

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: *BILDUNG* AND GENDER IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOURGEOIS GERMANY: A CULTURAL STUDIES ANALYSIS OF TEXTS BY WOMEN WRITERS

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Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, the German *Bildungsbürgertum* used the civic and inner components of *Bildung* defined by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) as a means to characterize its social identity and prominence. Together with the transitions related to the industrialization of society in the second half of the century, the German intellectual middle class recognized the changes of *Bildung* that adapted to the expansion of the bourgeois public sphere but simultaneously upheld the construction of the “eternal feminine” that emerged during the period of Weimar Classicism around 1800. Therefore, the idea of *Bildung* became associated with the cultural reality of young men. This event leads to the question: If bourgeois society excluded women from the process of inner and civic *Bildung*, how did women in return view themselves as members of the *Bildungsbürgertum*?

Drawing on both the inner and civic aspects of *Bildung*, this project investigates the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender as portrayed in a variety of literary and non-literary texts. Selected writings by Fanny Lewald (1811-1889), Hedwig Dohm (1833-1919), Franziska Tiburtius (1843-1927), Gabriele Reuter (1859-1941), and Ricarda Huch (1864-1947) reveal that many women created new interpretations of *Bildung* that were quite different from the mainstream conception defined by the male public voice. In addition, a variety of texts from the nineteenth-century press shows how women simultaneously raised awareness of the gender paradox in *Bildung* in mainstream bourgeois culture, particularly by women associated with the nineteenth-century German bourgeois women's movement. The methodological paradigms of New Historicism and Gender Studies play a vital role in my analyses of women's *Bildung* as it existed in a cultural discourse of "otherness", and how women's *Bildung* changed and shifted throughout the course of the century.

My project examines the role of gender within multiple contexts of *Bildung* as portrayed in the texts mentioned above. These discourses include upbringing, self-awareness, self-cultivation, literacy, institutionalized education, and vocational training. In addition, my analysis asks how *Bildung* played a role in either creating or breaking a woman's gender consciousness and idea of "self" in regards to the construction of "proper" femininity.

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WRITERS

By

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## Dedication

For my parents, Sandy & James Weaver, and James & Rosemary Gary.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to a very respectable woman and advisor, Professor Elke Frederiksen. Thank you for the encouragement, patience, and mentorship during my years of professional and personal growth.

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## Introduction

“What is gender anyway?” Debra Rosenberg asked this question in her article “(Rethinking) Gender” in the May 21, 2007 issue of *Newsweek* Magazine. She writes, “history and science suggest that gender is more subtle and more complicated than anatomy”, and in addition, it can be viewed as “a complex interplay of biology, genes, hormones and culture”.<sup>1</sup> As citizens of the increasingly global twenty-first century, we find ourselves searching for answers to complex questions in order to find an identity and place in a world continuously confronted with change. In order to begin any debate on reflective contemporary concepts like gender and culture, or masculine and feminine, one might look into past cultures in hope of finding origin and answers pertaining to a person’s individual cultural heritage. Whether we look to earlier definitions of gender or culture with nostalgia or admonition, with approval or criticism, the ways of living from times past nevertheless remain a fascinating subject and can tell us something about who we are today. In articulating what kind of role gender played in past cultures, a twenty-first century search for understanding the relationship between gender, culture, and identity may unfold.

In nineteenth-century Germany, gender was undoubtedly *the* key determinate of cultural organization. The ways in which men and women went about their daily routine clearly reflected preconceived notions that defined not only what men and women were supposed to “do” but also how they should “be” according to their

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<sup>1</sup> The article is found online at <http://www.newsweek.com/id/34772/page/1>.

gender. Masculinity and femininity were concepts almost impossible to break, as they implied a measure of appearance, behavior, responsibility, feelings, desires, and ultimate purpose in life. Social class played a major role in the formations and ascriptions of gender behavioral code, and men and women from the proletarian class differed significantly from men and women of the bourgeois class. Men were to act “masculine” according to preconceived notions associated with their social rank, and lived according to standards set forth in aristocratic, bourgeois, or proletarian contexts. They were the public figures, the breadwinners of the family, the colonels and soldiers of the military, and the patriarchal head of the home. Women of the proletarian class and of the upper classes, on the other hand, faced a different reality. In more cases than not, what was defined as “feminine” did not apply to the proletarian woman because of her public role as worker outside of her own home, especially during the second half of the century; this is known as the double burden of the proletarian woman, as she maintained a home as wife and mother while simultaneously working in order to survive. “Femininity” belonged to the discourse of the wealthier classes, as it pointed towards attributes of beauty, gentleness, passivity, privacy, and most of all, love. More often than not, the bourgeois concept of “femininity” implied a certain level of luxury that women of the proletariat could not afford with either money or time.

One of the cultural occurrences mostly associated with nineteenth-century German society is the gradual emergence of the bourgeoisie as the leading social class in economics, politics, lifestyle and culture. In general, the bourgeoisie exemplified a level of elitism while boasting itself as financially better than the

proletariat and more ethically inclined than the aristocracy. The collective ethics by which the bourgeois class(es) lived included “a deep respect for laws and rules; a belief in self-help, the sanctity of property and family; and a faith in science and progress” (Jeffries 30). There were different levels of middle classes within the framework of the entire German bourgeoisie, including the wealthier *Wirtschafts-* and *Besitzbürgertum* [economic- and propertied middle class], the cultured or educated *Bildungsbürgertum* [educated middle class] and the *Kleinbürgertum* [petit bourgeoisie or lower middle class]. Overall, to call oneself a *Bürger*, or middle class citizen, one not only articulated a position of social rank, but also an appreciation of the ethics mentioned above. Similar to the British phenomenon of the “gentleman” or “lady”, a bourgeois man or woman who displayed his or her recognition of “proper behavior” simultaneously portrayed the appearance of being “cultured”. Not to behave according to a particular code of ethics was to be considered ungentlemanly or unladylike, and consequentially, one risked social disparagement and a reputation of being “below” his or her class.

The term *Bildung* is multifaceted in meaning. Translated into English, *Bildung* not only signifies education (its most common translation), but also upbringing, the shaping and formation of character, refinement, cultivation, religiosity, literacy, and training for a particular vocation.<sup>2</sup> Overall, the term characterizes a universal education in relation to human experience, insight, and exposure: to be *gebildet* is to be educated *and* “culturally” aware. When placed on an equal level with gender in the nineteenth century, however, the meaning of *gebildet sein* [to be

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<sup>2</sup> The second chapter of this dissertation provides an oversight on the term *Bildung* and its cultural origins in Germany.

educated/cultured] changes in tandem with the continuously shifting cultural realities of men and women throughout the course of the century. The grouping of *Bildung* and “masculinity” resulted in a very different social consequence than the combined concepts of *Bildung* and “femininity”. For example, the interrelationship of *Bildung* and womanhood around the year 1800 characterized a notion of sociability (*Geselligkeit*) reflective of the blossoming intellectual culture of the time; the same interrelationship towards the end of the century negatively implied a woman’s “unfemininity” because *Bildung*—defined as “knowledge” in this context—was believed to contradict women’s nature.

If one would visualize the *Bildungsbürgertum*’s rise of civil and cultural prestige between the years 1800 and 1900, a picture would emerge that reflects a continuous line drawn in an upward slope. Contradicting this visual picture is society’s attitude towards women’s exposure to *Bildung*: between the beginning and end of the nineteenth century, the mainstream attitude towards women’s participation in various modes of *Bildung* either decreased or remained stagnant, especially after the establishment of the German Empire in 1871. This asymmetrical image reflects the gendered paradox of the German middle classes during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although the prosperous bourgeoisie defined their entire social identity on the notion of being *gebildet*, the stepping-stones of reaching an ideal level of *Bildung* remained reserved for men. What about women?—just as the proletarian woman was rarely associated with the concept of “femininity”, so was the mainstream belief that too high a level of *Bildung* would damage the “femininity” of a bourgeois “lady”.

My project expands on this gendered paradox by searching for representations of the interrelationship between *Bildung* and gender within nineteenth-century bourgeois German (particularly German-Prussian) culture. I not only analyze the extent to which gender acted as a determinant of cultural organization—i.e. how one lived on a day to day basis based on ascribed gender behavior code—but I also ask in addition how *Bildung* played a role in this discourse. I continuously refer to Manfred Fuhrmann’s differentiation between the terms *Bildung* and culture by forming an approach around his statement: “Bildung gilt als die Form, in der die Individuen an der Kultur teilnehmen” [*Bildung* is seen as the form in which individuals participate in culture] (36). The concepts *Bildung* and gender, in my opinion, are inseparable: on the one hand, *Bildung* played a role in an individual’s subjective understanding of gender behavior code, while gender, on the other hand, ultimately determined the direction of an individual’s experience with all forms of *Bildung*.

This project incorporates a variety of texts from the nineteenth century and places a large emphasis on non-literary (or non-canonical) texts from nineteenth-century journals and newspapers, including articles, pictures, advertisements, and questionnaires.<sup>3</sup> In addition, this project focuses on narratives by five bourgeois women writers: Fanny Lewald (1811-1889), Hedwig Dohm (1833-1919), Gabriele Reuter (1859-1941), Franziska Tiburtius (1843-1927), and Ricarda Huch (1864-1947). Upon first glance, one notices the scope of time in which these women lived: this is intentional, as the stories from different generations of women reveal how the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender shifted in conjunction with society throughout

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<sup>3</sup> A large number of essays from the nineteenth-century press are by Helene Lange (1848-1930), who is regarded today as the most prominent figure in the reform movement of girls’ and women’s education.

the course of the nineteenth century. Although most of these women lived into the twentieth century, their works selected for this project portray either an autobiographical, autobiographically based, or a realist-fictional portrayal of nineteenth-century life.<sup>4</sup> In addition to this, all five women writers from the bourgeoisie reveal strikingly similar representations of this cultural issue despite minor differences based on generation, region, religion, and individual life.

Key questions asked in this project are as follows:

- In what ways did the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender shift in congruence with the social, political and economic changes that occurred throughout the course of the nineteenth century?
- What roles do the conceptions of femininity and masculinity play within the framework of nineteenth-century bourgeois culture, and how does this provide one with a better understanding of Germany's cultural past?
- How did the pedagogical, philosophical, and social aspects of *Bildung* play a role in defining and maintaining the bourgeois belief in "propriety"?
- How did *Bildung* possibly alter a woman's own feelings of gendered subjectivity? In other words, are there any examples that reveal how *Bildung* provided a woman with the means to see her "self" differently?
- Are there examples in which bourgeois society viewed a woman as simultaneously *gebildet* and "properly feminine"?

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<sup>4</sup> Ricarda Huch, for example, has earned the reputation for being one of the most prominent women writers in twentieth-century Germany. The narrative used in this dissertation, "Frühling in der Schweiz" was published in 1938, but it is an autobiographical account of Huch's student years in Zürich in the 1880s. Franziska Tiburtius also published her autobiography Erinnerungen einer Achtzigjährigen in 1927, but the excerpts in this project focus on her depictions of student life in Switzerland as well as her first years in medical practice towards the end of the nineteenth century.

- What are some examples of “lost” or “endangered” femininity caused by “too high” of an exposure to *Bildung*?
- Do any of the selected autobiographical works reflect an author’s self-portrayal similar to the female protagonist of a *Bildungsroman*?

There are a number of recent publications that focus on *Bildung* and gender in nineteenth-century Germany, the most recent being Chris Weedon’s publication *Gender, Feminism, & Fiction in Germany 1840-1914* (2006). In providing a comprehensive overview of the culture of gender difference in Germany during the nineteenth century, Weedon briefly focuses on the academic aspect of *Bildung* in discussing women’s right to an education and its role in the feminist movement. In addition, she discusses the role of conduct books as commonplace in educational reading materials for especially young bourgeois women. James C. Albisetti’s publication *Schooling German Girls and Women* (1988) and Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz’s two-volume edition *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung* (1996) are two works which provide an excellent overview of the history of girls’ education: both publications focus primarily on the institutional and social aspects of *Bildung* by paying close attention to the development of the *Mädchenschule* [girls’ school] and educational reform. In addition, Maria W. Blochmann’s “*Laß dich gelüsten nach der Männer Weisheit und Bildung*”: *Frauenbildung als Emanzipationsgelüste 1800-1918* (1990) and Laura Tate’s dissertation entitled “Women’s Emancipation and the German Ideal of *Bildung* in the Life and Writings of Helene Lange” (1999) concentrate on educational reform during the nineteenth-century German women’s movement(s). In regards to literacy, Günter Häntzschel’s

edited publication *Bildung und Kultur bürgerlicher Frauen 1850-1918* (1986) explores the cultural significance of *Anstandsbücher* [conduct books]. Finally, Laura Tate's article "The Culture of Literary *Bildung* in the Bourgeois Women's Movement in Imperial Germany" (2001) discusses how various women activists within the nineteenth-century German women's movement referred to major literary works of the *Weimarer Klassik* in order to define 'German womanhood'.

Compared to these publications, my project sheds new light on the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender in several ways, the first of which applies directly to my theoretical approach. This dissertation is the first to establish a triangular relationship between the concepts of *Bildung*, gender, and culture by incorporating all interpretations of *Bildung* into an analysis of texts by and about women in the nineteenth century. My main objective focuses on the idea of *Bildung* as a form in which individuals participate in culture and then questions this within the discourses of gender relations and historical context. By incorporating this three-sided relationship into the analysis of nineteenth-century texts, this dissertation practices a unique combination of late eighteenth-century philosophy, nineteenth-century cultural history, and twenty-first century Cultural Studies theory.

Although most narratives chosen for this project are known in the field of women's German-language literature, this project is the first to connect these narratives to multiple discourses of *Bildung*. In discussing the autobiographies of Fanny Lewald and Gabriele Reuter, for example, my analysis questions the parallelisms between a woman's real-life depiction of upbringing (*Erziehung*) and the female protagonist of a nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*. Moreover, this

dissertation looks at the idea of “abnormalcy” as the opposing realm of *Bildung* in two fictional novels by Gabriele Reuter. Finally, my thesis contributes to the trans- and interdisciplinary field of German Cultural Studies by focusing on representations of social class, mass politics/mass culture, society, and human subjectivity within a variety of literary and non-literary texts produced during this time, making the analysis of the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender as comprehensive as possible.<sup>5</sup>

The first chapter of the dissertation focuses on the contribution of this project to the interdisciplinary area of German Cultural Studies. Not only does the first chapter provide an overview of the theoretical paradigms of New Historicism and Gender Studies, but it also looks at the concept of *Bildung* in connection with Raymond Williams’s (1921-1988) definition of culture presented in his publication *Culture and Society* (1958, 1983). The second chapter titled “*Geschlechtscharakter* and Modernity: A Cultural-Historical Overview of the Interrelationship of *Bildung* and Gender” examines the concept of *Bildung* throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a particular concentration on its relationship to the concept of gender. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) sets the stage in our analysis of *Bildung* around the year 1800 as a key figure in defining the individual and social meaning of the philosophical term; in addition, he was a prominent voice in the eighteenth-century/early nineteenth-century debate on *Geschlechtscharakter*, which linked personality and individuality with gender. This leads to a chronological overview of the cultural interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender in the middle of the

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<sup>5</sup> See David F. Crew, “Who’s Afraid of Cultural Studies? Taking a “Cultural Turn” in History,” *A User’s Guide to German Cultural Studies*, eds. Scott Denham, Irene Kacandes, and Jonathan Petropoulos, (Ann Arbor 1997) 45-62. Crew indicates these five areas as important themes in which Cultural Studies and German history commonly overlap.

nineteenth-century, with a particular emphasis on the bourgeoisie as a newly emerging economic and cultural force. Finally, the discussion draws on a selection of women writers' perceptions of all definitional facets of *Bildung*, how *Bildung* concurrently played a role in their individual development as writers, as well as the role of *Bildung* during the nineteenth-century German bourgeois women's movement.

The focus on *Bildung* and gender shifts to the question of childhood and upbringing in the third chapter titled “*Wir sollten nicht so unselbständig erzogen werden*”: Fictional and Non-fictional Accounts of gendered *Erziehung*”. The discussion examines the role of *Erziehung* in determining a gendered “way of being” as represented in various kinds of texts. Two autobiographical works are compared in order to find personal accounts of growing up female in the German middle class environment: Fanny Lewald's three-volume narrative *Meine Lebensgeschichte* [My Life's Story] (1861-62) and Gabriele Reuter's publication *Vom Kinde zum Menschen* [From a Child to a Person] (1921). The discussion then turns to Gabriele Reuter's bestselling novel *Aus guter Familie: Leidensgeschichte eines Mädchens* (1895) [From a Good Family (1999)] in order to discuss how the protagonist's upbringing revolves around the “myth” of romanticized gender roles within the context of Wilhelmine “propriety”. Finally, a discussion of Hedwig Dohm's autobiographically inspired text *Schicksale einer Seele* [Fates of a Soul] (1899) concludes the chapter by focusing on the narrator's portrayal of upbringing as a *Nichterziehung* [non-upbringing]. The theoretical concept that links all four discussions together is formulated by Troppe, who claims that social reality ultimately generates the cultural practice of gender-specific *Erziehung*. (Troppe 85) Overall, this chapter asks to which extent the

reciprocal relationship of “shaping” and “being shaped” according to preconceived principles of gender eventually played a role in women’s awareness of femininity as a “way of being”.

The fourth chapter of this project, “The Cultural Norm and the Individual Self: Representations of Disparity in Women’s Ways of ‘Being’”, moves beyond the notion of *Bildung* as an outside influence and focuses instead on the inward turn of individual character and personality. By concentrating on the notion of the “self” as another form of *Bildung*, I include a discussion on representations of women’s self-reflection, self-identity, and self-consciousness as depicted in various literary and non-literary texts. As a theoretical point of departure, I use a statement by Judith Butler in her introduction to *Bodies that Matter* (1993), that “it is unclear that there can be an “I” or “we” who has not been submitted, subjected to gender” (7). This chapter sheds light on several female characters who recognize their understanding of “self” as something that contradicts the expectations of others. In addition, the discussion reveals how these characters recognize and question the discrepancies between the value of appearing as a *sich bildende Individualität* [self-educative character] and being or appearing “feminine”. This section returns to Fanny Lewald’s autobiography *Meine Lebensgeschichte* and continues with a discussion of Hedwig Dohm’s novella *Werde, die du bist* (1894) [Become Who You Are (2006)] and her autobiographical text *Schicksale einer Seele* [Fates of a Soul].

The fifth chapter of this project entitled ““Abnormal” Behavior and *Bildung*” connects the attributes of “healthy” and “unhealthy” to the idea of the “bourgeois women’s sickness” in nineteenth-century German society. Up to this point, several

discussions on the question of *Bildung* and gender revolved around the question of the cultural “norm”; this chapter expands on this concept by asking how the construction of “normal femininity” simultaneously created its paradox—“abnormal femininity”. What happens, for example, when an individual’s particular awareness of “self” is not equal to the established cultural norms? By revisiting Gabriele Reuter’s novel *Aus guter Familie*, the discussion focuses on the cultural problem of characterizing a gender-specific “abnormalcy” within the discourse of *Bildung*. In addition, the analysis of “abnormalcy” and the cultural “norm” incorporates a second bestselling novel by Gabriele Reuter titled *Ellen von der Weiden* (1900), and centers on the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender by questioning the suppression of the protagonist’s character in order to conform to the conventions of the urban *Bildungsbürgertum*.

The final chapter of this dissertation, “Als ob tiefe Bildung und Weiblichkeit entgegengesetzte Begriffe seien”: *Frauenstudium* and Autobiography” [as if serious education and femininity were contradicting terms] provides an overview of educational reform regarding women’s participation in German institutions of higher learning towards the end of the nineteenth century. Helene Lange’s texts *Die höhere Mädchenschule und ihre Bestimmung* [The Girls’ Secondary School and its Purpose] (1887) and *Frauenbildung* [Women’s Education] (1889) reveal that the most difficult task in acquiring the right for women’s higher education lay not in process of reform itself, but rather in the deeply embedded cultural construction of a woman’s “femininity”. This chapter shows not only how the question of women’s higher education in Germany confronted the apprehension of a national loss of “femininity”

in conjuncture with the idea of *Bildung*, but also acknowledges the variety of approaches and opinions concerning *how* to make these reforms. The discussion then turns to Franziska Tiburtius' autobiography *Erinnerungen einer Achtzigjährigen* [Memoirs of an Eighty-Year-Old] (1927) and Ricarda Huch's autobiographical narrative *Frühling in der Schweiz* [Springtime in Switzerland] (1938) in order to shed light on women's experiences at the University of Zürich in the 1880s. Despite their differences, both authors reveal how they, as female students, battled against the social stereotype of the "manly-woman" and ultimately disproved the scientific "confirmation" of women's intellectual inferiority.

Finally, a conclusion to the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender compares and contrasts ideas from the previous chapters. All women writers chosen for this project offer a culturally significant and individually unique perspective regarding the problematic question of gender as a learned concept through the various definitions of *Bildung*. Although the outline above focuses mostly on women's literary texts, a large variety of non-literary texts support the arguments posed in each chapter. While Anton Kaes writes "although the present-day reader can never exactly understand a cultural history to its fullest extent",<sup>6</sup> this project reveals that one may achieve a stronger and more extensive understanding of a particular cultural period by juxtaposing a large variety of texts produced during the same time.

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<sup>6</sup> Kaes states that, "*wie es eigentlich gewesen* can never be realized; [...] the past can never be completely recovered "as it really was" because what we consider the past is always constituted by the interests of the present" (211).

## Chapter 1

### **Culture as an Object of Study: Gender Studies, New Historicism, and *Bildung* as Culture**

#### *Cultural Studies: What is it?*

Cultural Studies is not a discipline, but rather an interdisciplinary area of scholarship that promotes a new way of engaging in the concept of culture, especially within the academic fields of the humanities and social sciences. The earliest program of Cultural Studies, the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies, was founded at the University of Birmingham in Britain in 1964. The idea of Cultural Studies advanced in the American university setting in the early 1980s, especially within the academic disciplines of anthropology, history, women’s studies, sociology, and literary studies. The Cultural Studies we have come to know in the American university setting in the twenty-first century is less Marxist in nature compared to the earliest practices in Britain, but it continues to offer a wide range of critically introspective theories of approach in order to understand the common or everyday culture of a particular historical period. Some discourses of inquiry into a particular culture may include questions on gender, identity, social class, modes of dress, language, location, sexuality, technology—to name a few.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Baldwin et al. states “while there is little doubt that [C]ultural [S]tudies is coming to be widely recognized as an important and distinctive field of study, it does seem to encompass a potentially enormous area. This is because the term “culture” has a complex history and range of usages, and thus it has provided a legitimate focus of inquiry for several academic disciplines” (3). Most criticism on

One can hardly ignore the impact of Cultural Studies in the academic fields of the humanities and social sciences. In order to understand its significance in the world of modern literature, for example, one needs only to review the panels and papers presented at the latest convention for the Modern Language Association; or, in addition, one may recognize that almost all academic positions in the fields of foreign language and literature require knowledge in Cultural Studies. But what is it exactly that makes Cultural Studies something *new* in the world of literary scholarship in particular? According to Leitch, what mostly distinguishes Cultural Studies from the other approaches to literary studies are the “new and different objects of study and modes of inquiry” which concurrently oppose “the belletrism and formalism characteristic of Anglophone academic literary studies during the cold war period” (no page). *Werkimmanent*, or Yale New Criticism, as well as approaches that focused on aestheticism, anti-historicism and biography filled the world of reading literature in the twentieth century. In contrast, Cultural Studies focuses on avoiding those methods that view literature as a self-contained entity.

Important to mention is the fact that Cultural Studies continues to open up interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary doors beyond the autonomous discipline of literary studies by looking beyond the traditional canon as an established and indisputable body. By encouraging the use of traditionally marginalized, less known, or even “forgotten” texts, it calls the original establishment of the literary canon into

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Cultural Studies as the dominate methodology for literary studies, as far as I understand, comes from the potential “threat” of disorganization and a depreciation of traditional aesthetic value. As we read in the following pages, a depreciation of traditional literary genres is certainly not the case, but rather the opposite: Cultural Studies allows us to use fresh perspectives on reading literature and how we can understand these works as meaningful representations of a particular culture.

question. In addition, Cultural Studies promotes the use of non-literary texts in its search for cultural meaning: these may include film, radio productions, photographs, paintings, advertisements and commercials as well as the objects of urban and rural landscapes like architecture, monuments and maps. Even though Cultural Studies encourages the use of non-literary and less known, even marginalized texts, it is important to emphasize that it “is not a *dismissal* of literature, but, rather, a rethinking of its use” (Bammer 32). Finally, “the definition of what counts as worthy of being studied (text) has surely been shifted by Cultural Studies, but the value of the careful analysis has not” (Kacandes, *German* 9).

The combined efforts of questioning of the structure of power <sup>8</sup> and encouraging interdisciplinarity has made Cultural Studies the most popular paradigm for German Studies (the study of things German) in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> By adapting the modes of Cultural Studies, German Studies, according to Bammer, pursues the question of “what *German* means: who and what is German? how so and why?” (33). Although German Studies and German Cultural Studies act as a contemporary answer to the traditional discipline of *Germanistik*, the traditional approaches which focus on aesthetics and interpretation still remain the prevalent school of thought in German-language literature at many European universities today, especially in Germany.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Bachmann-Medick 215. “Cultural Studies stehen für eine kritische Analyse der Macht von Texten und von symbolischer Repräsentation [Cultural Studies stands for a critical analysis of power from texts and from symbolic representation].

<sup>9</sup> See Irene Kacandes, “From Deconstruction to Postcolonialism, 1980 to Present”, in *German Studies in the United States: A Historical Handbook*, ed. Peter Uwe Hohendahl (New York, 2003) 243-255, for an accurate and comprehensive explanation on how “Germanics” has shifted to “German Studies” in the last twenty years. Here 249.

<sup>10</sup> In his introduction to *German Studies in the United States: A Historical Handbook*, Hohendahl writes that this shift of focus towards German Cultural Studies is often referred to as an *Americanization* of the field. He continues, “the German profession in this country has been drawn

The once traditional discipline of *Germanistik* in the United States, however, has expanded to include paradigms of thought encouraged by Cultural Studies including Post-Colonialism, Multiculturalism, Globalization Studies, Feminism/Gender Studies, and New Historicism. The following section provides a description of the last two paradigms, as they are the dual points of approach used in this dissertation.

### *Gender Studies*

Gender Studies involves reading both literary and non-literary texts through the lens of gender in order to recognize representations of an engendered cultural reality within various social discourses. The idea of Gender Studies is inconceivable without the establishment of Women's Studies in the 1970s in the American academic setting. Renate Hof, one of the leading scholars of gender theory in the German language, describes the transition of focus from Women's Studies to Gender Studies:

Während die Frauenforschung anfangs versuchte, bisher vernachlässigtes Wissen von und über Frauen in einzelne Wissenschaftsbereiche zu integrieren, richtete sich die Aufmerksamkeit der Geschlechterforschung in immer stärkerem Maß darauf, das vormals ausgeschlossene Wissen in einen umfassenderen Kontext zu stellen. Es ging nicht länger darum, traditionelle Konzepte und Bildung von "Weiblichkeit" und "Männlichkeit" zu revidieren, sondern diese Konzepte als Teil eines gesellschaftlichen Ordnungsmusters zu

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more into this new orbit than has German *Germanistik*, which retains a stronger sense of a national project (of *Bildung*)" (15). See pages 15-18 for an explanation of the differences between American German programs and German *Germanistik*.

erkennen und mit anderen sozialen und kulturellen Organisationsformen in Verbindung zu setzen. (Hof, *Kulturwissenschaften* 331)

[While Women's Studies tried at the beginning to integrate knowledge from and about women up until then into a single discipline, the concentration of Gender Studies focused on placing the previously excluded knowledge in a more comprehensive context with increasingly stronger measures. It was no longer about examining traditional concepts and depictions of "femininity" and "masculinity", but rather to recognize these concepts as part of a social pattern of organization and to connect this with other social and cultural forms of organization.]

Hof continues that the objective of differentiating between Gender and Women's Studies is not to define specific sets of unrelated objectives, but rather to encourage a shift of concentration: in this case, the initial studies which focused predominantly on women's living and working conditions becomes analyzed in a broader socio-political context. (331-332) In addition, Hof provides three valuable questions to ask when approaching a literary or non-literary text through the lens of gender. These questions reflect the gradual shift of concentration mentioned above.<sup>11</sup>

1. Welche Rollen spielen historisch wechselnde Vorstellungen von Weiblichkeit und Männlichkeit etwa im Rahmen der Geschichtsschreibung, die ein Verständnis unserer Vergangenheit ermöglicht?

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<sup>11</sup> See Hof, *Kulturwissenschaften* 332.

[Which roles do the historically changing conceptions of femininity and masculinity play within the framework of historiography, for example, which gives us an understanding of our past?]

2. Aufgrund welcher Selektionskriterien werden bestimmte Fakten in bedeutende und weniger bedeutende historische Ereignisse eingeteilt und damit gleichzeitig ein kulturelles Gedächtnis geschaffen?

[By means of which criteria does one categorize certain facts as meaningful and less meaningful historical events? In addition, how does this categorization simultaneously establish cultural memory?]

3. Was wird als wissenswert und “forschungswürdig” angesehen?

[What can be considered worth knowing and valuable for research?]

Finally, Hof bridges the gap between gender theory and an overall analysis of culture by claiming that gender relationships are representational of a greater cultural system of rules. (16) In a similar statement, Stephan and von Braun also write that it is important clarify the laws that determine gender relationships, which exist in the core of every community. (11)

The following project utilizes the ideas mentioned above by searching for depictions of gender as an organizing principle within the greater discourses of culture and society. Therefore, instead of approaching the selected texts with the objective of women’s “victimization”, my methodology follows the advice of Lawrence Grossberg and moves “beyond models of oppression [...] and towards a model of articulation as ‘transformative practice’” (88). This methodology does not look to pass over any historical fact which saw women’s position in society as lower

than a man's,<sup>12</sup> nor does it argue in any way against the accomplishments of Women's Studies and theories of feminism which provided us with our knowledge today about women's experience in historical contexts. Rather, this project aims to recognize gender relationships and the meaning of "femininity" and "masculinity" alongside an additional cultural form of organization—in this case, *Bildung*. While it is true that a search for the "female experience" is not entirely new in German Cultural Studies in the twenty-first century, this project nevertheless offers a new perspective on women's experience in correspondence with the culturally significant concept of *Bildung* and therefore forms a three-sided cultural discourse of analysis.<sup>13</sup>

### *New Historicism*

New Historicism is a methodology coined by Stephan Greenblatt in 1982 when characterizing his historically oriented essays on the English Renaissance. (Kaes 210) Sometimes referred to as "cultural poetics", the main objective of New Historicism is not merely to identify certain cultural-historical particulars within a text, but rather to ask *why* they exist in the first place. The idea of New Historicism falls under the umbrella concept of Cultural Studies for various reasons, primarily for its movement

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<sup>12</sup> For example, the *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* [Civil Legal Code], passed through legislature in 1900, granted married women no say over their children, property rights, or any family related finances. (Jeffries 18)

<sup>13</sup> Ruth Mayer writes: "In der Auseinandersetzung mit privaten Aufzeichnungen von Frauen oder informellen Dokumenten weiblichen Lebens eröffnet vielleicht nicht eine völlig neue Geschichte, aber doch die zwingende Notwendigkeit, kanonisierte 'Ereignisse' und historische Epochen unter dem Gesichtspunkt Gender in ihrer Relevanz und Verbindlichkeit zu überprüfen." (Mayer 29) [In the examination of private documents from women or informal documents of female life, perhaps a new history does not exactly open up, but on the contrary, the imperative necessity to reassess canonized "events" and historical eras from the viewpoint of gender, as well as its relevance and accountability.

away from anti-historicist literary theories like *Werkimmanent*. In addition, New Historicism does not aim to offer clear-cut definitions of a particular cultural history, but rather opens up new realms of debate by asking questions never posed before:

Der New Historicist wundert sich. Er stellt die oft zunächst banal anmutende Frage, warum überhaupt etwas in einem Text steht, in einer Anekdote überliefert oder auf einem Bild zu sehen ist und nicht vielmehr nicht oder anders. (Baßler 133)

[The new historicist wonders. He asks questions that often appear trivial—why something exists in a text at all, is passed down in an anecdote, is apparent in a picture—and nothing more than that.]

In addition to focusing on the *how* and *why* of a literary text, New Historicism places a text in the context of another text from the same time period in order to intensify a particular cultural understanding. However, as mentioned before, these texts do not have to be works from the traditional literary canon or works traditionally considered “high” or “master” forms of cultural production, but instead, they can come from all possible areas of culture, especially from the types of productions once considered “low”, “common”, or “mass” (i.e. the “mass” press). It reflects the notion that “literary and non-literary texts circulate inseparably” (Veeseer 16). In “return[ing] to the older form of history as narrative as a way of resisting grand narratives of modern(ist) history”, Baldwin et al. claim, the main interest of New Historicist writers is “directed towards the ways in which history is represented as narrative and how different narratives relate to one another” (210). Louis Montrose articulates the relationship of text and context in an idea he calls the *historicity of text* and the

*textuality of history* in his essay “The Poetics and Politics of Culture” (1986). He not only calls attention to the use of text as a cultural production of a particular history, but also questions how a history was documented in the first place (i.e. from which individual or collective perspective). As a result, the present day reader must decipher a historical text with these relationships in mind.

The search for the “why” in New Historicism focuses on the origins of purpose in a particular cultural production, and one approach for doing so is by performing a close reading, which places a great emphasis on the smallest of details within a text that could point towards an interpretation of culture. Moreover, by paying attention to the smallest detail and minutest symbol as representational of the culture in which the text was produced, we are in effect engaging in the search for the “thick description”. Clifford Geertz’ concept of the “thick description” involves the collection and interpretation of cultural details, [and the] close examination of social behavior that serves as the means for finding the codes by which people govern their choices and actions (Dobie 171).

Although New Historicism has advantageously opened up many new doors in literary studies, some questions arise which criticize the casualness of this approach. Baßler provides two arguments against New Historicism that show this pattern.<sup>14</sup> The first argument against New Historicism draws attention to the danger of granting *too much* of a cultural significance to the minutest of examples derived from a comparison of texts in order to grab the interest of the reader. The second dispute expands on the idea of misconception by asking how intertextual connections exist in

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<sup>14</sup> See Baßler 146-147

the first place without hermeneutics. In other words, how can an author's influence on his or her own text not be included in the cultural analysis?

In response to the first argument against New Historicism, I believe that careful research prevents the danger of exaggeration. In addition, I also feel that paying attention to the minutest of details and utilizing them in a cultural analysis can do no harm: why not take a chance in pointing out the smallest of details derived from a text-text comparison? If one discovers new points of comparability, then that alone should provide one with a valid reason to analyze a particular topic and bring it to the attention of an interested audience. In the following chapters, for example, all selected material corresponds easily to the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender and therefore offers an unquestionable representation of the way of life in nineteenth-century Germany. The second problem mentioned above does present an important question; however, New Historicism does not call for a complete dismissal of the author and his or her influence on a text, but instead, it encourages the expansion beyond hermeneutics as a more inclusive discourse and into the cultural realm in which the author lived and wrote. This leads me to ask at which point hermeneutics ends and New Historicism begins, and the answer to this question, in my opinion, does not exist; on the contrary, the two methodologies have a reciprocal relationship that draws qualities from both angles. The following chapters demonstrate this argument by providing discussions on autobiographical accounts as well as a variety of other texts produced during the same time. The influences of a woman writer's life on her texts are especially apparent in chapter four of the dissertation, which revolves around the question of gendered subjectivity.

Revisiting Louis Montrose's notion of the *historicity of text* and the *textuality of history*, this project includes the search for representations of bourgeois culture in the mass press by including a variety of articles and illustrations from the nineteenth-century family journal *Die Gartenlaube* [The Arbor] (1853-1944). The first journal of its kind to “[target] the entire German *Volk* as its ideal readership”, *Die Gartenlaube* provides irrefutable representations of bourgeois *Alltagskultur*, or everyday culture, by presenting texts and images that reveal ideas of national and regional identity, the scientific advancements of modernizing society, and an idealization of the domestic side of life (Belgum xi). The literary and non-literary texts taken from *Die Gartenlaube* are specifically representational of bourgeois *Alltagskultur*, as they reveal a documented history of ideas from the bourgeois point of view in the nineteenth century. In addition, *Die Gartenlaube* belongs to a specific genre—*die Familienzeitschrift* [the family magazine]—which communicated the bourgeois principles of “gute Sitten”, or morality (Barth 129); because of this aspect, my project focuses on *Die Gartenlaube* as a form of bourgeois *Bildung* for the masses that encouraged a particular way of “being”. When placed parallel to selected literary narratives, the examples taken from *Die Gartenlaube* strengthen the intertextual connection and open up new realms of debate.

In conclusion of this section, there is a point made by Gallagher and Greenblatt that draws attention to the relationship between gender and New Historicism. They write, “[W]omen’s [S]tudies, and the feminism that motivated its formation, has served as an important, if little acknowledged, model for [N]ew [H]istoricism in that it has inspired its adherents to identify new objects for study,

bring those objects into the light of critical attention, and insist upon their legitimate place in the curriculum” (11).<sup>15</sup> Three of the five women writers included in this project have reentered the field of German literary studies as a result of their rediscovery by feminist literary scholars in the late twentieth century: Fanny Lewald, Hedwig Dohm, and Gabriele Reuter.<sup>16</sup> Although the popularity of their works have reached a status commensurate of a German women’s literature “canon”, their texts nonetheless continue to offer a multitude of new possibilities of research. My project proves this by implementing the methodologies of New Historicism and Gender Studies in tandem with the search for the cultural significance of *Bildung*.

### *Adding “Bildung” to the Question of Culture*

Taking culture as an object of study profoundly affects how we think about and value “text” and “context” (Kacandes, *German* 8). Because “culture” is by no means an easy word to define, it is necessary to first identify the forms and meanings of the

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<sup>15</sup> The association of New Historicism and Feminism/Gender Studies continues to be a debatable subject. Recent texts which focus on their relationship include Jennifer Fleissner, “Is Feminism a Historicism?” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* 21.1 (Spring 2002): 45-66; Sara Webster Goodwin, “Cross Fire and Collaboration among Comparative Literature, Feminism, and the New Historicism,” *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature*, ed. Margaret R. Higonnet (Ithaca, 1994): 247-266; Sara Lennox, “Feminism and New Historicism,” *Monatshefte* 84.2 (Summer 1992): 159-170; Sandra Bermann, “*Feminism* and the *New History*,” ed. Marie Elena de Valdés and Margaret R. Higonnet, *New Visions of Creation: Feminist Innovations in Literary Theory* (Tokyo: 1993): 151-158; and Wai-Chee Dimock, “Feminism, New Historicism, and the Reader,” *American Literature* 63.4 (Dec 1991): 601-622.

<sup>16</sup> Beginning in the 1970s in the American university setting, feminist literary scholars aimed to rediscover works of literature from the past that had been “forgotten” throughout the progression of the twentieth century. The reemergence of works by women writers, once highly acknowledged and influential works during the time in which they were produced, called the established literary canon of “high literature” into question by declaring their cultural richness, aesthetic value, and intellectual worth. Since then, literature produced by women continues to hold a strong presence in the field of contemporary literary studies.

term culture used in this dissertation. In addition, the idea of culture in this project cannot only reflect a twenty-first century understanding of the word, but must also contain a definition respective of the historical context in which it is used as an object of study. Raymond Williams, one of the founding fathers of Cultural Studies in Britain, outlines four definitions of culture that emerged in nineteenth-century European discourse in his highly recognized publication *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958/1983).<sup>17</sup>

- 1.) a general state of habit of the mind, having close relations with the idea of human perfection
- 2.) the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole
- 3.) the general body of the arts
- 4.) a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual

Williams continues to state that “where culture meant a state of habit of the mind, or the body of intellectual and moral activities, it means now, also, a whole way of life” (xviii).

When placing the concept of *Bildung* parallel to the description of culture mentioned above, it is impossible to ignore their resemblances. Does *Bildung* not also portray a level of intellectual and spiritual insight? In linking *Bildung* to the idea of humankind’s potential of perfection, does one not immediately think of how religiosity, intellectuality, and spiritual insight played a role in the writings of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—especially in regards to their texts that focused on the betterment of society? In

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<sup>17</sup> See Williams xvi

addition, the idea of *Bildung* as a process of self-cultivation corresponds to the idea that one familiarizes oneself with the fine arts. Even in the twenty-first century, institutions like the theater, opera house, and art museum continue to provide citizens with the opportunity to experience productions of “refined culture”. (c.f. Baldwin et al. 4)

Although it is logical to expound on the idea of *Bildung* as congruent to the idea of culture—and vice versa—there is a difference between the German concepts of *Bildung* and *Kultur* that require attention. As stated in the introduction of the dissertation, Manfred Fuhrmann explains this difference by stating: “Bildung gilt als die Form, in der die Individuen an der Kultur teilnehmen” [*Bildung* is seen as the form in which individuals participate in culture] (36). Terry Eagleton restates this differentiation by formalizing *Bildung* as an existing culture’s “ethical pedagogy” (6-7). The following chapters attempt to address the idea of *Bildung* as something that fits into the larger concept of nineteenth-century German culture.

## Chapter 2

### *Geschlechtscharakter* and Modernity: An Overview of the Interrelationship of *Bildung* and Gender

The etymology of *Bildung* dates back to the Middle Ages, where it originally signified “both the external form or appearance of an individual (*Gestalt*)” and “the process of giving form (*Gestaltung*)” (Kontje, *Bildungsroman* 1). In this context, the human soul reflected the work and will of God, and in return, humankind would strive to achieve likeness to God through piety, morality, and by living according to the laws of religious discipline. Epic literature frequently portrays a character’s aspiration towards *Gottesebenbildlichkeit* [likeness to God] and, in being *höfisch* [courtly/noble], this character portrayed a type of behavior that represents his or her “geistige und körperliche Bildung” [spiritual and physical creation] (Lutz 24). *Bildung*, in theoretical medieval context, is not a process, but rather a phenomenon made possible by the omnipotence of the highest power, revealed especially through the human practices of virtue and faith. In medieval context, *Bildung*—in the sense of striving towards achieving God’s favor—links itself to the concept of education in the sense that literacy, education, and cultivation took place in the church. As Fuhrmann explains, the church was by far the most important establishment for the continuation of culture, for the art of reading and writing, as well as for the exposure to documents, letters and books.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Manfred Fuhrmann, *Bildung: Europas kulturelle Identität* (Stuttgart, 2002) 13.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, European society witnessed the Enlightenment, a period of intellectual transition characterized by the dawn of secularization and progressive withdrawal from traditional modes of theosophical belief. Although the concept of *Bildung* began to shift during the wake of humanistic thought and the Protestant Reformation prior to the eighteenth century, it was during the middle phase of the German Enlightenment, approximately 1740-1780, that the definition of *Bildung* changed from a God-given circumstance to a more *individual* notion of human possibility.<sup>19</sup> *Bildung*, in eighteenth-century philosophical discourse, coincides with rationality and adds momentum to the notion that human beings could think consciously and independently; the ability to do so would not only lessen the feudal influence of the state upon the individual citizen, but also separate the intellectual elite from the “irrational” (or “uncivilized”) masses. In 1765, Moses Mendelsohn emphasized the words *Aufklärung* [Enlightenment], *Kultur*, and *Bildung* as new arrivals in the German language,<sup>20</sup> and almost two decades later Immanuel Kant succeeded in connecting the importance of rationality and human condition in his famous statement on *Aufklärung*, providing the cultural foundation of the term *Bildung* towards the end of the eighteenth century:

Aufklärung sei der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen!”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> According to Manfred Fuhrmann, Martin Luther first used the term *Bildung* as an education concept during the period of the Reformation when calling for the establishment of schools outside the domains of the Catholic church. This is found in Luther’s correspondence *An die Bürgermeister und Ratsherren aller Städte in deutschen Landen, dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen* (1524). See Fuhrmann 22.

<sup>20</sup> See Nordenbo 342.

<sup>21</sup> Immanuel Kant, “Was ist Aufklärung?”, published December 1784 in the Berlinische Monatsschrift.

[Enlightenment is humankind's emergence from its self-imposed immaturity.

Have the courage to use your own intellect!]

Especially within German-speaking intellectual circles, *Bildung* became the medium for human potential as postulated by philosophical thinkers of the time: it described a process of self-cultivation that would lead towards the harmonious combination of spirit, mind, and social responsibility. By transforming individuals to reach their ultimate state of harmony between the human “self” and their natural environment, one also believed that *Bildung* could transform society into a utopia based on non-interventionism, as portrayed, for example, in Friedrich Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe* [Aesthetic Letters] (1793/95) and the idealized *Turmgesellschaft* [Tower Society] in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* [Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship] (1795/96).

Parallel to the emergence of the secular “self”, the Enlightenment concept of *Bildung* corresponds with transitions in social class structure. The middle class—particularly the *intellectual* middle-class—was beginning to question the feudal belief of aristocratic birthright to rule, and therefore used rationality as a gauge in determining individual and social hierarchy as part of their claim for sovereignty. In the case of Prussia, for example, freethinking *Bürgers* [citizens] could begin to distance themselves from the dominating hand of the absolutist Frederician state through the practice of self-cultivation, a concept that focused on the development of character, or in other words, the individual as a sovereign self rather than a controlled citizen of a particular state. Politically, the idea of self-cultivation also offered an alternative to the tumultuous citizen-driven revolutions in neighboring France and the

American colonies: it defined a more intellectual form of revolution without a cause for complete turmoil.

As stated above, the notion of *Bildung* during the period of the Enlightenment and Weimar Classicism offered a new method to “forge the link between the person and his culture” (Løvlie 467). Although Goethe and Schiller are known for their leading role amongst intellectuals in the city of Weimar—the cultural hub of Weimar Classicism—it was Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1853) who turned theory into a social practice.<sup>22</sup> Humboldt’s philosophy on *Bildung* stems from the notion of “self-cultivation”, as he believed that “each individual has a unique configuration of powers, [and] if each person were able to participate in the fullest possible process of *Bildung* the result would be just so many different, highly individuated persons” (Geuss 38). In other words, the perfection of character exists in everyone, but that person is responsible for awakening it. Humboldt believed energy to be a source of “active virtue and the necessary prerequisite for a higher and more versatile development” (Hohendahl, *Building* 256). Moreover, it is important to recognize both the inner and civic conceptions of Humboldt’s philosophies on *Bildung*. The first objective—the inner conception of *Bildung*—focuses on an individual’s self-cultivation by virtue of unmediated development, the encouragement of developing one’s instinctive character, and practicing self-control along the guidelines of gentlemanly or ladylike behavior. In the latter concept of *Bildung*—the civic form—we are focusing on “social intercourse”, or how “one develops through the voluntary

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<sup>22</sup> According to Schubert, letter correspondence between Friedrich Schiller and Wilhelm von Humboldt reveals that the two intellectuals worked closely together and even inspired one another in their philosophical writings. See Johannes Schubert, *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Universalität* (Jena, 1907), pages 6-11.

interchange of one's individuality with that of others" (Sorkin 58-59). The key word in this second form of *Bildung* is sociability.

Humboldt believed in the importance of self-cultivation even before serving his sixteen-month service as Head of the Section for Religion and Education in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior from February 1809 to June 1810. His goal was to create an "allgemeine Menschenbildung" [general education] on all learning levels, beginning with the newly formed *Volksschule* [common elementary school] and continuing up to the university (Spranger 14). The reform aimed at replacing the outmoded method of instruction—imitation—with activity, rationality, and *Innerlichkeit*, or inwardness by means of self-reflection.<sup>23</sup> Influenced by a similar movement in post-revolutionary France, Humboldt and other leading German idealists aimed at diminishing the role of the state in education.<sup>24</sup> The establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810 (today the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin) successfully provided an "institutional setting in which the free interchange of varied personalities [could] occur" (Sorkin 61), and even more importantly, without imposition from the state.<sup>25</sup> Humboldt's "University of Culture" (as opposed to the traditional "university of the state") provides the foundation of the American university setting as we know today, which "draws its legitimacy from culture, which names the synthesis of teaching and research, process and product, history and

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<sup>23</sup> See Carola Groppe, Die Macht der Bildung: das deutsche Bürgertum und der George-Kreis 1890-1933, (Köln, 1997) 52-53.

<sup>24</sup> See Spranger 7.

<sup>25</sup> Sorkin questions whether both of Humboldt's notions of *Bildung* were actually implemented in society, especially when the "Prussian state had appropriated *Bildung* into its official pedagogy and demoted it from an autonomous ideal to an instrumental role", thus shifting the original meaning all together. (64)

reason, philology and criticism, historical scholarship and aesthetic experience, the institution and the individual” (Readings 65). Any interruptions or demands from external influences would prevent an individual from achieving his or her individual process of self-formation.<sup>26</sup>

### “*Bildung*” and Gender around 1800

I would like to take this notion of “external influence” and connect it to the analysis of gender and its interrelationship with the concept of *Bildung*. The first term that comes to mind in this case is *Geschlechtscharakter*, a term that presumes an individual’s character based on his or her gender. Like *Bildung*, one must view this term within its proper historical context in order to understand its significance in everyday culture. Although gender played a role in defining cultural organization since the time of antiquity, a cultural change occurred shortly prior to the year 1800 in regards to the relationship between man and woman within European context. Simonis explains this change by stating that during the middle and late phases of the Enlightenment, humankind’s discovery of “amour passionné” redefined the relationship between a man and woman (27). Simonis continues to claim these new ways in which men and women began to understand their relationships created a consequential “dogmatische Formulierung” [dogmatic formulation], which is what we ultimately find in the construction of the *Geschlechtscharakter* – an assertion without proof based on preconceived definitions of gender (27). The concept of

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<sup>26</sup> See Nordenbo 345. In addition, Spranger explains the complicated shift from *Staatsfeindschaft* to *Staatsidealismus* between the years 1792-1817 and thereby describes the difference between the objection of a state-oriented education and the positively argued movement towards *Nationalerziehung*, or national upbringing. See especially pages 1-17 for more on this topic.

*Geschlechtscharakter* not only pertains to European society, as seen in the writings of influential intellectuals like Wilhelm von Humboldt, Immanuel Kant, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (to name only a few), but it also reveals a broader cultural trend that was beginning to scrutinize and bring meaning to the differences between human “races”, languages, and cultures.<sup>27</sup>

The concept of *Geschlechtscharakter* played a major role in acting as the “external force” which contributed to the interruption of an individual’s exposure to all concepts of *Bildung*. As an autonomous theory, *Bildung* is not partial to gender; however, it is impossible to discuss the concept of *Bildung* as a social mechanism in historical context without adding gender to the question. In addition, it is impossible to consider the idea of gender around the turn of the nineteenth-century without referring to the construction of *Geschlechtscharakter*. The purpose behind the meaning of *Geschlechtscharakter* was to promote the belief that in addition to biological differences between men and women, there were also characteristics of behavior and personality that not only defined the difference between masculinity and femininity, but also provided a two-sided balance in creating social harmony. As we see in the following statement by Humboldt, universal human condition was not individual, but rather a harmonized balance created by the polarity of male and female: “Niemand ist reiner Mensch, sondern er ist Mann oder ist Weib” [No one is

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<sup>27</sup> One can find this, for example, in several writings by the world traveler Georg Forster (1754-1794), who sailed with his father on Captain James Cook’s second voyage to the South Pacific. In his essays “Noch etwas über die Menschenrasse” [Something More on the Race of People] (1786), “Neuholland und die britische Colonie in Botany Bay” [New Holland and the British Colony in Botany Bay] (1787), and “Über Leckereyen” [About Delectables] (1789), Forster questions the nature and culture of non-European peoples and discusses the differences of customs, rituals, appearances and languages. Forster’s ideas influenced the world traveler Alexander von Humboldt, the younger brother of Wilhelm von Humboldt.

purely human, but rather, human beings are either man or woman].<sup>28</sup> Humboldt restates his idealization of harmony between what is male and female in his essay *Über den Geschlechtsunterschied und dessen Einfluß auf die organische Natur* [On Gender Differences and their Impact on Organic Nature] (1794) by claiming one must live according to the “appropriate path” ordained by ones gender.<sup>29</sup> In this case, Humboldt complements the natural symmetry of both genders, and emphasizes the differences in the “masculine” and “feminine” in conjuncture with *Endzweck*, or one’s ultimate purpose in life. It is nature, he writes, that provides its sons with “masculinity”—characterized by power, fire, energy, and liveliness—and its daughters with “femininity”—which represents composure, warmth, and intimacy. (Humboldt 294)

Looking at these two objectives—first Humboldt’s concept of *Bildung* and second his emphasis on *Geschlechtscharakter*—one can easily recognize that a woman’s *Endzweck* or ultimate purpose in life eventually limited her chances of acquiring a civic form of *Bildung* commensurate with that of men. Todd Kontje reflects this idea in stating “by equating women with passivity and nature”, many of the Weimar Classicists “deny women any chance of participating in the process of *Bildung*” (*Bildungsroman* 7).<sup>30</sup> This idea leads one to ask that if preconceived

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<sup>28</sup> This is quoted in Eduard Spranger, Wilhelm von Humboldt und die Reform des Bildungswesens, (Tübingen 1960), 46.

<sup>29</sup> Humboldt, Werke in fünf Bänden (Stuttgart, 1960) 268.

<sup>30</sup> Theodor Gottfried von Hippel, for example, published an essay in defense of women’s access to an education at the same level of men’s in the year 1792 titled “Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber” [On the Bourgeois/Civil Improvement of Women], and based his argument on the enlightenment concept of civic duty. He argued against the contemporary construction of *Geschlechtscharakter* as a means for limiting their access to education and occupation outside of the home. See William Rasch, “Mensch, Bürger, Weib: Gender and the Limitations of Late 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Neohumanist Discourse,” The German Quarterly, vol. 66, no.1 (Winter 1993), 20-21.

notions of a woman's *Endzweck* ultimately limited her chances of obtaining a civic form of *Bildung* comparable to a man's, was it still possible for a woman to achieve an equivalent inner form of *Bildung*? Furthermore, did women succeed in creating new outlets of civic *Bildung* than those commonly appropriated by and for men?

As revealed in various literary genres as well as newly emerging social spaces throughout the period of the Enlightenment and into the early years of the nineteenth century, women were finding new ways to pursue, question, and convey both the inner and civic definitions of *Bildung*. Carola Groppe shows, for example, how *Bildung* and women's literary production—or more specifically, *Poesie* [poetry]—interconnect during this time. She states, “die Poesie besitzt daher die Kraft, als Bildungsinhalt zur Ermittlung des Wahren zu verhelfen (53) [henceforth, poetry possesses the power to leverage the contents of *Bildung* in the evaluation of truth]. In addition to poetry, the cultural phenomenon of letter correspondence emerged during this time as a new means of intellectual and social participation between men and women. Especially befitting women's private reality, the letter allowed communication to occur within the domestic sphere. Although excluded from the public and professional spheres, aristocratic and bourgeois women could achieve a new kind of *Bildung* as well as a particular level of intellectual independence within the privacy of their own home. (Simonis 27) The reading and writing of letters during the turn of nineteenth-century was nothing insignificant, but in contrast, a new type of daily culture that reflected an establishment of intellectual exchange, inward reflection, and intimate communication. Although letter correspondence was

practically the only form of written intellectual exchange allotted to women around the year 1800,<sup>31</sup> exceptions did take place, as seen below.

This new category of communication marked its place in the everyday culture of the aristocratic and bourgeois classes, and was even included in the formation of a new literary genre, the epistolary novel or *Briefroman*. J.W. Goethe's epistolary novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* [The Sufferings of Young Werther] (1774) created a cultural stir in the lives of mostly young bourgeois and aristocratic men, but it was the woman writer Sophie von La Roche (1730-1807) who truly broke tradition three years earlier with her epistolary novel *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* [The History of Miss Sternheim] (1771) by creating both a new type of female character as well as a place in the literary world for women's fiction. (Becker-Cantarino 288) The novel portrays "female socialization, interpersonal relationships, and friendships as self-realization and as adjustment strategies within the constraints of patriarchy" of eighteenth-century society (Becker-Cantarino 291). Although other authors during this period also engaged in portraying the lives of fictional female protagonists,<sup>32</sup> La Roche eventually established acknowledgement as the "author of what was called the first women's novel in Germany" (Boetcher Joeres 107).

Apart from the letter, another form of civic *Bildung* available to women was the salon, a social space that describes a regular gathering of distinguished guests in the homes of mostly upper-bourgeois families. Influenced by the salons in France,

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<sup>31</sup> See Reinhard M. G. Nickisch, "Briefkultur: Entwicklung und sozialgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Frauenbriefes im 18. Jahrhundert," *Deutsche Literatur von Frauen*, ed. Gisela Brinker-Gabler, vol. 1 (Munich, 1988) 408.

<sup>32</sup> Hans-Joachim Maier compares La Roche's novel with Christian F. Gellert's *Das Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G\*\*\** in his 2001 publication *Zwischen Bestimmung und Autonomie: Erziehung, Bildung und Liebe im Frauenroman des 18. Jahrhunderts*.

this new meeting place of German society flourished especially in the homes of Jewish families. The cities of Weimar, Jena, and especially Berlin hosted the most reputable salons in German society known today. The goal of the salon was to create an atmosphere of “Geistesverwandtschaft” [congeniality] instead of “Standeszugehörigkeit” [class affiliation], where “[die] Vermischung von adliger und bürgerlicher Kultur zur geistigen Emanzipation der Frauen [führte]” [the combination of noble and bourgeois culture led to an intellectual emancipation for women] (Scholtz 73). Henriette Herz (1764-1847) and Rahel Levin Varnhagen (1771-1833) both describe the intellectual and tolerant atmosphere of their salons in their writings, but it was especially Varnhagen who more fervently thematized the “dual condition of privilege and stigma” as both Jew and woman in a Gentile and patriarchal society (Tewarson 470). Interestingly, coming back to Wilhelm von Humboldt, it was Henriette Herz who first influenced Humboldt to distinguish “general culture from useful knowledge”, as Humboldt frequented the Herz household to attend lectures held by Markus Herz, Henriette’s husband (Bruford 4). Later, Henriette Herz and Humboldt joined the trend of secret societies when founding the *Tugendbund* [The Union of Virtue] in 1787, creating an intellectual circle of friendship dedicated to individual and societal moral improvement, particularly by recognizing and striving to actualize the philosophies of Goethe.

Whereas Herz narrated her experience as a leading salonnière to the writer Joseph Fürst, the original publisher of her memoir in 1850,<sup>33</sup> Varnhagen’s salon and more intimate *Dachstube* [garret] are revealed through her passionate language in

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<sup>33</sup> Jeannine Blackwell and Susanne Zantop, *Bitter Healing* (Lincoln, 1990) 301.

over 10,000 letters, many of which were published posthumously by her husband Karl August Varnhagen von Ense. What make Varnhagen especially unique are her strong opinions on women's participation in society beyond the ascribed limitations based on gender, her defense of selfhood and intellectualism, and her insistence that women are as equally able as men to achieve a high level of intellectuality. She envisioned women "performing the same tasks and occupying the same positions of responsibility and fame as men, once they received an education commensurate with their talents" (Tewarson 474). According to her letters, Varnhagen insisted that education was not a gift, but rather a duty,<sup>34</sup> and thereby she disregards all philosophical debate on *Geschlechtscharakter* and *Bildung* that determined a woman's intellectual position as inferior and unfit for the public sphere.

Apart from the letter and epistolary novel, a new literary genre emerged from Enlightenment discourse that placed emphasis on the development of one's freethinking consciousness (*Geist*) and self-formation (*sich bildende Individualität*) throughout various stages of life; it was the *Bildungsroman*, which is a novel that subsumes the intellectual or spiritual development of the main character. Although Christoph Martin Wieland first published *Die Geschichte des Agathon* [The History of Agathon] in 1776/77 and introduced the notion of self-cultivation to the literary scene, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* [Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship] (1795/96) ultimately came to define the prototype of the new genre. According to Selbmann:

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<sup>34</sup> For a translation of Varnhagen's letter to David Veit on February 16, 1805, see Blackwell and Zantop 408-411. This particular citation appears on page 411.

Indem Goethe die eigene Bildung wie auch die eigene Person so unerhört wichtig nimmt, gilt sein Interesse nicht mehr nur dem (erreichten) Bildungsziel, sondern auch den einzelnen schon durchschrittenen und noch zu durchschreitenden Stufen der Bildung. (3)

[Whereas Goethe understood one's *Bildung* as remarkably important as one's character, his interests no longer considered just the goal of *Bildung*, but also the respective stages of *Bildung* already taken and still left to cross.]

In the *Bildungsroman*, a (traditionally male) protagonist conclusively succeeds in understanding his or her character and purpose in life by embarking on a journey of introspection filled with trial and error. The journey is over when the hero or heroine reaches a state of harmony and completeness of character that reflects an overall balance between his or her individuality, the absolute being of truth, and the world. (c.f. Gfrereis 24; Meid 72-73) Inge Stephan writes that the hero of the *Bildungsroman* around 1800 could only be male, and the reasons for that are as follows: first, most authors at the time were men, and second, the position of women in society was so low that it was unthinkable to portray a woman as a heroine. (198) On the contrary, there are several novels by women at this time which depict the process of self-cultivation and knowledge (as found in a *Bildungsroman*) by female protagonists: these include Sophie von La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*,<sup>35</sup> and Frederike Helene Unger's novel *Julchen Grünthal* [Little Julia Grünthal] (1784).<sup>36</sup> Johanna Schopenhauer's novel *Gabriele* (1819/20) should also

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<sup>35</sup> See Jeannine Blackwell, "*Bildungsroman mit Dame: The Heroine in the German Bildungsroman*" (Indiana University, 1982) 18.

<sup>36</sup> See Todd Kontje, *The German Bildungsroman: History of a National Genre*, (Columbia, 1993), 105.

be included in this debate, as her anti-*Bildungsroman* reveals a female protagonist whose patterns of austereness and renunciation ultimately lead to absurdity.<sup>37</sup>

The three forms of expression mentioned above – the salon, the letter, and the *Bildungsroman* – are not exclusive to the few selected women writers mentioned above in the late-Enlightenment and early Romantic periods. In fact, Carl Wilhelm von Schindel mentions 550 women writers in Germany around 1800 in his 1825 publication *Die deutschen Schriftstellerinnen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* [German Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century]. (qtd. in Blackwell and Zantop 19) Other women who receive recognition for both their salon and literary productivity include Caroline Schlegel-Schelling (1763-1809) and Dorothea Schlegel (1764-1839) in the city of Jena. In addition, Sophie Mereau (1770-1806) and Karoline von Günderrode (1780-1806) are two names added to the German literary canon since their rediscovery by feminist scholars in the 1970s, as both women achieved recognition during their own time for their literary talents and participation in intellectual society. Finally, Bettina Brentano- von Arnim (1785-1859), the granddaughter of Sophie von La Roche and sister of Clemens Brentano, deserves attention for her socially critical and even “scandalous” literary career, which set her slightly apart from the women mentioned above. On her unique position within the discourse of nineteenth-century women writers, Peter Stein writes:

Sie war keine Frauenschriftstellerin wie ihre Großmutter [...] oder gar wie die Vorkämpferinnen der Frauenemanzipation im Vormärz. Sie war eine sehr

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<sup>37</sup> See Hansjürgen Blinn, “‘Das Weib wie es seyn sollte’: Der weibliche Bildungs- und Entwicklungsroman um 1800,” *Frauen Literatur Geschichte*, eds. Hiltrud Gnüg and Renate Möhrmann, (Stuttgart, 1999) 81-91, for an extensive overview of women writers who portray “ein neues Frauenbild” at this time.

selbstständige und selbstbewusste Frau (was nicht allein auf ihre Privilegiertheit zurückführbar ist) und verwirklichte in ihrem Leben und ihrem davon nicht abtrennbaren Werk eine Qualität weiblicher Emanzipation, in der aufklärerische und frühe romantische Bestimmungen des Menschlichen aufgehoben sind. (283)

[She was no ‘author for women’ like her grandmother [...] or like the pioneers of women’s emancipation during the period of the *Vormärz*. She was a very independent and confident woman (which is not only reducible to her privileged existence) and achieved in her life—as well as in her works—a quality of women’s emancipation that supersedes Enlightened and early Romantic regulations of human nature.]

The span of von Arnim’s literary career reveals an acute awareness of political development and social engagement incomparable to any woman writer before her. She established her reputation as a writer with the autobiographically based novel *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* [Goethe’s Correspondence with a Child] (1835); afterwards, she continued to broaden her distinction in the world of literature with socially radical productions like *Dies Buch gehört dem König* [This Buch belongs to the King] (1843) and *Gespräche mit Dämonen* [Conversations with Demons] (1852). Moreover, von Arnim met the newly emerging Socialist philosopher Karl Marx in the year 1842.<sup>38</sup> The fact alone that von Arnim admired Goethe (who was close to her mother Maximiliane von La Roche) and acknowledged Karl Marx’s pre-1848 Socialist ideas proves an intellectual open-mindedness that

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<sup>38</sup> See Elke Frederiksen, “Bettina Brentano- von Arnim” in *Women Writers in German-Speaking Countries*, eds. Elke Frederiksen and Elizabeth Ametsbichler (Westport, 1998) 29-39.

independently adjusted to the process of modernization and new modes of social thinking. The writings of Bettina Brentano- von Arnim bridge the “gray zone” of women’s position between the idealism of the eighteenth-century *Kulturstaat* and the economically driven reality of the nineteenth-century nation state, and therefore lead us appropriately into the next timeframe of discussion.

*“Bildung” and Gender: 1800-1848*

Turning our focus once again to historical context, it is important to first draw on the extreme political and social changes occurring in Germany during the early years of the nineteenth century. Napoleon’s rule over Prussia came to a halt in 1813 at the Battle of Jena, and almost two years later in 1815, the Congress of Vienna (under the direction of Prince Metternich) succeeded in reorganizing thirty-seven states and four city-states into a federation called the *Deutscher Bund*, or German Federation. (*Fragen an die deutsche Geschichte* 47) In addition to these political changes, the laws known as the *Karlsbader Beschlüsse* of 1819 implemented a strictly conservative censorship that ultimately gave meaning to the new phase of restoration that befell German-speaking society for the next several decades. Finally, the first signs of transformation from an agrarian to an industrial society were already becoming apparent. While governments of the *Deutscher Bund* were reestablishing traditional absolutist ways of ruling, however, liberalist thinkers especially from the middle classes began to promote the ideas of national unity, the rights of citizens, and the formation of a national constitution. Particularly in the 1840s, the liberal

movement increased in size and influence while signs of revolution and civil distrust revealed themselves in events like the *Weberaufstand* [Weavers' Uprising] of 1844, the *Hungersrevolte* [Hunger Revolts] of 1847 and 1848, and finally the March Revolution of 1848. A period of heavy emigration accompanied these events, as well as the birth of Socialism with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* [The Communist Manifesto], published in London in the year 1848. (*Fragen* 147-148)

The multitude of literary trends that surfaced during the first half of the nineteenth century reveal a variety of perspectives on the socio-political issues happening in Germany, including political transition, restoration, and liberalism. Whereas late Romantic writers like Joseph von Eichendorff (i.e. *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* [Memoirs of a Good-for-Nothing] (1826) and E.T.A. Hoffman (i.e. *Der goldne Topf* [The Golden Pot] (1811) tell tales of escapism into foreign or imaginary worlds, other writers embraced a return to the private, idyllic, and non-political life. Yet, other writers like Annette von Droste-Hülshoff in her novella *Die Judenbuche* [The Jew's Birch] (1842), for example, depict among other things an awareness of crisis in which political and social difficulties interrupt otherwise peaceful communities.<sup>39</sup> Goethe, in addition, began to question social issues like emigration, industrial technology, and contemporary politics in his later work *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* [Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel] (1829). Instead of escaping *from* convention (as we see in the works of the late Romantics) or *into* convention (as reflected in the return to simplicity), an additional literary trend known as *Junges*

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<sup>39</sup> Benedikt Jeßing and Ralph Köhnen, Einführung an die Neuere deutsche Literaturwissenschaft (Stuttgart, 2003) 38.

*Deutschland* [Young Germany] surfaced to reveal a confrontation with political conservatism, injustice, and censorship. Reaching its peak between the years of 1830 and 1835, the writings of *Junges Deutschland* criticized contemporary society, found fault with ruling governments, and aimed to make their readership aware of social injustice through shorter pieces of literature with a direct, easily comprehensible language (i.e. the pamphlet). Because of their cry for revolution, the state forced many of the *jüngste Deutschen* into exile, including Georg Büchner (1813-1837) and Heinrich Heine (1797-1856). Whereas Georg Büchner's texts *Dantons Tod* [Danton's Death] (1835) and *Woyzeck* (1836) bring the tumultuous political realities of France closer to home, Heinrich Heine calls for an awakening of the political spirit in Germany, especially in his satirical epic poem *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* [Germany: A Winter's Tale] (1844).

Despite extraordinary socio-political changes occurring in German society during the first half of the nineteenth century, the furtherance of women's participation in the more public domains of society regressed. The rising ideas of nationalism and anti-Semitism play a role in closing of the Jewish salon, and in addition, the traditional militaristic and patriarchal culture of Prussia began to emerge as the most dominant culture in Germany.<sup>40</sup> Varnhagen's famous Berlin salon ended in 1806 after the Napoleonic takeover of Berlin, which marked the end of religious tolerance. In addition, the founding of the *Christlich-Deutsche Tischgesellschaft*

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<sup>40</sup> Karen Hagemann argues that in keeping with the trend of anthropology during the Enlightenment, gender roles and character were anthropologized as biological traits during the period of military and patriotic build-up under Napoleonic occupation. See her article "A Valorous Volk Family: The Nation, the Military, and the Gender Order in Prussia in the Time of the Anti-Napoleonic Wars, 1806-15," trans. Pamela Selwyn, ed. Ida Blom et al., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford and New York, 2000) 179-206. Here, page 189.

[Christian-German Table Society] in the year 1811 by authors such as Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811) and Achim von Arnim (1781-1831) defined the end of salon culture that embraced the participation of women. (Stephan, *Aufklärung* 212) Furthermore, the writings of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and other pedagogically engaged philosophers influenced “den neuen Weiblichkeitsdiskurs”, or new discourse of femininity, which excluded women from active participation in intellectual and social gatherings (Scholtz 79). This new discourse of gender, which characterized the entire nineteenth century, created a female image dominated by feelings, and whose exorbitance of emotions compensated her intellectual abilities. (Blochmann 8)

Women writers engaged in the *Frauenfrage* [women’s question] before 1848, whether through professional writing or collaboration with male companions, such as Bettina von Arnim (1785-1859), Ida Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880), Fanny Lewald (1811-1889), Louise Aston (1814-1871), Malvida von Meysenbug (1816-1903) and Louise Otto-Peters (1819-1895), were compelled to end their politically engaged activities. Von Arnim served a two month prison sentence, Aston was forced into exile from Berlin as a “staatsgefährliche Person” [a harmful person to the state], and Meysenbug was exiled to London (Möhrmann 380). However, as time progressed towards the second half of the nineteenth century, women were finding a new space for voicing their opinions—the mass press. While society witnessed a cultural boom of journalistic activity and literary newspapers, especially after the abolishment of the *Karlsbader Beschlüsse* (1819/24) in March 1848, women especially found a new outlet for expressing their concerns with the position of their own gender in society. As Möhrmann states, women of the *Vormärz* generation were the pioneers in carrying

out their message for women's emancipation in "Vorträgen, Zeitungsaufsätzen, Programmschriften, Novellen, und Romanen" (379) [lectures, newspaper articles, programs, novellas, and novels].

### *"Bildung" and Social Change after 1848*

Gaining speed after the March 1848 Revolution in German society, the process of industrialization brought about political, economic, and cultural changes that affected the everyday lives of citizens from every class. From the mid- to late nineteenth century, especially during the Bismarck era (1871-1890) of the Wilhelmine Empire (1871-1918), the concept of *Bildung* underwent a parallel shift in meaning in especially two areas: first, the notion of *Bildung* as *Ausbildung* (education for training), and second, its role in the expansion and establishment of the culturally influential educated middle class, the *Bildungsbürgertum*. Apart from these transitions, the general public also began to think differently about their existence in relation to nature and civilization: newer and more "radical" thoughts overshadowed Enlightenment philosophy, such as the writings of Karl Marx in the 1840s, Charles Darwin around 1870, and finally Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud at the turn of the twentieth century. With such dramatic changes away from Enlightenment and early nineteenth-century ideas about social class, human origin, religion and human conscience, it is impossible to imagine the term *Bildung* without its own period of transformation as well.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Even Franziska Tiburtius recalls the change of atmosphere at the University of Zürich after Darwin's publications surfaced in the early 1870s. *Erinnerungen einer Achtzigjährigen*, (Berlin, 1929) 137-141.

Bleicher states that parallel to the astounding changes in daily culture and traditional modes of lifestyle during the shift from an agrarian to an industrial state, the concept of *Bildung* became “streamlined into *Ausbildung* to answer the need for skilled manpower, and thus increasingly approximated the notion of education prevalent in other European countries” (364). *Bildung* began to lose its “theoretische[r] Glanz” [theoretical dazzle] and initiated instead a new classification of social status (Bollenbeck 101). The once idealized prototype of the enlightened and balanced self began to lose its prominence to emerging economics. From this point onward, the idea of *Bildung* transitioned into an obtainable status symbol for members of the elite and “educated” classes as well as a required prerequisite of training in order to function within these influential social groups. (c.f. Bollenbeck 241) Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, these upper middle classes defined their goals within the following guidelines:

Gesellschaftlich wollte man sich dem Adel annähern, aber nicht dessen Position einnehmen; politisch wollte man sich vor dem Proletariat schützen, vor allem dessen Aufstieg zur Macht verhindern; wirtschaftlich wollte man die ‘freie Dynamik’ des Unternehmers (im weitesten Sinn) weiter ausbauen. (Ehlert 297)

[Socially, one wanted to come closer to the nobility but not take over their position; politically, one wanted to protect oneself from the proletariat and especially prevent their rise to power; economically, one wanted to extend the “free dynamic” of the entrepreneur even more in the broadest sense.]

The interests of the economic bourgeoisie merged with the ideal of *Bildung*, and as a result, the *Bildungsbürgertum* shifted from its more community-based context into a new economic and bureaucratic force; henceforth, the concept of *Bildung* would continue to drift further away from its original humanistic nature.<sup>42</sup> The “sharpening social differentiation accompanying the modernization of Germany saw its remaining humanistic essence [of *Bildung*] become the canonized, elitist preserve of the *Bildungsbürgertum*” in the class’s accumulation and use of capital (Bleicher 364). Moreover, in the words of Myer, “*Bildung* yielded compatible standards of behavior, a *habitus*, with which a group of citizens with diverse interests and motivations could identify themselves outside of traditional politics” (29). Even the behavior associated with the concept of being in the *gebildetes Bürgertum* [educated middle class], he continues, conveys and represents the mark of style, taste, and status required to wield influence in the new sociopolitical constellations of power. (29-30)

*The Nineteenth-Century German Bourgeois Women’s Movement: Women as  
Teachers, Students, and Political Activists*

As previously mentioned, to be “bourgeois” in German society was—above all other things—to be *gebildet*. However, as the overall way of life continued to shift in the course of time, the definition of *Bildung* redefined itself as well—such as in the case

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<sup>42</sup> See Perry Myers, “The Double-Edged Sword: The Cult of *Bildung*, its Downfall and Reconstitution in Fin-de-Siècle Germany,” *German Linguistic and Cultural Studies*, ed. Peter Rolf Lutzeier, vol. 11 (New York, 2004) 39-43.

of *Ausbildung* [training] during the course of the nineteenth century. Humboldt's three-tiered system of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education eventually became the norm, and the German state recognized its establishment as a permanent and mandatory structure.<sup>43</sup> However, parallel to the advancements of industrialization and overall social change, the school system built upon Humboldt's reforms began to lose its humanist roots during the period of post-1848 restoration, when the state once again intervened in the curriculum. In the words of Hohendahl, "the public talked of a theory of education [...] without realizing that this idealistic tradition had become problematic" (*Building* 249). What is interesting, nevertheless, is that while the state began to influence the curriculum of education established for men following the Revolution of 1848, its concern towards the situation of women's education remained mostly indifferent. Actually, the Prussian Ministry of Education did not recognize the *Mädchenschule* [girls' school] as an official and mandatory secondary institution until the year 1894. (Bernstein and Bernstein 281)

In the first half of the nineteenth century, girls from aristocratic and higher bourgeois families had the option of either attending a private or public *Mädchenschule*, a *Mädchenpensionat* [girls' boarding school], or receiving instruction in the family home by a governess or tutor. On average, education stopped around the age of fourteen—sometimes younger, depending on the decisions of her family. Young men from upper class families usually stopped their basic schooling around the age of eighteen; depending on family background, they may

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<sup>43</sup> As a side note, it is important to mention that Wilhelm von Humboldt may not receive all of the credit for educational reform because other major pedagogues played a role in reshaping the system: they include Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) and Adolf Diesterweg (1790-1866).

have continued their education by entering the military, pursuing a profession through the university, or embarking on the *grand tour*. Towards the middle of the century, the opportunity increased for girls to receive at least some post-elementary education; in this case, they would attend the *höhere Mädchenschule* [higher girls' school] until age sixteen. Above everything else, the mainstream opinion on the purpose of a bourgeois woman's education is reflected in the critical words of Helene Lange: "Die Frau soll gebildet werden, damit der deutsche Mann nicht gelangweilt werde!" [Women should be educated so that the German man does not become bored!] (*Die höhere Mädchenschule* 7).

**H ö h e r e  
M ä d c h e n - S c h u l e**

Wahlfreie Kurse (Selekt)

Vorbereitungs-klasse für das Seminar

**Lehrerinnen = Seminar**

mit eigener Übungsschule

Vorbereitung zur Ergänzungsprüfung

Zurufkurse für Mädchen und Frauen  
und zur Ausbildung von Zuruhrerinnen

**Berlin SW. 11, Dessauer Straße 24**

nahe dem Anhalter, Potsdamer und  
Ringbahnhof

**Frau Klara Seyling**

Vorsteherin.

1—2, Freitags 1—4.

Figure 1: Advertisement for the Girls' Secondary School in Berlin. In *Frauen-Führer*, 1907.

Amidst the atmosphere of post-revolutionary conservatism around the year 1850, new debates emerged concerning the state of girls' education that reflected a clash of ideals between liberal progression and conservative traditionalism. Reflective of the more conservative tone is an article presented in the bestselling family-oriented newspaper *Die Gartenlaube* (1853-1937), where the author Amely Boelte writes, "daß eine eigentliche Bildung in einem [Mädchen]institute nicht

gefördert werden kann, ist begreiflich” [it is understandable that an actual education can not be fostered in a girls’ institute].<sup>44</sup> The author continues to claim that a girls’ school only teaches young women “beständiges Plaudern” [constant chatting] and “Kichern” [giggling] instead of “Ordnung” [orderliness] and “Sauberkeit” [cleanliness]. Rather than distancing young women from the workings of family life, parents should avoid the girls’ schools and raise daughters properly within the domestic setting. On the other side of the argument, Louis Otto-Peters created a newspaper that would become the first of its kind, the *Frauen-Zeitung: Ein Organ für die Höheren Weiblichen Interessen* [Women’s Newspaper: An Organ for the Greater Female Interests], which circulated between the years 1849-1852 but ended after the state’s intervention for having a woman editor. Articles presented in the *Frauen-Zeitung* not only contested traditionalist arguments like the example above, but also argued for the overall improvement of the girls’ schools and its curriculum. According to Wischermann:

Die Kritik an der Mädchenbildung bezog sich vor allem auf die Töchterinstitute, in denen die Mädchen nach dem 14. Lebensjahr, wenn eigentlich ihr Geist erst richtig erwachte, nur Tanzen und Klavierspielen übten, Halbwissen aufnahmen, nachbeteten und auswendig lernten, statt selbst zu denken. (48)

[Criticism of girls’ education mostly alluded to the daughters’ institutes, where girls after the age of fourteen—a time in which their intellect was first awakening—practiced only dance and the piano, gathered only a smattering of

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<sup>44</sup> “Unsere Mädcheninstitute,” *Die Gartenlaube* 16 (1854): 190.

knowledge, recited prayer, and learned through memorization instead of independent thought.]

Although Otto-Peters' newspaper came to a close in 1852, her voice re-emerged in 1865 after co-founding the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* (ADF) [General Association of German Women] with Auguste Schmidt (1833-1902) and marking the beginning of the nineteenth-century German bourgeois women's movement. The newspaper *Neue Bahnen* [New Paths] would serve as the organization's mouthpiece until the beginning of the First World War.

The two main objectives of the German bourgeois women's movement were a woman's right to education as well as the right to work. (Frederiksen, *Die Frauenfrage* 12). Due to the advancements of industrialism, the restructuring of family life as well as an overall change in social economics had left especially middle class women with little hope of individual pursuit: not only did women possess no property rights, but in addition, bourgeois society considered a woman's work outside the home a defiance of convention and class stature. Although the entire cultural structure of the bourgeoisie incorporated marriage and family into its making, "not even half of all women between fifteen and fifty" in the middle classes were married around the middle of the century (Weedon, *Gender* 47). Advocates in the German bourgeois women's movement recognized the discrepancy between idealized convention and social reality and therefore used *Bildung* as a medium in their call for change and women's emancipation. Compared to women's movements happening in other Western countries, the German bourgeois movement "focused on, or even became preoccupied with, *Bildung*, rather than equal rights, as in the cases of English,

American, and French feminism” (Tate 267). Examples of accomplishment in this case include Louise Otto-Peters’ and Auguste Schmidt’s founding of the first post-primary school for middle and lower class girls in 1865, the creation of the *Lette-Verein* in 1866—an organization which provided mostly lower middle class women with practical training—and the launching of Marie Loeper-Houselles’ journal *Die Lehrerin in Schule und Haus* [The Woman Teacher in School and at Home] in 1884.<sup>45</sup> In addition, Helene Lange and Auguste Schmidt established the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnen Verein* [German Women Teachers’ Union], which grew from 3,000 members in 1890 to 16,000 by the close of the century, making it the largest organization for women during its time.<sup>46</sup> Finally, imperative to the discussion on reform is a collection of petitions known as *Die Gelbe Broschüre* [The Yellow Brochures], submitted by Helene Lange, Marie Loeper-Houselles, and four other women to the Prussian House of Representatives (*das preußische Abgeordnetenhaus*) and the Department of Education (*das Unterrichtsministerium*) in the year 1887.

In the petition’s accompanying essay titled *Die höhere Mädchenschule und ihre Bestimmung* [The Higher Girls’ School and its Purpose], the authors argue against the pronouncements set forth in the *Weimarer Denkschrift* [Weimar Memorandum] (1872), which revealed the results from the first state organized meeting of *Mädchenpädagoginnen* [pedagogues specialized in girls’ education]. The authors of the essay write: “Unsere Schulen bilden nicht, sie erziehen nicht maßvolle Frauen von edler Sitte, sie lehren nur. (14) [Our schools do not educate and they do not raise modest women of noble fashion: they only teach.] The authors not only call

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<sup>45</sup> More information on the Lette-Verein is found in chapter six of the dissertation.

<sup>46</sup> Helene Lange and Gertrud Bäumer, *Handbuch der Frauenbewegung* (Berlin, 1901) 86.

for reform to the curriculum of the girls' schools by referring to the theories of Pestalozzi, but also—and perhaps more fervently—for the improvement of training for women who become teachers. More importantly, they do so by working within the boundaries of the existing system by emphasizing gender difference. For example, the six women agree that in order for women teachers to instruct above the elementary level, they must attend seminars that train them to do so (like men) within the fields that women should teach, namely German, religion, literature and the arts.<sup>47</sup> They emphasize the relationship between women teachers and the advancement of the nation by articulating the importance of education to girls, who would be the mothers of future generations: “Schafft uns bessere Lehrerinnen, und wir werden bessere Mütter und durch diese bessere Menschen haben. (43) [Give us better women teachers: through this, we will become better mothers and therefore have better people.]

The petition reiterates a gendered form of social responsibility by claiming “nicht alle Frauen sind zur Heirat berufen, fast ausnahmslos aber haben sie in irgend welcher Weise mit der Erziehung der Jugend zu tun” [not all women are destined to marry, but almost without exception, they have something to do with the upbringing of youth] (21). They argued that because women were natural caregivers, they should be in charge of teaching and raising the future citizens of the nation—especially female students on the secondary level. Although the authors' petition for reform was

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<sup>47</sup> “Ja, wir sind der Meinung, daß da, wo es sich rein oder vorzugsweise um Verstandeskultur handelt, in Grammatik, Rechnen, Naturwissenschaften, Geographie [,] der Mann besser am Platz ist, als die Frau [...]”. [Yes, we are of the opinion that in the areas that deal purely or especially with the comprehension of culture—in grammar, mathematics, natural science and geography—that men are better suited for these positions than women.] (*Die höhere Mädchenschule* 34)

within bourgeois boundaries of gender roles and social responsibility, they do not agree with the preconceived notion that saw women as unfit to learn because of a possible damage to their “femininity”. In defending the rights of women teachers to receive an education equal to their male colleagues, they write:

Die Erfahrung lehrt weiter, daß es allerdings eins giebt, was die echte Weiblichkeit gefährdet, das ist eben das, was uns jetzt geboten wird: die Halbbildung, und zwar deshalb, weil die halbgebildete Lehrerin ihre Natur gewaltsam zu unterdrücken und in selbständiger Nachahmung männlicher Art, die ihr allein als wirksam gilt, Erfolge zu erreichen sucht. (56)

[Experience continues to teach us that, above all else, there is one thing that endangers true femininity, and it is exactly that which is currently being offered to us: half of an education. A woman teacher with only half of an education single-handedly suppresses her nature by imitating the masculine way, as she understands it to be the only effective method in her search for success.]

In order to train women teachers more effectively, the authors of the petition call for the establishment of women’s colleges or *Hochschulen*, modeled after Cambridge University’s women colleges—Newnham and Girton Colleges—in England while staying within the discourse of gender difference.<sup>48</sup> The question of post-secondary education leads to the final aspect of this discussion.

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<sup>48</sup> For the “moderate” advocates within the bourgeois women’s movement who promoted emancipation on grounds of gender difference, the idea of *geistige Mütterlichkeit* [intellectual motherliness] offered a two-sided argument to the improvements of women’s roles as teacher: on the one hand, it secured and justified a place for women teachers in the field of education; on the other hand, the concept based its argument more or less on the idea of *Geschlechtscharakter* by defining a woman’s biological nature as appropriate to a child’s earliest learning environment and nothing higher. Anne Taylor Allen argues

Despite the increasing number of participants fighting for the rights of women to obtain an education as proposed in the women's movement—whether in terms of elementary, secondary, or post-secondary levels—the construction of “femininity” remained strong in the daily customs and beliefs of mainstream bourgeois culture. Those opposed to the betterment of women's education grounded their arguments on women's physical and intellectual inferiority; a young woman's physicality left her “unfit” for long hours of studying and intensive intellectual material, and in addition, too much sitting could eventually wreak havoc on her physique.<sup>49</sup> These contentions interface with the idea of “proper femininity” for bourgeois “ladies”, as proletarian women, on the other hand, faced a different reality – the dual burden of laboring long days as either factory workers or domestic servants, as well as taking care of domestic obligations in their own household. German policy adopted a gradual change of attitude towards women's education, beginning with the implementation of *Realkurse* [secondary courses] in Berlin in 1889. These courses offered young women the possibility of preparation for university study in countries that already allowed women's matriculation, including the United States, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire (as guest auditors only), Holland, Norway, and Belgium. Helene Lange explains the positive outcome of granting women *Realkurse* by stating:

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that the concept of *geistige Mütterlichkeit* is not reflective of a conservative return to gender-based tradition, but rather promotes women's emancipation by raising job possibilities and responsibility outside the home. See Allen, ““Geistige Mütterlichkeit” als Bildungsprinzip: Die Kindergartenbewegung 1840-1870,” *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*. Eds. Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz. Vol.2. (Frankfurt/New York, 1996), 19-34.

<sup>49</sup> “Das erste deutsche Mädchengymnasium,” *Die Gartenlaube*, 38 (1893) 647.

Die meisten Schülerinnen der Realkurse verfolgten zwar keinen weiteren Zweck als den, ihr Wissen zu erweitern; einige aber bestanden nach 2½ bis 3 jähriger Vorbereitung ihr Maturitätsexamen in Zürich und sind heute dort in glücklicher Abwicklung ihrer Studien begriffen.<sup>50</sup>

[Most of the women students taking *Realkurse* actually did not follow any other purpose than broadening their knowledge, but several passed the entrance exam in Zürich after 2 ½ to 3 years preparation and are happily studying there today].

In addition to the significant addition of *Realkurse*, Hedwig Kettler's *Frauenverein* [Women's Association] (founded in 1888, renamed to *Verein Frauenbildungsreform* [Association of Women's Education Reform] in 1892, then *Verein Frauenbildung-Frauenstudium* [Association of Women's Education/Women's University Studies] in 1895) succeeded in transforming the *Realkurse* into full nine-year programs with *Gymnasialkurse* [courses at the *gymnasium* level] in the Fall of 1893; this occurred shortly after the opportunity for women to take the *Abitur* [university entrance exam] in 1892. The establishment of the first *Mädchengymnasium* followed in Karlsruhe in 1893.<sup>51</sup> These events paved the way for women to attend certain universities as *Gasthörerinnen* [guest auditors] in 1896, and then finally as matriculated students in 1908 (following the Universities of Heidelberg and Freiburg, which opened their doors to matriculated female students in Spring 1901).

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<sup>50</sup> Helene Lange, "Die Frau und das Universitätsstudium," *Die Gartenlaube*, no. 25 (1895) 423-427.

<sup>51</sup> Although several secondary texts claim the first *Mädchenschule* to have opened in the year 1894, an article posted in *Die Gartenlaube*, no. 38, 1893 suggests otherwise.

Concluding this historical overview is an example taken from the article “Weiblich oder unweiblich?” [Feminine or Unfeminine?], which appeared in Hedwig Kettler’s series *Bibliothek der Frauenfrage* [Library of the Women’s Question] in her edited journal *Frauenberuf* [Women’s Occupation]. The narrator of the article creates a scene in which a bourgeois father and mother both object to the idea of their daughters receiving a post-secondary education, particularly during the period in which young women began to pursue professional degrees at the universities in Switzerland. The narrator writes:

Da sind Vater und Mutter entsetzt, in der Zeitung zu lesen, daß wieder so und so viel Damen in Zürich Medizin studieren. (Natürlich werden diese Studentinnen auch rauchen, unmäßig Bier trinken, Reitstiefel und Spazierstöcke tragen wie die Studenten – das ist selbstverständlich, auch wenn es nicht in der Zeitung steht.) “Nein, wie unweiblich, diese Weiber heute! Unsere Amalie, Emilie oder Wilhelmine soll ordentlich den Haushalt lernen [...] Sie soll weiblich bleiben; zum Kukuk mit der Unweiblichkeit!” (4-5)<sup>52</sup>

[Father and mother are disgusted by reading the newspaper that so many ladies are studying medicine in Zürich. (Naturally, these female students will also smoke, drink excessive amounts of beer, wear riding boots and carry a cane like the male students – that goes without saying, even if it isn’t mentioned in the newspaper.) “Well, how unfeminine these women are today! Our Amalie, Emilie or Wilhelmina should properly learn home economics [...] She should stay feminine; to the birds with being unfeminine!”]

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<sup>52</sup> “Weiblich oder unweiblich” is the title of opening chapter in Hedwig Kettler’s Streiflichter auf unsere Gegner, no. 11 and 12 of the series Bibliothek der Frauenfrage. No date listed.

The limitations on *Bildung* brought about by gender construction are clear in this excerpt. The first point that arises is the father's word choice for "woman"; in this case, the fact that he says "Dame" [lady] ultimately restates that *Bildung* was indeed a luxury for both men and women, and the women that chose to study medicine were "ladies" from the bourgeoisie. In addition, this fragment discloses the mainstream belief that the construction of "femininity" alludes to a protected state of almost child-like intellectuality, as the characters' daughters are already "feminine" as children, and the only thing they should learn in addition to the knowledge they have is how to run the household. Furthermore, this excerpt reveals an essentialist construction that assumed female students to adopt the behaviors stereotypically associated with male students without considering the possibility of establishing a new kind of "space" for women's collective identity. Reflecting the opinions of the father mentioned above, a statement by Hedwig Dohm in her essay *Die wissenschaftliche Emanzipation der Frau* [The Scientific Emancipation of Women] (1874) comes to mind that reflects Kettler's message. Dohm writes, "Sitte und Gewohnheit sind mächtiger selbst als das Gesetz" [Conventions and habits are stronger than the law] (38). Although the opportunities for women to obtain a higher education increased throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the conventions and habits of the conservative bourgeoisie proved to be an even harder battle to surmount.

This excerpt serves as one representation of the complex interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender in the German context of the late nineteenth century. The following chapters continue an analysis of texts by and about bourgeois women

within multiple discourses of *Bildung*. By beginning with *Erziehung*, the facet of *Bildung* that pertains to the parallels between upbringing and learning, the discussion ventures into the notion of gender as a socially and culturally “learned” behavior.

### Chapter 3

#### **“Wir sollten nicht so unselbständig erzogen werden”: Fictional and Non-fictional Accounts of Gendered *Erziehung***

“Wenn unser Unterricht das erziehliche Moment aus dem Auge läßt, auch da wo es sich um völlig gereiste Damen handelt, so erreichen wir unser Ziel nicht, das kein geringeres ist als unsere Schülerinnen zu jener Kunst zu führen, unter deren Mangel das weibliche Geschlecht unserer Tage so schwer leidet—die Kunst der Selbsterziehung, die Erziehung zu selbständiger Arbeit.” (Fr. Johanna Bethe)<sup>53</sup>

[If our education lets a moment of upbringing out of sight—also when it concerns well traveled ladies—than we will not accomplish our goal of nothing less than leading our female pupils to the very art which the female gender greatly lacks today—the art of self-cultivation and an upbringing that teachers her to work independently.]

“Das Weib will selbständig werden: [...] – das gehört zu den schlimmsten Fortschritten der allgemeinen Verhäßlichung Europas.” (Friedrich Nietzsche)<sup>54</sup>

[Woman wants to become independent: - that belongs to the worst advancement of the general uglification of Europe.]

“Wir sollten nicht so unselbständig erzogen werden.” [We shouldn’t be raised to be so dependent.]<sup>55</sup> Agathe Heidling, the female protagonist in Gabriele Reuter’s bestselling novel *Aus guter Familie: Leidensgeschichte eines Mädchens* (1895) [From a Good Family (1999)] makes this statement while conversing with Mr. Raikendorff,

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<sup>53</sup> “Die Eröffnung der Fortbildungsanstalt für Töchter gebildeter Stände und der Gymnasialklassen für Mädchen”, *Frauenberuf: Blätter für Fragen der weiblichen Erziehung, Ausbildung, Berufs- und Hilfstätigkeit*. No. 30, 22 April 1899.

<sup>54</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “Jenseits von Gut und Böse,” *Werke in Zwei Bänden* (Munich, 1967) 122.

<sup>55</sup> All translated citations from Reuter’s narrative *Aus guter Familie* are taken from Lynne Tatlock’s English version of the novel *From a Good Family* (Rochester, 1999). Here 136.

an older man Agathe knows from an earlier unpleasant experience but coincidentally encounters again while walking alone, anxiously, on the streets of her provincial town in central Prussia. By claiming that girls like her should not be raised to be so dependent, Agathe criticizes her position in society on the one hand as an unmarried woman from the “good” bourgeois class; on the other hand, she conveys a glimpse of hope towards one last chance of marriage, the only change that would end her role as ‘eternal family daughter’ and grant her the life she was taught to lead as wife and mother, despite her antipathy for this man in particular. Although Agathe is the protagonist of a fictional novel, her words in this case carry a non-fictional meaning that reflect the reality of bourgeois girls and women throughout Germany in the nineteenth century, as their dependent existence contributed to the idyllic ambitions of the imperial nation. The concept of *Erziehung*, or “upbringing”, directly contributes to the problem of dependency that concurrently adds to the problem at hand, namely the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender as cultural concepts in nineteenth-century society.

The concepts of femininity and masculinity still exist today, but it was especially towards the latter half of the nineteenth century that their meanings were much more definitive than what we know now in the twenty-first century. Hierarchical institutions like the state, church, and family played dominant roles in defining and maintaining both the construction of gender and gender roles. This applies especially to the bourgeois classes, whose entire existence rested upon the construction of “goodness”, family reputation, and preconceived ideals of uprightness and morality. Weedon connects these collective ideals of bourgeois attitude and behavior to the

issue of gender by claiming “throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the lives of middle and upper class women were governed by laws and social codes of behavior that assumed that women were fundamentally different from men while, at the same time, constructing them as such” (Weedon, *Gender* 1). Not only was gender becoming a clearly outlined category that combined character and behavior to the everyday routine of common culture, but its construction of “being feminine” in particular began to surface in the scholarly fields of science<sup>56</sup>, psychology, history, pedagogy, religion, philosophy and sociology in order to scientifically argue women’s inferiority to men.<sup>57</sup> The general belief in the characteristics of “femininity” supported women’s dependent position in society, amongst other things.

The constrictive definition of femininity in nineteenth-century society was really a bourgeois case. Blackbourn explains, “the bourgeois family rested, in the first place, on the separation of the workplace from the home, and on the possession of sufficient material resources for servants to be employed to run the household” (10). “The family thus became,” he continues, “a sphere of private, domestic compensation for the hardworking and public male, while his wife devoted herself to the cultivation of domesticity and the passing on of correct cultural values and norms to the next generation” (10-11). This notion of class-related values reflects the term *Standesgemäßheit*, or social class appropriateness. Klika emphasizes this idea by

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<sup>56</sup> See Helga Mae Thorson’s dissertation “Re-negotiating Borders: Responses of German and Austrian Middle-Class Women Writers to Medical Discourses on Sex, Gender, and Sexuality at the Turn of the Century” (1996) for more on gender within German-language medical discourses.

<sup>57</sup> Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) comes to mind in this context. In chapter two, the narrator goes to the ‘Oxbridge’ library in order to find scholarly works on the definition of woman. The narrator asks, “Are you aware that you are, perhaps, the most discussed animal in the universe?” (26)

defining the process of upbringing as “extrem klassenspezifisch” (285) [extremely class specific]. Whereas bourgeois girls were generally confined to the home, working class girls in urban and rural areas were not; overcrowded living spaces in the urban setting resulted in a type of “Straßenkindheit” [childhood on the streets] for children of poor families, and even in the rural setting, children worked outside of the house.<sup>58</sup> In addition, while bourgeois girls were encouraged to assist in ‘lighter’ household tasks, such as embroidery, sewing, and watching over younger siblings, girls from working-class families were forced to assist the family by “working in the fields of domestic service, agricultural labor, and factory work” (Weedon, *Gender, Feminism & Fiction*, 140). Otilie Baader (1847-1925), for example, describes her working-class childhood in her autobiography *Ein steiniger Weg. Lebenserinnerungen einer Sozialistin* [A Rocky Road: Memoirs of a Woman Socialist] (1921). The author recalls her earliest days of work in the household beginning at the age of seven, and then at the age of thirteen, when she entered the routine of the twelve-hour work day in a Berlin *Nähstube*, or sewing shop.<sup>59</sup> This example shows the dichotomous conditions of bourgeois and working-class daughters. On the one hand, bourgeois girls were forced to remain dependent on the family in order to uphold the family’s propriety, and women stayed present within the family home; on the other hand, working-class girls were forced to participate in the working world, as their families could not afford the same luxuries. (We will see more of this in the upcoming discussions.)

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<sup>58</sup> See Dorle Klika, “Die Vergangenheit ist nicht tot”, *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*, ed. Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main, 1996) 283-296.

<sup>59</sup> See Elke Frederiksen, *Die Frauenfrage in Deutschland 1865-1915*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, 1994) 268-273.

### “*Erziehung*” as “*Bildung*”

The information above leads us to question the relationship between gender construction and the concept of *Bildung* by looking at the term *Erziehung*. The process of upbringing is twofold: it shapes and prepares according to the workings of a particular society. In connection with the concept of education, the process of upbringing also carries the double notion of “bringing up” and “leading forth” (Lloyd 98), but this is impossible without “vorgefaßte Prinzipien”, or certain preconceived principles, that one must strive to reach (Selbmann 2). Troppe expands the reciprocal relationship between the process of upbringing and pre-existing principles within a cultural discourse by using gender as a determinant of cultural and social purpose. She states, “*Erziehung wird gesellschaftlich bestimmt, und Ausgangspunkt für die aktuelle geschlechtsspezifische Erziehung ist die gesellschaftliche Realität [...]*” (Troppe 85) [Upbringing is socially determined, and the point of origin for the prevailing gender-specific upbringing is social reality]. The concept of social reality includes certain rights, types of work, religion, social class, and even individual roles within the context of the family. All of these connections between upbringing and society concurrently reflect an understanding of the word “culture”, which according to Terry Eagleton, “contains a tension between making and being made” (5).

Especially when looking for representations of gender in nineteenth-century texts, it is easy to conceive how gender played (and continues to play) a role in a child’s upbringing. What is not automatically clear, however, is the extent to which

gender *organized* the everyday culture of nineteenth-century society. I agree with Troppe on the connection between social reality and gendered upbringing and am therefore extending this thought to emphasize the role of gender in cultural organization. Searching for a breakdown in meaning of just about every concept, I like to think that the idea of “organized society” is a construction itself, or in other words, is something that is “learned”. If we view “organized society” as something that is learned, then we must also shed light on the ways in which it is learned. This leads me to ask *what* was learned during a child’s *Erziehung* that contributed to an idea of organized society based almost completely on gender and gender role.

The following discussion focuses on several key questions that explore the meaning behind gendered *Erziehung* in nineteenth-century Germany, the first of which relates to the family as a sphere of influence and experience. What are some examples that convey the way in which parents played a role in shaping the development of their daughters and sons to fit into the ideal of bourgeois femininity and masculinity? Although this project searches for representations of gender within texts produced by women writers, there are many examples that portray differences in individual *Erziehung* according to gender, and my second question therefore asks how children were raised differently according to the social realities of their gender. How do women authors of literary narratives compare their childhood experiences in comparison to their male siblings? Furthermore, are these differences depicted in a critical light, or simply presented as common modes of behavior as experienced in everyday culture? Finally, after comparing and contrasting several literary texts by various authors, what kind of conclusion can be formed in order to understand a

larger concept of nineteenth-century culture that is new? By analyzing both fictional and non-fictional texts by Fanny Lewald, Gabriele Reuter, and Hedwig Dohm in congruence with texts from the mass press, this chapter reveals a thin line between autobiographical fact and narrative fiction as representations of gendered *Erziehung*.



Sie spielen Hochzeit

**Figure 2: “Sie spielen Hochzeit,” [They’re playing ‘wedding’] in Helene Lange, *Das Erwachen der Seele* (Zürich and Leipzig, 1933) 91.**

*Fanny Lewald: “Meine Lebensgeschichte”*

There are two facts about Fanny Lewald (1811-1889) and her role in the call for women’s emancipation that really make an impression: first, that she began publishing about the women’s question several decades before the beginning of the nineteenth-century German bourgeois women’s movement (recognized as the year

1865), and secondly, that she began to do so while living under her father's roof in the city of Königsberg (today Kaliningrad). In 1843, shortly after the publication of her first novel, *Clementine*, Lewald anonymously published a critical essay titled "Einige Gedanken über Mädchenerziehung" [A Couple of Thoughts about Raising Girls] in response to a serial topic on *Mädchenerziehung* [girls' upbringing] in the periodical *Archiv für vaterländische Interessen oder Preußische Provinzial-Blätter* [Archive for Fatherlandish Interests or Prussian Provincial Pages]. She begins her essay by questioning the subject of debate in the first place, but then provides an extensive argument in favor of girls' education, and reminds the reader not to view marriage and motherhood in every woman's case as a means to an end:

Daß [Mutterschaft] ihr naturgemäßer Beruf sei, wer könnte es leugnen? Es giebt keinen würdigern, keinen schönern, aber ist es ausgemacht, daß jedes Mädchen sich verheirathen müsse? (382)

[Who could deny that motherhood is her natural occupation? There is nothing more dignified, more beautiful, but is it assured that every girl must marry?]

In addition, Lewald articulates the importance of a girl's education outside the family home, contradicting the idea that an education under the guidance of a governess within the family home would prevent girls from experiencing the "unruhige Gewühl einer Schule" (Lewald, *Archiv* 216) [the chaotic melee of a school]. These two arguments come as no surprise to a reader familiar with her autobiography *Meine Lebensgeschichte* (1861/62) [My Life's Story], as Lewald seems to be grounding her arguments on her own childhood experience, particularly in this case while writing as a thirty-year-old unmarried woman who still lived in her parental home in

Königsberg. Like her autobiography, this particular essay reveals two major social issues during her time which make the argument for reformed *Mädchenerziehung* a challenge: first, the weight of the counterarguments posted by conservative men and women who insisted on raising girls to be dependent, and second, that society as a whole needed to change the ways it viewed girls' upbringing and education.

The following discussion focuses on Lewald's three volume autobiography, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, which depicts the life of the author from the earliest days of her childhood up to the year 1845, the year Lewald travels to Italy with some female companions. This journey follows a remarkable and long awaited event which took place only several months earlier: at the age of thirty-three, Lewald was granted permission by her father to leave the family home and live independently in Berlin, where she would support herself financially by writing. At this time, Lewald had already proven to her father that she could write, as she succeeded in publishing a small collection of essays, especially through the help and support of her cousin August Lewald, as well as two novels, *Clementine* (1842) and *Jenny* (1843).

Lewald's autobiography is divided into three sections that reflect the various stages of her life: *Im Vaterhaus* [In the Father's House], *Leidensjahre* [Years of Suffering] and *Befreiung und Wanderleben* [Liberation and Unsettled Life]. Ulrike Helmer draws attention to the connection between the title of the second volume, *Leidensjahre*, and J.W. Goethe's well-known novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*;<sup>60</sup> in addition, I would extend this wordplay in the third volume's title to *Wilhelm Meisters*

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<sup>60</sup> See Ulrike Helmer's, "Nachwort", Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main, 1988) 289.

*Wanderjahre*.<sup>61</sup> Especially in the first two volumes of the autobiography, Lewald portrays what it was like to grow up female in nineteenth-century East Prussia, and thus provides us stories that unquestionably reflect the notion of gendered *Erziehung* and *Bildung*. Each new chapter portrays the conflicts derived from feelings of personal want against rigid social and familial expectations within various discourses of everyday life. In addition, there are several examples of how the author's childhood and youth differed from that of her male siblings because of the prevailing construction of female propriety and place. The following paragraphs reveal that Lewald was indeed encouraged to act "feminine" by both of her parents and other dominating figures in society, and in addition, she was warned several times about the dangers of educating herself beyond her 'proper' level. Uniquely, Lewald learns at an early age to use intelligence as a tool to battle the common construction of femininity that sought to confine her to traditional convention. The following discussion of the autobiography not only provides an overview of Lewald's personal accounts of childhood in nineteenth-century East Prussia, but also shows the twenty-first century reader how gender played a major role in upbringing, which eventually adds to the greater picture of cultural identity.

Fanny Marcus was born in Königsberg on March 24, 1811, the first born child of a reputable and non-practicing Jewish family, who later changed its family name to Lewald in the year 1831 after converting to Christianity. (Schneider 135) She writes that her mother, Zipora Lewald née Assur, was denied any education by her own

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<sup>61</sup> Kontanze Bäumer draws attention to multiple references and connections to Goethe in Fanny Lewald's autobiography and travel literature in her article "Reisen als Moment der Erinnerung: Fanny Lewalds (1811-1889) 'Lehr- und Wanderjahre'", *Out of Line/Ausgefallen: The Paradox of Marginality in the Writings of Nineteenth-Century German Women* (Amsterdam, 1989) 137-160.

father, who believed that educating a woman was superfluous. However, Lewald states that her mother remained curious and eager to learn, though she found it difficult to pursue any subject in depth because of the missing fundamentals usually obtained during the early years of a person's education. Lewald's father, David Marcus, on the other hand, came from a family described as "ganz anders" [completely different] in comparison to her mother's relations (Lewald 1: 7). Her father, she writes, was raised by truly *enlightened* parents who displayed a fair amount of "allgemeine Bildung" [general education] and were unconcerned with the rigors of religious practice (Lewald 1: 7). Because of the high regard for education within the Lewald family, it is no surprise that Fanny, the first-born child of the household, would possess an insatiable thirst for knowledge and an eagerness to learn that would eventually serve as fuel to the political fire of educating girls and young women.

Beginning at the age of six, in the year 1817, Lewald attended the *Ulrich'sche Schule* in Königsberg; this was a private Christian school originally established for girls that opened its doors to male pupils the same year of the author's entry. Lewald learned easily and prides herself for being one of "die Paradedferde", or one of the top pupils (Lewald 1: 86). When the school unexpectedly closed, Lewald was forced to end her education at the age of thirteen, one year short of the average duration of schooling for girls from well-off families at this time. The fact alone that Lewald was able to attend the school until the age of thirteen makes her educational experience seem advantageous, but on the contrary, as Brinker-Gabler states, "seit ihrem Eintritt in die Schule sah Fanny Lewald [sich mit] widersprüchlichen Erwartungen

konfrontiert” (15) [since her entrance into the school, Fanny Lewald saw herself confronted with contradictory expectations]. The contradictions are easy to recognize, as they entail the dichotomous positions of good *student* and good *daughter*. One particular example of this contradiction is the praise she receives for being a good student while simultaneously being warned about too much studying. Lewald writes that her mother praised her daughter for her intellectual superiority above other pupils, but at the same time, she warned her daughter that “nichts widerwärtiger und unbrauchbarer sei als ein gelehrtes, unpraktisches Frauenzimmer” (Lewald 1: 117) [nothing is more repulsive and useless than a learned, impractical woman]. The contradictory pattern continues with Lewald’s father, who encouraged his daughter to learn diligently as long as she was enrolled in school; when her schooling had ended at the age of thirteen, however, he expected his daughter to return the favor for her education twice as much by utilizing her time in helping others with household responsibilities. In addition to the inconsistent advice from her parents, Lewald also received warnings from relatives about the dangers of education to femininity:

Verwandte und Freunde des Hauses gaben den Eltern manchmal zu bedenken, daß so viel Lernen und Lesen mir physisch schaden könne [...] (Lewald 1: 70)  
[Relatives and friends of the house sometimes pointed out to my parents that too much learning and reading could damage me physically...]

Beginning at an early age, Lewald recognized and even criticized the social reality of her own gender. Two examples include instances in the classroom where Lewald only received half of the praise for her superior performance because of her gender:

“dein Kopf hätt’ auch besser auf’nem Jungen gesessen [...] wie schade, daß das kein Junge ist” (Lewald 1: 87-88) [your head would sit better on top of a boy [...] what a shame that she isn’t a boy].<sup>62</sup> In reaction to these statements which Lewald found insulting, the author writes that she began to compare herself continuously to the star male pupil in the classroom, and she developed “eine Art Geringschätzung gegen die Frauen” (Lewald 1: 88) [a sort of disdain for women]. Defensively, Lewald claims that she “wollte lernen wie ein Mann” (Lewald 1: 89) [wanted to study like a man] and fantasized about the chances of becoming a professor, like the woman professor in Bologna she had heard about. Lewald confesses that even while at home, she would intentionally leave items around the house in order to contradict the attribute of orderliness commonly associated with femininity.

The transition from days spent at school to days spent at home was not only hard for Lewald, but also for her family. She remarks that she was always ready and willing to help her mother with domestic responsibilities, but no one knew exactly what she should do. (Lewald 1: 139) In order to combat the disorganized and random daily routine of reading and minor household tasks that was slowly becoming his daughter’s habit, Lewald’s father composed a *Stundenzettel* for her, a schedule that she was to follow everyday in order to provide structure to her daily routine. Lewald depicts the outline of the *Stundenzettel* as follows.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Compare to Hedwig Dohm’s Die wissenschaftliche Emanzipation der Frau, 1874 (Zürich 1982) 48-49.

<sup>63</sup> Lewald 1: 140-141.

## Stundenzettel

für

*Fanny Marcus,*

entworfen Ende September, gültig bis zur veränderten Jahreszeit und bis andere Lehrstunden eintreten.

### Allgemeine Bestimmung

Des Morgens wird spätestens um 7 Uhr aufgestanden, damit um 7 ½ Uhr das Ankleiden völlig beendet sei.

### Montag:

- Von 8-9 Uhr Klavierstunde. Übung neuer Stücke.
- “ 9-12 “ Handarbeit, gewöhnliches Nähen und Stricken.
- “ 12-1 “ Nachlesen der alten Lehrbücher, als: Französisch, Geographie, Geschichte, Deutsch, Grammatik u.s.w.
- “ 1-2 ½ “ Erholung und Mittagessen.
- “ 2 ½ - 5 “ Handarbeit gleich oben.
- “ 5-6 “ Klavierstunde bei Herrn Thomas.
- “ 6-7 “ Schreibübung.

### Dienstag:

- Von 8-9 Uhr Übung neuer Klavierstücke.
- “ 9-10 “ Häusliche Handarbeit.
- “ 10-12 “ Unterricht im Generalbaß
- “ 12-1 Uhr gleich Montag
- “ 1-2 ½ “ dito.
- “ 2 ½ -5 “ dito.
- “ 5-6 “ Übung alter Klavierstücke.
- “ 6-7 “ Schreibübung wie Montag.

**Mittwoch** gleich **Montag**; von 5-6 Uhr Übung der alten Musikstücke am Klavier.

**Donnerstag, Freitag und Sonnabend** gleich den ersten drei Wochentagen.

**Sonntag** wird völlig der Bestimmung von Fanny anheimgestellt, mit Ausnahme der Klavierübung von 8-9 Uhr; jedoch müssen die wöchentlich unnötig versäumten Lektionen nachgeholt, und die Stunden, welche am Klavier durch Ausgehen oder durch Besuche versäumt worden, genau ersetzt werden.

Fanny wird durch pünktliche Erfüllung dieses Stundenzettels und durch sonstiges gutes Betragen sich bemühen, ihren Eltern den Beweis zu geben, daß sie würdig sei, noch anderweitigen Unterricht zu erhalten, und von ihrem Vater für ihre Erholungsstunden gute Lesebücher zu bekommen.

Besuch außer dem Hause wird wöchentlich einmal, und nur ausnahmsweise zweimal stattfinden.

Lewald writes that she eventually learned to appreciate the plan, despite its strictness and her disinterest in the activities listed. For five hours a day, she was to sit in the

living room at her proper place by the window and darn socks, mend laundry, and perform other household tasks. Two hours were to be spent playing the piano (an activity she did not enjoy), one hour for rereading old school books (which she already knew verbatim), and one hour for practicing her hand at poetry. She writes, “ich hatte am Abende das niederschlagende Gefühl, den Tag über nichts Rechtes getan zu haben” (Lewald 1: 142) [In the evening I had the depressing feeling of having done nothing at all in the course of the day]. Moreover, Lewald describes a burning envy for her brothers, who were permitted to attend the *Gymnasium* and listen in on lectures. In relation to her brothers’ educational opportunities, she writes, “ihr ganzes Dasein erschien mir vornehmer als das meine” (Lewald 1: 142) [their entire existence appeared much more elegant than mine]. When her two younger brothers were ready to study, she writes, “wie der Vater uns Töchter unter strenger Zucht hielt, so gewährte er den Söhnen, nun sie in das Leben traten, viel Freiheit” (Lewald 1: 259) [as much as father held us daughters under strict obedience, he allowed his sons a lot of freedom upon entering life]. But this was not as carefree as it seems, as Lewald explains in this volume and the later two volumes of her narrative that her brothers’ lives were also ultimately decided by their father, and that no course of study began without their father’s permission.

Although Lewald secretly desired to pursue a daily purpose beyond the responsibility of taking care of her younger siblings, she never expressed her wish to her parents because of the possible accusation of having “viel mehr Verstand als Herz” (Lewald 1: 142) [much more reason than heart]. This accusation, however, would have only been added to Lewald’s list of ‘misbehaviors’ against the ascribed

regulations placed upon her gender. According to Lewald, several of her aunts in Berlin accused her of possessing too much independent thought and intelligence, therefore damaging her chances of ever marrying.

Ich sollte zuvorkommender, sollte naiver, gelegentlich auch verlegener sein, denn so wie ich wäre, so ernsthaft und sicher und bestimmt, könne ich den Männern nicht gefallen; und zu gefallen müsse ich suchen, da sich sonst nicht leicht jemand finden dürfte, der sich ein Mädchen mit so viel unversorgten Geschwistern aus einer nicht bemittelten Familie zur Frau erwählen würde. (Lewald 2: 9)

[I should be more obliging, more naïve, and occasionally more bashful, because just as I was—so serious and confident and decisive—I could not please any men at all: but I had to aim to please, because it would not be easy to find a man who would choose a girl with so many siblings from a family of small means.]

Lewald's mother continuously pushes her to be orderly, and to act more "mädchenhaft und natürlich" [girly and natural] rather than "männlich und schroff" [masculine and brusque], which, on the contrary, were really misinterpretations of Lewald's boredom and depression (Lewald 1: 162).

Although Lewald states that "gegen [ihres] Vaters Befehl kein Widerspruch gestattet war" (Lewald 1: 85) [no contradiction was permitted against her father's command], there does come a point in time when Lewald, in fact, thinks and acts independently, and therefore defies the wishes of her father. This particular example relates to a marriage proposal Lewald receives at the age of twenty-five, from a

*Landrat* [congressional-like government official] of a provincial area in his mid-thirties. Foreshadowing this catastrophic argument that takes place between father and daughter is a scene that occurred about ten years earlier. When Lewald was still a teenager, her father openly praised Goethe's literary character Eugenie, the tragic heroine of the play *Die natürliche Tochter* [The Natural Daughter] (1803), and therefore left his opinion on his daughter's purpose in life closed for any opposing interpretation (Lewald 1: 163).<sup>64</sup> After Lewald learns of the heroine Eugenie, she secretly promised "[sich] nie zu einer Heirat überreden zu lassen, und [sich] nie anders als aus voller Überzeugung und Liebe zu verheiraten" (Lewald 1: 165) [to never allow herself to be forced into marriage, and to never allow herself to marry unless out of the fullest conviction and love]. Ten years later, on the day of the actual marriage proposal, Lewald stayed true to her own promise and refused to marry the man chosen for her. In the following scene with her father, Lewald depicts harsh words between herself and her father, who contested that "eine Frau selbst in einer nicht ganz glücklichen Ehe noch immer besser daran ist als ein altes Mädchen" (Lewald 2: 134) [a woman in an unhappy marriage is much better off than an old maid], and "eine Frau, die in sich selbst gefestigt sei und neben ihrem naturgemäßen Berufe ein eignes inneres Leben habe, immer glücklich sein könne, wenn sie ihre Pflicht gegen ihren Mann erfülle und ihre Kinder gut erziehe" (Lewald 1: 186) [a woman who is content with herself and her natural occupation can always be happy when she fulfills her duties to her husband and raises her children well].

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<sup>64</sup> Von ihrem Halbbruder unter Druck gesetzt, willigt die uneheliche Herzogstochter Eugenie in eine Heirat mit einem Nichtadeligen ein, um ihr Vaterland so vor der Revolution bewahren zu helfen (Lewald 1: 296) [Under pressure from her half brother, the illegitimate duke's daughter Eugenie marries a man of nobility in order to help protect her fatherland from a revolution.]

The fact that Lewald's father refers to a classical literary figure in order to convey his opinion on his daughter's responsibility to the family and to society makes an interesting point of discussion. Knowing that her father, as mentioned above, came from an *enlightened* and highly *gebildete* family, it is no surprise that he uses these classical references. Lewald's father, in my opinion, applied the most contemporary philosophies of *Erziehung* to his eldest daughter's situation that were avant-garde at the time. A statement by Manfred Fuhrmann reflects this notion:

Die klassische deutsche Bildungsidee gründete sich auf ein neues Verhältnis zur Antike. Man glaubte oder währte, dass die eigenen Ideale ein historisches Vorbild hätten, dass sie im alten Griechenland schon einmal verwirklicht worden seien. [...] Was man den Griechen andichtete, erhoffte man für sich selbst, und so stimmten das Griechenbild und das Humanitätsideal der Weimarer Klassiker im Wesentlichen überein. (Fuhrmann 50)

[The classical German idea of *Bildung* based itself on a new relationship to the ancient world. One believed or imagined that this new ideal acquired a historical archetype that had already been achieved in ancient Greece. [...] What one credited to the Greeks, one also hoped to apply to his or her self. In this way, the humanistic ideals of the *Weimarer Klassiker* essentially corresponded to the image of Greece.]

By referring to the figure Eugenie, who abstained from pursuing her own desires in order to save her country through forced marriage, Lewald's father encourages his daughter to "practice" a form of *Bildung* associated with her gender that was ideal at the time. One cannot help but ask whether Lewald's father also sensed beforehand

his daughter's potential refusal, and therefore found a way of encouragement that would suit his quick-minded and intellectual daughter? By ultimately refusing to marry the man chosen by her father, does Lewald appear in the eyes of an authority figure from the generation of the Enlightenment as an *ungebildete* woman? Moreover, does Lewald's promise never to marry unless out of love reflect the next generation of *sentimental* thinkers who sought to defy rationality through passion and to defy the wishes of the older generation by following their own hearts?

The feelings of guilt that surfaced after Lewald refused to marry were immeasurable. In addition to believing herself accountable for her future financial dependence on the family, the following citation reveals how Lewald simultaneously battles the disappointing reality of uselessness. Here, she speaks not only on her own behalf, but also for the thousands of women like her who struggle against feelings of hopelessness and a guilty conscience just because they do not marry.

Wir litten alle, ich direct und die Meinen indirekt, von der falschen, auch jetzt noch herrschenden Sitte, welche die Töchter der Mittelstände über die Jahre der Kindheit und Jugend hinaus zum nutzlosen Hinleben in den Banden der Familie verdammt, auch wenn sie denselben lange entwachsen und in jedem Betrachte für ein selbständiges Leben und Walten reif geworden sind. [...] Als die Älteste von sechs erwachsenen und zu versorgenden Töchtern war ich für den ganzen Organismus der Familie überflüssig und unnütz wie das fünfte Rad am Wagen, und obendrein hinderlich als ein solches fünftes Rad, weil ich für mich eigene und unabhängige Bewegungen machen wollte und machen mußte, um mich zu erhalten. (Lewald 2: 233)

[We all suffered, I directly and those like me indirectly, from the false convention still in existence, which damns middle class daughters for years beyond their childhood and youth to a useless existence within the confinements of the family, even when they have outgrown this role and all considerations for an independent life have grown mature. [...] As the oldest of six grown up and unmarried daughters, I was as superfluous and useless as a fifth wheel on a wagon for the entire family just because I wanted to – and had to – make a move towards independence in order to survive.]

Lewald writes “je freier ich mich innerlich zu entwickeln geneigt schien, um so unerbittlicher und strenger wurden die Forderungen, welche mein Vater an meinen Gehorsam und an meine Pflichterfüllung stellte” (Lewald 1: 179) [the more I appeared to be at ease with myself, the more inflexible and strict my father’s demands became on my obedience and fulfillment of duties]. This comment reflects a statement by Klika, who writes „bürgerliche Mädchen waren in ihrer Bewegungsfreiheit weitgehend eingeschränkt“ (289) [bourgeois girls were largely restricted in their liberty of action]. Every attempt that Lewald makes to find a job—or at least a meaningful task—outside of the house, her father deems inappropriate for his daughter: this includes taking younger siblings out for a walk, becoming a governess, or becoming involved with charitable organizations.

In conclusion to this section, we witness how Lewald uses her own experience in order to eventually write her reaction to Dr. David in the aforementioned essay “Einige Gedanken über Mädchenerziehung”, and why she argues that while motherhood is desirable, the right to an education is indispensable for securing a

woman's happiness. In addition, Lewald's own conflict with the limitations set forth by her father after her refusal to marry reflect the need for an overall cultural shift in attitude toward's the construction of "proper femininity". Too quickly, one relates the idea of "public space" as a concept that denotes political or social activity, but as Lewald's autobiography reveals, the construction that related "proper femininity" with the bourgeois "private sphere" even affected a woman's permission to take a walk and be "seen". As a child, Lewald received permission to leave the home in order to walk to school and interact with other children, but this was no longer the case after school had ended and Lewald's adult life had begun. Lewald finally obtains permission to leave her parents' house and pursue an independent life only after proving her ability to write; nevertheless, her father urges her to write anonymously, as public attention could still "tarnish" the family's reputation. A discussion of her Lewald's autobiography continues in the next chapter of the dissertation.

*Gabriele Reuter: "Vom Kinde zum Menschen" (1921)*

Unlike Lewald, Gabriele Reuter (1859-1941) maintained a more indirect position during the nineteenth-century German women's movement by defining herself as "Betrachterin – nicht Kämpferin" [an observer – not a fighter], as she writes in her autobiography *Vom Kinde zum Menschen* [From a Child to a Person] (462). Nevertheless, her writings reveal a sharp and unyielding criticism of bourgeois culture that ascribed strict conventions of behavior to its female and even male

citizens,<sup>65</sup> making her one of the most discussed nineteenth-century women writers within the area of German Gender Studies. Reuter was born in Alexandria, Egypt, but moved with her family back and forth between Prussian Germany and Egypt several times during the course of her childhood. This, in my opinion, is one of the major factors that provided Reuter with a sharp and critical eye towards the customs and habits of upper-bourgeois culture, especially in regards to her own experiences depicted in her autobiography (published in 1921). The power of cultural comparison as well as an almost distanced observance eventually provided the fuel for Reuter's compelling bestseller *Aus guter Familie* (1895), which is also discussed in this chapter.

When comparing the autobiographies of Lewald and Reuter, it is crucial to recognize the chronological difference between the authors in relation to the changes that occurred in German society. Reuter, born almost fifty years later than Lewald, portrays a bourgeois way of life in her texts that reflects a more imperial, industrial, expansionist, and even materialist Germany. Reuter's literary career not only began several decades after the official beginning of the organized German bourgeois women's movement, but also surfaced during a time in which more women made their way into the world of writing and publishing. Despite the differences of time and everyday culture, however, both women's autobiographical tales of experience as "bourgeois daughters" reveal striking similarities that suggest the notion of a stagnant and unaltered culture in regards to women's reality. This reflects a statement by Julia Kristeva in her essay "Women's Time" [orig. *Le Temps des femmes*] (1979) that

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<sup>65</sup> The male protagonist Fritz von Kosegarten in Reuter's novel *Der Amerikaner* (1907) conveys the notion that men were also affected by patriarchal bourgeois moral code.

postulates women's relationship to time as diagonal, opposed to the time of history, which is defined as linear.<sup>66</sup> In this case, the concept of femininity compared to masculinity is indeed horizontal, as it does not seem to shift at all in congruence with the course of history and its respective changes to lifestyle and social environment. Both Lewald and Reuter reveal differences of upbringing that differ from their male siblings, and describe the watchful eye of their parents—particularly their fathers—who expected their daughters to obey the conventional principles of “proper femininity”.

Gabriele Elise Karoline Alexandrine Reuter was born on February 8, 1859, the third child of the appointed merchant Carl and his wife “Hannchen” Reuter née Behmer, in Alexandria, Egypt. She first traveled to Germany at the age of six and stayed with relatives in the city of Dessau during the years 1864 to 1869. During this time, the Reuter family intermingled with high society, where they became known for their lucrative business in Egypt; the children of the family even attended tutoring sessions and dance lessons with the children of the local aristocracy. The Reuter family moved back to Alexandria, Egypt, for several years, and returned permanently to Sachsen Anhalt in 1872, when Reuter was thirteen years old. This second phase of residence in Germany, however, proved to be less fortunate, beginning with the death of Reuter's father after their return. At the age of fourteen, Reuter entered a local *ländliches Töchterinstitut* [rural boarding school for girls] in the town of Wolfenbüttel but did not stay for the entire academic year for two reasons: the family's business in Egypt had gone bankrupt, and Reuter needed to help her mother

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<sup>66</sup> See Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (New York, 1986) for a more detailed explanation of this concept.

at home. The family settled close to industrialist relatives in the neighboring towns of Alt- and Neuwaldensleben, but then moved to Weimar after the disclosure of their financial ruin. This period of hardship, Reuter writes, marked the end of her childhood.

Like Lewald, Reuter begins her autobiography with a description of her family's history, emphasizing region and social class status. She pays a large amount of attention to her great grandmother, Philippine Engelhard née Gatterer (1756-1831), and describes her as a famous poet and salonnière of her time. In addition, she boasts about her great grandmother's refusal to marry the Enlightenment world traveler Georg Forster and admires her courage for following her heart instead of the wishes of those around her. The next family figure to receive great attention in the autobiography is Reuter's father, who became the world traveler generations later as a business apprentice in England, France, and the "Orient". Carl Reuter's critical letter to Alexander von Humboldt on the promise of cotton and linen textiles in the Orient (coincidentally during the weavers' crisis of the mid-nineteenth century) impressed the renowned intellectual to such an extent that he forwarded the message to the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who appointed Carl Reuter the mercantile position in Egypt. (Reuter 31-32)

Reuter portrays her upbringing and early educational experiences in Egypt in both a positive and negative light. On the one hand, she compares herself to her two older brothers, who left the house every weekday morning in order to attend the *Missionsschule* [mission's school]; Reuter, on the contrary, received private instruction in the family home from a governess. While her brothers were learning to

speak French, Italian, and Arabic through live and hands-on conversational practice, Reuter learned from books under the direction of her governess Fräulein Clara, with whom she never developed a friendly relationship. Despite the advantages of attending the *Missionsschule*, however, Carl Reuter eventually sent the oldest sibling, Thomas, back to Germany in order to receive a more proper education. Overall, however, Reuter portrays her childhood experience in Egypt as extremely advantageous compared to the mainstream experience of girls in Germany.

Die großen Eindrücke, nach denen erlesene Menschen weite Reisen unternehmen, wurden uns Kindern täglich in neuer Fülle geboten. Wir waren keineswegs reif dazu, sie richtig zu würdigen, aber wir freuten uns an ihnen.  
(103)

[The great impressions for which well-read people take on long journeys were offered to us children every day in new ways. In no way were we mature enough to appreciate them properly, but we really enjoyed them.]

Reuter describes the casualty and flexibility of learning, particularly during the family's stay with another German-speaking family in Cairo.

Wir trieben miteinander, was uns Freude machte, was uns innerlich wirklich beschäftigte. Alles andere, wie deutsche Grammatik und besonders das Rechnen waren lästige Beigaben, die wir eilig erledigten, um zur Hauptsache zurückzukehren.

[We did whatever we wanted to with each other, whatever occupied our interests. Everything else, like German grammar and especially arithmetic,

were troublesome additions that we completed quickly in order to return to the most important things.]

Overall, Reuter describes her childhood education in Egypt as “lückenhaft” [full of gaps], but is proud of having received a different kind of childhood experience in contrast to the traditional practices found in her native country (112).

Reuter articulates the recognition of difference between her own upbringing and that of girls of her age and class in Germany. If she would have stayed in Dessau, Reuter writes, “würde ich wahrscheinlich zu dem oberflächlichen Geschöpf geworden sein, das geschmackvoll gekleidet, hübsch anzusehen und von der üblichen Bücher-Bildung geformt, eine “Dame” genannt wird” (93) [I probably would have become one of the superficial creations, who dresses tastefully, is pretty to look at, who is formed by the typical education from books and called a “lady”]. It is also worth noting that the first citation above regarding Reuter’s experience in Cairo contains the word “wir”, or “we”; this implies that children of both genders were exposed to the same type of learning environment, or at least while visiting the artifacts and landscapes of cultural history. In due course, Carl Reuter decided to move back to Germany and provide his daughter with a “proper” education, as he claimed his daughter “sei eine kleine überspannte Trine und müsse in die Gesellschaft von Mädchen [ihres] Alters und unter strengere Aufsicht kommen” (152) [has become a little exaggerated Trina and has to enter an environment with girls her age and under stricter supervision].

As mentioned above, Reuter’s educational experience in Germany consists of two periods: her years in Dessau, 1864-1869, as a pupil in a private elementary school

for girls, and 1872-1873, during her stay at the *ländliches Töchterinstitut* [countryside boarding school for daughters]. Reuter begins her description of the private elementary school by nostalgically claiming it to be the place of her first “dichterischer Erfolg” [poetic success], where she entertained her classmates for over a half hour with storytelling (59). But on a more negative note, Reuter depicts an early feeling of difference compared to other girls her age. When comparing herself to her playmate Hedwig von O, the daughter of a high ranked Prussian military official, she states: “sie wurde erzogen, während man mich wachsen liess” (65) [she was raised, while I was allowed to grow]. In addition, she comments on her brother’s experience with children of upper-crust society and his complaints of having to address his classmates with the formal “Sie”. In retrospect, Reuter ultimately criticizes bourgeois society for its gendered modes of upbringing by stating, “die Konvention des deutschen Bürgertums, von dem die Mädchen weit enger umschlossen sind als die Knaben, war zu stark, als dass ich ihr widerstanden hätte” (93) [the conventions of the German bourgeoisie, in which the girls live much more closed-in than the boys, were too strong for me to withstand].

As previously stated, Reuter attended the *Töchterpensionat* Neu-Watzum in Wolfenbüttel for less than one year. During her stay, she writes that she was unable to identify herself with this particular group of girls, whose upbringings shaped and developed them into the type of “conventional” bourgeois daughter that she herself did not and would not become. Her boarding school experience was first overshadowed by her father’s recent death and then came to an abrupt stop with the bankruptcy of the Egyptian business. Reuter metaphorically connects the winter

months in boarding school to her personal feelings of isolation and difference: just as a white wall of ice had frosted over the windows of the large hall, so too had a wall of ice surrounded her once-warm Egyptian heart. (185) In addition to this, Reuter had developed a class-consciousness that really surfaces in this scene upon the recognition of the “haves” and the “have nots”. In recognizing herself as one of the “have nots” for the first time in her life, she learned how to view customs and expectations of the bourgeoisie from the perspective of the outsider. Reuter states that she was “umgeben von fröhlichen, wohlgepflegten, gutgenährten Mädchen, die hübsch gekleidet mit sorgloser Lust einer heiteren Zukunft entgegenzugehen schienen” (189) [surrounded by happy, nicely kempt, well-nourished and prettily dressed girls who appeared ready to take on a pleasant future]. She played with guessing the futures of her schoolmates, describing one as a true “lady” in making: “nein, die konnte man sich nicht anders vorstellen, als im Arm eines ebenso eleganten Herrn im Ballsaal dahinschwebend” (189) [no, it was impossible to imagine her in any other way than on the arm of an equally elegant man in the ballroom]. But when it came to her own future, she dreaded the idea of becoming a governess, especially when she recalled her own experience with her governess as a child.

Aber ich hatte meine Erzieherin immer ein wenig als Untergebene empfunden. Ob ich nun auch Erzieherin werden und von mir einer gnädigen Frau sagen lassen musste: Fräulein – ich wünsche...Welch eine wunderliche Vorstellung! (189)

[But I had always seen my governess as somewhat inferior. If I become a governess now and allow a lady to say to me: “Miss – I want...” – what a strange thought!]

As Alimadad-Mensch claims, the family’s social decline after the death of the father turns the Reuter from a princess into Cinderella without any forewarnings or period of transition. (28) The sudden combination of financial decline with the expectations to fulfill daughterly roles impacted the author with a tremendous weight on both the individual as well as the social level. Once welcomed to higher society as well-traveled relatives living in an “exotic” land, Hannchen Reuter and her five children now found themselves being slighted by the only family members who could aid in their situation, the industrialist family Nathusius in Althaldensleben. While attending a ball, Reuter became the victim of malicious gossip while attending a ball, and she reluctantly realized the upper crust of society no longer welcomed the presence of her family.

Before moving to Weimar, Reuter’s household responsibilities were similar to that of a servant compared to her brothers, who eventually left the house one by one in order to pursue a career. Reuter writes: “Was leistete denn ich? Die demütige Arbeit einer Magd” (279) [What did I do? The humiliating work of a maid]. Her new tasks at home include “Stiefel putzen, Jungenhosen flicken, Strümpfe stopfen, kochen, waschen, plätten, [und] Wasser aus dem quellenden artesischen Brunnen herbeischleppen“ (279) [cleaning boots, mending boys’ pants, darning socks, cooking, laundry, ironing, and carrying water from the artesian well]. In addition,

Reuter writes that her four brothers did not view her as a young woman, but rather as the responsible daughter and sister who took care of the house and their mother.

Die Brüder dachten nicht daran, mich in der Weise zu verehren, wie die junge Herrin in Althaldensleben von all den hübschen Offizieren angebetet und verehrt wurde. Unsere Jungen sahen in mir immer nur die lästige Erzieherin zur Ordnung und Sparsamkeit, die Mahnerin zur Rücksicht auf die kränkliche Mutter. (279)

[My brothers did not think about honoring me in the same way as the young lady in Althaldensleben, who was approached and honored by all the handsome officers. Our boys only saw in me the troublesome governess of order and frugality, and the admonisher of consideration for their sick mother.]

Reuter writes that while she carried out her household responsibilities, her mind remained occupied with the wildest fantasies of adventure: for her brothers, however, such fantasies were actually becoming realities. For example, the oldest sibling, Thomas, pursued the business of sugar production in Tucuman, Argentina, and eventually married an English woman, whose youngest daughter they would send to Reuter for “proper” upbringing.<sup>67</sup> (367) Whereas Atti, the second oldest, succeeded in establishing a cocoa plantation in the rainforest of Brazil, the third brother, Carlo, immigrated to the state of Florida, where he married and settled down for the rest of his life. Finally, the youngest sibling, Martin, studied medicine and remained in Germany.

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<sup>67</sup> Reuter writes that she found the inspiration for one of her first novels Kolonialistenvolk (1891) from her brother Thomas and his stories of Argentina. (Reuter, *Vom Kinde* 367)



**Figure 3: “Die Familie Reuter, Weimar, 1884.” Gabriele Reuter, *Vom Kinde zum Menschen*. 367. Reuter stands between two of her brothers, posing with either a tea or coffee pot.**

Despite Reuter’s obligation to care for her aging mother, she remarkably found her place in society and established a literary career without abandoning her most consuming family responsibility. Ironically, the financial, social, and personal hardships mentioned above contributed to Reuter’s successful literary career with as much weight as her childhood experience in two different cultures. The following well-known statement by Reuter reflects the notion that her writings derive entirely from her own life experiences as a young woman in the German middle class.

Und plötzlich wußte ich, wozu ich auf der Welt war --: zu künden, was Mädchen und Frauen schweigend litten. [...] -- die stumme Tragik des Alltags wollte ich künden. [...] Die Tragik in dem Los des Weibes: geboren zu sein, erzogen zu werden für eine Berufung, die sie gelehrt ist, als ihr einziges Glück

zu betrachten, und dieses Glück, diese Berufung wird ihr stets vor Augen gehalten und doch nie gewährt – niemals darf sie eintreten in den Tempel des Gottes, zu dessen Priesterin sie doch gebildet ist. (432)

[And suddenly I knew my purpose for living--: to proclaim what girls and women silently suffered. [...] -- I wanted to bear witness to the silent tragedy of everyday life. [...] The tragedy in the fate of women: to be born and raised for a vocation that she is taught to see as her only means of happiness, and this happiness, this vocation instead is held in front of her eyes and never granted – never is she allowed to walk into the temple of the God whose Priestess she is actually prepared to be.]

Like Lewald, Reuter took her first breath of independence only after accomplishing literary success. This defines her personal transition of identity from “family daughter” to “woman writer” as a *new* way of living for bourgeois women. She claims: “ich war nun kein junges Mädchen mehr, keine Dame der Gesellschaft, vor der man Rücksicht nehmen mußte – ich war Schriftstellerin, Kollegin und freier Mensch” (470) [I was no longer a young girl, nor a lady of society which one must take into consideration – I was a woman writer, a woman colleague, and a free person]. Alimadad-Mensch states that the fame of authorship not only grants Reuter freedom from the constricting confinement of her small-town life, but also the fulfillment as woman in regards to emotion and sexuality. (183) During her stay in the city of Munich, Reuter broke all forms of bourgeois taboo by becoming involved in a very secret love affair: she has never revealed the name of the man, who was also the father of her daughter, Lili Reuter, born only a few years after the publication of

*Aus guter Familie*.<sup>68</sup> Reuter, along with her mother and daughter, eventually settled in Berlin, where she supported her small family with a successful literary career, publishing at least twenty-five narrative works after the release of *Aus guter Familie*. In addition, she wrote for various newspapers and journals, published children's stories, and even served as a correspondence to the *New York Times*. (Tatlock, *Our Correspondent* 1999)

In conclusion to this section, the most striking feature in relation to the discussion of *Bildung* and gender is how Reuter views herself as an outsider while living in Germany and speaking her native language, German. Although chapter four of the dissertation focuses on the idea of the “self” as a form of *Bildung*, Reuter's depiction of “self” as an outsider of German society proves itself worth mentioning at this moment. The opposite of the “self” is the “other”, and Reuter portrays her feelings of otherness, difference and insecurity after returning to Germany for a permanent stay—a plausible cultural question within post-colonial discourse. Without veering too far from the goals of this project, it is vital to discuss shortly how the vagueness between the “self” and “other” come into play. The idea of the “other” conveys the idea of “the non-self and the non-us” (Robins 249). If (among other things) the idea of “otherness” defines itself through association and cultural identity, is it plausible to think of this process of awareness as a unique or untraditional mode of *Bildung*? Does Reuter's recognition of herself as “different” in the course of time

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<sup>68</sup> Reuter's novel *Das Tränenhaus* (1908) [House of Tears] hits bourgeois morality in its most tabooed context with the depiction of motherhood outside of wedlock. The novel criticizes society which idealizes motherhood yet condemns sexuality. See Faranak Alimadad-Mensch, *Gabriele Reuter: Porträt einer Schriftstellerin*, (New York, 1984) 168-174, for a deeper insight into Reuter's autobiographical connotations in this novel that portray her own experience as an unwed mother in bourgeois society.

uncover an awareness of “self” congruent to the anti-hero of a *Bildungsroman*—the one who never reaches a state of harmony with his or her social surroundings? Or should one understand Reuter’s feelings of otherness and difference merely as an awkward stage of transition—something she eventually overcomes after successfully publishing her bestseller and establishing an untraditional place for her “untraditional self” in German bourgeois society?

*Gendered Morals and Learning to Love, Love, Love:*

*“Aus guter Familie: Leidensgeschichte eines Mädchens” (1895)*

Referring once again to Reuter’s autobiography, *Vom Kinde zum Menschen*, we find a quote by the author about her literary success with the release of her novel *Aus guter Familie* in 1895: “auf einen literarischen Erfolg hatte ich gehofft – den kulturellen Einfluß, den mein Buch auf die Entwicklung des deutschen Mädchens, der deutschen Familie haben würde, konnte ich nicht voraussehen!” (Reuter *Vom Kinde*, 474) [I had hoped for a literary success – I could have never foreseen the cultural influence that my book would have on the development of the German girl and the German family!]. The novel’s critical portrayal of German bourgeois society was so scandalous that even thirty-three years later in 1928, “weder ein französischer noch ein englischer Verleger wagte es, seinem Publikum eine Übersetzung zu bieten” [neither a French nor an English publisher dared to offer a translation to its public] (Reuter, *Über die Entstehung*, n.p.). Without doubt, the main reason for the novel’s success was the fact that bourgeois girls could identify themselves with the heroine of

the story, which was the intention of the author in any case. (c.f. Brinker-Gabler, *Selbständigkeit* 46).

The novel is set in the middle region of the Prussian state during the cultural-historical period known as Wilhelmine Germany, a society comparable to Victorian England. Named after Kaiser Wilhelm II, *Wilhelminismus* characterizes an especially upper-bourgeois lifestyle that embraced the concepts of empire and capital expansion, conservatism, Protestantism, and decent, proper behavior. The novel criticizes the very heart of German society—the construction of bourgeois propriety—by revealing the hypocrisies and lies within its own borders. While depicting the daily customs and beliefs incorporated into the Wilhelmine upper-class lifestyle, this novel simultaneously reveals the very problems that arise under the veil of perfection by following a young female protagonist, Agathe Heidling, from her first confirmation to her eventual mental and spiritual breakdown as an unmarried woman in her early thirties.

Similar to the discussions above on the autobiographical works of Lewald and Reuter, my analysis of the novel *Aus guter Familie* in this chapter concentrates on the cultural problem of the internalization of gender on account of one's *Erziehung*, or upbringing. Compared to the autobiographies, however, the discussion of this fictional novel reveals one element that is not apparent in the other texts: unlike the autobiographical stories of Lewald and Reuter, the protagonist of this particular novel neither confronts nor battles the ascribed modes of behavior defined by gender, but rather remains silent until it is too late. Secondly, unlike Lewald and

Reuter, our fictional protagonist never finds a literary voice that helps her succeed in finding independence and a break from the role of “eternal” family daughter.

Throughout the novel, Agathe Heidling continuously receives instruction on how to be or remain a “good” daughter, while on the contrary, the very people who give her this advice are guilty themselves of hypocrisy and secrecy. Attributes of character and behavior associated with gender and class compose the perfectly idealized zone of protection for Agathe in order to keep her “good”, and her family members seek to protect Agathe from any man who does not fit the mold of this idealized conception of noble masculinity. These male characters include her Socialist cousin Martin, proletarian workers in a family owned factory, and even a humble preacher whom Agathe admires for his devotion to the poor. Agathe’s parents also advise their daughter to stay away from several women, including the actress Fräulein Daniel, and the innocent proletarian girl Wiesing Groterjahn. However, in the course of time, Agathe realizes that both Fräulein Daniel and Wiesing Groterjahn are merely victims of the double standard. The point of hypocrisy is that there are male and female members within Agathe’s own family circle who also live against “bourgeois goodness” behind closed doors. These examples of hypocrisy include sexual exploitation of the proletarian girl Wiesing; a courtier’s interest in marriage as a means of financial gain; and a flirtatious bohemian artist with a child out of wedlock. People who appear to embrace the bourgeois ideal of virtue and principle surround Agathe, but in reality, they show themselves to be just as “impure” as any man or woman who does not embrace moral convention. Even more dangerous is the combination of narrow-mindedness with patriarchal

authority as portrayed especially in Agathe's father, a local government official who uses his own constructed ideal of femininity in order to prevent Agathe from ever developing intellectually and physically beyond the role of "good" daughter.

The topic of gender myth based on idealized constructions of "good" femininity and masculinity leads me to ask whether we could expand Silvia Bovenschen's *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit* (1979) [The Imagined Femininity] to create a new perspective that analyzes the myth behind the descriptive norm attached to gender and social class: *eine imaginierte Bürgerlichkeit* [an imagined bourgeois way of being]. Whereas Bovenschen's publication concentrates on the discrepancies between women in real society and representations of women in cultural productions, the "imagined bourgeoisie" could expound on this idea by including both genders within a particular class and its idealized lifestyle. Reuter's novel *Aus guter Familie* reveals the contradiction between socially ascribed guidelines of propriety for bourgeois women and bourgeois men as well as the imagined ideal of bourgeois "goodness" that served as a mask of decency, respectability, and appropriateness. Similar to the constructions of femininity and masculinity, I also suggest that the construction of "values" and the idea of foreseeable behavior attached to a particular social class contribute to a larger body of culture in nineteenth-century Germany.

There are many examples of the bourgeois gender "myth" in this novel, but for this discussion, let us first give attention to the discrepancies between the feminine and masculine behavioral codes by focusing on a factor considered most important in a woman's upbringing – learning to love. The opening paragraphs of the novel instantly reveal Agathe's position in her rural community as a pious protestant girl

from an upper middle class family. The scene begins in a protestant church, where our protagonist prepares to receive her first communion. Due to the thick provincial dialect notable in a background conversation about the birth of a calf the night before, the reader is apparent of the fact that all other girls taking part in the communion are from families with a much lower social status. Therefore, Agathe sits apart from them in her own pew. Following the ceremony, Agathe receives the advice from the pastor and her father about how to behave and continue to grow as a “good” young woman. Agathe learns that love—both universal and selfless love—is and will continue to be her sole purpose in life:

Liebe – Liebe – Liebe sei Dein ganzes Leben – aber die Liebe bleibe frei von Selbstsucht, begehre nicht das Ihre. Du darfst nach Glück verlangen – Du darfst auch glücklich sein – aber in berechtigter Weise [...] (20)

[Love, love, love should be your entire life. But this love should remain free of selfishness. Covet not what is theirs. You may desire happiness. You may even be happy, but in a righteous manner [...] (11)]

Agathe listens carefully to the pastor’s advice, but even her young mind is able to recognize the unclear message on how “properly” love. She secretly reacts with frustration and her eyes immediately fill with tears from confusion. She is a careful listener and an obedient daughter, and therefore begins to internalize feelings of guilt for not understanding:

Widerspruch wagte sie natürlich nicht. Sie hatte ja Gehorsam und demütige Unterwerfung gelobt für das ganze Leben. (24)

[Naturally she didn't dare to offer opposition. She had, after all, promised obedience and humble submissiveness for her entire life. (14)]

Despite her confusion, Agathe does take to heart the advice of her father and pastor. As the plot continues to unfold throughout the novel, the reader sees that—although Agathe appears to her family as a selfless and compliant girl with actions that revolve around the idea of “love”—she subconsciously struggles at the same time against the rules and expectations placed upon her shoulders in comparison to the actions of others.

The greatest “threat” against the decency of a bourgeois woman was exposure to any topic related to sex and human sexuality. Agathe grows older, develops crushes, and falls in love, but all of her feelings remain unrequited. Although her body matures, Agathe almost forces her understanding of sex to remain at a child-like level of naivety; this is a reflection of her “good” upbringing, which neither provided nor encouraged a young woman's understanding of sex. Agathe first learns about the tabooed subject from her friend Eugenie, who received her own education on the topic by badgering workers in her family's factory for information. The disclosure of information shatters Agathe's world of innocence, crushes her childish belief in the stork, leading her to throw a tantrum fit of disgust towards her mother. As a result of this incident, the parents of both girls insist on protecting their daughters from any further improper behavior by sending them to an elite boarding school, as in any other place the girls might have easily been exposed to “ein häßliches Wort oder gewöhnliche Manieren” (28) [a nasty word or vulgar manners (17)]. However, the tabooed subject of sex once again makes its way into the lives of the girls from proper

families, who gathered eagerly around forbidden books and whispered secrets about their experiences with the opposite gender. Even her friend Eugenie reveals the true reason behind her stay in the boarding school: because of her love affair with a working class man in her family's factory and her parents' insistence on keeping them apart from one another. Remaining true to her former lessons on "goodness", Agathe becomes an outsider amongst the girls because of her ignorance, and in defense, she hides her lack of knowledge behind a veil of proud piousness while secretly wishing for her inclusion on the girls' conversations. Ironically, however, it was only Agathe who did not react with outrage when the news was revealed that a teacher's wife was expecting a child: "Die jungen Damen waren einig in der Empörung, daß man ihnen, den Töchtern der besten Familien, einen so anstößigen Anblick zumuten könne!" (45-46) [The young ladies were united in their outrage that such an offensive sight should be forced upon them, daughters from the best families! (31)]

Agathe's understanding of middle class men as virtuous gentlemen is crushed on three different occasions. The first incident occurs behind the closed doors of her own home, where Agathe learns that her brother Walter, a young officer, was sexually violating the housemaid Wiesing Groterjahn (originally one of the peasant girls at Agathe's confirmation). Agathe confronted her brother in order to protect Wiesing, but her brother only responded, "es ist unpassend von Dir, an solche Dinge zu rühren!" (84) [It's improper of you to speak of such things! (62)]. Wiesing leaves the house in order to escape Walter's violations, only to eventually resurface in the desolate world of prostitution, a common fate of many young women in the urban

proletarian class. (c.f. Weedon, *Gender* 113) A second occasion involves a brief affair with the decadent artist Adrian Lutz, a man Agathe instantly falls in love with. Although she received a warning from her aunt concerning his seedy reputation, Agathe idealizes the artist and visualizes him in a perfect light before ever holding a conversation with him. But her crush comes to an end upon the disclosure of his relationship to the young actress Fräulein Daniel and the son they have together; despite Fräulein Daniel's obvious hardships in dealing with a child out of wedlock in bourgeois society, Agathe envies her from the childish perspective of always having Lutz in her life. The third and final incident has the largest impact on Agathe's life and it concerns her relationship with her cousin Martin. The development of their relationship remains overshadowed by Martin's original interest and then later activity in the politics of Socialism. While accompanying Agathe to her first ball, Martin reprimands her for following the traditions of the "verrottete Bourgeoisie" (62) [rotten bourgeoisie (44)], but then confides in her to protect his Socialist writings before fleeing the country in order to escape the imperialist guard. In the final chapters of the novel, Agathe and Martin coincidentally meet up at a *Kurort* [a spa-like sanatorium] in Switzerland, where Martin tries to persuade Agathe to follow him back to his new hometown so that she could live independently and finally escape the role of family daughter. Her hope shatters, however, when she watches Martin haughtily flirt with a waitress. At this point, Agathe realizes her cousin does not love her, but is only interested in promoting another case of Socialist victory over the bourgeois way of life. She runs away in a fury, disappointed once again by unrequited love, and braces herself to end her own life. The only thing that holds her

back from committing suicide is the promise to her deceased mother to take care of her father.

A little over the age of thirty, Agathe remains confused about her eternal role of family daughter and begins to descend the downward spiral of spiritual and emotional disappointment.

Entwickelten sich denn alle Wesen in dieser Welt zu höheren Daseinform und nur sie und ihresgleichen blieben davon ausgeschlossen? Sie war “das junge Mädchen” und mußte es bleiben, bis man sie welk und vertrocknet, mit grauen Haaren und eingeschrumpftem Hirn in den Sarg legte - ? Wußte denn keiner, daß es grausam war, eine Blume, die nach Entfaltung strebte, durch ein seidenes Band zu umschnüren, damit sie Knospe bleiben sollte? Wußte keiner, daß sie dann im Innern des Kelches verrottete und faulte? (219)

[Did everything in this world evolve into higher forms of existence and only she and her kind remained excluded from it? She was “the young girl” and had to remain so until they laid her in her coffin, withered and desiccated, with gray hair and a shrunken brain? Didn’t anyone know that it was cruel to tie a silk ribbon around a burgeoning flower in order to keep it a bud? Didn’t anyone know that in the interior of the calyx it rotted and moldered? (169)]

Agathe was raised to “love” in preparation for her future role as wife and mother, but she never marries and never becomes a mother. This fate—in connection with her family’s ‘protection’—leads to a life of uselessness and boredom, and she searches for opportunities to be socially active but is unable to identify herself with groups of what she even calls “alte Jungfern” [old maids]. The protagonist painfully laments

that her childhood fantasy to be kissed remains unfulfilled, and instead of becoming a loving wife and mother, she only receives the eternal label of ‘family daughter’ by her parents, a nervous “old maid” by her brother, and a socially incompetent woman by her sister-in-law Eugenie. Agathe’s silenced feelings finally explode, and she takes revenge on her sister-in-law after witnessing her affair with the doctor of the *Kurort*. Eugenie, who proudly boasts herself as officer’s wife and careful mother, is also guilty of hypocrisy. Agathe’s anger and final release of frustration is undeniable in the following citation.

Ja – aber erhebt ein Mädchen nur die Hand, will sie nur einmal trinken aus dem Becher, den man ihr von Kindheit an fortwährend lockend an die Lippen hält – zeigt sie auch nur, daß sie durstig ist...Schmach und Schande! Sünde – schamlose Sünde – erbärmliche Schwäche – hysterische Verrücktheit! schreit man ihr entgegen – bei den Strengen wie bei den Milden, den Alten und den Jungen, den Frommen und den Freien. (264)

[Yes, but if a girl only raises her hand, if she wishes merely to drink just once from the cup continuously and seductively held to her lips since childhood, if she even merely shows that she is thirsty....Humiliation and shame! Sin—shameless sin—wretched weakness—hysterical madness! they scream at her—the severe ones as well as the gentle ones, the old ones and the young ones, the pious ones and the free ones. (205)]

In conclusion to the problem of gendered *Erziehung* in Reuter’s novel *Aus guter Familie*, the reader sees that whereas the idea of love acts as one component of a man’s life among other things, it is the major part of a woman’s

“embourgeoisement”, or her process of upbringing into the bourgeois lifestyle. Raising a girl to love as her sole purpose in life becomes a kind of “Bildung und Bindung” [education and attachment], as stated by Vuilleumier (14). There are, however, other elements at play in the making and shaping of Agathe’s mind, which is the next topic of discussion in regards to Agathe’s entrapment within the world of the bourgeois “myth”: the role of books and literacy.

### *Reading the “Self”*

The question of reading material available to girls and young women in the bourgeois world of nineteenth-century Germany is by no means a small topic easily summarized in one segment of a chapter. Although a considerable amount of recent scholarly research revolves around this topic, it is crucial to at least discuss the role of literacy in regards to a woman’s understanding of “self”. Referring once again to the usage of *Bildung* as the form in which one participates in culture, the following section not only provides an oversight on the topics deemed properly “feminine” for young women, but also shows how reading material remained within the discourse of gender. Afterward, this discussion returns to the character Agathe Heidling and asks how the limitation of reading material played a role in her self-awareness and, perhaps as well, her self-ignorance. Before returning to the novel, I refer to two different examples from the mass press in relation to women’s literacy.

During a time in which the advancements of science (Darwinism), banned political theory (Socialism), and social taboos (Naturalism) increasingly became the

material of books, a parallel concern surfaced concerning the protection of feminine innocence regarding literacy. The urgency behind the question of determining what a bourgeois girl should or should not read is apparent in the following article from the journal *Neue Bahnen* titled “Was sollen unsre Töchter lesen?” [What Should our Daughters Read?].<sup>69</sup> The author of the article agrees that despite a multitude of modern advancements in society—“this is 1891!”—Goethe’s conception of ideal womanhood from the beginning of the century remained the leading prototype which served as an ideal model for girls (9). However, the author continues, it is the needlework and lack of more challenging intellectual material that is causing girls—even in the 1890s—to develop unhealthy fantasies. The author of the article writes:

Gewiß nur wenige unsrer jetzigen Haushaltungen vermöchten—selbst wenn sich die Ansichten darüber nicht geändert hätten—nach Goethes Vorschrift ihre Töchter in Haus, Küche, Hof, Keller und Garten so ausreichend zu beschäftigen, daß damit jede Regung einer darüber hinausschweifenden Phantasie unterdrückt würde, und wieviel Thorheit ein junger müßiger Mädchenkopf bei den einförmigen geistlosen Nadelarbeiten auszubrüten vermag, mit denen der größte Teil des heranwachsenden weiblichen Geschlechts die Jugendzeit verbringt, entzieht sich jeder Beschreibung. (9)

[Certainly only few of our current households would be capable of following Goethe’s instruction—even if their point of view has not changed—to keep their daughters sufficiently busy in the house, kitchen, courtyard, cellar, and garden, in order to suppress their impulses to fantasize. Monotonous and

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<sup>69</sup> *Neue Bahnen*, vol.26, no.2, 1981.

mechanical needlework produces such an extreme amount of foolishness in a young girl's head that it is beyond description, and this is how adolescent women spend the greatest part of their younger days.]

Because of the need to remain “virtuous” while simultaneously engaging the mind, the author suggests that parents ought to provide their daughters with books by the well-acclaimed writer Thekla von Sumpert. The title of the writer's most famous book reveals its bourgeois-friendly material suitable for girls: “Thekla von Sumperts Bücherschatz für Deutschlands Töchter” [Thekla von Sumpert's Treasure of Books for Germany's Daughters] (10). This collection of books should provide Germany's daughters with intellectual material beyond the facts one acquired at the *Mädchenschule* while simultaneously remaining within the constructed boundaries of propriety. “Das junge Mädchen soll sich vorbereiten auf den Beruf einer Frau, aber auch auf die Arbeit, die ihm vielleicht als einer Unvermählten bevorsteht...” [A young girl should prepare herself for the occupation of wife, but also for a vocation, in the event she does not marry...] (10). Although the well-known writer of girls' *Anstandsbücher* [conduct books] directs her advice towards a middle class female audience, it is interesting to see that she—perhaps one step ahead of her colleagues of the same genre—also hints at the necessity to prepare oneself for an occupation in the event one did not marry. After all, let us not forget that this article appeared in *Neue Bahnen*, the mouthpiece for the bourgeois women's movement that emphasized a woman's right to education and work.

Turning to a second example from the mass press, the image on the next page provides an example of women's literacy as a contemporary topic of social debate—

but from an opposite perspective. The image, posted on the title page of the supplementary edition of the political-satirical newspaper *Kladderadatsch* [Crash-Bang-Boom] (1848-1944), appears with the title “Unsere Frauen und ihre geistige Nahrung” [Our Women and their Intellectual Nourishment]. Notice how the illustration portrays bourgeois women and the change of their learning and reading material throughout the various stages of life.

As the ten-year-old girl (upper left corner) learns eagerly from a teacher, the fifteen and twenty-year-old women next to her read almost dreamily and ponderously: while one reads [Heinrich] Heine’s *Buch der Lieder* [Book of Songs] (1827) the other grins at the imaginary photographer with a copy of [Émile] Zola’s Naturalist writing in her hand.<sup>70</sup> In the middle of the page, a thirty-year-old woman lounges comfortably alongside an exotic cactus plant and a perched parrot and reads about fashion. Finally, at the bottom of the page, the forty-year-old woman engages in the question of *Frauen-Rechte* [The Rights of Women] while the seventy-year-old examines the Bible.

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<sup>70</sup> The writings of Émile Zola were highly influential to the literary/artistic movement of naturalism towards the end of the nineteenth century in Germany. See Christine Kanz, Deutsche Literatur Geschichte, 6 ed. (Stuttgart 2001) 343.

kleinste Anzeigen-Anzeige  
 bei **Rudolf Mosse**  
 Annoncen-Expedition  
 für sämtliche Zeitungen  
 Deutschlands u. d. Auslandes.

# Beiblatt zum Kladderadatsch.

Insertions-Gebühren  
 für die  
 4-gelappte Nonparell-Belle  
 oder deren Raum  
 1 M = 1/4 Br.

in Berlin, Jerusalemerstr. 48, Breslau, Chemnitz, Köln a. Rh., Dresden, Frankfurt a. M., Hamburg, Leipzig, London, München, Nürnberg, Paris, Prag, Strassburg i. E., Stuttgart, Wien, Zürich.

Nr. 13. Erstes Beiblatt.

Berlin, den 18. März 1888.

XII. Jahrgang.



Figure 4: "Unsere Frauen und ihre geistige Nahrung." [Our Women and their Intellectual Nourishment] *Beiblatt zum Kladderadatsch*, no. 13 (18 March 1888)

As the illustration above suggests, mainstream “patterns” of literary interest in the world of bourgeois women seems to not only have been predictable with age, but also unquestionably associated with gender. If one leafs through a collection of articles in the *Kladderadatsch* and its supplementary pages, it is obvious that the politically oriented satirical newspaper directed its contents to a male readership. Why is no woman reading something more politically oriented in this cartoon, such as a newspaper or an essay? Only the twenty-year-old and forty-year-old come close to reading something with “political” substance; the difference with the twenty-year-old, however, is the grin on her face and either backyard or vacation-like setting that suggests she may have gotten her hands on something deemed “taboo” and therefore sits in a place where no one can discover her. The thirty-year old, surrounded by exotic and probably expensive luxuries, reads only about another luxury—fashion. This illustration suggests that the thirty-year-old has nothing to do but engage her “intellectual nourishment” with matters that concern her own appearance, and it is something she can afford with time and money. The forty-year-old woman engaged in the *Frauenfrage* appears to be reading in the comforts of her own home, but her furnishings are not as extravagant as those that belong to the thirty-year-old. In addition, the forty-year-old is holding a cigarette in her left hand. Because smoking implied an “unfeminine” behavior, does this message also lead one to interpret an interest in the woman’s question as something “unfeminine” as well?

Ironically, the purpose of showing these two examples from the mass press was to show the material that the character Agathe Heidling did not have. Instead, Agathe’s literary world revolve around a group of conduct books that neither

prepared her for future employment in the event she did not marry, nor did they offer her any intellectual stimulation outside the discourse of “love”. As illogical as it may sound, books play an important role in limiting Agathe’s intellectual development and promoting her self-“ignorance”.<sup>71</sup> The exclusion from particular reading materials first occurs following Agathe’s confirmation. After receiving a long-awaited copy of *Herwegh’s Gedichte* [Herwegh’s Poems] from her cousin Martin, it is immediately confiscated by her father and pastor, who decide: “Es giebt ja so viele schöne Lieder, die für junge Mädchen geeigneter sind und Dir besser gefallen werden” (22) [There are so many lovely poems that are more appropriate for a young girl and that you’ll like better (13)]. Agathe’s father exchanges the book for a new one titled *Fromme Minne* [Pearls of Pious Love], a conduct book for young girls which adds to her small library of *Gerocks Palmblätter* [Gerok’s Palm Leaves] and *Des Weibes Leben und Wirken als Jungfrau, Gattin, und Mutter* (17) [Woman’s Life and Deeds as Maiden, Wife, and Mother (8)]. The pattern of parentally advised reading material continues years later after Agathe becomes aware of the fact that she will not marry. Amidst the extreme boredom at home—her main chore was to roll and unroll the living carpet everyday—she discovers the book *Häckels natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* [Häckel’s Natural History of Creation] (published in the year 1868) in her father’s library and begins to read it. Amazed at overcoming even her own assumption that

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<sup>71</sup> In light of the concept of self-ignorance and the subject of literacy, it is important to mention Linda Kraus Worley’s perspective on Agathe Heidling’s reading material as being a crucial reason for the protagonist’s tendency to escape into fantasy. Worley writes, “a culture that fictionalizes women into romance heroines has led Agathe to fictionalize her self, her actions and future” (200). See her article “Girls from Good Families: Tony Buddenbrook and Agathe Heidling,” *The German Quarterly*, 76.2 (Spring 2003): 195-211.

she would not understand the material, Agathe realizes immediately the difference of reading material for men and women.

Ach, Männer, die sich hier vertiefen – die weiter forschen und grübeln durften – die Glücklichen! Die Glücklichen! Denen brauchte freilich die dumme Liebe nur etwas Nebensächliches zu sein! (216)

[Oh, men who immersed themselves in the subject, men who had the opportunity to continue researching and brooding over it – how lucky they were! How lucky! Of course for them stupid love need only be a matter of little consequence! (167)]

Agathe composes a list of desired books for her father and uses the argument that she needs to occupy her mind more wisely, since she is never going to marry. In response to her request for more “intellectual” material, her father buys her instead the book *Die Flora von Mitteldeutschland, zum Gebrauch für unsere Töchter* [The Flora of Central Germany, for the Use of our Daughters] and comments about the books she had requested: “Ich blätterte in den Sachen – sie wollten mir gar nicht für mein Töchterchen gefallen” (218) [I flipped through them. They didn’t strike me at all as something for my little girl (168)]. Although she had hoped for something intellectually stimulating and new, Agathe must accept the reading material chosen by her father, as anything else would be unsuitable for a “feminine” mind. Agathe, being an obedient daughter from a “good” family, does not argue and remains quiet.

The discussion of Reuter’s novel *Aus guter Familie* will continue in the next chapter. Let us conclude this wide-ranging section by focusing once more on the myth of gendered “ways of being” in connection with bourgeois moral code.

Agathe's *Erziehung* bases itself on a shaky foundation of constructed idealism, and Agathe continues to develop and mature within its fabricated ideological discourse to a point of no return. The two examples taken from the mass press reveal that the question of suitable reading material for girls from "good" families not only thrived as a serious issue of debate among bourgeois parents, but also existed as something amusing and entertaining in a the context of satire. This leads me to question if Agathe's character ever reflects at least one of the reading patterns depicted in the *Kladderadatsch*, and the answer is yes. The scene in which Agathe fervently dives into her cousin's illegal contraband of Socialist writings parallels the illustration of the twenty-year-old with a tabooed book in her hand. The difference, however, is that while it seems the girl in the illustration reads the tabooed material in a comfortable state, Agathe, on the contrary, is overcome with wild dreams of escapement into an ideological world opposite of the one she knows. Agathe, aware of the ideology that surrounds her, longs for escapement into only another ideology (i.e. living as the wife of bohemian artist, or as the lover of a Socialist writer in Switzerland). Therefore, does the ideological "myth" of bourgeois propriety in Agathe's upbringing only teach her to believe in other "idealized" lifestyles as means of escape? What can she learn to be "real" if her entire existence revolves only around hypocrisy and double standards?

“Nichterziehung”: Hedwig Dohm’s “*Schicksale einer Seele*”(1899)

The final example of gendered *Erziehung* as a cultural concept focuses on the term “Nichterziehung”, a word used by Hedwig Dohm in her autobiographically-based narrative *Schicksale einer Seele* (1899) [Fates of a Soul], the first of three books in her series entitled *Drei Generationen-Projekt* [Three Generations-Project].<sup>72</sup> The narrator of the novel, Marlene, writes that her “Nichterziehung” [non-upbringing] eventually resulted in her feelings of being a “Nichtindividualität” (233) [non-individuality]. In exploring the meaning behind these two terms, the following discussion first includes a brief overview on the author, Hedwig Dohm, and then a focus on the novel and its fictional protagonist, Marlene. In addition to the autobiographies of Fanny Lewald and Gabriele Reuter, and to the fictional protagonist Agathe Heidling of *Aus guter Familie*, our fourth and final example sheds light once again on the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender by focusing on the discourse of *Erziehung*.

Marianne Adelaide Hedwig Schleh was born in Berlin, September 20, 1831, as the fourth child and oldest daughter of eighteen children, two of whom died at a very early age. Her parents married after the birth of the tenth child, and the family name of Schlesinger officially changed to Schleh in the year 1851 in order to be distanced from its Jewish heritage. Hedwig married Ernst Dohm (1819-1883) in the year 1853 in order to escape the watchful and strict eye of her mother, a woman with whom she never developed a close relationship. Although the couple had five

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<sup>72</sup> Whereas *Schicksale einer Seele* reveals similarities to Dohm’s own life, the other two novels of the trilogy, *Sibilla Dalmar* and *Christa Ruhland*, reflect those of her daughter and granddaughter. See Nikola Müller, *Hedwig Dohm (1831-1919): Eine kommentierte Bibliografie* (Berlin, 2000) 21.

children together, their marriage was overshadowed by Ernst Dohm's several extra-marital affairs.<sup>73</sup> In her short series of autobiographical contributions to the *Vossische Zeitung*, Hedwig Pringsheim-Dohm (1855-1942), the second child of Ernst and Hedwig Dohm, not only describes her mother as "zart und gebrechlich, schüchtern, empfindsam, ängstlich, bei Lichte besehen sogar schrecklich feig" (Pringsheim-Dohm 63) [delicate and fragile, shy, sensitive, anxious, and even horribly cowardly in the cold light of day], but also as "nichts weniger als eine Kampfnatur!" (61) [nothing else than a fighter by nature!]. In addition, Pringsheim-Dohm writes that her father Ernst Dohm, who served as editor of the satirical newspaper *Kladderadatsch*, neither encouraged nor discouraged his wife from pursuing a writing career.<sup>74</sup> Hedwig Dohm began her literary career with a publication on Spanish national literature in 1867 and then turned to writing about women's emancipation for the rest of her life. Her earliest essays on women's emancipation include "Was die Pastoren von den Frauen denken" [What Pastors Think about Women] (1872), "Der Jesuitismus im Hausstande" [Jesuitism in the Household] (1873), "Die wissenschaftliche Emanzipation der Frau" [The Scientific Emancipation of Women] (1874), and "Der Frauen Natur und Recht" [Women's Nature and Privilege] (1876). Hedwig Dohm also held a salon at her Berlin home with a high level of intellectual exchange, and frequent guests included Fanny Lewald and Adolph Stahr, Alexander von Humboldt, August Varnhagen von Ense (the widower of Rahel Varnhagen), Gabriele Reuter, and many other prestigious intellectuals. In his condescending yet praiseworthy essay

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<sup>73</sup> Carol Diethe, *Towards Emancipation: German Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (New York, Berghahn) 152-154.

<sup>74</sup> "Ihr Mann hat sie sicher nicht dazu animiert, sie aber auch nicht daran gehindert." Hedwig Pringsheim-Dohm, *Häusliche Erinnerungen*, Ed. Nikola Knoth (Berlin, 2005) 63.

“Little Grandma”, Thomas Mann describes his grandmother-in-law’s influential role throughout the course of the nineteenth-century women’s movement and into the early twentieth century:

Aber erstens war es damals bei uns, anders als in den angelsächsischen Ländern, etwas Außergewöhnliches und Imponierend-Halbanstößiges, im bürgerlichen Sinne „Unweibliches“, daß eine Frau überhaupt Bücher schrieb; und zweitens war Little Grandma eine Kämpferin und Ruferin im Streit, welche die Freiheit und Selbständigkeit des Weibes, die sie als Novellistin praktisch betätigte, auch als Journalistin, mit Artikeln, die sie für die liberale Presse und für Frauenzeitschriften verfaßte, theoretisch-gesellschaftskritisch verfocht und sogar in Versammlungen auftrat. (473)

[Originally, in our country, different than in the Anglo-Saxon countries, it was something extraordinary and impressively scandalous, in a bourgeois sense “unfeminine”, that a woman would write books at all. Secondly, Little Grandma was a fighter and a herald of the controversy that theoretically and critically advocated the freedom and independence of women, which she as a novelist and a journalist put to use with articles she composed for the liberal press and for women’s newspapers; she even appeared in assemblies.]

Although Dohm’s narrative *Schicksale einer Seele* reveals innumerable similarities to her own life’s story, the narrating protagonist of the novel, Marlene, is two years younger than Dohm—a difference which caused confusion even during the author’s own lifetime. According to Boetcher Joeres, “Hedwig Dohm wurde in Berlin geboren, unter Umständen, die denen ihrer Romanprotagonistin Marlene sehr

ähnelten, wuchs ähnlich wie Marlene auf, genoß also keine gründliche Bildung, lernte keinen Beruf” [Hedwig Dohm was born in Berlin under conditions that are very similar to the novel’s protagonist, Marlene; she grew up like Marlene and therefore enjoyed no basic education and learned no occupation] (*Die Fremdlinge* 333). In the following paragraphs, the discussion is limited to the topic of *Erziehung* and its examples in the text, as a discussion of the novel continues in upcoming chapters as well.

The first scene of the novel depicts a thirty-three year old narrator in the process of writing a letter to a man unknown to the reader. Her opening lines emphasize the narrational time as a tremendous period of transition, and therefore, she only has three months to write her entire life’s story down on paper. The reader eventually recognizes that Marlene is writing to a character named Arnold, a platonic friend she met while vacationing on the Tegersee with her daughter Traut. Marlene begins the tale of her life with a reflection of her childhood in Berlin in the 1830s and 40s. She writes that her mother ran the household because her father, being very busy with the running of his factory, visited with his children only on Sundays. Although Marlene’s upbringing focused primarily on preparing her for the future roles of wife and mother, she writes that she never spent any time with her mother; in fact, she actually feared her. The narrator claims in addition that her mother prevented her from doing anything she enjoyed; she frequently confiscated toys and eventually forbade her to read books. When describing her mother, Marlene writes that the woman embodied the ideal “Musterhausfrau” [model housewife], who paid a great amount of attention to her own appearance and the running of the large household

instead of paying attention to her children beyond the stage of infancy (17). Angry over the fact that Marlene as an infant would not take to her during breastfeeding, the narrator's mother referred to her oldest daughter as "Ekelbiest" [repulsive brute]. The narrator's relationship with her mother resulted in a low self-esteem that would eventually serve as the meaning behind the narrator's sense of self as a *Nichtindividualität* [non-person].<sup>75</sup>

The narrator describes the differences in upbringing between female and male siblings as being opposite as night and day. Compared to her own strict surrounding and limitation of activity as a child, Marlene writes that her brothers enjoyed themselves without much parental surveillance at all. Compared to the situation of herself and her female siblings, who were prohibited from playing outside, exercising freely, or even throwing snowballs during the winter, Marlene's male siblings were permitted to do almost the exact opposite:

Die Knaben hatten es gut. Sie turnten, sie exerzierten. Sie durften sich auf Strassen und Plätzen in Freiheit tummeln. Ihnen gehörten Schnee und Eis im Winter, das Wasser im Sommer.

[The boys had it well. They did gymnastics and they exercised. They were allowed to tumble around in the streets and market places. Snow and ice belonged to them in the winter and water in the summer.]

In addition, while the girls were responsible for household chores, like preparing socks for the laundry, stitching, and watching over younger siblings, it seems that the boys had no responsibilities: "sie taten immer, wozu sie Lust hatten" (24) [they did

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<sup>75</sup> Chapter four of the dissertation focuses on Dohm's term *Nichtindividualität*.

whatever they pleased]. The predetermined social roles based on gender in this case are undeniable: the girls of the family were raised in an almost protected manner, were not allowed to wander without purpose outside of the family home, and were responsible for domestic chores. This example only reiterates an argument made at the beginning of this chapter: that preconceived principles of gender expectation in nineteenth-century society indeed played a role in how one was raised as a child, and concurrently, these principles were learned through the process of *Erziehung*.

Marlene describes herself as a dreamy girl with an active imagination, which eventually earned her the reputation as the dumb sibling in the family, a generalization that follows the narrator into adulthood when she still finds herself doubting her intelligence:

Rief man mich zu Tisch oder zum Vespere, so riss ich mich ungerne von meiner Schwelgerei los und mag dann wohl blöde und verwirrt dreingeschaut haben, und ich glaube, schon damals entstand die Mythe (es ist doch eine Mythe – nicht?) von meiner Dummheit, eine Meinung, die meine Familie wahrscheinlich bis auf den heutigen Tag festgehalten hat. (9)

[If one called me to the table or to evening prayer, then I reluctantly tore myself from my daydreams, probably looking morose and confused, and I think already back then, the myth of my stupidity originated (it is only a myth – right?). This is an opinion that my family probably still embraces today.]

Unlike the label of stupidity attached to Marlene at home, however, she writes that she felt differently in school. She states, “da galt ich merkwürdigerweise als sehr begabt (46) [Curiously enough, there I was considered very talented]. Despite

Marlene's good performance at school, her attendance came to an abrupt end by her mother, who removed her as a punishment for secretly participating in reactionary student-run assemblies shortly before the 1848 Revolution. The removal from school would also prevent Marlene from continuing her friendship with schoolmate and fellow fan of the revolution, Helene Bucher.

Similar to the protagonists in the works discussed earlier in the dissertation, the narrator of *Schicksale einer Seele* also finds herself overcome with boredom after returning to the home setting on a daily basis. Confined to performing menial household tasks, the narrator feels out of place within her own family setting, which "doch gar nicht zu Hause war" (73) [just was not home at all], and she describes her new daily routine as uninteresting and completely void of structure:

Was nun...?

Zwar hatte ich Zeichen-, Klavier-, Nähstunden, ich mußte bei der großen Wäsche helfen, die Leinenstücke für die Rolle ziehen und legen, die Strümpfe umkehren und stopfen. [...] Und Staub mußte ich wischen und auf die kleinen Geschwister achtgeben. (73)

[What now...? I had drawing-, piano-, and sewing lessons, and I had to help out on the big wash days, to pull and lay the pieces of linen in order to be rolled, and to darn and turn around the stockings. [...] I also had to dust and watch over my younger siblings.]

In addition to the tasks mentioned above, Marlene's mother requests her daughter to embroider a large and highly detailed carpet for the living room. The narrator's distain for this chore is obvious, as she writes: "O dieser scheußlich, seelenmordende

Teppich!” (75) [Oh, this dreadful, soul-murdering carpet!]. The narrator (just as Dohm herself) finally completed the carpet after one and a half years. After this was finished, Marlene’s parents decided for her to attend a *Lehrerinnenseminar* [seminar for female teachers], a course that would last for the length of one year and ultimately prepare her to work as a teacher of the elementary school. The seminar eventually proves itself as an unproductive and mechanical course, and therefore does not ease the narrator’s feelings of discontent. Marlene never does go on to be a teacher; shortly after the seminar comes to an end, she unexpectedly receives a proposal of marriage from Walter Bucher, the brother of her former schoolmate Helene who had disappeared without correspondence for about one year’s time. Although an awkward situation altogether, Marlene accepts his proposal and the couple marries shortly thereafter, bringing Marlene to the next stage of her life as wife and mother in the social surroundings of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. This brings us to the next chapter, which discusses how Marlene changed as a person during the course of her marriage.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the methods and ways associated with a child’s upbringing was extremely class specific in the nineteenth century. Gabriele Reuter’s novel *Aus guter Familie* provides an excellent portrayal of class difference by juxtaposing the lives of two female characters of the same age. Agathe Heidling, the bourgeois protagonist, succumbs to a fate unquestionably linked to the conventional and contradictory fashion in which she was raised. Wiesing Groterjahn, on the other hand, ultimately surrenders to the fate of the proletarian woman by dying in extremely poor and unsanitary conditions and losing her infant child, whose father was likely unknown. In the case of Agathe Heidling, one can

argue that the bourgeois and nationalistic ideology of the Wilhelmine era intertwined itself with her upbringing. Her father, a representative of the government, tried to carry out the state's ideals of women's place in society in the life of his own daughter while simultaneously ignoring her unhappiness. In addition to Reuter's novel, Fanny Lewald's autobiography reveals how contemporary philosophies may link itself to a woman's upbringing. When trying to persuade his daughter to marry, Fanny Lewald's father uses Goethe's depiction of "selfless femininity" in the author's work *Die natürliche Tochter* [The Natural Daughter] as one last argument. Because Goethe was one of the most influential writers engaged in the question of *Bildung*, it is no wonder that David Marcus, an enlightened individual himself, would not try to convince his daughter to follow in the footsteps of a contemporary literary heroine—that is, to sacrifice personal desire in order to benefit the "better" good.

Each work discussed in this chapter portrays a difference in upbringing based on gender, and all accounts—whether created in autobiographical reflection or depicted in the life of a fictional character—reveals this difference in a critical light. Compared to their male siblings, female members of the (higher) bourgeois classes were restricted to shorter learning sessions, less-challenging educational material, and more domestic chores that entailed a great amount of self-discipline, like needlework, for example. To busy oneself with harder domestic tasks, such as cooking and cleaning, one would defy their social rank above the lower classes. The only case that appears slightly different from the others is in Gabriele Reuter's autobiography, but one cannot forget that compared to other characters mentioned—autobiographical

as well as fictional—the financial situation of her family played a major role in this occurrence.

In the traditional process of *Erziehung*, one learns to form oneself in a way that would eventually prepare him or her for a meaningful life within a pre-existing social structure. *Erziehung*, being a form of *Bildung*, shapes and forms an individual according to preconceived principles that are culturally specific, and especially in nineteenth-century Germany, gender specific. This chapter offered a unique glimpse into four accounts of gendered *Erziehung* and covered only one aspect of the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender. The next chapter builds on the concept of gendered *Erziehung* by asking how an individual views his or her “self” in the society in which they live, which more or less corresponds to the eventual outcome of *Erziehung*.

## Chapter 4

### The Cultural “Norm” and Individual Self: Representations of Disparity in Women’s Ways of “Being”

“[...] ich glaube meine Tugenden waren nichts als die weichlichen Instinkte einer mangelhaften Organisation” (Dohm, *Schicksale einer Seele* 233).

[I believe my virtues were nothing other than the gentle instincts of a faulty organization.]

This chapter sheds light on one of the most essential aspects of *Bildung* that sets the concept apart from its English translation of “education” and “knowledge”, namely the idea of the self-learned or self-cultivated character. The following discussion focuses on the idea of the “self” in the context of *Bildung* by looking for representations of “self-cultivation” and/or “educative self-formation” within the discourse of gender. Drawing once more on the argument that, beyond its biological discourse, gender includes a cultural way of “being” encouraged by various forms of *Bildung*, the following discussion focuses on concepts of the “self” that point to a learned, formed, or encouraged subjectivity based on a gendered way of life. However, instead of discussing how nineteenth-century society played a role in creating and encouraging gender role, our discussion articulates to which extent a woman may have viewed herself as a member of bourgeois society, particularly in the *Bildungsbürgertum* [intellectual middle class].

Once again, German Enlightenment thoughts enter the discussion on *Bildung* and its relationship to the concept of the self, particularly as seen in the philosophical

contributions of Wilhelm von Humboldt. Although the idea of the reflective self stems from the emergence of Protestantism throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth-, and early eighteenth centuries in Western Europe,<sup>76</sup> it was not until the mid- to later eighteenth century that the concept of inwardness became secularized, especially in connection with the term *Bildung*, which underwent its own phase of secularization as well. Voßkamp claims that this transition interconnects with the shift from a feudal society to a society based on function in the last third of the eighteenth century. (15) Parallel to the secularization of the state from the church as well as the shift of scientific thought away from theosophical context, the idea of the modern self emerged during this time.<sup>77</sup> Wilhelm von Humboldt combined the concept of the modern self with his theories on *Bildung* by defining the latter as “a matter of ‘gaining insight into oneself’ and being able through action to ‘express one’s freedom and independence’” (Nordenbo 348). The process of “gaining insight into oneself” is not an isolated process, but is rather achieved through exposure to the world—an idea that relates to the “cultivation” of an individual. According to Løvlie, “in Humboldt’s world there was no individuation without cultivation, whether the stuff of cultivation was things, texts and buildings or customs, rituals and methods” (468). In addition, “the aim of cultivation was the inner freedom of the subject brought to expression by interacting with things and persons in ways that were educative” (469).

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<sup>76</sup> As Ian Hunter points out, some terms that refer to the self during the era of Reformation are “self-scrutiny” and “self-discipline”. Ian Hunter, “Self”, *New Keywords*, eds. Tony Bennett et al. (Malden, 2005) 318.

<sup>77</sup> See Anne-Kathrin Brauen, “Subjekt/Subjektivität,” *Gender Studies, Geschlechterforschung*, ed. Renate Kroll (Stuttgart, 2002) 379-380.

This leads us to question how the relationship between *Bildung* and the “self” plays a role in gender theory. Anne-Kathrin Braun limits her focus to female subjectivity by stating that because conceptions of femininity are culturally predetermined, female subjectivity is also a product of discourse; I believe, however, Braun’s argument could also expand to include male subjectivity and cultural constructions of masculinity. (Braun 380) This chapter concentrates on the question of female subjectivity by asking how several women writers balance their own awareness of self with preconceived notions of femininity. In other words, is the reader able to recognize a discrepancy between the want or need to “perform” a mode of behavior traditionally categorized as being “properly feminine”, and the want or need to “perform” according to one’s individuality? Theoretically, this chapter also draws on the notion of the cultured body, an idea which refers to how “social norms and conventions are realized and lived through the body”—an idea that brings us to our next topic of discussion (McNeil 17).

Contemporary theoretical debates on the notion of the cultured body articulate the clash between the individual self and the material body, which is cultured through activity, behavior, appearance, age, and most significantly, gender. As stated by Baldwin, et al., “at least since Descartes’ famous dictum ‘I think therefore I am’, a radical split between body and mind has been widely accepted” (269).<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, Baldwin et al. provide a list of binary oppositions associated with the “self” as one entity and the “body” as another. (270) These include:

mind                      body

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<sup>78</sup> This concept is sometimes labeled as “Cartesian dualism”. See Maureen McNeil, “Body,” New Keywords, eds. Tony Bennett et al. (Malden, 2005) 17.

private	public
inner	outer
culture	nature
reason	passion

These binary oppositions are very different from one another, but they all relate to a person's individuality, and consequentially, one may view them within the discourse of *Bildung*. In addition to these sets of oppositions, this discussion involves a closer look at how the notion of gender surfaces in behavior and appearance from a more subjective point of view. In her introduction to *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), Judith Butler connects this idea with the debate on gender theory by stating:

Indeed, it is unclear that there can be an "I" or a "we" who has not been submitted, subjected to gender, where gendering is, among other things, the differentiating relations by which speaking subjects come into being. Subjected to gender, but subjectivated by gender, the "I" neither precedes nor follows the process of this gendering, but emerges only within and as the matrix of gender relations themselves. (7)

The following discussion revolves around the concept of the "self" as presented by Jerrold Seigel in his publication *The Idea of the Self* (2005).<sup>79</sup> Seigel describes the "self" as:

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<sup>79</sup> See Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2005) 5-6.

1. the thing about our individual nature that makes us different than others (housed in our bodies and shaped by our bodies needs and wants, like temperament)
2. the common connections and involvements that give us collective identities and shared orientations and values, our selves as what our relations with society shape or allow us to be
3. the self as an active agent of its own realization, almost from a distance: “we are what our attention to ourselves makes us to be”

A second aspect to this discussion links Seigel’s definitions of the self to the concept of gender by asking, for example, what is it about a character’s individual nature that makes him or her different from others of the same gender (depicted especially through temperament)? In addition, what are the common connections and involvements that reveal shared orientations and values of gender, and how do they affect a particular character’s relationship to society? How do these characters view themselves as participants of a culturally ascribed behavioral code based on gender? Finally, and most importantly, how does a particular character come across as either in tune with—or at odds against—a social obligation to the definition of “normalcy” based on these preconceived notions of gender? The concepts of masculinity and femininity were so strong in nineteenth-century Germany that they, as mentioned in the introduction of the dissertation, played a key role in cultural organization. This leads me to ask how an individual’s understanding of their “self” either conformed with (i.e. Reuter’s protagonist Agathe Heidling) or acted against (i.e. Fanny Lewald) ascribed labels of preconceived feminine ways of “being”.

This chapter's analysis sheds light on the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender by looking for representations of discrepancy between an individual's sense of self and their cultured "performance", or their way of behaving according to culturally ascribed gender code. The following pages offer a continued discussion of Fanny Lewald's autobiography *Meine Lebensgeschichte* [My Life's Story] (1861-62) and Hedwig Dohm's autobiographically influenced novel *Schicksale einer Seele* (Fates of a Soul] (1899): in addition, this chapter incorporates Hedwig Dohm's novella *Werde, die du bist!* [Become Who You Are] (1894). By explaining the battles against her own self-consciousness for going against the grain of tradition, Fanny Lewald portrays her life's story as something similar to a female version of a *Bildungsroman*. Concluding the narrative, she portrays a moment of contentment with her "self", and this simultaneously reflects a harmonious existence with society as well as the choices she had made in order to get there. Hedwig Dohm's novella *Werde, die du bist!* [Become Who You Are] (1894) explores the question of gendered subjectivity in connection with age while portraying a widow's conquest of "self". In contrast, Dohm's novel *Schicksale einer Seele* reveals the narrator's gradual recognition of self-awareness after receiving "instruction" by a couth and self-enlightened female friend. Before turning to these literary texts, however, the discussion of a woman's understanding of "self" begins by looking at a unique example from the mass press that captures the significance of this cultural problem in its historical context.

*“Preisfrage” [Contest]: A Focus on the “Self” in the Mass Press*

Between the years 1904-1920, the publishers of the widely read family journal *Die Gartenlaube* printed a supplementary magazine entitled *Die Welt der Frau* [Woman’s World]. Several of the magazine’s earliest issues presented contests in order to give its female readership the opportunity to participate in contemporary debates regarding women’s place in society. In the first issue of the year 1905, a contest appeared with the title “Wie verheirate ich meine Tochter?” [How Do I Marry Off My Daughter?] (see image on next page). Other concerns raised in connection with the question posed in the title of the contest include:

- Schädigt oder verbessert die Berufswahl die Eheaussichten?

[Does the choice of occupation damage or improve the chances of marriage?]

- In welchem Umfange darf und kann eine Mutter dazu beitragen, ihre Tochter in diejenige gesellschaftliche Umgebung hineinzubringen, die ihr die Bekanntschaft mit geeigneten jungen Männern ermöglicht, ohne den guten Ruf ihrer Tochter und ihren eigenen zu schädigen?

[To which extent can and may a mother play a role in bringing her daughter into society that enables an acquaintance with appropriate young men without damaging the good reputation of her daughter and herself?]

The prize winning answers of the contest appeared in the thirteenth issue of the year 1905.

# Preisfragen der „Welt der Frau“

**U**m unseren Leserinnen Gelegenheit zu geben, an dem neuen Frauenbeiblatt, das bei den Abonnenten der „Gartenlaube“ stets wachsende Zustimmung gefunden hat, regelmäßig mitzuarbeiten und uns zu helfen, auch diesen Teil des Blattes immer fesselnder zu gestalten, haben wir uns entschlossen, unter obenstehendem Titel eine neue, ständige Rubrik einzurichten, die in regelmäßiger Folge anregende Fragen zur freien Preisbewerbung aufstellen soll. Jedem Abonnenten der „Gartenlaube“ steht die Beteiligung an diesen Preisauschreiben frei; die Preisverteilung übernimmt die Redaktion. Mit der Zuerkennung des Preises geht der preisgekrönte Beitrag in unser Verlagsrecht über und gelangt an dieser Stelle zum Abdruck. Wir behalten uns aber das Recht vor, außer den preisgekrönten auch andere Beiträge gegen ein Honorar von 20 Mark für die Druckspalte der „Gartenlaube“ zum Abdruck zu bringen. Die Namen der Preisempfänger werden veröffentlicht. Beiträge für diese Rubrik dürfen so kurz wie möglich, aber jedenfalls nicht länger als eine Spalte sein. Alle hierauf bezüglichen Sendungen werden erbeten unter der Adresse:

An die  
Redaktion der „Gartenlaube“  
(Preisfragen-Abteilung)  
Berlin SW. 12. Zimmerstraße 37/41.

Für jede Mutter bleibt die Frage:

## Wie verheirate ich meine Tochter?

bei aller Anerkennung der Erfolge der modernen Frauenbewegung in ungeschwächter Kraft bestehen. Die wachsende Ehescheu der Männer hat diese Frage verschärft, die Notwendigkeit, unsere Töchter wegen des hohen Prozentsatzes der Ledigbleibenden einen Beruf ergreifen zu lassen, hat ihr nichts an Bedeutung genommen. Schädigt oder verbessert die Berufswahl die Eheaussichten? In welchem Umfange darf und kann eine Mutter dazu beitragen, ihre Tochter in diejenige gesellschaftliche Umgebung hineinzubringen, die

ihr die Bekanntschaft mit geeigneten jungen Männern ermöglicht, ohne den guten Ruf ihrer Tochter und ihren eigenen zu schädigen? Solche und hundert andere hiermit in Zusammenhang stehende Fragen beschäftigen jede mit Töchtern gesegnete Mutter schon lange, bevor das Kind das heiratsfähige Alter erreicht hat. Wenn wir die Frage: „Wie verheirate ich meine Tochter?“ als erste Preisaufgabe stellen, so sind wir uns wohl bewusst, daß ihre Lösung keineswegs leicht ist, denn nichts ist schwieriger, als die richtige Grenze zu finden, innerhalb deren sich die mütterliche Fürsorge um das künftige Eheglück des Kindes bei voller Wahrung von Sitt und guter Sitte betätigen soll. Für die besten Antworten auf diese Frage setzen wir drei Preise aus und zwar als

1. Preis: 150 Mark
2. Preis: 100 Mark
3. Preis: 50 Mark

Da die technische Herstellung der großen Auflage der „Gartenlaube“ längere Zeit erfordert, so bitten wir, die Einsendung der Antworten nach Möglichkeit zu beschleunigen. Die Veröffentlichung der Preisarbeiten soll mit Heft 9 beginnen.

Wir stellen die obige Preisfrage nur als erste einer Reihe ähnlicher Fragen, mit denen wir, wie eingangs bemerkt, von Zeit zu Zeit an unsere Leserinnen herantreten wollen. Denn nichts kann uns so sehr erwünscht sein wie die freundliche Mitarbeit der weitesten Kreise. Um dieser Mitarbeit ein neues Feld zu eröffnen, bitten wir unsere Leserinnen, uns auch ihrerseits Preisfragen vorzuschlagen, deren öffentliche Behandlung von allgemeinem Interesse ist. Wir setzen für die beste, uns bis zum 15. Februar übersandte Anregung für eine derartige Preisfrage einen weiteren Preis von 50 Mark aus und behalten uns vor, auch andere zur Veröffentlichung geeignete Preisfragen für je 30 Mark zu erwerben.

Leipzig, den 1. Januar 1905.

**Ernst Keil's Nachfolger**  
G. m. b. H.

Figure 5: Preisfrage: “Wie verheirate ich meine Tochter?” [Contest: How do I Marry Off my Daughter?] *Die Welt der Frau*, no. 1 (1905) 11.

In order to share the winners' opinions with its readership, the editors of *Die Welt der Frau* published all three essays in their entire format. For questions that appear somewhat "old-fashioned" to the twenty-first century reader, the first place essay by Frau Helene Rasp reveals an answer applicable to the lives of any woman living today. Helene Rasp begins her essay with a statement that reflects Helene Lange's notion of *geistige Mutterlichkeit* [intellectual motherliness]<sup>80</sup> by emphasizing the positive role of love in any young women's life as an undeniable attribute of their gender. However, following this introductory statement, the author's advice accentuates the awareness of one's "self" as the most valuable information in a young woman's life. Instead of focusing on how one should succeed in "marrying off" their daughters, one should concentrate instead on raising a young woman to be self-confident of her individuality.

Deshalb lehre auch deine Töchter, nicht einzig und allein in der Ehe das Glück des Lebens zu suchen, bekämpfe die törichte "Altejungferangst" und lasse die Mädchen irgend etwas vollständig erlernen, damit sie sich unter Umständen selbst ihren Lebensweg bahnen können und nicht fortwährend nach einer Versorgung ausschauen müssen!

[For that reason, teach your daughters not only to search for the happiness of life in marriage alone; fight against the foolish "old maid anxiety" and let your daughters somehow learn something complete, so that they can pave their own way through circumstances and not have to perpetually look out for provisions.]

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<sup>80</sup> See footnote 44.

This piece of advice makes an immediate impression of being avant-garde for its time, and it is unquestionably reflective of the atmosphere of modernism associated with the turn of the twentieth century. Would such an essay have appeared, for example, in the family of Agathe Heidling, whose concern for their daughter's livelihood focused only on Agathe's abilities to love and remain a "good" daughter?

The words of Helene Rasp represent a new era of thought that was slowly beginning to trump the dominating construction of "proper femininity" that limited a woman's exposure to various means of *Bildung*. This example alone shows two interpretations of *Bildung*: the uninhibited development of character as well as an education that centers on training for a future vocation. However, are these words not similar to those of Fanny Lewald in her essay "Einige Gedanken über Mädchenerziehung", published in the year 1843?<sup>81</sup> It is also important to point out that while Lewald published her essay anonymously in order to avoid her father's disapproval, the editors of *Die Welt der Frau* awarded Helene Rasp with a monetary award of 150 Marks. More importantly, what we see above is neither the advice of a physician nor the theoretical insights of a professional pedagogue; instead, they are the words of a bourgeois woman who reads *Die Welt der Frau*. In light of returning to Fanny Lewald, let us begin our discussion of the "self" in literary narratives by revisiting the author's life story.

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<sup>81</sup> See pages 69-71 of the dissertation.

*Fanny Lewald: The Path towards Individuality and a New Way of “Being” in  
“Meine Lebensgeschichte” (1861-62)*

Turning once again to Fanny Lewald’s autobiography *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, this chapter pays more attention to the second and third volumes entitled “Leidensjahre” [Years of Suffering] and “Befreiung und Wanderleben” [Liberation and Unsettled Life]. Spanning just beyond the time of a decade, these two volumes depict significant phases of Lewald’s young adult life that reflect a series of “trial and error” experiences typically associated with a *Bildungsroman*. The genre *Bildungsroman* depicts a protagonist who comes to learn a new self-awareness that liberates itself from class-related and religious ties; the discovery of one’s own and non-reversible individuality; and the conception of an educational process in which individual natures (can) find a balance with society in the course of time, or just by means of a productive crisis. (Meid 73) Unlike the traditional protagonist of this genre, however, Lewald’s greatest challenge lies in the ability to overcome tremendous feelings of guilt after refusing to marry her father’s choice of suitor. In addition, because Lewald’s innermost sense of individuality continuously longed for a purpose beyond traditional domestic tasks, it is no wonder that feelings of guilt for being “different” resurface throughout the autobiography on numerous occasions. Of greatest interest in this chapter are Lewald’s representations of disparity between her own idea of “self” and the cultural “norms” associated with the bourgeois concept of femininity. For Lewald, it seems not to be a question of self-awareness, because, as we have seen in chapter three, she portrays a particularly high level of self-confidence in her intellectual capabilities during her years at school; instead, the root of the complexity

in Lewald's case lies in the relationship to her father and the influence of his authority. Ulrike Helmer claims that in Lewald's case, the female gaze searches for its own goals but continuously turns back to the father and the male gaze.<sup>82</sup> (293) This is reflective of Lewald longing for her father's approval and reassurance. In her own words, Lewald reveals how an obligation to her family (perhaps *the* most important aspect of nineteenth-century bourgeois culture) is continuously at odds with her own individuality; nevertheless, as time progresses, the disparity seems to dissolve, and especially Lewald's father learns to accept a new "way of being" upon which his oldest daughter has embarked.

Although Lewald was a prize pupil during her years of schooling, it is during her one-year stay in the city of Breslau that she, in my opinion, first came to terms with the notion of the free-thinking "self". When she was approximately twenty-two years old and living at her family home in Königsberg, Lewald's father invited his daughter to accompany him on a long trip throughout Germany that would extend from Berlin all the way over to the southwestern city of Heidelberg and the area of Baden. The extensive trip ended in the city of Breslau, where Lewald stayed under the care of her aunt and uncle for one year. During this time, Lewald writes that she not only formed a very close relationship with her aunt, but also developed a love for her cousin Heinrich Simon, who first introduced Lewald the idea of a *sich-bildende Persönlichkeit*, or self-educating character. Many years later in her autobiography, Lewald describes a scene of reflection from the year 1834 in Breslau, where her

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<sup>82</sup> Sigrid Weigel also refers to Lewald's "double gaze" or "cross-eyed vision" in "Der schielende Blick: Thesen zur Geschichte weiblicher Schreibpraxis," Die verborgene Frau: Sechs Beiträge zu einer feministischen Literaturwissenschaft (Berlin, 1983) 83-137.

cousin Heinrich had given her a journal for her birthday. The journal contained an inscription by Heinrich which read: “Das Höchste aber, sagt Goethe, wozu der Mensch gelangen kann, ist das Bewußtsein eigener Gesinnungen und Gedanken, das Erkennen seiner selbst, welches ihm die Einleitung gibt, auch fremde Gemütsarten zu durchschauen” (Lewald 2: 278) [The highest of things, Goethe says, that one can achieve is the consciousness of one’s own sentiments and thoughts; this recognition of self provides one with the means to acquire dispositions that are different from his or her own.]

This scene ties into our discussion because of its message of an individual’s responsibility to actively pursue his or her “self”, which, as mentioned above, was praised by German intellectuals as one of the absolute highest achievements in life. What Heinrich Simon seems to not recognize, however, is that Lewald, as a woman, would have a much harder time balancing this quest of self with the given circumstances around her because of nineteenth-century society’s approach to gender differences. The best example of this conflict is Lewald’s refusal to marry the man chosen by her father. Despite her father’s fervent insistence that “eine Frau selbst in einer nicht ganz glücklichen Ehe noch immer besser daran ist als ein altes Mädchen” (Lewald 2: 134) [a woman in a not so happy marriage still has it better than an old maid], Lewald remained true to her own promise never to marry unless under the condition of love. Although the reader first assumes that Lewald would be happy with her refusal to marry, the result is, in fact, quite the opposite. From this point onward, Lewald finds herself continuously struggling against feelings of tremendous guilt for having declined the marriage on the one hand, but also for her desire of

independence on the other. Lewald identifies herself with other unmarried girls of the bourgeoisie who, she feels, form a collective identity as a nuisance to society and their respective families.

Was soll man mit ihnen machen? Und da man sich die rechte Antwort aus Vorurteilen nicht geben mag, bescheidet man sich, die alten Mädchen in der Gesellschaft und in den Familien als unvermeidliches Übel zu ertragen. (Lewald 2: 138)

[What should one do with them? And because one did not want to give the right answer out of prejudice, one has to be content with tolerating the old girls in society and in families as an inevitable annoyance.]

Instead of viewing this particular instance as a good example of exercising individual consciousness of thought, Lewald instead sees it as a period of her life described as *Leidensjahre*, or years of suffering, just as the title of the second volume suggests. This particular example leads the reader to conclude that finding a sense of self, or recognizing a consciousness of individual desire, was indeed dependent on social realities associated with gender differences. It also leads us to ask whether Heinrich Simon, a man of the same social class and cultural surroundings, had ever faced such an extreme case of conflict between two opposing life-defining decisions.

Reason versus passion: this particular set of binary oppositions listed at the beginning of this chapter most accurately describes, in my opinion, Fanny Lewald's social transition from unmarried family daughter to an independent woman writer. By following her *passion* to write, Lewald overcomes the *rational* concept that she, as a woman of "proper" standing, should not venture into any realm beyond the

domestic sphere. This is described in the scene in which she receives the invitation from another cousin, August Lewald, to write a small report for his journal *Europa*. Aware of her ability to write, as he had published anonymous segments of her letters prior to this occasion, he requested his cousin to provide a description of a recent royal event which had taken place in Königsberg. Lewald's long anticipated sense of purpose is obvious in the following citation:

Es war mir ein Blick aus der Wüste in das gelobte Land, es war eine Aussicht auf Befreiung, es war die Verwirklichung eines Gedankens, die Erfüllung eines Wunsches, die ich mir einzugestehen nicht getraut hatte. (Lewald 2: 276)

[To me, it was a gaze into the land of praise from the desert; it was a glimpse of release; it was the actualization of a thought, the fulfillment of a wish that I had not even dared myself to confess.]

After years of struggling against her own obedience as “eternal family daughter”, Lewald finally does find her sense of self beyond the traditional definition of bourgeois female identity and place; however, she also describes the necessity of overcoming a negative self-image in order to make the most of her new purpose in life.

Jahrelang hatte ich mich in die Vorstellung eingelebt, daß ich ein altes Mädchen, und als ein solches ohne Hoffnung auf Freude und Glück sei. Jetzt fing ich an, mir zu sagen, daß ich eine junge Schriftstellerin sei, daß ich einen Vater in leidlich sorgenfreien Verhältnissen und gute Geschwister habe, daß ich treue Freunde besitze und ein Talent, welches zu üben mir Freude bereite,

während es mir eine gewisse Unabhängigkeit zu sichern versprach, und ich hatte ein Ziel vor Augen, das ich mit Begeisterung und mit Ehrgeiz verfolgte.

(Lewald 3: 71)

[For years I had gotten used to the idea that I was an old maid without any hopes of enjoyment and happiness. Now I began to say to myself that I was a young writer, that I had a father in reasonably carefree circumstances and good siblings, that I had true friends and a talent which I enjoyed practicing—while it also promised me a certain level of independence—and I had a goal in front of my eyes which I followed with excitement and ambition.]

In addition to adopting a new self-image, Lewald writes that she was confronted with another new challenge, namely the battle of self-confidence as woman writer in a traditionally male dominated public realm. She claims, “tagelang kämpfte ich mit meinem Verlangen und mit meinem Mißtrauen gegen mich selbst, und eine ganze Reihenfolge persönlicher Beweggründe trieben mich daneben vorwärtszugehen” (Lewald 2: 280) [I fought daily with my desires and against my lack of self-confidence, but a whole series of personal motives pushed me to keep going forward]. Although inspired by classical male authors, the thought of entering their world as a woman writer was intimidating to Lewald; she therefore aimed to avoid any type of literary style that could be labeled as trivial. In addition to this conscious effort, Lewald receives one last request from her father upon receiving permission to leave the family home and live independently: to write all works anonymously.

As in the final stages of a *Bildungsroman*, Lewald’s autobiography concludes with a portrayal of overall harmony with her self as well as her new position in

society as an independent woman writer. In addition, Lewald learns to view her individuality as a noble and positive quality after meeting personally with Henriette Herz and the widower of Rahel Varnhagen, who was Lewald's most inspiring predecessor. Upon meeting these two people, Lewald seems to realize her shared values and orientations with these women who also, in their individual ways, showed a different "way of being" apart from the status quo of bourgeois lifestyle and traditional gender roles. Lewald ends her autobiography just before embarking on a trip to Italy, where she would meet the writer and her future husband Adolf Stahr and enter a new phase of her life.

*Self-Awareness and the Physical Boundary: Hedwig Dohm's "Werde, die du bist!"*

(1894)

"Ich bin keine Persönlichkeit" (Dohm, *Werde* 30) [I am no personage (Dohm, *Become* 20)].<sup>83</sup> This statement is made by Agnes Schmidt, the fifty-four year old widowed protagonist in Hedwig Dohm's novella *Werde, die du bist!* (1894) [*Become Who You Are* (2006)]. Upon claiming herself to be no person, Agnes Schmidt opens up the question once again of gendered subjectivity in connection with age, and how social norms and conventions are realized and lived through the body. How can somebody see his or her "self" as "nobody", and what does this telling statement reveal about gender and age in connection with the idea of self-awareness?

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<sup>83</sup> All English translations of *Werde, die du bist!* are from Elizabeth G. Ametsbichler's edition *Become Who You Are!* (Albany, 2006).

Composed when the author was sixty-three years old, the novella “touches on many of the same issues that concern [Dohm] throughout her work: familial and marital relationships, women’s participation in society and in the home, and aging (particularly for women and especially for widows)” (Ametsbichler 85). The following discussion focuses on how age—together with gender—adds to the theoretical debate of the cultured body as a separate entity from the individual self, and how this plays a role in the discourse of *Bildung*.

The opening scene of the novella takes place in a mental hospital in Berlin. Agnes Schmidt, around sixty years old, is described as a woman with a particularly unique case of mental disturbance, and as a shy woman with observing eyes and a habit of occasional melancholic monologues. Her physician at the hospital, Doctor Behrend, concluded his patient’s case of mental illness as a result of her long and lonely travels, which had only just begun after the death of her husband. Upon the arrival of a young doctor from southern Germany, the otherwise silent and solemn woman is overcome with emotion and she joyfully calls him by his first name, Johannes; she collapses into unconsciousness as her doctor reminds her that she is an old woman and should therefore behave more adequately for her age. The reader learns from the young doctor that he had actually seen Agnes on the island of Capri about three years prior to this encounter, and they did not see each other again after his insult of having met “Großmutter Psyche” (Dohm, *Werde* 11) [“Grandmother Psyche” (Dohm, *Become* 6)]. Upon her insistence, Doctor Behrend reads Agnes Schmidt’s diary in order to find out more about any possible reasoning behind his patient’s mental disturbance. The diary, beginning only a few years prior to the time

in which the novella unfolds, portrays an overview of Agnes' life as mother and wife, as grandmother and widow, and comes to an end after her encounter with Johannes on the island of Capri. At the end of the novella, Agnes regains consciousness only to mumble several words to Doctor Behrend before dying. The last image of Agnes portrays her as a Jesus-like figure with the crown of thorny myrtle flowers entwined in her hair and a drop of blood on her forehead.

As in the case of Fanny Lewald, the protagonist of the novella *Werde, die du bist!* takes an interest in finding herself beyond the labels society attributed to her—grandmother and widow—which in nineteenth-century discourse symbolized more or less the end of a woman's life. As we learn in Agnes Schmidt's journal, society was far too ready to classify her as something that she did not feel she was, as these terms not only denoted social identity, but they also tended to erase any notion of individuality. The reader sees this immediately on the first several pages of the novella, as Johannes defends his reason for having mistaken her to be a younger woman.

Merkwürdig war, wie verschieden sie aussehen konnte, bald wie eine Greisin, und dann wieder schien sie eine kaum Vierzigjährige. (Dohm, *Werde* 4)

[It was odd, how different she could look, sometimes like an old woman, and then again she appeared to be barely a forty-year-old. (Dohm, *Become* 5)].

In addition to the doctors, Agnes' family members view her more as a body or physical presence than as a person with individual wants and thoughts. For her daughters, Agnes is a person who requires constant attention; for her son-in-laws, she is a financial burden and the target of all jokes. In addition, Agnes even approaches

her grandchildren as virtual strangers whom she must love because family traditions have told her to do so. Repeatedly, Agnes' family members look at her entire presence through the preconceived understanding of "grandmother" and "widow" rather than through a mode of conduct that would give Agnes a chance to reveal her own character. She is not an individual, but on the contrary, a body, or a material object which consumes space, time, and money. Regarding her relationship with family members, Agnes writes the quote mentioned earlier: "ich bin keine Persönlichkeit" (Dohm, *Werde* 30) [I am no personage (Dohm, *Become* 20)]. The decisive factor of any preconceived belief in her character is age, which she describes as "eine neue Kette" (Dohm, *Werde* 47) [a new chain (Dohm, *Become* 32)].

From the protagonist's journal, the reader (through the eyes of Dr. Behrend) catches a glimpse into Agnes' bourgeois marriage which could be defined as proper, long, and content for both partners. This is easy to recognize in the couple's last name, Schmidt, which conveys a notion of middle class commonness—similar to the English name Smith. The protagonist writes in her journal that she had met her husband Eduard around the age of sixteen, and they married after a four-year engagement. Looking back to the time in which she married, Agnes ponders the individuality of both herself and her husband Eduard; she writes that the marriage resulted more from cultural expectation and tradition rather than mutual love.

Und er—was wußte er von mir? Von mir war ja nichts zu wissen. Wir waren beide rechtschaffene Leute, die ihre Pflicht thaten (Dohm, *Werde* 25).

[And he,—what did he know about me? Indeed, there wasn't anything to know about me. We were both upright people who did their duty. (Dohm, *Become* 17)]

Agnes writes that having met Johannes on the island of Capri was comparable to receiving a second chance at life. She explains that she fell in love with his spirit and his character, which is greater than any emotional attraction hidden behind the veil of sexual desire. However, Agnes also claims that it is absurd to think of an older woman falling in love with a younger man, and she compares herself to the story of Goethe, who, around the age of seventy, fell in love with a child:

[...] empfindet aber eine alte Frau tief und stark für einen Mann, um seiner Seelen-Schönheit willen, so ist sie—erotisch wahnsinnig” (Dohm, *Werde* 88)  
[if an old woman feels deeply and strongly for a man because of his soul-beauty then she is—erotically insane (Dohm, *Become* 61)].

In her journal, the protagonist continuously mentions a burning desire within her to find her true self, but then realizes that she does not know where to begin her search. She writes, “Denken! Ich habe nie gelernt zu denken, und das muß man doch lernen” (Dohm, *Werde* 54) [Think! But I have not learned to think, and one must indeed learn that (Dohm, *Become* 37)]. She compares herself to Goethe's fictional character Mignon, who had never seen Italy yet “yearned to go there with all the fibers of her heart” (Dohm, *Become* 18)].<sup>84</sup> Agnes once believed her daughters to be her true *Heimat* [home or place of belonging], but upon visiting them after the death

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<sup>84</sup> The entire existence of Mignon in J.W. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* [Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship] (1795) embodies the idea of *Sehnsucht*, or longing and nostalgia, especially in connection with Italy.

of her husband, Agnes concludes that they, Grete and Magdalene, have outgrown the need of their mother by becoming mothers themselves. Agnes therefore uses inheritance money in order to travel to the North Sea and to Italy in search of finding out who she really “is”. Agnes writes, “ich bin neugierig auf mich” (Dohm, *Werde* 48) [I am curious about myself (Dohm, *Become* 33)], and therefore embarks on a journey to the island of Capri, which brings us back to the encounter with the young doctor Johannes.

In reference to Wilhelm von Humboldt’s idea of the “self” mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that the character Agnes Schmidt was fascinated with the possibility of finally achieving “insight into her self”; in contrast, however, the external social influences and preconceived stereotypes associated with gender and age continue to hinder this process.<sup>85</sup> Agnes Schmidt is caught in an unsatisfactory position: on one hand, she possesses a level of awareness and curiosity about the possibility of finding her true “self”; on the other hand, she is “chained” to her physical appearance, which is characterized primarily by gender and age. Both doctors—who simultaneously symbolize the accomplishment of a form of *Bildung*—overlook Agnes Schmidt’s confusion and frustration and treat her rather as a case of “mental illness”. In addition, Agnes Schmidt’s small and insecure attempts at conveying her true character—whatever it may be—were to no avail, because those who possessed a formal education—in the sense of *Ausbildung*—disapproved of her unlearned path of personal enlightenment. In this case, is it valid to argue that Agnes Schmidt searches for a version of classical *Bildung* in its most original theoretical

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<sup>85</sup> See the section of the dissertation titled “*Bildung* and Gender around 1800” for a reference to the meaning of “external influences” in an individual’s process of *Bildung*.

form—inner *Bildung*—while the *ausgebildete* physicians embody a late nineteenth-century (even twenty-first century) definition of *Bildung*—namely one that trains, excludes, and demarcates the “learned” from the “unlearned” by means of institution? Or does her difficult position rest solely on a form of cultural reality associated specifically with gender and age, which really has no association with the definition of *Bildung* apart from experience or everyday “know-how”?

Agnes Schmidt concludes her journal with a question that, once again, refers to the more spiritual notion of *Bildung* associated with various intellectual movements of earlier historical contexts: ob im Tode mein Ich geboren wird? – ob ich im Jenseits werde, die ich bin? (Dohm, *Werde* 93) [Will my “I” be born in death? – Will I in the Beyond become who I am? (Dohm, *Become* 65)]. My immediate reaction to the word *Jenseitigkeit* [otherworldliness] brings us back to a more religious idea of *Bildung* found prior to the secularization movement of the Enlightenment. Agnes Schmidt writes about death because she can imagine no other way to escape the limitations placed on her body in order to set her mind free. It seems that death is the only option left for her to fulfill—what else can she do? In addition, how else could she escape the position between “becoming who she is”<sup>86</sup> and “remaining who she was” without undergoing an intellectual or physical transcendence? Social conventions in this case convince Agnes Schmidt that it is inconceivable for her to find her “self” while recognizing only the corporeal aspects of a person’s individuality; in other words, society will continue to render judgment on Agnes because of her age and gender. She therefore transcends into the world of

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<sup>86</sup> Diethelme writes that Nietzsche often used the phrase “become who you are”, as he believed that the most important knowledge one could obtain is self-knowledge. (157)

the beyond, dying in the hospital as a silent Jesus-figure with a crown of dried myrtle flowers on her forehead.

In the next novel of discussion, the topic of a woman's *Bildung* in connection with its interpretation of "self-awareness" continues in the discourse of religiosity, but in a very different way. Not only does the protagonist of the next novel befriend an enlightened woman who teaches her how to find her "self", but in addition, she finds a particular movement of spirituality—theosophy—as the only social realm that allows her to pursue insight into her self without any social interruption. Whereas the protagonist Agnes Schmidt ultimately succumbs to society's discouragement of her personal journey into her own individuality, the narrator of *Schicksale einer Seele* learns to free herself first from the constraints of silence, and then from the convention and bias of her own culture.

*"Nichtindividualität"? Hedwig Dohm's "Schicksale einer Seele" (1899)*

Continuing the discussion of texts by Hedwig Dohm that shed light on the concept of gendered subjectivity, our focus revisits the novel *Schicksale einer Seele* and its protagonist Marlene Bucher. As mentioned in chapter three of this project, Marlene Bucher implies an understanding of herself as a *Nichtindividualität*, or a "non-individual", which was ultimately a consequence of her *Nichterziehung* [non-upbringing]. The idea of *Nichtindividualität*—similar to Agnes Schmidt's self-perception as *keine Persönlichkeit* [no person]—serves as a point of departure in this chapter's analysis. The discussion of Dohm's novel *Schicksale einer Seele* ended in the previous chapter with the protagonist's marriage to Walter Bucher, the seemingly

long-lost brother of a former classmate who returned home after the 1848 Revolution and unexpectedly proposed marriage. This subject of dialogue continues by taking a more critical glance into the marriage of Marlene and Walter, and then into the relationship between Marlene and the matriarchal figure Charlotte von Krüger.

In reference to the theoretical framework mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the discussion of this particular novel expands on how the process of individualization as *Bildung* could not happen without cultivation, which not only implies an exposure to material things, like texts and buildings, but also to customs, rituals, and ways of living. All of these means of cultivation come into play during Marlene's quest of finding her "self". Although the protagonist admits to never have become a *Weltdame*, or cosmopolitan lady, she nevertheless learned to see things more clearly. In other words, Marlene learned to see behind the veil of superficiality that concealed the "proper" workings of Berlin's upper-class society. In the process of looking back, Marlene continues to describe her long and arduous course of self-cultivation and self-awareness in the form of a letter to her friend Arnold.

The narrator begins a description of her marriage to Walter by claiming, "eine unbestimmte Hoffnung hatte ich auf Walter gesetzt, dass er etwas in mir wecken sollte, das schlief" (Dohm, *Schicksale* 95) [I placed an unexplainable hope in Walter that he should wake up something in me that was sleeping]. She recalls her shyness during the early years of marriage and describes herself as "unsinnig schüchtern" (129) [ridiculously shy] and unable to speak up on any occasion. Instead of participating in intellectual conversations while in the company of Berlin's culturally

savvy *Bildungsbürgertum*, Marlene's mind would focus instead on menial domestic tasks.

Da tauchte vielleicht plötzlich mitten in einem schwierigen philosophischen System ein Stück Käse vor meinem inneren Auge auf, das ich vergessen hatte, unter die Glasglocke zu stellen, oder der Schreck über das Bier, das wieder einmal nicht auf Eis lag, überwog das Interesse an Kants Zeit- und Raumproblemen. (119)

[Suddenly, in the middle of a complicated philosophical system, a piece of cheese would surface before my eyes that I had forgotten to place under its glass bell cover—or the dread about the beer that once again did not lie on top of ice—these [thoughts] outweighed any interest in Kant's problematic concepts of time and space.]

In addition to her disinterest in conversations with members of her husband's social circle, Marlene writes that she often sought escape into a "nie existierenden Welt voll reizender Abenteuer" [non-existing worlds full of charming adventure] (Dohm, *Schicksale* 119-120) and filled her mind with the literary works by Eugenie Marlitt<sup>87</sup> and Gräfin Ida von Hahn-Hahn<sup>88</sup>. Moreover, Marlene writes that she cherished her time alone in the apartment and even feared the company of their brash female

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<sup>87</sup> Eugenie Marlitt (1825-1887) was a flagship author and bestselling novelist for the family-oriented journal *Die Gartenlaube* in the 1860s and 70s. Her works received recognition for their depictions of idealized domesticity and familial morals associated with the culture of the *good* middle class. Once again, this example is relevant to the aforementioned discussion of women's literacy.

<sup>88</sup> To make the connection more notable, Ida Gräfin von Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880), a well-known woman writer during her time, attracted the affections of Heinrich Simon, the unrequited love and cousin of Fanny Lewald. See Gabriele Schneider, *Fanny Lewald* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1996) 33.

servant; despite her love of solitude, however, she also admits “die Einsamkeit fing an, mich zu beklemmen” [the loneliness began to wear me down] (153).

Marlene met Charlotte von Krüger at time in which the suffering from her own silence could continue no longer. Instead of laughing at her shyness and unfashionable dress as others in society have done, Charlotte von Krüger aims at teaching Marlene how to overcome her own shyness, how to ignore the opinions of others, and how to—basically—appear as a *gebildete* and self-confident woman who belongs in the *Bildungsbürgertum*. Marlene describes Charlotte as almost masculine in appearance: instead of wearing traditionally feminine clothing like gloves, she wore a collar and tie like a man and smoked fat cigars. In addition, Marlene writes that Charlotte appeared proud, noble and self-assured—everything Marlene never dreamed she could be. Like a powerful matriarch, Charlotte kept a circle of young women around her, mostly from lower income families, and boarded them in her home in order to provide them with the chance at a particular *Ausbildung* or skill. Based on a bad experience with heartbreak and divorce, Marlene explains, Charlotte secretly despised the opposite gender yet still took delight in a man’s company in order to prove the effortlessness behind superficiality.

Under the guidance of Charlotte, Marlene transforms quickly into a new person. Instead of feeling uncomfortable with her newly found attention and respect from others, Marlene welcomes her new consciousness of “self” that surfaces in the course of her unique *Bildung*. She writes that Charlotte “entband mich von der fremden Person in mir, vom Alpdruck der Schüchternheit, die sich wenigstens ihr

gegenüber verlor” [Charlotte released me from the strange person in myself, from the oppression of shyness, which at least subsided in her presence] (171). She continues:

Ich wurde mit ihr ich selbst, und indem ich mich gab, entwickelte ich mich.

Ich entdeckte Fähigkeiten in mir, die mich selbst in Erstaunen setzen. Denke dir—aber wahrhaftig, es ist wahr—ich wurde witzig. (171)

[I became myself around her, and while I gave into it, I developed myself.

I discovered abilities in myself that astounded even me. Just think—no really, it is true—that I actually became funny.]

In addition to teaching her companion about how to find her hidden character and overcome social awkwardness, Charlotte also enlightens Marlene on the truth about her marriage; not only was Marlene’s husband Walter involved in a love affair, but he had also spread gossip throughout society that rumored his wife to be the unfaithful partner. After the disclosure of this information, the rather extraordinary friendship between the two women abruptly ends. Instead of listening to Charlotte’s advice to file for divorce, Marlene decides to remain married to her husband, but shortly thereafter decides to travel on her own to the North Sea with her young daughter Edeltraut, where she then meets Arnold, the man to whom she directs her life’s story.

Marlene’s longing to understand her ultimate purpose in life reaches a climax after the death of her daughter. Because Marlene regarded Edeltraut as a mirror of her own soul, the death of her daughter may also symbolize a parallel loss of a particular chapter in Marlene’s own life, as if her childlike past remains irretrievable and forever gone. Henceforth, Marlene makes an active commitment to gain insight

into herself: her self-perception as a mere “Nichtindividualität” [ non-individuality] vanishes as well.

Und so bin ich – immer nur ein Schatten, den die andern warfen – zu einer undefinierbaren, verschwommenen, farblosen Nichtindividualität geworden.

Ich bin es geworden mit vollem Bewußtsein. (233)

[And so I became an indefinable, characterless and colorless non-individuality—always only a shadow whom others tossed around.

I became it with full consciousness.]

Marlene finds herself in a situation similar to the protagonist Agnes Schmidt of the novella *Werde, die du bist!*. On the one hand, she is aware of her desire to explore her individuality, but on the other hand, she remains unaware of how to do it or where to begin. Even though Charlotte assisted in transforming Marlene into a more gregarious character and even an “accidentally successful” coquette, Marlene was unsatisfied with her new identity and longed for an even greater insight into her self. With the assistance of a physician who prescribed a dryer climate for her lungs, Marlene travels alone to Italy. She writes to Arnold that in search of her individuality, she is unable to recognize the characteristics of a true “self” without also recognizing the influences of cultural heritage.

Wo fange ich an? Wo hören die anderen in mir auf? Ich weiss es nicht. War ich die Leichtfertige, die einige Jahre in den seichten, trüben Gewässern der schlechten Gesellschaft mitschwamm? Nein. War ich die Sklavin, die sich vor der Mutter, den Brüdern, dem Gatten fürchtete? Nein. Ich, das verschüchterte Geschöpf zwischen Taube und Gans? Aber nein, nein.

Wer bin ich? Immer nur Erbe all der Generationen, die vor mir waren?  
(312)<sup>89</sup>

[Where do I begin? Where do the others inside of me come to a stop? I do not know. Was I the frivolous type, who only several years ago swam along in the shallow and muddy waters of bad society? No. Was I the slave who cowered before her mother, her brothers, and her spouse? No. I, the intimidated creature between a dove and a goose? But no, no.

Who am I? Just the heir of all generations before me?]

While in Rome, Marlene becomes involved in a theosophical circle under the direction of a woman named Helena B.<sup>90</sup> She writes that she is overcome with an “Apostelfieber” [fever of an apostle] and rejoices at the idea of having the opportunity to ponder things philosophically and to have an effect on others like herself: this would be “eine Freude ohne Selbstsucht” [a joy without greed] (300). The novel ends with her decision to follow Helena B.’s group to India, which, in her eyes, is the only solution of escape from generations of tradition and a culture that would continuously impede on her quest of self.

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<sup>89</sup> An important reference for comparison is Rahel Varnhagen’s letter to David Veit on February 16, 1805. “Mir aber war das *Leben* angewiesen; und ich blieb im Keim, bis zu meinem Jahrhundert, und bin von außen *ganz* verschüttet, drum sag’ ich’s selbst” (Varnhagen 260). “But *Life* was assigned to me; and I remained an embryo until my century, and am *totally* buried in rubble from the outside; that’s why I say it myself” (trans. Goodman 409) The connection, I feel, lies in the question of time, as Varnhagen emphasizes her “self” as a product of the century in which she lives. Dohm’s questions about a woman’s individuality reflect Rahel’s statement by asking how one may possibly define one’s “self” without regarding the influences of society and culture on (or against) her character.

<sup>90</sup> “Helene B.” is short for Helena P. Blavatsky, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society in New York City in 1875. Historical information is available at [www.theosociety.org](http://www.theosociety.org).

In conclusion, two questions draw attention to the interrelationship of gender and *Bildung* and the novel *Schicksale einer Seele*. The first aspect raises awareness of the portrayal of *Bildung* as being a masculine or even “post-feminine” attribute. In the first case, *Bildung* and masculinity connect with Marlene’s husband, Walter Bucher, as an active and dominant member of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. In the case of acquiring “post-feminine” attributes, the discussion centers on the figure Charlotte von Krüger. Is it not interesting that Marlene Bucher receives “instruction” from a woman described as possessing attributes that are uncommon for women during that time, such as smoking cigars and wearing a collar and tie? Moreover, is it not worth noting that Charlotte von Krüger transformed herself into a socially superior and quasi enlightened figure after shedding any mode of behavior—i.e. language and dress—which could be linked to conventional constructions of femininity? Does Charlotte von Krüger find her escape from “proper” femininity as the only means in which she may live independently and without social criticism?

The second question revolves around the relationship between the concept of *Bildung* and an individual’s spirituality. Although the novel ends without any clear conclusion on Marlene’s spiritual quest, it does conclude with an undeniable suggestion of religion as Marlene’s proper “instructor” of individuality. In this case, the pursuit of spiritual fulfillment intersects with *Bildung*, as both missions require a high level of individual insight. To which extent, one may now ask, do *Bildung* and spiritual fulfillment interconnect with gender? Does the fulfillment of individual spirituality offer women a unique form of *Bildung* in response to a social reality that remains biased to the idea of gender and self-awareness? If obtaining a particular

level of institutionalized *Bildung* (in the sense of higher education) and a certain form of *Ausbildung* (in the sense of job training) remains reserved for male members of the middle-classes, could Marlene Bucher be suggesting an alternative form of *Bildung* obtainable for women?

## Chapter 5

### “Abnormal” Behavior and *Bildung*

Few words have more power, actually and symbolically, than *normal* and its associated terms – norm, normality, normalize. (Rose 241) In this chapter, the notions of “normal” and “abnormal” connect with the contrapositions of *Bildung* that denote the “irrational”, the “immoral”, and intellectually or socially “unhealthy”. Up to this point, several discussions on the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender revolved around the question of bourgeois cultural norms. This chapter expands on the idea of gendered *Bildung* within social context by asking how the construction of “normal” femininity simultaneously created its paradox—“abnormal” femininity. As mentioned previously, the notion of *Bildung* represents a certain form (or certain forms) in which one participates in one’s culture—but what happens when an individual’s particular “form” does not equate with an established cultural norm? In this case, the idea of behavior as something “learned” links itself to the idea of the body, which becomes “a medium of cultural expression and a key site for transgressing cultural beliefs” (Baldwin et al. 268). If *Bildung* defines one’s ability to strive towards a particular level of “cultivation” (based on the society in which one lives), could it also not simultaneously create an “empty” space for those whose fail to match cultural expectation? What happens to an individual when society as a collective identity marks his or her behavior, character, or mannerisms as “different”? Furthermore, what happens when the idea of the “self”—defined by Jerrold Seigel in chapter four of this project—does not blend in with society’s mainstream conception

of what a “self” should be and how the “self” should act? The greatest example of “abnormalcy” that relates itself to *Bildung* and gender is the nineteenth-century construction of gendered sickness, particularly women’s “nervousness” and “hysteria”.

Society—as a material, active, and collective entity—sees the human body and not the human “self”. In other words, self-consciousness is invisible: one person cannot actively see another person’s self-consciousness, and the body therefore serves as a site of individual expression—whether through voice or behavior. *Bildung*, once again, is a multifaceted term that relates to an individual’s self-consciousness or mental state *as well as* a person’s behavior and mannerism: hence, *Bildung* can reveal itself through the body by means of “self-control” that reflects one’s acknowledgement of a certain code of standards. As already mentioned, the German *Bürgertum* searched for its identity as a social group by upholding a particular code of ethics. The result of upholding a code of ethics, however, is twofold: while creating a discourse of “sameness” for means of identification, the opposite discourse of “otherness” or “difference” also surfaced for the same purpose of identification. Bringing gender into the question, how does this “otherness” combine with the construction of “abnormal” behavior for women of the bourgeois classes? In one case, this form of (anti-) *Bildung* may reveal itself merely in the idea of “difference”; in another case, it may create the appearance of a medical condition.

The following discussion begins by revisiting Gabriele Reuter’s novel *Aus guter Familie* (1895) within the critical discourse of “abnormalcy”. As mentioned previously, the protagonist Agathe Heidling consciously suppresses her feelings of

frustration and confusion in order to conform to the rigid “standards” set forth by her family and society. Believing Agathe to suffer from “nervousness”, her family aims to heal Agathe’s “abnormalcy” without realizing the truth behind her unhappiness. After visiting a variety of spas and sanatoria and ultimately undergoing contemporary medical treatments for the “bourgeois woman’s sickness”, Agathe’s *Geist* [spirit/character] deteriorates to a point of nonexistence.

The discussion then turns to Reuter’s second bestselling novel *Ellen von der Weiden* (1900). Unlike Agathe Heidling, the namesake of the second novel, Ellen von der Weiden [literally translated to Ellen “from the fields”] marries and fulfills the roles of wife and mother; however, her marriage reveals itself as troublesome from the beginning. Ellen, a nature-loving and somewhat “wild” girl from the mountainous woods of Thüringen, cannot adapt to the sober lifestyle of the urban *Bildungsbürgertum* in which her husband, Fritz Erdmannsdörfer, thrives as an established physician. Despite her efforts to conform to “normal” standards of “proper” behavior, Ellen continuously exposes herself and her husband to ridicule by acting “wildly” in public. Because of her inability to refine her behavior according to the customs and habits of her new social environment, Ellen becomes subject to her husband’s “physician’s gaze”, which continuously looks to categorize and classify her actions according to the psychological definition of “healthy”. Their marriage ultimately reveals the clash of two interpretations of *Bildung*. On the one hand, Fritz Erdmannsdörfer’s *Ausbildung* in the field of medicine grants him the qualification of judgment within the social structure of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, whereas on the other

hand, Ellen's realization of "self" reflects the idea of having accomplished the existence of *eine sich-bildende Persönlichkeit* [the self-cultivated character].

*The "Hysterical" Woman? A Continued Discussion of Gabriele Reuter's  
"Aus guter Familie"*

This segment focuses on the idea of "abnormalcy" in conjunction with the inseparable discourses of "proper" behavioral code and gender as presented in Gabriele Reuter's novel *Aus guter Familie*. The female protagonist of the novel, Agathe Heidling, ultimately succumbs to and undergoes treatments for bouts of "nervousness", "melancholia",<sup>91</sup> and eventually "hysteria". Although the idea of hysteria existed for centuries in Western European culture, Vera King explains that its classification as the "Erkrankung bürgerlicher Frauen", or bourgeois women's sickness, reached a pinnacle during the nineteenth century. (182) In addition, King elucidates Sigmund Freud's contribution to hysteria around the turn of the twentieth century in tandem with the emergence of psychoanalysis; Freud claimed that based on external, cultural, and internal problems, women especially have problems achieving sexual satisfaction, and for this reason, women have a stronger tendency to develop hysteria. (182)

In his publication *Die Krankheiten der Frauen* [Women's Sicknesses] (1884), Dr. Heinrich Fritsch begins his definition of hysteria with an intriguing introduction:

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<sup>91</sup> Lisabeth Hock's article "Shades of Melancholy in Gabriele Reuter's *Aus guter Familie*" (2006) looks into how Reuter's own struggle with "melancholy" played a significant role in her fictional texts, especially the novel *Aus guter Familie*.

“Der Reiz, welcher zur Reflexneurose der Hysterie führt, lässt sich nicht specificiren” [sic.] [The stimulus that leads to the reflex neurosis of hysteria cannot be specified] (419).<sup>92</sup> However, he continues that because of its particular acuteness during a woman’s menstruation, the stimulus for hysteria must lie in the female reproductive organs. By claiming this, Fritsch dismisses other physician’s opinions of hysteria as a purely psychiatric condition. Fritsch continues to outline hysteria as a female condition by claiming, “Psyche und Soma sind beim Weibe mehr von einander abhängig als beim Manne” [Psyche (Mind) and Soma (Body) are more dependent on one another in a woman than in a man]. In addition, “der pathologische Zustand des Gemüthes wirkt in viel grösserem Maasse auf den Körper des Weibes zurück als beim Manne” [sic.] [the pathological condition of the mind has a much greater reaction on a woman’s body than on a man’s] (419). Moving beyond his contentions that hysteria is connected to a woman’s reproductive organs, Fritsch provides the causes for this ailment.

Geistige deprimirende Einflüsse verstärken gleichsam die Prädisposition, die nervöse Belastung. Auch verkehrte Erziehung, gesellschaftliche Überanstrengung, Excesse im Coitus, Ononie, Sterilität, Impotenz des Mannes, Unglück in der Ehe und im Leben überhaupt werden als ätiologisch wichtig angeführt. (420)

[Mentally depressing influences intensify the predisposition of nervous strain.

In addition, incorrect upbringing, social overexertion, excesses of coitus, onanism, acyesis (absence of pregnancy), a husband’s impotency,

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<sup>92</sup> Dr. Heinrich Fritsch, ed, Die Krankheiten der Frauen: Aerzten und Studirenden [sic.], 2nd ed. (Braunschweig, 1884).

unhappiness in marriage and in life overall are alleged to be etiologically important.]

Fritsch ends his section on hysteria by listing the following treatments: first, the most favored method is to remove a woman's ovaries (but only in extreme cases, as this is a life-threatening procedure). When this is not possible, he suggests healing baths as a treatment, preferably "die Kaltwasserheilstätten" [cold water sanatoria] as well as "elektrisch[e] Bäder", in which electric currents are run through water while the patient sits on a rubber or wooden mat. (427) Apart from Fritsch's publication, an article in *Die Gartenlaube* on "Deutsche Frauenbäder" [German Baths for Women] entitled "Wo unsere Frauen Hilfe suchen" [sic.] [Where our Women Seek Help] reflects a cultural recognition and acceptance of this type of illness as well as its treatments.<sup>93</sup>

Fritsch's publication serves as an important example of nineteenth-century medical context in our discussion of Reuter's novel *Aus guter Familie* because of the "diagnosis" and treatments to which its female protagonist ultimately succumbs. Agathe Heidling's "hysterical" outburst at the end of the novel does not happen without reason, but rather is the result of years and years of suppression. Even the opening scene of the novel foreshadows Agathe's ultimate fate: following the celebration of her first communion, the protagonist wanders away from her family for a short while in order to digest the whirlwind of emotions she felt throughout the course of the eventful day. She finds a moment of solitude on an old wooden bench

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<sup>93</sup> "Wo unsere Frauen Hilfe suchen," *Die Gartenlaube*, no. 20 (1883) 311-315. Accompanying this article is an illustrated map of several popular spas dedicated to the healing of women's nervousness and anxiety.

near the waterside, and her longing for something far away from her own situation is apparent in the following citation.

Sie dachte gern an die Ferne – die Weite – die grenzlose Freiheit, während sie an dem kleinen Teich auf dem winzigen Bänkchen saß und sich ganz ruhig verhalten mußte, damit sie nicht umschlug und damit die Bank nicht zerbrach, denn sie war auch schon recht morsch. (27-28)

[She liked to think about distant places, open spaces, and boundless freedom while she sat on the tiny bench by the little pond where she had to be very still so she wouldn't tip over and so the bench wouldn't break into pieces; it, too, was certainly quite rotten. (17)]

Agathe must sit motionless on top of an old and moldy bench in order not to break it. Is this not a very telling description of the customs and conventions in Agathe Heidling's environment? How long can one sit upon a rotted and fragile bench before ultimately breaking it with only the slightest amount of pressure? In addition, how long can one cautiously "sit" before feeling the urge to "move"? This citation serves as a crucial metaphor of Agathe's situation because of two reasons. Not only does the metaphor reflect the conventions of the German bourgeoisie as being outdated and on the verge of collapse, but it also portrays the compliance of Agathe's character for doing all she can in order not to destroy it. Agathe's careful composure not only applies to this particular scene; it continuously resurfaces throughout the entire course of the novel. However, because she remains careful not to destroy the fragile "convention" upon which she sits, Agathe's spirit ultimately begins to decompose with it. Linda Kraus Worley underlines this idea by writing, "[Agathe Heidling's]

decay has not been caused by rebelling against the social codes, but by idealistically embracing them” (*Girls* 201).

Near the end of the novel, Agathe experiences an emotional and spiritual breakdown that expresses a final release of frustration, emotion, and desperation. While attending a spa in order to receive treatments for her “nervousness”, Agathe succumbs to the ultimate confrontation between obedience and physical unruliness. In an almost blind fury, she jumps on her sister-in-law Eugenie and tries to strangle her to death. Ironically, other women attending the spa do not seem to find the episode very uncommon: “ein junges Mädchen hatte den Verstand verloren – es war nichts gar so Seltenes in dem Badeorte” (266) [A young girl had lost her reason. It was not anything that unusual at the spa. (207)]. For the next two years, Agathe continues to receive innumerable treatments in order to “heal” her mental illness, including those mentioned above in Fritsch’s publication *Die Krankheiten der Frauen*. Her treatments include electric shock therapy, spa visitations, hypnosis, and sleeping pills. Instead of healing Agathe and improving her condition, the treatments result in turning her into an even more depressed person, completely void of emotion and life. The novel ends with the clear message that Agathe’s father continues to misunderstand Agathe’s need for intellectual growth and maturity. Thinking he must protect his daughter from exhaustion, her father even misinterprets the doctor’s advice on Agathe’s need for intellectual stimulation: “weil die Ärzte dem Regierungsrat gesagt haben, seine Tochter brauche ein wenig geistige Anregung, erzählt er ihr, was er des Morgens in der Zeitung gelesen hat. (268) [Because the

doctors have told the privy councilor that this daughter needs a little intellectual stimulation, he tells her what he read in the paper that morning. (208)]

Apart from the protagonist's diagnosis of the "bourgeois woman's sickness", there is another mode of behavior worth mentioning in this context, and that is Agathe's tendency to passionately fantasize about "misbehavior". On several occasions, Agathe visualizes herself as the "bad" and "disobedient" daughter who runs away from her family in pursuit of a more passionate life. It is her cousin Martin, the exiled Socialist, who plays the most significant role in this context. Agathe's childhood crush on her cousin eventually matures and overlaps with an admiration for his scandalous participation in Socialism. This first becomes apparent in a turbulent scene in which Martin entrusts Agathe with illegal documents upon fleeing the country for Switzerland. Alone in the house until the next morning, Agathe's curiosity for the contraband writings overcome her fear of being caught, and she secretly dives into the documents with a burning desire incomparable to anything she had ever felt before. Her strong feelings for Martin intertwine with a newly found desire for the rights of the working class, and she instantly begins to fantasize about joining Martin in the cause.

Und wenn sie morgen, statt nach Bornau zu reisen, Martin in die Schweiz folgte? – Ihr Vater bekam einen Brief: seine Tochter habe sich entschlossen, Sozialdemokratin zu werden und "der Sache" ihre Dienste zu widmen. (132)

[And what if tomorrow, instead of going to Bornau, she followed Martin to Switzerland? Her father would receive a letter: his daughter had made up her

mind to become a Social Democrat and to devote her services to “the cause”.

(101)]

Agathe continues to read fervently and is overcome with a passion, “die aus den Blättern sprühte, stieg ihr zu Kopf und jagte ihr das matte Blut durch die Adern” (132) [that flashed from the pages[,] went to her head and pumped her sluggish blood through her veins (102)]. She believes for a moment that following Martin to Switzerland would not only allow her to escape from the “fragile conventions” of her surroundings, but also to answer her life’s purpose to “love”—to love Martin as well as those less fortunate. Despite her sudden fervor for the thrill of something new and the desire to fight against the injustices of society, Agathe knows that in reality she is unable to follow Martin. Disappointed in the lack of courage to defy her family, she throws herself down on the sofa and cries.

Near the end of the novel, Agathe accidentally meets up with her cousin Martin while attending a sanatorium-like resort [*Kurort*] with her father in Switzerland. Many years had passed since their last encounter, and since then Martin had managed to make a name for himself as a renowned writer and promoter of Socialism. Once again, Martin encourages his cousin to escape her constricting bourgeois surroundings and to follow him back to Switzerland, where she could become involved in “the cause” with other young women like herself. At first, Agathe delights in the idea of adventure, release, and most of all, the opportunity to engage her mind intellectually in doing something for a greater purpose: “Etwas Werdendes--! Darin lag die Befreiung” (251) [Something that was coming to be! Therein lay emancipation....(194)]. It is interesting, however, that she forces herself

to recognize a difference between love and accomplishment. While fantasizing about the feeling of her cousin's soothing hand on her forehead, she interrupts her own daydream with more "rational" thoughts: "Von solchen weiblichen Schwächen durfte sie nicht träumen, wenn sie es wagen wollte, ihren Plan auszuführen (246) [She must not dream of such feminine weaknesses if she wanted to venture to carry out her plan. (191)].

This citation shows that Agathe has learned to believe that her feelings of sexual attraction towards her cousin are a weakness associated with her gender. In addition, in order for a woman to "become something", Agathe believes that she must not let any feelings of emotion interfere. The meaning of rationality in this case belongs to a separate discourse—a cultural stereotype that too quickly connects female accomplishment and intellectual pursuit with sexlessness. Agathe is incapable of recognizing her own internalization of this social construction that differentiates "normal" feminine behavior from "abnormal" feminine behavior. In other words, she forces herself to believe that a woman's accomplishment interferes with fulfilling a romantic relationship, and that these two extremes could never coincide. Agathe therefore continues to convince herself that she does not love her cousin, but upon witnessing his haughty flirtations with a waitress, it is to no avail. Agathe immediately loses all hope in self-accomplishment and release from her stifling world of childlike existence. Running away from Martin in a blind fury, she holds herself back from committing suicide because of the promise once made to her mother to take care of her father.

Agathe never views herself as an “abnormal” or “nervous” woman. Indeed, during her adolescence, Agathe often felt uncomfortable with expectations placed upon her character and behavior, but this gave her no reason to see herself as different from any other person. In fact, it is Agathe—rather than those who are quick to judge her—who strives the hardest to comply with social guidelines. The “problem” neither lies in her character nor her behavior, but rather in the cultural double standard that prepared her solely for the vocation of wife and mother while continuously withholding it from her. The “problem” also lies in the suppression of maturity, as Agathe’s family fails to recognize her as a maturing woman with the “normal” needs of an adult regardless of gender. Moreover, Agathe’s family members create a subculture of rules and routines around the construction of her “fragility” and “nervous condition” while simultaneously failing to recognize that there is nothing “abnormal” with her mental health. Instead, the fault derives from the discourse of social convention that extinguished any attempt to break the bourgeois mold of female propriety. In this case, Agathe is representative of a broader cultural dispute in Wilhelmine Germany that identified and treated the “bourgeois woman’s sickness” without realizing society’s mutual involvement in its existence.

Returning to a notion posed at the beginning of this section, the question resurfaces as to whether Agathe Heidling’s spiritual and emotional downfall could reflect the idea of an anti-*Bildung*—the paradox of *Bildung*—and the answer to this remains open. Indeed, Agathe Heidling possesses the desire to hone her character according to the practices of *Bildung*, but the interruption of outside influences

continuously outweighed her individual efforts. The limitations imposed by others lead to Agathe's disillusionment, and those who are closest to Agathe misinterpret her sadness and disappointment as "abnormalcy". Although Agathe openly conveyed interest in pursuing a variety of intellectually stimulating activities, the disapproval of authority figures or the fear of a particular group association (i.e. the "old maids") prevented Agathe from truly breaking out of her empty existence. She remained trapped in a vicious cycle of desire and rejection, of adulthood and childhood, which ultimately denied her the inner peace needed in order to even begin an inward quest of "self". For these reasons, the cultural standards of gendered *Bildung* become very questionable.

As seen in the next novel of discussion, *Ellen von der Weiden*, the debate focuses on an aspect almost completely opposite from that in *Aus guter Familie*. The character Ellen is very aware of her "difference" from others, but she is unable to (and unwilling to) suppress her behavior in order to comply with the expectations of her husband and his community. She eventually learns to overcome insecurity and the fear of "abnormalcy" through self-acceptance.

*"Self" Control: Gabriele Reuter's "Ellen von der Weiden" (1900)*

The title of the book represents the maiden name of the novel's protagonist, Ellen, who unintentionally encounters Fritz Erdmannsdorfer in her native woodlands of Thüringen. Fritz Erdmannsdorfer, a popular physician in the field of women's mental health from Berlin, is instantly attracted to the more or less "uncivil" Ellen, whom he

first confronts singing almost “wildly” on top of a mountain for the whole valley to hear. After this brief introduction, the story begins: “Nach sechs Wochen war Ellen von der Weiden, das singende Mädchen auf der Jungfernklippe, Frau Doktor Erdmannsdörfer in Berlin” (8) [After six weeks, Ellen von der Weiden, the singing girl on top of the cliffs, became Mrs. Doctor Erdmannsdörfer in Berlin]. From the earliest days of her new life in Berlin, Ellen not only feels uneasy in her urban surroundings but also becomes aware of a growing uneasiness in her marriage. Throughout the course of the novel, both Ellen and Fritz repeatedly struggle to maintain the image of what constitutes a well-suited marriage within the highest social circles of the Wilhelmine Empire’s cultural capital; however, Ellen repeatedly embarrasses her husband by continuously defying preconceived standards of “proper” behavior for the wife of a renowned physician. Their unhappiness eventually leads to Ellen’s love affair with another man and Fritz’s wish for a divorce. Ellen delivers their child in a home for unwed mothers, and the novel ends with a rather sober yet optimistic depiction of Ellen, back in her father’s home in Thüringen and alone with her child.

The following analysis focuses on two points of discussion connected with “abnormal feminine behavior”. First, what is it about Ellen’s actions and manners that make her “abnormal” and “unfit” for the culture of the urban *Bildungsbürgertum*? In order to integrate herself into the daily lifestyle of her new social surrounding, Ellen knows that she must learn to control her “wild” tendencies and behave more “refined”. She therefore undergoes a personal journey of insight unlike any other female protagonist discussed in this dissertation: instead of looking

for a way to sharpen her intellect or fill a void of self-awareness, Ellen attempts to re-shape her character by changing her behavior. This leads to the second question, and that is how Fritz Erdmannsdörfer—a renowned physician of women’s health—unconsciously judges Ellen’s behavior through his “physician’s gaze”.

Utilizing Michel Foucault’s theories on Western medicine and the creation of the clinic, Christina Schlatter Gentinetta brings gender to the subject (via Judith Butler) by articulating the “power of the physician’s gaze” when approaching the juxtaposition of male physician and female patient.<sup>94</sup>

Die Patientin legitimiert die Funktion des Arztes, sie reflektiert seine Macht. Von ihr ist der Arzt aber auch abhängig, um seine Macht immer wieder von Neuem bestätigt zu sehen. In ihr liegt gleichzeitig die Bedrohung durch die Möglichkeit seines Versagens. (168)

[The female patient legitimizes the function of the physician, and she reflects his power. The physician is also dependent on her, in order to see his power continuously confirmed. There is a simultaneous threat his of failure that exists in the female patient.]

This citation directly relates to the friction between Fritz and Ellen in several ways. As a highly esteemed doctor amongst the notable ranks of an educated society, Fritz plays a major role in defining, maintaining, and classifying cases of women’s “abnormalcy”. Within the privacy of his own home, his role as physician carries over to the situation of his “wild” wife. However, this is a reciprocal relationship of power

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<sup>94</sup> Christina Schlatter Gentinetta, “Signifikationen des Körpers: Zur produktiven Macht des ärztlichen Blickes,” *Gender Studies: Wissenschaftstheorien und Gesellschaftskritik*, Eds. Theresa Frey Steffen, et al. (Würzburg, 2004) 163-172.

because his social reputation also rests on the actions of Ellen—whether she fails or succeeds at her attempts of “refinement”. Furthermore, is Fritz—as a *gebildeter Mann* [educated man/husband]—creating Ellen to be something that she is not, namely another one of his “cases”? Does he unconsciously practice power over Ellen in the fear that others may identify her as *ungebildet* (based on “abnormal” behavior) and concurrently ruin his own position as a *gebildeter Mann* within the highest circles of the *Bildungsbürgertum*?

Ellen is fully aware of the definition of conventional “feminine” behavior, and therefore she pinpoints specific attributes about her “self” that she would like to change. One particular scene that reflects this notion is when Ellen, within the circle of her own family, plays the role of a boy in an informal music and dance performance. Ellen dresses up in clothing suitable for a boy and dances circles around her friend Thes, acting as if she were a boy in pursuit of a girl. Everybody in the small audience applauds the theatrical performance except Fritz. Ellen writes later in her journal: “Ich weiß, er fand mich wieder einmal unweiblich” (59) [I know he found me once again to be unfeminine]. In addition, Ellen—aware of the mainstream definition of “femininity”—teases her husband by using her dearest friend as an exaggerated example of gender stereotypes. She recalls the event by writing in her journal: “weißt du, Fritz, es ist mir ganz klar, du hättest Thes heiraten sollen, sieh einmal, wie tadellos jetzt in den Zimmern Staub gewischt ist...” (59) [See, Fritz, now I know that you should have married Thes. Just look how meticulously the rooms have been dusted...].

Finally, Ellen reveals a more serious or worried tone in her journal while conveying her ambition to change. Following another scene in which Fritz is ashamed of his wife's "uncontrolled" outspokenness, Ellen sarcastically writes: "kurz und gut – ich soll mich von Grund meiner Seele aus ändern, damit ich des Herrn Doktor Fritz Erdmannsdorfer würdig werde!" (66) [Short and sweet – I should change from the depths of my soul so that I can become worthy of Mr. Doctor Fritz Erdmannsdorfer]. But how can this happen when Ellen does not even feel comfortable with her new name?

Doch habe ich meinen Mädchennamen geliebt: "Ellen von der Weiden" – es klingt wie eine alte Romanze. Mir gab's anfangs stets einen Stich, wenn man mich Frau Erdmannsdorfer anredete. (99)

[But I really did love my maiden name: "Ellen von der Weiden" – it sounds like an old romance. At the beginning, it always stung when someone approached me with "Mrs. Erdmannsdorfer".]

Unlike Fritz, there are three contrasting male figures who take delight in Ellen's uncommon behavior: her father, a proud and conservative novelist from the woods of Thüringen; the tortured artist Hans Uglandy; and Jacobus Sieveking, a young aspiring-artist whom Ellen befriends. The contrasting thoughts and opinions of these three men offer interesting insights into a generational question of gender definition—not only by defining the concept femininity, but also masculinity. Whereas Uglandy and Sieveking represent the young artistic generation of the *Moderne*, Ellen's father portrays the ideals of a generation imbedded in the earliest years of the Wilhelmine Empire. On the youngest generation, Ellen's father

comments: “die Weiber sind eben ein schwaches Geschlecht, und die Jungen heutzutage auch schon halb *feminini generis* (58) [Women are the weak sex, and the guys today are also half *feminini generis*]. This citation clearly questions the definition of conservative masculinity: parallel to the concept of “femininity”, what exactly defined proper “masculinity” and proper “masculine behavior”? Apart from her father, Ellen quickly befriends Sieveking and feels at ease in his non-patriarchal presence. His ungraceful demeanor makes him similar to Ellen and his clumsy style of dress becomes an object of humor in the company of Fritz. Finally, there is Hans Uglandy, the decadent artist to whom Ellen feels most strongly attracted. Unattached to family, convention, or location, Uglandy represents the opposite of the discourse from which Ellen yearns to escape.

In tandem with *Bildung*, the male-male relationship in this novel makes an interesting subject of comparison. Each of the four men in Ellen’s life—Fritz, her father, Sieveking, and Uglandy—possess a level of *Bildung* commensurate with their individual talents and professions, and the power dynamic among them is obvious. Although Fritz Erdmannsdorfer’s position holds a large amount of influence in the urban *Bildungsbürgertum*, his public prestige loses its rank in the presence of Ellen’s father and his mountainous environment. Uglandy, on the other hand, characterizes the cultivated artist who avoids the conventions of the *Bildungsbürgertum* but thrives on their attention. In contrast, Sieveking comes across as a young man still learning about his “self”. Similar to Ellen, Sieveking continuously struggles to find a balance between his individual nature and the society in which he lives. In addition, Sieveking perceives both Fritz and Uglandy as role models in different schools of

intellectuality, but he ultimately chooses to follow the artistic route under Uglandy's guidance.

Much to Fritz's surprise, his social circle changes its attitude towards Ellen's "wild" nature after she participates in a charity event hosted by the *Kaiserin* [empress]. For the event, Ellen disguises herself as a dirty, disheveled and hunchbacked woman dressed in rags and shuffles around an audience composed of both upper class "ladies" and lower class recipients of charitable aid. Holding the audience captive with her untamed and outrageous gestures, she admits to the joy of power and the ability to control an audience. Ellen confesses this in her journal by writing:

Jedenfalls fühlte ich mich wundervoll behaglich in meiner Verkleidung. Und wenn ich die Macht wittere, die ich über die Leute ausübe, dann werde ich immer toller und waghalsiger, und es ist förmlich eine Sucht in mir, mich nach allen Seiten zu verschwenden. [...] (98)

[In any case, I felt wonderfully comfortable in my disguise. And when I sense the power that I exercise over people, I become crazier and more daring, and make waste of myself in any possible way for this obsession.]

Ellen becomes famous overnight, and soon all members of the proper society who had once frowned on her for being "unfeminine" begin to desire her company. Her sudden phase of stardom has no effect on her husband, however, who continues to ask his wife to display a more modest behavior. Ellen writes, "armer Fritz...er weiß nicht, soll er sich geschmeichelt fühlen oder ärgerlich sein" (99) [poor Fritz...he doesn't know whether he should feel flattered or be angry]. The sudden shift of

acceptance in Fritz's social circle only makes Ellen more confused: on the one hand, she finally receives a "space" in which she can act freely and without apprehension. On the other hand, she knows the public acknowledgement of her "wildness" only increases the distance between her and her husband. "O," Ellen writes, "daß in der Ehe auch das Träumen Sünde geworden ist..." [Oh...that dreams also have become sins in marriage] (99). In spite of this battle between right and wrong, Ellen is nevertheless disgusted with herself for portraying her innermost "self" as nothing more than a clown or "Hanswurst" to the world in which she lives (101).

There is only one scene that portrays a harmonious or balanced existence between husband and wife in the entire novel, and it takes place in a setting far away from Berlin society. It occurs after Fritz becomes ill and Ellen, happy to distance herself from the public eye, watches over him day and night until the threat of death passes. She finds a type of sanctuary in Fritz's private room and begins to question the faithfulness of her own character and the trustworthiness in herself.

Der Friede in so einem stillen Krankenzimmer. Ich möchte nie mehr heraus. [...] Ich meine nur, für mich wäre es der richtige Ort. Ein Krankenzimmer oder ein Kloster – ein ganz strenger Orden. Ich würde mich wohl fühlen in der Klausur. In der Welt, in der Freiheit verliere ich das Gleichgewicht. (104)

[The peacefulness in such a quiet sickroom. I never want to leave it. [...] I mean, for me it would be the proper place. A sickroom or a cloister – a very strong ordinance. I would feel good in a cloister. I lose my balance in the world and in freedom.]

Ellen rejoices in the idea of Fritz loving her once again and she is determined to give up all feelings of doubt in order to make their marriage work. She writes, “ich bin eben einfach seine Frau und für ihn da – und es ist gut so” [I am simply his wife – and it is good like that] (104). The only scene in which Ellen and Fritz coincide happily together is the moment in which he, the acclaimed doctor, becomes the patient. As if exchanging roles, Ellen takes on the responsibility of caretaker while Fritz becomes the “unhealthy” person dependent on her care. Fritz’s illness forces him to trust Ellen; in addition, there exists no judgment of behavior as well as no longing for escape, and both characters remain content. Only when Fritz assumes his “normal” masculine attributes of patriarchal behavior does Ellen find a desperate need to escape reality. The relationship between Fritz and Ellen returns to its usual state of dissonance, however, upon travelling to Ellen’s native Thüringen. Fritz becomes more domineering than before and reminds her of his authoritative position in their marriage: “[...] und jetzt bin ich dein Herr! Merk dir’s!” [and now I am your master! Take notice!] (117). In response to his sudden threats of authority, Ellen becomes only more careless in her behavior and disappears for a midnight walk through the woods with Sieveking and Uglandy. During this night, she willingly becomes romantically involved with Uglandy.

The reason for Ellen’s strong attraction to the artist Hans Uglandy is her belief in his ability to see into her soul. She is convinced of this after viewing one of his works of art at an exhibition in Berlin. Until she even meets the man in person, she believes herself in love with him because of this fantasy, which she confesses in her journal: “Da draußen in der Welt gibt es einen fremden Mann, der mich so versteht –

soviel tiefer als ich mich je verstanden habe” [Out there in the world there is a strange man who understands me – much more deeply than I have ever understood myself] (42). After Ellen becomes acquainted with Uglandy through her friend Sieveking, she finds him strongly attracted to her but in an unrealistic and self-indulgent way. Everything opposite of the “physician’s gaze”, Uglandy objectifies Ellen through an “artistic gaze”. Associating her with the idea of untamed nature and pagan enchantment, he calls her “mein Gnom” [my gnome] and “Waldhexe” [witch of the woods], and takes delight in imagining her as the Christian wife who dances around the fire on the night of the Walpurgis (112-113). By doing so, Uglandy falsely defines Ellen’s “femininity” by creating his own erotic version of her character.

The marriage takes a turn for the worse after Fritz makes Ellen aware of the fact that she is pregnant (once again, an example of “physician power”). Ellen, unable to control her “wild” nature, crushes Fritz’s happiness by declaring her hatred for him and her love for another man. Within seconds, the otherwise strong and authoritative Fritz transforms into “ein ganz gebrochener Mann” [a completely broken man], “ganz zusammengesunken auf einem Stuhle sitzen[d] und auf den Teppich starren[d]” [completely crushed, sitting down on a chair and staring at the carpet] (133). Fritz distrusts Ellen in the fatherhood of the child and files quickly for divorce; he then sends Ellen to a home in Berlin for unwed mothers in order for her to carry out her pregnancy. Interestingly, compared to Ellen, Fritz appears as the character more ashamed of divorce and its effect on his social identity.

Jawohl ist es unerträglich,” murmelte er, ohne nach mir zu sehen. “Man wird unsinnig – man wird zum Vieh und verliert schließlich die Achtung vor sich selbst.” (139)

[“Yes, of course it is unbearable,” he mumbled without looking at me. “One becomes unreasonable – one turns into an animal and finally loses one’s self respect.”]

At the end of the novel, when Ellen is back in Thüringen with her father and child, she composes a question of self-reflection in her journal that reveals not only feelings of guilt for causing a marriage to end, but also—perhaps more relevant to the topic of “abnormalcy”—she reveals an awareness of “self” that is dark and dangerous.

Aber wissen wir erst, wo unser Glück und unsere Selbstvollendung liegen, sollten wir nicht mehr um Sünde und Strafe klagen.

Nein, nein, es gibt keine Schuld, es gibt keine Strafe! Es gibt aber Gewalten in uns, die sehr stark und furchtbar werden, wenn man sie zum Kampf herausfordert. Und deshalb wagen es die meisten Menschen auch gar nicht. [...] (161-162)

[Once we know where our happiness and our perfection of character lie, we should not lament any more about sins and punishment.

No, no, there is no guilt, and there is no punishment! But there are powers in us that become very dark and frightening when one draws them out for a battle. And that is why most people do not dare to do it.]

In contrast to the female protagonists previously mentioned in this project, including Agathe Heidling, Marlene Bucher, and Agnes Schmidt, Ellen Erdmannsdörfer is afraid of gaining insight into her “self” out of fear for what she might find. Could we therefore argue that Ellen characterizes the female protagonist of an *Antibildungsroman*, who ultimately rejects the compromise between the self and society by finding an uncommon or rare resolution? Although my original answer to this question was “yes”, I find myself rejecting this notion upon deeper inspection, and the main reason for this response lies in the meaning of the word “society”. Ellen Erdmannsdörfer reveals that the art of self-cultivation according to the idea of “refinement” is a practice void of comprehensive meaning. Ellen engages in an art of self-reflection in order to change her character according to preconceived notions of civility, but eventually wins the approval of high society by remaining who she really “is”. Instead of discussing Ellen as the character who reflects the protagonist of an *Antibildungsroman*, I argue that Fritz Erdmannsdörfer matches this role much better. As a learned physician, Fritz Erdmannsdörfer misuses his intellectuality—as well as his reputation—as a means to classify others according to his determination of what is “normal” and “abnormal”. Furthermore, although Ellen never succeeds in “refining” her character according to the standards set forth by the *Bildungsbürgertum* in Berlin, the novel does end with a positive portrayal of Ellen in the society she knows best—her native woods of Thüringen. Ellen eventually renounces the conventions of the urban intellectual middle class and achieves a level of totality that is reflective of her individuality.

In conclusion, I want to revisit the idea of behavior as a medium of cultural expression. Although self-control comes across as the most common link between the stories of Agathe Heidling and Ellen Erdmannsdörfer, the ways in which both protagonists practice self-control in regards to the context of *Bildung*—or perhaps even *anti-Bildung*—differs significantly. On the one hand, Agathe makes a continuous effort to comply with social convention while silently battling disappointment and turmoil in her own mind. She suppresses her “self” until she reaches a point of no return, which reveals itself through a physical breakdown and loss of control. Ellen, on the other hand, challenges the social conventions of the urban *Bildungsbürgertum* through her own “uncultivated” character and feels the need to learn self-control in order to make her marriage work. Ellen’s strength is her erratic behavior, and self-discipline according to the guidelines of the “cultivated” bourgeoisie is her ultimate weakness.

The starkest difference between Agathe and Ellen is that while Agathe yearns to make something of herself beyond the constricting role of “family daughter”, Ellen prevents herself from looking into what she could “be” because she is frightened of what she might find. Focusing on Agathe for a moment, this leads me to ask whether Agathe ever succeeds in accomplishing the *Bildung* available to women in the bourgeois classes—such as any level of self-cultivation, a hint of self-awareness, intellectuality, knowledge from books, or practical training that could prepare her for a certain vocation. The answer to this question is both yes and no. On the one hand, Agathe is indeed aware of her “self” that makes her different from others around her, and she seeks to enhance a particular level of self-awareness on several occasions.

Furthermore, she experiences certain forms of “cultivation” associated with upper class lifestyle: for example, she attended a *Töchterschule* [girls’ school], appreciated theater and visual art, and was aware of “higher” forms of reading material that concerned itself with contemporary social issues. On the other hand, Agathe’s family does not grant her permission to engage in certain activities that would enhance her level of *Bildung*. Moreover, how could Agathe pursue any form of *Bildung*—inner or civic—when those who disapprove of her actions stop every new attempt at its earliest stage of exposure?

## Chapter 6

“Als ob tiefe Bildung und Weiblichkeit entgegengesetzte Begriffe seien”:

### *Frauenstudium* and Autobiography

Der ärztliche Beruf ist der weiblichste, den es giebt.<sup>95</sup>

[A medical profession is the most feminine vocation there is.]

The title of this chapter, “als ob tiefe Bildung und Weiblichkeit entgegengesetzte Begriffe seien” [as if serious education and femininity were contradicting terms] comes from Johanna Bethe, whose speech appeared in the woman’s journal *Frauenberuf* on April 11, 1899, in the article “Die Eröffnung der Fortbildungsanstalt für Töchter gebildeter Stände und der Gymnasialklassen für Mädchen” [The Opening of the Institution of Continuing Education for Daughters of the Educated Classes and of Gymnasium Classes for Girls]. Above all, Bethe’s statement reveals that even in the year 1899—the final year of the nineteenth century—debates over the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender remained far from closed. This chapter brings the analysis of the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender to another area of discussion by focusing on the ultimate academic pursuit traditionally deemed unobtainable for women—a post-secondary education. Expanding on chapter two of this project, which ended with a brief summary of milestone changes made in the area of women’s secondary education, this final section reveals how a variety of voices

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<sup>95</sup> Kraukneck, “Die Ärztin im 19. Jahrhundert.” *Schriften des Vereins Frauenwohl*. (Berlin, 1891) 11.

contributed to the advancement of women's participation in institutions of higher learning. Debates that focused on the question of women's higher education in Germany not only confronted the apprehension of a national loss of "femininity" in conjuncture with the idea of *Bildung*, but also revealed that there were a variety of approaches and opinions concerning *how* to make these reforms. For example, should the state follow the lead of England by establishing women's colleges, or should it instead allow women to matriculate at the existing universities, like in Switzerland? Furthermore, should women be permitted to earn academic degrees, or just sit in on lectures as guest auditors for the advancement of their overall education? In addition to providing an insight into the complexity of educational reform at the post-secondary level, this chapter also discusses the autobiographies of Franziska Tiburtius (1843-1927) and Ricarda Huch (1864-1947). Both women not only provide firsthand accounts of experiences as female students at the University of Zürich towards the end of the nineteenth century, but they also reveal how they overcame boundaries against their gender in pursuing what they—as women in the middle class—felt was correct for their individuality.

Although Johanna Bethe's speech in the year 1899 symbolizes a landmark event in the history of the German state of Baden-Württemberg, the establishment of the *Mädchengymnasium* [girls' preparatory school for the university] had already been in progress on a nation-wide scale since the year 1893.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, the opening of this specific school serves as one representation of greater cultural changes throughout Germany that witnessed the beginning of a different attitude

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<sup>96</sup> As mentioned in chapter two, the first *Mädchengymnasium* opened in the city of Karlsruhe in the year 1893.

towards women's education. Accompanying Bethe during this particular event is the Baroness Gertrud von Uxküll-Gyllenband, whose opening remarks also reveal an interesting perspective on the intention of the school for young women. Uxküll-Gyllenband states, "ob das Mädchen, das in unser Gymnasium eintritt, nachher auf die Universität geht, [...] ob sie ihren Wirkungskreis im öffentlichen oder im Familienleben suchen wird, wir fragen nicht darnach" [sic.] (199) [If a girl who enters our gymnasium goes to the university afterwards—or if she will seek out her area of influence in the public or domestic world—we do not ask]. What makes the baroness' statement interesting is her argument against the traditional belief that saw a woman's education as superfluous because of her domestic vocation. With these words, Uxküll-Gyllenband claims that it does not matter whether a woman marries and raises a family or continues to pursue a career in the public sphere: the most important factor is that she has the opportunity to choose.

Several decades prior to the event mentioned above, a governmental recognition of reform regarding women's post-secondary education hardly existed. Despite ongoing debates of change by influential voices in the bourgeois women's movement, the state organized its first official meeting for the reorganization and restructuring of women's education in the year 1872 in the city of Weimar. As mentioned previously, Helene Lange criticizes the *Weimarer Denkschrift*—a publication of the outcomes from this meeting—in the collection of petitions known as the *Gelbe Broschüre*. Because of the petitions, the state organized a second meeting that took place in the city of Berlin in August 1873. Once again, criticism arose in defiance of the state's lack of action on changing the national outlook

regarding the purpose and conditions of women's education. According to Marie Mellien in her essay *Eine neue deutsche Mädchenschule* [A New German Girls' School] (1891), the August Conference of 1873 came to a close with an agreement that pays no attention to women's individuality: "die weibliche Jugend soll befähigt werden, sich am Geistesleben der Nation zu beteiligen und dasselbe mit den ihr eigentümlichen Gaben zu fördern" (17) [The female youth should be qualified to participate in the intellectual life of the nation and to cultivate her particular talents by doing so]. Because these meetings took place during the earliest years of the German Empire—founded in 1871—it comes as no surprise that the first two state-organized meetings on the reform of women's education linked their goals to the progress of a new European power. Mellien argues the vague outcome of the August Conference, which produced no advancement beyond the existing belief that a woman's education should reflect "das wahre Wesen der weiblichen Natur" (16) [the true existence of women's nature]. Even though local efforts throughout the nation reveal the beginning of a shift of attitude towards the importance of a young woman's education, Mellien's essay uncovers the stagnant and traditionalist mind-set of the German parliament in this context. It seems that in the years following the establishment of the German Empire, the national interest remained focused on other things.

Although the objectives of the conferences in 1872 and 1873 were to reform the educational situation of young women between the ages of six and sixteen, its consequential emphasis on the protection of "femininity" in conjuncture with the development of the new Empire carries over into the debate on women's post-

secondary education. If Germany should follow the paths of its neighboring Western European countries and the United States in creating opportunities for women for higher education, the question remained *how* to do it. Apart from the debates that centered on the establishment of women's colleges or matriculation at German universities, there were already two establishments in existence that focused on training women for a particular vocation. The first example is the *Lette-Verein* [Lette Association], founded by Dr. Adolf Lette in Berlin in 1866. The association's motto, as stated in the journal *Die Gartenlaube*, embraces Goethe's seemingly timeless conception of women's place: "Dienen lerne bei Zeiten das Weib nach seiner Bestimmung" [A Woman should learn to serve according to her purpose as quickly as possible].<sup>97</sup> As the motto of the association reveals, the *Lette-Verein* recognized gender "difference" (as opposed to "equality"), and therefore aimed at training women for vocations associated with mainstream society's idea of "femininity". This is reflective of Adolf Lette's disagreement with women's emancipation but simultaneous recognition of an unmarried woman's necessity to work. (Albisetti, Schooling 101)

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<sup>97</sup> *Die Gartenlaube*, no. 12 (1888) 379.



**Figure 6: “In der Haushaltungsschule des Lette-Vereins in Berlin” [In the Home Economics School of the Lette Association in Berlin]. *Die Gartenlaube*, No. 12 (1888) 380.**

As Weedon writes, “this organization sought, on the one hand, to educate women for work and motherhood, and, on the other, to counteract feminist tendencies within women’s education” (*Gender* 48). The illustration above portrays only one division of the *Lette-Verein*, the *Haushaltungsschule* [school of home economics]: one picture shows a group of young women gathered around the kitchen, and the other a collection of female students learning the several stages of clothing production. The first association of its kind, the *Lette-Verein* aimed its original objective towards providing women from mostly lower middle classes with the opportunity to learn a vocation commensurate with “femininity”. After his death in the year 1869, Lette’s successors continued to expand the organization alongside other reforms regarding women’s education. (Albisetti, *Schooling* 102)

A second establishment—almost opposite in nature of the schools established by the *Lette-Verein*—was the Victoria Lyceum, founded in Berlin in 1869 and named after the crown princess Victoria.<sup>98</sup> Regarded as the first post-secondary school for women in the country of Germany, the original intention focused on providing young women (of a certain rank) intellectual lectures by professors in order to continue their overall education.<sup>99</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Lyceum grew to include a curriculum for the improvement of education for governesses and women teachers and continued to increase its numbers. (Albisetti, *Schooling* 118) Helene Lange, for example, attended the Lyceum as a student, and Franziska Tiburtius held a series of lectures on hygiene.<sup>100</sup> Because of the Lyceum's rather elite stature and reputation, women advocates in favor of gender equality as well as the rights of less privileged women to obtain a post-secondary education criticized the school for being a “luxury institute”.<sup>101</sup>

Compared to other countries, Germany was far behind in allowing their women entrance into the academic setting of post-secondary education. The United States first opened its doors to women students in 1844, followed by France in 1866, England in 1867, Switzerland in 1868, Sweden 1870, Denmark in 1875, Italy in 1876,

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<sup>98</sup> Helene Lange writes that the Lyceum replicated Queen's College in London, founded in the year 1848. Queen's College was the first of its kind to pay special attention to the education of women teachers and governesses. (*Frauenbildung* 7-8)

<sup>99</sup> For a comprehensive overview on the history on the Victoria Lyceum, see James Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women* (Princeton, 1988).

<sup>100</sup> Tiburtius' invitation to hold a series of lectures at the Lyceum almost fell through when a prominent member of the board decried the idea of a woman lecturer. Because Tiburtius refused to withdraw her acceptance, the renowned professor resigned from the Lyceum altogether. See Franziska Tiburtius, *Erinnerungen einer Achtzigjährigen* (Berlin, 1929) 118.

<sup>101</sup> See Elke Frederiksen, *Die Frauenfrage in Deutschland 1865-1915*, 1981 (Stuttgart, 1994) 201-206, for Fanny Lewald's arguments against the objectives of the Victoria Lyceum within the larger discourse of women's educational reform.

the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in 1878 (as guest auditors only), Holland and Norway in 1880, and finally Belgium in 1883.<sup>102</sup> England remained in a discourse of its own because of the establishment of women's colleges: Oxford opened up three women colleges named Lady Margaret Hall, Somerville Hall, and Saint Hugh Hall, but Cambridge had much more success with its two colleges, Girton College and Newnham College.<sup>103</sup> In the case of Germany, this pattern reveals itself as a *Sonderweg*. Although Christiane Erxleben received her "Doktor der Arzneikunst" [the art of apothecary] in Halle in the year 1754, she remains a true exception until the end of the nineteenth century, when post-secondary education within the borders of Germany slowly but surely became a possible reality for women—particularly from the middle classes.<sup>104</sup> In the autumn of 1891, the Ministry of Education, or *Kultusministerium*, passed the petition for women to attend universities as guest auditors and left the decision ultimately up to individual professors.<sup>105</sup> Käthe Windscheid would be the first woman to earn her doctorate degree at the University of Heidelberg in 1894 by completing a dissertation on "die englische Hirtendichtung von 1579-1625" [English Poems of Herdsmen from 1579-1625] (Lange, *Die Frau* 426). Finally, the states of Baden and Württemberg granted women the right to

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<sup>102</sup> These figures are in Helene Lange's *Frauenstudium*, 73-80. In regards to Spain and Portugal, Lange writes that there is no law prohibiting women from university matriculation; however, "the southern women neither have the air nor the intellectual and physical strength for scientific activity" (78). Once again, this shows Lange's connection between the advancement of women's education and the progression of the nation-state, making the argument only more appealing and noteworthy for government officials.

<sup>103</sup> In addition to these dates, Pochhammer writes that women's matriculation at American universities and colleges was far more advanced compared to Western European countries, but this was due to the fact that American women were already much more active in the professional world as physicians, teachers, and other public servants. (8-9)

<sup>104</sup> Helene Lange, "Die Frau und das Universitätsstudium," *Die Gartenlaube*, no. 25 (1895) 423.

<sup>105</sup> Helene Lange, "Die Frau und das Universitätsstudium", 426.

matriculate as degree-seeking students in the year 1900, and Prussia soon followed in the year 1908. (Frederiksen, *Die Frauenfrage* 27)

Before women received permission to matriculate as regular students at German universities, the main discussion on women's education at the post-secondary institute revolved around the possible establishment of women's colleges. One interesting example of debate in favor of the establishment of women's colleges is found in a speech titled *Beitrag zur Frage des Universitätsstudium der Frauen* [Report on the Question of Women and University Studies] by Leo Pochhammer in the northern German city of Kiel in 1893. Pochhammer not only defends women's rights to a post-secondary education, but also understands the importance of vocational training for unmarried bourgeois women who must earn their own living. However, Pochhammer boldly claims his stance against the matriculation of women at the German university—and his reason is quite interesting. He writes, “man ist darin einig, dass der Charakter der Universität als eines Instituts für ernste Fachbildung in keiner Weise beeinträchtigt werden darf” [one agrees that the character of the university as an institute for serious disciplined studies should be damaged in no way] (13). Because Pochhammer understands the overall level of academic disciplinarity to be much higher at the German university compared to that of neighboring Western European countries, “die Frauen stehen also in jenen Ländern einer weniger schweren Aufgabe gegenüber, als bei uns” [women are confronted with less difficult challenges in other countries compared to here in Germany] (Pochhammer 14). On these grounds, he calls for the establishment of women's universities whose prerequisites are consistent with the conventional education of the

female gender and whose goals do not go so far as the university. (15-16) Similar to a university for men, a *Frauenhochschule* [women's technical college] could especially provide women with necessary training for the future job market centered on technology. In addition, Pochhammer feels that women could pursue a medical degree at the newly established colleges and “sich zu Ärzten zweiter Klasse [ausbilden]” [educated themselves to become second-class doctors] (18). He continues to state that the female physician of the village [*Dorfärztin*] could become as commonplace as the village preacher and landowner.

Pochhammer's text contains many hidden layers of meaning that are unquestionably reflective of Wilhelmine German culture. The first aspect lies in the notion that the chance of obtaining a post-secondary education should remain reserved for bourgeois women who never marry. As the prevailing notion of moral “femininity” implied that “proper” women of the bourgeois class would devote their entire energies to domestic and family responsibilities, Pochhammer only promotes the creation of “otherness” and “difference” by claiming unmarried women must eventually provide for themselves. In this case, it seems to me that the original intention of granting women the right to a post-secondary degree was to suit the social “problem” of the “left over” women—or, as Fanny Lewald would perhaps articulate it—for the women who felt as useless to their families as a fifth wheel. This leads me to ask why there was such a cultural difference between married and unmarried women of the bourgeoisie even though, as mentioned previously, approximately fifty percent of bourgeois women never married. A second hidden message reveals itself through the superiority Pochhammer attaches to the German

university compared to other universities in Western Europe and the United States. He does not defend the university as an international institution of knowledge, but rather dismisses its validity in every other nation besides Germany. This argument reflects the emerging “vulgar idealism” that was “an important feature of bourgeois life and culture in Imperial Germany” (Jeffries 32). Finally, Pochhammer also provides an example of the deeply embedded belief in the idea of *Geschlechtscharakter* that labeled a woman’s intellectual and physical capabilities as being inferior because of her gender. It shows that the essentialist idea of maintaining a woman’s inferior position in society existed even within the context of reform.

In contrast to this example, Helene Lange provides a more undecided position on whether to establish women’s colleges or allow their matriculation at German universities in her publication *Frauenbildung* [Women’s Education] (1889). One example of her ambivalence is that although she favors the establishments of women’s colleges, she also makes sure to point out the disadvantages for women at such institutions. Using Girton and Newnham Colleges as models for the launching of similar schools in Germany, Lange points out several of their disadvantages:

Die Universität gewährt den Frauen viel, aber doch nicht alles. Sie erkennt sie als berechnigte Bewerberinnen um Zeugnisse an, nicht aber als berechnigte Mitglieder der Universität; d.h. sie gewährt ihnen weder die Titel (degrees) eines Bachelor of Arts noch die Benutzung der Bibliothek, der Laboratorien und Museen, obwohl in letzterer Beziehung durch das freundliche Entgegenkommen der Professoren mancherlei Zugeständnisse gemacht worden sind. (*Frauenbildung* 27).

[The university allows women a great deal of things, but not everything. It recognizes women as legitimate aspirants of credentials, but not as legitimate members of the university; in other words, the university neither grants them the degree Bachelor of Arts nor allows them to use the library, laboratories and museums—although in regards to the last, some allowances have been made recently by some professors’ friendly accommodations.]<sup>106</sup>

Apart from these disadvantages, Lange finds Newnham and Girton Colleges to be “moral” and “practical” institutions for women’s post-secondary education (*Frauenbildung* 24). However, she also proclaims that a woman should receive the right to earn an academic degree in order to measure the level of education as commensurate with that of a university-educated man. Lange argues her viewpoint by articulating the advantageous situations of women students in all neighboring countries of Germany. (73-79) By the year 1889, for example, the only other European countries besides Germany that did not allow a woman’s matriculation to the university were Hungary and Turkey; Austria, in addition, only allowed women to attend lectures as guest auditors. (79) When asking why German universities would not open their doors to women as matriculated students, Lange turns to culture for an answer, but in an unexpected way—she criticizes the parents.

Ohne Zweifel glauben [die Eltern] auch aufrichtig, dass, wenn sie ihre Töchter bis zu deren Hochzeit für sich behalten, sie das Beste für sie und zugleich das

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<sup>106</sup> Once again, Virginia Woolfe’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) comes to mind in regards to Lange’s citation. In chapter one of Woolfe’s text, after dining at “Oxbridge”, the narrator visits “Fernham”, the women’s college, after having been denied entrance into the university’s library. (7-13) This shows that even several decades later, the idea of gender difference still existed at elite academic establishments.

Angenehmste für sich thun. Wenn die Töchter eine andere Ansicht haben, so denken die Eltern, es kommt daher, dass sie noch jung und unerfahren sind und nicht imstande zu urteilen. Die Thatsache ist, dass die Eltern unerfahren sind. (83)

[Without doubt, parents genuinely believe they are doing the best and most pleasant thing for their daughters by guarding them until the time of their marriage. If daughters have a different view, the parents think it is because they are young and inexperienced, and therefore not able to make good judgment. The fact is that the parents are the ones who are inexperienced.]

Helene Lange's powerful statement does not just refer to the timeless conflict of the generation gap, but rather draws attention to the relationship of time and culture in regards to women's position in society. How could one possibly ignore the growing number of young women who left Germany in order to pursue an academic degree in another country? In a society that was changing so quickly on a local and global scale, the idea of "tradition" in relation to women's "proper" place no longer held ground as a legitimate argument against reform. Nevertheless, her statement above reflects the realities of almost all women writers and their fictional protagonists mentioned in this dissertation.

Let us now turn our focus to the autobiographical stories of two women writers from the German middle class who went against the grain of convention and earned university degrees during a time in which mainstream society still saw it as "unfeminine" to do so. Although their individual lives are very different, the depictions of their experience as a female student in Switzerland in the 1870s and

1880s are strikingly similar. Not only did Franziska Tiburtius and Ricarda Huch successfully defy the odds against the cultural construction that saw a woman as “unfit” for academic study, but they also confronted a social reality upon the completion of their studies that remained unwelcome to their academic achievements. Indeed, returning home to Germany with a doctoral degree and finding a place in the professional world proved just as hard as defending the right to obtain a higher education in the first place. Nonetheless, both women show no regret; instead, their autobiographies reveal pride for hard work, a commitment to professionalism, and most importantly, a harmonious balance between their individual “self” and the society in which they lived.

*Franziska Tiburtius: “Erinnerungen einer Achtzigjährigen”(1927)*

Franziska Tiburtius (1843-1927) was the fifth and youngest child born to a middle class family in northern Germany on the island of Rügen. As one of the first two women physicians in Germany, her name carries a distinguished reputation within the discourse of women’s education and professionalism. Her autobiography *Erinnerungen einer Achtzigjährigen* [Memoirs of an Eighty Year-Old], published the same year as her death in 1927, portrays the author’s professional journey through life, beginning with her earliest years as an *Erzieherin* [governess] in Germany and England and ending with her accomplishment as practicing physician in the city of Berlin. Between the years 1877 and 1894, Tiburtius and her partner Emilie Lehmus

treated 18,870 female patients at their polyclinic in Berlin.<sup>107</sup> Throughout her narrative, Tiburtius refers to the hardships she faced along the way as a woman seeking professional achievement in a public sphere traditionally dominated by men. In addition, Tiburtius portrays how she overcame constructed gender barriers that she had unconsciously internalized.

Beginning at the age of twelve, Tiburtius spent most of her time alone with her mother in their northern German home in Stralsund. Her father had recently passed away, and all of her older siblings had already left the family setting: Tiburtius' older brother had begun to study medicine, and her two older sisters had taken the *Lehrerinnenexamen* [exam for women teachers]. Tiburtius finished school at the age of sixteen and then stayed home for one year in order to learn “Haushalt und Wirtschaft” [the household and its economics] from her mother (47). At the age of seventeen, she accepted an invitation to work as a governess for the aristocratic family Lyngen, where she was responsible for the upbringing of six children. Tiburtius stayed with the family for six years before taking the *Leherinnenexamen* and heading for London. By invitation of Miss Boswood, the director of a boarding school for young women in a fashionable part of town, Tiburtius taught German until receiving an opportunity to work again as governess in a private home. She moved just outside of the city and into the home of Reverend Roupell, where she was in charge of four daughters between the ages of twelve and nineteen. During this time, Tiburtius—through the encouragement of her brother—would begin to plan for a career in medicine.

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<sup>107</sup> Die Gartenlaube, no.25 (1895): 426.

Shortly before accepting the position of governess in the Roupell household, Prussia declared war on France and Austria (later called the Franco-Prussian War 1870/71). Because she was in England, Tiburtius is unable to join the German Red Cross.

Wäre ich bei Kriegsausbruch in Deutschland gewesen, würde ich alle anderen Pläne zurückgestellt und mich in den Dienst des Roten Kreuzes oder einer entsprechenden Organisation gestellt haben [...] (92)

[Had I been in Germany during the declaration of war, I would have withdrawn from all other plans and placed myself in the service of the Red Cross or a similar organization.]

Within the course of the same year, Tiburtius received a letter from her brother, who was currently serving as a doctor on the warfront. In his letter, he expressed his wishes for his sister to no longer work as a governess upon returning to Germany. The author states that her brother “glaubte in [ihr] eine gewisse Befähigung für den ärztlichen Beruf” [believed she possessed a certain capability for a medical career] (108). In addition, her brother came up with the idea after befriending and later marrying the first female dentist in Berlin, Henriette Hirschfeld-Tiburtius, who completed her studies in the United States and returned to Berlin in order to open her dental practice in 1869.<sup>108</sup> Tiburtius and her brother decided it would be best to remain in England until the end of the war, where she should prepare herself for future studies in medicine in the meantime. Tiburtius began to prepare for the

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<sup>108</sup> The author continues to state that the Prussian crown princess [*Kronprinzessin*] personally met and entrusted Henriette Tiburtius to the care of her children’s dental health. In addition, she writes that Henriette frequently visited the social circle of Fanny Lewald. (207-208)

matriculation exam by teaching herself math, and she writes that even this step was something exceptional, as the widespread assumption prevailed that “Frauen niemals Mathematik begreifen könnten” [women could never understand mathematics] (109). In addition to preparing herself for studies in medicine, Tiburtius first had to decide where she should attend a university, as Germany was not an option. After hearing about female students of medicine in Dublin and Zürich, she decided on the latter and relocated to Switzerland in the fall of 1871 in order to begin her studies.

Although the author eventually returned to Germany as one of two practicing female physicians, she was by no means a solitary female student in the field of medicine at the University of Zürich. She compares the city and its university to that of a sanctuary, “das allein in ganz Europa den fragenden und suchenden Frauen die Stätte und die Hilfe gewährte, die sie brauchten [who alone granted questioning and searching women in all of Europe the place and help they needed] (113). Tiburtius became a member of a small international community of female medical students, including several women from Germany and England, two Americans, two women from Switzerland, and one woman from Poland. The largest group of female international students and an object of Tiburtius’ interest, however, were from Russia. The author categorizes this unique group of women into three social groups in order to understand their significant presence in Zürich in the 1870s. Women of aristocratic descent composed the first group of students, who purposefully maintained distance from other Russian female students. The second group consisted of talented and industrious middle class women, who eventually returned to Russia in order to practice medicine. The third group of female students known as the

“Kosakenpferdchen” [Cossack ponies], are in Zürich for more political reasons than on academic grounds. This group of women distinguished themselves by wearing their hair short, blue-rimmed glasses, a short umbrella-like skirt, and a sailor’s cap. Following the revolutionary movement of Nihilism<sup>109</sup>, they—along with their male colleagues—made such clamor that the university, according to Tiburtius, “vom Herbst 1871-1873 vom Russentum ihr äußeres Gepräge erhielt” [received its external character from its Russian presence from autumn 1871 to 1873] (120). Their presence came to end in July 1873, as the government in Petersburg required all Russian students at the University of Zürich to return home in order to keep their rights of citizenship [*Heimatsrecht*]. During this time, Tiburtius recalls at least one hundred female students at the university from Russia, seventy-five of which studied medicine. (154) Those who were serious about their studies either received a petition to stay in Zürich until completing the *Staatsexamen* [official state exam] or returned to Petersburg in order to open up a woman’s college of medicine. Those known as “Kosakenpferdchen” returned to Russia in order to defend the emancipation of the rural peasants: ironically, the emancipated peasants either chased them away entirely or murdered them.

Although most male students and professors associated with the university welcomed female students to their traditionally male environment, Tiburtius depicts several incidents in which gender continued to play a role in the course of her studies. For example, none of her prior acquaintances knew of her academic endeavors apart

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<sup>109</sup> Tiburtius explains her understanding of Russian Nihilism in the following statement: “Das Grundprinzip des Nihilismus, wie ich ihn vor 50 Jahren kennen lernte, war fanatischer Altruismus, das Mitleid mit dem Volk.” (128) [The basic principle of Nihilism, as I came to understand it fifty years ago, was fanatical altruism, the compassion for the people.]

from her mother and brother, and the reason for this is clear: in case she did not succeed, Tiburtius still needed to rely on her former profession as governess.

Wenn aber bekannt gewesen ware, daß ich in der Anatomie und in medizinischen Vorlesungen gewesen, so war mein früherer Beruf mir verschlossen. Welche Eltern hätten wohl einem “emanzipierten Frauenzimmer”, das im Präpariersaal und in medizinischen Vorlesungen gewesen, ihre Töchter anvertraut! Das war doch ganz außer Frage! (141)

[Had it become known that I visited lectures in anatomy and medicine, my former career would have been over. Whose parents would entrust their daughters to an “emancipated woman” who had been in the preparation room and medical lectures! That was just completely out of the question!]

In addition, Tiburtius recalls one occurrence that involved tutorial sessions in mathematics. Knowing this subject to be her weakest, she asked a young professor by the name of Ollivier for additional instruction in the subject. Although having originally responded he did not believe that women possessed an understanding for mathematics, he ultimately used Tiburtius’ achievements in defense of a woman’s ability to learn a subject traditionally conceived as unfitting. (142) Nonetheless, this change of opinion did not occur with every instructor at the university, as the author mentions one professor in particular who disliked the idea of having female students in his classroom, but at least gave them a fair chance. Tiburtius writes that although a professor by the name of Hermann did not particularly enjoy seeing female students in his lectures, he was at least fair in recognizing their achievements. (137) Summing up her overall experience in Zürich, she writes that despite a lot of insecurity, doubts,

restlessness, and outer and inner conflicts, the memories of her student years stand out as radiant and joyful. (132)

After completing her degree, the ultimate confrontation Tiburtius faces is not the mainstream social convention against women's higher education, but rather the difficulties in opening a medical practice in Germany. Subsequent to leaving Switzerland, Tiburtius worked one summer as a volunteer assistant in the gynecological clinic of Professor von Winckel in Dresden and then moved to Berlin in the following Winter 1876/77 in hope of establishing a practice with her female colleague from Zürich, Dr. Emilie Lehmus (1841-1932). From this point onward, the two women repeatedly run into bureaucratic walls. Tiburtius writes that there was no way for her to establish a medical practice, as Prussian state officials denied her the opportunity to take the *Staatsexamen* [qualifying state exam] and the *Maturitätsexamen* [qualifying exam for the university]. She writes that because it was impossible for her to attain the right to take the medical exam, she decided to take the official exam for midwives; this opportunity was also denied, even after she provided the recommendation letters that proved her experience in teaching midwives-in-training. (180) Tiburtius finally received something similar to “permission” from a state official who—based on the overall atmosphere of transformation in Prussia in the 1870s—tells her to open her practice “unofficially” and to ignore the laws permitting her to do so. However, there was one stipulation to this: Tiburtius and Lehmus must refer to themselves with the title “Dr. med Universität Zürich”—a title which puts emphasis on their medical education outside the borders of Germany. Despite this “lack of qualification”, the two women

succeeded in establishing a practice that welcomed several thousand female and pediatric patients in the course of one year alone.<sup>110</sup>

After opening their practice, Tiburtius and Lehmus found themselves at first to be the object of distrust and humor in the traditionally masculine public eye. The author refers to herself and her partner as “Eindringlinge” [intruders] in the medical field, as this term very well describes their unwelcome reception (184). Tiburtius portrays traditional stereotypes that reflect these feelings of “intrusion” in one particular scene in which she begins to explain a patient’s severe sickness to a male doctor: the doctor interrupts her in mid-sentence and says, “Ach, ja, das wissen wir ja, lassen Sie doch [...]: aber sagen Sie mal—warum haben Sie nicht geheiratet?” [Oh, right, we know that already, just let it be [...]: but tell me...why did you never marry?] (184-185). In addition, Tiburtius mentions their role in the satirical newspaper *Kladderadatsch*, in which two female doctors in Berlin, a Frau Dr. Romulus und Frau Dr. Remus (notice the play of names) both fall in love with the same male patient and become enemies, which would ultimately be the plot of the next bestselling romance novel. After meeting up with Ernst Dohm<sup>111</sup> personally and showing good humor about the cartoon, the editor agreed to leave them alone in the future. (186) Finally, Tiburtius writes that members of the German parliament took cynical delight in any mentioning of female physicians. (186)

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<sup>110</sup> See Tiburtius 184

<sup>111</sup> This connection of Franziska Tiburtius to Ernst Dohm—the husband of Hedwig Dohm—not only exemplifies the dominance of the *Bildungsbürgertum* in creating “daily culture” in German society, but also demonstrates the quick speed at which a woman’s participation in public discourses traditionally reserved for men could become a ridiculed topic of the mass press.

Although Tiburtius and Lehmus were experiencing only a lukewarm reception in the traditionally male public world, they were a sensation in another part of society. She and Lehmus found their greatest welcome in the company of women involved in the nineteenth-century bourgeois women's movement. Tiburtius describes this particular group of women as key contributors to the overall dynamic environment of Berlin in the 1870s and 1880s, and writes that as a collective group of insightful advocates for change, they helped create an aspiring middle class that was educated, hard working, and aware of its responsibilities to society. (200) In tandem with the advancement of the women's movement, Tiburtius defended a women's right to a higher education and a career at various assemblies, and she became a highly respected role model for young women in the mass press dedicated to the promotion of women's emancipation. She also held lectures at newly established institutions of post-secondary education for women, including the Victoria Lyceum, and praises her collaboration with Helene Lange, Minna Cauer, and Henriette Schrader—to name a few—in promoting the advancement of women's education and their social position.

In the course of time, the established rules against women's right for a higher education and a career gradually softened. Tiburtius writes that it took somewhere between seventeen to twenty years before she and Lehmus were completely accepted. She describes their situation: "die Widerstände waren zu Ende, bei den Behörden wie bei den Kollegen schwand das Mißtrauen—jener große Felsblock, der zu Anfang auf unserem Wege lag (185-186) [The resistance ended, and the distrust amongst officials as well as colleagues faded—the big boulder that obstructed our path at the beginning]. The sense of change was in the air in 1894, when several German

universities allowed women to attend as *Gasthörerinnen* [auditors], and then again in 1898, finally allowing women to take the *Staatsprüfung* [state exam].<sup>112</sup> Tiburtius never took the exam, as she felt she could not afford the year's leave of absence in order to prepare properly for it. Tiburtius and Lehmus remained the first female physicians in Berlin for fifteen years before other colleagues like Agnes Blum (in 1890), followed by Agnes Hacker, Anna Kuhnow, and Pauline Plötz, entered the scene. She writes:

Ich glaube, es ist dieser zweiten Generation weiblicher Ärzte schon erheblich leichter geworden, festen Fuß zu fassen, zumal sie berufliche Tüchtigkeit mit Liebenswürdigkeit vereinigten. Man hatte sich an den Gedanken des weiblichen Arztes gewöhnt, Behörden sowohl als Publikum fürchteten nicht mehr allerhand Schrecknisse. (218)

[I think that it already became considerably easier for this second generation of female doctors to establish footing, especially since they combined professional competency with politeness. One became accustomed to the idea of the female physician, and officials as well as the general public no longer feared all sorts of awful things.]

Tiburtius stopped practicing medicine at the age of sixty-four, and left—in her words—a blooming practice that still showed no signs of decrescendo. (222) The author traveled across North America all the way over to the Pacific Ocean; to northern Africa, including Palestine and Egypt; and then on to various European destinations like Rome, Spain, and Sicily. During the First World War, Tiburtius

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<sup>112</sup> Tiburtius writes that the first woman to take the *Staatsprüfung* was Dr. Ida Demock-Mauermeir in the year 1901; she also studied medicine in Zürich. (219)

served as a physician but then stopped when she felt she had lost all energy to continue. Upon ending her autobiography, the author composes a statement that reflects her life's unique path: "Mein Leben ist köstlich gewesen, denn es ist Mühe und Arbeit gewesen [My life was priceless, because it was effort and work] (223).

In conclusion, there are some important points that emerge after connecting Tiburtius' story to the late nineteenth-century definition of *Bildung*. Tiburtius' personal story reveals that social practicality and the significance of *Ausbildung* continues to grow as the new form of *Bildung* in intellectual and professional society. Unlike other works mentioned in this dissertation, Tiburtius does not show a remarkable case in which literacy and religiosity, mannerisms and a honing of character play a role in her attainment of education. Rather, her story communicates the superior position of professional knowledge, and it is one of the earliest stories known in which a bourgeois woman succeeds in creating a scientific professional outlet for her self beyond the discourses of literature and the arts. In Tiburtius' case, the university degree acts as a mirror of *Bildung*—something extremely new for women and relevantly new for men during this time. Despite the validity of her achievement, Tiburtius still had to fight for social recognition and trust by her male colleagues as well as her patients. This shows us that achieving a university degree was still not enough to change society's attitude towards women's professionalism in the public sphere; in addition, a woman needed a very high level of perseverance.

*Ricarda Huch and her Student Years at the University of Zürich: A Look at her Autobiographical Narrative “Frühling in der Schweiz” (1938) and a Poem*

Ricarda Octavia Huch (1864-1947) serves as the final representative of nineteenth-century bourgeois women writers in this project. Parallel to a remarkable biography, Huch’s name fills the category of “first woman” on several different occasions. Not only was she the first woman to earn her doctorate degree in History at the University of Zürich in 1891, but she was also the first woman accepted into the Prussian Academy of Arts [*Preußische Akademie der Künste*] in the year 1927. In addition to her reputation of being the founding author of a literary trend called New Romanticism in the early twentieth century (its characteristics perceptible in the upcoming poem),<sup>113</sup> she also earned considerable respect for having resigned from the Prussian Academy of Arts in protest of the expulsion of its Jewish members (i.e. Alfred Döblin) in 1933. (Stephan, *Literatur* 443) Huch remained an active opponent of the National-Socialist regime, and although the dictatorial state prohibited many of her books, she never sought exile in another country. Her career as a novelist, poet, historian and scholar was extremely successful, proven through her many fictional and non-fictional publications that approximate eighty different texts all together.

Ricarda Huch was the youngest of three children born to a merchant family in the city of Braunschweig. Her father, Georg Heinrich Richard Octavio Huch, embarked on frequent and extensive business trips to Brazil. After the death of her mother Emilie Huch née Haehn in the year 1883, Huch’s father travelled once more

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<sup>113</sup> Weedon, *Gender, Feminism, and Fiction* (New York, 2006) 19.

to Brazil for a several year stay; in his absence, his daughter eventually decided to move to Zürich in order to prepare for the university entrance exam. Although her father died shortly after his return from Brazil in 1887, Huch decided to continue with her academic endeavors as an alternative to living with her grandmother in Braunschweig, mostly in order to leave the presence of her brother-in-law Richard, to whom her older sister was married and Ricarda was in love. In the time span of seven semesters between the years 1888 and 1891, Huch studied history at the University of Zürich and successfully completed all requirements for the doctoral degree. From 1892 to 1896, she worked as a librarian for the *Zürcher Bibliothek* [Library of Zurich] as well as a teacher for a *Privatschule* for girls; then, upon invitation, she moved to Bremen in order to teach at a newly founded Lyceum, but only stayed there for the duration of six months. Huch's next journey took her to the city of Vienna in 1897 in order to be close to her university friend "Bäumchen", and it is here that she met Ermanno Ceconi, a modest dentist from a less privileged family in Italy. They married in 1898 and moved to the city of Trieste, where they stayed until 1900 with their daughter Marietta, or "Busi". The family moved again, this time to Munich, where Ricarda and Ermanno eventually divorced in 1906. Huch married her first love, her brother-in-law Richard, in 1907, but the marriage stayed intact for only three years. Huch, as an established poet and writer, remained in Munich for some time and raised her daughter while continuing her literary career.

In her narrative "Frühling in der Schweiz", Huch portrays an autobiographical tale of her experience as a female student at the University of Zürich during the earliest days of women's academic involvement. Still considered an unwarranted

pursuit for women in general, Huch explains that this was no exception in her own family. She writes, “wäre mein Vater zu Hause gewesen, würde er mich nicht haben fortziehen lassen, mindestens das Studium nicht gelitten haben” [had my father been home, he would not have allowed me to move—or at least not have allowed me to study] (Huch 97). In addition, she claims that her closest guardian, her grandmother, commented negatively on her decision to pursue an academic degree.

Ein Unglück war aber, daß ich studierte. Daß ich etwas Auffallendes tat, was allgemeine Mißbilligung hervorrufen würde. (160)

[It was a misfortune that I studied, that I did something so conspicuous which would meet with universal disapproval] (160).

Because her grandmother was well aware of the strong emotional connection between Huch and her brother-in-law, she finally agreed that it would be best for Ricarda to move to another city and engage herself in something new.

Huch provides two excellent examples in her autobiography that relate directly to the interrelationship of gender, *Bildung*, and culture as “a way of being”. The first example conveys an internalization of gender stereotypes similar to an experience depicted by Tiburtius. While preparing for the *Maturitätsexamen* or entrance exam in 1887, Huch explains that she hired private tutors for Latin, math, and the natural sciences in order to be eligible for academic study. In comparison to receiving instruction on Latin and natural sciences, two subjects she approached without difficulty, she claims that the subject of math was another question: “vor der Mathematik hatte ich mich gefürchtet: ich bildete mir ein, das sei etwas, was nur Männer könnten (169) [I was scared of mathematics: I imagined that it was

something only men could do.].

After studying algebra, geometry, and physics, Huch learned to make a game of mathematics and was therefore able to pass the entrance exam with ease. The interesting point to this citation, however, is the internalization of gender stereotype that assumed mathematics as an unobtainable subject for women. Contrary to this example, there is another moment in which Huch overcomes another internalization of social belief and defies the looming stereotype that saw women students as “unfeminine”. Along with a group of close female friends, Huch writes that they intentionally used their body and appearance to project opposition against any accusations of “unfemininity”. Huch arrived at the university with a shorter hairstyle, assuming this was the general practice of a woman student; however, she makes an agreement with her closest female colleagues that as a collective group, they should make every effort to avoid any association with prevailing negative stereotypes.

Zu Beginn der Studienzeit ließ ich [die Haare] wieder wachsen, weil es unter uns Studentinnen Grundsatz war, uns in keiner Weise von anderen jungen Mädchen zu unterscheiden. Damals galt es bei vielen noch für unweiblich, zu studieren; es sollte deshalb jede als männlich zu deutende Note in der äußeren Erscheinung und im Auftreten vermieden werden.

[At the beginning of my student days I let [my hair] grow again because it was a principle amongst us women students not to be different from other young women in any way. Back then, many still considered it unfeminine to study: therefore, we had to avoid every detail in our outer appearance and demeanor that one could label as masculine.]

It is interesting to see how Huch and her female colleagues actively defend their womanhood and “femininity” by paying even more attention to their outer appearance than a woman who felt unthreatened by this accusation. Furthermore, they use their bodies—something physical—to defy the dogmatic stereotype—something mental—and overcome the conventional construction that saw a woman’s learnedness as threatening to her ability to be “womanly”.

In regards to the professional environment at the University of Zürich, Huch writes—reflective of Tiburtius’ description as well—that most professors welcomed women students in their lecture halls: in only one case does she suggest otherwise. Huch writes that Salomé, a female colleague in the field of medicine, described the established professor of gynecology as too quick to make a condescending comment about female physicality in connection with his women students.

Er verflocht nämlich anstößige, oft geradezu unflätige auf sein Fach bezügliche Witze in seinem Vortrag, die er vielleicht überhaupt gern angebracht hätte, die aber zugleich den Zweck hatten, die anwesenden Studentinnen zu verscheuchen oder mindestens zu beleidigen. (182)

[He wove offensive, often downright foul-mouthed jokes in relation to his field into his lectures that he generally liked, but which simultaneously carried the intention of either scaring off or at least offending the women students who were present.]

Apart from this exceptional case, Huch explains that all professors she had personally encountered were in favor of women’s presence at the academic setting, and claims that the most of the faculty members were ready to grant women the chance to prove

their intellectual capabilities. (209)

On July 18, 1891, at the end of her seventh semester at the university, Huch completed the “Diplomprüfung für das höhere Lehramt” [diploma examination for the graduate teaching certificate] on her twenty-seventh birthday with the defense of her dissertation entitled “Die Neutralität der Eidgenossenschaft während des spanischen Erbfolgekrieges” [The Neutrality of the Swiss Confederation during the Spanish War of Succession].<sup>114</sup> Mostly due to her need of financial support, she first took a half-time position at the *Zürcher Stadtbibliothek* [Zürich Library], and then another position as a teacher at a *Privatschule* in Zürich for young girls. Similar to Tiburtius’ experience upon completing her degree and returning to Germany, Huch looked forward to returning to Braunschweig and was disappointed to find that her qualifications were not valid for a teaching position in Germany; one must take the *Lehrerinnenexamen* in Germany in order to teach at the secondary level, and qualifications earned in another country remained unacceptable. Disappointed, she writes, “meine Studien und Prüfungen in der Schweiz wären also vergeblich gewesen” [my studies and exams in Switzerland were for nothing] (195). At this point, Huch was aware of the fact that if she returned to Germany, she would have no chance to either teach or live independently.

Huch’s disappointment turned into hope after meeting Dora G. and Christine R., who came to Switzerland from Bremen in order to recruit women teachers for their newly established Lyceum. At the time, Huch was not content with her position at the *Privatschule* in Zürich and felt that an academic appointment at the Lyceum

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<sup>114</sup> Huch provides a fascinating description of her dissertation, her academic advisors, and her oral defense in her narrative. See 193-195.

would be less time consuming and allow her more time to concentrate on her literary career. She therefore accepted the offer to teach in Bremen and left Zürich, although only for a short amount of time: heart-broken by an empty promise by her brother-in-law, Huch left Germany six months later and returned to Switzerland. Following her friend “Bäumchen” to Vienna shortly thereafter in 1897, where she would meet her future husband Ermanno, or “Manno” Ceconi and eventually establish her literary career.

Before entering the discussion of Huch’s poem, there is one more citation worth mentioning in regards to her autobiographical accounts of student life in Zürich. This single citation, as small as it is, unquestionably places Huch on a common scale with the idea of real-life female protagonist of a *Bildungsroman* mentioned repeatedly in this project.

In Zürich war ich in den Besitz meiner selbst gekommen, hier wurde mir zuerst das Bewußtsein der eigenen Persönlichkeit und der eigenen Kräfte; denn zu Hause wird man als Glied einer Familie ohne eigenes selbständiges Wesen in eine vorhandene Rubrik eingeordnet, in der Fremde, wo man für sich allein steht, muß man sich Unbekannten bekannt machen und ihnen seinen Wert beweisen. (227)

[In Zürich, I acquired my self; for the first time ever, it was here that I developed the consciousness of individual personality and individual strengths. At home, one is categorized as the member of a particular family without any individual or autonomous character; when one lives away from home, one must make the unknown known and prove one’s worth.]

With this statement, Huch portrays herself as a literary heroine who discovered the most important thing throughout the course of her education—her “self”. In addition to this citation, Huch conveys a similar message in a speech entitled “Über den Einfluß von Studium und Beruf auf die Persönlichkeit der Frau” [The Influence of Academic Studies and Occupation on a Woman’s Character], held on March 12, 1902.<sup>115</sup> In this text, Huch reinstates the importance of a young woman’s experience away from home; in the event that this would be impossible to do, she urges parents to grant daughters at least a particular amount of space in order to find her “self”. Comparable to the autobiographies of Fanny Lewald, Gabriele Reuter, and Franziska Tiburtius, as well as the autobiographically based novel by Hedwig Dohm, Ricarda Huch portrays her individual path of self-insight as a journey that successfully ends with an overall contentment with her self and the society in which she lives. Even though originally disappointed in being unable to establish a teaching career in Germany, the author eventually reaches a decisive moment in which she realizes the teaching profession is wrong for her and decides instead to focus more on her writing.

The following poem, published approximately in the year 1905, reflects Huch’s experience at the university setting by portraying a figure, either male or female, who displays a passion for history. Torn between the rational world of contemporary academia and an irrational passion for escape into ancient worlds, the narrator reveals a frustration with the mundane process of reading and testing—something far away from the character’s original passion to pursue an academic degree. The narrator’s enthusiasm for history takes on humanly characteristics, and

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<sup>115</sup> Elke Frederiksen, Die Frauenfrage in Deutschland 1865-1915, 1981 (Stuttgart, 1994) 256-267.

ancient poetic verses and scripts surpass time to come alive in the narrator's fantasy, offering a passage of escape into a world far beyond the routine of everyday life.

Ricarda Huch, "In das Feuer wünsch ich meine Bücher"<sup>116</sup>

In das Feuer wünsch ich meine Bücher,  
Alle Bücher samt dem Bücherschranke!  
Nur ein einziges Buch möcht ich studieren,  
Ein lebendiges, ewig wechselvolles.  
O du Rätselangesicht, geliebtes,  
Grundriß aller meiner Wissenschaften,  
Mühsal, sowie Labsal dem Beflissenen!  
Welche Runen oder Hieroglyphen,  
Uralt fremde, glühn in deinen Augen!  
Drunter dann im roten Lippen-Einband  
Toller Schwänke eine blanke Reihe.  
Wie es von Schnurren, Märchen und Legenden  
Reimt oder fabelt in den Wunderlinien!  
Doch dazwischen warnt gelehrter Zweifel:  
Ist des Lächelns Quelle zuverlässiger,  
Oder gibt ein Zornblick echte Kunde?

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<sup>116</sup> Aus der Cotta'schen Handschriftensammlung, Stiftung der *Stuttgarter Zeitung*. Ricarda Huch, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 11. (Cologne, 1974) 499-500.

Irrtum aber ist hier süß wie Wahrheit  
Und dem Schüler gleich verehrungswürdig.  
Gott im Himmel, welche Riesenkräfte  
Spür ich plötzlich des Studierens halber!  
Hätt ich doch das Buch noch, das ich meine,  
Würd ich Doktor bald und bald Magister,  
Zuversichtlich, voll Gewissensruhe  
Schritt ich ins Examen rigorosum.

Doch Examinator ist die Liebe  
Und der Doktorhut ein Kranz von Rosen.

The reader recognizes that the narrator of the poem is a student in pursuit of an academic degree, hence the doctoral cap mentioned in the last line—but a student of what subject? Full of elements reflective of early nineteenth-century German Romanticism, Huch's poem revolves around the concept of *Transzendentalpoesie*, or transcendental poetics, which reflects the notion that a work of art creates its own realm of possibility.<sup>117</sup> The burst of emotional frustration in the beginning lines of the poem reveal the narrator's inability to control her/his desire, and as if backlashing against convention, the narrator wishes to throw his/her books—the universal symbol of knowledge—into the fire. By staring into the fire, the author enters a dream-like state and his/her mind wonders to perceive an image of true passion. This passion

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<sup>117</sup> Heike Gfrereis, ed, Grundbegriffe der Literaturwissenschaft (Stuttgart, 1999) 211.

transcends rationality as the imagined book takes on human eyes that glow with archaic symbols of language and red lips that cite ancient verse. This image creates the visualization of an almost pre-medieval setting of nighttime community around the fire, waiting to hear a storyteller's tales of legend and magic. In the narrator's fantasy, the archaic things of knowledge such as runic symbols and hieroglyphics come alive and become the object of eroticism. If the narrator could only rediscover his/her original passion for the almost supernatural passion for history, then he/she could take the oral examination for which they are studying with complete peace of mind. The relations between the real and fictional become reciprocal when the narrator imagines the doctoral cap as a crown of roses.

By means of transcendental escape, this poem conveys the message that it is possible to cope with the often conventional and routine realms of existence. Altogether, it consists of a mixture of artistic expression, social criticism, and individual desire. Is the narrator confessing a love for learning, or is he/she ultimately disappointed by the lure of studying a passion to the point of earning the doctorate degree? Has the reality of academia—or just plain reality—disappointed the narrator? Or, does history have the chance to become alive once more in the fantasies and daydreams of the modern person, who finds his or her self surrounded by disillusionment? Dare we claim the narrator to be Huch, whose intellectual curiosity led her through the hurdles of academic study during a time in which mainstream society deemed it inappropriate for women, hence the necessity of escape into a world beyond the struggles associated with daily life? The final two lines of the poem appear to be the most intriguing. By redefining the examiner as love and

the doctoral cap as a crown of roses, the fictional world that revolves around irrepressible desire amalgamates with reality, and the rituals associated with accomplishment in both worlds overlap.

## Conclusion

The various chapters in this project have shown the correlation of *Bildung* and gender as an inseparable cultural reality of nineteenth-century German social discourses. Although my focus centers on the interrelationship of *Bildung* and gender in nineteenth-century bourgeois society, it was necessary to first look at the idea of *Bildung* in combination with the idea of *Geschlechtscharakter* during the periods of the German Enlightenment and Weimar Classicism before moving further into the nineteenth century. It was Wilhelm von Humboldt who not only turned the cultural ideals of *Bildung* into an educational reality, but who also reshaped the concept of *Bildung* to imply an inner as well as civic definition. By incorporating the methodologies of Gender Studies and New Historicism, this project approached literary and non-literary texts produced by or about women during the nineteenth century. Along with a variety of texts from the mass press, selected writings by Fanny Lewald, Hedwig Dohm, Gabriele Reuter, Franziska Tiburtius, and Ricarda Huch reveal that although bourgeois society denied women the chance to obtain a civic form of *Bildung* commensurate with that of men, women repeatedly broke through constructions of “proper” femininity and pursued an individual path of *Bildung*. On the one hand, this project shows that the idea of inner *Bildung* played an unwavering role in the lives of bourgeois women from the time of Weimar Classicism up to the turn of the twentieth century. Women continuously searched for an awareness of “self”, although their modes of approach changed and shifted with the social and cultural changes of a particular historical period. On the other hand, this

project also reveals that many bourgeois women additionally obtained a form of civic *Bildung* that went beyond the limitations set forth by governmental and institutional guidelines. In other words, many women either found a way to circumvent these limitations or developed new interpretations of the concept of civic *Bildung*.

What really made this project unique was the incorporation of articles and illustrations from the nineteenth-century family journal *Die Gartenlaube*. Regarded as the mouthpiece of bourgeois culture and a key player in nineteenth-century German cultural identity politics (c.f. Kirsten Belgum 1998), *Die Gartenlaube* and its short-lived supplementary magazine *Die Welt der Frau* offered invaluable material that strengthened my understanding of how society's attitude towards *Bildung* and gender changed with time. My project utilized a variety of articles from *Die Gartenlaube* that focused on women and *Bildung*, and they are:

“Unsere Mädcheninstitute.” 1854: 16

“Weibliche Bildung und Erziehung.” 1856: 35

“Die höheren Töchterschulen.” 1884:18

“Die Haushaltungsschule des Lette-Vereins in Berlin.” 1888: 12

“Das erste deutsche Mädchengymnasium.” 1893: 38

“Die Frau und das Universitätsstudium.” 1895: 25

In addition, my work included a contest and its prizewinning essays from *Die Welt der Frau* that revolved around the question “Wie verheirate ich meine Tochter?” [How Do I Marry Off My Daughter?] (1905). After comparing these texts, the results show that attitudes portrayed in the early years of the *Die Gartenlaube*'s publication reflected the opposite of those published at the end of the century. The earliest article

included in this project entitled “Unsere Mädcheninstitute” [Our Girls’ Schools] appeared in *Die Gartenlaube* in 1854, only one year after the journal’s establishment. The author of this article, Amely Boelte, argues against a girl’s education outside of the home while simultaneously pronouncing the girls’ schools as institutes that promote nothing but frivolity. The next article, in chronological order, entitled “Weibliche Bildung und Erziehung” [Female Education and Upbringing], emphasizes the difference between “die gebildete Frau” [the cultivated woman] and “die gelehrte Frau” [the learned woman] (476). As the title of the article suggests, a woman who is raised “properly” according to the standards of “femininity” earns a more favorable recognition in this text than a woman who is “learned”. Subsequently, the articles that appeared after the beginning of the German bourgeois women’s movement (1865) reveal a lukewarm acceptance of women’s educational reform on the one hand, while simultaneously embracing the concept of femininity set forth by Weimar Classicism on the other. This is apparent in the article that applauds the *Lette-Verein* (1888) as well as B.’s [sic.] tribute to the first German *Mädchengymnasium* (1893). Although the authors of both articles commend these newly established institutions, they simultaneously render the idea of femininity as a cultural treasure that must remain safeguarded. Finally, Helene Lange’s article “Die Frau und das Universitätsstudium” [Women and University Education] (1895) provides an overview of changes made in the area of women’s education during the last years of the nineteenth century. It is her article, I believe, which breaks the pattern of conservative skepticism by showing how the ability to obtain a higher level of education does not rest solely on one’s gender, but rather on one’s individuality.

Lastly, the contest entitled “Wie verheirate ich meine Tochter” (1905) in *Die Welt der Frau* reveals the shift of attitude towards a woman’s *Bildung* on a broader public scale. The first place prizewinner Helene Rasp argues that a young woman’s best preparation for marriage is her attainment of civic and inner *Bildung*.

On the topic of inner *Bildung*, I would like to refer to two texts by Fanny Lewald and Ricarda Huch that appeared in this project. Although produced sixty years apart from one another, Fanny Lewald’s anonymously published essay “Einige Gedanken über Mädchenerziehung” [Several Thoughts about Girls’ Upbringing] (1843) and Ricarda Huch’s published speech “Über den Einfluß von Studium und Beruf auf die Persönlichkeit der Frau” [The Influence of Academic Studies and Occupation on a Woman’s Character] (1902) convey a similar message: a young woman must spend a certain amount of time away from the family environment in order to achieve an awareness of “self”. For Lewald, this meant a young woman should be able to leave home during the day to attend a public school. This experience, similar to Lewald’s own pastime, offered especially young women the opportunity to socialize with one another, and it granted children of both genders the independence necessary in order to develop an uninhibited sense of character. Huch’s message, on the other hand, reflects an idea more commensurate with her generation by articulating the benefits of an academic education for women. Apart from intellectual achievement, a woman who studies at the university also receives the opportunity to develop her “self”. Between the lifetimes of Lewald and Huch, a significant number of social changes occurred that pertain to the civic form of women’s *Bildung*, including, for example, the establishment of secondary schools and

the matriculation of women at the universities of neighboring countries. Despite these changes, the idea of inner *Bildung* in relation to the development of “self” remained unchanged. Because of this, I feel Lewald’s essay and Huch’s speech convey an explicit and parallel message that portrays a woman’s achievement of inner *Bildung* as superior to the timeless shifts and changes of the public sphere. Incidentally, this notion reflects the original meaning of *Bildung* that offered middle class citizens a way of distancing themselves from the absolutist state toward the end of the eighteenth century. Therefore, this idea leads me to presume that although the *Bildungsbürgertum* repeatedly excluded women from full participation in a form of civic *Bildung* commensurate with that of men throughout the course of the nineteenth century, women nonetheless maintained their own discourse of *Bildung* by continuously advocating the importance of its inner value.

Several texts illustrate the obvious correlation between inner *Bildung* and travel over the full span of this work. In particular, Fanny Lewald’s autobiography *Meine Lebensgeschichte* [My Life’s Story] (1861-62) and Hedwig Dohm’s autobiographically based novel *Schicksale einer Seele* [Fates of a Soul] (1899) portray the idea of travel as a means of opportunity to gain insight into one’s “self”. There is something about leaving the “known” and venturing into the “unknown” that not only parallels a notion of liberation, but also provides a chance to discover something about his or her “self” that otherwise would remain suppressed. Although Fanny Lewald’s first journey with her father throughout Germany around the age of twenty-two had a large impact on her life, it is especially her second extensive journey that serves as evidence of the interrelated ideas of liberation and inner

*Bildung*. The third and final volume of Lewald's autobiography, "Befreiung und Wanderleben" [Liberation and Years of Travel], conclude the author's story at the age of thirty-four as she embarks on a journey to Italy with a female friend. The evening before their arrival in Italy, the author writes that while enjoying the sunset over the mountainous terrain of the Swiss border, she feels for the first time in her life how to control her "self". Up until that very moment, Lewald states that she had only known two ways of existence: cheerless tranquility or exhilaration overshadowed by anxiety. In this moment, the author understands that only in a state of positive tranquility does one recognize one's true "self". (Lewald 3: 296) This statement serves as a point of comparison with the actions of Marlene Bucher, the protagonist of Dohm's novel *Schicksale einer Seele*. After the disclosure of her husband's marital affairs and the death of her daughter, Marlene feels a dire need to leave everything and everyone she knows in order to find her "self". She therefore travels to Italy, where she quickly becomes acquainted with theosophy and adopts a feeling she describes as "apostle fever". (Dohm, *Schicksale* 300) By surrounding herself with "otherness", Marlene Bucher feels that she may finally shed the layers of culture that formed her "I" up to this point and reach self-awareness that would be free of internalized cultural standards and void of heritage. In these two particular texts, both women writers recognize the act of travelling as a means of *Bildung* that makes a woman's quest of "self" possible. However, this idealization of travel leads me to ask whether this form of *Bildung* for women may serve as an interpretation of the educational *grand tour* once reserved for especially aristocratic men (i.e. Alexander von Humboldt and Georg Forster). On the one hand, it does reflect the practice of

travel as a means of acquiring an education about other cultures, but on the other hand, the cultural implications associated with gender make the journeys of Fanny Lewald and Marlene Bucher remarkably different. Not only was it exceptional that these two women decided to travel without a male companion, but it also shows how they boldly challenged the construction of “proper” femininity one more step beyond the cultural standards of their time.

Expanding on the idea of travel within the discourses of women’s *Bildung*, an additional question surfaces in connection with Gabriele Reuter’s life and works. Instead of travelling away from the familiar in order to encounter something new or foreign, Gabriele Reuter left her childhood country of Egypt and returned to the country of her citizenship and cultural heritage. Although the original intention of Reuter’s education in Germany included a “refinement” of her behavior, her autobiography reveals that she—along with her brothers—paved a unique path of self-cultivation that was untraditional and unquestionably a result of their distinctive upbringing. In my opinion, the moment in which Reuter embraces her new public identity as a woman writer and free person (in contrast to an elegant “lady” or young girl), she simultaneously seems to have achieved inner *Bildung*. (c.f. Reuter, *Vom Kinde* 470) Reuter demonstrates intellectuality and self-cultivation by showing her ability to observe and reproduce the double standards against women that existed in her own society. By proclaiming her life’s purpose as the herald of the cultural inconsistencies brought upon women’s lives, Reuter also becomes an educative voice that enlightens bourgeois society about the everyday tragedies that occur behind the veil of propriety. As a woman writer concerned with the everyday culture of her

gender, Reuter establishes a new kind of femaleness that supersedes the construction of the “eternal feminine”. This is especially apparent in her novel *Ellen von der Weiden*. Instead of surrendering to the cultural standards of a society that are not her own, Ellen boldly breaks through convention by simply being her “self”.

In her landmark publication *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir asked why society repeatedly viewed woman as the *Other*. (c.f. 41) This project poses a similar question by asking why a woman’s *Bildung* was “othered”. Why was a woman’s exposure to *Bildung* considered to be something that existed outside the realm of the “normal” and apart from “mainstream” bourgeois culture in nineteenth-century German society? After comparing and contrasting a variety of texts published by nineteenth-century women writers, this project provides evidence that women’s *Bildung* was never absent. Instead, it existed in a less public form. In connection with the expansion of a bourgeois public space throughout the course of the nineteenth century, the forms in which women participated in *Bildung* grew along with the gradual inclusion of women’s participation in the public domain. If one views the meaning of *Bildung* through the lens of the female gender, one finds an interpretation of *Bildung* that is different in approach but simultaneously similar to that of men: this includes an acquisition of self-awareness, inwardness, self-cultivation, literacy, and eventually, institutionalized education and professional training. Similar to the conceptualization of *Bildung* defined by the public male voice, women’s experience with *Bildung* also shifted with social changes in the course of the nineteenth century.

*Bildung*—in its civic form—will always be gendered. Just as Judith Butler contends that it is impossible for an “I” to exist without gender, a number of recent publications that focus on contemporary educational dilemmas reveal that gender continues to play a role in twenty-first century cultural debates. These include, for example, the article “Schlaue Mädchen, dumme Jungen” [Smart Girls, Dumb Boys] in *Spiegel Online* (May 17, 2004) and Nancy Gibbs’ essay “College Confidential” in *Time Magazine* (April 14, 2008), which discloses the continuous significance of gender in college admissions. On the other hand, *Bildung*—in its original context of inwardness and the development of character—may continue to act as a form of intellectuality that supersedes any form of gender association found in public debates, just as it did in nineteenth century Germany. None other than the famous nineteenth-century writer Rahel Varnhagen von Ense reaffirms this idea better by claiming inner *Bildung* to be a means of intellectuality that overcomes any limitations set by cultural societal standards:

Rahel Varnhagen to David Veit on April 20, 1811.

Ich bin ungelehrt wie immer; “verstehe aber, was kluge Männer sagen”; und Geschichte der Dinge, womit Denker aller Art und wissenschaftliche Leute sich beschäftigen, ist für mich auch Geschichte, interessant, und auch der Gegenstand meiner innern Beschäftigung. Und das von Natur, und *trotz*—nicht *durch*—Umgebung: also fruchtbar für meine Seele; und glücklich. (265)

[As always, I am unlearned; but I understand what learned men say. The history of things that engage thinkers and scholars of all kinds are also interesting to me, and they are the object of my innermost engagement. That

is my nature *despite of*—and not *by means of*—environment: therefore rewarding for my soul, and prosperous.]

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