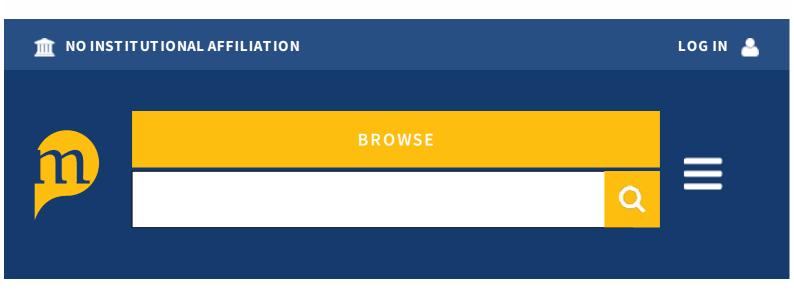
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Anonym, verschollen, trivial: Methodological Hindrances in Researching German Women's Literature.



# Anonym, verschollen, trivial: Methodological Hindrances in Researching German Women's Literature

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# In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Jeannine Blackwell Anonym, verschollen, trivial: Methodological Hindrances in Researching German Women's Literature Frauenliteratur, like the terms Frauenroman and Frauendichtung, is a two-way mirror. It is a distressing reminder of the impotent and flowery sentimentality of Wilhelminian German literature: garden dwarfs, the Gartenlaube, tüchtige Hausfrauen, Hedwig Courths Mahler, and Vicki Baum. It is harmless literature, to be classified next to the children's stories, the codebooks, and home improvements. Yet with this term Frauenliteratur, as with so many, there is a cutting edge. Is Frauenliteratur really what Treitschke

and Goedeke tell us it is? Is it not also the letters Caroline and Dorothea wrote, Bettina's Armenbuch,
Gabriele Reuter's social protest? Were not these also by, for, and about women in Germany? To discover
what Fraue nlite ratur was and is, scholars today must look through that dark, distorting mirror of lite rary
history. Anticipating and identifying the cracks in that history, feminist critics must reshape the critical tools
to deal with the anonymous, the unrecognized, the uncanonized, the "trivial"; to reconstructor rediscover
the verschollen; and to locate and describe the dear ladies who read the books back then. The other side
of the cracked mirror of literary history is Fraue nliteratur today. It is the product of contemporary critical
female authors for a predominantly female audience; it is also the reestablished or discovered tradition of
women authors such as Sidonie Zäunemann (1714-1740), Thérèse Huber (1764-1829), and Gertrud Kolmar
(1894-1943?). Often a literature of the "other Germany" critical, republican, socialist, Utopian, or feminist
it is not harmless, impotent droolings. This excavation work brings out the straightforward, graphic, even
aggressive side of German women's literary culture. This research has grown out of the second women's
move ment in both Europe and the United States. Its new female mentality, new consciousness of history and
the private sphere demand a fresh reading of the old texts. In this reading, feminists cannot rely trustingly
on that cracked mirror of German literary history. We must reread everything and question the verity of every
fact already given. 39 The great reference works of the nine teenth century are some of the most important
tools we have to reconstruct that literature. Knowing the history of these works will give feminist scholars
$todayanideaofhowFrauenliteraturwasdefined,\\ whichpieceswereincluded,\\ andwhichwereomitted.\widetilde{A}\bullet $
$brief examination of the\ process\ of literary\ analysis\ in\ Germany\ will\ underscore\ the\ pitfalls\ of such\ reference$
works. These massive undertakings must be checked for factual error, but more importantly, they must be
seen in conjunction with and contrast to the movements of social and political change within the German
are a. The establishment of modern German universities, under the leadership of the brothers Grimm and
Humboldt, brought in a model of scholarly research which became paradigmatic for Germanistik as well as
for the natural sciences. The unguistisch-literaturwissenschaftliche method of philological research,
RTs torical dating, biographical data, study of origins and development started by the collections of Herder
and the brothers Grimm put literature first into its historical context, and then into national and linguistic
$groupings; its\ authorial\ origins\ were\ sought\ out\ if\ possible.\ Criticis\ m\ was\ no\ long\ er\ me\ re\ ly\ aes\ the\ tic,\ mo\ ra\ long\ er\ me\ re\ ly\ aes\ the\ tic,\ mo\ ra\ long\ er\ me\ re\ ly\ aes\ the\ tic,\ mo\ ra\ long\ er\ me\ re\ ly\ aes\ the\ tic,\ mo\ ra\ long\ er\ me\ re\ ly\ aes\ the\ tic,\ mo\ ra\ long\ er\ me\ re\ ly\ aes\ the\ tic,\ mo\ ra\ long\ er\ me\ re\ long\ er\ long\ er\ me\ re\ long\ er\ long\ $
and philosophical, but rather historical. With this group of scholars and with the establishment of new
universities at Berlin, Göttingen, and elsewhere, the separation of the writing scholar and the artistic
scholar was completed. While it had been customary up to the eighteenth century for the two fields to be
$combine \ d \ \ one \ thinks \ here \ of Opitz, later \ Lessing, Herder, and \ Wieland, who \ wrote \ both \ scholarly \ treatises$
and creative works this era brings about the division and professionalization of poet and scholar. The
$division\ of labor\ between\ the\ Gelehrten\ and\ the\ Dichter\ that\ prevailed\ after\ the\ late\ 18th\ century\ was\ a\ boon$
to women authors. Since they had been and continued to be excluded from university study (with a few
loudly proclaimed exceptions) and had little opportunity to learn the classics or consistent orthography,
they had been essentially shut out from literary production. The new division of literary labor, combined with the production of the pro
the spiritual justification of women's literary forms in Pietist confessional literature, changed that

#### Jeanaine Flackwell

Amonym, verschillen, brivial: Methodological Hindrances in Researching German Women's Literature

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