



JENNIFER DRAKE ASKEY

GOOD GIRLS, GOOD GERMANS

Girls' Education and Emotional
Nationalism in Wilhelminian Germany

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Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture

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*This book is dedicated to Greta and Ingrid,
with permission to read whatever the heck they want.*

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Acknowledgments

THIS BOOK OWES its existence to my frustration with Agathe Heidling's fate in Gabriele Reuter's *Aus guter Familie*. Following her myriad attempts at self-betterment through reading and their systematic thwarting by her family and social circle, I wondered aloud "what was she supposed to read?" This book attempts to answer that question for me and for other researchers of nineteenth-century German literature, history, and culture.

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Introduction: Emotional Nationalism and Germany's Daughters

THE PROTAGONIST OF Gabriele Reuter's 1895 novel *Aus guter Familie* (*From a Good Family*, 1999), Agathe Heidling, receives two books for her religious confirmation, and the reactions of Agathe's family and that of her pastor to these gifts reveal much about the landscape of gender and nationalism in which Agathe, a typical upper-middle-class girl, lived and was educated.¹ Her cousin Martin gives her Georg Herwegh's *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* (Poems of one who is alive)² and her friend Eugenie presents her with Friedrich Rückert's *Liebesfrühling* (Springtime of love).³ Her pastor and her father are visibly dismayed at the revolutionary political nature of Herwegh's poems and take the volume away from her, to replace it later with a volume on pressing flowers (12). Pastor Kandler summarizes the men's opinions of the book and Agathe's relationship to it and others of its kind by saying: "There are so many lovely poems that are more appropriate for a young girl and that you'll like better" (23). Without explaining the significance of her transgression or Martin's, her male authority figures shame and punish her into disavowing the appeal that this literature had for her and turn her attention instead to more appropriate texts, such as Gerok's *Palmenblätter* (Palm leaves), and a volume titled *Das Weib als Jungfrau, Gattin und Mutter* (The woman as maiden, wife, and mother).⁴ These works, also confirmation gifts, place Agathe solidly within her culture's dominant discourse on femininity, where her position in society and her sense of self is determined by her relationships—romantic and otherwise—to her father and her unknown, future husband. Agathe's mother and the pastor's wife have their turn at consternation when Agathe opens up Eugenie's gift of love poems (8). They discuss whether Eugenie's gift was inappropriate, or just given to Agathe at too young an age. All of the adults present agree, however, on the symbolic and actual importance of literature for Agathe's education. Their attention to Agathe's reading material and the possible messages it conveyed about Agathe's commitment to the nationalist and gendered ideology of her class and era reflect their belief in the significance of literature and reading in the lives of middle-class girls during this period.

Books given as gifts on special occasions—elegantly bound *Prachtausgaben* primarily marketed to middle-class readers—signaled the status of both giver and recipient and filled a representative function that

exceeded its role as educational or entertaining tome. Thus, the readerly joy Agathe would have experienced with the volume of Herwegh is deemed inappropriate because of its political content and is replaced with a book meant for show—in both appearance and content. The less severe fate of Eugenie's gift—a book focused on the adult role of women as mothers and wives, containing within an acknowledgment of female sexuality, however veiled—signals the difficulty of integrating public and familial discussions of girlhood, womanhood, and sexuality.

As Russell Berman argues in *The Rise of the Modern German Novel*, “Literary life is here a bourgeois idyll, characterized by commodity display and the exchange of meaning, as well as by family life and contact with strangers.”⁵ Books given as gifts or displayed on shelves functioned as symbols of the cultural and social capital in circulation within a family and its social circles, and girls as readers were participants in this economy as well. The very public role of reading and its connection to the representation of class and gender in a girl's life would necessitate, perhaps, that Agathe not receive Eugenie's gift, or that she receive it later in her adolescence, or that she receive it in a less public venue than her confirmation celebration. However, the primacy of reading as a middle-class girl's avenue to self-improvement and the attainment of cultural knowledge points to the important function of these books about social behavior in helping girls negotiate the private and public sides of their representative role in the middle-class family. In an environment that placed a premium on respectability and public decorum, reading and books fulfilled crucial functions in relating political, sexual, and emotional information to a young, female population not easily granted access to the world of mature adult discourse.

Representing a generation of middle-class girls in late nineteenth-century Germany, Agathe struggles to fulfill her traditional domestic obligations within her conservative family, while at the same time achieving a modicum of intellectual independence through self-improvement and reading. Her ultimate failure in this struggle, which leaves her mentally and physically scarred, signals the stakes of nineteenth-century discussions about girls' education and girls' literature. (Gabriele Reuter herself struggled with access to respect and literary success, thus explaining her recognition of these stakes as they pertained to a girl's ability to read and receive the education she desired.) Agathe struggles to gain access to literature she wants to read, in opposition to the literature her father wishes her to read and to the literature she was expected to display as a marker of her class and education. Herwegh's poems are not the only books off limits. Her mother reads, but hides, romance and popular novels; Agathe and her friends do the same with novels by Eugène Sue at boarding school; her father locks his reading shelves after he discovers that Agathe has read Häckel's *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* (*The History of*

Creation).⁶ As with the Herwegh poems so many years earlier, her father exchanges her Christmas list of wished-for science books for a book on the art of drying flowers. Agathe's father rejects her intellectual curiosity and power, as well as her sense of pride in learning and understanding through reading, by restricting her access to scientific, political, and legal texts. Reuter's casting of Agathe's father as Privy Councillor Heidling, a bureaucrat in Prussian service, makes it abundantly clear that his views on girls and their leisure reading habits reflect the social interests of the patriarchal state and its apparatus. Reuter's text suggests that Agathe's enthusiastic response to Häckel's work did not serve the cultural purposes of a well-respected, middle-class family such as the Heidlings: "How it shook her out of her intellectual torpor, out of discontented semiconsciousness, so that she rubbed her eyes, planted her feet firmly on the ground and looked around her inquisitively" (166).

Years after the Herwegh incident, Cousin Martin gives Agathe socialist pamphlets she must hide from her family and the authorities in order to protect him (98). She overcomes her reflexive obedience to her father's injunctions against Martin and his politics, and reads Martin's words. This reading experience brings her an intellectual and emotional pleasure that signals the personal and physical freedom from her confining, middle-class life that Agathe craves. As she finished reading:

A short sob. The girl threw herself down full length upon the little sofa, her arms spread wide in helpless desire for something that she could embrace, in the desire to be impregnated with strength, to receive the fructifying breath of spirit and intellect that streams over the earth in a spring storm. (102)

Agathe is hungry for knowledge and yearns for a sense of significance in her community and her world. The familial and class restrictions on her reading and education appear in this passage analogous to sexual taboos that limit the girl's awareness of herself and her own powers. Agathe's plight illustrates Reuter's conviction that girls and women came to literature looking to satisfy needs: a search for knowledge and a sense of significance.

The books Agathe read, and the books she was supposed to read, provide the contemporary reader with a valuable lesson on the public value of private feminine behavior, as well as on how in the nineteenth-century, nationalism—along with its middle-class ideology of respectability and self-sacrifice—was narrated into the lives of girls via literature. Through a close reading of the leisure-time literature targeted at the young female reader and a careful examination of the gendered pedagogical and social context that informed the young readers' lives, this book explores the utility of *Mädchenliteratur* for nurturing and reproducing nationally productive fantasies in readers' lives. Addressing the type of literature that Agathe Heidling would have been allowed and encouraged to read can

deepen our understanding of the myriad ways the German national myth captivated the hearts and imaginations of generations of young German women and encouraged them to bring their hearts' desires into emotional accord with the perceived cultural needs of the new nation-state. Focusing attention on late nineteenth-century *Mädchenliteratur* and its appeal to the desires of girls and young women opens our eyes to an emotional and domestic facet of nineteenth-century nationalism.

Emotional Nationalism

The second half of the nineteenth century in Prussian Germany witnessed the explosion of both public and private educational institutions for girls as well as the rapid expansion of the publishing market for girls' literature. These two movements were products of industrialization and the rise of Germany's bourgeoisie to political and cultural power. Nationalism, which also accompanied the rise of the middle-class, fueled educational reform at both the primary (*Volksschule*) and secondary school levels. Educational opportunities for German girls outside of the home expanded, increasing the relative importance of extra-familial authorities and influences in the lives of girls and their families. Ever-expanding literacy, together with a self-confidently nationalist educational paradigm, proved fertile soil for an expanding array of pedagogical treatises, schoolbooks, and popular literature for children of both sexes. Literature about educating girls, as well as literature written for girls, became big business, with authors, publishers, and pedagogues all concerned with the task of educating Germany's female youth for their place in German society and Germany's place in the world.

As Benedict Anderson demonstrated in *Imagined Communities*, the expansion of access to the printed word in the nineteenth century provided the ideal tool to instill a notion of shared national belonging, and with that, shared national responsibility and fate.⁷ Literature can hold pride of place in nationalist movements, Anderson suggested, by serving as proof of the existence of a community of people—in this case readers—united by common language, common geography, and a common trajectory through history.⁸ In the act of reading, as well as in the substance of the material read, citizens, pupils, and leaders all participate in the recreation of the myth of national formation and belonging. Schools and universities serve not only to instruct in national language—as opposed to regional dialect or minority language—and in literature and history, but they also provide the interpretive context to read and confront the texts of the nation.

Girls' school curricula and pedagogical treatises on girls' education address very forthrightly the role of educating girls in German literature and German history for the benefit of the new nation-state and its cultural mission. Additionally, trade literature published for girls during

this period by popular schoolbook publishers, such as Ferdinand Hirt & Sohn in Leipzig and Velhagen und Klasing in Bielefeld, attempted to model the ideal German woman for the imperial era. “Jede Nation, jede Zeit,” declared Dr. S. Waeztoldt at the opening ceremony of the Victoria Lyceum in Berlin in 1895, “hegt ein Idealbild der Frau, zu dem sie die Mädchen erziehen will. Dies Bild wandelt sich, aber es trägt doch bleibende nationale Züge. Dichter zeichnen es, und in den Schriften über Frauenbildung spiegelt es sich wieder.”⁹ To this end pedagogical resources and popular literature for girls and young women narrated female lives according to the dictates of a term I will describe as “emotional nationalism.” This emotional nationalism, crafted out of the stuff of Protestant religion, Prusso-German history, and German literary classics, saw reader identification as the primary pedagogical reading tool and sought to draw young female readers into involvement in the national community via their traditional domestic and emotional roles in the family. Literature that received approbation from educators, middle-class parents, and clergy, whether classical Weimar era texts or contemporary narratives, was praised for its ability to create and nurture individual fantasies that were also nationally productive. Women in Prussia at this time were denied real political engagement and they were not represented significantly in the workforce or in institutions of higher learning. In the face of martial and patriarchal national ideology, emotional nationalism encouraged girls and women to see their domestic activities and their emotional lives (their loves, their family commitments, etc.) as significant within the broad context of national cohesion and the advancement of the bourgeois German cultural mission. Thus, romances and coming-of-age stories for girls in the late nineteenth century feature settings, characters, and plot developments that signal to the female reader that the heroine with whom she identifies is not merely developing as a young woman, but that she is also developing the sensibilities, skills, and character traits of a young German woman. It is to this ideal that the female reader should aspire.

A large body of historical and literary scholarship exists that demonstrates the cultural and aesthetic foundations of patriarchy in German culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The significant odds against which women who struggled for emancipation had to fight have been enumerated and evaluated. The focus on struggle—the struggle for the female artist’s self-realization, the struggle for the middle-class woman to find respect and authority inside the home and out, the struggle for lesbian women to be visible in society at all—has enriched our understanding of Germany and its cultural production in the modern era. Specifically, Silvia Bovenschen’s *Imaginierte Weiblichkeit* (1979), Ute Frevert’s *Mann und Weib und Weib und Mann* (1995), and Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres’s *Respectability and Deviance* (1998) have revealed both the inherent misogyny in the German literary canon and the social,

economic, and rhetorical challenges facing women who wanted to write in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, girls remain invisible in most of this scholarly work. Girls—future women—were the objects of significant pedagogical, civic, and commercial interest, and their appropriation of cultural constructs designed to regulate their bodies, minds, and hearts was a necessity.

Whether in religion, German history, or literature, the written text was paramount; pedagogues asserted that exposure to the proper sort of literature both inside and outside of school was critical in preparing girls for the *Kulturarbeit* (cultural contributions) of adult women in the German national community. Aesthetic appreciation, pious sensitivity, and an awareness of the historic and future greatness of the Germanic peoples and their new nation-state were primary goals of girls' schools and *Mädchenliteratur*, as these qualities appeared to best serve the civic and domestic cultural needs of the new German empire. As a result of a relatively homogeneous literary palette both inside and outside schools, middle-class girls experienced a plethora of literary heroines, fictional and historical, romantic and tragic, who modeled for them the conservative social values and limiting domestic role held as the feminine ideal by the nationalist patriarchal elites.

In this study, I look specifically at popular literature in the nineteenth century written for girls and young women that treats the relationship between femininity and Germanness. Literature for girls in this era relied on emotional identification with a model protagonist and indulged in the limited possibilities of emotional adventure condoned in girls' reading material both to produce and satisfy romantic and civic desire. The production of national desire for female readers, a desire that encouraged identification of national progress and harmony with personal emotional fulfillment, proved a popular and successful strategy in girls' literature of the nineteenth century, representing commercial and ideological conservatism in the face of growing calls to change women's political, academic, and employment prospects. There is no shortage of literature for girls in the nineteenth century that supports this line of reasoning: *Backfischbücher*, historical novels, popular biographies, and all manner of love stories written in the nationalist era in Germany participated in the broader discourse of national character, national mission, and gender roles that also informed girls' education and the cult of female domesticity.

Schooling

Writing about the role of the *Lesebuch* in girls' school curricula, Heinrich Saure remarks, "So wird der Unterricht in der Muttersprache für das Mädchen die Centralsonne," and continues:

Alles Lehren und Lernen in der Mädchenschule gehört zum Unterrichte in der deutschen Sprache, dieser heimst auch die auf anderen Gebieten reifenden Früchte ein und empfängt dadurch wiederum frische, befruchtende Kraft, ja auch das innere Gemüts- und Geistesleben der Schülerin, wie es sich durch die außerhalb der Schule liegenden Einwirkungen entwickelt, führt dem deutschen Unterricht einen unberechenbaren Bildungsstoff zu, verleiht ihm seine hervorragende erziehlische Bedeutung und macht ihn so zum Mittelpunkt der gesamten Lehr- und Lernthätigkeit unserer Mädchenschule.¹⁰

The importance Saure attributes to the *Lesebuch* he published reflects the importance that educators in general set for German instruction in girls' schools. This combined an introduction to the classical treasures of German literature—works that would speak to the heart and temperament of young women specifically—alongside information about German cultural, religious, and literary history. The didactic value of the “right sort” of literature was uncontested. Through identification and example, characters in literature provided an emotional avenue for achieving pedagogic goals. Instruction in national literature introduced the pupils to a canon of values and aesthetics understood as German, and thus formed an integral part of the program to enhance the patriotic influence of secondary school education.

The interconnectedness of national and aesthetic sensibilities was an implicit, if not explicit, goal of German instruction in the higher grades of the girls' school (the *Oberstufe*). Pastor Schäfer hints at this when he states that the goal of the *höhere Töchterschule* is “den Mädchen eine Bildung zu geben, die es ihnen ermöglicht, neben ihren künftigen Pflichten, die ihnen die Sorge für das Hauswesen auferlegt, doch auch den Sinn für das Schöne und Edle zu pflegen und deutsche Sitte und Zucht zu vertreten und zu wahren.”¹¹ Cultivating a sense of appreciation for the beautiful and the noble and representing and guarding German manners and customs go hand-in-hand. Female pupils learn, implicitly, that their interest in things of aesthetic value—literature, art, and music—is not merely an extracurricular activity to pass the time, but rather, if appreciative of the proper things, comprises part of their role as middle-class German women.

Educators and publishers agreed that reading the right sort of literature would 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. Otto Richter explained: “Wie dankenswert ist es, z.B. die Johanna Schiller's mit ihren Schwestern, sowie mit der Sorell; die Minna von Barnhelm mit ihrem Kammermädchen, die Leonore von Este mit der Leonore von Sanvitale zu vergleichen; wie dankenswerth

selbst, die hochherzige Dorothea der würdigen Mutter ihres Hermann gegenüberzustellen!"¹² Additionally, Richter explains, teachers could refer back to the Germanic sagas, to "die Gestalten einer Chriemhild und Gudrun," in order to complete a catalog of "ideale Gestalten" for girls to bear in mind.¹³ The ideal German woman, as presented to the female pupil in secondary school in Germany in the late nineteenth century, is a poetic and mythical ideal. Biographies of female historical figures—Queen Luise, Empress Maria Theresia of Austria, Queen Elizabeth of England, Queen Kristina of Sweden—varied only slightly from their fictitious counterparts in tone and their quality as object lessons. The Mary-like cult around Queen Luise in the early years of the nineteenth century and the nationalist literature it inspired in the last decades of that same century serve as a prime example of this phenomenon.¹⁴ Regardless of the biographical or mythical subject material, however, it was the manner in which girl readers absorbed these stories—their ability to identify with exemplary protagonists and use the example provided by these women to help shape their own lives and values—that was the most significant aspect of histories for girls.

Literature enjoyed special focus in *höhere Töchterschulen* for yet another reason. Since most pupils were preparing for a future as wives and mothers, reading and an appreciation for literature was the one thing that they could almost assuredly take with them when they left school around the age of sixteen. Given their increasingly representative function in middle- and upper-middle-class households in Germany in the last decades of the nineteenth century, women had larger increments of free time on their hands than in previous generations and constituted, due in part to this, one of the largest markets for books in Germany in this period. Secondary schools for girls sought to cultivate an appreciation for a type and a manner of reading in their pupils that would, in turn, have a positive pedagogical effect not only on the pupils themselves, but also on future generations of German children. Educators consequently understood that if the young women in their classrooms were to bear the fruit of good instruction even years after they were done with formal schooling, they had to be encouraged to read once they were done with school and to read the proper sort of literature. "Bleibt ja doch die Lektüre auch für die Frau im späteren Leben das wichtigste Bildungsmittel. Hat darum die Schule gut vorgearbeitet, so erntete das Haus, die Familie die schönsten Früchte."¹⁵ Thus, in addition to nurturing domestic virtues, another goal of girls' secondary education was to foster an enthusiasm about German literature and German history that would carry into adulthood and influence their reading behavior.

The pedagogical and societal focus on women in the private sphere belies, however, the representative and nationalist function of women and girls in the late nineteenth century, and especially during the *Kaiserreich*.

Historical and literary scholars now recognize that the conventional understanding of the separate gendered spheres of activity, in which women are relegated to the domestic arena and did not or could not contribute to public discourse, limits our options for interpreting and understanding the past. The assumptions about the nature of the domestic that accompany the notion of separate spheres, as Marjanne Goozé remarks, “can prevent evidence of the value of the private sphere and of women active in the public sphere from being appropriately recognized and evaluated.”¹⁶ The insistence on a singularly domestic role for nineteenth-century women reveals the preoccupation of the German middle class with the representative function of women, to be sure. It also, however, sheds light on the very public significance of girls and women in representing their families’ economic and social station as well as their religious values and perceived place in the larger national family. The relationship between women’s domestic activities and bourgeois respectability relies on the communal and public knowledge and acceptance of this activity. Not only her restriction to the domestic sphere, but also her activities within it—decorating, tending, reading, providing companionship, supervising domestic workers—are a matter of communal, class-oriented interest, as shown in Miriam Bailin’s *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction: The Art of Being Ill* (1994) and Kirsten Belgum’s *Interior Meaning: Design of the Bourgeois Home in the Realist Novel* (1991). Against this backdrop, then, the private reading practice of girls and young women becomes an understandable public preoccupation and the industries and institutions focused on creating, monitoring, and guiding this reading activity grew in size and significance. The growth of schools for girls and the growth of the segment of the textbook and recreational publishing industry devoted to children’s literature in general and girls’ literature in particular reflect the social and cultural importance of girls’ academic and private reading activity in the *Kaiserreich*.

The concerns of educators involved with girls’ schooling point to another important contradiction in private/public sphere discussion. The school itself is part of the public sphere and “schooling a girl outside the home to take up service inside the home is a fundamental ideological contradiction.”¹⁷ The ideological insistence on women’s domestic role existed at odds with the implementation of girls’ education; the “natural” role of girls and women was not biological, but rather mediated to girls and women by state, community, and familial entities whose needs produced the role itself. The state, the public sphere, in the garb of state-approved schooling, inserted itself, via curricula and pedagogy, into girls’ reading and learning, providing the girls with interpretive schemata to analyze and talk about their own experiences, hopes, and desires with terminology that reflected the role required of women by the patriarchal gender ideology and the state that embodied it.

Girls' literature has received much less attention in German literature studies than literature written by women authors or literature read primarily by women. For English literature, Nancy Armstrong and Miriam Bailin draw attention to women as both writers and readers. For American literature, Frances B. Cogan's *All-American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (1989) and the essays in *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader* (2003), edited by Caroline F. Levander, examine the narratives that surrounded American childhood in the nineteenth century. Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres's excellent *Respectability and Deviance*, while it addresses the schooling of German women in terms of their creative and literary backgrounds, primarily addresses the lives and works of mature German women. Scholarship on authors as diverse as Luise Mühlbach by Judith Martin, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach by Charlotte Woodford, and Eugenie Marlitt by Michael Kienzle has drawn our attention to the conditions under which they wrote and the social issues that preoccupied them in their writing lives.¹⁸ Their childhoods, however, rarely come into focus. Girlhood and adolescence, however, come into their own in the wake of the industrial revolution in Europe and America, and educating and writing for girls in the nineteenth century participated in the creation of a vision—and an experience—of girlhood in Germany that drew girls and women actively into the national community.

The reluctance to examine critically girls' literature stems, in part, from a general dearth of German children's literature studies in American *Germanistik*. Additionally, however, the fundamentally conservative nature of literature for girls makes it a less obvious choice for the feminist literary research it deserves. The gynocritical project, introduced into English and American literature studies by Elisabeth Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1982), privileges a feminist literary archaeology that traces women's emancipatory writing. The authors of *Mädchenliteratur* cannot easily be grouped in with other nineteenth-century German women writers, such as Luise Otto-Peters, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, or Hedwig Dohm, who qualify as feminist or protofeminist in their personal philosophies and literary output. Authors of girls' literature, such as Clementine Helm, Emmy Rhoden, Brigitte Augusti, Marie Felseneck, and Elisabeth Halden wrote largely on commission from publishing houses (such as Ferdinand Hirt & Sohn or Velhagen und Klasing) that also published school textbooks. Thus their literary output conformed to the traditional gender norms and nationalist view of Germany's cultural advancement in Europe that informed the conservative ideology of girls' schools. They were not celebrated by either the feminist or the literary establishment and few personal reflections on their engagement in the pedagogical or political debates of the day remain. What these authors and their works lack in protofeminist credentials, however, they more than make up for in

the possibilities presented by their work for reader cultivation and identification. Writing for the middle-class girls they themselves once were, these authors model a conservative, patriarchally oriented femininity that simultaneously attempts to locate moments of agency and power within existing social structures and expectations.

German scholars of girls' literature have frequently commented on the essential conservatism of the genre. Malte Dahrendorf, in *Das Mädchenbuch und seine Leserin* (1970), comments that the typical book for girls "stellt eine Literatur dar, die von vornherein auf 'weibliche' Bedürfnisse hin gemacht ist; Da diese Bedürfnisse, mehr oder weniger im Unterbewußtsein wirkend, milieu- und traditionsbedingt sind, paßt sich auch das Mädchenbuch in seinem Weltbild überholten Sozialstrukturen an."¹⁹ Gisela Wilkending refers in her volume *Kinder- und Jugendbuch* (1988) to the "beschränkte Abenteuer" provided by most nineteenth-century books for girls—adventures that were exciting to a small degree but that took place close enough to home to not be terribly threatening to the patriarchal status quo.²⁰ That the conservative portrayal of women's character and their role within the family in books for girls occasionally took on a defensive tone should come as no surprise given the social and economic tension surrounding the debates on higher education and employment for women on the one hand, and the desire for the middle classes to maintain their role as arbiters of respectability and virtue on the other. In the name of piety, cultural values, and a nationalist differentiation from neighboring France, girls' literature modeled and advocated a life for Germany's girls and young women that frequently resembled the preindustrial *Hausmutter* ideal as much as it did the modern *Hausfrau* figure. In *Backfisch* books as well as in historical fiction and biography written for girls, the idealized adult female models grace in adversity, tends the home fires—literally as well as figuratively—and dispenses important, if not always practical, advice to the girl through whose experiences the narrative is focalized for the reader. Popular literature for women and girls, and especially the historical novel, experiences its explosion in publication numbers and in readership concurrent with German society's preoccupation with shifting or contentious gender and social roles.

The history of educating girls in imperial Germany has been explored by James Albisetti; and the history of literature for girls has been discussed in the work of Gisela Wilkending, Dagmar Grenz, and Susanne Barth.²¹ Academic institutions, such as the Universitäts-Bibliothek Oldenburg, the Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaft Hamburg, and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz have mounted exhibits of girls' literature that reveal both the breadth of published titles for girls and young women throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and highlight the expansion of the publishing industry's efforts to market attractive literature to this market segment. Wilkending's