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Young Germans in the World: Race, Gender, and Imperialism in Wilhelmine Young Adult Literature

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YOUNG GERMANS IN THE WORLD: RACE, GENDER, AND IMPERIALISM
IN WILHELMINE YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

A Dissertation Presented

by

MAUREEN OLDHAM GALLAGHER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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German and Scandinavian Studies
YOUNG GERMANS IN THE WORLD: RACE, GENDER, AND IMPERIALISM IN WILHELMINE YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

A Dissertation Presented
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MAUREEN OLDHAM GALLAGHER

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ABSTRACT

YOUNG GERMANS IN THE WORLD: RACE, GENDER, AND IMPERIALISM IN WILHELMINE YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

SEPTEMBER 2015

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Directed by: Professor Sara Lennox

This dissertation shows how popular reading material for young adults was used to craft a new generation of German imperial citizens in the Second Empire (1871-1918). Uniting insights from contemporary postcolonial theory, gender studies, and the global history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany, it shows the intersectional development of German national identity in the children’s and young adult literature of Wilhelmine Germany. As literature written by adults for young people, designed both to entertain and instruct, children’s and young adult literature offers a unique window on how Germany built nation and empire simultaneously during this period. Focusing on texts set outside of the European borders of Germany by authors such as Else Ury, Sophie Wörishöffer, Karl May, Friedrich Pajeken, Bertha Clément, Brigitte Augusti, and Carl Falkenhorst, it shows how German literature carves a space for Germans outside of Germany to settle in the Americas, colonize Africa, and travel from the peripheries to the metropole and back again, and how Germany’s understanding of its place in the world undergoes a dramatic shift in light of the outbreak of the World War in 1914. German young adult literature from this period offers a portrait of German identity as both racial and cultural and shows
German heroes and heroines as racially superior to indigenous people and culturally superior to other immigrant groups or colonizers. Narrative literature for young people from this time features young heroes and heroines who come of age abroad—boys who learn how to be men in Africa, South America, or the Wild West and girls who grow to maturity and marriage in various colonial settings—and reveals how metropolitan authors conceived of the nature of German identity in a period of globalization and colonization.
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INTRODUCTION

Some time around 1903, so the story goes, a blonde-haired, blue-eyed child named Annemarie is born to Edmund and Elsebeth Braun; the youngest of three children, Annemarie is known as “Doktors Nesthäkchen” or simply “Nesthäkchen.” She grows up in a well-to-do bourgeois home in Berlin, struggles through the difficulties of the First World War and learns to be proud of her German identity, studies medicine in Tübingen for a time before getting married, and raises three children in the uncertain financial climate of the 1920s. Ultimately her own Nesthäkchen, youngest daughter Ursel, leaves the nest for the far corners of the globe, marrying a Brazilian plantation owner named Milton Tavares and raising her children abroad. This figure, whose biography in many ways resembles that of a typical German girl of the early twentieth century, is in reality a fictional creation from the pen of Else Ury. Annemarie Braun is the heroine of the highly popular Nesthäkchen series, published between 1913 and 1925.¹ I begin with an outline of her life because of the glimpse it offers into how the globalized world of early twentieth century Germany is evident in literature for young people from this period.

Created in 1913 by Ury, Nesthäkchen became one of Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany's most beloved characters,² appearing in ten successful novels which were

¹ Some scholars place the publication date of the first Nesthäkchen books as 1918, but I follow Barbara Asper’s earlier dates: Barbara Asper, Hannelore Kempin, and Bettina Münchmeyer-Schöneberg, Wiedersehen mit Nesthäkchen: Else Ury aus heutiger Sicht (Berlin: text verlag, 2007).

² Else Ury and her Nesthäkchen books remained popular even in Nazi Germany, when the Jewish author was forbidden from publishing. For more on this see Christa Kamenetsky, Children's Literature in Hitler's Germany: The Cultural Policy of National Socialism (Athens: Ohio UP, 1984).
adapted for television in 1983. Her first appearance in 1913's *Nesthäkchen und ihre Puppen* (Nesthäkchen and her dolls) introduced young readers to a sweet, imaginative, and slightly wild little girl struggling to be a good “mother” to her dolls. Wilhelmine girls grew up with *Nesthäkchen*, whose title character Jennifer Redmann has argued, “represents the ideal, middle-class German child and woman of the early 20th century.”

Annemarie, like so many other heroines of German literature for young people, offers a model for overcoming childish tomboy behavior to accept bourgeois German womanhood and its ideals of duty and self-sacrifice.

This quintessentially German character, firmly ensconced in a bourgeois German milieu, possesses an imaginary life that places Wilhelmine Germany within its global context. She struggles to deal with the “uncleanliness and disorderliness” (“Unsauberkeit und Unordentlichkeit”) that her doll Lolo has brought with her “from her homeland Africa,”


This enormously popular series is not alone in its representation of German identity or life in Wilhelmine Germany. Other works for children and youth that I will discuss in this dissertation also offer an understanding of German identity that is mobile and portable, not bound solely to the European borders of the German nation, but that can be taken abroad and relocated within colonial or other settlement contexts.

---


With this dissertation I offer the first comprehensive study of imperialism in young adult literature from this period. While the imperialism of authors such as Sophie Wörishöffer and Karl Falkenhorst has come under consideration in isolated studies, imperialism as a constitutive and genre-defining aspect of young adult literature has been neglected. Scholars such as Dagmar Grenz, Gisela Wilkending, and Irmgard Voß have shown how girls’ literature from this time socializes its young readers into gender expectations and prepares them to take on their role as dutiful wives and mothers, and Jennifer Askey has shown how girls’ literature from this period propagates a particular gendered conception of nationalism for the consumption of young female reading audiences. Some scholars of girls’ literature dismiss works set abroad like those I discuss in my dissertation as “atypical,” but I instead show how nationalism and imperialism intersect and how these works reflect the self-understanding of Germany as a global imperial power.

My approach is shaped by postcolonial theory, in particular Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper’s injunction to examine metropole and colony as a single sphere of influence. Rather than seeing colonies as changed and shaped solely by the imperial power from the metropole, this calls for understanding how metropole and colony exerted

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6 Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, introduction to Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), vii-viii.
mutual influence upon each other. I show how novels written for young people that imagine life abroad or in the colonies exhibit metropolitan imperial fantasies, a way for authors to think through changing notions of German identity, particularly in its racial and gender aspects. In my dissertation I thus offer an intersectional reading of German young adult literature from Wilhelmine Germany that looks not only at nationalism and imperialism but race and gender. In my study I bring girls’ and boys’ literature together to show how literature imagined new roles for both men and women in the colonies and other imperial spaces abroad.

In my study I focus on the creation of German identity in books for young people. This involves examining primarily the protagonists of novels: the colonizers, immigrants, soldiers, and merchants who form the primary identificatory figures in novels for young people. Scholars have studied the representation of Native Americans, Africans, and other ethnic groups in the literature of this period for both children and adults, and I

build on this work to show how these representations interact with the self-presentation of white Germans. This sheds light on how Germanness comes to be explicitly defined as white as a result of the colonial encounter and the challenges miscegenation and other forms of colonial reproduction pose to German identity. Focusing on the representation of Germans in colonial and imperial encounters allows me to bring into focus the usually unmarked category of whiteness.8

The Metzler Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur identifies roughly 25,000 titles published for children and young adults between 1850 and 1900.9 Though the book industry for young people was diverse, encompassing many genres—poetry, short stories, fairy tales and sagas, and historical dramas, to name but a few—I am concerned with books written for adolescents and set in the contemporary world that show Germans who travel or live outside the continental borders of Germany—in German settlements in the American West, in Germany’s African colonies, or in other parts of the world where Germans traveled and resided. Authors I examine include Sophie Wörishöffer, Karl May, Nazlie Hodaie have written on Orientalism and the German representation of Asia and the Near East, but that is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

8 The study of whiteness in German colonial contexts continues to gain attention. In taking this approach I am building on the work of German scholars of Critical Whiteness Studies, or kritische Weiβseinsforschung, as it is also known in Germany, such as Anette Dietrich, Weiβe Weiblichkeiten: Konstruktion von 'Rasse' und Geschlecht im deutschen Kolonialismus (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007) and Katharina Walgenbach, Die weiβe Fraue als Trägerin deutscher Kultur: Koloniale Diskurse über Geschlecht, Rasse und Klasse im Kaiserreich (Frankfurt: Campus, 2006).

9 The volume on literature published between 1900 and 1945 has not yet been published, but given that book market segmentation only increased in the early twentieth century, numbers are likely to be even higher. Otto Brunken, Bettina Hurrelmann, Maria Michels-Kohlhage, and Gisela Wilkending, eds. Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur. Von 1850 bis 1900 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2008).
Friedrich Pajeken, Carl Falkenhorst, Bertha Clément, and Else Ury. This selection of authors and their work allows me to show the effect of imperialism, colonialism, race and gender on imagining German identity outside of Germany. I have chosen these authors because they were both popular and active in Wilhelmine Germany, writing generally dozens of works for young people each. Most of these authors came under attack by pedagogues such as Heinrich Wolgast who sought to reform young adult literature and objected to most popular writing for young people as unliterary and morally and educationally harmful. Wolgast’s attacks on these authors in particular show that they were synonymous with the field of young adult literature and recognized as influential and important to young readers in Wilhelmine Germany.

**Wilhelmine Germany in an Age of Globalization**

Recent scholarship has reevaluated the historiography of modern Germany to move away from a narrow focus on German nationalism. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel write in *Das Kaiserreich transnational* that after national unification, 1871 served as a “teleological vanishing point” with German history written as a “story of the yearning for and fulfillment of the national idea.”\(^{11}\) Attempts to write the story of Germany led to an overdetermined narrative that viewed the events of 1871 as the inevitable result of all that came before. This reliance on the paradigm of nationalism, according to Conrad and Osterhammel, blinded historians to Germany's global and

\(^{10}\) An appendix with author biographies can be found at the end of this dissertation.

transnational history. Instead they call for understanding Imperial Germany “not as a unified actor but rather as a space of action and experience.”\textsuperscript{12} They conceptualize Imperial Germany as part of a “networked world” (\textit{vernetzte Welt}) resulting from a revolution in transportation and information technologies. Travel by rail and steam ship, as well as improvements in the telegraph and other communications technologies, connected people and places in new ways and allowed for the movement of people, commodities, and information faster and more cheaply than ever before. This conception of German identity is national and imperial simultaneously and emerges as a product of what Mary Louise Pratt has termed “European planetary consciousness,” which unites ideas of bourgeois subjectivity with colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism.\textsuperscript{13}

The economic, technological, and political changes that globalized and networked the\textit{ Kaiserreich}\textsuperscript{14} had a profound impact on the social and imaginary lives of its citizens. With the mass emigration of Germans to other parts of the world, in particular the United States, the expansion of Germany’s realm to include overseas colonies, and the growth of popular anthropology in the form of zoos, museums, the \textit{Völkerschau} (ethnographic show), and other spectacles that put “exotic” peoples on display in the metropole, Germans were confronted with an awareness of globalization and its effects.\textsuperscript{15} They were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} “nicht als einheitlicher Akteur, sondern als Aktions- und Erfahrungsraum.” Conrad, Osterhammel, \textit{Kaiserreich transnational}, 15.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Mary Louise Pratt, \textit{Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation} (London: Routledge, 1992), 9.
\item \textsuperscript{14} I will use the terms \textit{Kaiserreich}, Wilhelmine Germany, and Imperial Germany interchangeably to refer to Germany between 1871 and 1918.
\item \textsuperscript{15} For more on anthropology, ethnography, and spectacle see Sierra A. Bruckner, “Spectacles of (Human) Nature: Commercial Ethnography between Leisure, Learning, and \textit{Schaulust},” (127-155); Andrew Zimmerman, “Adventures in the Skin Trade:
\end{itemize}
prompted to think about Germany’s place in the world, among its empires and peoples. Authors for both young people and adults wrote texts that imagined Germans living in proto-colonial circumstances in South America, in the United States, and in colonial Africa. It is the imagined Germany constructed for young people in popular literature that is my focus here; as I show, young adult literature articulated an understanding of German identity that was situated within a global system.

Race

A central concern of my dissertation is the role of race in young adult literature from the era of German imperialism. Race has recently become a flashpoint in discussions about German children’s literature with the announcement by the Thienemann Verlag in January 2013 that subsequent editions of Otfried Preußler’s classic children’s book Die kleine Hexe (The Little Witch, 1957) would omit the word “Negerlein.” While it may be the case that the fierce debate this sparked about race, censorship, and language and cultural change was the first time many Germans confronted the issue of race in children’s literature, I hold that it merely brought to the


16 The word appears in Preußler’s novel in the context of children dressed up for Carneval. The word is controversial in Germany because it is roughly equivalent to both the outdated English word “Negro,” as well as the word “nigger.” Those who object to the term do so largely on the basis of its continued use as a racial slur in contemporary Germany. For more see the article from January 4, 2013 in Der Spiegel: http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/literatur/thienemann-verlag-streicht-neger-aus-der-kleinen-hexe-a-875839.html.
fore a much older issue. From picture books like Heinrich Hoffmann’s *Struwwelpeter* (1845), to the Robinsonade (Robinson Crusoe-like stories) and adventure stories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to “social problem literature” (problemorientierte Literatur) from the 1970s and 1980s that dealt with issues such as immigration and discrimination, race has always been a part of German children’s and young adult literature.

In my understanding of race I draw on contemporary cultural studies and critical race theory, in particular Stuart Hall’s definition of race as a floating signifier: “Race is more like a language than it is like a way in which we are biologically constituted,” he argues. Race is a socially- and culturally-constructed category that is used to articulate perceived biological differences among humans but whose meaning changes over time. For the importance of race in this period I draw on David Theo Goldberg’s arguments in *The Racial State* about the centrality of race to the modern world and modern state building, what he terms the “co-articulation” of race and the modern state. For Goldberg the modern state is racialized in its process of subject formation: the racial state rules over racialized subjects. Central to this process is both exclusion and inclusion (and what


18 For more on social problem literature see Heinz-Jürgen Kliewer’s chapter in *Geschichter der Deutschen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, ed. Reiner Wild (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990), 328-353, in particular 338-345.


he terms the internalization of exclusions); the racial state has the power to create and place people and groups in hierarchical categories and governs social exclusion and social standing. The slave trade and the racialized management of peoples through colonial and imperial projects thus helped shape and inflect modern forms of state power.

Existing studies of race in Wilhelmine Germany have been based on the premise that only people of color have a race, focusing on the representation of minority characters and omitting any discussion of whiteness and the construction of white German identity. For example, the representation of Native Americans, particularly in the works of Karl May, has been well researched, and the representation of Africans, particularly in children’s books, has also attracted some scholarly attention. However, the very few existing studies of whiteness in the colonial experience do not take children’s and young adult literature into account. My dissertation thus fills a gap in the

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23 For example, Anette Dietrich, Weiße Weiblichkeiten: Konstruktion von 'Rasse' und Geschlecht im deutschen Kolonialismus (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007); Katharina Walgenbach, Die weiße Frau als Trägerin deutscher Kultur: Koloniale Diskurse über Geschlecht, Rasse und Klasse im Kaiserreich (Frankfurt: Campus, 2006).
scholarship by addressing how whiteness is portrayed in young adult literature from this period and how minority characters are used to construct white German identity.

Of interest to me in these depictions is the articulation not only of race in general but of whiteness in particular. Emigration and colonization can threaten the categories of whiteness and Germanness, and with the potential for miscegenation and interracial relationships, the exclusive coexistence of Germanness and whiteness is no longer self-evident. I am concerned with how authors for young adults conceptualize their white characters and their place within colonial, cultural, and racial hierarchies. In presenting Germans engaged in building colonies, settlements, and states abroad and interacting with and managing native populations, these authors grapple with notions of race in ways that deserve further analysis. It is in this period that the whiteness of Germans comes to be named, discussed, and debated in new ways. For example, Wilhelm Solf, Secretary of the German Colonial Office, declared in the Reichstag in 1912, “Wir sind Deutsche, wir sind Weiße, und wir wollen Weiße bleiben” (We are Germans, we are whites, and we want to remain whites), a statement which will be discussed in its full context in Chapter Four. Taking my cue from critical whiteness studies, I am concerned not only with how “other” races are represented in this literature, but how these depictions are used to construct the white identity of the German protagonists.

**Gender**

Like race, gender can be seen as a floating signifier for presumed biological differences that are perceived as natural but are actually socially constructed. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Germany, there was an entrenched
understanding of the differences between the sexes.\textsuperscript{24} Women and men were seen as biologically distinct, with specific “Geschlechtscharaktere” (gender characters) and different abilities, roles, and duties based on their inherent natures. For example, women’s rights advocates called for suffrage and other rights on the basis of women’s role as mothers in serving the nation and raising soldiers and citizens, rather than on the basis of equality.\textsuperscript{25} In Wilhelmine Germany, boys and girls enjoyed separate avenues for schooling and professional training, and increasing efforts to train women for professions around the turn of the century were based on perceived falling marriage rates rather than a perceived need for female financial independence.\textsuperscript{26}

Books for girls from Wilhelmine Germany are relatively well researched in comparison to books written for boys. Gisela Wilkending and Dagmar Grenz pioneered a line of research into how literature written for girls socializes them into proscribed gender roles; more recently, Jennifer Askey has published a volume on how girls’ literature cultivates national feelings in young female readers.\textsuperscript{27} While the intersections of gender and nationalism and the role of literature in furthering traditional gender roles are thus well-established, I break new ground in looking at how these works also deal with race and imperialism alongside gender and nationalism. Masculinity and literature for boys


\textsuperscript{25} See, for example, Ute Frevert, \textit{Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation} (Oxford: Berg, 1988).

\textsuperscript{26} For a history of this perception of the marriage crisis in Germany (and a thorough statistical debunking), see Catherine Dollard, \textit{The Surplus Woman: Unmarried in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918} (New York: Berghahn, 2009).

\textsuperscript{27} See note 5 on page 3.
from this period remains under-studied. While Kara Getrost and Marieluise Christadler have studied masculine adventure novels and there are isolated studies on authors for boys such as Friedrich Pajeken and Sophie Wörishöffer, little work has been done on how literature for boys reinforces gender roles and expectations, a gap I address with this dissertation.

My dissertation offers an intersectional analysis that takes into account the mutually reinforcing categories of gender and race. The colonies opened up new spheres of influence for women in particular, but they also represent an ambiguity. While they offered opportunities for women to break out of traditional gender roles, the importance of women to the colonial project was grounded in their traditional roles as guardians of culture and bearers of children, a contradiction explored by scholars such as Katherina Walgenbach, Anette Dietrich, and Lora Wildenthal. I also draw on postcolonial theorists such as Anne McClintock and her work on women and respectability in British colonialism, in particular how the borders of race and nation come to be mapped onto the female body.  

Imperialism

I have consciously chosen to use the term “imperialism” in the title of my dissertation as a more broader and all-encompassing term than colonialism. In this I draw on recent theoretical advances, in particular George Steinmetz’s comparative essay on US

---

and German imperialism in *Lessons of Empire*. Drawing on Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s attempt to decouple the state from empire, Steinmetz defines imperialism (in particular US-American-style imperialism) as “indirect political and economic influence” rather than direct occupation of territories. He argues that there have historically been four types of empires: classical, land-based empires such as Rome, modern territorial empires, colonial empires, and “imperialism, a system of control of far-flung areas without territorial annexation.” Imperial Germany showed all three modern forms of empire in combination or hybrid form during its existence.

Germany is often described as a reluctant colonial power, its empire having been late and small and brief (1884-1918). This sense of the lateness and brevity of German colonialism, coupled with its unique post-colonial history (Germany’s colonies were divided among the Entente powers under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles), meant

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31 Steinmetz, “Imperialism or Colonialism,” 137.

32 Steinmetz, “Imperialism or Colonialism,” 140.

33 Steinmetz, “Imperialism or Colonialism,” 149.

34 The “lateness” of German colonialism is a constant refrain in historical and literary studies of the period. In *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop point out the problematic nature of this observation for implying there was a “right” time for colonialism (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1998), 19. Though Germany may have come to formal overseas imperialism after many of its European neighbors, one might ask whether David Blackbourn’s observation in *The Peculiarities of German History* that Germany was “much more the intensified version of the norm than the exception” can be brought to bear on German colonialism, as well (with Geoff Eley, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 292.
that the German empire was less studied and the scholarship less influenced by postcolonial theory than with other former imperial powers like France or England. However, as Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop note, German colonialism was “‘real’ and long-lived” for both colonizer and colonized, not just in fact but in “mentalities and imaginary configurations” that remained long after the end of official colonialism.\(^{35}\) Literary representations of colonial or pseudo-colonial endeavors belong to these “mentalities and imaginary configurations” and have a long and varied history, as Susanne Zantop has shown.\(^{36}\)

Steinmetz’s understanding of empire and imperialism, taking into account fluid and hybrid forms of rule and influence, is particularly useful in these circumstances. It does not, however, protect from the common “terminological slippage,” from empire to imperial to imperialism to colonialism.\(^{37}\) I frequently also make use of the terms colonial, colonialist, and colonialism because the texts I deal with were written during the era of Germany’s imperial expansion abroad and are inflected and influenced by the rhetoric and ideology of overseas colonialism. Thus, for example, Bertha Clément describes the German settlers in Illinois in her novel In den Savannen (In the Savannahs, 1900) as “Kolonisten” (colonists) rather than the more neutral “Ansiedler” (settlers).\(^{38}\) However, while using the language of colonialism, German authors who write about the Americas

\(^{35}\) Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox, and Zantop, Imperialist Imagination, 18.


\(^{37}\) Steinmetz, “Imperialism or Colonialism,” 138.

\(^{38}\) Clément’s novels will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two.
more often portray informal dominance rather than official political rule, making a full distinction between colonialism and imperialism difficult.

Using Steinmetz’s fluid understanding of empire, imperialism, and colonialism allows me to discuss literature set in Germany’s African colonies alongside literature set in the American West as related phenomena that explore and reflect on the same continuum of experience rather than distinct phenomena because of the political status of the German immigrant characters in such texts. While these works are grounded in the historical events, they represent metropolitan fantasies about German life abroad and are full of historical, geographical, zoological and other factual errors. These works should be read as authentic responses to German emigration and German colonialism, but they are not authentic representations of life abroad at the time.

**Outline**

In Chapter One, I offer historical background on the history of youth and young adult literature in Wilhelmine Germany, sketching what it meant to be a young person in a time of nationalization, colonization, and globalization. I discuss how youth comes to be identified as both a target demographic for publishers and as a social population in need of control, and I offer a case study of the pedagogical journal *Jugendschriften-Warte* and its discussion of problematic “Indianerliteratur.” I also show how schooling and school reading books fostered both nationalism and imperialism, and how popular culture and popular entertainment reflected the globalizing world, offering spectacles of people and products from far-flung corners of the globe for metropolitan spectators.

In Chapter Two, “Little Germans on the Prairie: Colonial Claims to German Space
in the Americas,” I show how German authors such as Karl May, Sophie Wörishöffer, Friedrich Pajeken, and Bertha Clément make colonial claims to the American West. These authors present to their young readers colonial fantasies of German life in North America that present Germans as the true heirs to the frontier. German characters bring order and civilization to the American West, rendering it an orderly, productive, German space. These colonial claims to a German West are also based on race and gender. German men like May’s Old Shatterhand and Pajeken’s Robert Rheinfels not only master frontier skills like hunting, fighting, and riding wild mustangs but show maturity, respect, and good stewardship of resources, all of which are coded as masculine. Fewer novels feature German women on the frontier, but Bertha Clément’s novels *Im Rosenhause* and *In den Savannen* show women engaged in the imperial project of spreading Germandom abroad. These colonial claims to the land are also predicated on the Germanness and the whiteness of the novels’ main characters. As Germans they show moral superiority over Americans and other settlers, and as whites they show racial superiority over the indigenous peoples. Further, indigenous characters like May’s Winnetou acknowledge the superiority of Germans over Native Americans and endorse their own colonization.

Chapter Three, entitled “Where Boys Become Men: The German Colonial Adventure Novel,” addresses masculinity in imperial adventure novels for boys. In this chapter I read the colonial adventure novel as a kind of puberty novel for boys, similar to the *Backfischbuch* for girls. Using Sophie Wörishöffer’s and Carl Falkenhorst’s writings about Germans abroad in South America and Germany’s African colonies, I show how boy readers were offered models of masculine development. Their young male protagonists who travel abroad learn how to become men through the physical and
mental challenges they face in the colonies. They grow brave and strong, learn the importance of work, and ultimately embrace their place in the colonial racial hierarchy. They practice a particular kind of benevolent patriarchal racism, serving as idealized colonial rulers and teaching the natives to work and take their subordinant place in the racial hierarchy. Later novels set during the colonial wars in Southwest Africa build upon these earlier models to portray the violence and genocide as a mere interruption of Germany’s civilizing work abroad.

In the fourth chapter, “Race, Gender, and Colonial Violence in German Girls’ Literature,” I explore little-known examples of German girls’ literature set in German Southwest Africa: Agnes Sapper’s Werden und Wachsen, Henny Koch’s Die Vollrads in Südwest, Valerie Hodann’s Auf rauhen Pfaden, and Elisa Bake’s Schwere Zeiten. I place these novels in the literary and historical context of Wilhlemine German colonial writing and contemporary debates about colonialism, race, and miscegenation and show how the borders of Germanness, whiteness, and racial respectability come to be mapped on to the bodies of young female characters. The presence of these female lead characters in German Southwest Africa ensures the colonies can become a true German homeland, as women are seen as the literal and symbolic bearers of Germaness, able to give birth to German children and preserve German cultural traditions. While the presence of white German women in Africa is meant to prevent miscegenation, the unmarried status of these young female figures makes them vulnerable. Bake’s and Hodann’s novels both contain scenes of violence against these young women that hint at the porousness of racial and national boundaries, and these female characters must make a last stand to defend the racial order of the colonies. Genocide is then presented as the necessary
solution that will allow for a white, German future in Southwest Africa.

In Chapter Five, “Imperial Girls: Wilhelmine Girls’ Literature in an Era of Globalization,” I explore the growing globalization of girls’ novels in Wilhelmine Germany by focusing on girls’ novels that feature travel to places other than the African colonies and North America. I briefly sketch a framework for how the genre of the girls’ novel becomes globalized and offer a thoroughly new reading of girls’ literature in this period that moves beyond merely showing how it socialized girls into accepting their proscribed national and gender roles. This chapter shows how German authors explore the relationship between colony and metropole, between Germany and the wider world. Some authors present travel as enriching, teaching girls to appreciate their German identity. Others express skepticism of emigration by presenting girls born abroad whose families are torn apart through lost fortunes, bank collapses, slave revolts, and tropical storms; they achieve wholeness only when they travel to Germany and learn how to be proper German girls. The traditional plot of a German girls’ novel involves the heroine sacrificing for the sake of her family and, by extension, the nation, but in an age of globalization and imperialism, German girls are shown as participating in the larger imperial project of cultivating Germanness at home and abroad.

In the sixth and final chapter, “‘A World of Enemies’: Gender, War Mobilization, and Colonialism in German Young Adult Literature from the First World War,” I show how the idea of “young Germans in the world” changes in light of the global conflict. The First World War constitutes an abrupt shift in the rhetoric of how German identity is described in relation to the rest of the world. Whereas before the war German identity is presented as thriving outside of Germany and Germany as an important colonial power,
during the war Germany is described as the victim of European imperialism. German young adult literature narrates this transition and articulates Germany’s new relationships to the rest of the world. The importance of the colonies is minimized, and exotic or colonial settings often exist in novels only to provide an exciting set piece from which the hero must escape as he makes his way back to Germany to fight on the European fields of battle. Politicians, bureaucrats, publishers, and teachers all sought to mobilize youth for war in highly gendered ways. While literature with male protagonists tends to showcase battlefield heroism, literature for girls remains bound to the homefront, showing heroines engaged in traditional female pursuits to aid the war effort, such as knitting, cooking, sewing, caregiving, and nursing.

Thus I offer a portrait of what the world looked like to young readers of fiction in Wilhlemine Germany. This view is necessarily limited and partial, reflecting the concerns and biases of metropolitan authors; it is not a reflection of the world as it was but rather how authors believed or wanted it to be, or perhaps how they thought it should be for their young readers. With large-scale emigration to North America and Germany’s accession of colonies in the 1890s, authors and young readers were confronted with a globalizing world and challenged to think about Germany’s role within it. Authors explored changing understandings of race, gender, and German identity and offered their young readers portraits of Germans in imperial and colonial settings to teach them about what it mean to be young Germans in the world.
CHAPTER 1
GROWING UP IN WILHELMINE GERMANY: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

From the 1880s onward, German reformers, pedagogues, and publishers increasingly recognized German young people as both a distinct demographic and a population in need to social control. At the same time, the German publishing industry became increasingly specialized and engaged in marketing geared directly toward young people, responding to the increased autonomy and spending money that many young people enjoyed. Reformers and pedagogues attempted to bring these increasingly autonomous youth under the control of adults and other authority figures through continuation schooling and other efforts to direct the leisure time of working class youth in particular.¹ These efforts were grounded on an understanding of young people as budding members of the nation state. As such, the nation had a vested interest in ensuring that they were raised properly to be productive and patriotic citizens, so as not to endanger the nation. It therefore fell not only to parents but to every adult authority figure to help young people become useful, dutiful citizens, and the culture and institutions of Wilhelmine Germany reflect this concern with young people and their upbringing.

¹ On adolescence and efforts to control youth in Germany in this period see Derek Linton, ‘Who Has the Youth Has the Future:’ The Campaign to Save Young Workers in Imperial Germany (New York: Cambridge UP, 1991), Detlev Peukert, Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung: Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Jugendfürsorge von 1878 bis 1932 (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1986), and Mark Roseman, ed., Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany, 1770-1968 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).
Raising young Germans in this time period also meant raising them to be citizens of the German empire. Colonialism and imperialism had become part of the fabric of metropolitan society, with reading material, toys and games, and popular culture reflecting an increasingly imperial culture.² Young people learned about Germany’s official possessions abroad in school and outside of school witnessed spectacles of exotic peoples and products. School curriculum, reading material, and popular culture connected the nation to the globalizing world and reflected institutions of colonial and imperial power.

In this chapter I will provide historical background on the history of youth in Wilhelmine Germany. I will discuss how Germany in this period worked to foster both nationalism and imperialism, as well as how popular culture, literature and institutions such as schools promoted nationalism and imperialism. I will discuss the publishing culture of Wilhelmine Germany and current scholarship on the role of young adult literature in shaping young German identity in this period. I will further offer a case study of the Jugendschriften-Warte (JSW), a publication by a German teacher’s organization that offered reviews and critiques of contemporary young adult literature out of concern for the state of literature and its effect on young people. This case study will show how this influential group exhibited missionary and colonial thinking about young people in their reviews and underscores how seriously adults at this time took the question of what young people read. This background on the history of youth in Wilhelmine Germany will

show how young Germans lived not only a nationalizing and globalizing world, but a reading world, as well.

**Building Nation and Empire in Wilhelmine Germany**

Wilhelmine Germany was, in the views of many historians, a “verspätete Nation” (belated nation); having achieved national unification comparatively late, in 1871, it was forced to play catch up to other European nations like Britain and France.\(^3\) The economic modernization of the period did not coincide with social and cultural modernization, and the country retained a military and monarchic culture where ruling classes held onto their pre-modern ideas and power structures. Under these conditions, Germany struggled to achieve full unification, and politicians waged bitter battles against perceived internal enemies such as Catholics, Jews, and Socialists. Chancellor Bismarck, long resistant to engaging in official colonial efforts, finally succumbed to popular pressure and the efforts of colonial interest groups in the 1880s,\(^4\) a move read by some historians as a ploy to draw attention away from Germany’s problematic domestic politics.\(^5\)

\(^3\) For an early and important volume on this idea, see Helmuth Plessner’s *Die Verspätete Nation: Über die Verführbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, [1935] 1959).

\(^4\) For background on Bismarck’s changing attitude toward colonial policy, see Sebastian Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (Munich: Beck, 2008), in particular 22-27.

\(^5\) See Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s 1973 *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918*, translated into English by Kim Traynor: *The German Empire, 1871-1918* (Oxford: Berg, [1985] 1997). German historians are generally in agreement about Bismarck’s reluctance to engage in colonial ventures abroad and lack of enthusiasm for colonialism, ascribing to him domestic policy or economic motivations for acceding to popular demands (Wehler uses the phrases “pragmatic expansionism” and “social imperialism” to describe these two motivations). For a comprehensive overview see Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969); for a contrarian view see H. P. Meritt, “Bismarck and the German Interest in East Africa, 1884-1885,” *The Historical
As Niels P. Petersson writes, Wilhelmine Germany experienced “parallel processes of globalization and nationalization…, … the simultaneous build up and mutual influence of domestic and global economic interdependence.”6 As the world “shrunk” by becoming ever more connected through new technology and European expansion abroad, a unified Germany struggled to define itself and its relation to its neighbors and the global world. As Sebastian Conrad writes in *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*:

> German history did not unfold solely within the boundaries of the nation state. Nor did the world remain outside; external events had far-reaching effects on German society. The *Kaiserreich* formed an integral part of the political, economic and cultural interrelationships that characterised the world before 1914. Pre-First World War German history is and has always been part of the history of the process of globalisation around 1900.7

In his study of work and labor in Wilhelmine Germany, Conrad shows how German national identity emerges within the global context of the time, discussing developments around 1900—for example *Weltpolitik*, the world economy, colonialism, emigration, protectionism, and the Yellow Peril—and showing how these concerns with Germany’s place in the world help develop German national self-understanding. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer make the related argument that “colonialism was central to Wilhelminian discourse on national identity and to the country’s understanding of itself…

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as a world power.” Conrad understands nationalization and globalization as dependent processes, not as separate developments, proposing “that the dynamics of nationalisation and nationalism must always be understood as, in part, a product of the globalisation of the turn-of-the-century era and not merely its prerequisite.” I will follow this approach in my dissertation and examine how nationalism and imperialism support and sustain each other in the young adult literature of Wilhelmine Germany.

Though newly united, Wilhelmine Germany was strongly divided by politics, culture, class, and confession, nationalist rhetoric portrayed it as unified, powerful, distinct, ancient, and all-encompassing. The nation remained fractured politically even as the official culture of the Second Empire took shape with an understanding of a glorious, unified, mythical German past. The memorial and symbolic culture of Wilhelmine Germany—comprised of festivals, monuments, songs, and organizations—was military and monarchic. Celebrations of Sedan Day and monuments like the Hermannsdenkmal in the Teutoburg forest, for example, allowed Germany to embrace the religion of nationalism out of a “longing to escape from the consequences of industrialization” and a desire for a sense of wholeness.

The prevailing notion of German nationalism in the Second Empire held that Germans were ethnically and culturally a people united by Germanness, expressing itself

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in their common behavior, customs, soul, and spirit. Stefan Berger notes in *The Search for Normality* that this German nationalism, stemming from Herder and his writing on Germans and their *Volksgeist*, *Volksseele*, and *Blutgemeinschaft*, saw itself as both organic and pre-political.\(^{12}\) Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales write of German nationalism: “Of the three possible bases of national particularity (cultural, genetic and political), culture, which was expressed in terms of a German ‘character’ and ‘values,’ was the most significant.”\(^{13}\) They also note that new political institutions were conceived of as extensions of long historical and cultural traditions.\(^{14}\) This German nationalism was heavily gendered, and women and girls were seen as necessary to reproduce Germanness both biologically and culturally.\(^{15}\) Further, traditional female virtues like duty, modesty, and frugality come to be explicitly coded as German.

Increasing German emigration to other parts of the world gave this nationalism a new poignancy. With tens of thousands of Germans leaving every year for other parts of the world, in particular the United States, the question of how to maintain German nationalism both at home and abroad came to the fore in public discourse and popular literature.\(^{16}\) The flood of so-called America novels (*Amerikaromane*) in the latter half of the nineteenth century, which will be discussed further in the next chapter, imagined


\(^{13}\) Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales, eds., *Representing the German Nation* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), 24.


\(^{16}\) The most comprehensive source on German immigration to the United States is *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred Year History*, eds. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).
Germans living in the United States and portrayed struggles of immigrants to adjust to life in the U.S. and to maintain their ethnic identity. These novels must be read as a response to immigration, showing the fear of loss to the nation that existed in metropolitan Germany. Many of these fictional portrayals of German life abroad showed Germans as particularly virtuous and good in contrast to other settlers and ethnic groups.

This understanding of German cultural superiority can be seen in Germany’s approach to colonialism. Perraudin and Zimmerer write,

> From the first point at which a unified German state began to form, the colonial idea—but also the perception of the nation’s lateness and differentness as a colonizer—was constitutive of Germany’s sense of self. Once an (overseas) empire had been rather tenuously acquired, basic aspects of German self-understanding articulated themselves through colonially focused discourse and iconography, affirming racial supremacy over the colonized as well as a degree of cultural superiority over other colonizers.\(^{17}\)

Germany’s entry into the colonial arms race prompted the calling of the Berlin Conference (also known as the Congo Conference) in the winter of 1884-1885, now credited as the start of the “Scramble for Africa.”\(^{18}\) Germany’s colonial empire was dwarfed by those of France and Britain, but it nonetheless encompassed one million square miles and twelve million inhabitants in German East Africa (present-day Tanganyika, Rwanda, and Burundi), German Southwest Africa (present-day Namibia), Cameroon, Togo, Kiaochow (on China’s Shandong Peninsula), and parts of New Guinea, Samoa, and other islands in the Pacific (the Bismarck Archipelago, the Solomon Islands,

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\(^{17}\) Perraudin and Zimmer, *German Colonialism and National Identity*, 5.

and the Marshall, Mariana, and Caroline Islands). In some cases, German colonial projects drew on long-standing economic and cultural ties, including missionary work that had begun in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Many German colonies were initially governed by charter companies, but native rebellions and other problems forced Bismarck’s government to eventually take over direct management of all colonies. Andreas Eckert and Michael Pesek argue that the German colonial project was a relatively disorganized endeavor, lacking institutionalization and instead operating as “a mixture of individual initiatives and random opportunities.”19 The colonies were run by semi-autonomous governors who saw themselves as the direct stand-in for the Kaiser in the colonies.20

Because of the German empire’s abrupt end during the First World War and the re-colonization of its former territories—divided among the Entente powers under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles—Germany experienced a different kind of decolonization than Britain, France, and other empires, and there is little writing in German that could be termed postcolonial literature.21 Even during the peak of German


21 This is true if one applies a narrow definition of postcolonial literature. For more see The Imperialist Imagination, 1-2, and Lennox’s chapter on “Postcolonial Writing in Germany” in The Cambridge History of Postcolonial Literature, ed. Ato Quayson.
imperialism, there was only limited migration from metropole to colony or the reverse, with even Germany’s major settlement colony, German Southwest Africa, housing at most around twelve-thousand Germans in 1913 (and considerably fewer Germans throughout the rest of the colony’s history).\(^{22}\) Though lasting only a few decades, coming to an abrupt end, and resulting in relatively little exchange of persons between colony and metropole, the significance of German colonialism should not be underestimated. Though its duration was relatively short, the German colonial period was particularly violent, with the Maji Maji rebellion in German East Africa (1905-1907) claiming the lives of approximately 100,000 Africans, and Germany responsible for the first genocide of the twentieth-century during the Herero and Nama war (1904-1907) when approximately sixty percent of the native population was killed, mostly by being driven into the desert.

While engaged in imperial efforts abroad, German culture in the metropole became increasingly imperial and colonial. John Phillip Short argues that this colonial culture encompassed both the “‘official mind’ of empire, and its materializations in far-flung practices of colonial state formation, white settlement, and economic extraction, but also flourished in unofficial forms; subaltern and demotic colonialisms among women,

the working classes, and the petite bourgeoisie.” He notes that it is not enough to view the state as the actor who manipulated the lower classes into supporting colonialism; “neither the institutions of the state nor the colonialist parties and interest groups ultimately stood sufficiently ‘above’ or ‘outside’ the colonial worldview to imply manipulation of a distinct other,” he writes. Men and women from a variety of social positions wrote to colonial organizations expressing an interest in immigrating to the colonies and starting a new life, for example.

Imperialist attitudes in Wilhelmine Germany emerged from the intersection of colonial enthusiasm and the rise of mass consumer culture. Jeff Bowersox writes, “Over the course of the Imperial era, Germans from all sectors of society began encountering the colonial world regularly in their everyday lives”; these encounters occurred in schools, in the Scouting movement, through toys and games, and through commercialized media and spectacles like zoos, trade shows, exhibits, and ethnographic shows (Völkerschauen), as well as colonial novels that were infused with colonial and racialized imagery. Short concurs, “The gradual rise in real wages, the expansion of free time, and

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25 Short, *Magic Lantern*, 60

rising literacy rates turned these new urban masses into consumers of cultural goods and commodity excitements." These entertainments were staged in venues frequented by both the working classes and the bourgeoisie and became more popular over time.

David Ciarlo notes that there were more than one hundred large ethnographic shows between 1880 and the First World War, in addition to countless small touring shows. Ethnographic shows of the kind staged by Carl Hagenbeck became major money-makers and large-scale commercial enterprises due to their popularity. Ciarlo quotes popular bourgeois illustrated magazine *Die Gartenlaube* from 1884: the “newly reappearing display of the non-European races of men exerts a peculiar attraction on everyone.”

This display of peoples and artifacts in ethnographic shows, colonial museums,

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30 Hamburg merchant and promoter Carl Hagenbeck is generally credited with the creation of the modern zoo. His “Tierpark Hagenbeck,” which opened in 1907 in Hamburg, was the first to use open enclosures (rather than barred cages) and is still in operation today. Hagenbeck began as a merchant who traded in wild animals (supplying such luminaries as P.T. Barnum with animals) but when business took a downturn he began promoting ethnographic shows featuring people brought from exotic locations including Germany’s colonies. For more on Hagenbeck see Eric Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck's Empire of Entertainments* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 2009).

31 Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire*, 76.
and colonial exhibitions reinforced the racial hierarchy and colonial power structures.\textsuperscript{32} Ciarlo notes that colonial exhibitions and their display of ethnographic objects and artifacts from around the globe gave Germans the opportunity to compare their cultural achievement to that of African natives and triumph in their superiority: “The so-styled bizarre or grotesque objects did more than merely shock and titillate; they also flattered. When the guidebook described the savagery of the grotesque mask as an object produced by a primitive culture or as a reflection of primitive taste, it at once asserted and certified the superiority of the civilized culture.”\textsuperscript{33} These events, which straddled the line between entertainment and education, gave a veneer of science and respectability to mass spectacle.\textsuperscript{34} Short argues that these displays of peoples, their artifacts, or wax replicas


\textsuperscript{33} Ciarlo, \textit{Advertising Empire}, 46.

\textsuperscript{34} As evidence of this Short offers the amusing story of one “Captain Köster’s Traveling Naval and Colonial Exhibition” which attempted to perform in Augsburg without paying the city’s entertainment tax, arguing that the exhibit was more educational than

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allowed people in the metropole to bring order to an expanding and ever more complex world: “Commercial entertainments brought living specimens from the farthest reaches of the colonized world, or fabricated them in wax, for inspection, classification, edification, and pleasure.”

As Ciarlo has noted, the rise of the German empire corresponded to the rise of the modern advertising empires, and advertising at the turn of the century came to rely on racialized tropes and colonial hierarchies. Colonial and colonial-inspired spectacles were not only confined to the zoos, museums, and exhibition grounds that housed them, but rather entered the fabric of daily life through the handbills, posters, and lithographs that advertised them. By the turn of the century advertising that relied on colonial stereotypes was so ubiquitous that advertisers relied on standardized visual shorthand to depict racial others such as Africans, and these generic images were by no means confined to products from the colonies (so-called Kolonialwaren) such as coffee and cocoa. Ciarlo writes,

> After the fin de siècle, the emerging forces of commercial mass culture offered a new, more powerful vision of Germany’s future by explicitly illustrating a new comprehensive identity for Germans. By the First World War, advertising appeared on every conceivable surface. … Within this consumer imaginary, both colonial power and the racial otherness of Africans offered touchstones around which sectors of German society could orient their engagement with modernity.

Advertisers were drawn to trends and tropes from Britain and the United States, using entertaining; it took a court order to determine the tax was owed to the city: *Magic Lantern*, 84.


36 Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire*, 106.

37 Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire*, 190.

images of Black people in order to signal Germany’s modernity and place on the world stage and modern role as a colonial power. In Ciarlo’s words, “Colonialism was not just international politics; it was a domestic agenda— and grist for advertising to capitalize upon.”

The History of Youth and Young Adult Literature in Wilhelmine Germany

Beginning with the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, traditional patterns of marriage and child rearing began to change and the peer-group structures that controlled unmarried youth gave way to an increasing institutionalization of young people and direct supervision by parents, clergy, and teachers. As Germany became increasingly industrialized and urbanized in the late nineteenth century, clergy, teachers, and reformers worried about the health and well-being of young people, calling for compulsory schooling and other programs to bring young people directly under adult supervisions and to counter the perceived danger of their being left adrift and at risk of resorting to crime, juvenile delinquency, and other social ills. While bourgeois and upper-

39 Ciarlo, Advertising Empire, 310.
40 For more on the history of youth in modern Europe see John Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1750-Present (New York: Academic, 1974) and Michael Mitterauer, Sozialgeschichte der Jugend (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986).
41 In 1871, about twenty-four percent of Germans lived in towns with more than 5000 inhabitants, but by 1910 this had doubled to almost forty-nine percent: Wolfgang Köllmann, “The Process of Urbanization in Germany at the Height of the Industrialization Period,” Journal of Contemporary History 4.3 (1969): 59-76. The engine of this rapid urbanization was Germany’s expanding economy led by the growth of heavy industry, which transformed it into the largest economy in Europe by 1900. For an overview of Germany’s industrialization see Patterns of European Industrialization: The Nineteenth Century, eds. Richard Eugene Sylla and Gianni Toniolo (New York: Routledge, 1991).
class youth who attended upper schools remained under direct adult supervision through their teen years, working class youth, whose education ended at the age of fourteen when they left the Volkschule and went to work, generally in factories, did not. As Derek Linton notes, continuation schools and local organizations devoted to providing leisure activities such as films and dances for working class youth sprang up to fill the gap and bring more young people under direct adult control.\footnote{Derek Linton provides an overview of reform efforts geared toward working class youth in \textit{Who Has the Youth Has the Future: The Campaign to Save Young Workers in Imperial Germany} (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002). For more information see also Detlev Peukert, \textit{Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung: Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Jugendfürsorge von 1878 bis 1932} (Köln: Bund, 1986).}

Young people of all classes enjoyed increasing amounts of leisure time and spending money during this period, and some scholars argue the development of these new leisure activities and social spaces for youth contributed to modern notions of adolescence as much as changes in demographics, immigration, schooling or family structures that can be credited with creating the modern notion of adolescence.\footnote{W. Scott Haine, “The Development of Leisure and the Transformation of Working-Class Adolescence, Paris 1830–1940,” in \textit{The Evolution of Adolescence in Europe}, ed. Barbara Hanawalt, Special issue of \textit{Journal of Family History} 17 (1992): 451-476. Articles from Mary Jo Maynes and J. Robert Wegs in the same volume discuss German and Austrian youth.} One of these new forms of leisure and consumption was reading. Though there was nothing particularly new about reading or even the book, changes in copyright law and new print technologies revolutionized the book industry, and books and periodicals could be produced in greater quantities and more cheaply than ever before.\footnote{For more on reading and the availability of books in this period see Bowersox, \textit{Raising Germans}; Gideon Reuveni, \textit{Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany before 1933} (New York: Berghahn, 2006); and Rudolf Schenda, \textit{Die}}

Furthermore, the
expansion of schooling in the nineteenth century ensured that there was a ready market for reading material, with Wilhelmine Germany having achieved near universal literacy by the turn of the century.  

The modern understanding of the youth demographic resides between the two poles of autonomy and control, and young adult literature from this period navigates the complex web of interests and relationships to produce a marketable commodity. Young adult literature was produced not only with an eye to the end users, the youth of Wilhelmine Germany, but also to the interests of myriad others: publishers, authors, teachers, parents, and state authorities. The considerable amount of ink that was spilled in discussing how young people were raised, how they exercised, what they ate, how they spent their pocket money and leisure time, and, of particular concern to me here, what they read, shows the worry that parents, teachers, reformers, and critics felt about their young charges and the perceived need to intervene in the raising of young people to ensure they grew into proper, productive German adults.

In response to both the growing youth demographic and increased adult concern over what young people read, the publishing industry became more specialized in the late nineteenth century, with publishers emerging who specialized not only on literature for a specific age group but for a specific gender, a phenomenon known as book market segmentation. Though there were many sub-genres of works written for young

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Schenda, Lesestoffe, 38.

See Jennifer Askey’s and Jana Mikota’s essays on this phenomena in Publishing Culture and the “Reading Nation”: German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Rochester: Camden House, 2010).
people—picture books, poetry, fairy tales and sagas, histories, etc.—here I am concerned with prose works set in the contemporary world. Literature for girls and young women, often indicated with the subtitle “für junge Mädchen” or “für die junge Mädchenwelt” and referred to as *Backfischbücher*, was generally formulaic. These works followed young female protagonists as they navigated their difficult teenage years and learned to do their duty and fill the roles expected of them by society. The protagonist engages in travel, career training, finishing school, or stays home as a *Haustochter* before meeting her future husband; almost all of these works end in the marriage or engagement of the protagonist. Books with male protagonists, by contrast, which usually bore the more gender neutral subtitle “für Jugend und Volk,” generally featured young men engaged in heroic deeds in wartime, at sea, or in far-off lands. They were concerned with the economic and demographic factors that led to young men leaving the Fatherland to make their fortunes and in their young protagonists show role models of young masculinity who grow into dutiful, brave German men.

Perceived upheaval in Wilhelmine German society caused by urbanization and industrialization—falling marriage rates, increasing female participation in the workforce, and general destabilization of the bourgeois family—resulted in a particular focus on girls and their literature. As Lynne Tatlock writes in the introduction to her translation of Gabriele Reuter’s *From a Good Family* (*Aus guter Familie*, 1895) the

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47 The term “Backfisch” refers to fish that were caught too young and are therefore only good for baking (backen). For more on the Backfischbuch as a genre for girls, see my chapter, “The *Kränzchen* Library and the Creation of Teenage Identity” in *Detectives, Dystopias, and Poplit: Studies in Modern German Genre Fiction*, eds. Bruce B. Campbell, Alison Guenther-Pal, and Vibeke Rützou Petersen (Rochester: Camden House, 2014), 207-226.
proliferation of educational manuals, etiquette guides, and other instructional texts for women and girls indicates “the cultural task of conditioning middle-class girls for their vocation as wives and mothers was not an easy one.”

Although women's participation in the labor market and marriage rates remain relatively consistent during this period, the shift from domestic service to factory work and the rise of pink collar jobs such as clerks and shopkeepers meant that single and working women were more socially visible than ever before.

Critics and observers took both falling marriage rates and rising rates of workforce participation as facts and wrote books, pamphlets and articles about how to solve the problem of “surplus women” (Frauenüberschuß) and women working outside the home and its perceived ill effects on the national body.

Wilhelmine girls' literature arises within this framework, and authors such as Bernhardine Schulze-Smidt (1846-1902), Bertha Clément (1852-1930), Else Ury (1877-1943), and Henny Koch (1854-1925) produce literature for young women that was to prepare them for the complicated social reality of Imperial Germany and inculcate them with bourgeois values such as duty, honesty, and domesticity. In their ground-breaking work on girls' literature, Gisela Wilkending and Dagmar Grenz have focused primarily on the importance of the reading material of young people in the socialization and inculcation of bourgeois values and gender norms; they write this literature arose in connection to the extension of the period of “youth” for bourgeois girls in the nineteenth century as a “transitional object” in the ever more complicated process of the dissolution and rearrangement of familiar ties and new orientations in the fields of family and work and which intervened in the self-understanding of the female reader as “girl”

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49 Dollard, The Surplus Woman.
In focusing on the perceived troubled age of puberty or adolescence, these works of literature for girls offer a window on social processes and a society in transition, revealing anxieties about changing family structures and the role of women and girls in Wilhelmine society.

The girls' literature of Wilhelmine Germany is particularly significant for its attempt to address this perceived radical social change of the period. Wilkending reads girls' literature of this period as a “medium for channeling and ventilating, or as a kind of ‘cooling apparatus’ for a society that had become ‘hot’ … and which needed change.”

In a time of real and perceived social upheaval, girls' literature provided just enough room for girls’ fantasy, while still exercising social control and advocating traditional bourgeois values and gender roles. Girls' literature that found approval with teachers, clergy, and parents was able to “create and nurture individual fantasies that were also nationally productive.”

Girls' literature in this period is characterized by what Askey terms “emotional

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52 Askey, Good Girls, 5.
nationalism,” a particular iteration of nationalism that incorporated young women into the national community through reader identification and the reinforcement of “traditional domestic and emotional roles in the family.” These formulaic works, which follow an upper- or upper-middle-class protagonist through her teenage years as she leaves school and finds her proper role in society as a wife and mother, offer a narrow range of behavioral possibilities to help girls overcome this awkward phase. With these works geared for the problematic teen years when young people go through puberty and undergo the transition from child to adult, their authors attempted to prepare young people to take up the roles expected of them as adults within a growing nation and empire.

**Nationalism and Colonialism in Schoolbooks and Popular Literature**

The official culture of monuments and national holidays and popular entertainments like zoos, exhibitions, and ethnographic shows promoted an understanding of Germany as both national and imperial, with a distinct national culture embedded in global systems of capital, migration, and cultural flow. What young people learned in school and read in their free time also reinforced this understanding of German identity and its place in the world. The selection of texts for schoolbooks glorified German history, and popular reading material showed German protagonists engaged in colonial and imperial adventures abroad.

Wilhelmine Germany saw its teachers as state functionaries tasked with spreading Germanness and maintaining the political status quo. In their history lessons, most

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German schoolchildren encountered a Prussian-centric version of German history that encouraged patriotism and glorified the Hohenzollern dynasty, now emperors of the entire German nation, though there were great regional variations across school reading books.\textsuperscript{54} German \textit{Volksschulen}, which thanks to compulsory schooling legislation enrolled more than six million young people by 1911, sought to educate young people to be patriotic, to unite them during a divisive time in German history.\textsuperscript{55} The readings in Prussian schoolbooks promoted “a sense of belonging to a peaceful, prosperous, well-ordered society.”\textsuperscript{56} The goal of German schooling, particularly of the working classes, was the moral and social education (\textit{Erziehung}) of young people rather than purely the acquisition of knowledge (\textit{Wissenschaft}).\textsuperscript{57} Most young Germans had one hour of history per week, increasing to as much as two hours after the turn of the century, and most schoolbooks contained disconnected biographical narratives and historical vignettes. For teaching the German language and literature, school readers relied on excerpts from the poetry and prose of luminaries of the German canon like the Brothers Grimm, Goethe, Fontane, Schiller and Uhland which primarily took the form of descriptions of the German landscape.\textsuperscript{58} Pupils were taught what it meant to be German through an emotional appeal to \textit{Heimat}, in both its local and national dimensions.\textsuperscript{59} As Askey writes,

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\textsuperscript{56} Olson, “Prussian Schoolbooks,” 47.

\textsuperscript{57} Olson, “Prussian Schoolbooks,” 49.

\textsuperscript{58} Olson, “Prussian Schoolbooks,” 47-50.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Heimat}, roughly but not entirely equivalent to the concepts of home or homeland, refers to a strong emotional connection to and identification with a particular place. For
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Educators were unanimous in their belief that young people who were taught to think and feel as Germans would mature into adults who would not only support the Prussian monarchy (regardless of their location in Germany), but also actively forward the German cause by becoming enthusiastic soldiers and wives and mothers of soldiers.60

Thus school readers were not full of raw facts and dry descriptions but anecdotes, biographical sketches, and literary texts—particularly poetry—that were designed to evoke in students a feeling of what it meant to be German.

Provinces outside of Prussia made a similar emotional appeal using regional and local authors, history, and monarchs to cultivate nationalism. As Katharine D. Kennedy has noted, the Prussian model of “aggressive nationalism” was far from universal across Germany, where curriculum was the purview of individual states, not the federal government.61 Provinces in southern Germany instead “presented regional loyalties as consistent with national loyalties.”62 Although regional approaches to history differed, the importance of history lessons in teaching nationalism to children was unquestioned, evidenced by the increasing time devoted to history lessons in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The kind of emotional appeal that scholars see in the Heimat approach to nationalism in German schools is similar to that found in popular reading material for young Germans. According to Askey, “reading the right sort of literature would

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60 Askey, Good Girls, 53.


encourage girls and young women to modify their behavior, or persist in docile habits, by encouraging reader identification with an exemplary protagonist or, conversely, by deterring them from repeating the behavior of antiheroines." The literature that young women read in Wilhelmine Germany not only taught them bourgeois norms and values but drew them into the nation by encouraging them to develop an emotional connection to figures like Queen Luise (1776-1810), wife of Friedrich Wilhelm III and Queen Consort of Prussia, seen by many as the embodiment of Prussian German virtue and nationalism. Wilkending writes of girls’ literature from Wilhelmine Germany that, “Girl- and woman-figures are placed in texts as vehicles of cultural, in particular national, consciousness or as founders of tradition … and in this way girls’ literature manifestly serves to build (national) consciousness and traditions…”

While young readers imbibed lessons and stories that tied the local and the emotional to the national in schoolbooks and pleasure reading, they also encountered lessons that tied the national to the global, colonial, and imperial. In schools it was the discipline of geography above all that became increasingly dominated by colonialist rhetoric deployed in service of the nation. Bowersox notes that geography teachers took a

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64 For an overview of how this type of literature instills bourgeois values in young women see Irmgard Voß, *Wertorientierungen in der bürgerlichen Mädchenerziehung am Beispiel der illustrierten Mädchenzeitung Das Kränzchen*, 1888/89-1933/34 (Hamburg: Dr. Kovac, 1997). For more on the importance of Queen Luise in Wilhelmine literature and culture, see Askey, *Good Girls*.

“land-and-people” approach to the topic, incorporating ethnographic information alongside geographic study of the land and its characteristics. He writes, “With the land-and-people approach, school geographers explicitly put their discipline in the service of German national strength; school geography became a matter of surveying, explaining, and thereby facilitating the expansion of colonial influence around the globe.” The organizing principle of these lessons was “from the Fatherland to the foreign!”

Schoolbooks contained readings related to German imperialism and the war in Southwest Africa, such as Theodor von Rommel’s 1906 poem “Ride of the Patrol” (*Patrouillenritt*) and Gustav Frenssen’s *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest* (Peter Moor’s Journey to Southwest, 1906).

The increasingly imperial character of German school reading books mirrored broader cultural trends involving the intersection of colonial enthusiasm with the rise of mass consumer culture. Particularly popular among both adults and young people were sensationalist *Groschenhefte*, which sold for ten or twenty Pfennig per volume; these serialized stories took many forms: romances, crime and detective stories, and, increasingly adventure stories set in exotic locales: “As the German public became increasingly interested in empire in the 1880s and 1890s, such colonial adventures became the most popular genre of youth literature, surpassing the tales of romance, royal scandal, and crime that had previously predominated.”

Approximately half of pamphlet novels were Wild West tales in the 1880s and 1890s; other adventure tales focused on

68 Bowersox, *Raising Germans*, 123.
European imperial possessions.69

The popularity of pulp affected the rest of the book market, and publishers and authors that catered toward middle-class audiences sought to respond to popular demands for adventure stories while maintaining an aura of middle-class rectitude and respectability; Bowersox writes, “in this reform-minded era, writers could not simply give in to their young readers’ desire for untrammeled excitement. Authors had to protect themselves from the charge that they exploited young Germans for their own profit or, worse, that they demeaned German culture and weakened the public by catering to the basest of human instincts.”70 Authors and critics called for adapting the popular topics from lowbrow commercial literature—particularly cowboy and Indian tales and colonial adventure novels—in order to channel young people’s fantasies into more productive avenues. Popular literature “could be used to shape the future of Germany” and fantasy became a way to “domesticate” the “volatile imaginations” of young readers and “direct them down various pedagogically valuable avenues.”71

Literature written and marketed toward girls responded to these same trends in the publishing world, but the gendered expectations for the behavior of young people mean that colonial adventure novels for girls are a rarity. Girls’ literature nonetheless is infused with a colonial and imperial mindset and reflects the growing global consciousness of the period. However even works that placed young German women at the crossroads of major historical events or in exotic locales including Germany’s new colonies, show

69 Bowersox, *Raising Germans*, 123.
these young heroines accepting their duty as German women and finding a husband by the end of the novel. In colonial novels with female protagonists, this traditional plot was put in service to the nation, with young women seen as engaged in missionary work in the spreading of Germandom:

In this sense, the heroes of girls’ novels fulfill a cultural, sometimes even a political, “mission.” They spread “Germandom.” Just like texts about Queen Luise, colonial novels show that girls were supposed to identify with specifically national literature and that they were to be connected to the cultural and political consciousness.

These works which place the coming-of-age story in a foreign or exotic location tie women and their traditional roles explicitly to the work of the nation, and reinforce that women have a role to play in shaping the German nation both at home and abroad.

The JSW, Indianerbücher, and Youth Literature

The enormous popularity of these types of novels was the cause of much concern in certain circles of Wilhelmine society. By all accounts children and adults read them voraciously, but teachers, pedagogues, and reformers dismissed these works as lurid adventure fantasies, unworthy of serious attention and potentially harmful to their young readers.

Reading too much fantastical adventure literature was not only seen as

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73 Silke Kirch, “Reiseromane und Kolonialromane um 1900 für junge Leserinnen,” in Mädchenliteratur der Kaiserzeit, ed. Wilkending (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), 139.

74 See Bowersox, Raising Germans; Rudolf Schenda, Lesestoffe.
distracting young people from more important educational pursuits but was considered
dangerous and harmful to their growth and development. The influence of these
pedagogues and thinkers can be seen throughout Wilhelmine young adult literature, in
particular in forewords by publishers and authors that emphasize the educational aspects
of their works in an attempt to preempt criticism and present them as worthy young adult
literature.

In order to illustrate the importance that was placed on young adult literature and
the concern with which it was discussed and debated in Wilhelmine Germany, I will
discuss a debate that occurred in the pages of the Jugendschriften-Warte (JSW), an
important pedagogical journal devoted to reviewing young adult literature, in 1903.
Critics and pedagogues were divided about whether a missionary’s memoir about his
time among Native Americans in Michigan constituted an “Indianerbuch” that was
appropriate for young people to read (unlike the examples of this genre that will be
discussed in the following chapter). A close reading of this debate will show not only
what pedagogues and reformers, particularly those from the left end of the political
spectrum, thought of what young people read but how they viewed young people as
future citizens and the role of literature in shaping their future adult selves. This debate
also shows a slippage between missionary and colonial or imperialist rhetoric; in their
efforts to mold and shape the reading habits of young people, reformers treat youth like a
colonized people or like uneducated “savages,” in need of “raising up” by those in power
in order to serve the needs of the German nation.

The pedagogues of imperial Germany were convinced German suffered from a
serious malady caused by industrialization and the rise of mass culture, in particular the
availability of cheap, often low-quality, reading material. During this era of reform pedagogy (Reformpädagogik), concerned teachers and reformers banded together to form groups targeting young people, to guide their reading habits and leisure time activities and ensure the health and well-being of the national body.\textsuperscript{75} One of the most influential strands of this widespread reform movement was the Youth Book Movement (Jugendschriftenbewegung), which was closely tied to the artistic education movement (Kunsterziehungsbewegung), an effort to elevate the German masses through education focused on art and aesthetics.\textsuperscript{76}

Heinrich Wolgast, a Volksschule teacher from Hamburg, became the intellectual leader of the Youth Book Movement.\textsuperscript{77} He issued a scathing indictment of the publishing industry in his influential 1896 \textit{Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur} (The Wretchedness of our Youth Literature), questioning the need to produce books specifically geared toward

\textsuperscript{75} For more on Reformpädagogik, see Hermann Röhrs, \textit{Reformpädagogik und Innere Bildungsreform} (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1998) and Wolfgang Scheibe, \textit{Die Reformpädagogische Bewegung, 1900-1932} (Weinheim: Beltz, 1972). Derek Linton’s \textit{Who Has the Youth Has the Future} also provides a good overview of broader social and educational reform efforts aimed at working class youth in this period.

\textsuperscript{76} The Kunsterziehungsbewegung was highly influenced by Julius Langbehn’s 1890 \textit{Rembrandt als Erzieher} (Rembrandt as Educator). The work, its title an homage to Nietzsche’s \textit{Schopenhauer als Erzieher}, is deeply pessimistic, rejecting the rationality, materialism, and cosmopolitanism of the modern age and calling for a return to traditional German roots typified by low German (Niederdeutsch) Rembrandt. Also influential to this movement was Alfred Lichtwark, a teacher who took over leadership of the Hamburg Kunsthalle; for more on Lichtwark and his role in the movement see Sterling Fishman, “Alfred Lichtwark and the Founding of the German Art Education Movement,” \textit{History of Education Quarterly} 6.3 (1966): 3-17; and Carolyn Kay, \textit{Art and the German Bourgeoisie: Alfred Lichtwark and Modern Painting in Hamburg, 1886-1914} (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2002).

\textsuperscript{77} For more on the history and development of the Youth Book Movement, see Gisela Wilkending, \textit{Volksbildung und Pädagogik “vom Kinde aus”: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der Literaturpädagogik in den Anfängen der Jugendschriftenbewegung} (Weinheim: Belz, 1980).
children and young adults (what he called “spezifische Kinder- und Jugendliteratur”) and calling for less pleasure reading among young people in general. Wolgast argued, “for more than a century the specific children's book has filled the empty hours of our youth with useless content (nichtigem Inhalt).” To Wolgast, teaching children to sit still and read was unnatural and harmful to their development. Their reading should be limited, controlled, and supervised, consisting only of works of art (Kunstwerke), not necessarily works written specifically for children and young adults.

Wolgast, the leader of the Hamburg Youth Book Commission (Hamburger Jugendschriftenausschuß) founded the United German Assessment Commissions for Youth Books (Vereinigten Deutschen Prüfungsausschüsse für Jugendschriften) to bring teachers and other concerned parties together to review sub-standard young adult literature and influence public reading behavior. The organization began to publish a monthly periodical in 1893, which came as a supplement to most pedagogical newspapers and teachers’ organization publications.\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Jugendschriften-Warte}, which Wolgast edited from 1896 to 1912, existed primarily to publish reviews of young adult literature for teachers to help them carefully choose reading material for their classes and monitor the pleasure reading of their pupils. Each year at Christmastime the \textit{JSW} published and distributed a list of what they deemed acceptable reading material in the hopes of influencing parents in the choice of books for their children. Sample criteria,\textsuperscript{78} “Über ein Jahrhundert hat nun schon das spezifische Kinderbuch leere Stunden unserer Jugend mit nichtigem Inhalt gefüllt.” Heinrich Wolgast, \textit{Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur} (Leipzig: Teubner, \[1896\] 1905), 7.

\textsuperscript{79} For a history of the \textit{Jugendschriften-Warte} and its influence on German youth literature, see Taiji Azegami’s \textit{Die Jugendschriften-Warte: Von ihrer Gründung bis zu den Anfängen des “Dritten Reiches” unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kinder- und Jugendliteraturbewertung und –beurteilung} (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996).
provided by the Berliner Lehrerverein on the front page of *JSW* in April 1896, include works that are “morally pure,” “correspond to reality and are psychologically true,” “stimulate the imagination without overexciting it,” and “show artistic structure.”

In October of 1903 a brief notice appeared in the *Jugendschriften-Warte* announcing the publication of Eduard Baierlein’s *Im Urwalde bei den roten Indianern* (In the wilderness among the Red Indians) by the Hamburg Youth Book Commission.

William Lottig, the *Volksschule* teacher from Hamburg who wrote the announcement, speculated that this news would be met with great surprise, as this organization was usually strenuously opposed to all cowboy-and-Indian novels. Lottig notes, “if this book were not different from what one expects in an Indian book, the Hamburg commission would hardly have been able to publish it.” It does not contain “fantasy-inflaming nature scenes and nerve-tickling Indian action scenes” but instead shows the “brave, silent work” of a missionary who attempted “to bring salvation to the poor helpless remains of a not ignoble race.” Lottig ends with a quote from Wolgast himself: “I think we can rest easy about the fate of this little work. Who can think of a book that better

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Wolgast’s approbation, coming from a Social Democrat, also shows how widely spread approval of colonial and missionary work was across the political spectrum.

Wolgast and Lottig were destined to be disappointed, and they soon saw their work declared unsuitable by many of their sister organizations and attacked within the pages of Wolgast's own journal. Critics accused them of abandoning their aesthetic criteria and publishing a book unworthy of young readers in both form and content. Wolgast, Lottig, and other members of their organization were stunned by this response and argued vociferously with the critiques of their publication. Their arguments make clear that they responded so positively to Baierlein's book not because it reflected the political and aesthetic goals of their organization, but because in Baierlein's work in bringing culture and Christianity to the heathens in the wilds of Michigan they saw a corollary to their own work in instilling literary taste in the uncivilized German reading masses. In publishing Baierlein’s memoir of his time preaching to and educating Native

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84 There is of necessity slippage when it comes to discussing class and young adult literature from this period. Though most scholars of youth literature (including Askey, Tatlock, Wilkending, among others) see these works as reflecting bourgeois interests and geared toward bourgeois readers, contemporary critics like Heinrich Wolgast complicate matters. Wolgast’s language in Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur clearly reflects a Marxist critique of class relationships and his ties to the Social Democratic movement. However the wider Kunsterziehungsbewegung, which his work with the Jugendschriftenbewegung is generally considered part of, is referred to as a bourgeois movement in scholarship, for example in Carolyn Kay’s Art and the German Bourgeoisie: Alfred Lichtwark and Modern Painting in Hamburg, 1886-1914 (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2002). This slippage between the masses and youth (specifically bourgeois young people) is revealed in the common appellation to many of these works: “für Jugend und Volk.”

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Americans in Michigan, the Hamburg Youth Book Commission recognized that the work of missionaries like Baierlein was similar to their own work in educating the uneducated and immature.

In the publication announcement for Baierlein’s book, Lottig expressed hopes the book would counteract the negative influence books set in North America like those discussed above; he wrote that the book would serve as “a counterweight to the blinding excess of existing Indian literature.” When Lottig and other reformers use the term “Indian literature” (Indianerliteratur), and related terms like “Indian book” (Indianerbuch) and “Indian story” (Indianergeschichte), they are not referring solely to adventure stories set in North America featuring characters from indigenous tribes. By the time Baierlein’s book was published by the Hamburg Youth Book Commission, adventure stories set in the American West had dominated the youth book market for more than a decade. The success of novels like Karl May’s famous Indianerbuch, Winnetou, first published in 1893, was so complete that critics like Lottig, and Wolgast in his Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur, use Indianerliteratur as the catch-all term for all adventure literature.

In speaking of the necessity of counteracting the influence of “existing Indian literature,” Lottig references a contemporary understanding of the harm that could be caused by such reading material. To men like Lottig and Wolgast, adventure stories, in particular cowboy-and-Indian novels, were nothing less than a danger to the national

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86 See Bowersox, Raising Germans; Schenda, Lesestoffe.
87 Wolgast, Elend, 146-163.
body. The pages of the *Jugendschriften-Warte* regularly documented the harmful effects of reading too many such novels. An article from August of 1900 describes a boy who reads so much Karl May he is at risk of failing out of school; an article from April of 1896 highlights two boys who, after reading “Indianergeschichten,” steal money and run away from home in the hopes of reaching America; and an article from 1895 documents the suicide of a young man, crediting his self-stabbing as being inspired by the reading of too many “Indianerschriften.” These events were so common that Wolgast noted in *Elend*, “Every year one can collect such newspaper announcements by the dozen about the effects of young adult reading material. … A boy is seized with a desire for adventure after reading Indian stories or travelogues and flees parental control, a girl commits suicide because of sentimental love stories, etc.” There was even a quasi-medical term for this malady: *Lesewut*, or reading mania, and adventure stories were seen as particularly dangerous. Thus in publishing a counterweight to this trend, the Hamburg

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Youth Book Commission was attempting to do nothing more or less than save the lives of young people and thereby the future of the German nation.

Baierlein's *Im Urwalde* does not resemble a traditional Western adventure story. Born Edward von Valseck in 1819 in Posen to a Polish noble family, Baierlein was disinheritced and forbidden the use of the family name after converting to Lutheranism, though he appears to have later reconciled with his family. In 1847 he was sent to Frankenmuth, Michigan, to serve as missionary to the Chippewa Indians; he later founded a settlement he called Bethany (near present-day St. Louis, Michigan). The book, published in 1889 and translated into English in 1996 as *In the Wilderness with the Red Indians*, is a simple chronicle of Baierlein's experiences among the Chippewa in central Michigan. He is still known in Lutheran missionary circles for his methods: he learned the Ojibwa language and translated the catechism, Bible passages, and other texts into it for use with his flock. He adapted his methods to suit the lifestyle of the Chippewa and worked within existing social structures to bring about conversion, rather than relying on imposing a lifestyle from outside. After serving for six years among the Chippewa, he was sent to India, where he served as a missionary for a further thirty-three years; he retired in 1886 and died in 1901. Baierlein's book is a historically and anthropologically interesting document and remained important in missionary circles for

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91 Both spellings—Eduard and Edward—of Baierlein's name are commonly used.


93 Quotes from Baierlein's book will come from Boldt’s translation.
many years because of his influential methods, which were relatively unusual in the 1850s, but it was a strange choice for a young adult book published by an organization that prioritized aesthetic and artistic criteria over content and educational value.

In April 1904 a youth book commission (Prüfungsausschuß) from Gotha published a negative review of Baierlein's work in the JSW. They praised the effort to create an Indian novel that avoided the failings of its peers, but, they note:

> What is offered in the little volume before us from the Hamburg Youth Book Commission, remains too far behind the ideal … to allow us to recommend it. While it avoids the mistakes of Indian books, it also dispenses completely with their appeal: the exciting plots and situations, the sharply-drawn (scharfgeschnitten) characters, the natural-elemental mood.\(^{94}\)

With no poetic or artistic elements to make up for its failings, they dismiss the book with disgust. They note that the language in the book is “so dull, colorless, and abstract that one sometimes would like to set it down out of boredom” and express surprise and bemusement that the Hamburg Youth Book Commission thought it was an appropriate text to publish at all: “We cannot tolerate such German [language] in a model youth text, and we admit it is incomprehensible to us how our colleagues from Hamburg could choose to publish such an inadequate opus.”\(^{95}\) These short excerpts show the clever

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\(^{95}\) “So matt, farblos und abstrakt, dass man zuweilen das Buch gelangweilt aus der Hand legen möchte” and “ein solches Deutsch können wir in einer Musterjugendschrift nicht dulden, und es ist uns offen gestanden unbegreiflich, wie sich die Hamburger Kollegen
means of attack the commission from Gotha chose, using an understated and sarcastic tone—referring to the work as an opus, for example—in order to mock the Hamburg commission for betraying its own aesthetic values.

The Hamburg commission could not let such a biting review be published without commentary, and William Lottig responded in the same issue. He argued that the lack of “suspenseful action” (“spannende Haltung”) noted in the review is actually the strength of the book: “The uniqueness of our book is that it ‘simply tells’ us about the red Indians,” he writes. He accuses the authors of being too influenced by the style of existing cowboy-and-Indian fiction to recognize the merits of Baierlein’s book: “what appears dull and colorless to him is actually said quietly and without exuberance,” with “the character of innermost truth and constancy.” He further praises Baierlein’s character, noting, “This missionary is a wonderful man, and I have become fond of him—and insofar the book shows his form (Gestalt) it is still a work of art for me in spite of its shortcomings, or even on account of them.”

By May of 1904, the controversy over Baierlein's book reached the front page of the Jugendschriften-Warte, when Ernst Linde responded to Lottig on behalf of the Gotha Youth Book Commission under the headline “Once again among the ‘red Indians’”


97 “Da erscheint ihm matt und farblos, was still und ohne Überschwang gesagt ist” and argues that the language has “den Charakter innerster Wahrheit und Treue.” Lottig, “Entgegnung,” 14.

(“Noch einmal bei den ‘roten Indianern’”). He vigorously denies that he was influenced by existing Indianerliteratur in his dismissal of the work, noting,

we judged the work as a text for the youth, and there the lack of any “strong appeal,” and the total lack of all bright colors, is a fault. The youth want strongly-applied colors, particularly when a book has such a wild title: the “red Indians”! The book is not childlike, completely not! Any real boy would lay it down, disappointed.\(^\text{99}\)

Linde grounds his critique firmly in the aesthetic criteria promoted by Lottig and Wolgast, criticizing “the flat, vulgar phraseology of the writer” and remarking that “the German of the author is in many instances so lacking that one might even doubt that it could be considered the mother tongue of the author.”\(^\text{100}\) He provides dozens of examples of incorrect, imprecise, or informal German from Baierlein's book and then makes one more dig at Lottig in his understated manner:

Mr. Lottig believes he can put up with such vulgar turns of phrase; to him they serve to characterize the missionary. There our impressions are very different: to me, each time I come to such a passage it is as if someone rudely manhandles me when I believe myself to be among good society.\(^\text{101}\)

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\(^{100}\) “Die platte, vulgäre Phraseologie des Verfassers” and noting “ist das Deutsch des Verf. vielfach wirklich so mangelhaft, dass einem geradezu Zweifel darüber aufkommen können, ob es als die Muttersprache des Verf. zu betrachten ist.” Linde, “Noch einmal,” 17.

Linde further defends himself against accusations of pedantry by emphasizing the importance of language and echoing the words that Wolgast himself used in *Elend* about the importance of literature and literary taste. He writes,

> Don't tell me that's nitpicking! Where and how else should the appreciation for linguistic and aesthetic form be developed, if not through literature? The more we trust the silent impact of good literature in this regard, the more we must guard against children being offered anything that may deform them (*nichts Verbildendes*).\(^\text{102}\)

This back-and-forth continued throughout the year and the debate about what was referred to as the “Hamburger Indianerbuch” was a reference point in the journal for years to come. The men from Gotha based their attack on *Im Urwalde* on criteria that were well-known to Wolgast and Lottig, indeed, criteria that they had no small part in developing and disseminating, but the men of the Hamburg Youth Book Commission seemingly abandoned their previous positions to vigorously defend Baierlein's book time and time again. The harsh critique levied by the men from Gotha no doubt bruised the egos of Lottig and Wolgast, but it is more than their pride that led them to defend Baierlein.

Examining Lottig’s rebuttal to the attacks reveals the key to understanding the controversy over Baierlein’s book. In his first response to the Gotha critique, Lottig ignores the attack on the quality of the writing in order to emphasize the heroism of Baierlein:

The man who tells the story here is not driven by adventure-seeking fantasy, his blood pumping through his veins; instead this man is one of the wonderful human beings who can accomplish heroic deeds without even being aware of it himself...\textsuperscript{103}

To Lottig, the biography of Baierlein and his impressive accomplishments in the deep woods of Michigan can overcome any critique of the book's style or aesthetics. Their identification with Baierlein and his mission that blinds them to the book's linguistic and aesthetic faults. Wolgast and Lottig defend the book so strongly because they viewed themselves as missionaries, not bringing Christianity to the wilds of Michigan, but bringing literature and aesthetic taste to the masses of Germany. Baierlein focused on bringing about change from below, not above, by working within existing social structures of the Chippewa to expand agriculture, encourage the development of more permanent settlements, and eventually convert them to Christianity. He describes the Chippewa people he lives among a simple, natural people that are like children.\textsuperscript{104} He argues that the government and others have been unsuccessful in their efforts to promote settlement and agriculture among the Indians because they have not found the right method that speaks to the nature of the Indian: “The Indian cannot be driven by force, but is willing to adopt good manners if he is shown in a tactful manner.”\textsuperscript{105}

Wolgast, like Baierlein, emphasized the importance of finding the right method to reach Germany's children and teach them new behaviors. Like with Baierlein's Indians, Wolgast notes in \textit{Elend}, “Education must first and foremost keep in mind the

\textsuperscript{103} “Dem Manne, der hier erzählt, jagt nicht eine abenteuersüchtige Phantasie das Blut fiebernd durch die Adern; dieser Mann ist eins von den wundervollen Menschenkindern, die Helden taten vollbringen, ohne selbst davon zu wissen ...” Lottig, “Bei den,” 40.

\textsuperscript{104} See, for example, Baierlein’s descriptions on pages 100 and 117.

\textsuperscript{105} Baierlein, \textit{Wilderness}, 107.
In the view of the youth book movement, contemporary educational policies, particularly efforts to teach children to read for pleasure, were unnatural and harmful. Wolgast writes,

"Now a malformation enters that turns all natural relations on their head. What the child should naturally love, movement and games, loses its allure on account of reading; what the child previously enjoyed—using its strengths and senses in bodily motion, yes, using its spirit (Geist)—becomes a torture to it. The child no longer wants to work and play and even school lessons have no advantage over the all-consuming reading."

It is only in understanding the nature of children that one can find the appropriate methods to raise them into proper adults.

For Wolgast the technical and historical developments of industrialization in the late nineteenth century and the social change it brought to Imperial Germany made it more necessary than ever to find the right education method for Germany's masses. Wolgast viewed the present day as a “struggle for liberation (Befreiungskampf) by the people against the forces of production that dominated him” and notes that “if man is no longer a captive slave of the means of production, he gains in leisure and desire to have a perspective on the scope of the world and its glories. The desire for pleasure (Genußbedürfnis) arises and education hurries to make men capable of pleasure.”

\[106^{\text{th}}\text{ “Die Erziehung hat in erster Linie den unentwickelten Zustand des Kindes in Betracht zu nehmen.” Wolgast, Elend, 29.}\]

\[107^{\text{th}}\text{ “Jetzt tritt eine Verbildung ein, die alle natürlichen Verhältnisse auf den Kopf stellt. Was das Kind naturgemäß lieben sollte, Bewegung und Spiel, verliert gegnüber der Lektüre den Reiz; was dem Kinde eine Lust war, in körperlicher Arbeit seine Kräfte und seine Sinne, ja seinen Geist zu gebrauchen, wird ihm zur Qual; es wird unlustig zu Speil und Arbeit, und selbst der Unterricht hat nur selten Vorteil von der alle Kräfte absorbierenden Lektüre.” Wolgast, Elend, 4.}\]

\[108^{\text{th}}\text{ “Befreiungskampfe des Menschen gegen die ihn beherrschende Produktion” and “Ist der Mensch nicht mehr der gefesselte Sklave der Produktion, so gewinnt er Muße und Lust, Ausblick zu halten auf die Weite der Welt und ihre Herrlichkeit. Es entsteht das}\]
purpose of reading is thus to teach taste and leisure to the working classes, and it is up to the pedagogue to curate an appropriate selection of reading material to help develop this literary taste and ultimately bridge class divides. Ultimately Wolgast and the youth book movement sought to bring about widespread social change through gradual methods focused on educating young adults from the lower classes of society. Their own self-image was that of a missionary or a colonizer, raising up the masses, reducing class differences, and, in effect, civilizing young Germans by influencing literary and artistic tastes.

To the men of the youth book movement, the young people they taught in their schools, particularly Volksschulen, were the Volk of tomorrow, and by guiding their reading and shaping their taste, they were crafting the future of Germany. It is telling that Wolgast and Lottig, both deeply embedded in the cultural context of the German Kaiserreich, sought out the work of a missionary to the “red Indians” of America to represent their movement. The physical and mental borders of the empire were porous, the divide between colony and metropole often unclear, as many scholars have noted. Wolgast wrote that his goal in reforming German youth literature was nothing less than to

Genußbedürfnis, und die Erziehung eilt, den Menschen für den Genuß fähig zu machen.” Wolgast, Elend, 3.

109 For more on this see Wolgast, Elend, 37.

bring about a “gigantic change of mind of the people (Volk).”\textsuperscript{111} Though he claimed to reject the bellicose nationalism and chauvinism of colonial novels, he, in effect, styled himself as a more peaceful kind of colonist or missionary, raising children, like natives, into proper adult citizens.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The case study of the \textit{Jugendschriften-Warte} and its reception of Baierlein’s \textit{Im Urwalde} ties together many of the themes that will be explored further in this dissertation, and it highlights the many concerns about young people and their reading material that help shape the production and reception of young adult literature in Wilhelmine Germany. Though politically they were left-leaning and generally opposed to overt displays of nationalism and colonialism, they embrace a German missionary as their hero and adopt colonizing attitudes towards young people. In focusing on the need to raise young people to be proper adult citizens, Wolgast, Lottig, and the rest of the \textit{JSW} couch their concern with what young people read in language that would be recognizable to nationalists and colonists from across the political spectrum. Though a relatively small group, the writers of the \textit{JSW} were influential, and many of the authors I will discuss in this dissertation were sensitive enough to the critiques of Wolgast and his ilk that they often adopted his language in describing their work as educational and beneficial for young people.

The case of the \textit{JSW} shows how seriously teachers, parents, and other adult authority figures took young people and their reading material. Literature that today is

dismissed as trivial (*Trivialliteratur*) and receives little scholarly attention was at the time seen as important, as something that mattered. With the recognition of adolescence as a distinct stage of development and as a vulnerable and influential period in the development of young people and their identity, the educational, political, social, and literary influences that young people were exposed to came under great scrutiny. Works that could be dismissed as merely popular, kitschy, or of inferior quality were at the time understood to be vital in shaping the next generation of German [imperial] citizens.
CHAPTER 2
LITTLE GERMANS ON THE PRAIRIE: COLONIAL CLAIMS TO GERMAN SPACE IN THE AMERICAS

Introduction

Between 1820 and the First World War more than six million Germans left their fatherland to seek a brighter future in the Americas, most of them never to return.\(^1\) German immigrants to the United States tended to assimilate, and this flood of Germans out of Europe provoked anxiety in those left behind.\(^2\) The literary response to mass...

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\(^1\) The most comprehensive source on German emigration and German life in the United States is the two-volume *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred Year History*, edited by Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). Also of note are Frederick C. Luebke’s *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990) and the collection *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner (Madison: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2004).

\(^2\) On the question of assimilation, local histories like Jeremy W. Kilar’s *Germans in Michigan* (East Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 2002) and David W. Detjen’s *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985) expertly show how German immigrants both retained their ethnic identities and assimilated into the local culture. The Pennsylvania Dutch are something of a separate case; see Don Yoder’s chapter, “The Pennsylvania Germans: Three Centuries of Identity Crisis” as a starting point on the complicated history of this ethnic and cultural group (in Trommler and McVeigh, *America and the Germans*, 41-65). Though the question of assimilation and maintenance of ethnic identity is complicated, for those in the metropole these populations of emigrants were considered lost to the nation because their emigration was nearly always permanent. More recent scholarship has focused on the continuing transatlantic contact between German émigrés, German-Americans, and those who remained in Europe; see Thomas Adam and Ruth Gross, eds., *Traveling between Worlds: German-American Encounters* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006) and Elliott Shore and Frank Trommler, eds., *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation between Two Cultures, 1800-2000* (New York: Berghahn, 2001). For a historiography of
emigration was the *Amerikaroman*, a nineteenth-century genre of novels set in the United States that presented either imaginative or authentic accounts of the fortunes of German emigrants.¹ Authors such as Balduin Möhlhausen, Friedrich Gerstäcker, and Charles Sealsfield made America a site of German literature and culture, domesticating the untamed wilds of North America for a German audience.² This trend was mirrored in the children’s book industry, with American settings increasing in popularity throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in young adult literature.³

In 1890 the American frontier was declared closed, marking a symbolic end to the era of unlimited westward expansion into the untapped frontier, but around this time there

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¹ For more on the *Amerikaroman* and German literary works set in the United States see *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur*, eds. Sigrid Bauschinger, Horst Denkler, and Wilfried Lühl (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975); *Deutschlands literarisches Amerikabild: Neulere Forschungen zur Amerikakreptition der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Alexander Ritter (Hildesheim: Olms, 1977); *Jerry Schuchalter, Narratives of America and the Frontier in Nineteenth-Century German Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000); and Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Ideology, Mimesis, Fantasy: Charles Sealsfield, Friedrich Gerstäcker, Karl May and Other German Novelists of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). While Bauschinger, Denkler, and Malsch contains an essay on Karl May, as does Sammons’ book, Ritter’s more than 500-page work contains only a few fleeting references to May, a shocking omission given the enormous success of May’s America novels. None deal with the other authors of popular literature for youth who will be discussed in this chapter, reflecting the general marginalization of children’s and young adult literature in scholarship. A new volume, *Sophie Discovers Amerika: German-Speaking Women Write the New World*, edited by Rob McFarland and Michelle Stott James, pays greater attention to the importance of gender in the written construction of America (Rochester: Camden House, 2014).

² These three authors are the most well known examples of German authors who wrote literature set the Americas in the nineteenth century. Other notable writers on this topic include Otto Ruppius (*Der Prärieteufel*, 1861), Ernst Wilkomm (*Die Europamüden*, 1838), and Ferdinand Kürnberger (*Der Amerikamüde*, 1855).

³ See, in particular, chapter four of Bowersox, “Reading Empire: Politics, Gender, Confession, and Class in Commercial Youth Literature,” for more on this “most popular genre of youth literature”: Bowersox, *Raising Germans*, 123.
is a surge of novels for young Germans that take the American West as their setting in Germany. As the classic figures of the cowboy and Indian locked in an eternal struggle began to recede into the realms of history and myth, authors such as Karl May, Sophie Wörishöffer, and Friedrich Pajeken began to compose wildly successful tales of German life and settlement in the Wild West for young people in the Wilhelmine German metropole. In this chapter I will show how these authors, representative examples among many, present a vision of the United States as an ideal location for the growth of the German nation. The choice of these authors is based on their popularity and breadth of work. All wrote many best-selling adventure novels, set in the Americas and elsewhere in the world, and came to be identified with the genre. Heinrich Wolgast, for example, discusses all three of these authors in a chapter critical of present-day German “Indianergeschichten” (“Indian stories”), showing that all three authors came quickly to be identified as representative of the genre. The vision that emerges through the works of

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6 The frontier was declared closed after the Census of 1890 revealed there was no longer an unbroken line of settlement in the West, and the US government announced that future censuses would no longer track the westward migration of the US population. This prompted Frederick Jackson Turner to develop his “frontier thesis” about the importance of the frontier to the American psyche and the development of US democracy, first explicated in a paper given to the American Historical Association in 1893, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” and later expanded in Turner’s 1921 book, The Frontier in American History (New York: Holt, 1921). More recent research using newer technologies such as digitized local maps and census records has cast doubt on 1890 as the definitive date for the breaking up of the frontier, with scholars identifying three distinct phases of westward expansion, with key dates around 1840, 1890, and 1910. For more on this see Samuel M. Otterstrom and Carville Earle, “The Settlement of the United States from 1790 to 1990: Divergent Rates of Growth and the End of the Frontier,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History 33.1 (2002): 59-85.

7 Heinrich Wolgast, Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur (Leipzig: Teubner, [1896] 1905); his discussion of “Indianergeschichten” occurs on pages 146-163.
these authors is not the classic version of the American West, but a kind of German West, a world where Germans are the true heirs to the frontier.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the tone of young adult literature featuring German emigrants changed in the face of permanent emigration. Thekla von Gumpert’s 1847 *Die Kinder des Auswanderers* (The Emigrant’s Children) is an excellent example of the early phase of young adult literature featuring the Americas. The foreword to the story speaks of the “sad times” with their “material and spiritual afflictions” and emphasizes the need for proper education (*Erziehung*) of young people to stamp out the “Auswanderungssucht” (emigration addiction) that exists among the younger generation.8 The story portrays emigrants to the Americas as those who want to get rich quick and are too lazy to get ahead in Europe. All of the featured emigrants meet with hardship and misfortune, and the story ends with the titular emigrant’s children choosing to return to Germany, offering the moral: “Remain in the country and nourish yourself honestly.”9 By the turn of the century, however, the young adult book market was dominated by rollicking adventure stories set in the wilds of the American West, featuring buffalo hunts, skirmishes with natives, trapping and fur trading, and the California Gold Rush.


9 “Bleibe im Lande und nähre dich redlich.” Gumpert, *Kinder*, 82. Here I have offered a literal translation of the German because Gumpert is playing on the double-meaning of “Land” to refer to both the countryside (in the original context of the psalm) and one’s country of origin, particularly given the story’s focus on emigration and return. The quote comes originally from Psalm 37:3 in the Luther Bible: “Hoffe auf den Herrn und tue Gutes; bleibe im Lande und nähere dich redlich.” In the King James Bible it reads, “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.”
In this chapter I will show how authors of young adult literature make colonial claims to the Americas. Though these novels show a variety of attitudes toward race, emigration, and life in the Americas, there is a strand of colonial thinking that recurs and reappears across the genre, and it is this I will discuss in this chapter. In the Western novels of Wörishöffer, Pajeken, and May the frontier is an empty space onto which colonial fantasies of German life in the New World are projected, and the American West becomes a place where new and traditional forms of German identity can be enacted. These authors accept the disappearance of Native Americans as a foregone conclusion and view the American West as an empty space for Germans to live and prosper. Their German protagonists are shown to be uniquely suited for life on the frontier, able to master not only manly skills such as hunting and trapping but also to bring order and civilization to the Wild West and found productive German settlements.

These Wilhelmine authors of young adult literature make a claim to the American West through the race, gender, and nation of their protagonists. The male protagonists who move to the West embody a type of frontier masculinity—hunting, trapping, fighting Indians, and battling against the elements—but find more success than their American or other immigrant counterparts because of their German values of diligence, patience, and prudence. In remaining true to their German values and their German roots, these men master the frontier and bring it under control, forcing the Wild West to become an orderly (German) settlement. Other authors flip the gender to show the importance of femininity on the frontier, and female characters emerge as essential to the colonial project by embodying German culture and enabling Germanness to flourish on the prairie. Underlying these fantasies of German mastery of the West is an understanding of white
German racial and cultural superiority. Even novels like Karl May’s *Winnetou*, which is often read as showing sympathy with the plight of the American Indian, are infused with a kind of white supremacy, with German characters exhibiting moral and cultural superiority over Americans and other immigrant groups and racial superiority over Native Americans.

**Frontier (German) Masculinity**

Young adult novels present German men as uniquely suited to life on the frontier. They master the external markers of frontier identity—hunting, trapping, horseback riding, and fighting—but eschew the drunkenness, brutality, and senseless killing that men of other national backgrounds engage in. Their German sense of diligence, patience, and prudence, as well as a willingness to work hard, allows them to tame the frontier and make it a German space. The heroes of Pajekenn, May, Wörishöffer and other novelists masterly perform this type of frontier masculinity.¹⁰

The classic example of this trope is Karl May’s “Old Shatterhand,” a figure that comes to the United States as an inexperienced “Greenhorn” but is soon able to

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demonstrate his western skills. Though the young “Greenhorn,” member of a surveying crew, has only read books about hunting, shooting and life in the American West, he is nonetheless able to kill a herd’s largest buffalo single-handed, slay a bear without the aid of a rifle, and even capture and tame a wild mustang. His innate skills are superior to both the Native Americans and the whites he encounters. He soon earns the respect of those around him and becomes a true “West man.”

German Western heroes are presented as more virtuous and deserving than the men around them; in particular, they are contrasted with greedy white Americans who are only interested in extracting riches from the West and swindling Native American tribes. Hugo, for example, the young protagonist of Wörishöffer’s Auf dem Kriegspfade (On the Warpath, 1881), agrees to accompany a group of trappers as an assistant in order to earn money for his impoverished family. The member of the expedition referred to as “the American” assumes Hugo wants to join the group to get rich: “Look at this young skinflint,” he declares, assuming the boy wants to earn money to speculate. A man named Old Jonathan quickly corrects this misconception, explaining that Hugo’s father was a hard-working settler whose land was unjustly taken away from him by the American government. In the end Hugo not only gains experience in the wilds of

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11 Karl May (1842-1912) was born into reduced circumstances in Saxony. He trained as a teacher but lost his license after being convicted of theft. He spent time in jail for fraud in the 1860s and turned to writing to make his livelihood in the 1870s. Though his novels set in the American West and the Middle East were very popular, May’s later years were plagued by lawsuits and scandals. He remains a well-known writer and one of the most widely read German authors of all time.

America hunting, trapping, and fighting Indians, but also earns enough money to help his family regain their farm.

Friedrich Pajeken’s works, based partially on his own time in North America living in the Bighorn Mountains and getting to know the Native Americans who lived there, contain heroes who, in uniting wilderness skills with German values, show the true meaning of manliness.\textsuperscript{13} The heroes of his western novels—*Bob der Fallensteller* (1890), *Bill der Eisenkopf* (1899), and *Jim der Trapper* (1892), among others—master the frontier and find not only wealth but security and respectability. The first volume of Pajeken’s *Bob*-trilogy, *Bob der Fallensteller* (Bob the Trapper) follows the fortune of young Bob Gabert, who is portionless and believes himself to be an orphan. He is reluctantly taken in by brothers Jim and Charley, whom he persuades to teach him how to hunt and trap. Jim and Charley do not wish to interrupt their quiet, solitary frontier lifestyle by taking in a third person, but the young German convinces them of his worth through his willingness to work hard and his ability to use their resources responsibly. He is not only able to quickly learn how to be a valuable assistant in their frontier labor of trapping animals and curing their pelts, but does the brothers a great service: when they travel to Cheyenne to sell their pelts, Bob prevents them from spending all their money on gaming and drinking. Instead he opens a bank account for them, proudly showing them the checkbook, explaining it was his duty (*Pflicht*) to safeguard their money, and proclaiming, “Here, take this and ask yourselves if the boy did you an injustice while you

\textsuperscript{13} Friedrich J. Pajeken (1855-1920) trained as a merchant and traveled first to Venezuela and later to Montana in that capacity, traveling widely and spending time among the indigenous populations of those territories. He began writing adventure novels set in the Americas in 1890 after returning to Germany and settling in Hamburg as a merchant.
forgot to be men.”¹⁴ Bob’s responsible, German behavior is here explicitly coded as masculine. It is not only through his mastery of frontier life that he shows himself to be a man but also through his ability to save money and resist the temptation to drink and gamble. In this way German authors offer a redefinition of frontier masculinity, showing that it is not enough to only hunt, trap, ride, and fight Indians; one must also save money, conserve resources, and behave in a sober, prudent manner.

In addition to explicitly coding this mix of wilderness skills and bourgeois values as masculine, these works also code it as German. The only characters who achieve the balance between prudence and adventure are Germans or German-speaking immigrants. Old Shatterhand, Sam Hawkens, and Klekih petra from Winnetou (and other novels and stories by the same author) are all German. Bob also meets with many German and German-speaking immigrants in the West. One such man is a trader named Old Tex—real name Franz von Traunstein—an Austrian nobleman who, serving as a deus ex machina, leaves his extensive property to Bob at the end of the novel, on the promise that the young man will settle down: “Bob Gabert, give me your word of honor that you will give up your previous way of life and will attempt to become a useful member of society.” Bob assures him, “That’s my dearest wish!”¹⁵ After mastering frontier skills, heroes such as Bob seek to master the West to create thriving towns and settler communities to turn America into a German space.

**Transforming the Frontier**

Young adult novels set on the prairies and frontiers of North America portray the transformation of the Wild West into a productive, ordered, *German* space. In showcasing German settlers as the bringers of order and civilization, these works embody colonial fantasies of German life in North America; they create “an imaginary German colonial history on paper and in the minds of their readers.”16 The protagonists discussed in the previous section perform white, German masculinity through the Western lifestyle, living in the wilderness, hunting and trapping, fighting and outsmarting Indians, but after amassing wealth through these ventures they must resign that lifestyle and adopt the mantle of bourgeois respectability to found settlements. Once these figures have mastered both the American wilderness and civilization, America can become a German space. In showcasing the transformation of the sometimes savage and brutal frontier into a stable, civilized space, these authors make a claim that not only are the Americas suitable for German inhabitants but that Germans are necessary to tame the Wild West.

Pajeken’s western trilogy showcases this strategy for making a German claim to the American West. Once Bob, hero of *Bob der Fallensteller*, has been reunited with his long-lost father and inherited substantial property from Old Tex, he renounces his trapper lifestyle and founds a town. The second volume, *Bob der Städtegründer* (Bob the City Founder, 1891), shows his struggle to attract the hard-working, peace-loving, moderate,

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16 **Susanne Zantop**, *Colonial Fantasies*, 3. Though Zantop focuses on the precolonial period, the term is accurate here because while Germany was engaged in formal colonial projects in Africa, writers in the metropole remained fixated on creating fantastic stories of German colonial life in the United States that bore little or no resemblance to the reality of German settlement there.
sober Germans who are necessary to build successful settlements. When the railroad initially chooses a route that bypasses the town, the German settlers leave for more prosperous places, leaving the town overrun with wild, hard-drinking Irishmen. The third and final volume, *Bob der Millionär* (Bob the Millionaire, 1894), features the struggle of Bob’s son (also named Bob) to maintain the prosperity his father created. Nicole Grewling notes that the figure of Bob Rheinfels can be seen as an example of the “good German colonizer” trope common to colonial fantasies.17

Bob makes a promise to his dying father to continue the small settlement’s growth, but he initially lacks the proper resolve to carry it out. On his deathbed, Bob the elder exhorts his son to establish a mine in the nearby mountains, in the hope that gold and silver will bring prosperity and settlers and result in a permanent, established settlement under the protection of the United States Army: “Only then can the land truly prosper. The law will maintain order and peace, and people will then bestir themselves with redoubled eagerness toward blessing-giving work.”18 Though Bob makes this promise to his father, he is too used to prosperity to undertake the hard work necessary to maintain a mine. He initially shuns the German values his father taught him and delegates the job of establishing the mine to a man named Crackfield. Establishing a clear pecking

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order of ethnicity, Crackfield is derisively referred to as “der Amerikaner” and abuses the workers in the mine, putting the entire settlement at risk.\textsuperscript{19}

Pajeken’s books show that order to achieve the American dream of prosperity for oneself and one’s heirs, it is necessary to adopt German values and a German identity. It is only when Bob learns the bourgeois German values of duty, hard work, and compassion that he is able to make the mine profitable and ensure the settlement’s continued growth. At the end of the novel Bob, who has lived his whole life in the United States and has never visited Germany, declares his loyalty to the German nation: “Yes—I want always to retain a German sensibility just like my dear father… Even though I was not born in Germany, it is still as if it is my Fatherland… I have achieved much, but the best thing of all is the guarantee of my own future, happy home!”\textsuperscript{20} The town’s new militia, to whom Bob makes the announcement he will marry a nice German girl and establish a home, bursts into what has become Bob’s favorite song: “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt!”\textsuperscript{21} Here Bob has continued his father’s work, going from \textit{Städtegründer} (city founder) to \textit{Staatengründer} (state founder).\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Pajeken, \textit{Millionär}, 89.
\textsuperscript{21} Pajeken, \textit{Millionär}, 192.
Sophie Wörishöffer offers a similar parable about Germans as the tamers of the frontier in her 1891 *Im Goldlande Kalifornien* (California: Land of Gold). Though she was known for writing swashbuckling tales so violent they earned her the nickname Bloody Sophie, this book showcases both gripping action scenes and the transformative power of German immigrants on the United States. A classic emigrant story, *Im Goldlande Kalifornien* tells the story of four ethnic German peasants (who reside in Polish territory) from the Kinski family who leave Europe to seek a better life in the United State. When their inherent value for hard work, modesty, and duty is given room to grow on the democratic frontier, they are able to transform Gold Rush-era California into an ideal, just society. For Wörishöffer, the United States serves “an exotic canvas against which German values and ideas of German superiority are portrayed.”

Even though the story’s main characters are penniless peasants, they demonstrate bourgeois German values: honor, honesty, and hard work. They work tirelessly for a

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23 Wörishöffer (1838-1890) was perhaps the only female author of adventure novels in Wilhelmine Germany. Born Sophie Andresen in a well-to-do bourgeois family, she turned to writing to support herself after the death of her husband in 1870; her cousin was the well-known author Detlev von Liliencron. She never remarried but gave birth to a child in 1871 whose paternity is unknown. Her works were published as “S. Wörishöffer” or under a pseudonym, leaving her sex a secret until her death in 1890, after which she is generally listed by her full, female name in lexica and other trade publications. See Nicole Grewling, “Inventing America: German Racism and Colonial Dreams in Sophie Wörishöffer’s Im Goldlande Kalifornien,” in Sophie Discovers Amerika: German-Speaking Women Write the New World, eds. Rob McFarland and Michelle Stott James (Rochester: Camden House, 2014), 111-124; and Steinbrink, *Abenteuerliteratur*, 178-179.


25 Grewling, “Inventing America,” 112.

26 For a discussion of how Wörishöffer’s portrayal of the unassimilated Kinski clan and their neighbors conforms to racist stereotypes of Poles, see Grewling, “Inventing America,” 115-16.
merciless master (Graf Ladrin), save what money they can, and dream of a better life. This dream takes root when they receive a letter from a relative in California, who describes a land of plenty that “blooms and blossoms” and is “like heaven compared to our sad, oppressed Fatherland, where farmers have only sloe and crab apples to eat.”

The idea of this “Wunderland Kalifornien” sustains them, and they seize the opportunity to flee during a peasant uprising. Even though they had been horribly maltreated by their master, they refuse to participate in the uprising, choosing instead to cling to their dream of America and its promise of freedom and equality.

Instead they find themselves in “Sodom,” a degenerate and profligate society, corrupted by the gold rush and full of brutal violence and “frontier justice.” Soon after their arrival in the American West, they observe the summary execution of a young “Spaniard,” Manoel, accused of theft. The judge is hardly worthy of the name, pronouncing: “We don’t have prisons here; all people, good and bad, run together, every sort of crime is committed every day, public security is completely lost,—one must set a deterring example. Take this Manoel and hang him, lynch him in due form, children.”

Anyone who objects to or interferes with this sentence is to be shot. This example of dubious frontier justice is startling to the men who fled inequity in Europe and did not

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29 Wörishöffer, *Goldlande*, 142.

30 “Gefängnisse haben wir hier nicht; allerlei Volk, gutes und schlimmes läuft zusammen, Verbrechen jeder Art werden täglich begangen, die öffentliche Sicherheit ist vollständig dahin, -- man muss also ein abschreckendes Beispiel aufstellen. Nehmt diesen Manoel und hängt ihn, lynch ihn in aller Form, Kinder.” Wörishöffer, *Goldlande*, 141.
expect such violence, brutality, and injustice in an American frontier town, believing, as
they did, in American democratic ideals.

Their first experience with the West is colored by the brutality of the gold rush,
which represents the dark side of the American experience: greed, privation, and families
torn apart.\textsuperscript{31} They come across a German farmer who laments that with the glint of gold
in their eyes, “no one considers honest work anymore.”\textsuperscript{32} When they are united with their
uncle Semen in California, he uses the language of racial degeneration to explain the
corrupting influence of greed on most immigrants:

\begin{quote}
Our feet are bare, our heads covered with all kinds of rags and scraps and bits of
tree bark, not because we are too poor to clothe ourselves decently—Heaven
forbid! There are hundreds of thousands of dollars in our pockets—but because
our sense of decency, of order, and of cleanliness has completely disappeared. We
are ashamed of nothing and no one. That’s a sign of our decline.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

Wörishöffer portrays here the danger of straying from the path of civilization: it leads
only to ruin and misery. The settlers who became caught up in Gold Rush fever almost
seem to have “gone native,” abandoning markers of civilized life like wearing clean
clothing and washing regularly to furiously amass as much gold as possible. Semen’s
words reflect his disappointment with how life in California has changed since gold was

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{31} For a history of the California Gold Rush and its importance in American history, see
\textsuperscript{32} “Eben keiner mehr an die ehrliche Arbeit denkt.” Wörishöffer, \textit{Goldlande}, 199.
\textsuperscript{33} “Unsre Füße sind nackt, die Köpfe mit allen möglichen alten Lappen, Matten und
Stücken von Baumrinde bedeckt, nicht etwa, weil wir zu arm wären, um uns anständig
zu kleiden, --behüte! es sind ja Hunderttausende in unsern Taschen, -- wohl aber, weil
uns das Gefühl für den Anstand, für Ordnung und Sauberkeit total verloren gegangen ist.
Wir schämen uns vor nichts und vor niemand, -- das ist das Signal zum Untergang.”
\end{flushright}
discovered, and he looks to his fellow Germans to help him restore civilization to the frontier.

The German settlers, with their unique combination of a history of oppression by the ruling classes and bourgeois values of honesty and hard work, are the ideal figures to bring civilization to the Wild West and enact Semen’s colonial fantasy. “Uncle Semen” as he is known, is so eager to have like-minded compatriots again that he immediately offers to share his hard-won millions so that they can together rebuild “Räuberstadt” (City of Thieves) and turn it into a model settlement. The settlers agree to contribute to a “Stadtkasse” (city treasury) for the maintenance and beautification of the town, and three years later Räuberstadt is a flourishing town, with public buildings, postal service, straight roads and sidewalks, and a blossoming garden in front of every house.\(^{34}\)

At the conclusion of the novel, the German settlers have remade the West into a more just version of their own homeland. Through their hard work, the former peasants have become prosperous landowners, and, in an implicit critique of the aristocracy, they extend charity to their former master and oppressor, Graf Ladrin, when he arrives in their town. The former count dies impoverished, surrounded by the men who were his peasants but are now wealthy and respected citizens. In the end it is their bourgeois values of duty, honesty, and hard work that see them through difficult times and ensure American prosperity in a German fashion.

The transformation that Wörishöffer and Pajeken portray can only be enacted by Germans, and the image of the West that consequently comes through in their novels is not the classic version of the American West, characterized by tumbleweed, saloons, 

\(^{34}\) Wörishöffer, Goldlande, 516.
gunfights, wild buffalo, and Indian raids, but rather is a kind of German West. In this German colonial fantasy of the United States, immigrants hold tight to their language and heritage instead of assimilating to the English language and American values, hoist the Prussian flag over their towns and sing the *Deutschlandlied*, and tame the “Wild” West, turning it from an unruly territory into a productive space for German settlement.

**Gendering the Frontier**

The American frontier as depicted in these Western novels is a gendered and gendering space, a space in which gender norms and roles are performed and enacted. The cowboy fantasy of the West is male-dominated, with white men taking the lead to fight savage Indians and tame the frontier, bringing a female landscape under the control of [white] men. It is a space where boys become men, and heroes like Bob Gabert undergo the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the frontier serving “as a proving-

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ground of masculinity.” Bertha Clément’s *Im Rosenhause* (1898) and *In den Savannen* (1900) complicate this narrative by presenting a colonial fantasy of the American West that features a female protagonist. These novels thematize the fear of losing traditional German values to the shallow capitalism of North America and feature a female colonizing presence in the prairies of the Midwestern United States.

While young male Germans can learn how to be men on the frontier, young women must return to the Fatherland for this type of education. Clément’s novels present the American West—here the prairies of Illinois—as an inappropriate place for the heroine of the novel to transition from girlhood to womanhood. Though the heroine of the books, young Felicia Bertram, known as Fairy or Fee, is presented as bringing culture and Germanness to the prairie, she can only do so after she has returned to Germany and learned how to function as a German woman. The wilds of North America almost seem to have a corrupting influence on young women, introducing them to American culture with its emphasis on freedom and profligacy.

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36 Andrew C. Isenberg, “The Code of the West: Sexuality, Homosociality, and Wyatt Earp,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 40.2 (2009), 144. In his article, Isenberg complicates the masculine ideal of the frontier and uses the biography of Wyatt Earp to show the “shift from homosocial to heterosocial dominance” (156) on the western frontier in the late nineteenth century, the transition from the predominance of male-only spaces that offered few opportunities for unmarried men and women to socialize to a social structure that prioritized heterosexual relationships and socialization.

37 Bertha Clément (1852-1930) was the daughter of a painter who grew up traveling widely throughout Europe. She began her literary career in the 1890s and published over ninety books in her lifetime.

38 Clément’s novels appear to be unique in German girls’ literature of this period. Though there are novels set in the northeastern United States, primarily New York City, these are the only novels for girls I have found that feature young female protagonists on the Great Plains or in any situation that even remotely resembles the “Wild West” setting of so many adventure novels with male protagonists.
Im Rosenhause (In Rose Cottage) begins with the backstory of Felicia’s father, Karl Bertram, a classic immigrant narrative of a worthless son of privilege who squanders his opportunities in the metropole and flees, penniless, to the colonies to pull himself up by the bootstraps and make his fortune. Karl had been a “young, carefree student” ("junger, sorgloser Student") who had lived “a merry life” (“ein lustiges Leben”) in Germany until he spent through not only his own fortune but that of his mother and sister as well. With his prospects in Germany exhausted, he had left for the United States, “to seek his fortune in the land of freedom.” After many years of hard work and privation he had married a German-American woman and settled down in rural Illinois to “live in quiet, industrious happiness” (“in stillem, arbeitsamen Glück wohnten”). Meanwhile his sister had to become a seamstress to support herself and their mother, and his relations with the two women remained strained.

When the story opens, Felicia resembles the classic Backfisch heroine: wild, mischievous, headstrong, unruly, and tomboyish. Having grown up on the prairies of Illinois, away from civilization and without the influence of a mother or other German settlers—her father is always busy working, leaving her in the care of their many African American servants—she demonstrates behavior that is not appropriate for a German and

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39 This is a common plot device in German young adult novels, a twist on the classic Horatio Alger tale that incorporates the dangers of the New World by showing an immigrant who makes good but forgets his homeland and becomes lost in his new prosperity. Novels by Wörishöffer and Pajeken both feature protagonists who are miraculously reunited with their presumed-dead fathers during their travels on the frontiers of North and South America.


equally inappropriate for a woman. The only solution that Karl Bertram can think of to correct his daughter’s behavior is to send her to Germany to live with his mother and sister: “It is high time that she is handed over into female hands so that she becomes a compliant young woman,” he reasons.\(^{43}\) Returning to the Fatherland is thus necessary for her to understand what it means to be a German woman.

In Germany, Felicia clings stubbornly to her old patterns of behavior, which are described as both American and masculine. She initially refuses to go “to nasty old Germany where girls first have to ask permission to be allowed to turn right or left,” but is ultimately compelled to do so.\(^{44}\) Once she arrives in Germany and is placed with a family friend with five children to be educated, she still stubbornly resists changing. She calls herself a “free American” (“freie Amerikanerin”) and demonstrates this by stealing a farmer’s horse and taking it for a joyride, bareback, through the countryside near Hamburg.\(^{45}\) The other children in the house are shocked by her behavior, one of them exclaiming, “You’re really worse than the wildest boy (\textit{Bube}) in the village; you don’t even seem to know how a girl is supposed to behave. Here in Germany that is not our custom.”\(^{46}\) The behavior that Felicia has learned in the United States—riding horses

\(^{43}\) “Da wird es hohe Zeit, dass sie in weibliche Hände kommt, damit sie ein fügsames Mädchen wird.” Clément, \textit{Rosenhause}, 12.

\(^{44}\) “Nach dem alten garstigen Deutschland, wo die Mädchen erst um Erlaubnis fragen müssen, ob sie sich nach links oder nach rechts drehen dürfen.” Clément, \textit{Rosenhause}, 15.

\(^{45}\) Clément, \textit{Rosenhause}, 72.

\(^{46}\) “Du bist wirklich schlimmer als der wildeste Bube im Dorfe, du scheinst aber gar nicht zu wissen, wie sich ein Mädchen benehmen muss. Hier bei uns in Deutschland ist so etwas nicht Sitte.” Clément, \textit{Rosenhause}, 76.
without a saddle and without asking permission—is unimaginable to her upright German cousins, and they consider her wildness and unruliness masculine.

Once Felicia has undergone the painful transformation akin to Trotzkopf and other Backfisch heroines, she can return to the United States as a colonizer. In Germany she not only learns to speak, read, and write German, but to behave like a proper young German woman. In the sequel to Im Rosenhause, called In den Savannen (On the Savannahs), Felicia returns to the United States accompanied by her aunt Luise. Her transformation is complete, and she has shed her American identity and considers herself fully German: “No, I don’t want to be anything but a good German who is loyal to her Kaiser even in her faraway homeland and who shows the value of German customs and practices,” she declares. With this new identity as a loyal German, she sets out to transform the disconnected settlers in her neighborhood into a real German “colony” in the United States. She starts small, with her half-German friends Mabel and Ellen Brighton who went to school in Chicago and relish being “freie Amerikaner”: spoiled, disobedient, irresponsible girls who think only of their own pleasure. Felicia assures her father the girls will not be a bad influence on her; rather, she will exert a positive influence on them: “Give me a chance and by and by I will teach those girls German customs and sensibilities.” With Fee as her inspiration, Ellen learns the value of hard work and decides to train to be a seamstress: “Then I will have something useful to do, for I must

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47 “Nein, ich will gar nicht anderes sein als eine gute Deutsche, die ihrem Kaiser auch in der fernen Heimat treu bleibt und zeigen will, was deutsche Sitten und Gewohnheiten wert sind.” Bertha Clément, In den Savannen: Eine Erzählung für die junge Mädchenwelt (Nuremberg: Theo. Stroefer’s Kunstverlag, nd [1910]), 85.

48 “Lass mich nur machen, allmählich will ich den Mädels schon deutsche Sitten und Gesinnungen beibringen.” Clément, Savannen, 44.
tell you, Fairy, this lying around in rocking chairs and eternal reading makes me sick; I can’t take it any more.”\(^49\) In a very short time Felicia has a positive impact on many of her fellow Germans, encouraging them to abandon their American laziness and instead act like useful young Germans.

Felicia’s mission in the United States among her fellow settlers is described in the language of colonization. The young woman who has “become a good German” (“eine gute Deutsche geworden”) and who believes she has left “half her heart” (“halbes Herz”) in Germany, does not only want to influence her nearest friends but wants to cultivate German sensibilities in all the local settlers.\(^50\) The immigrant community largely consists of those with at least some German heritage, and when they decide to found a town they are described not as “immigrants” or “settlers” but as “colonizers” (\textit{Kolonisten}). Ellen and Mabel’s brother Henry explains, “Actually all of us colonists here are half Germans and therefore halfway obliged to introduce German habits.”\(^51\) Felicia spearheads the efforts to start a colony, raising money and subscriptions to hire a German pastor and build a church and working to attract new German immigrants to the area. Eventually, after much hard work and sacrifice on Felicia’s part, she sees her dreams realized: The “colonists” build a town called “Glückstadt” atop a hill, with a plain, unadorned wooden church in the center and a schoolhouse for all the local children.

Clément’s twin novels show the gendered component of the German West. They complement the works by May, Pajeken, and Wörishöffer that emphasize the masculine nature of life on the frontier by making the ideal German colonizer a young woman. Old Shatterhand, Bob Gabert (who later takes the name Rheinfels) and similar figures reinforce the cowboy mythos by showing solitary men who master frontier life before bringing order to the Wild West. While boys become men through their experience of the frontier, girls must return to the metropole to complete their education. It is only once she has traveled to Germany and lives under the influence of a motherly figure in an idyllic countryside setting that Felicia learns to behave as a German woman. Once she has undergone the transformation from unruly tomboy to proper German woman, she can return to the United States to create an outpost of Germandom on the prairies of Illinois.

**Whiteness and Germanness: Confronting Race in the Wild West**

Just as the frontier is a gendered space, it is also a space where race is enacted and performed. In young adult novels, America functions as an imaginary space where white characters confront race and where non-white characters originate. Instances where characters wonder whether visitors from the United States are brown, black or red are so frequent as to constitute almost a running gag in German young adult literature. For example, in Sophie Kloerss’ *Vaterhaus und Vaterland* (1915), a historical novel set during the Napoleonic Wars, when main character Ursel tells a maid that her aunt has a visitor from the United States, the maid, Rieke, is horrified, exclaiming, “From America?
… Where the Black people are?” Sensible Ursel corrects her, “He is not a Black person, Rieke; he is perhaps a bit browner than you and I, but otherwise just like other people. And further, the Indians in America are red, not black.” Similarly, in *Im Rosenhause* Frau Dr. Wallburg’s five children are excited to learn they will welcome a young woman from the United States into their home and speculate about her:

> And this sister was to come from far-off America, where all those nice, gruesome Indian stories are set that they had already heard so much about. They had no notion of what she might be like. “Hey,” little Klara asked her sister Lotte, “do you think that she might be brown or even black?”

Both scenes are played for humor, emphasizing the naiveté and innocence of the youthful protagonists, but they also offer a glimpse of what many writers thought America represented in the minds of young people. To these children, the United States does not immediately strike them as a place where white Germans live, but rather as the place where vivid adventure stories are set and people from a variety of non-white races live.

> These throwaway episodes reveal how the “New World” was profoundly tied to an understanding of race. The inclusion of such episodes in many novels shows a preoccupation with race, and, more specifically, a preoccupation with whiteness. In implicitly questioning the whiteness of Germans from the United States characters like Felicia or Ursel from *Vaterhaus und Vaterland* invoke a normalized understanding of

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Germans as white. These episodes reveal a fear of loss to the nation—the fear that emigrants would assimilate into the racial melting pot of the United States—by including youthful characters who have trouble imagining that people coming from the United States could be either German or white.

In contrast, young adult novels set in the United States by authors such as May, Pajeken, and Clément invoke a racial and cultural claim to the Americas as a German space and show how German settlement to the United States is tied to an understanding of German whiteness. Though some of these novels appear to exhibit a superficial tolerance for racial difference or sympathy with the plight of Native Americans, they nonetheless reinforce German superiority by endorsing a view of American Indian tribes as already dying peoples it is impossible to save. To take a well-known example, the second paragraph of Karl May’s *Winnetou*-trilogy begins with the words “The red race is dying,” and May does nothing to counter the logic of the manifest destiny of white civilization to take native lands and wipe out native peoples.\footnote{The original line uses the phrase “red nation”: “Ja, die rote Nation liegt im sterben” (Freiburg: Fehsenfeld, 1893). David Koblick’s 1999 abridged translation (Pullman, Washington State Univ. Press, 1999) renders the line, “Alas, the red race is dying,” and Michael Shaw’s complete 1998 translation, “Yes, the Indian race is dying” (New York: Seabury Press, 1977).} The downfall of Native Americans is a given. The German characters from these novels show both racial and cultural superiority over Native Americans, and moral and cultural superiority over white Americans and other immigrant groups. In this way German authors present Germans as the true heirs to the frontier.

My focus in this section will be primarily on the whiteness of German characters—how it is constructed, often in contrast to Native Americans, and how it
furthers colonial claims to the American West—and not solely on the depiction of American Indians, which has already been the focus of much scholarship. I will not adopt the practice of many scholars in drawing a distinction between the literary depiction of Native Americans and their living, breathing counterparts by using the terms “Indian” and “Native American” respectively. Instead, I will use “Indian” only when directly quoting the German word “Indianer” and will use the terms “American Indian” and “Native American” interchangeably to refer to the indigenous American characters that appear in the works of May and other German authors. Using the common terminology draws a false distinction, blurring out the question of how racial, ethnic, and national stereotypes are deployed by authors and obscuring the constructed nature of the gender, nationality, and race of the white German characters. As Zantop notes in

56 There is an immense amount of scholarship on the image of the Native American in Germany literature and culture, particularly regarding Karl May. See, for example, Hartmut Lutz’s “Indianer” und “Native Americans”: Zur sozial- und literarhistorischen Vermittlung eines Stereotypes (Hildesheim: Olms, 1985), Peter Uwe Hohendahl, “Von der Rothaut zum Edelmenschen. Karl Mays Amerikaromane” in Bauschinger, Denkler, and Malsch: 229-245, or almost any volume of the Karl May Yearbook. More recently, H. Glenn Penny has published a history of Germans’ perceived affinity with Native Americans, Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), but as this is premised on different assumptions than my dissertation, it does not inform my own study.

57 This is a common distinction made by scholars such as Christian Feest, Nicole Grewling, and many contributors to the Calloway, Gemünden, and Zantop collection. Hartmut Lutz, for example, uses this distinction in his book “Indianer” und “Native Americans,” explaining that “Native Americans” refers to the actual indigenous inhabitants of North America and “Indianer” to their clichéd representation by Europeans and Euro-Americans: 2-3. This relies on Robert F. Berkhofer’s influential The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present (New York: Knopf, 1978), where he makes this distinction (though he uses the terms “American Indian” and “Native American” interchangeably).

58 There has been, for example, an almost obsessive scholarly quest to probe the “authenticity” of May’s western novels and their portrayal of Native Americans. Robert F. Spencer, for example, asks in his article, “How Authentic Were Karl May’s Indians?”
Germans and Indians, “the clichéd image of the Indian freely roaming the prairie has more to do with national needs at specific historical moments in Europe than with Indian people and their experiences on the North American continent.” Images of both Native Americans and white Germans are constructed to serve historical, political, and ideological purposes by German authors and should be treated equally. In drawing a terminological distinction between “real” and literary Native Americans but not between real and literary Germans, the whiteness and Germanness of the main characters of these novels is normalized and remains unquestioned and unexamined.

May’s writings about North America show a clear racial and cultural hierarchy, and he deploys negative and racist portrayals of Native American characters alongside negative portrayals of white Americans as a way to reinforce German characters’ dual (racial and cultural) superiority as both white and German. Karl May’s indigenous

and ultimately reaches the conclusion, “Sadly, not at all,” 15. Much scholarship on May is on May alone, attempting to explain the phenomenon, the appeal or how he was able to achieve such supposedly accurate and authentic portrayals of America, its landscape and its inhabitants, rather than on its literary or cultural aspects.

59 Zantop, Germans and Indians, 5. This collection (2002), edited by Colin Calloway, Gerd Gemünden and Susanne Zantop, breaks out of the common mold of May scholarship to handle the complex historical, cultural, and racial aspects of the May canon. It includes articles connecting racist portrayals of Indians with emerging anti-Semitism and National Socialism, comparing Germany’s Indian fascination to other European countries’, focusing critically on Indian hobbyism in Germany, and analyzing “Indianerfilme” from the GDR. Christian F. Feest wrestles with the problem of terminology in his essay, “Germany’s Indians in a European Perspective,” noting the constructed nature of both the “Indian” and the “German” and that “the first affinity between Indians and Germans may be that both categories are largely fictional” (27).

60 A further problem with distinguishing the term “Native American” from “Indian” is the reclamation of the latter term by contemporary Native American writers and activists. Using a term that has been reclaimed by an ethnic group to refer to hegemonic and racist constructions of that ethnic group seems to further reproduce unequal power relations, rather than offer a neutral form of address.
characters, like nearly every depiction of Native Americans of this time, are violent people, constantly carting away prisoners in order to hatchet, scalp, burn or bury them alive, or kill them in some other horrific way. Sam Hawkens, the narrator’s first Wild West mentor, has been scalped by a band of Pawnees, leaving a ghastly wound: “The sight of his hairless, blood-red scalp was truly frightful.” When Old Shatterhand first meets the Kiowas they are on the way to fight the Apaches in retribution for killing four of their warriors, but it soon emerges that the Apaches had only killed the four Kiowa warriors for attempting to steal Apache horses and exchange them for alcohol from white traders. In this and many other instances Native Americans are shown to be murderers, thieves and liars. In the introduction to Winnetou I, May informs the reader that Indians have become “a furtive, sneaking, mistrustful, lying people.” Old Shatterhand chides Winnetou, “the redskins tear each other apart instead of standing by each other against the mutual enemy of their race.” All Native Americans, even those like Winnetou who are presented as noble, engage in petty fighting and mutual slaughter among themselves rather than uniting to fight their shared enemy, the white settlers. This places the responsibility for the defense of the frontier on Native tribes who failed to unite and fight their enemy, rather than on the white Americans who slaughtered them.


64 In spite of the constant onslaught of negative representations of American Indians, many scholars insist that May’s writings are anti-racist. Jeffrey Sammons, for example, makes the bizarre observation that “there seems to be little trace of [racism] in May’s
Further, May’s portrayal of Native Americans serves to construct a sense of white superiority by showing how these characters acknowledge the supremacy of white characters and white European civilization. When Old Shatterhand first visits Winnetou in his village, for example, he is clad only in a light linen robe, carries no weapons and holds a book in his hand, on which the word “Hiawatha” is visible. Old Shatterhand is shocked that “This Indian, this son of a people considered ‘wild,’ could not only read but possessed sense and taste for finer things. Longfellow’s famous poem in the hands of an Apache! I never would have dreamt it.”

Winnetou, dressed in western-style clothing and reading an American author, both implicitly and explicitly accepts the superiority of white civilization. He admits, “The whites have more knowledge and skills than we do. They are superior to us in almost every way.”

writings,” based on a definition of racism as “a systematic doctrine attempting to discover, define, and, in some cases, evaluate differences among human races”: Sammons, Ideology, 238. This understanding of racism as a politically neutral system avoids any discussion of power and dominance: how systems of knowledge of human difference are used to oppress the peoples deemed less worthy and justify colonialism, imperialism, and other forms of domination.


66 “Die Weißen haben mehr Kenntnisse und Geschicklichkeiten als wir. Sie sind uns in fast allem überlegen.” May, Winnetou, 549. With these statements, Karl May shows his embeddedness in contemporary racial discourses that placed white Europeans atop a racial hierarchy, with Native Americans only slightly above Black Africans at the bottom. For more on race in Imperial Germany see Frank Becker, ed., Rassenmischehen—Mischlinge—Rassentrennung: Zur Politik der Rassse im deutschen Kolonialreich (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004); Tina Campt, “Converging Spectres of an Other Within: Race and Gender in Prewar Afro-German History,” Callaloo 26.2 (2003): 322-341; Anette Dietrich, Weiße Weiblichkeiten; and Fatima El-Tayeb, Schwarze Deutsche: Der Diskurs um “Rasse” und nationale Identität 1890-1933 (Frankfurt: Campus, 2001).
Winnetou becomes a figure that absolves his white readers of guilt for the Native American genocide by embodying the inevitability of Native American decline and endorsing colonization by a superior people.\textsuperscript{67} Not only does Winnetou accept the trappings of European and American culture, he actively assists in the colonization of his people. In helping Old Shatterhand claim land in Apache territory for the railroad, Winnetou “accepts the manifest destiny of white (German, Saxon) superiority.”\textsuperscript{68} Much to the surprise of Old Shatterhand, Winnetou convinces his father, Apache chief Intschutschuna, to not only give Old Shatterhand their official approval for his surveying work but to provide him with warriors to aid and protect him in his work. Intschutschuna’s reasoning for giving permission to measure his land for the railroad is that there is nothing he can do to stop the inevitable encroachment of white men. He tells Old Shatterhand, “You are right. We can’t stop them from robbing us over and over again.”\textsuperscript{69}

In having Native American characters acknowledge, enact, and voice the superiority of Europeans in general and the German Old Shatterhand in particular, May offers his readers a lesson in the power and importance not only of whiteness but of Germanness.

\textsuperscript{67} In some ways Old Shatterhand can be seen as an early prototype for the “white savior” figure, a white person who “saves” a member of a minority group or a number of non-white or disadvantaged people in some way, as seen in films such as \textit{Freedom Writers} (2007), \textit{Dangerous Minds} (1995), \textit{The Blind Side} (2009), \textit{Dances with Wolves} (1990), or \textit{Avatar} (2009). For more on the white savior trope see Daniel Bernardi, \textit{The Persistence of Whiteness: Race and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema} (New York: Routledge, 2007) and Wendy L. Moore and Jennifer Pierce, “Still Killing Mockingbirds: Narratives of Race and Innocence in Hollywood’s Depiction of the White Messiah Lawyer,” \textit{Qualitative Sociology Review} 3.2 (2007): 171–87.

\textsuperscript{68} Lutz, “Indianer” und “Native Americans,” 176.

With the exception of Winnetou and his family, all intelligent, honorable and upstanding characters—such as Old Shatterhand, Sam Hawkens, Klekhi-petra—are German. Other white settlers are greedy, money-grubbing opportunists. That Germans such as Klekhi-petra and Old Shatterhand ally themselves with Native Americans is not evidence of their racial degeneration, but rather the racial isolation of noble natives such as Winnetou. Winnetou, certainly modeled after James Fenimore Cooper’s Uncas, embodies everything that is good in the native, but he is rendered unthreatening to German superiority precisely because he is the last of his race. In the homosocial environments of May’s novels, there is no danger of anyone marrying and procreating, and thus the future demise of the Indian is secure: the “bad” American Indian tribes will be driven out by the Americans, while the “good” natives such as Winnetou will take their downfall as a given and make way for the future heirs of the west, German settlers in the mold of Old Shatterhand.

Like May, Clément constructs a racial and cultural hierarchy in her novels, atop which white German Felicia stands. Felicia takes it as her Christian duty to educate her

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70 In his essay, “Karl May: The Wild West as Seen in Germany,” Heribert Feilitzsch makes note of this point but dismisses what he terms May’s “ethnocentricity,” explaining that “simple ethic and nationalist stereotyping” was necessarily in order for the novels to be commercially successful. Feilitzsch, “Karl May: The ‘Wild West’ as Seen in Germany,” Journal of Popular Culture 27.3 (1993): 185.

father’s Black servants but looks down on them with revulsion. At the same time, she is positively contrasted with both her German aunt Luise, whose revulsion against Blackness leads her to be rude and condescending to the servants, and with her young peer Grace Martini, a girl who has rejected her German roots to embrace American shallowness and racism. Felicia’s Christian compassion toward her father’s poor, uneducated servants is thus used to show the superiority of German settlers on the frontier. German-American Felicia straddles cultures and serves as both a missionary and a colonizing figure, working with her father’s poor servants to teach them to read the Bible, spreading German culture among her neighbors, and demonstrating tolerance and compassion where her American counterparts do not.

Felicia’s aunt Luise, who only reluctantly accompanied Felicia and her father to the United States, has a difficult time adjusting to the racial landscape of the American prairie. She is immediately repulsed by the Black servants in Karl Bertram’s employ and begins to regret she ever came to the United States. She complains about the smell and habits of the servants and is skeptical about their ability to keep the kitchen clean. She immediately resolves to take over the cooking herself, unable to overcome her disgust at eating food prepared by a Black woman, in particular doubting whether her hands were clean. She asks Felicia: “Do you really believe, child, that one can eat anything this black woman cooks up? Do you know for sure that she handles the edibles hygienically?”

Though by the end of the novel Luisa is better able to tolerate the Black servants, she is

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72 “Glaubst du denn, Kind, dass man mit Appetit essen kann, was dies schwarze Weib zurechtkocht?… weißt du bestimmt, dass sie sauber mit den Eßwaren umgeht?” Clément, Savannen, 10.
unable to fully overcome her Old World prejudices and continues to look down upon them.

Felicia and her aunt are both presented in stark contrast with another figure with German roots, Grace Martini, who has rejected her German heritage and embodies a stereotype of a young American woman: lazy, beautiful, exotic, profligate. Grace seems to embody a type of New World racism, looking down upon those who her serve her and making no efforts to help them or better their position. Grace interrogates Felicia about her efforts to teach the young, uneducated Black children, unable to understand why she would take the time to care about them. Grace describes the child Felicia has her arm around as “the little monstrosity” (“das kleine Ungeheuer”) and wonders, “How is it possible that you want to touch such a black monster?” Grace’s dismissive attitude toward Felicia’s servants bears a superficial resemblance to Aunt Luise’s ignorant, scornful attitude, but where Luise’s understanding of race is driven by her ignorance and inexperience, Grace has lived among other races her whole life and remains cruel and contemptuous.

Like the figure of Old Shatterhand, Felicia’s racial tolerance occurs only amid a racial and cultural hierarchy topped by white Germans. Felicia is initially puzzled as to how to respond to Grace’s questions about why she wants to help her father’s servants. She admits that while she loves (lieb haben) head servant Bridget, for the others she feels only a sense of responsibility driven by the religious education she received in

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Germany. She explains to Grace, “They are people just like us, even if there is much in them that makes us uncomfortable. It is the heart, not skin color, that matters before God; do we then have the right to act dishonorably against His creatures?” Felicia’s modesty, domesticity, and compassion make her superior to both her aunt Luise and Grace Martini. Likewise, the inferiority of those she shows compassion toward is unquestioned. When Felicia returns home from Germany, her father’s servants are captivated by her young womanhood:

The Black faces were all transfigured with joy to see their young mistress again. They all loved her tenderly, even though they had to suffer greatly under Fairy’s capriciousness and domination when she lived in her father’s house. That was all forgotten as they joyfully crowded around their young mistress; they could hardly believe that the wispy child had become such a thin, blooming young woman.

The appearance of young adult Felicia, a perfect example of white German womanhood, causes an almost religious reverence among her father’s servants. This is reinforced through the book’s illustration of the scene, reproduced as Figure 1.

In the depiction of this scene the grown Felicia stands upright in the center of the frame, with white space around her. Clustered in masses around her are the anonymous Black servants, all oriented toward her, either looking up or making supplicating

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75 “Sie sind ebensogut Menschen wie wir, wenn sie auch manches in sich haben, das uns unangenehm ist. Vor Gott gilt nicht die Hautfarbe, da gilt allein das Herz, dürfen wir uns da anmaßen, nichtachten gegen seine Geschöpfe zu handeln?” Clément, *Savannen*, 66.

76 “Alle die schwarzen Gesichter waren verklärt vor Freude, ihre junge Herrin wieder zu sehen, alle liebten sie zärtlich, obgleich sie, als Fairy noch im Vaterhause weilte, viel unter ihrer Willkür und Herrschsucht hatten leiden müssen. Das war jedoch alles vergessen, voller Freude umdrängten sie ihre junge Herrin und konnten kaum glauben, dass aus dem schmächtigen Kinde eine so schlanke, blühende Jungfrau geworden war.” Clément, *Savannen*, 7.
gestures. Their features are, at best, stereotypical, and at worst gruesome caricatures [see Figure 2].

Figure 1: Illustration depicting Felicia’s return to her father’s farm in Illinois.

Figure 2: Detail of servant’s face from Figure 1.
Though Felicia is kind to the servants, undertaking to read the Bible to them and teach the children to read and write, she nonetheless makes generalized pronouncements about all Black people based on racist stereotypes. Her tolerance extends only far enough to do what she perceives to be her Christian duty, but she otherwise displays disgust and contempt for the Black men and women around her. She repeatedly refers to all Black people as lazy or idle (träg) and is disgusted by their smell and the supposedly unhygienic conditions of their living quarters: “A hot, close atmosphere inundated the young woman, she involuntarily took a step backwards—the effluvia of these people were really awful—and then she quickly marched to the window and threw it open.”

When Felicia takes over weekly Bible readings because the only literate servant is in poor health, she unfavorably compares her audience to the Sunday school children she encountered in the German village of Demmin: “Her Black listeners did not have the same level of understanding as the Demmin village youth; she had to limit herself to the simplest of explanations, appropriate for a childish mind.” Nonetheless Felicia is the heroine of the story and is presented not only as good and kind but as showing the proper attitude towards other races, and she throughout the book she is positively contrasted with both her German aunt Luise and American Grace Martini.

While May’s and Clément’s works display a clear sense of German superiority, other works emphasize the importance of a general white superiority that cuts across

77 “Eine heiße, dumpfe Luft schlug dem jungen Mädchen entgegen, unwillkürlich trat sie einen Schritt zurück, die Ausdünstung dieser Menschen war wirklich schrecklich, dann ging sie schnell ans Fenster und stieß es auf.” Clément, Savannen, 22.

78 “Ihre schwarzen Zuhörer reichten mit ihrem Verständnis nicht an die Demminer Dorfjugend heran, da mußte sie sich auf die einfachsten Erklärungen, passend für ein kindliches Gemüt, beschränken.” Clément, Savannen, 57.
class lines and immigrant groups. In his novels Pajeken includes scenes that emphasize the importance of white solidarity on the frontier. Pajeken’s *Martin Forster* (1898) is another coming-of-age tale featuring a young German man alone on the frontier. Eponymous Martin lives among a Native tribe but feels increasing solidarity with other white settlers; he willingly overlooks the cruelty of his fellow white settlers but strongly condemns the bloodlust of the Native Americans he encounters. When young Martin is orphaned and left with almost nothing, he abandons his wagon train out of a sense of duty. Not wishing to become a burden to anyone else, he strikes out alone with his only inheritance: a rifle. He wanders alone through the wilderness until he comes across a trapper who takes him in. Martin’s relief is short-lived, for the unscrupulous man soon sells Martin (and his rifle) to a Native American tribe for ten bison pelts.

Martin, like the figures of Bob Gabert, Old Shatterhand, and Wörishöffer’s ethnic German peasants, exhibits an almost stereotypical German work ethic. Though he is initially treated as a slave, he earns a place in the tribe when he shows he is willing to work even when not compelled to with a whip. Martin’s German cultural values keep him separate from the tribe. He is horrified to learn he has been given a scalp of the ruthless man who sold him to the tribe and experiences an intense physical reaction:

“Pale, his eyes fixed on the ornament, Martin sank onto his bunk. With quivering hands he loosed it from his throat and threw it in the fire… Hot and cold flashes ran down his spin and a horror gripped his limbs like a fever chill.”

In emphasizing so strongly the

physicality of Martin’s reaction, Pajeken shows his response to be instinctive, product of not only his upbringing as a German but of a seeming innate racial superiority.

Martin’s sense of racial and cultural superiority continues to grow, even while he lives peaceably as one of the tribe. The turning point comes when two white men are brought into the camp as prisoners. Even though Martin recognizes the men as two highwaymen who stole from his father before his death, he still considers it his “Menschenpflicht” (human duty) to help his fellow white men.\footnote{Pajeken, \textit{Martin Forster}, 81.} Antilopenauge, the young woman who works as Martin’s servant, explains they have not had their pleasure (\textit{Vergnügen}) in torturing anyone since the previous summer and are therefore looking forward to slowly torturing Billy Clark and James Morgan to death.\footnote{Pajeken, \textit{Martin Forster}, 70.} While Martin admits that the men are “very bad people,” (“Sehr schlechte Menschen”) he is not convinced they have earned death. When he thinks back on the cruelty he has witnessed in the Native American camp, such as children being allowed to torture animals to death and grown men brutally mistreating horses, he wonders “How will these people, who have no pity for innocent creatures, treat their white, mortal enemies tomorrow?”\footnote{“Wie verführen diese Menschen, die kein Mitleid mit den armen Geschöpfen kannten, wohl am nächsten Tage erst mit ihren weißen, von ihnen tödlich gehaßten Feinden?” Pajeken, \textit{Martin Forster}, 73-4.} At this thought Martin’s path is clear and he chooses racial unity:

No! His human duty was to attempt to save the two prisoners. But – if he achieved this, he could no longer stay among the redskins. – Good! That was okay with him. He had his gun and ammunition again; he was also warmly clothed
now, and he was not lacking any blankets and pelts for open air camping. —
Forward!83

The “human duty” Martin feels only extends toward his fellow white men. He does not consider the natives he has lived among for months to be equals toward whom he must exert his “human duty.” Though they welcomed him as an equal and offered him membership in the tribe, he held himself aloof and rejected many of their offers. When he chooses to rescue the ruthless white men and leave the tribe, he thinks not of repaying the generosity and hospitality of the tribe who essentially rescued him from death alone on the frontier but instead thinks only of his physical needs—his gun and blankets—before leaving. Though whiteness is not explicit in this scene, it is implicit in the choices Martin makes. Martin instinctively identifies with his fellow white men, even though those men were bad, unscrupulous people who indirectly caused the death of his own father. He feels compelled to free them and save their lives because he considers them racial equals, distinct from the racially inferior natives among whom he lives.

Pajeken’s, Clément’s, and May’s novels set in the American West all thematize whiteness, though often unnamed or indirectly. All three authors construct a particular notion of white Germanness that rests on the cultural superiority of Germans—their piety, work ethic, sense of duty, and respect for human life—and white racial superiority over Black Americans and Native Americans—their cleanliness and intelligence, greater degree of culture and civilization, and ability to cope with the extreme physical exertion

83 “Nein! Seine Menschenpflicht war es, zu versuchen, die zwei Gefangenen zu retten. Aber – wenn es ihn gelang, so war auch seines Bleibens nicht länger bei dem roten Volke. – Gut! Das war ihm gerade recht. Seine Waffe und seinen Schießbedarf besaß er wieder; auch warm gekleidet war er jetzt, und ebensowenig fehte es ihm an Decken und Fellen zum nächtlichen Lage im Freien. – Vorwärts!” Pajeken, Martin Forster, 74.
required of life on the frontier, even surpassing Native Americans in their skills in horseback riding and buffalo hunting. While Pajeken and May showcase young manly Germans who master the frontier, Clément offers a similar notion of white German superiority in the body of a young German woman who is presented as an ideal missionary and colonizer. These gendered and racialized portrayals of German identity constitute a claim to the American West on behalf of Germans.

**Conclusion**

Clément, Wörishöffer, Pajeken, and May invite their young readers to imagine a world in which German settlement occurs not only in the metropole but in the untamed wilds of North America. The notion of German identity they craft in their novels is not tied to the continental borders of Germany but persists across space and time, growing stronger through colonial settlement in the Americas. The understanding of German identity in these works is also embedded in a racialized colonial worldview that places white Germanness atop a racial and cultural hierarchy. These fictional German characters show their German national and cultural superiority over Americans and other white settlers and a racial superiority over the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Recurring colonial motifs are found across the breadth of writing about the Americas for young people in Wilhelmine Germany. Not only did those who wrote and produced literature for young people show a colonialist mindset, but so did those who reviewed and critiqued that same literature, as I showed in Chapter One. Robert Rheinfels’ model Prussian-style settlement, the Kinski family’s reformed Räuberstadt, and Felicia Bertram’s orderly Glückstadt are not examples of the “Wild West,” but rather
form a domesticated West, a space brought under control by white settlers and rendered orderly, productive, and German.
CHAPTER 3
WHERE BOYS BECOME MEN: THE GERMAN COLONIAL ADVENTURE NOVEL

Introduction

British naval historian Oliver Warner once joked about the novels of Frederick Marryat (1792-1848), one of the nineteenth century’s foremost authors of British imperial literature for boys: “East, west, landed affluence is best.”¹ This tongue-in-cheek remark references the often formulaic plot structure of Marryat’s dozens of novels written in the 1830s and 1840s: a young male protagonist generally from the middle class heads off into the world, makes his fortune in the colonies or at sea with the British Navy, and returns to the metropole to settle as a member of the landed gentry.² Movement in Marryat’s imperial novels is a closed loop, with protagonists traveling from metropole to colony and then back, richer than before, and the British Empire is thus put to use as a source of enrichment for sons of privilege from the metropole.³

² Marryat’s most well-known works include The Settlers in Canada (1844), Mr. Midshipman Easy (1836), Peter Simple (1834), and Poor Jack (1840). For a critical reading of Marryat’s imperial fiction see Patrick Brantlinger, “Bringing Up the Empire: Captain Marryat’s Midshipmen,” in Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 47-70.
³ There are vast amounts of scholarship on British imperial literature, but for more on literature for young people see in particular Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness; Joseph A. Kestner, Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction, 1880-1915 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); M. Daphne Kutzer, Empire’s Children: Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children’s Books (New York: Garland, 2000); Jeffrey Richards, ed., Imperialism and Juvenile Literature (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989); and Michelle J. Smith,
Even a cursory examination of German imperial literature reveals how differently it functions, dealing instead with the fact of German emigration and presenting a German future that lies outside the European borders of Germany. As I showed in Chapter Two, Karl May’s Western fantasies or Sophie Wörishöffer’s and Friedrich Pajeken’s tales of Germans who tame the Wild West all thematize permanent German settlement outside of Europe. The girls’ literature set in German Southwest Africa discussed in the following chapter also overwhelmingly presents stories of families who leave Europe to craft a new German homeland in the colonies, with no plans to return. These novels deal with the permanent settlement of Germans abroad and are therefore more concerned with patient and incremental economic development than with quick resource extraction.

In this chapter I will offer a reading of the German colonial adventure novel as a kind of puberty novel for boys. Written at a time when there was great concern about the physical and moral fitness of the group identified as adolescents, these novels explore this liminal stage. They show boys who travel abroad to the American West, South America

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4 Kara Getrost repeatedly discusses this difference between British and German imperial literature, for example on 170 and 250: Getrost, “From Innocent Play to Imperial Survey: Adolescent Rites of Passage in the British and German Adventure Novels of Sub-Saharan Africa, 1870-1905” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, 2008).

5 The publication of pioneering American psychologist G. Stanley Hall’s Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime and Religion in 1904 is seen as a watershed moment in the study this age group and developmental stage, but it built on decades of earlier work some of which took place at German universities. See the discussion in Getrost, “Innocent Play,” 15-16 and John R. Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations (New York: Academic, 1974), particularly the chapter “Boys Will Be Boys: Discovery of Adolescence, 1870-1900,” 95-132.
or Germany’s African colonies to spend their period of youthful wildness engaging in adventures—hunting big game, treasure seeking, scouting among the natives—before settling down to the real work of German colonialism as adult men. These novels contain idealized depictions of German colonial and imperial efforts abroad; German missionaries, farmers, and colonial authorities are presented as virtuous, concerned with sustainable economic development and fostering a native labor force that values hard work and respects their colonial overlords. On their journey to manhood these boys demonstrate their physical prowess and moral fitness to be colonizers. While contributing to the German colonial mission abroad, they also undergo their own transformations from boys into men and colonizers.

Work is a central theme in these German colonial novels, with it serving as a structuring principle that shapes the narratives and the protagonists’ journeys to manhood. The hard work required of life in the colonies forces young, immature men to transform into adults and take their place in the colonial racial hierarchy. While work helps shape German boys into men, it also helps transform the natives into docile colonial subjects. The need to train African natives into a workforce was often offered as a justification for German colonial efforts, and it forms a key part of German colonial discourse as reflected in literature. Work thus also becomes a way to portray the colonial experience as mutually-transformative, where both colonizer and colonized grow, change, and benefit.

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The story of nearly all boy heroes of adventure novels ends with either their assumption of adult responsibilities (and often marriage) in the colonies or a miraculous reunion with a long-lost father or other patriarchal authority figure. Thus, after a time of wildness and adventure, they accede to their proper places in the patriarchal colonial order at the end of the novel. It is important to remember that rather than reflecting either German colonial policy or the lived experiences of Germans abroad, these works instead reflect metropolitan concerns with the importance of the colonies to the metropole and fear of loss to the nation caused by mass emigration in the late nineteenth century. In presenting fantastic stories of adventures abroad that end in miraculous reunions and the reconstruction or founding of new German families, they serve to neutralize fears about the effects of colonialism and emigration. Rather than as places of dispersal or the disappearance of Germanness through assimilation, Germany’s colonies and other foreign territories instead become [fictional] spaces for the strength and endurance of German national identity even outside the European borders of Germany.

**The German Colonial Adventure Novel**

Though it never achieved the popularity of its British counterpart, German adventure literature for boys was nonetheless an important segment of the youth book market, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Few authors had direct experience with the territories they wrote about: some had missionary or military experience, but more commonly authors came from the fields of journalism or education.

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and were often enthusiastic members of colonial organizations. Novels written by metropolitan authors showed Germans who lived all over the world—in Germany’s African colonies, particularly East Africa and German Southwest Africa, in the wilds of North America or the Amazon rainforest—involved in similar scenes of action and adventure. As Getrost notes, the young male heroes of these novels undergo what she terms “rites of passage”—hunting, climbing trees, interacting with the natives, and exploring caves—on their journeys from boyhood to manhood, serving along the way as intermediaries between the adult colonizers and the childlike native others. Similar scenes of adventure are found not only in German books by authors such as Eginhard von Barfus, Otto Felsing, Rudolf Scipio, and Ludwig Foehse, but also in British books set in sub-Saharan Africa.

In this chapter I will focus primarily on works by two authors of adventure novels—Sophie Wörishöffer, whose *Im Goldlande Kalifornien* (1891) was discussed in Chapter Two, and Carl Falkenhorst (1853–1913). I have chosen to focus on these two authors as representative examples of popular authors of adventure novels for boys in Imperial Germany; they are also two of the very few authors of adventure novels from this period that have attracted any scholarly attention. Though they explore similar

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8 Benninghoff-Lühl, *Deutsche Kolonialromane*, 53; Getrost, “Innocent Play,” 44.

9 Getrost offers a good but non-comprehensive bibliography of German and British adventure literature set in sub-Saharan Africa: “Innocent Play,” 261-3.

10 Scholarly attention to authors of adventure literature from this period is relatively scant. In addition to scholarly works by Grewling (2014) and Steinbrink (1983), Wörishöffer’s works come under consideration in a biography by Karin Tuxhorn, *Mit Sophie Wörishöffer ins Abenteuerland: Vertraute Heimat, eigenartige Landschaften, unbekannte Ethnien und Kulturen* (Hamburg: Kovac, 2008), and Falkenhorst’s œuvre has been explored in Getrost (2008) and Marieluise Christadler, “Zwischen Gartenlaube und Genozid: Kolonialistische Jugendbücher im Kaiserreich,” in *Die Menschen sind*
themes in their works, they differ greatly in their backgrounds, writing processes, and the settings of their novels. Wörishöffer wrote what one might call generalized adventure novels of many different types—seafaring novels, Siberian adventures, gold-hunting in California, treasure hunting in the Amazon, and big game hunting in India and Africa. All told she published over a dozen books for young people and a similar number of works for adults.\textsuperscript{11} Falkenhorst, on the other hand, focused exclusively on Germany’s sub-Saharan African colonies, particularly East Africa and Cameroon. Wörishöffer wrote to support herself after the death of her husband. The Altona-based author never traveled far from her home, certainly never as far as the exotic locales she described in her books; instead she reportedly received her assignments from her publisher, Velhagen & Klasing, along with source books on geography and natural history of those regions.\textsuperscript{12} Falkenhorst also lacked direct experience with the territories he wrote about, but his knowledge of the colonies came from his work as a teacher of natural sciences.\textsuperscript{13} After leaving his education career, Falkenhorst became a journalist, working as an editor of bourgeois illustrated magazine \textit{Gartenlaube} and writing colonial adventure novels for young people.


\textsuperscript{11} The exact amount of Wörishöffer’s literary output is unknown due to the many pseudonyms she employed, and there is scholarly disagreement about whether certain works can truly be attributed to her or not. See Tuxhorn, \textit{Ins Abenteurland}, and Grewling, “Inventing America,” for a more complete discussion of Wörishöffer’s pen names.

\textsuperscript{12} Wörishöffer’s writing process and the boxes she received from her publisher are mentioned repeatedly by scholars although the precise source for this claim is unknown. See Grewling’s note 10 for more, “Inventing America,” 122.

\textsuperscript{13} Getrost, “Innocent Play,” 61.
on the side.\textsuperscript{14} He wrote with a stated purpose of educating Germany’s youth about the country’s colonial possessions.\textsuperscript{15} Falkenhorst was also a prolific author, writing dozens of books, including the ten-volume \textit{Jung Deutschland in Afrika} (Young Germany in Africa, 1894-1897) series, the \textit{Afrikanischer Lederstrumpf} (African Leatherstocking, 1888-1889) trilogy, a twelve-volume \textit{Bibliothek denkwürdiger Forschungsreisen} (Library of Memorable Journeys of Discovery, 1890-1891) and a series called \textit{Jung Deutschland in der Südsee} (Young Germany in the South Seas, 1903-1904) which had at least two volumes.

Here I will focus in particular on one novel by Wörishöffer and two from Falkenhorst’s \textit{Jung Deutschland in Afrika} series, \textit{Der Baumtöter} (Treekiller, 1894) and \textit{Die Tabakbauer von Usambara} (The Tobacco Farmers from Usambara, 1895).

Wörishöffer’s \textit{Die Diamanten des Peruaners} (The Peruvian’s Diamonds, 1889) tells the story of Benno Zurheiden, a young German man who, when he runs afoul of his strict uncle, is shipped off to South America “to compel him to obey!” (“um ihn zum Gehorsam zu zwingen!”).\textsuperscript{16} On the ship, however, he encounters a young man named Ramiro and agrees to set off with him on a perilous quest through the Amazon rainforest to Peru to search for his missing family diamonds. \textit{Der Baumtöter} has a protagonist with a similar backstory; young German Hans Ruhl yearns for adventure and dreams of

\textsuperscript{14} Fore more on the importance of the magazine \textit{Gartenlaube} in building the German national imagination in the nineteenth century see Kirsten Belgum, \textit{Popularizing the Nation: Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900} (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1998).
\textsuperscript{16} Sophie Wörishöffer, \textit{Die Diamanten des Peruaners: Fahrten durch Brasilien und Peru} (Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1889), 71.
striking it rich in Africa. His father sends him to work on a plantation in Cameroon, hoping he will soon get these dreams out of his system and gain practical knowledge of farming and planting. Hans initially spurns the advice of his mentor, Dr. Graubart, and attempts to earn money quickly by harvesting the India rubber that grows wild in the hills. The natives are unappreciative of his efforts to civilize them, and the ultimate result is a horrendous massacre, after which Hans returns to work with Graubart on his plantation. *Die Tabakbauer von Usambara* also features a hero’s transformation, this time of the native Tom from the Usambara mountain region of present-day Tanzania, who overcomes his pride and learns to properly serve his German colonial masters and help in the process of German colonization in German East Africa.

Though their biographies and imperial careers offer contrasts, Falkenhorst’s and Wörishöffer’s adventure novels show distinct thematic similarities, and these two authors were influential in establishing literary colonial discourse that later authors built upon. In this chapter I will also briefly discuss novels that date from a later period of German colonial endeavors and directly address the colonial wars in German Southwest Africa: Gustav Frenssen’s *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest* (1906), Jean Gümpell’s *Ins Land der Herero* (1904), and Friedrich Meister’s *Muhérero Rikárera* (1904). Though the wars and violence in the German colonies after the turn of the century changed the tenor of political debates about colonialism, colonial literature still retains the same kind of civilizing discourse found in Falkenhorst and Wörishöffer. These novels balance colonial elements with adventure elements to overcome the potential contradictions involved. While colonial novels chronicle the generally social project of settling a new territory, involving military, bureaucratic, and civilian populations, adventure novels usually
feature protagonist engaged in solitary pursuits such as exploring and discovering new lands. Further, adventure novels often contain potentially subversive elements, featuring, for example, male protagonists who break the rules, such as boys who defy their parents and run away to sea. It was precisely this aspect of adventure novels that so concerned members of the Youth Book Movement, and the pages of journals such as Jugendschriften-Warte and the Pädagogische Zeitung often featured stories of boys whose imaginations were inflamed by reading too many adventure novels and who subsequently defied their parents or tried to run away, as discussed in Chapter One.

In chronicling the difficult teenage years of angst and rebellion against an exotic backdrop, I argue that the authors of these colonial adventure novels created the male counterpart to the female Backfisch novel. Just as Backfisch novels showcase female adolescence and rebellion and serve to socialize young women into their anticipated roles as German wives and mothers, adventure novels do the same for boys.17 As novels written for boys—with subtitles such as “a book for youth and families” (“ein Jugend- und Familienbuch”) and “told to mature youth and the folk” (“der reiferen Jugend und dem Volke erzählt”)—these novels offered models of masculine development and identificatory figures for the young male audience. After a period of wildness and adventure, protagonists settle down, with authors thereby emphasizing the importance of importance of family, civilizing efforts, and stable life. Romantic cowboy figures like Karl May’s Old Shatterhand, exploring the Wild West in solitude or with only another man for company, are relatively rare. Instead these novels show young men who learn to

17 The role of the Backfisch book in socializing young women has been thoroughly documented by scholars such as Gisela Wilkending and Dagmar Grenz and will be further discussed in Chapter Five.
accept their role in society, to interact with, teach, and manage the native population, and to serve as colonizers within the German colonial realm and beyond. Boys’ novels can best be identified by the author, publisher, and subtitle rather than merely the age of the protagonist. Though *Backfischbücher* generally feature teenage heroines, the protagonists in boys’ novels vary in age from teenager into mid- or even late-twenties, but these unmarried protagonists are portrayed as young and engaged in a kind of extended adolescence in the colonies.

Like the *Backfisch* novel, adventure novels are predictable and formulaic, generally ending with the restoration of patriarchal order and authority at the end of the novel. After a period of adventure-seeking in the colonies, the Wild West, or another territory where he exhibits great skill and prowess, the young protagonist is either returned to the bosom of his family or starts his own family. By putting a finite end to the young protagonist’s days of wandering and adventure at the end of the novel, these authors are able to balance competing book market demands. With these stories ending in the hero forming his own colonial German family or miraculously reunited with his long-lost parents, they are able to contain both the exciting adventures designed to entertain the reader and a moralistic or educational lesson about German colonialism and German identity abroad to please parents, teachers, and critics.

These novels must also be read as colonial fantasies. Though they reflect and respond to the political and social issues of the time, in particular mass emigration to the Americas, the accession of colonies in the 1880s, and the increasingly imperial culture in the Wilhelmine German metropole, these novels do not reflect reality, but rather the wishes and desires of metropolitan authors and audiences. In this way authors like
Wörishöffer and Falkenhorst, though living and writing while Germany was engaged in colonial and imperial projects abroad, are not unlike Zantop’s “armchair conquistadors.”

**Coming-of-Age in the Colonies**

Adventure novels present Germany’s colonies or other far-flung territories as proving grounds of masculinity, places where boys go to become men. In this way these colonial adventure novels are the direct counterparts to the *Backfischbuch*, which narrated the transition from girlhood to womanhood for German girls, thematizing the difficult years of puberty. Once young men like Hans Ruhl have grown they must fully engage with the German colonial mission, which is presented as a less exciting endeavor than the exploration, treasure hunting, and waging war these young men engage in during the transitional state of adolescence. While female heroines like Trotzkopf must learn to suppress wildness in favor of feminine values like duty, modesty, and self-sacrifice, young men like Hans and Benno travel to wild, untamed lands like pre-colonial Cameroon and the Amazon rainforest to exercise the wildness out of their systems. These young, virgin lands are contrasted to the old, corrupt spaces of the metropole and presented as a pure environment where boys can become proper men.

The process of maturation these young heroes undergo bears a resemblance to the *Erziehung zur Arbeit* undertaken with the native populations. The native populations are generally portrayed as childlike and in need of reform; teaching them to work is a way of helping them to “grow up.” The development of the hero in progressing from an

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18 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 17.
adventure-seeking young man to a proper colonial master in some ways resembles that of
the native who transforms from a lazy or rebellious person into a proper colonial subject.
Tom, the protagonist of Tabakbauer von Usambara, for example, struggles with greed
and pride but disproves Dr. Schwalbe’s fears that he will regress, or, literally
“vernegern,” a racist term roughly equivalent to “going native” and related to the term
more common in German colonial discourse, “verkaffern.” Instead he eventually
submits to German colonial authority and abandons his desire to become a great, wealthy
planter, opting to grow cotton rather than the cash crop tobacco: “But above all I will be
able to be a good role model for my fellow countrymen. Farming in Waschamba is
already worth something, and it will bear rich fruit if someone improves it. That will be
my task.” In moderating his expectations and settling for incremental development and
serving as a positive influence to those around him, the story of Tom’s development
strongly resembles that of another hero from Falkenhorst’s series, Hans Ruhl.

Hans, the protagonist of the first volume of from the Jung-Deutschland in Afrika
series, Der Baumtöter, must learn to be a proper colonial ruler through a series of
exciting misadventures. He initially traveled to Africa to satisfy his lust for adventure: “I
don’t fear the dangers of the far away, foreign world. The unknown entices me…” His
father consented to his schemes on the assumption he would soon tire of Africa, and

19 “Nach und nach wird er vernegern und in die Wakilindiart zurückschlagen!”
Falkenhorst, Tabakbauer, 167.

20 Vor allem aber kann ich dann meinen Landsleuten mit gutem Beispiel vorangehen. Der
Ackerbau der Waschamba ist schon heute etwas wert, und er wird reiche Früchte
tragen, wenn man ihn verbessert. Das soll meinen Aufgabe sein.” Falkenhorst,
Tabakbauer, 172.

21 “Ich fürchte nicht die Gefahren der fernen, fremden Welt. Das Unbekannte lockt
mich…” Falkenhorst, Baumtöter, 8.
when the wanderlust was out of his system he would return home to Thüringen, having learned practical skills on a German plantation abroad. However, he longs for the bygone days of African exploration and is not initially content to settle down and work on a plantation. Instead he comes up with an ambitious plan to harvest and sell the India rubber that grows wild in the hills, but the natives only want to spend the money they earn on alcohol and guns, and Hans turns from the business in disgust when competition over the India rubber results in a mass slaughter. He has seemingly misunderstood the purpose of the German colonial mission in Africa; the explorers and adventurers belong to a past era of colonial exploration, and get-rich-quick schemes only serve to do harm. As his mentor Graubart explains to him, “What it comes down to now is to join the long, long neglected Africa to the rest of the cultural world as a useful limb.”

Falkenhorst’s novels celebrate German colonial efforts in Africa, and Der Baumtöter consequently ends with an idyllic portrait of flourishing farms and industry and the beginnings of a colonial civilization in Cameroon: “The better among the Blacks allied themselves with the Germans, and the German flag now wafts over this vast land, auguring protection for everyone who behaves uprightly and wants to work. Cameroon blooms and grows.”

Hans has settled down to the quiet life of a planter, working with these “better among the Blacks” in the valley to spread the colonial mission but hopes that one day the “wild men of the mountains” (“wilden Herren der Berge”) can also be civilized.

22 “es gilt das lange, lange vernachlässigte Afrika als nützliches Glied an die Kulturwelt anzuschließen.” Falkenhorst, Baumtöter, 10.

For the heroes of German colonial literature for boys, repudiating adventure is a part of growing up. Hans’s process of maturation clearly mirrors that of Tom from *Tabakbauer from Usambara*. Both overcome their greed and desire to amass quick wealth to instead embrace the slow, incremental progress of sustainable colonial development. Their pride and impatience lead them to have misadventures that drive the plot, but by the end of their novels they have learned from their mistakes and gained respect for the colonial hierarchy and an understanding of their place within it. This process of transformation is a recurring pattern in colonial adventure novels. Another Falkenhorst hero, Schmidt from *Der Fürst des Mondlandes* (Ruler of the Moon Land) is much like Hans, pining for the bygone era of African exploration. He lies to colonial authorities, claiming to be a merchant when he really plans a dangerous expedition to trace the source of the Nile to the *Mondgebirge* and the mysterious, mythical white people who supposedly live there. The expedition ends in disaster, with Schmidt deserted and betrayed by his guides, his numbers decimated, and forced to turn to stealing cattle to survive. He is duly chastened: “As an explorer he had crossed [this land] a few weeks ago and now he fled across it—as a cattle rustler.”

By the end of the novel, though he regrets he was not able to discover all he wished to, he has recognized the wisdom and prudence of the colonial authorities, and the patriarchal order is thus restored. The boy or young man’s period of rebellion and independence comes to an end as he learns to better appreciate his elders and authority figures. Likewise Benno from *Diamanten des...*

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Peruaners begins the novel as a disobedient nephew and ends it as an obedient son, prepared to take on adult responsibilities back in the metropole.25

When reduced to its simplest terms, the emotional growth of the protagonists of most colonial adventure novels resembles the formulaic plot structures of the Backfisch novel and its portrayal of young women’s journey from girlhood to womanhood. Just as Backfisch heroines learn to control their impulses to become proper, dutiful women, the heroes of colonial adventure novels learn from and renounce their rebellious streak and consequent misadventures. Heroes like Benno, Tom, and Hans learn to suppress their selfish personal desires for adventure and enrichment in the wilds of South America or Africa in order to be a part of the larger German imperial system. Both the Backfisch novel and the colonial adventure novel show young people who overcome their youthful rebellion to place themselves within existing social structures. While for a Backfisch heroine like Trotzkopf this might take the form of reading Werther, not showing proper deference to her stepmother, or playing pranks on her school friends, for the heroes of colonial adventure novels this involves running away to sea, joining a dangerous expedition through the Amazon rainforest or to seek the source of the Nile, or attempting to cash in the India rubber that grows wild in the Cameroonian hills.

The novels Tabakbauer von Usambara and Der Baumtöter present the story of German colonization of Cameroon from the perspectives of a native and a German colonizer respectively, but the mirrored journeys of the protagonists reveal that colonization changes both the colonizer and the colonized. Both Tom and Hans Ruhl, as

25 For more on father figures in German and British colonial novels see Chapter 3 of Getrost, “Innocent Play,” 113-177.
well as Schmidt, must learn to set aside their selfish desires, and the novel chronicles their transformational process from immature young men into proper members of the colonial order. Through these repetitive plot structures, the settings of adventure novels—the Amazon rainforest, the prairies of North America, and the wilds of Africa—emerge as ideal places for youthful adventure. Distant from the degenerate metropole and the overcrowded cities of Imperial Germany, these locations give an imaginative outlet for youthful adventure and harmless rebellion. Once young men have these impulses out of their system, they can renounce adventure to take their proper place in the colonial order.

**Reconstruction of the Nuclear Family**

*Backfisch* novels are often described as conservative because of their marriage-focused plots, with most ending in the betrothal of the lead female figure, but a closer look at colonial adventure novels for boys reveals a similar impetus. Though less focused on courtship and other aspects of romance, these novels and series nonetheless tend to end with the male protagonist either married or reunited with his long-lost father and therefore having taken his place in the paternal or patriarchal order. At the end of *Diamenten des Peruaners* Benno is reunited with his father and returns to Germany to begin his university education. Pajeken’s novels of the American West discussed in Chapter Two feature similar miraculous reunions, such as those of heroes Martin Forster and Robert Rheinfels; the former returns to Germany with his father while the latter stay in the United States to marry, start a family, and found a German settlement. White heroes Hans and Schmitt from Falkenhorst’s novels both submit to the authority of their elders and the German colonial officials, and Tom, one of Falkenhorst’s Black heroes,
ultimately chooses a proper wife from his own race and class and settles down to his place in the colonial order.

I connect this pattern to the transition from homosocial to heterosocial environments that scholars of the American West have noted.\textsuperscript{26} With the settlement of the frontier in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the “Wild West” transitioned from a primarily male space to a mixed-gender one, with the social environment marked by relations between the sexes, rather than among members of the same sex. German novels show the tensions created by this transition, for example when Falkenhorst repeatedly relegates African exploration to a bygone era, in contrast to a present focused on economic development and cultivating a complacent native workforce. Once Germany has taken formal control of African territories in the mid 1880s, it is no longer a space for solitary, adventuresome men but rather families, and colonial policy focused on bringing women to the colonies, in particular the settler colony of German Southwest Africa, to marry men and prevent sexual relationships between white German men and native women.\textsuperscript{27} In this way the novels of Karl May are outliers in showcasing rugged men living among men on the frontier, without marrying, having children, or settling down.\textsuperscript{28} Masculine only spaces for men to fight, drink, and explore in the company of other men like May describes were increasingly rare in the American West of the late nineteenth century.

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\textsuperscript{26} Andrew C. Isenberg, “The Code of the West: Sexuality, Homosociality, and Wyatt Earp,” \textit{Western Historical Quarterly} 40.2 (2009), 139-157.

\textsuperscript{27} See Lora Wildenthal, \textit{German Women for Empire, 1884-1945} (Durham: Duke, 2001). These efforts will be discussed further in the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{28} Arno Schmidt, for example, has written extensively on homoeroticism in May’s works: \textit{Sitara und der Weg dorthin: Eine Studie über Wesen, Werk & Wirkung Karl Mays} (Karlsruhe: Stahlberg, 1963).
and early twentieth century, and German adventure literature shows that they were also increasingly rare in literature as a colonialist mindset focused on settlement, development, and the propagation of a new generation of colonial Germans took hold.

**Virtuous Germans**

German adventure novels offer young male readers role models of benevolent colonizers, and German adventure novels reinforce the purity, superiority, and goodness of German colonial and imperial rule. The young German men who appear in these novels are, almost to a one, diligent, hard-working, dutiful, patient, and brave. Friedrich Meister writes in *Muhérelo Rikárera*, “Where else do you find such diligence, perseverance, loyalty and dependability as among us Germans?” However, the German colonial adventure novel goes beyond mere expressions of personal virtue to support the entire German colonial enterprise and present German imperial rule as disinterested and superior to that of other colonial powers.

These colonial adventure novels feature characters who are motivated not by a desire to personally enrich themselves but by a genuine, disinterested wish to serve the greater imperial project. These noble figures populate both Wörishöffer’s and Falkenhorst’s novels. In addition to Father Ernesto from *Diamenten des Peruaners* and Graubart from *Baumtöter*, a particularly apt example is German natural scientist *(Naturforscher)* Karl Hellmann, known as Bana Msuri (“guter Herr”) from Falkenhorst’s

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30 Getrost identifies this as a common theme across German adventure literature that is lacking in its British counterpart: “Innocent Play,” 59-61.
Zum Schneedom des Kilimandscharo (To the Snowy Peaks of Kilimanjaro, 1896) whose grave robbing—stealing the mask, weapons, and ornaments of a dead medicine man—is presented as a noble pursuit of imperial knowledge. When Bana Msuri encounters a dead holy man in the forest he is captivated by his dead body but has a moment’s hesitation: “He was drawn to the man’s mummery, which could become the centerpiece of a museum for ethnography. He wanted to take it with him, but it almost seemed to him as if he was robbing a grave.” He overcomes his compunctions because his “desire to collect” is “in the service of knowledge.” Once he has carefully wrapped the stolen objects, he covers the dead man’s body with branches and leaves but otherwise abandons him “to be eaten by vultures and beasts of prey.” The brutality and heartlessness of his actions are barely covered by the supposed purity of his motives. In the colonial logic of the novel, Bana Msuri, later described as being driven by the “holy fire of knowledge,” is completely justified, for the importance of displaying these ceremonial objects in a museum in the German metropole far outweighs any need to treat the dead native with respect and compassion.

As part of his journey to adulthood, Hans Ruhl must learn to listen to his elders and embrace a disinterested view of German colonialism. Initially Hans was optimistic that his plan to harvest India rubber would not only enrich himself but would benefit the

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31 “Ihn reizte die Vermummung des Mannes, die in einem Museum für Völkerkunde ein Prachtstück abgeben würde. Er wollte sie mitnehmen; aber es kam ihm vor, als ob er dadurch einen Leichenraub begehen würde.” Falkenhorst, Zum Schneedom des Kilimandscharo (Dresden: Köhler, nd [1896]), 100.
32 “Sammlungstrieb,” “im Dienste der Wissenschaft.” Falkenhorst, Zum Schneedom, 100.
33 “Raubtieren und Geiern zum Fraß.” Falkenhorst, Zum Schneedom, 100.
34 “Heilige Feuer der Wissenschaft.” Falkenhorst, Zum Schneedom, 161.
natives by providing them with an income. His mentor Graubart discouraged him from this plan because it would fail to properly instill a work ethic in the natives:

The Negro will earn money, it’s true, but in what way? Will he become accustomed to regular work? Absolutely not! He will lead a life of loafing about the forest and squandering his wages; he will be introduced to new necessities and become even more demanding, looking down with arrogance upon the worker who cultivates the land by the sweat of his brow.  

Graubart’s words present a fantasy of virtuous Germans who are driven by a genuine desire to better the lives of the natives, rather than mercenary motives. I will further discuss the trope of work and the German mission to teach native peoples the value of work in the next section.

In a similar manner, Benno from Sophie Wörishöffer’s *Die Diamanten des Peruaners* spends the novel aiding his friend Ramiro in locating and claiming his family diamonds only to turn down his own share of the treasure. Because he was reunited with his long-lost father and now has the means to attend a university in Germany, he considers it not only unnecessary but distasteful to accept a portion of the proceeds: “I would have to be insatiably greedy to take a penny from your children’s inheritance. No, no, my father and I will bring the treasure untouched to Europe and when that is achieved, will tell your wife and give her the whole sum, every dollar and penny.”

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36 “Mein Vater hat die Mittel, mich studieren zu lassen, das genügt vollkommen... ich müsste doch unersättlich sein, wenn ich von dem Vermögen Ihrer Kinder auch nur einen
Wörishöffer’s text thus both resembles other adventure novels in showcasing a young man on an adventuresome quest for lost diamonds and differs from non-German colonial adventure novels in the hero’s renunciation of his share of the treasure. Other contemporary adventure novels that feature found treasure, such as H. Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* contain heroes who, by virtue of being European, feel themselves entitled to any found wealth.\(^{37}\)

The young heroes of these novels learn about Germany’s benevolent colonial rule through the explicit contrast of Germany—and individual German settlers—with other European imperial powers. In *Diamenten des Peruaners*, German transplant Ernesto (Benno’s long-lost father) explains the brutality of Spanish rule to his son:

> You have no idea of the horrors that happen here, how mercilessly the Spaniards respond to any hint of espionage or secret enmity. To lock a house’s doors, barricade the area and burn everyone inside the buildings is normal to these people. It happens every day. \(^{38}\)

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\(^{38}\) “Sie ahnen nicht, welche Greuel hier stattfinden, wie unbarmherzig bei dem geringsten Verdacht der Spionage oder der heimlichen Gegnerschaft die Spanier verfahren. Eines Hauses Thüren zu verschließen, die Umgebung abzusperren und alles, was in dem umzingelten Gebäude lebt, zugleich mit demselben zu verbrennen, das ist diesen Leuten ganz geläufig. Es geschieht jeden Tag.” Wörishöffer, *Diamanten*, 423.
Ernesto’s kindly and benevolent treatment of the natives provides a sharp contrast to the cruel and heartless behavior of the Spaniards described in the novel. English colonial rule comes under similar scrutiny in other colonial adventure novels. In *Muhéřero Rikárera*, for example, Friedrich Meister actually shifts blame for the Herero uprising onto English colonial rule in southern Africa, claiming it as an “indirect consequence of the Boer War” more than “any errors or sins on the German side.” Thus German colonial authorities have merely inherited troublesome geopolitical situations caused by the English and are actually blameless when it comes to the bloody conflict that has erupted. Getrost observes that this kind of positive portrayal of German imperial and colonial figures is a common trope in adventure novels, and indeed these are only two examples among the many such found in similar novels that portray Germans in imperial situations as virtuous and blameless.

**Putting the World to Work: Germans’ Civilizing Mission Abroad**

German colonial and adventure novels showcase male settlers engaged in the process of bringing order and civilization to other parts of the world, both in formal colonial contexts like Carl Falkenhorst’s novels set in Cameroon and German East Africa and in informal imperial situations such as Sophie Wörishöffer’s *Die Diamanten des*

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40 See Getrost’s discussion of this, “Innocent Play,” 59-60.
Peruaners, which features a German expatriate in Peru. Colonial novels with young female protagonists will be discussed in the following chapter. These virtuous Germans bring both capital and values to far-flung corners of the world. By starting plantations they create work opportunities for the natives and instill in them a German work ethic. Though much colonial writing rests on an agrarian ideal, with small farms presented as the ideal state for Germans to live and raise families, these stories of Germans who create plantations also show an industrial mindset, with an emphasis on rationalized use of raw materials and labor, on putting everything and everyone to work and not letting anything go to waste.41

The emphasis on work and teaching the native population the value of work is so pronounced in colonial novels that it should rightly be seen as a key aspect not only of colonial literature but of the German colonial mission. Sebastian Conrad has compared efforts to grow a native labor force in German colonial Africa to efforts to reform juvenile delinquents in the German metropole.42 These efforts also resemble those used with the Polish population on Germany’s eastern borders.43 This Erziehung zur Arbeit was presented as beneficial to both the German authorities who gained a competent native workforce and the natives themselves who would be better able to support themselves.

41 For an example of how this worked in practice see Andrew Zimmerman, Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
Wörishöffer’s *Diamenten des Peruaners* shows how Germans outside of official colonial contexts nonetheless bring with them the colonial, civilizing mindset. Benno is both captivated by the beautiful scenery around him and laments that so much bounty is wasted:

This setting seemed to the northerner just like a fairy tale… There grew an overabundance of the richest, finest fruits in every part of the forest; large yellow melons lay unobserved on the ground, supplies that would have cost thousands in Germany rotted here under the wet leaves without being of use or causing happiness to anyone.44

The implication of Benno’s observations is that neither the Spanish colonizers nor the natives are proper stewards of the land and its resources. From his German perspective Benno sees natural resources that have been wasted and implies Germans would make better use of the land by collecting the fruits that currently remain unused and unappreciated.

It is only when they reach the settlement of Ernesto on the Peruvian border that the young man finds someone who has not only created a useful, productive settlement, but has undertaken to civilize the natives. A native explains,

He is the good Father Ernesto, a great wizard who knows and can do all. He showed us how to build sturdy houses and make leather suits and boots; he brought us in connection with other white men so that we can profitably sell our pelts. Before we knew no iron tools and had no fruit fields; now each of us has a garden with grapes and oranges, a field with

Ernesto represents benevolent German patriarchal authority, and when he is reunited with his long-lost son Benno he can serve as a proper colonial role model to him and teach him how to be a man. In *Diamenten des Peruaners* Ernesto thus serves as the representative of German civilization. Though he has hispanicized his name—he was originally christened Ernst—Benno soon discovers that he is his long-missing German father. Ernesto has managed, almost literally, to lift the natives out of the Stone Age and into the modern era, motivated not by a desire to enrich himself but by a genuine wish to improve the lives of the native people.

With young Benno able to become a man under the guidance of the good and kind Ernesto, the superiority of Germans over both the native population and their Spanish colonizers is reinforced. The native peoples are shown to be deserving of their internalized sense of inferiority (“we poor redskins”), unable to properly make use of the bounty around them without the aid of a white German. Further, on his journey through the Amazon, Benno encounters violent and bloodthirsty natives who put their trust in an evil, lying medicine man who slits the throats of children. When he encounters Spanish rule in Peru, like the brutal treatment of the natives described above, Benno is able to

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contrast it with the behavior of his father and other Germans who govern with genuine concern for being good stewards of the land and bettering the lives of natives.

Falkenhorst’s *Jung Deutschland in Afrika* series shows how Germans in various colonial roles, including planters, merchants, and missionaries, all further the German civilizing mission in Africa by elevating the natives and teaching them the importance of work. Falkenhorst’s novels endorse a particular type of benevolent patriarchal racism, and the protagonist’s journey to manhood involves learning to understand his place within the racial hierarchy. The novel *Die Tabakbauer von Usambara* is a particularly good illustration of this. Falkenhorst showcases the German mission in Africa to instill a work ethic and colonial racial order through his protagonist Tom, a native Wakilindi who has been raised by a German missionary to be a kind of cultural mediator between white authorities and the native population. The missionary becomes the mouthpiece of German colonialism in the novel, explaining to Tom:  

Be good to the workers on the farm, but be sure to hold them to diligent work! With a good heart share in the fortunes of the natives; you know that we Germans only came to this land with good intentions. In Germany you experience at every turn that we aim to lead the Negro to a higher level of perfection and that we are their best friends and without any kind of hostile disposition.

46 The relation of Christian missionaries to German colonial efforts in Africa is a complicated issue in need of further research. At times they worked closely with colonial authorities while at other points their ends and methods were at odds with German rule. For more on the relationship of missionaries to colonialism and racial rhetoric, see Cindy Patey Brewer, “‘Wie Kann Man Neger Weiß Waschen?’: Representations of the Black Child in German Missionary Literature for Youth and Children, 1900-1920,” in *Imagining Blackness in Germany and Austria*, eds. Charlotte Szilagyi, Sabrina K. Rahman, and Michael Saman (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 9-28.

47 “Sei gut gegen die Arbeiter auf der Farm, aber halte sie auch an zu fleißiger Arbeit! Mit warmem Herzen nimm Anteil an den Geschichten der Eingeborenen; du weißt ja, dass wir Deutschen nur in guter Absicht in das Land kommen. Auf Schritt und Tritt konntest
Tom’s task is to serve as a good role model to the other natives and help them accept German colonial authority. As the manager of a plantation, he would be ideally placed as a middleman to channel colonial reform efforts onto the native population and help them develop an appreciation for hard work in the service of white men. In this quote we also see that the German missionary is virtuous for adopting and raising Tom, but his efforts were nonetheless not selfish but rather in the service of German colonialism.

Alongside exciting stories about a hunt for the source of the Nile in the legendary Mondgebirge (the Rwenzori Mountains which lie on the border of present-day Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) or a heroic attempt to defend rubber trees from greedy speculators, Falkenhorst’s œuvre is full of similar stories of the “Erziehung zur Arbeit” of the native subjects by missionaries and responsible colonists. These Germans engaged in a civilizing mission attempt to instill in natives a respect for the Kaiser and colonial authority and offer them responsible models of economic development. Rather than resource extraction, these model colonists focus on incremental growth and development for the benefit of everyone. Dr. Graubart from Der Baumtöter is generally presented in the novel as a virtuous colonist who is interested above all in bettering the natives to further German colonial goals. He notes the importance of creating a native workforce to the colonial mission and the ability of Germans to survive as colonial authorities in Africa:

du ja in Deutschland erfahren, dass wir bestrebt sind, die Neger zu einer höheren Stufe der Vollkommenheit emporzuführen, dass wir ihre besten Freunde und bar jeder feindseligen Gesinnung sind.” Falkenhorst, Die Tabakbauer von Usambara (Dresden: Köhler, nd [1895]), 12.
Africa is different than America. Over there in North America the European could settle and work the land without the help of the “Redskins.” In Africa we can’t work by the sweat of our brows, digging and plowing; we can’t handle that in this climate. We need the Negro and must learn to get along with them. Perhaps one day our Fatherland will support us in this by sending warships and troops to scare respect into the arrogant Negro kings.  

This passage shows the connection between work and the racial hierarchy. Here Falkenhorst draws on classic racial rhetoric of climate to describe Germany’s mission in Africa to groom a native workforce. The climate theory of racial development held that the various races of men were uniquely adapted to their environments. This short excerpt reveals the potential difficulty with mapping this onto the landscape of colonialism. Whites like Graubart and the other colonialist characters from Falkenhorst’s novels stand atop the racial hierarchy, their superior development making them able to manage, enslave, “erziehen” and colonize other peoples and places. However, in noting the inability of whites to perform manual labor, Falkenhorst both points to the need for a native workforce and the potential vulnerability of whites in the colonies. This can be seen in other colonial novels, perhaps most notably in Frieda von Bülow’s novel

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49 Pascal Grosse, Kolonialismus, Eugenik und Bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850 - 1918 (Berlin: Campus, 2000).
Tropenkoller (1896) which features male colonialist characters plagued with fever and illness.\textsuperscript{50}

Importantly, in these novels this hierarchical nature of racial and colonial relations is equally endorsed by white and Black characters, colonizer and colonized. Graubart admits that training a native workforce is necessary to enable German colonial rule, but this is still presented and accepted as a benevolent act, rather than a self-interested one. Characters like Tom from Tabakbauer and the workers on Ernesto’s plantation explain how they have benefited from contact with German settlers and colonizers. As in Karl May’s Winnetou, this serves to further German claims to colonial authority by showing native peoples who acknowledge the supremacy of white Germans and endorse their own colonization.

The character of Tom from Tabakbauer von Usambara best represents this use of minority characters as mirrors to reflect German cultural and racial superiority. Tom, a native who lives in the mountainous Usambara region of present-day Tanzania, initially struggles to fill the role dictated to him by his German masters. As the son of a native ruler, he believes he deserves more than to be the servant of white authorities. Over the course of the novel Tom learns the error of his ways and cedes his desire for power to those that he acknowledges as the superior and rightful rulers, the German colonial authorities:

\textsuperscript{50} The role of illness in Bülow and other colonialist authors remains to be fully explored. For more see Marcia Klotz, “White Women and the Dark Continent: Gender and Sexuality in German Colonial Discourse from the Sentimental Novel to the Fascist Film” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1994) and Lora Wildenthal, “‘When Men Are Weak’: The Imperial Feminism of Frieda von Bülow,” Gender & History 10 (1998): 53-77.
My Usambara already has a king that is as powerful, good and just as he could wish. His lord is the German Kaiser. But in order to make Usambara a happy land, our Kaiser needs good, just stewards. I want to be one such; I will remain what I am, the steward of [the settlement of] Fumoni!⁵¹

By the end of the novel Tom has thus come full circle, able to unite German values with a modesty and humility. He has embraced his role as a cultural mediator and is prepared to aid the Germans in their mission of *Erziehung zur Arbeit* and serve the Kaiser. This is similar to the example discussed in Chapter Two from Karl May: in helping Old Shatterhand complete his survey work for the railroad, Winnetou endorses and participates in his people's colonization. Characters like Winnetou and Tom reinforce German colonialism by acknowledging the superiority of German colonial rule and offering their approval.

**Colonial Violence in Adventure Novels**

Today Germany’s colonial empire is perhaps best remembered for the many particularly bloody chapters from its relatively brief history—including the Maji-Maji rebellion in 1905 in German East Africa and the Herero Wars (1904-1907) and subsequent genocide, the first of the twentieth century—but in contemporary novels, these wars and other episodes of colonial violence were presented as brief interruptions from the true colonial civilizing mission. What is now understood as an inherent part of the colonial project was at the time presented as an aberration, an obstacle to be overcome before Germans could return to their real work with the land and native

peoples. For example, Friedrich Meister writes in the introduction to *Muhérero Rikárera* that the “advancement of civilization” (i.e. German colonial efforts) always causes conflict but that now “new life blooms among the ruins.”

Novels that deal with Germany’s African colonial wars differ from earlier works by Wörishöffer and Falkenhorst but also build upon the paradigm they established for colonial adventure novels. The three novels I will briefly discuss—Frenssen’s *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest*, Gümpell’s *Ins Land der Herero*, and Meister’s *Muhérero Rikárera* in many ways better fit the mold of traditional adventure novels, with strings of adventuresome scenes that rapidly follow on each other, but these are framed as interruptions to the true work of German colonialism. Like in Wörishöffer’s and Falkenhorst’s coming-of-age novels, these war novels feature young male heroes who face adventure—here war against the Herero and Nama people—but who renounce it at the end of the novel to return to what is presented as the real work of German colonialism. Scenes of colonial violence are described in graphic detail to excite and entice young audiences, but at the end of the novel the conflict is presented as decisively ended, enabling the protagonist to participate in, or at least envision, the continuation of German civilizing efforts in the colonies. As a literary device, emphasizing that war is merely an interruption to the true cultural work of German colonialism allows Gümpell to, in a way, contain the adventure elements of the novel. While the substance of the book is devoted to gripping scenes of action, ending the novel on this note allows him to distance himself from those elements. In effect this places a frame around the action.

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elements of the story and enables Gümpell to claim the book’s purpose is to educate young people about Germany’s colonial mission and its importance. Gümpell essentially writes an adventure novel that can pretend to be something more educational and worthy.

A similar technique is deployed by Gustav Frenssen in *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest*. The novel begins with allusions to adventure novel tropes, with the narrator stating, “When I was a boy, I wanted to go to America… Around the time that I left school I said one day that I wanted to become a sailor.”\(^{53}\) Both the desire to travel to the Wild West of the United States and the desire to run off to sea are common occurrences in adventure novels. In his novel Frenssen foregrounds the difficulties and privations of a soldier’s life in Southwest Africa but notes at the close of the novel that approximately half of the soldiers who fought in the war wish to stay and settle permanently as colonists: “There was not a small number of us whom the land pleased the more they got to know it and who decided to remain and become farmers.”\(^{54}\)

The boy heroes of German colonial war novels come of age in the face of the drastic physical and mental challenges they face while living and fighting in German Southwest Africa. The narrator of Gustav Frenssen’s enormously popular *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest*, for example, experiences hunger, thirst and peril, painted in excruciating detail: Warmbold describes the book as “170 pages of heat, thirst, typhoid and dysentery, homesickness, combat, and death” and Christadler as an “Odyssey of


\(^{54}\) “Es waren aber nicht wenige unter uns, denen das Land desto mehr gefiel, je mehr sie es kennen lernten und die ernstlich bei sich beschlossen, zu bleiben und Farmer zu warden.” Frenssen, *Peter Moor*, 204.
“suffering” (“Leidensodyssee”).\textsuperscript{55} This narrative of the 1904 war against the Herero was one of the most popular contemporary novels set in Southwest Africa, selling more than 400,000 copies by 1944.\textsuperscript{56} In overcoming these challenges the boy hero demonstrates the strength of German bodies and the German spirit.

These physical challenges not only allow boys to become men physically but mentally, as well, with their juvenile enthusiasm for war maturing into mental and moral fitness. Meister’s \textit{Muhérero Rikárera}, for example, shows how joining the German military and fighting in Southwest Africa helps the two protagonists, Willy Wendorf and Karl Orlovius, grow into worthy German men. Karl consistently displays bravery and virtue, for example by filling in for Willy when he backs out of a “duel” with English officers and then not saying anything when Willy takes all the credit. When Karl is fatally injured in his successful attempt to rescue Willy from his Herero captors, loyal Willy is unable to bear the impending death of his friend. Karl, however, assures him, “You will bear it like a man,” which finally prompts Willy to live up to Karl’s words and confess to his shipmates his own past cowardice.\textsuperscript{57}

In becoming men while fighting in foreign lands, the young heroes of colonial war novels also learn about race. In describing the punishing landscape and the bestial natives, authors present the native population of Southwest Africa as another physical obstacle to overcome, like the heat or the aridity. In Jean Gümpell’s \textit{Ins Land der Herero}:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{55} Joachim Warmbold, \textit{Germania in Africa: Germany’s Colonial Literature} (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 72; Christadler, “\textit{Gartenlaube} und Genozid,” 76.

\textsuperscript{56} Warmbold, \textit{Germania}, 67.

\textsuperscript{57} “Du wirst es ertragen wie ein Mann.” Meister, \textit{Muhérero Rikárera}, 212.
\end{flushright}
Erlebnisse eines jungen Deutschen (1904)\textsuperscript{58}, for example, the uprising of the Herero is described as a kind of natural force. The novel, which purports to be “based on facts” (“auf Tatsachen begründet”), features a young male protagonist who travels to German Southwest Africa to join his brother, a farmer. He falls in love with the land and is swept up in the war when it breaks out. Gümpell attributes the uprising to a period of prolonged drought and the treachery of Samuel Maharero\textsuperscript{59} and he describes the start of the war thus: “Completely unexpected, just like an elemental event (elementaren Ereignis), the uprising broke over the land; hundreds of brave Germans fell victims to the beasts…” In characterizing the start of the conflict as a kind of natural disaster like a tornado or tidal wave rather than the product of human agency, Gümpell renders it another physical obstacle for German farmers to overcome in their efforts to tame the land and render it useful. Gümpell does not merely dehumanize the native population (calling the Herero “Bestien,” for example) but almost renders them invisible at times; this is particularly evident in the dozens of photographic illustrations that accompany the text. Most are aerial shots of landscapes, showing large vistas of empty space, devoid of people. This has the effect of presenting Southwest Africa as an empty land. Rather than a populous

\textsuperscript{58} I have been unable to locate any biographical information about Gümpell. He apparently authored another book, \textit{Die Wahrheit über Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika} (Cassel: Dufayel, 1905), and is described in publisher’s announcements as a “young German” (“jungen Deutschen”): in Ernst Tappenbeck, \textit{Wie rüste ich mich für die Tropenkolonien aus?} (Berlin: Süsserott, 1905), np.

\textsuperscript{59} As Paramount Chief of the Herero during the uprising, Maharero (1856-1923) is today celebrated in Namibia as a national hero.

\textsuperscript{60} “Ganz unerwartet, gleich einem elementaren Ereignis war der Aufstand über das Land hereingebrochen, Hunderte von braven Deutschen waren den Bestien zum Opfer gefallen…” Gümpell, \textit{Ins Land der Herero: Erlebnisse eines Jungen Deutschen} (Berlin: Süsserott, 1904), 128.
nation with several different ethnic populations, it appears barren and therefore in need of German settlement and influence.

The end of the novel returns to the question of German cultural development and colonial efforts in the colonies. Both brothers are injured in the conflict and return to mainland Germany on medical leave to recuperate. They fondly depart their adopted home (“Auf baldiges Wiedersehen, du schönes Land!”) and await the day they can return: “We were home again, to await the end of the war and then set out again anew to take up the interrupted cultural work with German diligence and German determination.”\(^{61}\) The colonial war in German Southwest Africa is thus explicitly described as an interruption of German “civilizing” efforts, which also has the effect of rendering the genocide of the Herero and Nama people as an “interruption,” as well.

These later novels set during the Herero wars show the influence of earlier imperialist writers like Falkenhorst and Wörishöffer. They build upon their construction of Germans abroad as benevolent, patriarchal colonizers, focusing on incremental economic development and fostering a work ethic among the natives. They place young male heroes in dangerous and challenging situations as soldiers, melding the older vision of German colonialism with extreme violence and presenting the one as necessary for returning to the other. These novels of the colonial wars in Southwest Africa also reveal particularly starkly the melding of adventure and colonial elements in German boy’s novels of this period, the “adventure-exotic-educational mixture” (“Abenteuer-Exotik-

\(^{61}\) “Man war wieder daheim, um die Beendigung des Krieges abzuwarten und dann von neuem hinauszuziehen, die unterbrochene Kulturarbeit mit deutschem Fleiß und deutscher Tatkraft wieder aufzunehmen!” Gümpell, Ins Land, 168.
Belehrungsmixtur”) that Christadler notes in Falkenhorst’s works. They feature boys who act as soldiers, scouts, and spies, risking life and limb to undertake daring rescue missions and engaging in pitched battles against both the Herero and the punishing elements, but after proving their worth and masculinity through these physical and psychological challenges they reinforce the importance of German colonial efforts by starting families, becoming husbands and farmers, and settling down to peacefully work the land.

**Conclusion**

In restoring the patriarchal colonial order at the end of the novel, these authors of colonial adventure novels ensure the maintenance of cultural and racial purity in spaces abroad where Germans live. The role of women, in particular young women and girls, in maintaining this racial purity in the colonies will be discussed further in the following chapter. Young men like Benno or Martin Forster, who are reunited with their biological parents over the course of the novel, end their days of seeking adventure alone in the wilderness to return to the metropole as dutiful sons. When heroes like Robert Rheinfels (from Pajeken’s *Bob* trilogy) or the immigrants in Wörishöffer’s *Im Goldlande Kalifornien* marry and begin families at the end of the novel, there is no danger of them “going native” or engaging in the mixed-race relationships that colonial authorities

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62 Christadler, *Gartenlaube und Genozid,* 73.

63 The death of Winnetou’s sister just as her romance with Old Shatterhand begins to blossom effectively nullifies the risk of racial mixing. In this way the plot resembles James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, which no doubt influenced Karl May, as it was available in hundreds of editions, translations, and adaptations by the late nineteenth century.
feared. In marrying white [ideally German] women and starting families, they ensure the continuation of Germandom abroad. This type of happy ending to colonial novels also serves to neutralize fears about assimilation and German emigration. With millions of Germans leaving the metropole for sites abroad, above all the United States, those left behind feared the loss to the nation if all these Germans were to assimilate. By portraying families miraculously reunited abroad and showcasing the establishment of new, German families in places like North and South America and Germany’s African colonies, these novels offer a fantasy to quell the fears of those in the metropole by showing an image of Germandom flourishing abroad.

Authors of German colonial adventure novels present colonial and imperial settings as the ideal locations for boys to become men. Wörishöffer and Falkenhorst, as two of the more popular and prolific authors from the early days of German colonialism, offer their young readers models of masculine development. Their lead characters travel abroad as young and immature boys, disobedient and yearning for adventure, and end the novel prepared to enter the adult world, more mature and with a better respect for their elders and authorities. These boys learn to manage native populations and to both appreciate hard work on an individual level and instill a work ethic in the indigenous population. Through this they also learn a kind of benevolent, patriarchal racism and enforce this racial hierarchy among the natives. After being physically and mentally challenged, faced with difficulties with the native populations and other colonial authorities and battling the elements, they emerge more mature, prepared to take on the roles that await them in the adult world as husbands, fathers, and colonizers.


CHAPTER 4
RACE, GENDER, AND COLONIAL VIOLENCE IN GERMAN GIRLS’ LITERATURE

Introduction

“Have you heard of the Herero, children?”

So begins one of the short stories in Else Ury’s first book publication, Was das Sonntagskind erlauscht (What Sunday’s child overhears, 1906). Written shortly after the Herero Wars in German Southwest Africa, at a time when most children no doubt had heard about the Herero people and their uprising against German colonial rule, the story does not portray colonial violence. Instead it shows how the whiteness and innocence of a young German girl can mitigate the threat of Black male violence in German colonial Africa. The story features a little girl named Anita who is left on her family’s colonial plantation with only her mother and an elderly servant when her father and the able-bodied servants leave to fight the Herero uprising. The first page of the story evokes Anita’s “blond and delicate” looks in contrast to the lurking threat of colonial violence outside her window in the form of the “dark figures” who sneak up to the house. The Herero, described like wild animals, quietly slinking and creeping (schleichen and kriechen) through the mimosa bushes up to Anita’s bedroom, have come to set the

64 “Kennt ihr die Herero, ihr Kinder?” Else Ury, “Das Abendgebet” (The Evening Prayer), Was das Sonntagskind erlauscht (Berlin: Globus, 1906), 214-217. “Sonntagskind” (Sunday’s child) refers to a particularly lucky person.

plantation on fire and kill everyone inside.\textsuperscript{66} The only thing that saves the German settlement and preserves the lives of Anita and her mother is the figure of Anita. Herero scout Kali-mali peers into Anita’s room with his “dark wooly head” and “black Negro face” and chooses to spare the girl when he hears her evening prayer.\textsuperscript{67} She asks God not only to protect “all the good people” like her father, mother, and the German Schutztruppe but also “the bad Herero” so that they might “not be so bad anymore and invade our homes.”\textsuperscript{68} Kali-mali is so touched by Anita’s words that he walks away with a tear in his eye, calling off his men and sparing the farm. It is more than just Anita’s words that save the colony; it is also her whiteness. Anita’s physical appearance is repeatedly mentioned in the very short story; her blondness alone is mentioned three times in the three-and-a-half page story, twice either by or from the perspective of Kali-mali. His gaze is immediately drawn to the “small blonde-haired girl,” seemingly oppressed and overwhelmed by her childish innocence, piety, and powerful whiteness.\textsuperscript{69}

I begin with Ury’s story because it perfectly illuminates the major theme of this chapter: the powerful symbolic force of young female figures in colonial novels. German colonial novels written for both adults and young people use young female figures to portray both the hopes and the fears engendered during the colonial project. As the bearers of German culture (\textit{Kulturträgerinnen}) and the future mothers of German

\textsuperscript{66} Ury, “Abendgebet,” 215.


\textsuperscript{68} “alle guten Menschen … Aber auch die bösen Herero nimm in deinen Schutz, lieber Gott, dass sie nicht mehr so böös sind und in unsere Wohnungen eindringen.” Ury, “Abendgebet,” 216.

\textsuperscript{69} “sein Blick blieb auf dem kleinen, blondhaarigen Mädchen haften.” Ury, “Abendgebet,” 216.
children in the colonies, they represent the potential of the colonies to become a new German homeland, but as young, unmarried women in wild Africa, they are vulnerable and can be violated. Female figures and their bodies thus come to stand in for the borders of race and nation in the colonies, and their lives and their purity must be fought for, with violence if necessary. Most works for young people set in Africa were colonial adventure novels, but here I will discuss a smaller subset of colonial novels that feature female figures and domestic life, primarily in the settler colony of German Southwest Africa. I will begin by providing historical background on colonialism and colonial writing for children and adults, paying particular attention to how German youth novels show the colonies as a new German homeland. I will then discuss the importance of women to the colonial project, and women’s role in maintaining racial purity in the colonies, focusing on the German parliamentary debates about mixed-race marriages in May 1912 and how these concerns are reflected in works for young people. Only a handful of colonial novels were written for young women (or with young female protagonists), and I will discuss four of them in this chapter.

While Agnes Sapper and Henny Koch portray female

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70 Silke Kirch offers an overview of these German colonial novels for girls in Wilkending, Mädchenliteratur, 148-164.

71 Agnes Sapper (1852-1929) is often mentioned in the same breath as Heidi-author Johanna Spyri because of her enormous popularity as an author of books for girls. She began writing in the early 1890s and supported herself as a writer after the death of her husband in 1898. She is most known for the novels Die Familie Pfäffling (1907), Das erste Schuljahr (1894), and Gretchen Reinwalds letztes Schuljahr (1901), as well as the book of essays and advice, Erziehen oder Werdenlassen? (1912).

72 During her career Henny Koch (1854-1925) wrote thirty books, primarily geared toward a young female audience, including Die Traut (1905), Irrwisch (1907), and Ein tapfères Mädchen (1914). Her novels were often serialized in bourgeois illustrated girls’ magazine Das Kränzchen, and many of them also feature young women who live or travel abroad. She also worked as a translator of American literature, publishing the first German translation of Huckleberry Finn in 1890.
figures in peaceful situations as bringers of female influence, new life, and German culture to the colonies, works by Valerie Hodann and Elisa Bake\textsuperscript{73} portray female figures whose lives and sexual purity are endangered by acts of colonial racial violence. I tie these two figures to Hans Grimm’s story “Wie Grete aufhörte ein Kind zu sein” and read them as illustrative of the ways in which the female figure takes on a symbolic role as the guardian of German racial and national-cultural identity in the colonies and can consequently be used to justify genocide against the Herero people.

**German Colonial Literature for Women**

With most of Germany’s colonial possessions located on the African continent, Africa took center stage in the German colonial imaginary and featured prominently in colonial literature for adults.\textsuperscript{74} The first narrative literature set in Africa appeared in the mid-nineteenth century, building on an earlier tradition of travel and missionary writing about the continent, but it is not until Germany’s formal acquisition of colonies that writing about Africa truly took off.\textsuperscript{75} Though often described as a masculine genre, colonial novels were written and read by women from the very beginning; in fact, the

\textsuperscript{73} Little biographical information is known about Elisa Bake (1851-1928). She lived in Hamburg and was active as an author and translator from the 1890s to the 1920s, with her high point of activity between 1911 and 1913. I have found no further biographical information about Valerie Hodann (1866-1939), other than a handful of further literary titles and that she was the life-partner of little-known dramatist Theodor Walther (1861-1927).

\textsuperscript{74} Sibylle Benninghoff-Lühl located more than five hundred colonial novels for her study, *Deutsche Kolonialromane 1884-1914 in ihrem Entstehungs- und Wirkungszusammenhang* (Bremen: Verlag des Übersee-Museums, 1983). She notes that they tend to differ little from one another and exhibit common patterns and tropes (7).

\textsuperscript{75} For more on this see Joachim Warmbold, *Germania in Africa: Germany’s Colonial Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).
person credited with being the creator of the colonial novel in Germany is a woman.\textsuperscript{76} Frieda von Bülow (1857-1909) came from a noble family and spent her childhood in Smyrna (Turkey), where her father was a Prussian consul. Her brother Albrecht eventually settled in German East Africa.\textsuperscript{77} Bülow was an active member of colonial organizations, founding the Deutscher Frauenbund für Krankenpflege in den Kolonien (German Women’s League for Nursing in the Colonies) before traveling to German East Africa herself in 1887. She began writing colonial novels in the late 1880s after returning from abroad (Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Novellen, 1892; Tropenkoller: Episode aus dem deutschen Kolonialleben, 1896; Im Lande der Verheißung, 1899). Her novels feature the “commonplace,” showcasing aspects of domestic life in the colonies such as dinner parties and household management rather than military campaigns, lion hunts, or other classical markers of African adventure narratives.\textsuperscript{78} Beninghoff-Lühl reads her novels as expressing frustration with German colonial policy and its neglect of the colonies.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{76} Marcia Klotz makes the claim for the masculinity of the German colonial novel in her dissertation, “White Women and the Dark Continent: Gender and Sexuality in German Colonial Discourse from the Sentimental Novel to the Fascist Film.” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2005), and it is echoed by Rosa Schneider, \textit{“Um Scholle und Leben”: Zur Konstruktion von “Rasse” und Geschlecht in der kolonialen Afrikaliteratur um 1900} (Frankfurt: Brandes & Apsel, 2003). The claim that Bülow is the “creator of the German colonial novel” is often repeated, here quoted in Warmbold, \textit{Germania}, 58.

\textsuperscript{77} When Albrecht died in 1892, Frieda had hoped to take over his estate but the Foreign Office at the time discouraged both the holding of extensive private estates and the settlement of unmarried women in German East Africa: Warmbold, \textit{Germania}, 52.

\textsuperscript{78} See Warmbold, \textit{Germania}, 59. Though Warmbold is quoting in his use of the term “commonplace,” he speaks very dismissively of Bülow’s writings throughout, calling them “German East Africa in \textit{Gartenlaube} Dress” (58).

\textsuperscript{79} Beninghoff-Lühl, \textit{Kolonialromane}, 149.
Dozens of women in addition to Bülow wrote colonial novels, travel narratives, and autobiographies about Germany’s African colonies.\textsuperscript{80}

\textbf{Colonial Young Adult Literature}

Literature for young Germans set in Africa focused primarily on the settler colonies of Southwest Africa and German East Africa, with some exceptions. While some authors, such as Sophie Wörishöffer, used parts of Africa as exotic set pieces for rollicking adventure narratives, many others adopted a more sober tone to tie their literature to the national colonial mission in Africa.\textsuperscript{81} Through these works, young Germans were taught how to be Germans in relation to their place in the world as colonizers and imperial citizens. Authors such as Carl Falkenhorst (1853-1913) positioned their colonial writings for young people as part of an effort to cultivate both

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{80} Many women wrote autobiographical works about their time in Africa. Among them are Helene von Falkenhausen (\textit{Ansiedler-Shicksale: Elf Jahre in Deutsch-Südwestafrika} 1893–1904, 1904), Clara Brockmann (\textit{Briefe eines deutschens Mädchens aus Südwest,} 1912), Adda von Liliencron (\textit{Krieg und Frieden. Erinnerungen aus dem Leben einer Offiziersfrau,} 1912), Margarethe von Eckenbrecher (\textit{Was Afrika mir gab und nahm. Erlebnisse einer deutschen Ansiedlerfrau in Südwestafrika,} 1911, republished in 1936), Lydia Höpker (\textit{Um Scholle und Leben: Schicksale einer deutschen Farmerin in Südwest-Afrika,} 1920), and Ada Cramer (\textit{Weiß oder Schwarz? Lehr- und Leidensjahre eines Farmers im Lichte des Rassenhasses,} 1913). This latter was written by Cramer in defense of her husband, who was prosecuted and ultimately jailed for severely beating his servants, including two pregnant women who later lost their pregnancies (Schneider, “\textit{Um Scholle,}” 131). Other women who wrote colonial novels include Orla Holm (\textit{Pioniere: Ein Kolonialroman aus Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika,} 1906), Lena Haase (\textit{Raggys Fahrt nach Südwest,} 1910), and Hanna Christaller (\textit{Alfreds Frauen,} 1916/1902).

According to Schneider’s research, most women who wrote on colonial topics were very involved in colonial organizations or lived in the colonies (47). One of the most comprehensive sources of biographical information on German colonial women authors who wrote about Southwest Africa can be found at \url{http://www.namibiana.de/namibia-information/who-is-who.html}.

\textsuperscript{81} Wörishöffer’s \textit{Das Naturforscherschiff} (1880), \textit{Das Buch vom braven Mann} (1882), and \textit{Durch Urwald und Wüstensand} (1886) are all set at least partially in Africa.}
national pride and imperial knowledge and to train future imperialists for work in the
colonies and metropole. Authors of adventure stories were generally middle-class, and
many of them came from military families or were members of colonial societies who
had a vested interest in promoting German colonial interests.

As adventure stories set in faraway locales increased in popularity at the turn of
the century, such fantastic literature was subject to accusations of being dangerous or
harmful. In consequence, authors sought to justify the existence of their literature, often
focusing on the necessity of educating young people about the colonies. Falkenhorst
framed his Jung-Deutschland in Afrika series with a foreword that emphasized its
educational mission. He writes that the series was written “to awaken early in our youth
and among the Volk an appreciation for colonial questions, for the tasks of the future.”

Drawing on contemporary critiques of cowboy-and-Indian stories, he positions his
African adventure novels as correctives to such wild, unbelievable tales and claims to

82 Falkenhorst’s dual careers show how the cultivation of German nationalism and
imperialism went hand-in-hand. Under his real name, Stanislaus Jezewski, he worked as
an editor of Die Gartenlaube, nineteenth-century Germany's most popular magazine,
which Kirsten Belgium, drawing on Benedict Anderson's notion of print nationalism,
reads as central to the creation of the German nation (Popularizing the Nation, 1998).
Die Gartenlaube presented itself as “a representative mouthpiece for the German Volk”
(20) and created an image of “Germany as a diverse yet spiritually united geographical
space” (33). Under the pseudonym of C. Falkenhorst, he penned dozens of colonial
adventure novels for young people, including the twelve volumes of Jung-Deutschland
in Afrika and a trilogy called Afrikanischer Lederstrumpf (An African Leatherstocking).

83 Benninghoff-Lühl 53; see her chapter on “Kolonialschriftsteller” for more on the
biographies of colonial authors and their relationship to German colonialism and
promoting colonial interests, (53-58).

84 See chapter one for a more in depth discussion of the Youth Book Movement and their
critiques of popular literature for young people.

85 “frühzeitig in unserer Jugend und dem Volke den Sinn für koloniale Fragen, für
Aufgaben der Zukunft zu wecken.” Falkenhorst, Baumtöter, 3.
offer young Germans “a deeper understanding for the value and the meaning of the new possessions” by educating them on the history, ethnography, geography, flora, and fauna of the new colonial territories.\textsuperscript{86}

I have therefore over the course of the last few years written some stories for the youth that are set on the Dark Continent. It was my honest attempt not to inflame overly impressionable fantasy through the reproduction of fairy-tale-like adventures, but rather to place the captivating influence of story telling in the service of instruction: youth will be made acquainted with particular African lands and peoples in an entertaining manner.\textsuperscript{87}

Although Falkenhorst clothes the description of his novels in the language of the pedagogical reformers, claiming to teach young Germans useful knowledge, he nonetheless ran afoul of youth book reformers like Heinrich Wolgast. Wolgast refers to the academic content of Falkenhorst's novels in \textit{Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur} as mere “scholarly asides” that young people will read over as they “stick to the progression of the plot.”\textsuperscript{88}

The language Falkenhorst used to justify his writing of colonial literature for young people also echoes that used by colonial organizations and school geographers. These groups saw knowledge of geography and ethnology, in particular of Germany’s colonial possessions, as necessary for future nationalists and imperialists. Bowersox

\textsuperscript{86} “ein tieferes Verständnis für den Wert und die Bedeutung des neuen Besitzes.” Falkenhorst, \textit{Baumtöter}, 4.


writes, “school geographers explicitly put their discipline in the service of German national strength; school geography became a matter of surveying, explaining, and thereby facilitating the expansion of colonial influence around the globe.”

Though membership in colonial societies such as the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft remained relatively small (only 43,000 at the time of the First World War), they were influential in shaping public opinion and tapped into broader popular interest in the colonies. Figures such as Bernhard Dernburg, German politician and colonial secretary, called for the “Koloniale Erziehung” (colonial education) of young people, to train them to be colonial officials, farmers, planters, and businessmen.

Colonial literature for young people draws on larger colonialist rhetoric to present Germany’s African colonies as the sites of new German homeland. Authors such as Falkenhorst draft an image of a German future that unmistakably lies outside the continental borders of Europe, and the settler colony of Southwest Africa in particular becomes a place for impoverished noble families and hard-working members of the middle class to establish farms and plantations and create a new agrarian German society. It is only in Africa that the “Volk ohne Raum” (people without territory) can find the wide-open spaces necessary for the cultivation not only of crops and animals but of the

89 Bowersox, Raising Germans, 61.
90 Conrad, Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte, 24.
91 Benninghoff-Lühl, Deutsche Kolonialromane, 32-33.
92 See Horst Gründer’s collection, da und dort ein junges Deutschland gründen: Rassismus, Kolonien und kolonialer Gedanke vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert, for many examples of this colonialist rhetoric (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999).
German future.  

Valerie Hodann’s *Auf rauhen Pfaden. Schicksale einer deutschen Farmerstochter in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika* (On Rough Paths: The Fortunes of a German Farmer’s Daughter in German Southwest Africa, 1910), for example, emphasizes the freedom of Africa and the opportunity to create new worlds there, calling it the “land of freedom” in which settlers live “in their own self-created empires—in paradise.”

This new homeland is presented as an empty space, ready to be shaped by German ingenuity and to serve as an outlet for the German work ethic. John Noyes reads in German colonial novels an attempt to work through the crisis of liberal capitalism that caused the impoverishment of rural Germany and consequent urban overcrowding.

Colonial novels set in Africa “fantasized a landscape in which subjective plenitude could be realized” and in this “anachronistic space” the “subject can once again act as lord over labor and the land.” Jean Gümpell notes in the introduction to *Ins Land der Herero* that his work has an educational message not unlike Falkenhorst's novels, hoping “to enrich young people’s knowledge of the best and most promising (zukunftsreichste) of our

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93 The phrase “Volk ohne Raum” comes from colonial author Hans Grimm’s 1926 novel of the same title, a nostalgic look back on Germany’s lost colonies. The phrase became a rallying cry for the political right, in particular the National Socialists in Weimar and Nazi Germany.


colonies.” Through his emphasis in the introduction on cultivating imperial knowledge for future generations of German colonists and in the body of the text on glorifying the simple, hard-working life of a German settler in Southwest Africa, Gümpell, like other colonial authors, embodies the anachronism Noyes describes. In his works the farms and plantations of Germany's African settler colony not only become a place to escape contemporary industrialized society into a mythical agrarian past but also constitute the future of Germany.

Authors of colonial novels emphasize the importance of building the German future in Africa through diligence and hard work. In Gümpell’s novel, Ernst writes to his brother Fritz to invite him to come to Africa, enjoining, “life here, while very beautiful, is also a lot of work.” The local medical officer in Valerie Hodann's Auf rauhen Pfaden makes a similar observation: “When you think… that even ten years ago Wilhelmstal was a desert-like steppe, you can only be amazed at what German intelligence and German diligence have accomplished here.” The lead character, Ernestine, in Elisa Bake's Schwere Zeiten: Schicksale eines deutschen Mädchens in Südwestafrika (Difficult Times: Fortunes of a German Girl in Southwest Africa, 1913) moves to the German colonies when her family loses its fortune; they have heard from a friend that there are

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98 “das Leben hier zwar sehr schön, aber auch sehr arbeitsreich ist.” Gümpell, Ins Land, 2.

99 “...Wenn man bedenkt,’ unterbrach der Stabsarzt die Stille, ‘dass Wilhelmstal noch vor zehn Jahren eine wüste Grassteppe war, so muss man geradezu staunen, was deutsche Intelligenz und deutscher Fleiß hier geschaffen haben.’” Hodann, Pfaden, 51.
opportunities in Africa for “competent agriculturalists.” Even though her uncle offered to pay for her art school, Ernestine feels a duty to travel to Africa with her mother and sister to help run the household, and together the three women bring order to the disorganized colony: “Under mother’s experienced hand the poultry farm flourished, the unskilled natives received a little training, and cleanliness and order reigned everywhere on the large farm.”

Rudolf Vollrad from Henny Koch’s *Die Vollrads in Südwest* (The Vollrad Family in Southwest, 1916) sets off for Southwest Africa with his daughter and three sons after the death of his wife in order to start over. The words he inscribes on the cornerstone of his new home show his desire to create a new German homeland through his own hard work:

I, Rudolf Vollrad from Neuenburg, citizen of the German empire, traveled with my boys across the sea in order to establish for all of us here, with God’s help, a new homeland (*Heimat*). The German flag flies here, even if only above barren, inhospitable tracts of land. It is essential at first to prove what German breeding and customs (*Zucht und Sitte*), German loyalty, and German diligence are capable of. Even far away (*in der Ferne*) in a new land, we can contribute to the greatness, the growth and prosperity of our beloved Fatherland. I and my house will do our part to do so. A true German house shall arise above this cornerstone. Amen to that!

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102 Published in book form in 1916, the novel had been written earlier, appearing in serialized form in volume 26 of girls’ magazine *Das Kränzchen* (1913-1914).

103 “Ich, Rudolf Vollrad aus Neuenburg, Bürger des Deutschen Reiches, bin mit meinen Buben über das Meer gezogen, uns allen hier mit Gottes Hilfe eine neue Heimat zu gründen. Auch hier weht die deutsche Flagge, wenn auch über öden, unwirtlichen Strecken. Da gilt es, zunächst zu beweisen, was deutsche Zucht und Sitte, deutsche Treue, deutscher Fleiß vermögen. So können wir auch in der Ferne, auch im neuen Lande, zur Größe, zum Wachsen und Gedeihen des geliebten Vaterlandes beitragen. Ich
Like Falkenhorst, Gümpell, Bake, Hodann, and other colonial authors, Koch idealizes German colonial efforts in Africa. The Vollrad family left Germany to propagate Germanness abroad, building a “true German house” and maintaining German customs. Yet this portrayal of the Vollrads’ German work ethic and its ability to transform Southwest Africa taps into what Benninghoff-Lühl refers to as a “deceptive idyll” (trügerische Idylle). Though German colonial writing for both young people and adults idealizes the German farmer making an honest living on a small property, this was a mere “hope” for most settlers who struggled to adapt to the punishing environment and were actually engaged in a “struggle for existence” (Kampf ums Dasein).

Race, Gender, and German Colonialism

Part of what was deceptive about this “deceptive idyll” was the fiction of German Southwest Africa as an empty land to be populated by Germans and transformed into a German territory. In reality, of course, Southwest Africa was already possessed of its own history and native inhabitants before German colonization. Living among and ruling the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia provoked a confrontation with race in the metropole. Public debates about and literary depictions of German colonialism reflect the awakening thought about the nature of German racial identity and how it could be threatened by emigration and colonial economies of desire.


104 Benninghoff-Lühl, Kolonialromane, 165.

105 Benninghoff-Lühl, Kolonialromane, 165.
During this period the contested border of civilization, of Germanness, of racial purity, is mapped onto women’s bodies in colonial literature and public debates about German colonialism. In *Nationalism and Sexuality*, George Mosse claimed the notion of respectability was a way to “legitimize and define the middle classes as against the lower classes and the aristocracy.”¹⁰⁶ Central to this bourgeois morality was the regulation of sexual behavior, which itself rested on gendered assumptions about human behavior.¹⁰⁷ Anne McClintock has extended this notion and shown how the cult of domesticity and “gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise.”¹⁰⁸

Women came to be seen as central to the project of making German Southwest Africa German, as both Katharina Walgenbach and Lora Wildenthal have shown.¹⁰⁹ Women were seen as the bearers of Germanness and the only means to propagate white families in the colonies; as Lora Wildenthal notes, “women’s ability to sustain racial purity was the basis for their political participation in colonialism.”¹¹⁰ German colonial organizations sent single women to the colonies to marry the white German male settlers who were already present and ensure the propagation of white German families in the

¹⁰⁷ For an excellent discussion of how this relates to German girls and nationalism in this period, see Askey, *Good Girls*, 12-14.
¹¹⁰ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*, 6.
colonies. Jill Suzanne Smith notes that women were the key to the process of colonization, serving as complements to the men who were explorers and conquerors:

German men may have conquered the “wide open spaces” and the native peoples of Southwest Africa, but it was up to German women to domesticate the wild African landscape, its farms, and its people. As arbiters of domesticity and respectability, these “white women” [sic] proclaimed their moral and racial superiority over the African natives.111

Women were seen as the antidote to the problem of men marrying or entering into sexual relationships with native women.

In the spring of 1912, the German Reichstag fiercely debated the question of miscegenation in the colonies with the so-called mixed-marriage debate (Mischehendebatte). This debate revealed how the colonial encounter challenged notions of race, nation, and citizenship and left citizens and politicians alike unsettled.112 As Ann Laura Stoler notes about similar efforts on the part of other European colonial powers to regulate sexual morality: “Who bedded and wedded whom in the colonies … was never left to chance.”113 German colonizers worked to mitigate the threat of this colonial desire and its interracial offspring, with Germany’s African colonies eventually forbidding or outlawing interracial marriages. As Wilhelm Heinrich Solf, former governor of German Samoa and secretary of the colonial office, noted in a speech during the miscegenation debates in the German parliament in 1912, “We are Germans, we are whites, and we want


112 For more on this see Wildenthal, German Women for Empire, in particular chapter three, “A New Colonial Masculinity: The Men’s Debate over ‘Race Mixing’ in the Colonies,” 79-130.

113 Ann Laura Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 47.
to remain whites.”

The Reichstag ultimately passed a resolution calling for new laws reinforcing the legality of mixed-race marriages in the colonies and ensuring the legal status of children born in such relationships, but no such law was ever put into effect.

However, by this point colonial governors had already banned and annulled mixed-race marriages in Germany’s African territories.

Though one line of Solf’s famous Reichstag speech is often quoted (“wir sind Deutsche, wir sind Weiße und wollen Weiße bleiben...”), examining that line in the context of his entire speech illustrates the importance that was laid on women (and women’s bodies) to maintain racial and national purity. Solf viewed racial purity as the natural and necessary state of affairs, appealing to the “instincts” of his listeners in his speech:

Dear sirs, I beseech you to let yourselves be guided by your instincts on this question and not to drag sociopolitical or dogmatic factors into the problem of mixed marriages. I ask you to simply let the naked facts act upon you. You send your sons to the colonies: do you want them to bring Black daughters-in-law into the house? Do you want to have wooly-haired grandchildren in the cradle?

114 “Wir sind Deutsche, wir sind Weiße und wir wollen Weiße bleiben.” The text of Solf’s speech to the Reichstag is reproduced in Theodor Grentrup, Die Rassenmischehen in den deutschen Kolonien (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1914), 41-42.

115 See Wildenthal, German Women for Empire, 79-130, for an overview of colonial policy on mixed marriages and the outcome of this debate. The Reichstag and the German government would no doubt eventually have had to take up this question again, had the First World War and the loss of the colonies not rendered the point moot after 1914. See also Helmut Walser Smith, “The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation: Notes on Debates in the German Reichstag Concerning Southwest Africa, 1901-1914,” in The Imperialist Imagination, eds. Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox, and Zantop (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 107-124.

116 “M. H., ich bitte Sie dringend, sich in dieser Frage von Ihren Instinkten leiten zu lassen, ich bitte Sie dringend, keine sozialpolitischen und dogmatischen Momente in das Problem der Mischehen hineinzutragen. Ich bitte Sie, einfach die nackten Tatsachen auf sich wirken zu lassen. Sie senden Ihre Söhne in die Kolonien: wünschen Sie, dass sie
Solf makes a simple appeal with the “naked facts” of the situation, namely that intermarriages and racial mixing are undesirable and not the intended outcome of colonial policy. In conjuring up phantom Black daughters-in-law and mixed-race grandchildren, Solf makes a powerful argument for preserving racial purity, but for Solf, there is something even worse than a German son marrying an African woman and having a mixed-race child.

Though Solf begins with a discussion of white German men and their marriage to non-white women, the discussion immediately preceding his famous and oft-quoted line instead focuses on the possibility of white German women marrying Black men.117 He continues:

Even worse: every year the German Colonial Society spends 50,000 Marks to send white girls to Southwest Africa. Do you want these white girls to return with Hereros and Hottentots and Basters for their husbands? No, my dear sirs, let these facts act upon you, your instincts as Germans, as whites! The whole German nation will be indebted to you if you have no other consideration than this: We are Germans, we are whites, and we want to remain whites!”118

117 Marriages and relationships between white women and African colonial subjects existed but were very rare. Under German law, women adopted the citizenship status of their husbands, putting these women at risk of losing their German citizenship. See Wildenthal, German Women for Empire, 111-117, and “Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire,” in Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World, eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 268-283. Robbie Aitken and Eve Rosenhaft discuss relationships between white German women and African men that were initiated in Germany in Black Germany: The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884–1960 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

118 “Aber noch viel schlimmer: Die Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft gibt jährlich 50000 Mk. dafür aus, dass weiße Mädchen nach Südwestafrika geschickt werden. Wollen Sie, dass diese weiße Mädchen mit Hereros, mit Hottentoten und Bastarden zurückkehren als Gatten? Nein, m. H., lassen Sie diese Tatsache auf sich wirken, Ihre Instinkte als
The possibility of white German women crossing racial lines to marry Black men is “even worse” than when racial lines are crossed by white men. This is a terrifying prospect for Solf not only for the wasted money and effort in sending white women to the colonies to marry German men but for the racial degeneration that would result. What white Germans—these two categories are presented as interrelated if not interchangeable in his speech—should recoil from is the mixing of German women with other races and the possible consequences. For Solf, remaining true to these instinctual feelings of disgust at racial mixing and disallowing it will result in the preservation of the German nation.

With his speech and his impassioned plea for preserving white Germanness, Solf styles German women as the defenders of the nation and racial respectability. The responsibility for remaining white lies with German women, and in particular German women in the colonies, and the border of whiteness lies at women's bodies. Men who “went native” in the colonies showed how “porous and vulnerable” the boundary between Black and white could be, and “here gender discourses gained a particular relevance, for the stabilization of this precarious border was delegated to German women, the so-called ‘culture bearers.'” In this schema German women come to serve as symbolic border guards of the German nation; this coincides with the observation by Wildenthal and others that racial segregation and racial hierarchies become more pronounced as women

settle in the colonies in greater numbers. Hinnerk Onken argues that the miscegenation debates that gripped continental Germany in the aftermath of the Herero war should be read as about far more than marriage between German men and native women, which was relatively rare. Instead mixed-race marriages served as “a stand-in for all forms of sexual contact between Europeans and African women.” Focusing solely on mixed-race marriages allowed officials and the general public to avoid the discussion of the danger posed to the colonial order by sexual contact outside of wedlock and obscured the problem of sexual violence committed by white men against indigenous women, as well as forced prostitution or concubinage.

Drawing on Helmut Bley and his understanding of the importance of violence to maintaining German rule in Africa, David Kenosian notes, “The story of German colonialism in Southwest Africa must be understood within the context of the history of violence as a political praxis.” Those who wrote the laws governing the German colonies “apparently presupposed during the composition of the colonial laws the fiction

120 Wildenthal, German Women for Empire, 79. Also relevant here is perhaps Richard Dyer’s description of Native Americans as “borderless people,” a threat to whites because they “had no concept of boundaries and of the order and civilization that this bespeaks in the white imagination,” in White: Essays on Race and Culture (London: Routledge: 1997), 33.


of the complete separation of the colonizers and the non-white colonized.”

Under this legal framework it was necessary to enforce strict divisions between “Eingeborene” (native) and “Nichteingeborene” (non-native), even though these divisions were, as Albert Gouaffo explains, only a fiction: “Geographically and hierarchically separate ways of living between colonizers and colonizes could only be partially realized.” This fiction of starkly divided colonizers and colonized was enforced by violent means if necessary. As Jürgen Zimmerer observes, racial privilege in the colonies was not just a discursive formation, but a “cultural, social, and communicative praxis.” Frank Becker notes that private sexual behavior (i.e. entering into mixed-race marriages or other sexual relationships) came into conflict with political and social interests of the colonial state, with economic motivations giving way to “racial-political considerations” (rassenpolitische Erwägungen) to determine colonial policy. After the Herero war, German colonial authorities attempted to ban mixed-race marriages, declare existing relationships invalid, and threatened those living in extramarital relationships with native women. Zimmerer notes, “This followed a certain logic. If sexuality and reproduction
were made a communal manner, contributing to the general health or endangering an abstract ‘national body,’ then they were no longer private matters.”

Race and Gender in Girls’ Colonial Literature

Though German girls’ novels narrate the period in which young women go through puberty, they focus almost exclusively on social maturity—girls learn duty to their families, take on responsibilities either inside or outside the home, and eventually marry—rather than on the physical process of sexual maturation. Colonial novels for young people, particularly those featuring female protagonists, nonetheless thematize colonial desire and reflect, often in obscure, deflected, and indirect ways, these intense public debates about the boundaries of race and nation. Only five novels written for girls in Wilhelmine Germany were set in German Southwest Africa, and all of them reflect the contemporary rhetoric about the importance of women to the German colonial project. Three of them are set during the Herero uprising, and two of these novels contain similar scenes of girls who are directly threatened by the native uprising and must defend themselves.

In *Die Vollrads in Südwest*, a missionary lectures Herr Vollrad, who is all too apt


to treat his daughter just like his three sons, on the vital importance of women to their work:

Without the German woman our German colony can’t exist. They are essential to multiply and make wise use of the fruits of the sweat and effort of men. They are essential to make the home of the man and the children into a site of German culture, German breeding and custom, to preserve Germandom on foreign soil so that it does not sink under foreign ways, as is unfortunately often the case in the places German immigrants settle.\footnote{Ohne die deutsche Frau kann unsere deutsche Kolonie nicht an ein Bestehen denken. Es gilt, die Früchte des Schweißes und der Mühen des Mannes in weiser Umsicht zu verwerten, zu mehren; es gilt, das Heim des Mannes, der Kinder zu einer Stätte deutscher Kultur, deutsche Zucht und Sitte zu machen, das Deutschtum zu erhalten auf ferner Scholle, dass es nicht in fremder Art und Weise untergehe, wie leider sonst oft, wo deutsche Auswanderer sich niederlassen.” Koch, \textit{Vollrads}, 107.}

The presence of women in Africa thus serves to maintain the Germanness of the German colonies. Women will bring the culture, breeding, and customs to perpetuate Germandom and will ensure that German families remain racially pure and will not intermix with native Africans. Of particular note is the double-meaning of the word “Zucht,” which can refer to customs, discipline, and child-rearing as well as to the breeding of cattle; its repeated use in colonial texts shows the connection between biological notions of race and breeding and German nationalism and culture.

Other texts reinforce this racialized understanding of German identity by showing how women are not only necessary to propagate German culture in the colonies but to propagate whiteness. This can be seen in the 1910 novel \textit{Werden und Wachsen} (Becoming and Growing), the sequel to Agnes Sapper’s highly successful \textit{Die Familie Pfäffling} (The Pfäffling Family, 1907). These two novels are of particular interest because the first is an example of what scholars of German girls’ literature would class as
a “typical” girls’ novel, featuring young protagonists coming-of-age and accepting bourgeois values, while the second is “atypical,” featuring characters in exotic settings, in this case in Southwest Africa. That an author of “typical,” bourgeois girls’ literature also wrote fiction placing her characters in Africa shows the importance of Africa in the imagined German future.\(^{129}\) The Pfäffling family is portrayed as an idealized version of the German family, and the first novel shows how they overcome adversity (financial hardship) through hard work, a sense of duty, and family closeness and loyalty. The novel sold more than half a million copies and has been in print throughout most of the twentieth century; though Werden und Wachsen did not sell as many copies, it was nonetheless a very popular book.

The necessary presence of women in the colonies is shown through the character of Marie. While two of the Pfäffling family's seven children find their future in Africa in Werden und Wachsen, the greater part of the action focuses on daughter Marie and her German farmer husband. Family friend Arnold Scheffel writes from Africa of the importance of having a “good farmer’s wife… because without one it doesn’t work at all.”\(^{130}\) He is drawn to Marie for a variety of reasons, from her personality to her good family and even her healthy body. Scheffel notes that Maria has “a good, loyal temper and the spirit of a true German housewife. And we want to transplant Germandom

\(^{129}\) In this dissertation I hope to problematize the distinction that many scholars drawn between typical and atypical girls’ literature and show that both types of books contain the same ideological underpinning; Die Familie Pfäffling and Werden und Wachsen are an ideal example of this. For more on the distinction between typical and atypical girls’ books see Wilkending’s introduction to Mädchenliteratur der Kaiserzeit, 1-7.

\(^{130}\) “gute Farmerin... denn ohne eine solche geht’s durchaus nicht.” Agnes Sapper, Werden und Wachsen: Erlebnisse der großen Pfäfflingskinder (Stuttgart: Gundert, 1910), 84.
here.”

Scheffel's words, in particular his emphasis on Marie's Germanness, downplay financial motives for emigration to focus on the colonial fantasy of creating a German future in Southwest Africa. In particular, Scheffel is drawn to the Pfäfflings’ idyllic family life, explaining that while he had heard talk of the importance of the German family in colonial meetings, he had never truly understood it until he met the Pfäfflings and “felt the power and the hold, the happiness and the influence of such a family life.”

Scheffel absorbed colonial rhetoric about the importance of women and families in Africa and sought out a perfect, traditional German family in order to cultivate Germanness abroad. It is not only Marie’s personality and her home life that attracts Scheffel to her; he also remarks, “She also appears healthy; that is a requirement.” It is necessary for Marie to have a physically fit body not only to survive the climate but to create the next generation of Germans in the colony.

With Marie at his side, Scheffel is finally able to properly master Africa and make it a space for Germans, evidenced by the birth of their child who becomes a symbol for the persistence of white German identity in the colony. Their household servants admire the “precious commodity” that is the white child, and Marie is “happy and proud” to see the baby adored by a “circle of admirers” even though it is made up only of “half-naked

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131 “ein gutes treues Gemüt, echten deutschen Hausfraueninn. Und Deutschtum wollen wir hierher verpflanzen.” Sapper, Werden und Wachsen, 84.
133 “Gesund scheint sie auch zu sein, das ist Bedingung.” Sapper, Werden und Wachsen, 85.
savages.” To Marie and her husband it is self-evident that their servants will admire, or even venerate, their white child, but it is only when Marie's brother comes to visit that the whiteness of the child is explicitly addressed. Wilhelm, who is in Africa working as a geologist, remarks upon the child’s whiteness and exclaims, “It wouldn’t be surprising if they were to become Black in this hot country.” Marie only laughs at him dismissively and says, “White? But of course!” As the embodiment of the German future in Africa, Marie can only laugh at Wilhelm’s fears of racial degeneration; she remains confident in her Germanness and her whiteness and that of her child.

Here again we encounter a humorous scene that actually hints at serious questions about racial identity and the meaning of Germanness. In addition to explicitly pointing out the whiteness of the child, Wilhelm’s comment brings to mind the climate theory of racial development, the idea that racial difference is caused by the environment in which peoples develop. Though Marie merely laughs at Wilhelm’s comment, it nonetheless reminds the reader that not only is whiteness is not absolute in the colonies but that it is possible for white Germans to bear non-white children. In expressing surprise at the child’s whiteness, Wilhelm in fact points to the fragility of whiteness and the uneasy coexistence of whiteness and Germanness, potentially endangered by the colonial

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135 “Es sollte einen gar nicht wundern, wenn sie schwarz würden in diesem heißen Land.” Sapper, Werden und Wachsen, 297.
137 For more on theories of racial development, see Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, eds., The German Invention of Race (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006); John H. Zammito (35-54) and Larrimore (91-120) both discuss Kant and the climate theory. The climate theory is sometimes also called environmental determinism.
encounter. Wilhelm’s comment is only rendered laughable by the presence of his sister in the colonies; as a white woman, it was Marie’s role not only to bear white children but to ensure that sexual morality and racial purity were maintained.

**Colonial Violence in Girls’ Literature**

Of the three girls’ novels set during the violence of the Herero wars, two of them show young German women who are directly threatened by Black male violence, and I contend that this violence is sexualized. These depictions of violence against female colonists point to the vulnerability of the colonial enterprise, that white women could be raped or murdered by Black men, but at the same time limit this vulnerability by showing the survival and triumph of white women, ensuring the colonial project will continue. The taboo against portraying sexual topics was too great for there to be any young adult novels that directly deal with miscegenation, but several novels nonetheless feature young white women who fight off the attacks of an indigenous Black man. Scenes in which Black male characters threaten and attack virginal white women hint at an understanding of Black men as a threat to the racial purity of white German women. The violence with which the white colonizers, including the women themselves, respond to that threat—by shooting and killing the attackers—shows a sense of the stakes involved. Young female figures are presented as the last stand in the defense of the German colonial order.

These powerful images of the threat of Black male violence against white women show the symbolic importance laid on women, and in particular young women, as the bearers of both Germanness and future white children in the colonies. Erika, the
protagonist of Valerie Hodann's *Auf rauhen Pfaden* (1910), rides horses like a man and
dresses like a soldier, in corduroy trousers made “from the same practical material that
the members of the *Schutztruppe* wore,” strong brown boots and a white wool jacket.\(^\text{138}\)
She accompanies her brothers and the other men around the plantation and generally
behaves in an unladylike manner. Her person is later threatened by a native uprising, and
her attempt to deploy her whiteness against the men who have invaded her home fails
(“Don’t you know any more how you are supposed to treat the daughter of the white
chief?”).\(^\text{139}\) She resolves to commit suicide rather than “fall living into the hands of these
devils.”\(^\text{140}\) Aware that her body serves as the symbolic boundary of race and nation, Erika
resolves to protect it at any cost, even death. Just as Erika puts poison to her lips, servant
Kornelius’s hand “stretched out for her white robe,” but Erika’s future husband arrives
just in time to save her and kill Kornelius.\(^\text{141}\) As his black hand menacingly reaches for
the white robe of the innocent young woman, Kornelius shouts “Now you are mine!” and
explicitly references Erika’s whiteness, calling her, “proud white girl.”\(^\text{142}\)

This scene marks the end of Erika's childhood and the beginning of her
acceptance of her role as a white German woman in Southwest Africa. The threat of
sexual violence causes Erika to shed her childish immaturity and tomboy ways to become

\(^{138}\) “Sie ritt nach Herrenart, hatte Kordhosen an von demselben praktischen Stoff, wie ihn
die Schutztruppler trugen, einen breitkrempigen Hut auf dem welligen Haar, der dem
frischen Gesichtchen entzückend stand, braune, feste Stiefelchen, und über der weißen

\(^{139}\) “Wißt Ihr nicht mehr, wie Ihr der Tochter des weißen Häuptlings zu begegnen habt?”

\(^{140}\) “lebend würde sie nicht in die Hände dieser Teufel fallen.” Hodann, *Pfaden*, 119.

\(^{141}\) “die Hand nach ihrem weißen Gewande ausstreckte, um sie zu packen.” Hodann,
*Pfaden*, 127.

a model of German womanhood. When Erika returns to Germany to wait for the end of the war, her aunt Jutta admires the change in her: “It was a pleasant surprise to her that everything had turned upside down in her quiet home, and that the African tomboy—which was her image of Erika based on her last visit—had grown into a well-mannered young woman.”\(^{143}\) The confrontation with colonial violence makes her aware of her own place in the racialized and gendered colonial order and effects her transformation from girl into woman, prepared to return to the colony and propagate white Germanness.

Ernestine from *Schwere Zeiten* undergoes a similar transformation in Southwest Africa, turning from a brave and independent young woman into a quiet, dutiful wife after she is threatened by the Herero. Ernestine's uncle refers to her early in the novel as “the brave little lad,” her bravery here characterized as a masculine attribute.\(^{144}\) Ernestine shows maturity and a sense of duty and thus does not need to undergo the same process of transformation as Erika, but she nonetheless gives up her independence after her sexual purity is endangered. With all the men away gathering in the livestock, Ernestine is the only one who remains to protect her mother and sister, urging them to flee while she stays behind to fight off the Herero. When confronted with their “hideous faces with bulging lips, predator teeth, and malicious expression” she shoots and ultimately kills one of them.\(^{145}\) After her act of bravery symbolically saves the colony, Ernestine is not

\(^{143}\) “Es überrasche sie angenehm, dass aus dem afrikanischen Wildfang, als den sie Erika von ihrem letzten Besuch her in Erinnerung hatte, und der in ihrem stillen Heim das unterste zu oberste gekerht hatte, eine gesitete junge Dame geworden war.” Hodann, *Pfaden*, 174.

\(^{144}\) "der tapfere, kleine Kerl.” Bake, *Schwere Zeiten*, 61.

\(^{145}\) “Ernestine blieb stehen und spannte den Hahn ihrer Pistole. Sie sah die schueßlichen Gesichter mit den wulstigen Lippen, den Rautierzuahnen und den tückischen Ausdruck kaum zehn Schritt von sich entfernt und drückte, fast ohne zu zielen, los. Der eine der
allowed to repeat it.

![Illustration of the assault on Helene von Falkenhausen during the Herero Uprising](image.jpg)

Figure 3: An illustration of the assault on Helene von Falkenhausen during the Herero Uprising from the volume *Deutsche Reiter in Südwest*.

These scenes draw on a common pool of portrayals of violence in colonies, in particular after the Herero uprising and subsequent wars (1904-1907). Violence against women was a minor but recurring theme in these depictions, such as in Helene von Falkenhausen’s 1905 *Ansiedler-Schicksale: Elf Jahre in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1893-1904* (A Settler’s Fortunes: Eleven Years in German Southwest Africa). In this memoir Falkenhausen describes the brutal attack she endured at the hands of the Herero, after her

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146 On the representation of the Herero uprising and subsequent wars in Southwest Africa, see the chapter on “Feldzugberichte” in Benninghoff-Lühl, *Deutsche Kolonialromane*, 94-140; on pages 107-11 she discusses firsthand accounts of the colonial wars.
husband had already been killed in the uprising. When we compare the illustrations of Helene von Falkenhausen’s and Ernestine’s attacks, we see how active a heroine Ernestine is, making her transformation to a passive adult woman even more apparent.

Figure 4: The frontispiece to Schwere Zeiten depicts Ernestine’s defense of herself against the Herero.

The female figures bear a superficial resemblance to one another; both are petite, clad in white dresses that accentuate their thin and shapely figures, and have short or upswept dark brown hair. The first illustration has as its focal point the helpless figure of Falkenhausen, the moment before she is brutally attacked; in the second illustration it is the Herero men who are the victims, with one contorted in pain as Ernestine’s shot lands.

While the first illustration shows the terrified face of Falkenhausen, the second features Ernestine at an oblique angle; the visual center of the image is instead the pistol she fires. That the only color image in the book (the frontispiece) depicts Ernestine in the act of saving the colony through her bravery and action shows her symbolic importance.

The illustration of Falkenhausen’s attack also shows how the threat of violence against women is deployed to justify violence against native peoples. Falkenhausen’s memoir is unillustrated; the illustration above comes from a 1908 collection of soldier and officer memoirs from the wars in Southwest Africa, *Deutsche Reiter in Südwest* (German Troopers in Southwest). Though the book consists of almost five hundred pages of war memories by men, female colonists provide the discursive frame for the volume. Attached to the foreword is an illustration depicting Falkenhausen’s attack, and the final two pieces in the collection are by or about women. The first is a short piece by Falkenhausen written after her attack as she recuperates and makes the decision to take shelter in a military base to ensure her safety, and the second is a piece about German nurses written by a male military officer. The book ends with a tribute to the nurses who “always did their duty gladly and joyfully”: “Hats off to the women who shared the joy and suffering of war with us as loyal companions!” Though Falkenhausen was over thirty years of age and pregnant with her third child at the time of her attack, the trim, fashionably-dressed woman in white in the illustration could pass for a teenager. Her arms held above her in a protective gesture, she has sunk to her knees, a terrified look on

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her face, helpless in front of the Black men towering over her holding weapons. The book thus begins with an image of white German womanhood threatened by Black male violence, offering a justification for the military conflict, which fills the next 450 pages of the book.\textsuperscript{149} The final two pieces of writing then offer further reassurance of the justness and necessity of the conflict by portraying women who are safe and protected and filling their proper role by nurturing and caring for white men in the colonies.

In \textit{Schwere Zeiten}, Ernestine is given narrative leeway to transgress gender norms to show active agency and exhibit unladylike behaviors like shooting guns, but this field of action is available only as long as her life or sexual purity is threatened. Once an act of violence on the part of a white woman has ended the threat, these women must take their own proper place within the colonial order as subservient to male authority in their roles as wives and mothers. Ernestine ultimately saves the lives of her mother and sister but barely escapes with her own, contracting typhus on top of the severe head wound she suffered at the hands of the Herero. After convalescing for several weeks she returns to Europe to study art. Though her artistic skills would allow her to support herself independently in Germany, she is homesick for Africa and returns to Southwest the wife of a German captain. Her act of bravery is thus seemingly a one-off occurrence during the transitional age of adolescence. Because she has protected her virginity and racial purity, she is able to fulfill her proper role and return to aid in the colonial mission as a German

\textsuperscript{149} Interestingly, the illustration of Falkenhausen’s attack appears to have been drawn specifically for \textit{Deutsche Reiter in Südwest}, as the original of her text (as reproduced in Nineteenth Century Collections Online) contains no images. That the editor apparently felt the need to commission this drawing (rather than an additional illustration that accompanies the soldier memoirs) speaks to its symbolic importance to the frame of the volume.
wife and future mother.\textsuperscript{150}

Hans Grimm’s story “Wie Grete aufhörte ein Kind zu sein” (How Grete stopped being a child) from his 1913 \textit{Südafrikanische Novellen} (South African Novellas) takes the implications of Bake’s and Hodann’s text to their logical conclusion and shows the necessity of white women and their bodies to the colonial enterprise. Appearing in the same year as Bake’s text (and three years after Hodann’s), Grimm’s story, written for a more adult audience, shows, if not a direct line of influence, a cultural preoccupation with the question of white German women and sexualized Black male violence in Africa. Sara Lennox reads Grimm’s “Wie Grete aufhörte ein Kind zu sein” and “Dina” as betraying a fundamental inability to reconcile contradictory and competing notions of race and gender in the colonies,\textsuperscript{151} but in the case of Grete I argue it is possible to reconcile these competing notions of race and gender when one reads the text as a kind of \textit{Backfishroman}.

In titling his text “How Grete stopped being a child,” Grimm calls on the tropes and discourse of the \textit{Backfishroman} with its focus on the coming-of-age of teenage female protagonists. Instead of merely becoming more mature and womanly through a trip to boarding school, as is the case in many novels, Grete instead “stops being a child” and becomes a woman when she recognizes her place in the colonial racial order,

\textsuperscript{150} This move from independence to dependence differs greatly from many German colonial women, such as Helene von Falkenhausen, Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, and Lydia Höpker, who all lived independent lives as farmers or teachers in German colonial Africa either before their marriages or after the deaths of their husbands, if not both.

abandoning her tomboyish clothes and actions, suppressing her desire for her African peer, and fending off the threat of African sexual violence to maintain her sexual and racial purity. In the story Grete enacts the typical narrative arc of a Backfisch protagonist, beginning the novel as a wild child who rides horses like a boy and wears a man's clothing (her kilt, or “Schottlandtracht,” as it is called in the story) and ending as a mature young woman with proper racial pride.

In the story Grete is forced into action when her father, Karl von Troyna, fails to properly maintain racial pride and begins an affair with a mixed-race woman, Ellen. Karl’s liaison with Ellen causes a disturbance in the racial order because she was “white, but not quite,” to use Homi Bhabha’s phrase. He is captivated not only by her brown skin and “wild beauty,” markers of her racial otherness, but by her attitude, which shows she considers herself equal to the white people around her. Ellen speaks to Karl directly and was the first woman of color he encountered who did not call him “master” (Herr). He is thus attracted to Ellen in part because she defies the colonial understanding of the divide between Black and white as “unbridgeable” (unüberbrückbar). Karl’s acceptance of Ellen then allows her to defy the colonial order, dressing in European garb and eating with Karl at the dining table instead of with the servants. His neighbors must eventually attempt to socially shun him for his behavior, for “he had lost the right standard with her, and that affects us all.” As half-white and a German speaker, she can

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152 Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994), 86.
put on the garb of a white woman and ally herself with the colonizers, allowing Karl von Troya to "forget that he was a white man."\textsuperscript{156} It not until the return of his daughter that Troya is reminded of his whiteness and his role in maintaining the colonial order.

The Grete who returns from boarding school is at the cusp of womanhood, maintaining her childish clothing and behavior but sexually aware enough to be disturbed by the changes in her household.\textsuperscript{157} Grete finally “stops being a child” when she is called upon in her womanly role to restore the proper racial order to the colony. While she clings to her childish innocence and engages in her own transgression of the normal gender order, she is unable to properly assert her authority as a white woman. Overhearing Ellen discuss her relationship with Karl von Troya serves as a kind of primal scene for Grete, as she must confront not only her father’s sexuality but his violation of the colonial racial order. She experiences intense physical disgust (\textit{Ekel}) but cannot dwell on her feelings. The same overheard conversation reveals that Ellen, out of anger for her loss in status, has conspired with the Bondels in their uprising, endangering the entire settlement.\textsuperscript{158}

It falls to Grete to restore the proper colonial order. The knowledge of her father's failure to serve as a proper a colonial overlord causes her to step into his shoes to protect his property and assert white dominance:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{155}] “er hat den rechten Maßstab bei ihr verloren, das geht uns alle an.” Grimm, “Grete,” 142.
  \item[\textsuperscript{156}] “vergass Troya, dass er ein Weißer war.” Grimm, “Grete,” 145.
  \item[\textsuperscript{157}] “Noch einmal starre die Dienerin das hochfahrende Wesen an, von dem sie nicht wußte, ob’s als Kind oder als Frau zu nehmen war.” Grimm, “Grete,” 155.
  \item[\textsuperscript{158}] Though making a direct reference to the Bondelswarts uprising in 1903, Grimm was also indirectly referencing the three years of war with the Herero and Nama that occurred between 1904-1907: Lennox, “Race, Gender, and Sexuality,” 71.
\end{itemize}
Those out there, the Hundasis, are eternally foreign to us. I know that now. Something eternally foreign. And the temptation. The whole land is a temptation. Whoever is afraid, whoever can’t be lonely, he succumbs. Yes, yes. But I am not afraid, and I can be lonely. I must remain here as master. Me, yes me, Grete Troyna, or otherwise all is lost.159

Grete casts herself as the savior of the colony and uses her father’s shotgun to kill Ellen. This violent act reinscribes the colonial racial order. The figure of Ellen, mixed-race and able to speak German and move between cultures, reveals the porousness of categories such as race and nation, and killing her allows Grete to forcefully assert the “eternal foreignness” (ewig Fremdes) of the colonized other.

In the final act that allows Grete to cement her place as the savior of the colony and defender of the racial order, she kills Alfred, Ellen’s brother, to preserve her sexual and racial purity. Grete suppresses her own budding desire for Alfred160 and chooses to preserve her racial purity at all costs. In a scene that is reminiscent of Elisa Bake’s Schwere Zeiten (1913), Grete kills Alfred as he reaches for her: “He reached for her, clutched her nightgown, and pulled. Grete fired the first shot. Her shift tore. The Hundasi’s lust for life was so great that it took two more shots.”161 The Black man with his seemingly insatiable lust poses one final risk to Grete and the colonial order. In stamping out his “lust for life” Grete also extinguishes his lust for her body, as well as her


160 See Lennox, “Race, Gender, and Sexuality,” 71-72.

own desire for him, ensuring the colonial racial order is not further interrupted.

As the last act of Grete’s childhood she places herself squarely within the proper gender order again. Much like Ernestine from *Schwere Zeiten*, Grete steps back into her role as a proper white German woman after briefly taking over as “master” and killing Alfred and Ellen. When her father returns home, Grete is ashamed of what she is wearing—bare feet and a child’s nightgown she has outgrown—and insists on changing to wear her mother’s clothes. When she returns her transformation from an unruly tomboy into a proper young woman is complete: “Even her father was taken aback and barely recognized his daughter in the beautiful pale budding young woman.”162 In putting on her mother’s clothing, she has finally accepted her place within the colonial order and is prepared to take on her proper female role in maintaining sexual and racial purity.

Young white female characters like Grete and Ernestine serve a particular symbolic importance that justifies genocide. Their bodies young and not yet fully developed, they represent the potential to propagate white Germanness in the colonies. That these figures repeatedly come under threat or attack by Black men show an awareness of the potentially transient nature of whiteness. Violence then becomes necessary to restore the colonial order. Both *Schwere Zeiten* and *Auf rauen Pfaden* endorse the German regime’s genocidal violence against Southwest Africa’s indigenous inhabitants. At the start of Hodann’s novel, protagonist Erika questions the necessity of colonial violence, refusing to participate when her family decides to hunt down the natives who have been rustling cattle, insisting, “I would never shoot at a man unless

driven to by the direst of emergencies!"\textsuperscript{163} Her words foreshadow the conflict later in the novel, and her initial refusal to participate in the colonial regime of violence can be seen as endangering not only her own life and the colonial mission. She is left with only the choice to either be raped and attacked or to take her own life, both of which would have made her unable to fill her proper role in the colony of producing a new generation of white Germans. After she has survived the attack against her, the novel reinforces the need for genocide to purge the land and make the German colonial mission possible: “Only one can prevail. Next to the prolific land- and cattle-holders there was no room for German development, so the lesser race had to perish. Only through this bloody war did the colony become German land.”\textsuperscript{164} For the territory to continue to develop and flourish as German land, the Germans had to purge it of its native inhabitants. Elise Bake's \textit{Schwere Zeiten} employs a similar genocidal rhetoric to justify the extermination of 60,000 people:

The war had turned toward Waterberg in the north, where the rebels had retreated to, and two more years would pass before it was truly over. Forced into the desert, sweltering and thirsting, the Hereros perished! A people 60,000 strong was, for the most part, wiped out—not through the sword so much as through the elements of this powerful land, into which civilization shall be brought by German pioneers.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{163} “Ich würde nie auf einen Menschen schießen, wenn mich nicht die äußerste Not dazu zwänge!” Hodann, \textit{Pfaden}, 74.

\textsuperscript{164} “Einer nur kann herrschen. Neben den reichen Land- und Viehbesitzern war kein Raum für die deutsche Entwicklung; so musste die geringere Rasse untergehen. Erst durch diesen blutigen Krieg ist die Kolonie deutsches Land geworden.” Hodann, \textit{Pfaden}, 221.

Bake uses social Darwinist rhetoric to blame the Herero for their own destruction: they were killed not by the imperial German war machine but by their own inferiority and inability or unwillingness to properly civilize the land. The Herero were too weak to control the powerful land and were therefore left to die of thirst in the desert, clearing the way for a German future in Southwest.

In these novels genocide becomes a solution to the problem of the porousness of racial and national borders. If there were no Herero or Nama or other Black people in German Southwest Africa, there would be no risk of miscegenation, no temptation for the men who voluntarily enter into such relationships. The Herero uprising had challenged German hegemony in Southwest Africa; mixed marriages—and interracial relationships in general—and the debate surrounding them challenged the natural coexistence of Germanness and whiteness. These novels displace anger and fear over the disruption of German racial purity onto natives instead of onto the white German men who engaged in relationships across racial lines. Because of their youth, innocence, and fertility, the figures of Erika and Ernestine and Grete carry particular symbolic weight in colonial novels; their bodies must be defended with violence to preserve the colonial order. Their vulnerability in the colonies to acts of violence by Black men point to the fragility of whiteness, but their triumph over their attackers ultimately the reinforce the power of whiteness and white German women to maintain the colonial order. In *Werden und Wachsen*, Scheffel refers to his wife Marie as his future “comrade in arms” (*Kampfgenosse*), revealing an understanding of German settlement in Africa as a battle, a
jarring, violent image in an otherwise peaceful book.\textsuperscript{166} The white German couple moves to Africa to tame the land and start a family, closing off the possibility of other subversive, hybrid or interracial family formations. That Scheffel conceives of German settlement in Africa as a battle shows that he understands the necessity of violence in maintaining colonial power relations and policing sexual desire. At the end of their respective novels, Erika and Ernestine both return to the colony as wives, representing the start of a new German era in Southwest. Erika remarks that she is “finally completely at home again,” a new German homeland in Southwest Africa.\textsuperscript{167}

It falls to women like Erika and Ernestine to maintain the Germanness and whiteness of the new \textit{Heimat} in Southwest Africa. German colonial literature for young people thus reflects contemporary concerns with and public debates about miscegenation, whiteness, and colonial desire, in spite of the taboos that existed against dealing with controversial or sexually explicit topics. Young adult literature shows concern about the meaning and permanence of Germanness, the bounds of culture and race. The bodies of young female figures like Grete, Ernestine, and Erika form the symbolic boundary of whiteness and Germanness, and any violence done in the name of protecting those bodies is permissible.

\textsuperscript{166} Sapper, \textit{Werden und Wachsen}, 183.

\textsuperscript{167} “erst wieder ganz daheim.” Hodann, \textit{Pfaden}, 232.
CHAPTER 5
IMPERIAL GIRLS: WILHELMINE GIRLS’ LITERATURE IN AN ERA OF
GLOBALIZATION

Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the portrayal movement between colonies and metropole in young adult novels for girls from Wilhelmine Germany. In particular I will focus on how authors describe how girls move through the world in the age of globalization and imperialism and show the effect of globalization on girls’ literature. Popular authors such as Brigitte Augusti, Bertha Clément, Bernhardine Schulze-Smidt, Henny Koch and Else Ury write girls’ literature that deals with the relationship between German immigrants and the German metropole and grapples with important questions about German national identity in an age of globalization, including whether travel and immigration were enriching or threatening to the national community and how German identity can be maintained abroad. All of these authors place girls at the center of the German imperial project, reflecting the contemporary understanding of the importance of women to maintaining German identity abroad and in the colonies.¹ In this chapter I will discuss three distinct patterns of movement between colony and metropole, between Germany and the wider world, that I have observed in girls’ literature. The first, characterized by novels such as Henny Koch’s Im Lande der Blumen (In the Land of Flowers, 1912) and Else Ury’s Vierzehn Jahr’ und Sieben Wochen (Fourteen Years and

¹ For more on the importance of women to the colonial project see Walgenbach, Die weiße Frau; and Wildenthal, German Women.
Seven Weeks, 1911), shows travel into the world as a form of enrichment for girls that teaches them to appreciate their German national identity when they return to the metropole. The second features girls who are born abroad and travel to the metropole to learn how to be proper German women before they make their permanent settlement in life. The third pattern of movement, found particularly in the novels of Brigitte Augusti, is linear rather than circular; for these female heroines travel is a catalyst, and an initial temporary trip abroad becomes instead permanent emigration and a mission to spread Germandom abroad.

**Globalization and Wilhelmine Girls’ Literature**

Critics and scholars of German girls’ literature of this period often note its conservatism, particularly in comparison to contemporary Anglo-American girls’ literature.\(^2\) British and American girls’ literature by authors such as L.T. Meade (1844-1914) and Martha Finley (1828-1909) branches out at the beginning of the twentieth century to feature girls who solve crimes, travel, operate a motor car, or go camping or on other adventures with little or no parental supervision.\(^3\) The serialized fiction produced by the Stratemeyer Syndicate from the 1910s onward—titles like *Motor Girls* (1910), *Outdoor Girls* (1913), *Moving Picture Girls* (1914), and later *Nancy Drew* (1930)—illustrates this trend of featuring girls with personal and economic autonomy, and there

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\(^2\) This point is made by all scholars of German girls’ literature; see Askey, *Good Girls, Good Germans*, 104-105; Grenz, “Trotzkopf,” *Geschichte der Mädchenlektüre*, 115-117; and Willkending, *Mädchenliteratur der Kaiserzeit*, 1-2.

simply is no equivalent in Wilhelmine or Weimar Germany. Instead, German girls’ literature remains focused on marriage-based plots and stories of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation: wild girls learn to control their impulses and are rewarded with an engagement at the end of the novel.

At the turn of the century, German girls’ literature does undergo a shift to become a more globalized genre. Scholars generally divide German girls’ literature of this period into typical and atypical books. According to Gisela Wilkending the typical girls’ book, like Emmy von Rhoden’s *Trotzkopf*, is the epitome of a sentimental, conformist schema-literature in which the same story is always told, namely how the initial resistance of a girl to comply with the concept of traditional female roles and “female gender characteristics” is crushed and how the protagonist is promised an attractive engagement or marriage prospect after willingly identifying with this concept.

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5 The term “Geschlechtstcharakter” is difficult to translate; it has been defined by Susanne Kappeler as a “social sexual character” in *The Will to Violence: The Politics of Personal Behavior* (New York: Teacher’s College Press, 1995), 279, note 66, and by Lieselotte Steinbrügge as “the sum of the social, emotional, and intellectual traits attributed to male or female human beings based on their biological sex” in *The Moral Sex: Woman’s Nature in the French Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 109, note 5.

Atypical books, on the other hand, include colonial and travel narratives, historical novels, and war novels for girls. However, as Wilkending notes, some atypical girls’ books feature women in more independent and active roles, unmarried and working outside the home, while others feature the same plot structure as typical books only in a more exotic location.\(^7\) Instead of a distinction between “typical” and “atypical” books, I see the rise in travel and colonial literature for girls as a response to the globalizing times. Around the turn of the century, authors begin to grapple with the effect of travel, immigration, and colonialism on girls and German nationalism, to try to come to terms with the role of emotional nationalism in an imperial world.\(^8\) Though this constitutes a shift, Wilkending’s distinction between typical and atypical overstates the difference, and the same ideologies underpin both typical and atypical girls’ books.

This growing globalization can be seen in the changes to the trope of foreignness in girls’ literature, which shifts from referring to a girls’ first day at boarding school or at work outside the home to an actual encounter with foreign nations or cultures. Girls’ literature from Wilhelmine Germany often made use of phrases such as “in der Fremde” (“abroad”) or “in der Welt” (“in the world”) to refer to the end of schooling or the beginning of job training for girls, the first step toward an independence that never fully materializes for German heroines of girls’ literature. In Bertha Clément’s *Nur unser Fräulein* (1900), for example, the phrase “erster Tag in der Fremde” (first day abroad/away from home) refers to the female protagonist’s first day at work after leaving

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\(^7\) Wilkending explains this distinction on pages 4-6 of *Mädchenliteratur der Kaiserzeit.*

\(^8\) Askey defines emotional nationalism in relation to German girls’ literature of this period on pages 4-6 of *Good Girls, Good Germans.*
school. Girls are presented as needing to undertake job training to ensure they will be able to support themselves in the event they remain single, but only very rarely do these novels end without the protagonist becoming engaged or getting married. Angelika Harten’s *Draußen in der Welt* (Out in the World, 1896), Sophie Verena’s *Daheim und Draußen* (At Home and Abroad, 1891) and Friedrich Brunold’s *In der Fremde* (Abroad, ca. 1888) are three examples among the many novels that make use of this trope in their titles to refer to girls who leave the protection of their paternal home to make their way in the wider “foreign” world. All are set in Germany with no travel or even reference to foreign countries. Around the turn of the century, works become more common that feature a young woman not leaving her father’s house but leaving the fatherland entirely, to work as a governess abroad, to travel to the colonies with her family, or to pursue new opportunities in the “new” world. After the turn of the century, girls travel more and further, not just to France, England, or Switzerland but to the United States or India or German Southwest Africa. Travel or emigration becomes one phase of the heroine’s journey to maturity, placing other cultures at the service of the German nation.

The use of protagonists who travel abroad in girls’ literature relies on an understanding of the importance of women to maintain German culture identity at home and abroad. As I showed in the preceding chapter, women were seen as central to the colonial project because of their role as bearers of German culture (*Kulturträger*), and this idea filters into young adult literature. While traveling or living abroad the heroine learns to appreciate her German values and German identity, and exposure to foreign

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cultures provides a point of comparison that underscores the superiority of German values and customs. For the young woman who was born abroad, a visit to Germany allows her to learn how a German woman behaves and to either stay in Germany or return to her foreign homeland to serve as a colonizer and spread Germanness abroad.

**Travel as Bildung**

After the turn of the century, girl heroines more often travel abroad, both to near neighbors like Switzerland, Scandinavia, or England or further-flung destinations like Japan. For most of these heroines their movement is circular; they leave their fatherland to live or travel briefly abroad and return with a deepened sense of their own cultural superiority. Their exposure to foreign manners and morals seemingly serves only to strengthen their appreciation for Germany and desire to stay there.

Many novels feature girls who travel abroad to learn the stereotypical lessons of *Backfisch* novels, such as sacrificing their own needs and desires for that of their family. Bertha Clément’s *Fräulein Wildfang* (Miss Tomboy, 1909), for example, features a spoiled heroine Gertrud who at the beginning of the novel petulantly asks her mother, “Why should I have to sacrifice for the sake of the family?” when she learns she must work to help support her family after finishing her schooling. After she goes abroad to work as a nursery-school teacher (*Erzieherin*) in England and Switzerland, she develops a sense of responsibility and duty toward her family, and at the end of the novel she settles in Germany and runs her own boarding school to allow her to support herself and her family.

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family. Another Clément heroine, Annemarie in *Die nächste Pflicht* (The nearest duty, 1910) must similarly learn to suppress her own desires for the sake of her family. In her case she desperately wants to train for a profession but instead must learn to pay attention to her “nearest duty” to her family. Instead of beginning a training program she stays home to help her mother run the household and later goes abroad with her father to keep house for him. She chafes under the strain of managing a household by herself, initially trying to use her spare time to write a novel. Her father laughs at her literary efforts and is annoyed when she neglects him in favor of her writing. Eventually Annemarie, like Gertrud, learns that she must put her family first and not only becomes “satisfied” with her lot but grows to love it.\textsuperscript{11}

For other *Backfisch* heroines, the exposure to foreign manners cements their appreciation for their German homeland. Leni from Else Ury’s *Vierzehn Jahr’ und Sieben Wochen* (1911) enjoys the year she spends with family in England, but never fully acclimatizes to the foreign culture.\textsuperscript{12} She finds the English stiff and formal, in contrast to her warm and friendly German family. She is shocked at the appearance of Miss Brown, the family governess, with the woman’s hairstyle, hat, and dress convincing Leni that she is a man.\textsuperscript{13} She also chafes under the many rules of her host family, in particular the rules of dress and behavior for young women that hold she wear short skirts and keep her hair down like a little girl. She shouts, “I’m not a little girl… and what you do here in England

\textsuperscript{11} “zufrieden.” Bertha Clément, *Die nächste Pflicht* (Stuttgart: Wiese, nd [1910]), 90.

\textsuperscript{12} The title is a reference to a popular saying about how long the period of being a *Backfisch* lasted: “Mit 14 Jahr’ und 7 Wochen ist der Backfisch ausgekrochen, mit 17 Jahren Wochen drei ist die Backfischzeit vorbei.”

\textsuperscript{13} Else Ury, *Vierzehn Jahr’ und Sieben Wochen* (Stuttgart: Union, 1911), 34.
doesn’t matter to me at all! I am German, and I will remain so even in London!”¹⁴ Though Leni enjoys her year abroad, it serves to convince her of the superiority of her German home; she writes in a school essay, “The prettiest spot in Europe is Mecklenburg.”¹⁵ Her foreign travel constitutes an important learning experience, but its primary effect is to make her yearn to return to her German homeland and remain there.

Henny Koch’s *Im Lande der Blumen* (In the land of flowers, 1912) offers another example of how travel is put to use in girls’ literature to further German national feelings. The story follows teenage girl, Ruth, who relocates with her family to Japan for three years. While she admires the beauty of Japan, describing it as “such a blessed flower land” upon her first visit to a cherry blossom festival, for example, she nonetheless looks down upon the Japanese people and their customs.¹⁶ Ruth describes her mother as “brave” (tapfer) for having to put up with “a scrawny, yellow Japanese man” as the family cook.¹⁷ Koch relies partially on simplistic stereotypes and partially on outright fabrication to paint a negative picture of the Japanese. They are described as childlike, “by nature cheerful, frugal, carefree.”¹⁸ To further the plot, Ruth’s sister Iris is kidnapped by their servant Sada, a religious extremist who wishes to rescue the little girl from being raised as a Christian.¹⁹ Ruth’s best friend Kiku is almost forced into a marriage by her

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¹⁴ “Ich bin kein Gör… und was man hier in England tut, das ist mir ganz gleichgültig! Ich bin eine Deutsche, und das bleibe ich auch in London!” Ury, *Vierzehn Jahr’,* 38.
¹⁶ “solch ein gesegnets Blumenland!” Henny Koch, *Im Lande der Blumen* (Stuttgart: Union, 1912), 176.
father against her will, but she is seemingly powerless to resist her father’s patriarchal authority: “A Japanese father’s will is law to his children.” All that saves her from an unwanted marriage is that her fiancé chooses to marry someone else.

This negative characterization of the Japanese as simple, patriarchal, and domineering serves to contrast with Ruth’s German upbringing and drives her desire to return home. Though she enjoys her time in Japan, her family never waivers in their desire to return to Germany; while in Japan, her family erupts into spontaneous outbursts of German national enthusiasm, for example by singing the Deutschlandlied in front of a bemused Japanese audience. Ruth heartily agrees with the letter she receives from her friend Leni in Germany: “Anyone who is a true German girl can not hang her heart on something so exotic.” Ruth remains a true German girl to her core. The book ends with an adult Ruth, married with children, receiving a letter from her old friend Kiku. She laughs at her friend, now working in a hospital and still refusing marriage proposals. The book ends by holding up Ruth’s choice to marry and raise a family as the best choice a woman can make: “What a blessing it is to be placed in a circle that one can fulfill and where one can be fulfilled, be it at home or somewhere else… But the woman is doubly happy who has chosen as her sphere of influence her own home with husband and child, for husband and child.”

21 Koch, Blumen, 268.
22 “Was ein echtes deutsches Mädel ist, das kann sein Herz nicht an so was Exotisches hängen.” Koch, Blumen, 200-201.
23 “Welch ein Segen ist’s, in einen Kreis gestellt zu sein, den man ausfüllen kann, der uns ausfüllt, sei’s nun im Haus oder sonstwo! … Doppelt glücklich aber die Frau, der das
her a more content German wife and mother, fulfilling what is presented as her true and proper role.

These representative examples show how travel was put to use in service of the German nation in girls’ literature. Authors placed girls in ever more exotic settings but remained faithful to the German fatherland in their negative portrayals of other cultures. Though these heroines generally enjoy their travel and credit it with helping to improve their general education (Bildung), nothing they encounter in the wider world can compare with the German metropole. Their travel becomes a way to strengthen their German identity and their desire to return to Germany to raise families.

**Germanization in the Metropole**

A significant number of girls’ novels examine travel in the opposite direction, not from the metropole outward but from the colonies toward the metropole. These novels feature female protagonists who are born outside of Germany in colonies or to emigrant parents and who travel to Germany for school or another purpose, such as Clément’s character Felicia Bertram, who was discussed in Chapter Two. While in Germany, these heroines undergo a process of Germanization in which they shed the undesirable foreign customs they learned abroad in order to become proper German women. Girls who are born and raised in warm climates seem particularly in need of this reform. The novels *Libelle: Backfischzeit* (Libelle: Teenage Years, Bertha Clément, 1901), *Fräulein Übermeer* (Miss Overseas, Angelica Harten, 1901), Henny Koch’s *Das Mägdlein aus der Fremde* (The

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girl from abroad, 1902) and *Rose Maries Weg zum Glück* (Rose Marie’s path to happiness, 1904), and *Maria Leonas Deutsche Heimat* (Maria Leona’s German home, Else Franken, 1913) all feature German girls from Brazil, Argentina, and Cuba who exhibit wild and unruly behavior until they come to Germany to learn how German women behave. These authors conceptualize how German identity can be maintained in an era of mass emigration by placing the metropole at the center of the process of becoming German.

Girls who come to Germany from South America seemingly bring the light and warmth of their southern homelands to Germany. Dolly from Angelika Harten’s *Fräulein Übermeer* (1901) is a “bird of paradise” who longs to escape the strict convent boarding school in Germany, which she describes as a “Babylonian imprisonment” she must endure until she can return to her “promised land Brazil,” characterized by “light” and “freedom.”

Rose-Marie, who was orphaned after her German father and Cuban mother are killed in a boating accident during a freak tropical storm, is described in a similar fashion; her warm, sunny disposition resembles her southern homeland: “When she sticks her head through the door it’s as if a beam of light shines in.”

Young female protagonists born in the southern hemisphere struggle to adapt to the strict rules that govern behavior in Germany and are frequently accused of violating gender norms. In Bertha Clément’s *Libelle: Backfischzeit*, heroine Hildegarde (called both Hilde and Libelle, the German word for dragonfly) Hermsdorf lives with her

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25 “Wenn sie ihr liebes Gesichtchen durch die Thür steckt, ist’s als ob ein Lichtstrahl herein glitte.” Henny Koch, *Das Mägdlein aus der Fremde* (Stuttgart: Wiese, 1902), 103.
German family in Buenos Aires and is a typical *Backfisch* protagonist. She is a wild, tomboyish thirteen-year-old, called both “Wildfang” (tomboy) and “Sausewind” (whirlwind) by her family in reference to her unruly behavior. In Germany, Hilde, described by her new German friends as “the American” and an “exotic plant,” struggles to adjust to the “horribly stiff” atmosphere of her German school. Her behavior shocks those around her, and when she plays pranks like paying carnival musicians to play outside her school and disrupt lessons, she is described as “worse than a wild boy” and showing “willful disobedience and defiance.”

Else Franken’s *Maria Leonas deutsche Heimat* similarly portrays a young woman from South America who shocks her upright bourgeois relatives and classmates with her behavior. The novel relates the story of Isabel and Maria von Schlichting, children of a German expatriate who died after making his fortune in Brazil. When a circus visits the village where Maria, known as Meike, lives, she joins the performers onstage, prompting her school friend Else to exclaim “It’s a shame on the whole class!” and her aunt, “She has no pride! How could she make a spectacle of herself in front of everyone!” Classmates consider her “completely unfeminine” at first, and parents worry “that our daughters might be harmed through interaction with this Brazilian.”


All four heroines undergo a process of maturation and Germanization in the metropole, and there is ambiguity about whether their proper German behavior is fully learned or if being in Germany awakens their latent sense of Germanness. After the death of her father, Libelle is sent to a strict boarding school in Switzerland; in an effort to combat her “lack of an internal sense of order,” she is tasked with taking care of an orphan to settle her down and teach her to be a dutiful daughter who takes care of her ailing mother and their household.30 While Libelle seemingly learns how to behave like a German, Maria Leona is assumed to have a “good German” inside her that needs to be awakened. When parents express concern about Maria Leona’s influence on their children, a family friend comes to Maria Leona’s defense, asserting that her German blood will triumph over the misbehavior she learned in South America: “‘You must not forget… that Maria is a good German through her father. She also loves her father’s homeland.’”31 The assertion that Maria is a good German “through her father” is ambiguous, for it could refer to how she learned to love Germany thanks to the influence of her father. However, the text shows that Maria and her sister barely know anything about Germany, making this seemingly an argument about the German blood they inherited from their father. It takes a move to Germany to bring out this “good German” lurking within Maria.

In locating the place of transformation of these international Backfisch heroines in Germany, authors express skepticism about emigration and fear of what can happen to families who leave Germany to seek their fortunes abroad. These novels are full of

30 “Mangel des eigenen Ordnungssinnes.” Clément, Libelle, 244.
31 “Sie dürfen hier alle nicht vergessen… dass Maria durch ihren Vater eine gute Deutsche ist. Sie liebt auch ihres Vaters Heimat.” Franken, Maria Leona, 107.
fortunes made and lost, bank collapses, mysterious illnesses, and broken families, and heroines and their families are only made whole and healthy again when they travel to Germany for an extended stay. In *Fräulein Übermeer*, Dolly’s father, after years of stress about “bad harvests and worker uprisings on the coffee and tobacco plantations,” dies penniless after a bank collapse.\(^{32}\) Dolly is able to support her brother and stepmother only because the money she has inherited from her mother is safe in the stalwart Bank of England. Rose-Marie is left orphaned after her parents are killed in a freak tropical storm.

As wealthy heiresses, both Dolly and Rose-Marie must contend with fortune hunters and those who judge them for their ill-gotten wealth. Rose-Marie is described as “the half-wild daughter of a brutal slave trader,”\(^{33}\) and Dolly refuses marriage proposals from those who are only interested in her fortune. German girls born in South America are selfish and spoiled and misbehave. Maria Leona and her sister resist helping around the house because they have always had servants to do all the work for them. With the exception of Libelle, all of the other heroines lose their families in South America, so for them Germany serves as a place of healing and reconciliation.

The fortunes of these German girls born abroad are mixed. Though they all undergo a process of Germanization, only some choose to remain in Germany, while others go abroad to seemingly continue the process of colonization as German women. As the title of *Maria Leonas deutsche Heimat* promises, Maria adopts Germany as her true Heimat, but her elder sister Isabel marries and returns to Brazil. Rose-Marie, though

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a wealthy heiress, settles down to a simple life raising her children as a pastor’s wife in the German countryside. The only reminder of the southern land of her birth is the nickname of her daughter Hedwig, Sönnchen (Sunny). After spending time in Germany, Dolly is no longer as enraptured of Brazil as she once was: “Brazil is dear to me in my deepest heart as my beautiful, glorious homeland, … but I am long healed of my rapturous notions that everything here is light and free.”

At the end of the novel she marries the doctor who cured her stepmother of blindness and chooses to settle in Germany, and in doing so she renounces her overseas homeland. Her future husband proclaims: “my Dolly, my sweet bride, soon-to-be wife of my heart, my former Fräulein Übermeer!” emphasizing the end of “Fräulein Übermeer” now that she has chosen a German homeland.

Other heroines who become proper German women travel or move abroad, some with a fervent desire to spread Germandom across the globe. Libelle leaves German to find a “new homeland” with her husband in Hawaii, a place that reminds her both of Germany and Argentina. With its tropical climate and electric lights, horse tram, and theater, it is a mix of the foreign and the familiar. The mixed messages about Heimat at the conclusion of this novel—in the span of a few pages the word is applied to Germany,

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34 “Brasilien ist mir zwar als mein schönes, gesegnetes Heimatland, als das Land, wo meine teuern Eltern der Auferstehung entgegenschlummern, wo ich liebe Freunde gefunden, im tiefsten Herzen lieb und teuer; aber von meinen schwärmerischen Ansichten, als sei alles Licht und Freiheit hier, bin ich schon lange geheilt.” Harten, Fräulein Übermeer, 162.

35 “meine Dolly, meine süße Braut, bald das geliebte Weib meines Herzens, mein einstiges Fräulein Übermeer!” Harten, Fräulein Übermeer, 206.


Argentina, and Hawaii—are tempered by the patriarchal nature of her family. She assures her husband, childhood friend Enriko, whom she met in Buenos Aires but who was born in Spain to Basque parents, “Oh, Enriko, now I know for sure that my true home is with you.” After leaving her father’s home and fatherland, she locates her new home wherever her husband resides, and though her new island home is far from Germany, it is described as a “fairyland” (Märchenland), locating it squarely within the mythology of the old world. Thanks to her Germanization, the home Libelle constructs is culturally German. Almost every other Backfisch heroine marries a German husband to build her new German home with. Felicia from Clément’s Im Rosenhause and In den Savannen, which were discussed in Chapter Two, spends a year in Germany learning how to be a proper German woman before returning to her father in Illinois with the mindset of a colonist, founding the German town of Glückstadt and working to Germanize her immigrant neighbors.

These stories of German girls born abroad who return to the metropole present a fiction of strong connections between Germans who remain in Europe and the so-called Auslandsdeutsche. The German characters in these novels are able to leave and return, moving between the European and foreign homelands and able to be comfortably reabsorbed into the national body even after decades away. These authors offer an intriguing variation on the Backfisch novel, placing metropolitan Germany at the center point of a process of maturation and Germanization of foreign-born heroines.


**One-Way Travel: Women as Colonizers**

In one way or another, most girls’ novels conceptualize circular patterns of movement between colony and metropole. In this section I will discuss one author who deviated from this pattern in a significant way to present women as central to German imperial efforts abroad. Brigitte Augusti’s *An fremdem Herd* (On a foreign hearth) series features female protagonists who travel, often intending only to be gone a short time but who nonetheless never return to their German homeland, choosing instead to stay abroad as colonizers. The full title of the series indicates the general content of the four novels: *An fremdem Herd: Bunte Bilder aus der Nähe und der Ferne mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des häuslichen Lebens in verschiedenen Länder.* (On a foreign hearth: colorful illustrations from near and far with particular attention to domestic life in several countries).

This successful series places female figures engaged in the German imperial project into a larger literary conversation about German history and German nationalism. The series was a follow-up to Augusti’s highly successful *An deutschem Herd* (On a German hearth) series, whose five volumes traced the history of a German family from the middle ages to the nineteenth century. The series was commissioned by the publisher Ferdinand Hirt & Sohn to capitalize on the popularity of Gustav Freytag’s celebrated historical fiction series *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit* (Images from the German past) and *Die Ahnen* (The ancestors).

read as showing the importance of the middle class in developing Germany’s national consciousness.\textsuperscript{41} In her novels, “Augusti outlines for her young readers the emotional and supportive role played by middle-class women in the domestic sphere and reinforces the message of the middle-class German \textit{Kultur nation}, in which girls and women held an emotionally sustaining role.”\textsuperscript{42}

While \textit{An deutschem Herd} offers a glimpse into the importance of bourgeois German women in the history of the nation, Augusti’s second series is concerned with German women in a time of globalization and immigration. After exploring German cultural history and the foundations of German nationalism, Augusti investigates the spread and cultivation of Germanness abroad. The four volumes of \textit{An fremdem Herd} are concerned with the German \textit{Kultur nation} outside of Germany and how women can sustain German identity in immigrant communities abroad. \textit{Gertruds Wanderjahre: Erlebnisse eines deutschen Mädchens im Elsass, in Spanien, Italien und Frankreich} (Gertrud’s years of travel: adventures of a German girl in Alsace, Spain, Italy, and France, 1890) features a young woman who spends a year as a governess in Spain before ultimately settling in newly German Alsace. \textit{Zwillings-Schwestern: Erlebnisse zweier deutschen Mädchen in Skandinavien und England} (Twin sisters: experiences of two German girls in Scandinavia and England, 1891) focuses on twin sisters Frida and Ilse who travel to Scandinavia and England respectively to work as nannies; while Frida


\textsuperscript{42} Askey, \textit{Good Girls, Good Germans}, 116.
marries and remains in Norway, Ilse eventually becomes a missionary to India. She is a character in the third volume of the series, *Unter Palmen: Schilderungen aus dem Leben und der Missionsarbeit der Europäer in Ostindien* (Under the palm trees: scenes from the life and missionary work of Europeans in East India, 1893), where she serves as an inspiration to Henriette, the daughter of a wealthy German plantation owner, to engage in missionary work instead of enjoying a life of wealth and ease. *Jenseit des Weltmeers: Schilderungen aus dem nordamerikanischen Leben* (Beyond the ocean: scenes from North American life, 1894) follows two German women, Monika and Letty, who become disillusioned with the greed, avarice, and economic inequality they encounter in the United States.

For Augusti’s heroines, their travel abroad and exposure to foreign customs allows them to fully become German women and reinforces the importance of their German identity and German values. While travel is described as having a positive effect on these young women, they have many negative experiences in the countries they visit and live in, and Augusti is very critical of Spanish, French, British, and American culture. For example, Gertrud credits her time in Spain with contributing to the “enrichment of her spirit and her all-around education” through “matured judgment” and a “more open point-of-view.”43 However, while abroad, Gertrud holds herself aloof and is critical of those around her. When she visits a Catholic church she looked disdainfully on its

elaborate decoration, believing herself to be “in a junk store rather than a church.” She is disgusted by bull-fighting, referring to it as a “barbaric amusement” and believing those who enjoy bull-fighting to be heartless. Ilse returns from her year in England much improved, with more “self-confidence” to complement her “truly feminine aura of meekness and humility,” but overall her impressions of England are negative. She struggles to adjust to being treated like a servant by the proud, wealthy family she works for, and is eventually fired in order to separate her from their son Archie, whom they intend to have marry a wealthy heiress. After this heartbreak, Ilse travels to India as a missionary in the book *Unter Palmen*, in which Augusti is particularly critical of the British. In India Ilse meets Henriette, the German daughter of a wealthy plantation owner, and influences her to abandon her selfish and spoiled *Backfisch* behavior in order to serve the poor and help the mission. Henriette’s family, including her British stepmother and stepsister, only value ease and idleness and ridicule her efforts to Christianize the natives. Her sister Vivian thinks that Christianity is only suitable for “decent people” and does not wish to sit in church next to “bad-smelling riff raff”.

Augusti crafts a fiction of emigration that shows German identity as not only maintained but strengthened by living outside of Europe. With such a negative portrayal of the lands these girls visit and live in—Spain, England, India, and the United States—the experience of travel only serves to strengthen their sense of German cultural superiority and make their identification as Germans much stronger. Everywhere they go they encounter insulated German communities that serve as an inspiration to them, and each novel contains a scene where these Germans living outside of Germany spontaneously burst into songs celebrating the German nation, generally either the “Deutschlandlied” or “Die Wacht am Rhein.”

Rather than return to Germany, these heroines create outposts of Germanness abroad. When Frida marries and leaves for Norway, for example, her father whispers to her, “Attach yourself to your new home, your new fatherland, with all your strength, but at the core of your soul always remain a German woman!” Frida is presented as a missionary or colonizer figure who possesses an incorruptible German spirit and German soul that she can use to influence others. The other heroines are described in a similar fashion, and four of them marry and create German homes abroad. The other two remain single but do not live independent lives as single women. Ilse works as a missionary in

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48 Only in the fourth and final novel does Augusti express true skepticism about emigration. One character in *Jenseit des Weltmeers* remarks that American cities are overcrowded (überfüllt) with the “Europamüden” (those who have grown tired of Europe) who would be better off staying in Europe than emigrating. Augusti’s use of the term “Europamüden” plays off of the nineteenth century novels *Die Europamüden* and *Der Amerikämüde*, the latter of which is very critical of waves of German immigration to the United States. Augusti, *Jenseit des Weltmeers: Schilderungen aus dem nordamerikanischen Leben*. (Leipzig: Hirt, 1894), 117.

49 “Schließe dich mit allen Kräften an die neue Heimat, das neue Vaterland an, aber im innersten Kern deines Wesens bleibe immerdar eine deutsche Frau!” Augusti, *Zwillings-Schwestern*, 248.
India, spending her days teaching in a remote area, while Monika works as a doctor working in the slums of Chicago and lives in her father’s home.

For Augusti’s heroines, travel is the first step in a process of becoming a colonizing figure. Once they leave their fatherland for a trip abroad, their German homeland lessens in importance until they ultimately settle abroad permanently. Augusti’s heroines, engaged in the project of spreading Germandom abroad, much more closely resemble the heroines of the African colonial novels discussed in the previous chapter than other heroines of girls’ novels.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have attempted to trace the impact of globalization and imperialism on Wilhelmine girls’ literature. The classic plot of a Backfisch novel is driven by the self-abnegation of the heroine; over the course of the novel she learns to suppress her own desires in order to better serve her family and, by extension, the nation. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the formulaic genre undergoes a process of globalization, and novels begin to show girls who not only leave Germany but who leave Europe and make their way through the world as settlers, travelers, and colonizers. For most girl heroines, travel is circular. A trip abroad to England or Japan exposes a Backfisch to foreign manners and reinforces a sense of German cultural superiority, and by the end of the novel she is ready to settle into domestic life in Germany as a wife and mother. For German girls born outside of Germany, in particular in South American countries, a trip to the metropole is necessary to complete the Backfisch transformation from a wild, unruly tomboy into a proper German woman. For other girls, the first trip
abroad becomes an inspiration to join in the imperial project of creating outposts of Germanness around the world. In this way authors of Wilhelmine German girls’ literature responded to the age of globalization and imperialism in which they lived and presented to their young readers the relationship between colony and metropole and the role of imperial German girls in the modern world.
CHAPTER 6
“A WORLD OF ENEMIES”: GENDER, WAR MOBILIZATION, AND
COLONIALISM IN GERMAN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE FROM THE
FIRST WORLD WAR

Introduction

In her 1915 novel, *Daheim in großer Zeit* (At home in great times), German author Emily Albert includes the touching scene of a mother comforting a daughter worried about her father on the front: “We will have much to do. In the great world out there father will heal the wounds of poor soldiers, and at home in our small world we must comfort and lighten injured and heavy hearts.”¹ In this otherwise unremarkable wartime novel we find a surprising illustration of what it meant for young Germans to be a part of the “the world” during the First World War. Whereas before the war, a description of a young German living in the “great world,” to use Albert’s words, might refer to youth on the prairies of North America or in Germany’s African colonies, here it has been reduced; now the “greater world” seems to constitute only the European fronts of the war, while the “small world” encompasses the German home front.

Before the First World War, literature had established a framework for understanding German identity in global and imperial contexts. German settlement outside Germany—in the Americas, Africa, and elsewhere—was necessary and good, and

German identity could thrive in these outposts of the German nation. These new Germanys were places to provide a new start for the nation, free of the evils of modernity and industrialization. The understanding of what it meant to be a “young German in the world” shifted abruptly when the era of growing international cooperation and global entanglement gave way to a clash of empires and a fight for German survival, as the First World War was understood to be at the time. Now literature explicitly and implicitly disavowed Germany’s imperial ambitions and instead crafted a powerful notion of German victimhood at the hands of the combined imperial forces of most of the rest of the world. German young adults no longer read about Germans as an integral part of a world system, competing as equals (or betters) against and with the empires of France and Britain; instead they read of Germany as an isolated and embattled nation, the next target of European imperial exploitation. During the war the world shrinks to become “a world of enemies.”

In this chapter I will show how German texts for young people written and set during the First World War narrate this transition and articulate Germany’s new relationship to the rest of the world. I will address both fictional texts and nonfiction accounts to show how wartime young adult literature sought not only to awaken patriotic sentiment and encourage youth to participate in the war effort in a manner appropriate for their gender, but also to make them aware of Germany’s imperiled place in the world. I

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2 The phrase “eine Welt von Feinden” (or “eine Welt voll Feinden”) repeatedly occurs during the war. German feminist Helene Lange uses it in her famous essay, “Der Krieg und deutsche Kultur,” pamphlet and news writers often made use of it, and it is found in children’s essays from the war. Wolfgang Kruse chose the phrase for the title of his 1997 history of the First World War: Eine Welt von Feinden: Der Große Krieg, 1914-1918 (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1997).
will first examine the “Spirit of 1914” and the cultural meaning that was ascribed to the war before addressing how young people were mobilized for war. I will show how the war came to be seen as an educational force that had a great impact on young people and how this understanding of war is found in young female characters from literary texts. Finally, I will examine how Germany’s changed place in the world is explained to young people and how its colonies are represented in wartime writing for young people. I will examine both representative examples of narrative literature for young people and writing about the war for, by, and about young people, including school readers, pamphlets by educational authorities, and compositions by schoolchildren to show the crosspollination of ideas and consistency of message about the war across genre and generation.

I read this as part of the story of how Germany became postcolonial. Germany did not lose its empire through indigenous uprisings or political referendums, but through the intervention of other European imperial powers. However even before Germany’s colonies were divided among the Entente powers under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, German authors styled Germany as the victim of European imperial aggression. This end stage is a neglected chapter of Germany’s colonial history, but it had a profound influence on later debates about colonialism, including Weimar German outrage about the use of colonial French troops in the Rhineland and the so-called colonial guilt lie (Kolonialschuldlüge) and Nazi-era colonial nostalgia. Understanding what young people read about Germany’s place in the world and how they were taught to view the global conflict of the First World War thus helps to understand Germany’s postcolonial history.
The Spirit of 1914 and Wartime Education

Germans greeted the outbreak of the war in August of 1914 with optimism. With all of Germany’s generally fractious political parties united in their support of the war, it came to be seen as an opportunity to complete the supposedly incomplete process of national unification and emerge as a stronger, more powerful, unified nation.³ This was exemplified by Kaiser Wilhelm II’s famous proclamation, “Henceforth I know no parties, I know only Germans” on August 4, 1914.⁴ The literature of the First World War directed at youth almost universally embodied this feeling, the Spirit of 1914, the outpouring of popular support that emerged in August 1914. Crowds of enthusiastic Germans of all genders, classes, and ages flooded the streets, waving flags and giving the troops a hearty send-off, loaded down with gifts (Liebesgaben). Some scholars have questioned the universality of the Spirit of 1914, but it nonetheless became a critical part of the myth of the war experience and was consciously used by the army and the government in propaganda to maintain popular support for the war as it dragged on.⁵

The war was seen as an opportunity for cultural renewal, to reinvigorate and strengthen German culture through its young people.⁶ The war was conceived of as a

³ For more on this new understanding of German nationalism during the First World War see Steffen Bruendel, Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat: Die “Ideen von 1914” und die Neuordnung Deutschlands im Ersten Weltkrieg (Berlin: Akademie, 2003) and Sven Oliver Müller, Die National als Waffe und Vorstellung: Nationalismus in Deutschland und Grossbritannien im Ersten Weltkrieg (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

⁴ “Ich kenne keine Parteien mehr, ich kenne nur Deutsche.”


⁶ For more on young people and nationalism during the First World War see Andrew Donson, “Models for Young Nationalists and Militarists: German Youth Literature in
fight for the very existence of the German nation, and authors, teachers, reformers, and politicians sought to mobilize young people for war and to raise a new generation of Germans who could lead the nation to victory and greatness. Young Germans were seen particularly susceptible to both positive and negative influence and were therefore an important target for literature and propaganda. Underlying this focus on reinvigorating the nation through young people is an understanding that Germany was in need of renewal and reform. This is a consistent strand of thought throughout Wilhelmine Germany, and authors and reformers had long used the language of crisis to describe German society plagued by the evils of poverty, socialism, and the effects of rapid urbanization and industrialization in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The same line of thinking can be found in literature set in North America and German Southwest Africa, and in many ways the First World simply gave a new immediacy to old arguments.

The war gripped the popular imagination and quickly became the dominant topic of literary production.7 Previously diverse catalogs that featured many genres and types of books for young people gave way to a focus almost exclusively on stories about the war or narratives of heroic nationalism from German history. An enormous amount of literature for young people was produced during the First World War that was remarkably consistent and formulaic. Stories tended to be set in contemporary times and

featured noble German warriors, glorified German sacrifice, and presented Germans as innocent and the good guys; this literature was strongly nationalistic and militaristic and sometimes very violent.\(^8\) This literature, written to inspire and influence young Germans to help in the war effort, was also hopeful, looking to young people as a source of strength for the German nation. Literature from the war written for young people envisions a new German society populated by young people who show bravery, patience, patriotism, frugality, and domesticity and who remain free of foreign influence.

Reformers who had previously advocated against reading cowboy and Indian novels or colonial adventure stories now embraced violently nationalistic war literature for young people as a necessary part of the war effort.\(^9\) For decades the teachers who reviewed books for the *Jugendschriften-Warte*, the largest and most influential publication of the Youth Book Movement, had advocated against adventure literature as a potentially dangerous influence on Germany’s youth. As I showed in Chapter One, in the decade leading up to the war Wolgast and other members of the Youth Book Movement had waged a campaign against literature that was deemed too violent, nationalistic, patriotic, or militaristic, but this was abandoned at the start of the war. Reformers instead

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sought to harness the transformative power of literature to awaken the heroic natures of German boys and girls.10

The First World War also had a profound effect on the German school system, as scholars such as Andrew Donson and Catherine Kay have demonstrated.11 Many teachers abandoned the traditional curriculum in favor of incorporating the war and other current events into lessons wherever possible. The aggressively nationalistic and jingoistic content was accompanied by widespread educational reform and, for the first time, the introduction of child-centered pedagogy, such as free writing activities, into German schools. These curricular reforms were grounded on an understanding of the transformational effect of war on youth, for as one Max Schach wrote in the introduction to a volume about children and the war, “the war is also in our schoolrooms and nurseries.”12 A central tenet of this war ideology was to let the war itself be the teacher of Germany’s youth.13 The idea that the “Great War” was a great educator is a commonly repeated refrain throughout the war years; the introduction to a collection of diaries

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11 For more on war pedagogy and German schools see Andrew Donson, Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914-1918. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) and Carolyn Kay, “War Pedagogy in the German Primary School Classroom During the First World War,” War and Society 33.1 (2014): 3-11.


13 Donson discusses how schools participated in the mobilization of young people in his chapter “War Pedagogy in the Era of the Burgfrieden,” Youth in the Fatherless Land, 59-90. See also his translation of Theobald Ziegler’s “Ten Commandments of War Pedagogy” for an example of this ideology, 243-4.
written by young female agricultural workers explains, for example, “And then came the teacher, the Great War, which showed us with a firm but true hand what we needed to do.”

Testament to this understanding of the war’s importance in teaching and transforming Germany’s youth are the number of publications geared at both teachers and the general public about the new pedagogy; publishers produced books of essays at a furious rate that focused on the war and what it taught young people. Coverage of the war in schools included a broad range of topics, including history, military strategy, geography, and, of particular interest to me, Germany’s relation to the rest of the world. Some publications, like Johannes Wewer’s *Aus großer Zeit: Bilder aus dem Weltkriege* (During Great Times: Pictures from the World War, 1917) and J. Radtke’s *Themen und Aufsätze zum Weltkrieg* (Topics and Essays about the World War, 1916), were aimed at teachers and included short texts for students to read, essay topics and discussion points for use in the classroom, while others, like Walther Schwahn’s *Deutsche Aufsätze über den Weltkrieg* (German Essays about the World War, 1917) included both essay topics and sample essays written by German schoolchildren. Others, such as Schach’s *Das Kind und der Krieg*, which included drawings, essays, and stories by German children, and *Was wir als Erntehelferinnen erlebt haben* (What we experienced as farm helpers, 1916),

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disseminated the writings of young people to a more general audience, presumably as a way of boosting morale by showing the patriotism of Germany’s youth.\textsuperscript{15}

In schools young Germans were taught that the very fate of the nation was at stake, as an essay in Wewer’s collection emphasized:

Every German knows that this World War is about the existence or non-existence of the German people. This knowledge has gripped German youth and filled them with sacred ardor for their beloved fatherland. Schools have the delightful task of maintaining and strengthening this enthusiasm by showing pupils lively portrayals of combatants and other enlisted persons to allow them to inwardly experience this difficult yet glorious time.\textsuperscript{16}

This author’s tone is similar to that of other authors and critics who address the war with a serious but hopeful tone, treating it as a terrible but necessary event in the life of the nation. This excerpt is from the foreword to a collection of essays and news items meant to be used in schools as a supplement to standard school readers, allowing students to learn about the “difficult” and yet “glorious” war in the classroom. It shows how the educational and publishing worlds in particular worked to foster a sense of patriotic duty in young people and to teach them how to function in the new social order and help Germany triumph over its enemies.

\textsuperscript{15} A more thorough discussion of these and similar sources can be found in Donson, \textit{Fatherless Land}, 78-88.

Young people were mobilized through their schools and reading material to come to the defense of Germany as a beleaguered nation attacked and invaded by major colonial powers. Pamphlets and supplementary material for use in classrooms or by teachers, such as *Deutsche Aufsätze über den Weltkrieg*, show the simplistic explanations young people received of the complex global politics that led to the outbreak of the war. One outline for a student composition on “Die Gründe des Krieges” (The causes of the war) includes three primary reasons: England’s jealousy, Russia’s longing for the Baltic German provinces, and France’s desire for revenge. To Germany’s primary antagonists are ascribed the most basic of motives for their declaration of war: jealousy, greed, and revenge, and the causes of a complex geopolitical conflict are reduced to crude national stereotypes and three bullet points for Germany’s young people. Another essay, “Der Krieg zeigt den wahren Charakter eines Volkes” (War shows us the true character of a people), is similarly reductive in its descriptions of national characters. For example, the English are arrogant and reckless, the French unchivalrous and boastful, the Italians faithless and stubborn, and the Russians coarse and frivolous; the Germans, on the other hand, are described as just, noble, and active. Sample essay topics in another collection, *Über 800 Aufgaben über den Weltkrieg 1914/15* (More than 800 activities about the World War) followed the same line of thinking. On the subject of “Germany’s Position of Power in the World,” author Gustav Spiegelberg lists “Germany’s Great and Exemplary Culture,” “Germany’s Model Military Organization,” and “Deutschland über alles in der

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Welt!” as possible essay topics, while he offers “England’s Growing Jealousy of Germany,” “England’s Petty-Mindedness,” and “France’s Never-Dormant Desire for Revenge against Germany” as “Causes and Motives for the World War.”

Young Germans were thus taught that they were living in a world where Germany was the target of European aggression. Their participation in the war effort was presented as necessary for Germany to triumph and reclaim its place on the global stage. In schools young Germans of both genders were confronted with the war on a daily basis, and teachers worked actively to inform young people about the war and awaken their patriotic sentiments.

**Girls go to War: The War as Educator in Girl’s Literature**

Mass mobilization efforts aimed at Germany’s young people were strongly gendered. As Margaret Higonnet has written, “war must be understood as a *gendering* activity, one that ritually marks the gender of all members of a society, whether or not they are combatants” and the German case is no exception. In the collection *Das Kind und der Krieg*, we find the words of a boy who has been instructed to write sentences that feature opposites (such as “Fire is hot – water is cold”). Drawing on the omnipresent war, the anonymous boy formulates a sentence that beautifully illustrates gendered German

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mobilization efforts: “Boys are brave, girls are docile.” During the First World War, German boys and girls received different messages about war mobilization and patriotic duty that relied on a bifurcated understanding of gender identity. As the anonymous boy’s words show, men and women, boys and girls, were seen as opposites, both able to serve the nation but in different ways based on their natures and abilities, boys with their bravery and girls with their docility.

In this section I will examine girls’ literature from the war with a focus on gendered mobilization and the understanding of war as an educator. Stories aimed at boys (which, of course, were also read by girls) generally showcased battlefield heroism or disobedience, such as boys running away to enlist without parental consent. Stories specifically aimed at girls, on the other hand, differ little in basic structure from their pre-war counterparts. However, in wartime narratives about immature, disobedient girls who grow into tame, domestic, marriageable young women, it is the war itself that serves as the engine of the heroine’s transformation. It is the war, and the pressing need for German women to help in the war effort, that vanquishes childishness, selfishness, and


23 For more on adventure literature for boys from wartime see Andrew Donson, “Young Nationalists.”
immaturity. Anglo-American girls’ fiction from this period shows girls actively participating in the war, traveling to the front and coming into contact with Europe’s fields of battles, yet their German counterparts remained bound to the homefront. German literature for girls from the First World War portrays the war as a totalizing force that touches every aspect of life and culture, but these novels eschew the portrayals of girls who undertake brave and daring adventures that are found in English-language fiction. Instead German girls’ novels show girls as vital to the war effort through their embrace of traditional gender roles, by rolling bandages, baking cookies, or knitting socks for the troops. Through their embrace of this traditional femininity, girls become symbols of national renewal.

The titles of German girls’ literature show contemporary understandings of the importance of the war and girls’ role in it: Deutsche Mädel in großer Zeit (German girls in great times, Else Hofmann, 1916), Im heiligen Kampf (In a holy struggle, Sophie Kloerß, 1915), Daheim in großer Zeit (At home in great times, Emily Albert, 1915). These texts portray girls rising to the occasion of these great times and becoming dutiful, responsible young women once the war breaks out. Tosia Eschenhorst from Marga Rayle’s Majors Einzige im Kriegsjahr (The major’s only daughter during the war, 1915) goes from looking forward to her summer holidays and gossiping with her school friends to devoting long days to war work, including child care, knitting socks, and cooking. Isolde from Die unsere Hoffnung sind (Those who are our hope, Helene Christaller, 1916) is initially flighty and unfocused, having finished school without the requisite grades to become a teacher, but during the war she focuses on supporting her family, adopts a war baby, and finally becomes engaged to a soldier. Ruth from Morgenrot
(Sunrise, Bertha Clement, 1916), the youngest and very artistic daughter of her family, must exert herself in new ways and take over her older sister’s duties in caring for her mother and the household. Examples of such texts are numerous, but here I will focus on two literary examples of girls who grow up in wartime, focusing on what happens when the heroines of popular girls’ series go to war.

In her book *Nesthäkchen und der Weltkrieg* (Nesthäkchen and the World War, 1916), Else Ury portrays the ways in which children were mobilized for war. The novel, the fourth in what would become a ten volume series, centers on Annemarie Braun, the youngest of three children of a Berlin doctor. Ury shows how all three Braun children imbibe patriotic sentiment in school that they in turn pass on to their elders. The Braun children are zealous in their duty, teaching their grandmother how to behave, encouraging her not to hoard food, to obey the bread ration cards, and to turn in copper kettles to be used in munitions manufacturing. It takes the efforts of all three children to convince their grandmother to exchange her gold for paper money, explaining to her the necessity of sacrificing for the fatherland. Grandmother eventually relents and accedes to the children’s requests: “She never would have thought she would ever give up her hoarded gold. But the intelligent, patriotic woman had realized that it was necessary to put the welfare of the people ahead of the welfare of the individual. ‘Yes, yes, the world is all turned around, and now the old learn from the young,’ she said…”24 With their patriotic spirit awakened by their teachers and what they read and experienced of the war,

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Annemarie and her brothers are able to influence their elders and help further the war effort. In this way Ury herself participated in youth mobilization, providing girl readers of Wilhelmine Germany with a patriotic heroine to emulate.\textsuperscript{25}

Even though thirty years had elapsed since the original publication of Emmy von Rhoden’s \textit{Der Trotzkopf}, Marie von Felseneck drew on the enormously popular girl’s novel for her unauthorized sequel, 1916’s \textit{Trotzkopfs Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg} (Trotzkopf’s experiences during the World War).\textsuperscript{26} In her 1885 novel, Emmy von Rhoden chronicled the teenage years of a defiant young woman, Ilse Macket. Rhoden’s novel is a typical \textit{Backfisch} story and remains one of the most well known German girls novels, never out of print since its release. Felseneck picks up where Rhoden left off, with defiant Ilse reformed after a stint in boarding school and engaged to Leo Gontrau. Their plans to wait a year to announce their engagement while Leo serves in the foreign service and Ilse moves to Munich with her aunt and uncle to study painting are abruptly disrupted by the outbreak of the war.

Even though Rhoden’s novel already showed Ilse’s transformation into a calm, dutiful, marriageable young woman, Felseneck rewrites the character so that the war completes the process of maturity that began for Ilse in \textit{Der Trotzkopf}. She puts aside her

\textsuperscript{25} Even though \textit{Nesthäkchen und der Weltkrieg} was by far the most popular of the ten \textit{Nesthäkchen} books when it was published, it was out of print for sixty years after the Second World War. Because of its nationalistic content, the Allies placed it on a list of forbidden books in 1945 and it was only reprinted in the spring of 2014 (Vechta: Geest-Verlag, 2014). It is also the only \textit{Nesthäkchen} book to have been translated into English: \textit{Nesthäkchen and the World War}, trans. Steven Lehrer (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2006).

\textsuperscript{26} Marie von Felseneck, pseudonym of Marie Luise Mancke (1847-1926), was a prolific author of young adult literature, writing dozens of books for girls between 1890 and her death. Popular titles include \textit{Durchgerungen} (1890), \textit{Königin Luise} (1897), \textit{Drei Freundinnen} (1903), and \textit{Landwehrmanns Einzige} (1915).
disappointment at the need to delay her marriage when Leo enlists and chooses to selflessly engage in war work with her aunt Lotte instead of continuing her artistic studies. She tirelessly engages in traditional female occupations during the war, volunteering at the village school, nursing the sick and injured, and sewing and knitting for the troops. At the end of Trotzkopfs Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg she tells her mother and Leo: “I have learned to appreciate, perhaps with more difficulty than other girls, that it is only work, honest work, that gives life value.” She has lost her childish selfishness and learned to be orderly, calm, self-controlled, patient, and dutiful.

Felseneck glorifies female sacrifice in her novel but emphasizes women’s symbolic role more than their actual contributions to the war effort. During a typhoid outbreak Ilse volunteers to care for the sick children, sacrificing her own beloved Christmas celebrations at home and putting her health in jeopardy. She conceives of this as her patriotic duty and minimizes the importance of her actions: “If I were a man, I would be out there in the trenches, but since I am only a woman, it is my duty here at home to act like my brothers out there in the field and not value my own life too highly…” Felseneck pays lip service to the work women do in wartime, emphasizing their roles as nurturers and nurses who do necessary and complementary work to that of the soldiers in the trenches, but still prioritizes the symbolic importance of women to German nationalism and the war effort. Ilse’s uncle Kurt says to Lotte: “My dear


wife…if all German women think like you and Ilse, then in this sign we must conquer” (108). This phrase, a translation of the Latin *In hoc signo vinces*, with its connection to early Christianity and the Roman emperor Constantine I, emphasizes the symbolic significance of the German woman. Lotte and Ilse become symbols for Kurt and Leo, the inspiration and motivation for fighting the war, a role that trumps any contribution they can make to the war effort with their physical labor.

Felseneck’s novel, like other works of this period, shows that women and girls are vital to the war effort through their acceptance of traditional gender roles and behaviors. Women undertook enormous amounts of paid and unpaid labor during the First World War, filling the positions vacated by able-bodied men to ensure the smooth running of the national war machine and the homefront economy. However, literary texts overwhelmingly portray women and girls contributing to the war effort through traditionally female virtues such as duty, patience and sacrifice and through traditionally female handcrafts like knitting. In a collection of school essays collected by a school inspector named J. Radtke, one young girl writes on the topic “How we girls serve the fatherland” (“Wie wir Mädchen dem Vaterlande dienen”):

> We live now in a very earnest time. A world of enemies has arisen against us. Thousands of men and boys have rushed out to protect our beloved

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We girls also gladly place our weak powers in the service of the fatherland... Even thriftiness is now a weapon.\footnote{Wir leben jetzt in einer sehr ernsten Zeit. Eine Welt von Feinden hat sich gegen uns erhoben. Tausende von Männern und Jünglingen sind hinausgeeilt, unser geliebtes Vaterland zu schützen. Auch wir Mädchen stellen gern und freudig unsere schwachen Kräfte in den Dienst des Vaterlandes... Auch die Sparsamkeit ist jetzt eine Waffe.” in J. Radtke, \textit{Themen und Aufsätze zum Weltkrieg} (Breslau: Hirt, 1916), 18.} Like Felseneck, the girl who wrote these words minimizes the importance of women’s practical work by describing the weakness of women’s powers and thereby does not offer a challenge to the patriarchal social structures that prioritized men and their contributions. Instead she emphasized how women and girls can serve their country through traditional female activities like frugal shopping, knitting, or making gifts to send to the troops at the front.

In this she echoed the words of adults writing about the war. One contemporary pamphlet, “What does the war teach our women and daughters?” (“Was lehrt der Krieg unsere Frauen und Töchter?”), similarly sees the war as a means of effecting positive change in young women. In answer to the pamphlet’s titular question, the author lists “moral strengths” (“sittlichen Kräfte”), including “a sense of duty, a feeling of responsibility, self discipline, willingness to sacrifice, subordination of one’s own welfare to the needs of the whole, devotion to the fatherland, mutual trust, and loyalty to the death.”\footnote{Pflichtbewußtsein, Verantwortlichkeitsgefühl, Selbstzucht, Opferwilligkeit, Unterordnung des eigenen Wohls unter das Ganze, Hingebung ans Vaterland, gegenseitiges Vertrauen, Treue bis zum Tod.” [Heinrich] Planck, “Was lehrt der Krieg unsere Frauen und Töchter?” (Stuttgart: Verlag der Evangelischen Gesellschaft, 1916), 13.} In describing these virtues as the basis for Germany’s “Siegeszuversicht” (assurance of victory), Heinrich Planck emphasizes the symbolic role of women in ensuring German moral superiority, rather than offering a practical contribution to a
German victory. The author does, however, caution his readers that female education “should strive for a greater degree of self-sufficiency (Selbständigkeit), without creating unfeminine girls (unweibliche Mädchen).”

These statements illustrate the tension and unease about gender that existed during the First World War. In many ways the war reified traditional gender roles, emphasizing the value of the home and women in their roles as wives, mothers, nurturers, and caregivers. The essay of the anonymous girl above was likely included in the collection because she emphasized the traditionally feminine ways that women could contribute to the war effort over the practical and non-traditional. At the same time, the war opened up new possibilities for women’s employment and empowerment, for it was necessary for everyone to work and be active in the war efforts. Girls’ magazine Das Kränzchen, for example, profiled women in traditional male occupations, like Fräulein Schär, a female chimney sweep, and showed pictures of women at work in munitions factories. In this way young readers were bombarded with conflicting messages about gender during the First World War.

Ury’s Nesthäkchen und der Weltkrieg illustrates these ambiguities about gender in wartime. Annemarie observes the greater participation of women in public life, and she and her friends are amazed by the presence of female conductors, female elevator operators, female street sweepers, and even female postmen. Like Trotzkopf, war transforms Nesthäkchen from a tomboy into a proper young lady. At the beginning of the book she loathes knitting, but she perseveres and soon begins joyfully churning out socks.

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and linens to aid in the war effort. She takes in a “war baby,” an orphan from East Prussia, and raises it until foster parents can be found. Paradoxically, the war also allows her greater leeway to act out. With Nesthäkchen’s father deployed as an army doctor and her mother detained in England, Annemarie and her brothers are left in the care of three weak female authority figures: their grandmother, the cook, and a nursery maid. The children are largely left to their own devices, and, though the earnestness of the war means that Annemarie generally behaves in a responsible manner, she and Klaus occasionally make mischief, for example when Annemarie dresses up as a boy to accompany her brother collecting wool scraps for Reich Wool Week. When she visits the home of her friend Kurt his mother wonders aloud at her dress: ‘‘Kurt told me a lot about you. You always seemed to me to be half-boy, but have you now become a whole boy?’’ she said jokingly with a glance at her pants.’’35 Though Annemarie is recognized as a girl in boy’s clothing at several homes, this behavior is never censured. Seemingly as long as she is engaged in the war effort, her cross-dressing poses no threat.

The characters of Ilse Macket and Annemarie Braun exemplify the gendered mobilization of German girls during the First World War. The use of familiar characters like Trotzkopf and Nesthäkchen show the reactionary politics of wartime writing. While authors and writers repeatedly emphasize the immense impact of the war and show its transformational effect on German society, the ideological focus remains on the traditional and conservative. The expressed need for the spiritual renewal of the nation can be met only if the youth adopt traditional gender roles. This gendered mobilization

35 ‘‘Kurt hat mir viel von dir erzählt, ein halber Junge scheinst du mir danach ja schon immer gewesen zu sein, nun bist du wohl ein ganzer geworden?’ sagte sie scherzend mit einem Blick auf die Hosen.” Ury, Nesthäkchen und der Weltkrieg, 143.
and call for a return to the traditional was presented as necessary to prepare youth for the changed world in which they lived. Wartime writing presents the war as a massive force that has the ability to sweep away the evils of modern industrial society and allow for a return to a supposedly simpler, better time. This rhetoric echoes that of colonial literature that viewed places like German Southwest Africa as spaces for the renewal of the German nation. Both call for a return to a mythic time in the German past that likely never existed, an expression of dissatisfaction with contemporary times.  

**Young Germans in a World at War**

In her character Nesthäkchen, Else Ury offers an example of a young girl who ardently and enthusiastically embraces the patriotic sentiment surrounding the war but takes it so far that it becomes a caricature. In her childish naiveté Annemarie repeatedly misunderstands the complicated geopolitics of the global conflict. She is particularly zealous in her attempts to banish all “foreign” words from the German language, a recurring scene in popular literature from the war. Annemarie insists that everyone put five Pfennig in a collection box whenever they use a word without a Germanic origin, such as Adieu, Soße, Pompadour, Portemonnaie and Mantille, particularly hounding her poor grandmother for her linguistic infractions. She stages a revolt against French class,  

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36 As Catherine Dollard has shown, there was much debate in Wilhelmine Germany about the role of women. Even though marriage rates and female employment rates remained relatively consistent until the First World War, many in society spoke of a crisis and feared an erosion of the traditional family and traditional gender roles. See Dollard, *The Surplus Woman: Unmarried in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2009).

refusing to learn the language of Germany’s enemies.\textsuperscript{38} In her childish chauvinism Annemarie shuns her “Japanese” neighbor, refusing to make eye contact with, speak to, or accept chocolate from one of Germany’s enemies.\textsuperscript{39} Similarly she accuses schoolmate Vera, a refugee from Poland, of being a spy and Germany’s enemy because she speaks very little German.\textsuperscript{40} By portraying Annemarie as such a perfect patriot, Ury offers a send-up of war literature and its unrelenting nationalism and jingoism. By the end of the novel Ury makes it clear Annemarie has been overzealous in her German nationalism; she writes that it was “false patriotism” that motivated her cruelty toward Vera.\textsuperscript{41} Ury portrays the process of Nesthäkchen learning from her mistakes and feeling regret for the way she has treated others; she reconciles with Vera after her German father is killed on the eastern front, and apologizes to her neighbor when she learns he is actually from Siam.\textsuperscript{42} Early in the novel Ury even includes a scene where Annemarie initially prays for a German victory but corrects herself to instead pray for God to remain neutral, reasoning that French and English children might be praying to the same God for victory.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{38} Ury, \textit{Nesthäkchen}, 50.
\textsuperscript{39} Ury, \textit{Nesthäkchen}, 43-47.
\textsuperscript{40} Ury, \textit{Nesthäkchen}, 97-100; 106-108.
\textsuperscript{41} “Nur falsche Vaterlandsliebe hatte ihr Herz gegen Vera verhärtet.” Ury, \textit{Nesthäkchen}, 115; my emphasis.
\textsuperscript{42} Ury, \textit{Nesthäkchen}, 160; 47.
Ury’s critical stance is a rarity in a wartime novel, but Annemarie’s struggle to understand how Germany fits into the world after the start of the war resembles that of other characters from young adult novels. Other authors include characters with similar patriotism and chauvinism, and who reject foreign influence and fight against Germany’s supposed enemies, though generally handled with less subtlety than Ury. A sense of German cultural and racial superiority remains, with the focus shifting to how these qualities make Germany a target of the greed and jealousy of the British, French, and Russian empires.

Authors of young adult literature from the First World War differ from their pre-war counterparts in how they portray the life of Germans abroad. Before the war, literature showed Germans abroad in permanent settlement, as colonizers and settlers building German communities elsewhere with no plans to return to the metropole. During the war these Germans are portrayed as if they are only in a temporary exile. German identity remains permanent and indelible and German culture is still presented as thriving outside of Germany’s European borders, but settlers in the colonies or the Americas are now shown as biding their time until they can return to Europe. Reinhard Roehle’s Über Anden und Meer ins deutsche Heer (Over the Andes and across the sea into the German army, 1916) and Fritz Reck-Mallerzewen’s Aus Tsingtau entkommen (Escape from Tsingtau, 1916) are two examples of this trend. Both feature German protagonists who make daring escapes to return to Germany and serve in the military; their plots are

in the war. And Uncle Henry and all the other soldiers. And please send us another nice victory like today, eh? Please help us Germans, dear God.’ Suddenly it occurred to Nesthäkchen that French and English children might also be begging God for His help at the same time, so she quickly added: ‘And if You don’t want to help us, then please don’t help the others either. At least stay neutral, dear God. Amen.’”
outlandish and action-driven, with protagonists crossing the Atlantic Ocean disguised as a Swiss cow milker and taking a train through Siberia dressed as American industrial workers, respectively. While living abroad and engaging in these adventures, the protagonists are presented as in a kind of holding pattern, filling time until they can join (or re-join) the German army and engage in their real mission of fighting the war in Europe. Pre-war images of Germans who are engaged in spreading Germandom abroad fade, to be replaced by portrayals of Germans in exile, waiting for the chance to return to the fatherland and serve on the European fields of battle.

Gabriele Reuter (1859-1941) offers a particularly interesting example of this theme in her 1917 novel Was Helmut in Deutschland erlebte (What Helmut experienced in Germany). It tells the story of Helmut, a young German-Brazilian who returns to Germany in 1914 with his family. Though most of his shipmates have made Brazil their home, with Germany having become “almost foreign” to them, they joyfully greet the news of the outbreak of the war when their ship docks. For them it is a “stroke of fate” that makes them recognize that their true home is in Germany: “Amidst this danger suddenly awoke a burning recognition of love in the hearts of many. All at once one felt

45 Reuter was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1859 and grew up in both Egypt and Germany. When her father died and her family was left with little money, she turned to writing to support her mother and siblings. She became an important writer of books for children and adults in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, particularly known for her 1895 novel, Aus guter Familie: Leidensgeschichte eines Mädchens, which has been translated into English by Lynne Tatlock: From a Good Family (Rochester: Camden House, 1999).
46 “beinahe fremd.” Gabriele Reuter, Was Helmut in Deutschland erlebte (Gotha: Perthes, 1917), 3.
that one belonged again—one felt he was amongst his own!" The war offers Helmut and his shipmates a new sense of belonging to the German nation, and they disembark to a chorus of voices singing “Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles.” Helmut, who “sang along as loudly as he could,” becomes a symbol of Germany’s strength and renewal through its young people and their ardent nationalism and patriotism. His return to Germany seemingly awakens his latent nationalism; though he has lived in Brazil for so long (eleven of his fourteen years) that he does not remember Germany, his return to German soil immediately prompts a feeling of belonging and patriotism.

The publication history of Reuter’s text adds further weight to this interpretation, as it was commissioned by the Perthes Verlag, in cooperation with the Central Office for Foreign Services (Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst) as a piece of propaganda to be aimed at neutral countries. Reuter’s book was one of a series of young adult books that were written and published with the hope of contradicting the negative representation of Germany in the foreign press and projecting a positive image of Germany to the world. The novels thus focused on Germany’s relationship to the rest of the world, giving greater context to Reuter’s portrayal of Germans as noble warriors fighting for their survival against the corrupt enemies allied against it:

Germans were presented as barbarians, as thieves and murders in their newspapers. Preachers and teachers did not shy from teaching young people as truth all the lies that were spread in France about the Germans, and in this way they filled their hearts with hate. In Germany it was

47 “Shicksalswende”; “Man fühlte sich mit einemmal wieder ‘dazugehörig’ -- man fühlte sich unter den Seinen!” Reuter, Helmut, 3.
48 “hatte mitgesunden so laut er konnte.” Reuter, Helmut, 4.
49 Documents that describe the development of this project can be found in the German Bundesarchiv in Berlin (Signature: R901-72457).
considered unchivalrous to insult enemies, but they didn’t want to believe that on the other side of the Vosges or the Channel.  

Because Helmut has been living abroad, he must return to Germany to fully develop his patriotism, for it is only there he receives an accurate impression of Germany’s noble character and cultural achievement. Reuter’s novel relies on the same simplistic national stereotypes of other European countries that are found throughout German wartime writing for young people and uses them to emphasize Germany’s innocence and superiority. Helmut is presented as both innately good and innately German, the one inextricably linked with the other.

Correspondence between the Perthes Verlag, the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt), and the authors and illustrators involved in the project show the importance that authorities placed on educating and mobilizing young people. One letter to an artist asking for permission to use his illustration in the book series read:

The news department of the Foreign Office, whose scope of functions includes propaganda in neutral countries on behalf of German matters and the battle against antagonistic defamation, has learned in the course of its duties that it is not enough to pay attention only to adults in the political battle, but rather it must be attempted to exert influence on adolescents.

50 “Denn als Barbaren, als Räuber und Mörder wurden ihnen die Deutschen von ihren Zeitungen hingestellt. Prediger und Lehrer scheuten sich nicht, all die Lügen, die in Frankreich über die Detuschen verbreitet wurden, der Jugend als Wahrheit zu lehren und auf diese Weise ihre Herzen mit Haß zu erfüllen. In Deutschland galt es für unritterlich, die Feinde zu beschimpfen, aber das wollte man jenseits der Vogesen und des Kanals nicht glauben.” Reuter, Helmut, 27.

The German government and the Perthes Verlag thus worked together to mobilize young people through literature. Though it is unclear how many of these novels could have been distributed outside of Germany in 1917, their production history shows the vaunted role of literature in mobilizing young people and awakening them to patriotism and their duty to engage in war work.

Literature written for young people during the First World War thus sought to help readers adapt to Germany’s changed relationship to the world. Young Germans read a narrative that emphasized German innocence and German victimhood. War literature presents Germany as a noble and virtuous country attacked by jealous European imperial powers and now engaged in a fight for its very survival. Authors of young adult literature helped their readers to rethink what it meant to be German in light of the changing geopolitical circumstances and gave them a new sense of what it mean to be young Germans in the world.

**End of an Empire: Germany’s Colonies in Wartime**

The narrative of the war that presented Germans as the victims of French, English, and Russian imperialism left little room for Germany’s own colonial ambitions. The glimpses of the colonies that can be found in wartime young adult literature minimize their importance to focus instead on the impact of the metropole. One such example is Marga Rayle’s *Majors Einzig im Kriegsjahr* (1915). Though in most ways a conventional wartime *Backfisch* book that characterizes the war as an engine of Tosia’s growth and maturity, the novel is unusual in that Tosia’s love interest, Rolf Hartenson, is a settler in German Southwest Africa who returns to Germany for a visit shortly before
the outbreak of the war. Though the capitulation of the colony means the loss of Rolf’s farm and wealth, it is glossed over in fewer than a hundred words:

And world history marched on. The massive German army stood almost before Warsaw, and the relatively small armies in the West held their positions victoriously. But something else came that had to come: the news of the capitulation in Southwest! Monstrously outnumbered, broken down by hunger, thirst and lack of munitions, the small brave pile was defeated. That handful of people held the English army at bay for much, much longer than was thought possible. This loss was spoken of with sadness and with pride, and they remained convinced the German fist would eventually snatch it back!52

This brief representation of the colonies, in itself an exception in war literature, shows the shifting significance of colonialism for German identity in this period. Rayle uses the term “world history” primarily to refer to events on the European continent. The loss of Southwest Africa is dealt with almost as an afterthought, dwarfed by the military successes on the eastern front.

Rayle and other authors of young adult literature use colonial characters or scenes set in the colonies to criticize other imperial powers for their methods and thus implicitly present Germans as superior colonizers. The sadness Rolf from Majors Einzige feels when he learns that Southwest Africa has been lost to the British is not due to the material losses he suffered but his fears that the British will negate German work in civilizing the natives: “Rolf thought with pain on his beautiful farm that now, if only

temporarily, was in the hands of enemies who would likely stir up the blacks with the intention that they unleash their bestial instincts on foreign possessions. With this type of waging war nothing better could be expected. Underlying Rolf’s words is an understanding that Germans have calmed the “bestial instincts” of the native peoples to live in peace with them. Rayle’s critique of the British mimics earlier colonial literature which often decries British colonial policies, in particular its greed, and presents Germany as a superior colonizer in Africa.

The German colonies are transformed from a constitutive aspect of German identity, a central part of German national identity in the globalized, imperial world system of the early twentieth century, to a means of critiquing British imperialism. Rather than focus on the loss of his fortune, his income, and all his worldly possessions, Rolf highlights the evils of British colonialism, British war methods, and, indeed, the British character. Through their manner of seizing the German colonies the British demonstrate a lack of ethics and a destructive, win-at-all-costs attitude. Underpinning this quote is an assumption of white racial superiority coupled with German cultural superiority and German exceptionalism, notions that became increasingly significant after the First World War and the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Kurt Floericke’s Blockadebrecher und U-Boote (Blockade-breaker and U-Boats, 1916) offers a similar critique of the British:

53 “Auch Rolf dachte mit Schmerz an seine schöne Farm, die nun wahrscheinlich, wenn auch nur vorübergehend, in die Hände der Feinde geriet, die vermutlich ihre Schwarzen darauf hetzten in der Absicht, dass diese alle ihre bestialischen Instinkte an dem fremden Eigentum ausließen. Denn etwas Besseres war bei der Art Kriegführung ja nicht zu erwarten.” Rayle, Majors Einzige, 205-6.
“Yes, that’s the way the English are,” Mönkedik growled darkly, “always selfish, only thinking of themselves. When will people finally awake and recognize British arrogance and British selfishness? Anyone with a healthy mind can see that England’s coldblooded politics always let foreign peoples bleed for it, and now that England itself must finally wage a large war, it sends its whites and colored helpers, the Indians, Australians, Canadians, Africans, New Zealanders, Boers and whatever they are all called, into the fire and keeps its own children in the background.”

England’s use of colonial soldiers as cannon fodder, supposedly allowing white Englishmen to escape the worst of the killing, is evidence of its moral decline. Floericke constructs a colonial hierarchy where the English, and presumably the French, with their use of colonial troops are inferior to the more ethical German empire. This attitude denies Germany’s own colonial and imperial ambitions, both within Europe and beyond. This move allows Germany to position itself as the defender of the equality and freedom of all peoples, the one who is fighting, outnumbered, the imperial forces of England, France, and Moscow. Further, this shifts the focus from Germany as an imperial power to Germany as the victim of imperial and colonial oppression.

Children’s essays about the war show how this attitude was learned and parroted by young people. One essay from Deutsche Aufsätze über den Weltkrieg states,

During the war our colonies have been largely lost to our enemies, in some cases after notable resistance, like in Kiautschou; fighting only continues

in East Africa. But the fate of the colonies will not be decided there but on
the battlefields of Europe, and if we remain victorious here we can
demand and enforce the surrender of colonial territories. The importance
of extensive colonial possessions for the motherland from a military point
of view can be seen in the many native regiments that our opponents have
placed against us in the field.55

Here we can precisely trace the shifting significance of colonial Germany, where the
actual loss of Germany’s colonies is subsumed into an emphasis on the European fronts
of the war. The anonymous young author of this essay mentions the colonies but
immediately dismisses their significance in favor of focusing on the battles fought on
European soil. The significance of real colonial Germans and their struggles fades in
comparison to the importance of domestic struggles. The author also envisions a future
where the German colonies become a source of soldiers the way the British and French
colonies were.

**Conclusion: Postcolonial Germany**

The curriculum, fiction and nonfiction of the First World War showed young
Germans that they were living in a drastically changed world. Before the war German
identity was a portable, global commodity that could be taken anywhere in the world and
used to improve local conditions. Fiction presented new Germanys popping up all over
the world in response to German emigration. During the war, however, German identity

55 “Unsere Kolonien sind uns während des Krieges zum größten Teile an die Feinde
verloren gegangen, zum Teil nach rühmlichen Widerstande, wie in Kiautschou; nur in
Ostafrika wird noch gekämpft. Aber das Schicksal der Kolonien wird nicht dortselbst,
onderen auf den europäischen Schlachtfeldern entschieden, und wenn wir hier siegreich
bleiben, können wir auch die Abtretung von Kolonialland fordern und durchsetzen.
Welche Bedeutung ein umfangreicher Kolonialbesitz allein in militärischer Beziehung
für das Mutterland haben kann, zeigen schon die vielen Eingeborenen-Regimenter, die
is presented as fixed and imperiled. Though Germans live all over the world, they belong in the Fatherland, and what was generally permanent emigration is recast as a form of temporary exile. The colonies remain a part of German war literature, but only peripherally. Their existence is acknowledged, but their significance is altered. Colonial Germans return to the Fatherland, shifting the emphasis to the European field of battle. The colonies are secondary to the prevailing narrative of Germany as a land under attack by the combined imperial forces of England, France, and Russia.

This recasting of Germany’s relationship to the rest of the world is part of the story of how Germany became postcolonial. Before Germany ceased to have an overseas empire and before Germany’s colonies were redistributed among the Entente powers, Germany redefined its place in the world in a way that de-emphasized its colonies and their significance. After the First World War, German authors and thinkers retold the story of German colonialism to emphasize its goodness and superiority. The German public decried the so-called “colonial guilt lie” of the Treaty of Versailles, the accusation that Germany was unfit to be a colonial power and the justification for the redistribution of Germany’s colonies after the war.\textsuperscript{56} In the absence of colonies, Germany becomes a benevolent, or even ideal colonizer, bringing health, wealth, and civilization wherever it had been.\textsuperscript{57} The lost German colonies become the stuff of nostalgia, a yearning for the

\textsuperscript{56} For more on the “koloniale Schuldlüge” (or “Kolonialschuldlüge) after the First World War see Gisela Graichen and Horst Gründer, \textit{Deutsche Kolonien: Traum und Trauma}. (Berlin: Ullstein, 2005), 367-398.

\textsuperscript{57} On colonial nostalgia and the remembrance and representation of the colonies after the war, see Dirk Göttsche, \textit{Remembering Africa: The Rediscovery of Colonialism in Contemporary German Literature} (Rochester: Camden House, 2013) and Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama, eds., \textit{German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
past perhaps best captured in the novels of Hans Grimm, in particular his 1926 *Volk ohne Raum*, which presents German colonial Africa as an ideal homeland for Germans; his post-war stories are notably more nostalgic and optimistic than his earlier writings.\(^{58}\)

The end of the war and the loss of the German colonies also prompted Germans to rethink their relationship to race. Forced decolonization, combined with the use of colonial soldiers by other European imperial powers, allowed Germany to style itself as the defender of the European racial order after 1918.\(^{59}\) At the end of the war French colonial troops occupied the Rhineland. For the French, this was a defining moment in understanding French citizenship and its relation to the colonies, but for the Germans, coming as it did on the heels of defeat, this was an event of enormous significance, a source of national shame and outrage.\(^{60}\) Stories of mass rapes of white women and other crimes circulated in the contemporary press, and the so-called “Schwarze Schmach am Rhein” (Black Horror on the Rhine) was used to push for revisions to the Treaty of Versailles.\(^{61}\) The children of Black colonial soldiers and white women came to be known as the Rhineland Bastards, many of whom were sterilized by the National Socialists.

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\(^{58}\) Klotz, “White Women.”


because they were seen as a threat to the racial purity of the nation.\textsuperscript{62} The notion of the Black Horror relies on a stereotype of the sexually dangerous black man preying on white women, an idea that can already be seen in German colonial writings following the Herero uprising. Pascal Grosse reads this as the defining moment in the move from German colonialism to National Socialism; Germany’s forced decolonization, coupled with the use of colonial soldiers by the victorious powers, marks the beginning of a new understanding of race in Germany.\textsuperscript{63} Germany henceforth styled itself as the defender of the racial order in Europe, a role it was forced into when other European powers lost their appropriate racial pride.


CONCLUSION: YOUNG GERMANS IN THE WORLD

Wilhelmine children grew up with the idea that they had the world at their feet. The world was seemingly shrinking, connected by steamships and telegraphs, allowing people and information to move through the world more quickly and easily than ever before. Literature written for young people reflected this growing global networking of the world. Young people read stories of German boys and girls who moved through the world as immigrants, settlers, colonizers, and imperialists. Whether at sea, on the Russian steppes, on the prairies of North America, or in Germany’s African colonies, these fictional boys and girls were proud of their German identity and worked to foster German identity abroad. These texts offer an understanding of German identity as something mobile and portable, not bound solely to the European borders of the German nation, but that can instead be relocated anywhere in the world.

Race

Wilhelmine young adult literature shows a growing preoccupation with the question of race and an emerging understanding of German identity as white. Recurring jokes about the racial identity of German characters from the United States—speculation about whether they are “brown,” “red,” or “black”—point to an imagined tension between monoracial Germany and the multiracial United States. German characters like Karl May’s Old Shatterhand and Bertha Clément’s Felicia Bertram are presented as good and noble for their racially tolerant attitudes toward Native Americans and African Americans respectively, but this tolerance rests on a racial hierarchy. Further, German
fantasies of settlement in the American West are predicated on the downfall of America’s indigenous populations. May’s novels never question the manifest destiny of white America, and authors such as May and contemporaries Sophie Wörishöffer and Friedrich Pajeken repeatedly reinforce white German racial and cultural superiority over Native Americans.

During the German colonial encounter legal, social, racial, and cultural understandings of Germanness came into conflict with each other. Colonialist rhetoric and public debates like the mixed-marriage debates that reached the Reichstag in 1912 show how German racial and national identity were potentially threatened by emigration and colonial economies of desire. German colonial novels reflect the contemporary understanding of white German women as the guardians of whiteness and Germanness in the colonies. In including scenes in which white German women must defend themselves against violent attacks by African men, these novels point to the porous nature of racial identity. The threat against them, which I read as a sexualized threat, is not only to their own life and person but to the racial purity of the nation. This threat is then used to retroactively justify genocide against the Herero and Nama people to ensure that a white German nation could flourish in German Southwest Africa.

**Gender**

Wilhelmine young adult literature reflects the reactionary gender politics of the day. Anxieties about the supposed decline in the traditional family because of falling marriage rates and increasing rates of female employment led to repeated calls for a return to a better time in the mythical past. Girls’ literature remains conservative,
traditional, and marriage-minded. The classic plot of a German girls’ novel is driven by the self-abnegation of the protagonist who sacrifices her own desires for the good of the family and the nation. During an age of globalization and imperialism, authors begin to imagine how these girls move through the world and how their emotional nationalism can be put to use for the good of empire.

German national identity, whether based at home or abroad, is strongly gendered. Authors like May and Pajeken present masculine fantasies of life in the American West that show how German men master frontier skills like hunting and trapping and combine them with German humility, sobriety, and modesty to truly master and tame the Wild West. Novels set in both colonial Africa and the United States show the importance of women in maintaining German cultural identity abroad. Felicia Bertram considers herself a “colonist” in her Illinois town and works to Germanize the prairies around her. Marie Scheffel in Agnes Sapper’s Werden und Wachsen ensures the ability of the German colony in Southwest Africa to survive and flourish, serving as a literal and figurative bearer of Germanness. The presence of women ensures the continuation of German families and German identity abroad.

**Imperialism**

Young adult novels from Wilhelmine Germany present Germans as a transformational force around the world. Even though Germany’s empire was relatively small and short-lived, it loomed large in the imaginative literature of the day. From the Kinski family’s Räuberstadt in Wörishöffer’s *Im Goldande Kalifornien* to Felicia Bertram’s Glückstadt in Clément’s *In den Savennen* to Robert Rheinfels’ neo-Prussian
home in Pajeken’s *Bob der Millionär* German literature set in the United States envisions a uniquely *German* West. These colonial fantasies share their ideological underpinnings with African colonial novels like Carl Falkenhorst’s *Jung-Deutschland in Afrika* series, Sappers’ *Werden und Wachsen*, Elisa Bake’s *Schwere Zeiten*, and Valerie Hodann’s *Auf rauhen Pfaden*. Whether set in the wilds of the American West or the wilds of German colonial Africa, German young adult literature imagined a world in which German identity lasted and had a lasting effect on the world around it. Young Germans travel into the world and either return to the metropole with a renewed appreciation for their German identity or they settle abroad to engage in the imperial project of spreading Germandom abroad.

The outbreak of the First World War in August of 1914 brought an end to this depiction of Germany’s peaceful imperial progress. Germans greeted the war with a grim enthusiasm, and publishers, teachers, authors, and reformers looked to young people to lead the nation to victory and provide a new start. Wartime literature presents a new understanding of Germany’s relation to the rest of the world; instead of reading of Germany as an imperial power, youth read of Germany as the victim of the imperial aggression of Britain, France, and Russia. Texts focus on the metropole and the European fields of battle, the colonies pushed [back] to the periphery.

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The German young adult literature discussed in this dissertation carried its readers across the globe and back again, from the prairies of Illinois to “flower-land” Japan, from sub-Saharan Africa to Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina, from east India to a geographically indistinct American West. At the same time, this imagined world full of Germans
engaged in a common imperial project never really existed. Authors of young adult
literature from this period wrote colonial fantasies of German identity and its role in the
world. Most of these authors had little direct experience with the far-flung territories they
wrote about, and their texts are replete with historical, geographical, and ethnographical
errors and inconsistencies. Though imagining a world in which young people were
mobile and active as travelers, settlers, and colonists, these authors for the most part
remained bound to the metropole and wrote for a strictly metropolitan audience. In
reading the imperial novels of authors such as Karl May, Sophie Wörishöffer, Else Ury,
Bertha Clément, Henny Koch, and Friedrich Pajeken, German readers could learn how to
function as “young Germans in the world” without ever leaving their comfortable
German Heimat.
APPENDIX

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Brigitte Augusti (1839-1930), pen name of Auguste Plehn, began to publish books for young people in the 1880s. She was a prolific author, known for her An deutschem Herd and An fremdem Herd series.

Edward Baierlein (1819-1901) was born Edward von Valseck into a Polish noble family but changed his name after being disowned by his family for converting to Lutheranism. In 1847 he was sent to Frankenmuth, Michigan, to serve as missionary to the Chippewa Indians; he later founded a settlement he called Bethany (near present-day St. Louis, Michigan). He published a chronicle of his time in Michigan, Im Urwalde bei den roten Indianern, in 1889. After serving for six years among the Chippewa, he was sent to India, where he served as a missionary for a further thirty-three years; he retired in 1886 and died in 1901. He is still known in Lutheran missionary circles for his methods: he learned the Ojibwa language and translated the catechism, Bible passages, and other texts into it for use with his flock. He adapted his methods to suit the lifestyle of the Chippewa and worked within existing social structures to bring about conversion, rather than relying on imposing a lifestyle from outside.

Little biographical information is known about Elisa Bake (1851-1928). She lived in Hamburg and was active as an author and translator from the 1890s to the 1920s, with her high point of activity between 1911 and 1913.

Bertha Clément (1852-1930) was the daughter of a painter who grew up traveling widely throughout Europe. She began her literary career in the 1890s and published over ninety books in her lifetime.

Carl Falkenhorst (1853-1913) had dual careers that exemplify how Wilhelmine Germany simultaneously built nation and empire. Under his real name, Stanislaus Jezewski, he worked as an editor of Die Gartenlaube, nineteenth-century Germany's most popular magazine, while under the pseudonym of C. Falkenhorst, he penned dozens of colonial adventure novels for young people, including the twelve volumes of Jung-Deutschland in Afrika and a trilogy called Afrikanischer Lederstrumpf (An African Leatherstocking).

Marie von Felseneck, pseudonym of Marie Luise Mancke (1847-1926), was a prolific author of young adult literature, writing dozens of books for girls between 1890 and her death. Popular titles include Durchgerungen (1890), Königin Luise (1897), Drei Freundinnen (1903), and Landwehrmanns Einzige (1915).

Kurt Floericke (1869-1934) was a German naturalist, ornithologist, and writer. After attending the University of Marburg, he traveled widely on research trips eastern Europe, the Middle East, northern Africa, and South America and ultimately settled in Vienna and supported himself with popular science and naturalist writing. During the First World
War he turned to writing military-themed works. He ultimately died of malaria contracted during his travels.

Gustav Frenssen (1863-1945) took orders and worked as a pastor at Hemme before working full-time as an author. He was known as a part of the *Heimatkunst* movement, focusing on regional and local themes, but had great success with his 1906 *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest*, set during the Herero wars in German Southwest Africa.

Jean Gümpell’s biography remains obscure. He apparently authored another book, *Die Wahrheit über Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika* (Cassel: Dufayel, 1905), and is described in publisher’s announcements as a “young German” (“jungen Deutschen”).

Thekla von Gumpert (1810-1897) originally worked as a governess and teacher after the death of her father before she turned to writing books for children and young people to support herself in the 1840s. She was a prolific writer and is today best known for her publication of the periodical *Töchteralbum* beginning in 1855. She also wrote about teaching and child-rearing and was a passionate advocate of Friedrich Fröbel’s methods. She married the poet, librettist, and actor Franz von Schober in 1856 but separated from him only five years later.

Angelika Harten (1858-1935), pen name of Maria Schmitz, trained as a teacher and worked in Aachen until her marriage to a factory director. She began to write at an early age but only began publishing in the 1890s after the death of her husband. She is particularly known for her books written for girls, including the *Wildfang* (Tomboy) series: *Aus Wildfangs Kinderjahren* (1896), *Wildfang im Pensionat* (1897), and *Aus Wildfangs Brautzeit* (1901).

I have found no further biographical information about Valerie Hodann (1866-1939), other than a handful of further literary titles and that she was the life-partner of little-known dramatist Theodor Walther (1861-1927).

Sophie Kloerss (1866-1927), born Sophie Kessler in Wandbeck, married a teacher and lived in Rostock and Schwerin. It is said she was inspired by her many children to write stories and books for young people set in her native Mecklenburg.

During her career Henny Koch (1854-1925) wrote thirty books, primarily geared toward a young female audience, including *Die Traut* (1905), *Irrwisch* (1907), and *Ein tapferes Mädchen* (1914). Her novels were often serialized in bourgeois illustrated girls’ magazine *Das Kränzchen*, and many of them also feature young women who live or travel abroad. She also worked as a translator of American literature, publishing the first German translation of *Huckleberry Finn* in 1890.

Karl May (1842-1912) was born into reduced circumstances in Saxony. He trained as a teacher but lost his license after being convicted of theft. He spent time in jail for fraud in the 1860s and turned to writing to make his livelihood in the 1870s. Though his novels set in the American West and the Middle East were very popular, May’s later years were
plagued by lawsuits and scandals. He remains a well-known writer and one of the most widely read German authors of all time.

Friedrich Meister (1848-1918) began writing adventure novels after retiring from a life at sea. In addition to original works for young people, he also adapted classic adventure novels from English-language authors, including James Fenimore Cooper and Frederick Marryat.

Friedrich J. Pajeken (1855-1920) trained as a merchant and traveled first to Venezuela and later to Montana in that capacity, traveling widely and spending time among the indigenous populations of those territories. He began writing adventure novels set in the Americas in 1890 after returning to Germany and settling in Hamburg as a merchant.

Gabriele Reuter (1859-1941) was born in Alexandria, Egypt and grew up in both Egypt and Germany. When her father died and her family was left with little money, she turned to writing to support her mother and siblings. She became an important writer of books for children and adults in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, particularly known for her 1895 novel, *Aus guter Familie: Leidensgeschichte eines Mädchens*, which has been translated into English by Lynne Tatlock.

Agnes Sapper (1852-1929) is often mentioned in the same breath as *Heidi*-author Johanna Spyri because of her enormous popularity as an author of books for girls. She began writing in the early 1890s and supported herself as a writer after the death of her husband in 1898. She is most known for the novels *Die Familie Pfäffling* (1907), *Das erste Schuljahr* (1894), and *Gretchen Reinwalds letztes Schuljahr* (1901), as well as the book of essays and advice, *Erziehen oder Werdenlassen?* (1912).

Else Ury (1877-1943) was one of Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany’s most famous authors of children’s and adult literature. She began her publishing career in 1906 and continued until she was ejected from the Reichsschrifttumskammer in 1935 because of her Jewish origins. She published almost forty books during her career and was particularly well-known for her *Professors-Zwillinge* and *Nesthäkchen* series, the latter of which was made into a TV miniseries in the 1980s. Her writing earned her substantial amounts of money, enough to allow her to purchase a vacation home in Krummhübel she christened Villa Nesthäkchen. She resisted pressure from her brothers to emigrate to England after the Nazis came to power, and she remained in Germany to care for her ailing mother. She was deported and died in Auschwitz in 1943.

Heinrich Wolgast (1860-1920) was an important teacher, reformer, and advocate. He worked as a teacher in Hamburg in the *Volksschule* for most of his long career, and he was particularly active in criticizing children’s and young adult literature as it existed. He founded the “Jugendschriftenausschuss” of the “Vereins Hamburgischer Volksschullehrer,” co-founded the “Vereinigten Deutschen Prüfungsausschüsse für Jugendschriften” and published its monthly newspaper, the Jugenschriften-Warte, from 1896-1912. He is also known for his polemical *Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur*, published in 1896.
Sophie Wörishöffer (1838-1890) was perhaps the only female author of adventure novels in Wilhelmine Germany. Born Sophie Andresen in a well-to-do bourgeois family, she turned to writing to support herself after the death of her husband in 1870; her cousin was the well-known author Detlev von Liliencron. She never remarried but gave birth to a child in 1871 whose paternity is unknown. Her works were published as “S. Wörishöffer” or under a pseudonym, leaving her sex a secret until her death in 1890, after which she is generally listed by her full, female name in lexica and other trade publications.
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