

# Women in German literature

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## ABSTRACT

Woman ... proverb says that she is the half of society mother, sister, daughter and wife. But alas for a long time through all ages of the huge history of the human life this half had exposed to role ignorance and most of cultures put her under depression. So it was a normal result for that kind of female treatment to be even ignored in the intellectual lighted side which is the literature... In this research we just give a simple glimpse about the position of the German women during some periods of time and specially her existing character and role in the German literature. And may be the reader gets surprised when he knows that it was not permissible for a woman in an era in Germany to have a single book or to get educated because young wives of workers were taught that their home is the holy land and were told that their kids and husbands are the masters of that land the only job is the responsibility for making happiness at home and she has to live according to the economic circumstances of the family and strict power of her father till she gets married and came under control of the husband through the different social classes and Sometimes When women got chance for participating in writing they have to raise the standard of life and profit only not for creativity because of marital abandonment, widowhood or kids auspices. Also it is important to mention women's right movements during at least two generations to start new liberal agreement of gender And the stages of forming women's political parties to demand the active participation of her role. A simple glimpse about the usage of woman's roles in the Nazi time with the guidance Adolf Hitler presenting the political agenda of Berlin policy as pilots. In This research you will find some famous female German names that affected in the history of the Frankish woman such as *Elisabeth Selbert* and her role in women's rights movements... Briefly The German woman lived, the struggle between the overwhelming general presence of female idealism and the paradigm cited by women's difficulties and left for the history an indelible mark on the stories and articles she produced.

**Keywords:** Role of women – Physical violence – Equality – Inheritance – Women voting right – Employing woman – Nazi era – Widowhood –Motherhood

## Introduction

The women role and the existence in (OHG) Old High German was predominately abandoned and not represented in that time cannon not just with scholars but in the literature in general because of many factors affected the traditions of the literary western school.

It is clear for every literature seeker that we are reaping the fruits of eliminating our male academic predecessors and nowadays we are victims and backward because of such kind of study like old English and the impressive performance of British anthology criticism. For example (Damico and Olsen, 1990) which explains a part of the British woman life and has paragraphs and papers about sights of dating that returns to conferences of modern language society during 1980 and many textual materials were available of old English. But the reason of not finding similar studies in Old High German is the shortage and lankness of writings or books about the German women only the close to silence on the topic alone can rarely explain (Schrader 1983:86).

The era of mental enlightenment did not support for women, including even lovers of education and edification Enlightenment, because they considered that women in her nature created to be fundamentally mothers and householders wives. There was the belief within the knowledgeable educated classes that girls should be largely educated to be accepted and convenient interlocutors with their families and husbands. At the same time women in lower-classes expected to be productive and economically helpful so as to support their husbands to overcome life demands.

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By looking into issue of gender and relation between the two sexes in a comprehensive sense in the tradition life style that overshadows any data founded about the life of women at that era It is quite possible that family relations reflect a kind of hierarchically models which is nearly similar to religious and secular realms The omission neglected role of women in German society in the early Middle Ages may be a normal result of the general known attitudes towards females as a gender through long time these articles might be such clear evidence that may help to be up to date, with the studies of women and their complete roles in medieval periods Merovingian and Carolingian.

### **Frankish Women in German Society<sup>2</sup>**

(1) During the 5th through 9th centuries German society transformed from a comparatively simple intertribal structure to a more complicated pyramidal organization to realize the increasing of work and limiting women's sphere of activity that influenced all through this time. The goal of the woman was to explain the distance among ideals and legal guidelines in one side and the reality of the society facts in the opposite side what did subsequently affect the ruling structures and social conformity in the Frankish and European society has on equality between the sexes? Did the up growth of the kernel of family and fulfillment of monogamy in the Carolingian age consolidate or corrode the power and abilities of women? And did it Correct the genetically picture?

Men are depicted with reference to their specified behaviors toward a woman so the male one should call for prescribed social-linguistic actions shows reverence to women. Because linguistics can be grasping as a mirror of an existing familiar rule between male and female during that time saw the humanitarian Transition that took place in Frankish Germany. It was a transformation from the rising death average and high birth average to less death or birth averages because polity sophisticated from no industry to a cultivated modernization and encouraged a high-growth industrialized civilized productive system because of industry. In past generations, not everyone could marry because of the lack of lands, and usually marriages took place after one's age of 25 years old. After 1815, also the up growth of agricultural fertility meant more food contentment and a drop in starvations, plagues, and non-malnutrition gave chance to marriage earlier, and having healthy kids.

If we study the women act and role in the literary production era of the medieval age we find ourselves forced to put away the content of the works and look at the historical effects as an evidence to find the feminine role in publishing making books and Literary topics can be seen as a reflection of social habits of that time structure.

Germanic Frankish law, set women to an inferior subordinate situation just close to men that happened since early medieval age and until the 18th century, from which the German lands laws and regulations would be certified, placed women at limited advantages with concerning rights of inheritance and property. Also in courts the Germanic widows required guardian of a man to demonstrate and represent for them. On contrary of the Anglo-Saxon law or the Visigoth symbol, Salic law forbade women from royal alternation succession. And according to military and biological roles the social status were Determined, in cases related to newborns a reality expounded in ceremonial, a lesser value given to female than male infants when they were born. Until the 18th century in Bavarian law the usage of physical violence assess towards woman was absolved.

Also equality according to the known law of criminal code said that females have to stay period of time in prison, among male criminals where they will have to learn and educated, This status of women in society of early German and later, they reflect the way of thinking that historians used to see women long since.

(2) Before the 19th century, young female lived according to the economic authority and strict power of their (exists male) brother or father till she get married and came under control of the husband. A Germanic woman needed to buy an essential dowry In order to secure and achieve the satisfaction of her marriage, but in rich high families, the daughter usually took her dowry from her privileged belongings, while poor girls take it to improve their chances to wed and all work just to keep wages saved for that reason. Dowries and inheritances of women property rights either were under the supervision of the German laws, as a valuable benefit imposed on high death-rate. Before the year 1789, most of women lived bounded and restricted to society's special temper policy<sup>3</sup>.

(3) The novels by German women, of course, still must represent a limited percentage of the total novelistic output between 1770 and 1810, a period in which the rate of production jumped astronomically. But, even while reviewers sneered at yet another febrile product of a female pen, over two hundred female authors writing in German during the century, but again, many of their works have apparently disappeared, known only by their titles that was encouraging publishers to worry less about the sex of a work's author than its salability, and encouraging even more women to

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<sup>2</sup> Women in Frankish Society Marriage And The Cloister, Author: Suzanne Fonay Wemple

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Publisher: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981

<sup>2</sup> German Women In The 18th and 19th centuries Author: Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres And Mary Jo Maynes

A social and literary history (1986)

venture into this field. Subsequently, despite the dictates of the interior conflicting and increased tough, rigid femininity ideology on the main economic level the market was undeniably giving to select women accurately what the moralists admonished them to renounce the license to indulge in their own powers of imagination and a taste for financial self-sufficiency.

The historical nonentity, publishers and readers were implicitly declared encouraging "talking" of and about the Frankish women in published print, and as never before the female authors rewarded for their histories<sup>4</sup>.

(4) The class of the young middle and upper class women started to pressure their own families and their universities to let them join the higher levels of education like rich. In Germany, the first female person get graduated from university was Anita Augsburg she graduated with certification of law from Zurich University in Switzerland. Many other German women Later on joined, unable to get the approval to universities in Germany, so in order to continue their education they had to attend to Zurich University. Finally In 1909 universities gave the permissions to women to get admissions although the graduated women did not get the permission for practicing their professions, as they were "prohibited from neither administrative posts of lawyers nor private practice and public " Marie Stritt established the first female's legal agency for aid and in 1894 by 1914, there were more than 95 female legal aid agencies, where employing women took their opportunity of graduation according to a new law.

Then new positions for women enabled by the nutritional science prompt expansion such as dietitians and dietary or dietitian's assistants often found during Lower middle class roles. Female jobs such as chemistry of food. Physicians paid most of attentiveness to diet and confirming that mixing selection of scientific contents and high levels of planning was curative for patients suffering from metabolism. Their roots in the class which are lower middle let dietitians did not receive any professional status in the German society at that time.

#### **The Germanic Woman in Nazi era 1933-1945<sup>5</sup>**

During Nazi time were not allowed for women to fulfill any formal job but at the same time, there were some exemptions featured out in the governmental authority, may be because of women's closeness to Adolf Hitler or for purposes such as propaganda. The Nazi ruler confirmed development in technology, especially in the management of aviation, and put pilots of women at the center of their exploitation stunt. Those female flying ambassadors as citizens were presenting the political and economic agenda of Berlin policy but sent abroad as aviators.

The female's role at Military service in 1944-45 cannot be forgotten. A number of 500,000 women and more were volunteered and uniformed formally in the armed forces of German (Wehrmacht), and as nurses number of more than 400,000 served, about a similar number volunteered in civil air forces defense also many more female drafted into the army replacing men in the hard war time. They helped operating the anti-aircraft systems in combat power at Luftwaffe to shot down bombers of confederate.

Later on the years of 1990s, women positions have reached high critical standard in Germanic politics in the contrary of the past because until year 1977 in Germany the married Frankish woman could not work except with the permission of husband. Since 2000 the presence of women increased in regime dominance due to Generational equality changes. They won a very long conflict from guiding a home to the guidance of the advanced political institutions.

#### **GERMAN WOMEN'S RIGHT MOVEMENTS<sup>6</sup>**

As an introduction to the women literary spring these movements considered the first step for female literature liberation. during last years of the eighteen century, simultaneously with the nineteenth century exactly at the beginning twenty years of it witnessed significant progress not only the start of a new liberal agreement of gender, but also the overlapping of the speech with other argumentation facing what happens in the political circumstances . The 1790s mark the high point of the theoretical framework arguments about what is the female role, and if any women could play in the outstanding outputs of the social public history at this period also the integration of the femininity doctrine witnessed great development and idealized pressure motivations.

German women for over 170 years have been struggling for equal fair rights. Despite of their gorgeous performance, that kind of movements also reveals that there are still much has to be done.

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<sup>4</sup> Katherine M. Rogers, *Feminism she lived in the 18th-Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, (1982) England

<sup>5</sup> *The Global Career of A Nazi Celebrity "German History. Rieger, Bernhard (2008) Hanna Reitsch (1912–1979)*

<sup>6</sup> Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," in *Writing and Sexual Difference* Ed. Elizabeth Abel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 32.

Female were granted the voting rights in March 1871, and reached men in an extraordinary odd progress for the Frankish lands of Germany. The roots can be traced back to the French Revolution and its requirements for parity without changing of the shell of authority or division of elites, but led to a revolution in mood of the Germanic society attitudes that clashed the deference that had ruled Germany for many centuries and affected the relations of society. Therewith, it took long time about half a century for women to get her right and be granted election rights. It was not before the Republic of Weimar elections during 1919 the global vote movement expanded everywhere to involve women. Socialists such as Rosa Luxemburg , Emma Ihrer and the famous Party named the Social Democracy were the keys that figured movement for the voting right of the women. The ware for woman's voting right was side by side and united with the fight for the right of female needs for work without any permission. Even later, there was completely no role for women in the elections and totally casted a way regardless of their age, income or positions.

Subjects and topics writings of this era and writers gave the chance to the German lady for a literary opportunity such as novel, poems and articles just to achieve the goal of this time.

German Female suffrage law which started was activated as an act done through People's Deputies Parliament and on 12th November 1918 redirected to the German nation. Then on the 30th of the same year and month Nov 1918, the Empire Elections Law forcedly activated and entered to the public voting to all citizens for both gender female and male. Generally women and men have the same rights and obligations this was the idea of an article named 109 II written by Weimar Constitution, however good a law is, and these expanded rights of suffrage were overwhelming when National Socialists drove the empire in 1933. Then under the rule of this National Socialists, female voting rights were forbidden and women did not allow directing the executive committee of the party. Later in 1933, female rights movements were confined and isolated from major positions.

In 1949 lastly the legist Elisabeth Selbert, and she is considered one of the 'four mothers' of the statutory Law of Germany that argued the famous clause .male and female are equal had to be included into the statutory law of Germany as a fixed based principle, and allow the law of women's voting right a regular outcome of this principle. Nevertheless, in spite of this abandonment of overt emancipatory agitation, it was also between roughly 1760 and 1810 that women in both Germany and England started entering the public opened world of the written word and publishing to an anonymous scope as poets, journalists controversialist, dramatists, and above all novelists<sup>7</sup>.

### **The roles of women in old German literature**

German women lived with, the conflict between the overwhelming public presence of a feminine ideal and the typical quoted idea of female difficulties lifting an indelible mark on the novels they produced. And also if they turned to a Kind of imagination that supposed (and was awarded) confined authority of literature, female novelists were have to face with the opposition of their natural creation and gender by their own " Femininity " entered into a masculine public sphere, and driven to acknowledge, how- ever delicately or deviously, the gap thus opened up between public ideal and personal conduct. The traditional point of view of man domination in Old High German era is not so fair but it's very sure that by having a deep look on the literary evidences between our hands we notice that it always been hasty, incorrect and unfaithful in discarding the considerable allusions in texts that refers to many issues concerning the female case. Gathering of rare data with the convention of carelessness in females issues did not gave us a clear image about women but just left us with a very narrow angle of view of what slang information has been transferred to us<sup>8</sup>.

Most of the women were not allowed to gain or own more than one book while most of the books were contently religious for example prayers handle books, parts of Bibles, Sermons about stories in Bible reflections .e.g. here is an example of a woman used to have books on the Old High German period her name is Susan Groag 1988 she has known as one of the famous 250 women books owners and more than one of manuscripts from the 9 until 15 century. And it is known that the majority of Middle Ages textual writings in the German lands speakers for the whole world were written in Latin language so the conventional literary about women followed by the vernacular directory of written German. Forasmuch we have much more proofs of women requesting, writing Latin and reading (McKitterick 1994) in Old High German like the case of male there are vernacular evidences about female declares that women are involved at this time.

The existence of the female role in Old High German (OHG) literary texts is usually explained by conventional regard, Rare and occasional and if we have a fresh overview at the approximately ninety years extant in Old High German texts! Through this glance we can clearly touch differentiated and discerning estimation towards importance for the

<sup>7</sup> *Songbird of the German women's movement* 'Author: Louise Otto-Peters (1819-1895)

*Louis Otto-Peters: She is a pioneer of Germany's women's movements. At the age of 24, she called for more female involvement in decision-making and founded with other suffragists The General German Women's Association in 1865. The activist also wrote poetry and novels, earning her the "songbird" nickname.*

<sup>8</sup> *Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, eds. New Readings on Women in Old English Literature -Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990) for an exception which treats the Old High German period - literary treatment of religious figures and women's other roles elsewhere.(Albrecht Classen)*

textual references which speak about women in that era, and the female connection and relevance to indications in the core Latin literary texts of the era, while seeing dependent progress in medieval High German era. Also new research that made about the life of women during the output and publishing of first Latin literature of that time has expounded that the female readers and authors, supporter patrons and books owners did participate actively or productively, but it is clear that records declare the limited information about the female role in old high German literary texts' that only seen through the surrounding textual slang has widely been disappeared and ignored. Like what happened in time of Old German similar circumstances was recently discovered in the new researches field about Old English research's although it declare that a lot has been written in that period of study to cure the shortage of attention in the female characters and presenting of the female role through looking back to the historical sources and restudying of primary literary writings<sup>9</sup>.

### **Feminist literary criticism**

The German literature did not know what feminist criticism is, they just knew how to define it. Definitions opened their eyes to some of the problems and the prevailing biases in traditional literary interpretation. They read critical articles on women in German literature, such as "Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century" by Otto Heller, who wonders why there are no great women authors in Germany. Is woman excluded by natural Limitations from the realms of creative art? And why there are no Great artists from females?" says: "The fault lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles or our empty internal spaces, it lies in our situations and our education. The miracle is in fact, that given such overwhelming odds against women so many have managed to achieve so much. We cannot look at literature by women and about women without taking into account the social conditions which women faced. And that is an important goal of feminist literary criticism, which some critics define as "ultimately cultural criticism."

Victoria D. Jacoby's brief article, she says that Reading, Writing, and Women have provided a good, clear introduction to the problems of feminist criticism. She claims it as "neither a form of conventional 'objective' critical review nor a test of ideology to be utilized for the expense of aesthetic value argument. It falls somewhere between the extremes of disengagement and commitment. More specifically, Jacoby sees feminist criticism as "an effort that need to be described, and explained,

Within the feminist perspective various critical approaches may be applied. The most obvious one is the search for stereotypical images and roles, which shows that literature-as a cultural mirror-perpetuates certain images, e.g. the temptress, and can be an important key to the understanding of cultural attitudes towards women. While this approach is worthwhile and necessary, it should not be limited to the study of women as the oppressed it should open the path towards independence, strength, and a new image of woman, which considers her as equal without losing those elements of her being which so often have been described as female. Ginny Foster says that we need special studies helps to reach a future enjoys the real meaning of freedom, not just for women as a women, but for women as she is human being.

According to both Zweig and Dohm, women were supposed to be pure, innocent, untouched, without sexual feelings until they were married and then clean, cook, bear children, and exist to boost their husbands' physical and mental egos. This was true for lower-class as well as middle-class women. A handbook on housekeeping, written by a male author and published in its eleventh edition in 1882, advised young wives of workers to consider their home as holy and told them that theirs was the sole responsibility for happiness at home. While realistically depicting women as wives and mothers, suppressed and exploited by husbands and sons, and treated like animals, Both (Halbtier) and (Olly Rangierbahnhof) are women searching for their own identities and trying to fulfill themselves in their professions as artists. It is significant that the answer seems to lie in their work rather than in marriage; they are unable to combine both and must make a choice.

For example the book of Verena Stefan, an active member of the West German women's movement, consists of auto biographical sketches, dramas, poems, and analyses. Searching for her lost female identity, she lives through various love relationships with men and women. She started variety and change in the portrayal of women as well as the problems they face. The younger authors in particular are searching for new forms and a new language. Stefan believes in the existence of a female language and a female literature, which she sees as the focal point of her writings. These authors open up new possibilities for women. They show an increasing interest in female problems such as childbirth, abortion, and lesbian love, and more importantly, they are not satisfied with depicting suppression. They introduce new images; women who search for and find their own identity<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> see also an Introduction," Women as Protagonists and Poets in the German Middle Ages. An Anthology of Feminist Approaches to Middle High German Literature, ed". A. C. G6ppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 528 (G6ppingen: Kummerle, 1991)

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## WORKING WOMEN AND FEMAL DIFFICULTIES

Although there are female writers were liberated from any financial responsibilities to write, we will find that many others have to write for profit only during particular times of their lives. both in German-speaking Europe and in England, because of marital abandonment, widowhood or separation a certain type of women who took care of their pens to raise the standard of life to raise themselves and help their kids (Mary Ann Radcliffe, and Charlotte Smith) left with ten and eight children, respectively, to support their motherhood like Isabella Wallenrodt, Eliza Fenwick, Anne Masterman Skinn, Elisa Hahn,, Caroline Augusta Fischer).what happened then during the finish of the eighteenth century, the field of economic options for female self-independence actually tightened after this very long struggle.

This disconnection between market-generated opportunities and gendered roles and expectations was only one of the components of female authorship in England and German-speaking Europe during the late eighteenth century. Women were caught in other, homologous contradictions in almost every sphere of their experience-on the levels of education, of marriage, of domestic organization and child rearing of social interaction outside the home, of their cultural positioning face to face literary tradition, and of political involvement and affiliation.

This discrepancy is reflected and showed clearly in the literary works of English and Germanic female novelists of that age, but according to the highly recommend and mediated form that the story permits, this newly opened up literary territory exercised on the popular imagination still by no means legitimated unsupervised narrative and thematic free play within its boundaries and in encountering communal forces that threaten its prerogatives, discovers its autonomy This in turn ensured that the novel, by its very popularity if nothing else, itself functioned as a vehicle for the recontainment, the proper socialization in short, the supervisory policing of the reading and writing subject.

Furthermore, it seems logical that the fate of the female self, which was arousing so much novelistic interest from the middle of the eighteenth century onward, would be particularly affected by the conflict between self-exploration and difficulties that women faces in the society. After all The weaker female gender was, assumed to be more in a need for a helpful guidance, because she is facing a strong wave of criticism and on judgment of appearance, although that is not justice. Most German women novelists seem to have worked with the generic resources at hand; utilizing the fictional tools they found to highlight certain pragmatic difficulties inherent in contemporary female existence<sup>11</sup>.

### Conclusion

There are multiple forms of discrimination, may be based on gender or other factors Violence, especially if it is towards woman. In all cultures, discrimination against women prevails over an unimaginable range, often accompanied by women's access to justice with discriminatory obstacles in law and practice.

Many believe that German women did not experience this discrimination, but in reality German Frankish ladies before 1789, the most females lived bounded and restricted to society's special private temper mode, German women have gone through decades of discrimination and when society benefited from them, they were employed, to achieve a political goal for example, and not exclusively, the Nazi era. And the German male society viewed her only as a wife, mother and widow. All the studies refer to even in the era of Old High German and the medieval period where the international Latin language took control of writing we can just fiend a rare mention of the female character.

All these factors affected women's production of literature. This discrepancy is reflected and showed clearly in the literary works of Germanic female novelists from the educational point of view of the Germanic country, and from the socio-economic point of view, it caused a great delay. Even the era of mental enlightenment did not bring too much for her role .But with all these circumstances and factors that stood against German women, there was a ray of hope that was between 1770 and 1810, a period in which the rate of female literary production jumped astronomically. Because of the empty historical literary background the educated literary woman of today is still victim of the omissions of largely male academic ancestors and she is collecting the results of social old day's restriction although the opened life what she is living in the European society And the evidence is that we cannot find equal number of female writers Compared to the number of men writers or at least large number of famous Germanic female names in the field of western literature. we have to say that in all societies and traditions of nations Males are recognized with their treatment and their behaviors against women so He should call for specific social phrases or words that declare respect for women. Linguistics can be taken as a reflection of a known existent example between male and female and also can be described in the literature of any nation.

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