12. Carnal Knowledge and the Populating of Paradise: Johann Gottfried Schnabel’s Insel Felsenburg

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Die sinnlichen Vergnügungen sind nach der Natur der Menschen eine wirkliche Bedürfnis für einen wohleingerichteten Staat.¹

Der Republic [ist] allerdings daran gelegen . . . , daß einer Stadt oder Landes Einwohner sich verheyrathen, Kinder zeugen, und also dem Statum Politicum unterhalten mögen.²

But towards the extinction of the passion between the sexes, no observable progress whatever has hitherto been made.³

The Robinsonade seems tailor-made for a symposium on knowledge, science, and literature. After all, Daniel Defoe’s seminal Robinson Crusoe distinguishes itself with its meticulous descriptions of its protagonist’s experimentaton, his systematization of his life on the island, his taming and cultivation of nature. Crusoe’s survival depends on coming to know the island and learning to exploit its resources: “I saw large plants of alloes, but did not then understand them. I saw several sugar canes, but wild and, for want of cultivation, imperfect. I contented my self with these discoveries for this time, and came back musing with my self what course I might take to know the vertue and goodness of any of the fruites or plants which I should discover.”⁴ By contrast, the most famous German imitation of Defoe’s Crusoe, Johann Gottfried Schnabel’s eighteenth-century best seller, the four-volume Wunderliche Fata einiger Seefahrer (1731–43), will on first reading fail to meet any such readerly expectation: the narrative devotes little space to exploration of the island and, without much effort on the part of its colonizers, the island simply yields its riches. Indeed, fifteen years ago Jan Knopf convincingly argued that the protagonists of Schnabel’s Insel Felsenburg conspicuously lack the curiosity that characterizes Crusoe and the modern spirit of inquiry in general: “Die Kernvokabeln neuzeitlichen Selbstverständnisses erschienen wieder negativ besetzt: ‘Neugierde’
und 'Vorwitz' sind wieder Eigenschaften, die den Menschen nicht selbstbewuβt auszeichnen, sie sind wieder Herausforderungen von Unbekanntem, das dem Menschen nicht bekannt werden darf, weil es nicht für ihn ist." The Felsenburger, Knopf insists, never exhibit an inclination—"Lust"—to explore other countries, never even thoroughly explore the island itself. Instead, Knopf maintained, they seek peace and quiet and withdraw from history, the world, and its experiences: "[Schnabel] ging es weder darum, die Entdeckung einer neuen Welt vorzuführen, einer Welt, der man—wie Robinson Crusoe—die menschliche Wirtschaftlichkeit erst abbringen muß, indem man sie entdeckt, bearbeitet und zwingt, den Menschen nützlich zu sein, noch darum eine zukünftige Projektion eines idealen Staats . . . zu entwerfen . . ., hier wird vielmehr die Flucht vor der Wirklichkeit demonstriert." Yet even as Knopf identified the lack of experience, indeed, the lack of desire to experience the world, the flight from reality, he overlooked—or perhaps dismissed as merely domestic—what Bernhard Fischer has recently discussed as the book's central experience: the sexual union of Albertus Julius and Concordia. Fischer has astutely maintained that Schnabel's text depicts human society as rooted in sexuality. Like Fischer, I, too, will place sexuality at the center of my investigation, for the entire colony of Felsenburg and thus the book itself issue from it. Unlike Fischer, however, I am interested primarily in the construction of male sexuality as key to the knowledge that the text creates.

I intend to explore the engendering, regulation, and satisfaction of male desire in this text and the knowledge generated and applied in the process. I am interested in the ways the narrative relates technologies of the male self to technologies of the state, that is, how it transforms male sexual economy into political economy, domestic science into political science. My reading of this novel will insist on the continuum of the private and the political. Unlike Fischer, however, who views Schnabel's novel as a bourgeois critique of absolutism—albeit an ineffectual one—I will argue that in this text male autobiography interlocks with the political economy of eighteenth-century mercantilism, indeed, that Schnabel's colony in many respects participates in the political thought of the cameralist system of eighteenth-century enlightened despotism.

I

On the opening page of the Wunderliche Fata the fictitious editor commends Albertus Julius's "Geschichts-Beschreibung" to the special de-
light, “zu besonderer Gemüths-Ergötzung,” of a masculine-gendered reader, a “geneigter Leser” (1: sig. 2): (r). While the masculine gender of a putatively generic and universal reader might appear unremarkable, a fictional reader response to this text from the late eighteenth century alerts us to the possibility that Schnabel's novel particularly appealed to male readers. The narrator of Karl Philipp Moritz's autobiographical novel *Anton Reiser* (1786–90) describes one of the secret pleasures of Anton's childhood, his solitary reading of *Insel Felsenburg*:

Die Erzählung von der Insel Felsenburg tat auf Anton eine sehr starke Wirkung, denn nun gingen eine Zeitlang seine Ideen auf nichts Geringers, als einmal eine große Rolle in der Welt zu spielen, und erst einen kleinen, denn immer größern Zirkel von Menschen um sich her zu ziehen, von welchen er der Mittelpunkt wäre: dies erstreckte sich immer weiter, und seine ausschweifende Einbildungskraft ließ ihn endlich sogar Tiere, Pflanzen, und leblose Kreaturen, kurz alles, was ihn umgab, mit in die Spähre seines Daseins hineinziehen, und alles mußte sich um ihn, als den einzigen Mittelpunkt, umher bewegen, bis ihm schwindelte. Dieses Spiel seiner Einbildungskraft machte ihm damals oft wonnevollre Stunden, als er je nachher wieder genossen hat.

The boy Anton's eager adoption and adaptation of Albertus's story as well as his pleasure in reading it suggest that this fantasy offers a model of “masculine” self-realization. Indeed, it presents him not with a model of quiescence but rather with a fantasy of activity and pleasure; Anton is not tranquilized but rather highly stimulated. So inspired is he by Albertus's example that he imagines himself a second Adam, the father of humankind with dominion over the plants and animals. He has clearly recognized that Albertus not only authored himself by telling his life story but literally fathered an entire colony “von mehr als 300. Seelen,” a colony that will live on after his death. What is more, through this text Anton discovers himself and his capacity for pleasure (“wonnevollre Stunden”).

Anton Reiser is not, however, the first male character to be given pleasure by Albertus's life story; as it happens, this distinction belongs to the fictitious author of the book himself, Eberhard Julius. Indeed, Eberhard, who frequently sought and found a cure for his melancholy in books, reacts quite strongly to the first account of his great great uncle's biography: "Der Capitain [hatte] . . . mich [damit] in erstaunendes Vergnügen gesetzt" (1:25). In fact, unlike Crusoe, who goes to sea because he desires adventure, Eberhard sets sail for the island on account of his uncle's story, a story that, as we shall see, holds the promise
of sexual satisfaction as well as progeny. On the island Eberhard Julius will marry and, as it were, come into his own. In fact he becomes an agent in more than one sense of the word. And apparently Albertus's biography has permanently cured Eberhard's melancholy, for it is never mentioned again. Schnabel's model of "masculine" self-realization, this powerful therapy, deserves a closer look.

II

The title page and introduction to the original volume of *Insel Felsenburg* leave no doubt as to the narrative's center: the book consists of "Albert Julii Geschichts-Beschreibung, und was Mons. Eberhard Julius, zur Erläuterung derselben, diesem unglücklichen Passagier sonst beygelegt und zugeschickt hatte" (1: sig. 4):(v).11 While I will also examine the larger structure created by the collected biographies of the settlers, my investigation focuses primarily on this narrative center, on the story of Albertus Julius and therefore on the first, best, and most enduringly popular volume of Schnabel's serial novel.12 Like the tale of Alexander Selkirk, the prototype for Robinson Crusoe, the central fate of the *Wunderliche Fata* begins innocuously enough as a "plain Man's Story." But unlike Selkirk, Albertus undergoes a marvelous transformation over the course of the narrative. His story recounts its protagonist's coming to a prodigious manhood, his transformation from passive victimization to active agency, a fatherless child's metamorphosis into the patriarch of a flourishing and populous nation. Albertus's discovery of his own sexuality constitutes a critical moment in this metamorphosis.

Although born into middle-class respectability to a father who was a loyal servant (*Etaats-Bediente* [1:110–11]) of a German prince, Albertus and his brother were orphaned at a tender age and left to beg on the street. The brief description of these early years unmistakably belongs to a well-known seventeenth-century genre, the picaresque novel. Like many a seventeenth-century picaro, Albertus becomes for a time a "Spielball des Glicks." The world acts upon him and he muddles through as best he can, sometimes using his wits and sometimes acting foolishly. In the Europe of this text he is unable to establish himself in any sense of the word—one of his misadventures symbolically involves a mixup with a pair of pants, "daß ich in der Angst unrechte Hosen und an statt der Meinigen des Herrn Praeceptoris seine ergriffen" (1:116). Indeed, young Albertus's story promises readers little more than a tale of failed masculinity, "denn ich wuste mich selbst nicht zu
resolviren, was ich in Zukunfft vor eine Profession oder Lebens-Art erweilen wolte” (1:117). He seems powerless, even uninterested in taking initiative. Indeed, even as seventeenth-century Europe teems with men who are ruled by uncontrollable desires of all kinds, in particular lust and greed, young Albertus appears to lack any such “secret moving springs in the affections.”

Fortunately Albertus meets a Dutch aristocrat, to whom he recounts the history of his brief but precarious life. So taken with Albertus’s anecdotes—“ungemein vergnügt” (1:120)—is Mons. van Leuven that he hires him as his servant, assigning him no duties but to entertain him. Although he as yet has very little to tell, Albertus has already found in van Leuven an appreciative and grateful male audience. Schnabel’s text thus signals early on that the autobiographical mode may function as a means of social bonding, indeed a pleasurable one. I shall return to this point.

Despite his new association with the enterprising van Leuven, Albertus finds himself further than ever from achieving any sort of authoritative “masculine” identity: van Leuven dresses his young servant as a woman, commanding that he behave as if he were his wife and, ever passive, Albertus obliges his master. Eventually it becomes clear that this ambiguous disguise is part of a plan to abduct van Leuven’s true love, Concordia Plürs, but its effect on Albertus lingers. Even after he once again clothes himself in trousers, he does not easily win back his male status. He remains curiously “feminized,” identified with Concordia rather than with his master van Leuven. In fact, on the voyage Albertus and Concordia become violently seasick and both are unconscious when the ship founders on a sandbank: “Weiter weiß ich nicht, wie mir geschehen ist, indem mich entweder eine Ohnmacht oder allzustarker Schlaf überfiel, aus welchem ich mich nicht eher als des andern Tages ermuntern konte, da sich mein schwacher Körper auf einer Sand-Banck an der Sonne liegend befand” (1:139). The most enterprising man, van Leuven, has dragged Albertus ashore along with his wife. Albertus’s passivity at this crucial moment contrasts starkly with Crusoe’s mad swim for shore. Indeed, unlike Defoe’s protagonist, Albertus has up to his arrival on the island appeared devoid of desire of any kind.

If Albertus has for a time been positioned as a woman, the island offers him the possibility of renegotiating his social and sexual identity. Four people have survived the shipwreck: three men—his master van Leuven, the ship’s captain Lemelie, and Albertus himself—and one woman. The tally of survivors in and of itself raises the specter of scarcity even before the characters themselves consciously begin to
worry about starving to death and long before Lemelie offers his im-modest proposal for populating the island.

Scarcity has a profound effect on Albertus, who begins to show initiative, indeed, unexpectedly proves himself the most worthy man. He is not imprudent like Lemelie who begins to eat everything in sight without a thought to the future, nor is he unrealistic like van Leuven who only makes vain predictions of a happier future (1:151–52). Albertus begins to explore the island and discovers the seals who satiate the company’s hunger. Encouraged by his successes and unafooted of heights, he climbs higher and higher in search of food. One day he has a curious experience—or rather he describes a discovery in a curious manner:


Albertus ostensibly narrates a sighting but wastes little time talking about seeing. Rather he seems to have been struck by a thunderbolt; he describes not a vision but a total bodily sensation of pleasure. What is this greatest of all pleasures and why is it important?

August Langen insists that in pietist circles “Vergnügen” tended to refer to contentment, not sexual pleasure: “Vergnügen und seine Sippe wird im Pietismus im Sinne des älteren vergnügen = zufrieden stellen (also noch nicht = voluptas, das im 18. Jahrhundert aufkommt . . .) häufig gebraucht.”¹⁵ I would argue that Schnabel’s use of the word in the Wunderliche Fata includes both of the senses of “Vergnügen” that Langen describes—the new and the old—and, moreover, that Schnabel, like many of his contemporaries, was quite conscious that the two meanings were not so far apart, that sexual pleasure was essential to other kinds of satisfaction and general well-being, indeed happiness. In 1719, for example, the prolific medical writer L. Christoph de Hellwig remarked on the therapeutic value of orgasm: “Das ich mit wenigen viel sage, es ist kein kräftiger remedium uns zu curiren, als eine or-
dentliche Liebe und Anfügung an ein Weibes-Bild, und diese Wollust überschüttet uns mit vielem Guten, sie machet unsere Seele vergnügt und vermehret die Kräfte unsers Leibes." Indeed, the Canon of Avicenna, which had dominated medieval medicine, cited coitus as vital to men's well-being and as a particularly effective antidote to melancholy. Sex brought about "the 'expulsion' of a dominant train of thought or of an obsession, the acquisition of boldness, the control of excessive anger, and, of course, the dissolution of the spermatic vapours that accumulate in the brain of the melancholics." Although Schnabel's text does not exactly advocate sexual pleasure for its own sake, it does, as I shall explain, insist on it as necessary to human health and happiness and thus to the building of a prosperous state.

What does Albertus's reaction to his sighting of the interior of the island tell us about his physiology and its place in the divine order? When recalling this moment, Albertus says quite explicitly that he had caught a glimpse of paradise and, like that of Milton's Adam, Albertus's first encounter with paradise bears a striking resemblance to a sexual experience: "All things smiled" [and] "with fragrance and with joy my heart overflow'd." Indeed, when describing this "allergröste Vergnügen," he uses the same vocabulary that Schnabel uses elsewhere to refer to orgasm. In Schnabel's infamous risqué novel Der im Irrgarten der Liebe herumtaumelnde Kavalier (1746), for example, a baroness assures the protagonist of her gratitude for nights of pleasure: "Euch, aber, mein Leben, bin ich noch jetzt unendlich verbunden für das entzückende Vergnügen, welches Ihr mir in einigen Nächten zu Ariqua verursacht und wovon ich das Angedenken noch unter meinem Herzen trage." Since in the eighteenth century female orgasm was thought to be necessary for conception, there is no mistaking the meaning of "entzückende Vergnügen" here. Indeed, these are precisely the words that Albertus uses to describe his own wedding night: "[Ich] fand in ihren Liebesvollen Umarmungen ein solches entzückendes Vergnügen" (1:268). As for the sighting of paradise, in case we missed the point, the narrator flags the sexual analogy by describing the deep contented sleep that follows Albertus's first exploration of paradise and the embarrassment he feels about having slept so long: "Meine Ruhe war dermassen vergnügt, daß ich mich nicht eher als des andern Morgens, etwa zwey Stunden nach Aufgang der Sonnen ermuntern konte. Ich schämete mich vor mir selbst, so lange geschlaffen zu haben" (1:161).

Having identified the vocabulary of sexuality Albertus uses, the question of its significance remains. Albertus's first encounter with this second Eden in fact constitutes a double discovery. Not only has he discovered a paradise, and perhaps had a presentiment of paradisal liv-
ing, he has finally discovered himself and experienced his own sexuality, a sexuality that, as we soon learn, must be satisfied for the island truly to become his paradise. If church commentaries on the biblical myth linked human sexuality to the departure from Eden, Schnabel links it quite specifically to the return.

In fact sexual thematics become explicit in Albertus's autobiography only after his discovery of the interior of the island—the analogy to female anatomy is perhaps too obvious to deserve mention. Lemelie, who has been somewhat suspect all along, shows his true colors when they enter the interior of the island and proposes a libertine solution to the shortage of women: "Was solte es wohl hindern, wenn wir uns ... alle 3. mit einer Frau behülffen, fleißig Kinder zeugen und dieselbe so-dann auch mit einander verheiratheten" (1:167). Lemelie's lasciviousness, his "geile Brunst," eventually drives him to violence, the murder of van Leuven, the attempted rape of Concordia, and, indeed, his own untimely violent death—in hot pursuit of Albertus, who has thwarted his designs, he accidentally but significantly impales himself on Albertus's bayonet.

After Lemelie's death only Concordia and Albertus remain on the island, a neatly symmetrical heterosexual arrangement that raises reader expectation of a future union. The narrative, however, delays Albertus's and the reader's gratification. Albertus swears an oath that he will never pester Concordia with untoward sexual demands "weiln ich lieber Zeit-Lebens unvergnügt und Ehe-Loß leben, als euer Ehre und Tugend die geringste Gewalt anthun" (1:223). Yet even as he forswears Concordia, his oath itself could not make plainer that he considers sex vital to a happy life. As it turns out Albertus had underestimated the vitality of his sexuality when he swore the oath. Indeed, after about a year and a half he finds himself so melancholy and so filled with desire that he wants nothing more than to leave the island and find a wife. For him the island is paradise only if he has a mate; otherwise it is unbearable: 20 "Wie vergnügt wolte ich, als ein anderer Adam, meine gantze Lebens-Zeit in diesem Paradiese zubringen, wenn nur nicht meine besten Jugend-Jahre, ohne eine geliebte Eva zu umarmen verrauchen solten" (1:257). He insists in his prayers that his longing is "keine geile Brunst, sondern [hat] deine heilige Ordnung zum Grunde" (1:257). Nevertheless, he also implies that his desire is not specific to a particular object when he mentions that he considered the possibility of waiting until Concordia's daughter was of marriageable age. Indeed, we recall that his first experience of desire on the island was independent of a specific woman. In other words Albertus identifies sexual desire as simply part of the condition of being human or rather, as the novel on
the whole does not depict women as desirous creatures, specifically part of the condition of being male. With respect to origin, then, Lemelie's "geile Brunst," which the book clearly condemns, differs very little from Albertus's "Liebes-Gluth" (1:258), which the book condones as belong to God's divine order.

In his very useful article Fischer has attempted to differentiate between Lemelie's sexuality, "einer asozialen, ja gesellschaftsfeindlichen, rein egoistischen Triebnatur, deren Index der reine Lustgewinn ist: der 'geilen Brunst,'" and Albertus's, "einer ursprünglich gesellschaftsgründenden, vernünftigen Natur, deren Index die Fortpflanzung ist: der 'keuschen Liebe.'"21 While appealing in its simplicity, the dichotomy Fischer proposes between sexual pleasure for its own sake and sex in service of reproduction does not take account of the text's implicit insistence on sexual pleasure as vital to "masculine" agency and hence to civilization. Fischer overstates the case, then, when he argues that in rationalizing sexuality Schnabel constitutes marriage as an institution of repression—as if delectation no longer had any place on the island or in the book itself.22

Fischer of course correctly identifies the foregrounding of reproduction on the island. In the love lament “Soll meiner Jugend beste Kraft/In dieser Einsamkeit ersterben?” (1:255) Albertus himself pointedly couples his desire to his generative capacity. Furthermore, in this narration of an earthly paradise Albertus's union with Concordia explicitly enables the fulfillment of God's first commandment to humankind in the first story of creation: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."23 But whereas in the twentieth century it is easy enough to uncouple sexual pleasure from reproduction, Schnabel's eighteenth-century text constructs sexual pleasure and reproduction as a continuum that forms the basis for human happiness, a view Schnabel shared with many of his contemporaries. In 1734 the author of the entry "Ehestand" in Zedler's *Großes Universal-Lexikon* wrote in answer to the question as to whether people capable of reproduction were obliged to marry:

Da nun der weite Erden-Crei8 zu Erhaltung so vieler Menschen hinhänglich ist; der Mensch auch hiernach die Kraft, sein Geschlecht zu vermehren, bey sich empfindet; und endlich eine solche Vermehrung, in Betrachtung, daß die Kräfte der grossen Gesellschaft dadurch zunehmen, zugleich auch das Werck der Zeugung mit einer Annehmlichkeit verbunden ist, den letzten Entzweck derer Menschen, welcher ihr wahres Wohlseyn und
Vergnügen ist, keines Weges verhindert, sondern vielmehr be-
fördert: so ist diese Fortpflanzung des menschlichen Geschlechtes
eine Folge des Göttlichen Willens, und eine denen Menschen ob-
liegende Schuldigkeit.24

Indeed, in the early eighteenth century passionate lovemaking was
thought not only vital to but a sign of fertility. As Thomas Laqueur ex-
plains, it was commonplace that the body have through its pleasures a
sign of its capacity to generate.25 Conversely, numerous offspring signi-
fied sexual fulfillment. Anke Meyer-Knees has also noted the “Ver-
bindung von Gefühl—Sexualität—Fortpflanzung als menschheitser-
haltende Notwendigkeit” in eighteenth-century medical discourse.26

While Schnabel certainly establishes the utility of the institution of
marriage, I would argue that he offers his male readers marriage not as
an institution that represses pleasure but one that regulates it, thereby
increasing it.27 Or, to put it another way, marriage converts the destruc-
tive and dissipated flames of “geile Brunst” into red hot, civilization-
forging “Liebes-Gluth.” I shall explain.

Schnabel’s second popular novel Der im Irrgarten der Liebe herum-
taumelnder Kavalier tells the cautionary tale of an aristocratic man who
is out of control. The hapless hero, Gratianus Elbenstein, is in some
sense a harmless Lemelie, not so much dangerous to society as to him-
self. His fate contrasts markedly with the bourgeois Albertus Julius’s
success story. Elbenstein always eagerly and willingly submits to wom-
en’s blandishments despite his many resolutions to mend his ways.

Nevertheless, after a series of erotic adventures, he finally reaps the re-
ward of his sinful youth in bankruptcy. The text insists on an analogy
between his disastrous personal finances and his licentious sexual
economy: complicated financial affairs decimate his wealth and “der
Gram und Kummer, welchen er deswegen einnahm, brachte ihn
dergestalt von Kräften, daß er schwachheitshalber seine Funktion nicht
mehr verrichten konnte, sondern sich genötigt sah, seine Charge zu
resignieren” (p. 366). If this is his punishment for libertinage, we can
conclude that if, rather than dissipate his sexual energy, he had, so to
speak, husbanded his resources, he would, like Albertus, be happy and
strong of body, the father of many children (unlike Elbenstein not just a
single troublesome son [p. 365]) as well as rich.

In contrast to Elbenstein, who generally hops into bed at a moment’s
notice, Albertus and Concordia delay the consummation of their sexual
union, thus building up sexual tension and reader anticipation. After
three nights of singing and praying the time has finally arrived: “In der
vierdten Nacht aber opfferte ich meiner rechtmäßigen Ehe-Liebste die
erste Krafft meiner Jugend, und fand in ihren Liebesvollen Umarmungen ein solches entzückendes Vergnügen, dessen unvergleichliche Vollkommenheit ich mir vor der Zeit nimmermehr vorstellen können” (1:268). This explosion of sexual energy has predictable consequences: “ Wenige Tage darauf verspürete [Concordia] die Zeichen ihrer Schwangerschaft . . . .” (1:268); as if to emphasize the benefits of delayed gratification and the founding-father Albertus’s particular virility, this passionate night yields not a single child but twins.28 Within his marriage to Concordia, Albertus’s pleasure is, then, not repressed but encouraged and extended. The Hausvater Albertus differs from the roué Elbenstein in that the Hausvater channels his pleasure with far-reaching beneficial results, not the least of which is that he lives to be over one hundred years old and to see his “Geschlecht” multiplied. “Geschlecht” should be understood in this context in the sense of family and in the several senses of sex; indeed, here bloodline is identical with sex. The quintessential bourgeois Albertus thus substantiates the well-known Foucauldian argument that the bourgeoisie was “occupied, from the mid-eighteenth century on, with creating its own sexuality and forming a specific body based on it, a ‘class’ body with its health, hygiene, descent, and race: the autosexualization of its body, the incarnation of sex in its body, the endogamy of sex and the body.”29 Unlike Robinson Crusoe who proves to be a “rather bad colonist,”30 Albertus lives “vergniigt” in the interior of the island of Felsenburg, having reached the destination of his desire. Marriage has enabled this male subject to regulate himself, thus leading to his true happiness, just as in the writings of eighteenth-century cameralists “‘good government’ and the promotion of happiness turn out to involve an ever-extending work of regulation.”31

III

How then does domestic economy relate to political economy? Both Knopf and Fischer see Schnabel’s reliance on autobiographies that focus largely on how the settlers reach the island and not so much on what they do once they arrive there as one of the signs of the poverty of a work that appears at least superficially to belong to the genre of Staatsroman, a genre that is supposed to project an ideal state. If, however, we scrutinize the first volume of Schnabel’s novel from a perspective broader than that of the individual narratives, we can see that it not only projects a model state of sorts but that it predicts its increasing vigor. Indeed, Schnabel’s text describes what Keith Tribe has identified
as the utopia of the eighteenth-century political economies “in which economic well-being was the prerequisite of political power.” Schnabel’s interest in contemporary statecraft manifests itself in at least two important ways in the novel and precisely these manifestations concern me in this section of my essay. Here again, after a brief excursus on political economy in the eighteenth century, Albertus’s sexuality will constitute the starting point.

In 1741, ten years after the publication of the first volume of the *Insel Felsenberg* and two years before the publication of its fourth and final volume, one Johann Peter Süßmilch, a Berlin military pastor, published a pathbreaking work entitled *Die göttliche Ordnung in den Veränderungen des menschlichen Geschlechts, aus der Geburt, Tod, und Fortpflanzung desselben.* Süßmilch, who two years later was elected to the Royal Academy of Sciences, has gone down in history as the father of modern demographical statistics. By comparing registers of births and deaths Süßmilch was able to calculate fertility and mortality rates and population growth. He reckoned that overall the human race was constantly multiplying; on average the population doubled once every 100 years. The statistics he was compiling—the word itself remarks on the importance of these numbers to the state—would, he insisted, provide an index of the health of a particular state: “Ich bemerke noch hierbey, daß man aus diesen Listen von dem Zustande, von der Ab- oder Aufnahme eines Staats urtheilen könne. Da die Force und die Einkünfte eines Landes auf der Anzahl derer Einwohner beruhen” (p. 17). Moreover, he noted, “Da der nunmehro in Gott ruhende König Friedrich Wilhelm bey nahe 30. Jahr regieret, in 30. Jahren aber die Zahl der Einwohner dieser Lande sich um 1/3 vermehret: so erkennet man hieraus wie die friedliche Regierung desselben, die Gott in dessen würdigsten Sohne und Nachfolger noch lange fortdauren lassen, eben so anzusehen sey, als wenn er einige Länder erobert hätte, die den dritten Theil aller Einwohner der Preußischen und Brandenburgischen Lande enthalten” (p. 17). Süßmilch’s words recall those of Frederick the Great himself, who maintained in his *Anti-Machiavel*: “La force d’un état ne consiste point dans l’étendue d’un pays, ni dans la possession d’une vaste solitude ou d’un immense désert, mais dans la richesse des habitants et dans leur nombre. L’intérêt d’un prince est donc de peupler un pays, de le rendre florissant, et non de le dévaster et de le détruire.”

Our post-Malthusian age easily forgets that before Malthus European political economists judged the wealth of the nations to rest on their populations. In 1656 Veit Ludwig von Seeckendorff insisted, for example: “So ist auch in einem Regimient kein besserer Schatz/ als die Mänge vieler Leute und Unterthanen.” Sixty years later, in 1716, the
German statesman Julius Bernhard von Rohr reaffirmed the point: "Das beste Mittel ein Land zu bereichern, ist, darauf zu dencken, daß viel Volck in das Land gezogen werden, und auch alle Unterthanen durch fleißige Arbeit ihre Nahrung und Erwerb haben mögen. Denn eine grosse Menge wohlgenehrter Unterthanen ist der rechte Schatz eines Landes." Increasing the population was critical since, so the political economists believed, Europe was underpopulated; huge tracts of land lay fallow because there were not enough laborers to cultivate them. "Diese Bevölkerung," maintained the statesman and one time professor of "Kameralistik" Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi in 1756, "ist die innerliche Cultivirung, welche der äusserlichen die Seele und das Leben geben muß. . . . [S]o muß es als einen Grundsatz in dieser Abtheilung ansehen, daß ein Land nie zu viel Einwohner haben kann, welcher Grundsatz wider alle Einwiürfe leicht zu retten ist." The populating of the state constituted a cardinal principal of German cameralism and thus of contemporary German statecraft. Indeed, already in 1668 Becher had concluded that is was "derohalben leichtlich zuerachten/ daß die vornehmste Staats-Regul/ oder maxima einer Stadt oder Lands seyn sol/ Volckreiche Nahrung; angesehen/ weder der Landsfürst/ Städte oder Länder considerabel seyn/ wann sie arm von Volck seyn/ dann sie können sich nicht defendiren auß Mangl der Menschen." 

The statistician Süßmilch proposed three methods for increasing the population: increasing the birthrate, increasing life expectancy, and importing people. Frederick William I had experimented with the latter method when in 1731 he invited the 20,000 Salzburger expelled by the Archbishop Leopold Anton, Freiherr von Firmian, to settle East Prussia. When the Salzburger passed through Stolberg on their trek to the northeast, Schnabel commemorated the event with his Nachricht, welchergestalt die Salzburgischen Emigranten in Stolberg am 2. bis 4. August 1732 empfangen wurden (1733). But Frederick William was only emulating the policies of his grandfather, the Great Elector, who in the late seventeenth century had invited the French Huguenots to settle around Berlin with considerable economic advantage to the region. 

In his treatise on population Süßmilch maintains that the greatest deterrent to the birthrate is "der ehelose Stand." In pondering fertility rates he calculates not only the number of children produced in each marriage but, more important, how many new marriages result from the original one. He does not suggest that the population be multiplied by a grotesque increase in the number of children each individual woman bears (pp. 115–16). Rather, he insists, ubiquitous and early marriage guarantees a high birthrate. Süßmilch notes that the birth of
twins in particular promotes population growth and furthermore em-
phasizes that there must be an equal number of men and women since
neither polyandry nor polygamy contributes to increased birthrate.
The “göttliche Ordnung,” as Süßmilch characterizes it, is coupling two by two.

The colonizing, that is, the narration, of Felsenburg pursues all three
of the strategies Süßmilch proposes: fertility maximized through timely
and ubiquitous marriage and fortuitously by the frequent birth of
twins, increased life expectancy, and recruitment of settlers. The
twelve-page genealogical chart with which Schnabel (or perhaps his
publisher) furnished the first volume renders explicit what has been
implicit all along. These pages clearly illustrate the relationship be-
tween Albertus’s sexual economy and this novel’s political economy.
While in the genealogy as in the autobiography Albertus Julius consti-
tutes the primary instance, the personal knowledge of individuals that
the reader had acquired through the medium of autobiography has
been reshaped and transformed into a more impersonal knowledge of
an entire nation. Telling has returned as tally. Schnabel’s table provides
a schematic overview that allows the reader to analyze and take stock
of the fortunes of not just Albertus Julius but of the nation of Julius.
Schnabel’s genealogy thus re-presents carnal knowledge in the form
that Foucault claims is at the center of knowledge in the seventeenth
and eighteenth centuries: the table, that is, a display of “simple ele-
ments and their progressive combination,” a display of knowledge “in
a system contemporary with itself.”

What are the particular characteristics of this genealogical chart and
what does it tell the reader? It is worth recalling that the royal ge-
nealogical chart traditionally summoned the authority of a distant,
even mythological, past to legitimate the present. It began in the past
with an illustrious ancestor and concluded in the present with the
would-be illustrious descendant, clearly identifying both the ancestor
and the descendant. Schnabel’s chart has a different orientation; here
the distant past plays no role whatsoever. The chart begins with Alber-
tus Julius’s parents, as is necessary to show the relationship of the insu-
lar Julises to the European line. The story the genealogy tells is, how-
ever, unmistakably the story of the island nation, for the European
branch of the family turns out to have been remarkably unprolific and,
symbolically, Eberhard Julius is one of two surviving family members
from a mere third generation.

The genealogy identifies Albertus as Albertus Julius I and thus
clearly represents him as the founder of a Julius dynasty, one that is
of course synonymous with the entire Julius nation. One page of the
genealogy is devoted to each of the ten tribes (Stämme), the descendants of Albertus's nine children and one adoptive child on through the fifth generation of island inhabitants. Each page concludes with the total number of women and men and summations of the deceased and living of each sex. Most striking is that from the third generation on the descendants are for the most part anonymous, indeed, identified only as male or female. The chart provides the explanation for the cryptic notation: "Der geneigte Leser beliebe . . . zu excusiren, daß nicht alle diese Personen mit ihren Tauff-Nahmen benennen sind, welches . . . unnötige Weitläufigkeiten verursacht hätte" (1:488). These colonists will never tell their life stories, only occupy a place in a reproductive system. Indeed, there is no reason to do so, for they are natives and received the redundant name Julius at birth; they need not be naturalized. Their numbers not their stories are important. The chart provides clear indication that Albertus's descendants will continue to multiply on into the future and herein lies the key criterion for the founding father's success. The final tally, 429 living and dead, attests to a population growth that would later have astounded even Malthus. Schnabel's triumphant tally anticipates the cameralist Justi's maxim "Man setzet nicht gerne Kinder in die Welt, wenn man selbst unglücklich ist; und man mithin voraus siehet, daß die Kinder nicht glücklicher seyn werden."45 One only has to read Justi on the subject of "Policeywissenschaft," that is, the regulation of social life for the benefit of the state, to realize that Knopf's dictum "Die Insel Felsenburg ist nicht . . . ein Staatsroman" is perhaps too hasty a conclusion.46 The absence of an explicit articulation of the laws regulating social life on the island does not mean that the laws themselves are absent. They are simply hidden, the private regulations of the conjugal bed. Certainly, the regular marriage and multiplication of the population recorded by the genealogical chart indicate that the regulations dictated by "Policeywissenschaft" are operating better than any cameralist could have dared hope.

I have claimed that the novel exhibits at least two clear manifestations of contemporary ideas of statecraft. The genealogy is one of these. With its projection of Albertus's seed into an anonymous fifth generation this chart predicts an unbroken and endless multiplication into the future, the prospectus of a vigorous state. The second manifestation is to be found in the cumulative structure of the novel itself.47 Knopf in fact accurately identified the character of this structure, only to dismiss it as unbearably rigid and by implication uninteresting: "Das starre System, das soziologisch die Gruppe der Inselbewohner umschließt und das sich erzählerisch darin niederschlägt, daß jede neu hinzukommende Person—als eine Art Generalbeichte—ihre Lebensgeschichte
On the island of Felsenburg, the public recitation of each new immigrant’s autobiography, what Knopf terms a “Generalbeichte,” functions as a powerful means of social bonding. In his very narrative structure, Schnabel invented a means of grafting a new and vital immigrant population onto the established population. Within this scheme the mechanics of writing a serial novel and the mechanics of crafting a powerful state dovetail. Of course, as Knopf notes, by making the recitation of the autobiography a part of the naturalization process, Schnabel hit upon a scheme that could have enabled him to continue his narrative endlessly: as long as the Felsenburger required know-how and spouses, the novel could have continued to expand the panoply of “wunderliche Fata.” The nature of the economy that informs the narrative is unmistakable: like the mercantilist economies of its age, it is acquisitive. And like the politics of population growth, it speculates on the future, banking on its ability endlessly to renew the reader’s pleasure.

IV

With the reader’s pleasure we have come full circle. The fictitious editor has made no bones about it: the reader’s pleasure in reading, the repeated piquing and satisfaction of his curiosity, constitutes the book’s only explicitly articulated justification. In the introduction to the first volume the fictitious editor of the *Insel Felsenburg* reported that he initially had taken up Eberhard Julius’s manuscript because he believed it to be an alchemical text whose arcane knowledge could be exploited to economic advantage. Instead he found “verschiedene Passagen... woran mein Gemüt eine ziemliche Belustigung fand” (1: sig.):(4v). I would suggest that in fact at some level he correctly identified the nature of the manuscript when he supposed it to be an alchemical text; indeed, Albertus’s individual story and the serial novel itself ought to remind us that pleasure—sexual pleasure—is the quintessential something-out-of-nothing-much that can be exploited to economic advantage.

Within the scheme of Schnabel’s novel, the controlled arousal and satisfaction of (male) desire—this technology of self—by no means leads to bankruptcy, lassitude, or quiescence. Quite the contrary. It becomes an integral part of the expanding edifice of the narrative. Karl
Philipp Moritz did indeed identify the potentially powerful effect of this novel on the male reader: it enables Anton Reiser blissfully to imagine himself the center of a pleasantly waxing world that he dominates.

With the Insel Felsenburg the "Hof-Balbier" and "Stadtchirurgus" Johann Gottfried Schnabel constructed a regulated and regulatory pleasure that was essential to the well-being of the (male) individual and thus to the weal of the state. And, if the narrative itself had a practical side, it was to offer male readers—as did Albertus’s story a discomposed and despondent Eberhard Julius—a vicarious pleasure, a tonic of sorts "to purge away spleen, melancholy and ill affections." 50 Without a particularly large stretch of the imagination the reader could identify with the "I" of each autobiography—and especially with Albertus Julius—as the "I" made its way toward the bliss of the island. That the salutary activity the novel generated was all in the reader's head goes without saying, or at least it is another story.

Notes

I would like to thank Joseph F. Loewenstein and Michael Sherberg for careful readings of the manuscript in progress.


11. The title page also gives Albertus’s story preeminence; it reads Wunderliche *FATA* einiger See-Fahrer, absonderlich ALBERTI JULII, eines geborenen Sachsens, Welcher in seinem 18den Jahre zu Schiffe gegangen, durch Schiff-Bruch selb 4te an eine grausame Klippe geworffen worden, nach deren Ubersteigung das schönste Land entdeckt, sich daselbst mit seiner Gefährtin verheyrathet, aus solcher Ehe eine Familie von mehr als 300. Seelen erzeuget, das Land vortrefflich angebaut, durch besondere Zufälle erstaunens-würdige Schätze gesammelt, seine in Deutschland ausgekundschaftten Freunde glücklich gemacht, am Ende des 1728sten Jahres, als in seinem Hunderien Jahre, annoch frisch und gesund gelebt, und vermuthlich noch zu dato lebt, entworffen Von dessen Bruders-Sohnes-Sohnes-Sohne, Mos. Eberhard Julio, Curieusen Leser aber zum vermuthlichen Gemüths-Vergnügen ausgefertigt, auch *par Commission dem Drucke übergeben Von GISANDERN*.

12. Grohnert correctly maintains that volumes three and four exhibit a “Schwund an künstlerischer Geschlossenheit und die Zunahme an Irrationalismen” (Dietrich Grohnert, “Robinson zwischen Trivialität und Sozialutopie. Bemerkungen zu Entstehung und Autorenabsicht deutscher Robinsonaden,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Pädagogischen Hochschule “Karl Liebknecht” Potsdam* 16 [1972]: 418). Of the four volumes, volume one has received the most attention, from Achim von Arnim’s reworking of it as “Albert und Concordia” and “Albert diktiert weiter” in *Der Wintergarten* (1809) to the Reclam edition which includes only the first volume of Schnabel’s novel (Johann Gottfried Schnabel, *Insel Felsenburg*, ed. Volker Meid and Ingeborg Springer-Strand. [Stuttgart: Reclam, 1979]).

13. Defoe puts these words into Robinson Crusoe’s mouth to describe desire (Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 193).


20. The "Lebens-Beschreibung" of Don Cyrillo de Valaro, the last surviving member of a Felsenburg settlement from the previous century, offers a dystopic vision of life on the island without women. Indeed, to Don Cyrillo's horror, the lack of women had led some of the men to copulate with the apes: "daß meine 3. noch übrigen Lands-Leute seit etlichen Monathen 3. Aeffinnen an sich gewöhnet hätten, mit welchen sie sehr öfters, so wohl bey Tage als Nacht eine solche schändliche Wollust zu treiben pflegten" (1:598).


22. In fact even Lemelie does not separate pleasure from reproduction. His suggestion is framed as a proposal for effectively populating the island.


27. Schnabel’s text thus supports Foucault’s assertion in *The History of Sexuality* that we are mistaken if we understand the bourgeoisie to have repressed sexuality. Foucault maintains rather that “what was involved was not an asceticism, in any case not a renunciation of pleasure or a disqualification of the flesh, but on the contrary an intensification of the body, a problematization of health and its operational terms: it was a question of techniques for maximizing life. The primary concern was rather the body, vigor, longevity, progeniture, and descent of the classes that ‘ruled.’” Michel Foucault, *An Introduction*, vol. 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), pp. 122–23.

28. In Johann Christoph Ettner’s *Die unvorsichte Hebamme*, a fictitious midwife explains the necessary conditions for conceiving twins:

Ich halte davor / daß wann so wol der Mann starck/ als auch die Frau
guter Art ist/ und eine willige Mutter hat; daß wofern die Caressen ver- 
doppelt werden/ die Mutter im Anziehen zweyfache Vermischung des 
Saamens mache/ und einige Eyer in denen Mutterhörnern/ ausser daß 
der Saamen des Weibes zweymal (wie es denn wol zuweilen in einem 
Beyschlaf 3. und mehmal auf Seiten des Weibes zu geschehen pflegt) in 
die Mutter geworffen werde/ von des Mannes Saamen ausgehenden 
Geist imprægnirt werden/ und sodann so wol als die andere Frucht das 
(rudimentum) Anfang der Nabelschnur an die Mutter setze: Diejenigen 
Frauen die Zwillinge / Dreylinge und mehr Kinder getragen haben/ 
sagen: Daß sie zu der Zeit/ wann sie caressirt worden sind/ erstlich so 
eine ungemeine Lust empfanden/ daß sie nicht gewust/ wie ihnen 
geschehen/ und haben eine Zeitlang gleichsam entzuckt gelegen” (Jo-
hann Christoph Ettner, *Des Getreuen Eckarths Unvorsichtige Heb-Amme* 


32. Tribe, *Governing Economy*, p. 21. Tribe refers here specifically to Wilhelm von Schröder’s (1640–88) *Fürstliche Schatz- und Rentkammer* (1666). Tribe’s larger point is that “‘the state’ as a separate entity from the ruler’s household cannot be said to exist” (p. 21) and furthermore that rulers of early modern states understood the state to be a household that they were to manage. The state was thus treated as “a generic term for socio-political organization” (p. 28).
33. Unless otherwise stated, the following edition of Süßmilch’s *Die göttliche Ordnung* is quoted: Johann Peter Süßmilch, *Die göttliche Ordnung in den Veränderungen des menschlichen Geschlechts, aus der Geburt, Tod, und Fortpflanzung desselben* (Berlin: J. C. Spener, 1741).

34. Frederick of Prussia, *L’Antimachiavel, in Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand* (Berlin: Rodolphe Decker, 1848), 8:77. “The might of a state does not at all consist in the extent of its lands, nor in the possession of vast wastes or immense deserts but in the wealth of its inhabitants and in their number. The interest of a prince is thus to populate a country, to make it flourish, not to devastate and destroy it.” (Quoted and translated by Tribe, *Governing Economy*, p. 19.) Paul Sonnino lists the two original editions as *Examen du Prince de Machiavel* (The Hague: Van Duren, 1741 [1740]) and *Essai de critique sur le Prince de Machiavel* (The Hague: Paupie, 1740); see Frederick of Prussia, *The Refutation of Machiavelli’s “Prince” or Anti-Machiavel*, introd. and trans. and notes by Paul Sonnino (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), p. 21. It is unclear whether Süßmilch had actually read Frederick the Great’s work when he wrote his own treatise; he in fact writes as if Frederick William were still the reigning monarch.


Abnehmens/ der Städt/ Länder und Republicken [1668]). His work, Justi claims, differs from that of his predecessors in that it offers "das erste System einer Policey . . ., worin diese Wissenschaft vollständig, von andern Wissenschaften abgesondert und in einem, auf die Natur der Sache gegründeten, Zusammenhänge erscheint. Der gemeinste Fehler in Ansehung der Policey ist Zeither gewesen, daß man dieselbe mit der Staatskunst in eine Brühe geworfen und unter einander abgehandelt hat" (Justi, Grundsatze der Policeywissenschaft, sig. *3r–*3v).


47. Grohnert has in fact maintained that Schnabel's novel itself is a product of mercantilism, that is, that the entire "Robinson-Welle" to which "Insel Felsenburg" belongs derives from "ebenfalls merkantilen und schließlich sehr
profitablen verlegerischen Manipulationen mit einem sich seit dem Erfolg des
'Robinson Crusoe' abzeichnenden Lesergeschmack" (Grohnert, "Robinson
zwischen Trivialität und Sozialutopie," p. 413).


49. At the conclusion of the first volume the editor renews his promise of
readerly pleasure, assuring his public that the second volume will satisfy the
curiosity piqued in the first part: "Es soll von ihrer künfftigen Aufführung
und Vereheligung, im Andern Theile dieser Felsenburgischen Geschicht, des
geneigten Lesers curiosität möglichste Satisfaction empfangen" (1:473). As yet
another guarantee, the advertisement that appears on the following three
pages promises a sequel on the condition that the first one has created plea-
sure ("einiges Vergnügen erwecken" [1:475]), that is, aroused and satisfied
the reader's curiosity.

50. Foreword to Henry Fielding's Joseph Andrews (1742), quoted by Günther
Blaicher, Freie Zeit—Langeweile—Literatur. Studien zur therapeutischen Funktion
der englischen Prosaliteratur im 18. Jahrhundert, Quellen und Forschungen zur
Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, n.s., 69 (1993) (Berlin:
de Gruyter, 1977), p. 119. Blaicher argues that the eighteenth-century English
novel justifies itself to a leisure-class readership by insisting on the therapeutic
value of the stimulated and active imagination.