



TRANSLATION HISTORY

# Feminist Activism, Travel and Translation Around 1900

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Transnational Practices  
of Mediation and the Case  
of Käthe Schirmacher

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JOHANNA GEHMACHER

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# Translation History

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Johanna Gehmacher

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Travel  
and Translation  
Around 1900**

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ISSN 2523-8701

ISSN 2523-871X (electronic)

Translation History

ISBN 978-3-031-42762-6

ISBN 978-3-031-42763-3 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-42763-3>

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*...all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms  
with the foreignness of languages.*

*Walter Benjamin, The Task of the Translator*

# Acknowledgements

Writing a book is a lonely endeavour. But not always. It creates connections with many people—those whose open and unspoken questions we are trying to answer, and those who have helped in one way or another with the research and writing. I would like to mention some of them and apologise to anyone whose help I have overlooked. For several years, I shared the interest in Käthe Schirmacher and the abundance of letters, manuscripts, and the printed sources on women's movements from Schirmacher's estate with Elisa Heinrich and Corinna Oesch. They collaborated with me in a research project funded by the Austrian Science Fund, and we co-authored a German biography, to which this study also refers in many respects. I look back with gratitude to the intense time of collaboration and to the insights and excitement they shared with me.

The idea for this book came about during my year as 2018/19 Gerda Henkel guest professor at the London School of Economics and at the German Historical Institute in London. It reflects not only the research I did there, but also the challenging experience of living in a foreign language. I thank these two institutions and the Gerda Henkel Foundation for giving me the great opportunity to conduct research

in the fabulous libraries of this city over an extended period of time. I also enjoyed the many inspiring conversations and discussions with colleagues at the GHIL and at the LSE. Particularly, I would like to thank the members of my London writing group, Susanna Erlandsson, Victoria Phillips, and Falko Schnicke for their collegiality, humour, and interest in my work at an early stage. After my return to Vienna, I continued to exchange ideas with Falko Schnicke about our (slowly evolving) respective texts on British Royal diplomacy and transnational social movements. During the years of the Covid-19 pandemic, I thus made the astonishing experience that it is possible to be friends via Zoom. My thoughts on transnationality, translation, and other topics in this book owe a lot to Falko's continuous interest and feedback. Much of the actual writing of this book took place during the recurring lockdowns of the pandemic. During this time, I shared a household of learning and teaching from home with Bertrand Perz, Leander Perz and Yamna Krasny. I thank them for their good humour, for many talks and walks and card games and great meals.

The first person I talked to about the experience of living in a foreign language was Emily Richards, who worked as a translator and editor during my time at the GHIL. Emily supported me with the preparation of the first classes I had to give in English and in writing an article for the GHIL Bulletin outlining my initial ideas for this project in English. The interest she, as a professional translator, showed in the issues of my work encouraged me greatly in developing the project further. I was, therefore, very happy when she agreed to edit this text. If it sounds English at all, that is to be credited to her input. If it doesn't, it's due to my stubborn love for certain expressions I imagine are English. One language that will always remain a mystery to me is Polish. It was, therefore, very fortunate for me that Monika Bednarczuk, with whom I share an interest in transnational friendships and epistolary practices among women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contacted me during her stay in Vienna in 2021. Her help in locating and interpreting the Polish sources was invaluable.

An important experience for the development of this project was the exchange with the International Standing Working Group on Medialization and Empowerment at the GHIL, especially with Jane Freeland



and Christina von Hodenberg. The group's conferences became a valuable place for me to reflect on (mass) media, feminism, and women's movements and showed me in how many places in the world researchers were thinking about similar questions. For some months in the winter of 2021/22, I was given the opportunity to focus on writing this book as a Fernand Braudel fellow at the European University Institute in Florence. I enjoyed this time of concentrated work and the exchange with colleagues there very much—the book was almost finished there.

Since 2019 several student interns at the GHIL and at the EUI have been helping me with excerpts, translating, copying material, and other tasks. I would like to thank Franziska Böck, Jonas Breßler, Leonie Busch, Marta Chmielewska, and Lena Heerdmann for their support.

This book would not have come about without the invitation of the editors of the Palgrave Translation History series. I thank them, and Birgit Lang in particular, for their feedback and their trust that I would write the book I promised to write. I thank all who helped to make this open access book reality, especially Sarah Hills, Cathy Scott, Lynn Sharon and Preetha Kuttiappan at Palgrave, Sabina Abdel-Kader and Doris Haslinger at the Austrian Science Fund, and the anonymous reviewers who provided such helpful comments and so generously welcomed this book, so precariously situated between disciplines, academic cultures, and languages.

Research supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): P 25705-G16; the Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Gerda Henkel Visiting Professorship at the GHIL and the LSE), a Fernand Braudel Senior Fellowship (EUI) and the University of Vienna.

Published with the support of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) (Pub PUB 1031-P). Research result from Austria.

## Praise for *Feminist Activism, Travel and Translation Around 1900*

“This groundbreaking study examines the transfer of ideas, mediation, and translation as transnational practices of the international women’s movement around 1900. The differing expectations of translations and translators as well as Western dominance in transnational communication are convincingly brought out. Gehmacher, the best connoisseur of Käthe Schirmacher’s estate, introduces with this book a fresh perspective on the history of the international women’s movement.”

—Angelika Schaser, *Professor of Modern History, Universität Hamburg, Germany*

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# Abbreviations

BDF	Bund deutscher Frauenvereine (League of German Women's Associations)
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German Nationalist Party)
DVF	Deutscher Verein/Verband für Frauenstimmrecht (German Union/ since 1903: German Federation for Women's Suffrage)
IAF	International Abolitionist Federation
ICW	International Council of Women
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IWSA	International Woman Suffrage Alliance
KS	Käthe Schirmacher
NAWSA	National American Woman Suffrage Association
NL Sch	University Library Rostock, Schirmacher papers
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
VFF	Verband Fortschrittlicher Frauenvereine (German Federation of Progressive Women's Associations)
WSP	Indianapolis Public Library digital, May Wright Sewall papers
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union

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# 1

## Introduction: Translating and Mediating Feminisms, Travelling Women's Movements

In April 1896, an international congress on the situation of women took place in Paris. Delegates and visitors from neighbouring countries, from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and North America had travelled to the French capital for the four-day event.<sup>1</sup> The wide coverage of the *Congrès féministe* in the French and international press illustrates the growing public interest in the various social and legal issues raised by the European women's movements. Although the response to the event was mixed, the unanimous praise for one young German woman's speech at the convention stands out in many reports. Several Parisian dailies, otherwise often notorious for their harsh critiques, highly lauded the performance of thirty-year-old Danzig-born Käthe Schirmacher (1865–1930). German papers also highlighted the German delegate's communicative competence, her entertaining presentation, and her charming character. These paeans, however, were tinged with nationalist and gender stereotypes, thus pointing to the complex situation in which a mediator between cultures and languages often finds herself (Fig. 1.1).<sup>2</sup>



**Fig. 1.1** Meeting at the congrès féministe in Paris 1896. *L'Univers illustré. Journal hebdomadaire*, 18 April 1896, cover Illustration (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

In the following, I use these comments and the constellation in which they emerged as a starting point to lay out the contexts, concepts, theoretical framework, and central questions of this book, which explores the practices of connecting and intertwining women's movements across national and other borders around 1900.

## Praises, Noises, and the Mediator's Choices

Reporting on the conference, the daily Parisian literary newspaper *Gil Blas* called on French women to learn a lesson from the 'charming German girl' who spoke 'wisely' and with 'ingenuity'. Without mentioning the topic of her speech, the author used Schirmacher's example to criticise other participants of the congress. Some speakers, he held, had bored the audience with confusing and lengthy lectures read from manuscript and a group of socialist students had threatened to derail the whole event with an uproar over the minutes. Schirmacher, however, 'woke up the audience when she took the podium' and spoke 'words of peace':

The charming German girl, pleasant, harmonious, speaks wisely, and we take pleasure in this comforting music, in these words of peace that the modest and collected little student pronounces without pose and with ingenuity. It was a dream to remember. (La mignonne Allemande, agréable, harmonieuse, parle sagement, et l'on prend plaisir à cette musique reconfortante, à ces paroles de paix que la petite étudiante modeste et recueillie prononce sans pose avec ingénuité. Ce fut un rêve dont on se souviendra.)<sup>3</sup>

The patronising emphasis on Schirmacher's feminine charm while devaluing her intellectually as a 'little student', even though she was one of very few women of her time to hold a doctorate, illustrates the prevalence of prejudice against learned women in even a supposedly supportive statement.<sup>4</sup> The ambivalent characterisation points to the irritation that university-educated women caused to the nineteenth-century European gender order.<sup>5</sup> How the growing number of learned European women around 1900 dealt with such dismissive statements and responded to institutional exclusions, and what individual and collective strategies they developed to carve out a place for themselves in public and professional life are some of the larger questions that form the background for this study.

But the comments on Schirmacher's speech were not only about gender. They were also about the national construction of social and

political life. Against a backdrop of German–French rivalry, it was certainly a provocation to describe a German as a role model for French women in a French newspaper. Clearly, however, Schirmacher’s linguistic competence and her French ‘esprit’, mentioned in several reports, facilitated the precarious manoeuvre. The conservative *Gazette de France*, to quote just one newspaper, applauded the young German delegate for ‘expressing herself in such a French way’ and her clear rhetoric that would ‘win over everybody if words were capable of producing such a miracle’ (Mlle Schirmacher s’exprime de façon si française [...] si particulièrement claire et pénétrante, qu’elle opérerait la conquête des tous si les mots étaient capables de produire un tel miracle).<sup>6</sup> German journals also placed language competence above argument when they held that Schirmacher’s free and witty speech in excellent French had won her enthusiastic applause from the entire audience.<sup>7</sup> Explicitly nationalist sentiments became evident when in the widely read French paper *Le Figaro* Jules Bois praised Schirmacher for not being tainted by any ‘physical or moral trait of the typical German woman’ (aucun trait physique ou moral de la classique Allemande).<sup>8</sup>

A couple of days later, probably to contradict the nationalist framing of the report in *Le Figaro*, a long article in the German *Kölnische Zeitung* emphasised the excellent French of *all* foreign delegates but particularly lauded Schirmacher for having made ‘propaganda for the hated German fatherland’ (Propaganda für das verhaßte deutsche Vaterland) with her speech.<sup>9</sup> The anonymous author of the Sunday lead story presented the advance of the different women’s movements as a national competition in which France was ‘by several horse lengths’ behind other nations—which obviously implied: behind Germany.

The comments in *Le Figaro* and the *Kölnische Zeitung* epitomise the difficult choices a mediator between two countries and cultures often has to face. By deliberately pointing to anti-German sentiment in France, the *Kölnische Zeitung* interpreted Schirmacher’s intervention as a patriotic act whether she had intended it as such or not. The article in *Le Figaro* confronted her with a similarly unpleasant dilemma: if she accepted the praise she tacitly also accepted the anti-German sentiment it entailed, but rejecting it would mean implicitly also questioning her competence as an efficient intermediary between the two countries, the very thing that

she was being lauded for. I will come back to Schirmacher's ambivalent (and changing) reactions to these choices at the end of this chapter. They exemplify to what extent transnational communication requires not only linguistic but also cultural competence, involving decisions that go far beyond the translator's choice of words.<sup>10</sup>

For a brief moment, in these reports on an international event of the transnationally developing women's movements, issues of cultural mediation across national boundaries took centre stage. Research on transnational movements such as the women's movement, which began to flourish in the 1890s, has often brushed aside such supposedly peripheral noises or analysed them as what they of course also were: disruptions of the progress of the women's movement, which is usually described via its programmes, messages, and campaigns—by political content and activism rather than by circumstances and interferences. In contrast to this, I argue that transfers and mediation practices, and the cultural conditions that facilitate or complicate them, play an important, if often overlooked, role in the emergence and development of social and political movements on local, national, and international levels.

Translated texts, travelling lecturers, and reports about developments and achievements elsewhere often play a decisive part in fomenting debates about otherwise unquestioned social and political conditions, thereby creating spaces of civil engagement and activism.<sup>11</sup> However, since the genuinely local origin of a movement is often part of its legitimising discourse, foreign models are frequently appropriated in a nationalising way, thus veiling the transfers behind them.<sup>12</sup>

This study argues that an in-depth analysis of flows and hierarchies of knowledge, concepts, and strategies can thus contribute new and relevant perspectives on the history of the growing transnational civil sphere around 1900. In this book, women's movements serve as an exemplary case to examine and better understand the transnational dynamics of many of the movements that thrived in this period. To this end, I examine practices of translation, travel, and transnational journalistic correspondence that enabled various transnational circulations between women's movements and feminist activism before the First World War. In doing so, I also consider how power relations between states as well as

the entangled hierarchies of languages and cultures shape and determine the evolving spaces of social and political engagement.

## Approaches to Transnational Practices of Communication in and among Social Movements

To better understand the dynamics between national and inter/transnational movements, we need to analyse translation as one of the various practices of communication across languages and national borders. However, examining these dynamics and logics that kept the transfers of knowledge and strategies going and the networks growing is challenging, so is the analysis of the precarious transnational cultures they produced. The work of mediators—the journeys they make, the linguistic and cultural knowledge they use—is perhaps most effective when their mediating role (the ‘in-between’) remains almost unnoticed and communication flows seemingly effortlessly across linguistic or cultural boundaries.<sup>13</sup> The most efficient transfers are therefore often the ones most likely to be forgotten. I thus argue that the translator’s ‘invisibility’, as described in Lawrence Venuti’s influential book, is not necessarily due solely to a certain style of translation, but can also be linked to a certain kind of transnational political practice.<sup>14</sup>

Although the inconspicuous nature of many transfer and mediation processes poses a heuristic problem for the historian, we can turn the shortcomings of an often barely visible subject into an advantage if we systematically search for the limits of communicative processes and describe them. The importance of overcoming differences in language and customs and of providing information across borders is felt most vividly when this essential work for some reason cannot be done, when it is suspended or is inadequate.<sup>15</sup> Interpreting communicative fractures—such as translation conflicts or cultural misunderstandings—as symptomatic instances serves to render visible what otherwise remains hidden, namely the work of mediators. Looking out for peripheral noises (such as the ambiguous praise for the young Käthe Schirmacher in Paris),

complications, and disturbances of political communication in national and transnational movements is therefore not necessarily a deviation from more relevant issues, but can be a particularly useful starting point for further investigations on how transnational communication works.<sup>16</sup>

This study focuses on widespread activist practices of transfer before the First World War which were highly relevant for the development of transnational movements: travel, translation, transnational journalistic correspondence, and the particular texts and paratexts they produced.<sup>17</sup> I examine the routines and economies associated with them, their multiple functions in national and transnational movements, and their sometimes unintended effects. Based on the history of women's movements and feminisms, this study also adopts concepts and perspectives from transnational history and descriptive translation studies<sup>18</sup> and incorporates interdisciplinary strands of theory such as travel studies,<sup>19</sup> persona studies,<sup>20</sup> and auto/biography studies.<sup>21</sup>

Using the concept of the transnational civil society<sup>22</sup> to describe the activism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I want to demonstrate the relevance of those transfer practices and networks that thrived in transnational spaces and were practised in parallel to international relations between states. Examining the commitment and agency of those active in transnational networks, I also discuss the cultural hierarchies by which these networks were shaped. Imperial travel practices, colonial and postcolonial politics of domination, as well as the supremacy of (some) European languages need to be reflected upon.<sup>23</sup> Orientalising discourses are often part of global perspectives. Overviews of developments in different countries and comparisons between them thus often result in hierarchising assessments. I address these questions at various points of this study and focus on them in Chapter 6 by analysing an example of an orientalisng overview of women's movements.

Taking up recent research on women and gender relations in transnational history<sup>24</sup> and on the transnational character of women's movements, I use the concept of transnationality to stress the efforts of these movements to build connections across national and cultural borders but also their connections with national movements (and with nationalisms, too).<sup>25</sup> Tying in with this research I use the term 'transnational activism' to mark the difference between, on the one hand, international relations

between states and their governments, and non-governmental movements that co-operated across national borders on the other.<sup>26</sup> However, when discussing sources that describe this activism as ‘international’, I apply the term accordingly. In addition, I use the concept of transnationality in contrast to the term ‘global’ to signal a partial perspective and to reflect on how imperial perspectives and racist hierarchisations are also part of transnational relations.<sup>27</sup>

However, the openness and vagueness of the concept of transnationality and the privileging of certain languages associated with the concept, especially English, require critical reflection.<sup>28</sup> I try to address these problems by concentrating on discrete topics (practices of mediation, particularly travelling, translating, and transnational media correspondence). Given the worldwide dynamics of women’s movements and feminisms around 1900 and the conceptual openness of these transformative and transgressive practices, however, this task can only be approached through a focus on specific examples.<sup>29</sup> In this book, I have chosen as a case study the life of Käthe Schirmacher, the much-praised speaker at the international feminist conference in Paris in 1896. Discussing the transcultural and transnational dynamics of various transfers in this particular biographical case, I examine how multilingualism and mobility (often entangled with each other) enabled transnational communication in women’s movements around 1900 and highlight the importance and the agency of those who were engaged in this exchange.<sup>30</sup>

Serving as a methodological bridge between disciplines, the case study approach helps to illustrate major issues of transfer practice, communication, and exchange.<sup>31</sup> It offers a way of testing theoretical concepts such as transnationality, as well as visibility, trust, engagement, and activism in translation history, which will be discussed later in this chapter. To explore the possibilities and limits of the concept of cultural translation in the history of social and political movements, this study chooses an exemplary perspective on a particular type of protagonist (a transnational writer, translator, and mediator) in European middle-class feminist movements building transnational networks around 1900.<sup>32</sup>



## **Käthe Schirmacher, a Travelling Writer, Translator, Mediator—and Nationalist**

Käthe Schirmacher (1865–1930) was a German transnational writer and lecturer. Around 1900, she played an important role as a transnational journalist, mediator, interpreter, and translator in radical women's movements in several European countries. However, already during this period, she was also becoming an ever more ardent nationalist, which changed her ideas of transcultural mediation.

Growing up in the Prussian port city of Danzig (now Gdansk), Schirmacher lived in Paris for many years of her life. She travelled widely in the decades before the First World War, building and using the transnational networks of women's movements.<sup>33</sup> Born to a family of transnational traders, she received a liberal Protestant education, open to other languages and cultures. After the decline of her father's business, however, like many middle-class daughters, she could not count on receiving a dowry that would have opened up marriage opportunities in her social class, or on being financially supported by her family throughout her life. While her family hoped for a good marriage for her, Schirmacher, contrary to the norms and expectations of her milieu, aspired to a higher education that promised to earn her a living.

Describing herself and other female representatives of her time and class as transitional personalities (*Übergangstypen*), she developed an individual way of life that was characterised by professional work, transnational mobility, and mutual support among women. For most of her adult life she lived with female partners. Her desire to study led her abroad at an early age, to France, the UK, and Switzerland. However, her chosen field of study, modern languages, can also be seen as a compromise between her aspirations for an academic career and her family's more conventional ideas of a young woman's education that among the German middle classes often included learning French. How the prospect of her becoming a translator was negotiated when she was a teenager as part of this compromise is discussed in Chapter 2, while her first steps and later work as a literary translator are discussed in Chapter 3.

Schirmacher's fight for an education brought her into contact with the German women's movement of the late 1880s. After studying German language and literature in Paris, she first taught at a high school in Liverpool before turning to writing literary and political texts. After a three-year stay in her hometown of Danzig due to illness, she continued her studies in Zurich where she earned a doctorate in Romance Studies. Striving to become a professor for many years, she earned her living in numerous ways—as a translator and as a travelling lecturer, as a journalist working for French, German, and Austrian papers, and as a writer of fiction and non-fiction.

Writing and travelling with and for the women's movement, Schirmacher was active in associations of the radical wing in Germany and in international organisations as well as in the International Abolitionist Federation (IAF). She wrote influential books comparing and connecting women's movements transnationally and reporting on activism in different countries. In doing so, she shaped the view of particular movements and the translation of key terms of the movement. A founding member of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) in 1904, she interpreted between French, German, and English at many of the Alliance's international meetings. Her transnational reports and overviews of women's movements as well as other textual transfers between languages and cultures are discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 9. Chapter 8 focuses particularly on her experiences as an interpreter at women's movement congresses, the influence she enjoyed, and the conflicts her mediating position involved. Her travel practices in the context of the women's movement are discussed in Chapters 4 and 7.

Schirmacher was a prolific author in many fields, publishing in different languages, translating, and being translated. While she became known for her feminist writings and transnational correspondence in journals and newspapers, she also published scholarly works and literary critiques of French writers and translated French and English literature. Also, she wrote German nationalist propaganda later in her life. However, in this study, I focus on writings that represent different forms of written transfers (transnational journalistic correspondence, translation, self-translation, excerpting and summarising) of feminist activism

between languages and across borders. Her writings on literature as well as her German nationalist texts have been discussed elsewhere.<sup>34</sup>

In the years leading up to the First World War, Schirmacher turned to German nationalism and became a member of right-wing organisations and an ever more extreme anti-Semite. After the war, she was a delegate to the constitutional assembly of the German Reichstag for the German Nationalist Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei, DNVP). She continued travelling, lecturing, and writing in this nationalist milieu. However, the loss of her transnational networks and her marginalisation as a feminist in an anti-feminist party meant a severe loss of work and income. Chapter 10 concludes with an account of Schirmacher's split from the women's movement. I take the analysis of this process as a vantage point from which I re-examine the transnational practices of communication described in the earlier chapters of this study and assess their significance for social and political movements as well as their time-bound and precarious character.

## A Case Study of a Transnational Life

Using a biographical case study to explore transnational milieus, networks, and transfers has been proposed as a fruitful strategy by several researchers.<sup>35</sup> Such a study can serve as a way of formulating research questions that methodological nationalism otherwise obscures.<sup>36</sup> Reconstructing networks, economies, and passages of exemplary transnational lives and examining the opportunities and the difficulties encountered by these protagonists, for example, allow us to outline the gendered structures of specific transnational milieus and gauge the possibilities for transgressing norms and limitation of gender, race, and class. At the same time, tracing a particular life path and exploring the different stations of that trajectory provide a stable focus in the otherwise often vague field of transnational history.

A biographical case study that serves a particular research agenda does not aim to provide a conventional biography of the protagonist. The choice of sources analysed and of topics discussed reflect neither the

protagonist's self-image, nor the perception of this person by her contemporaries or followers in later times. Rather, the particular focus of a biographical case study reflects the issues the researcher associates with the protagonist's case. Adapting this genre (which gained importance in the late nineteenth century in new disciplines such as sexology or psychoanalysis) for historical research requires a critical reflection on its immanent truth claims.<sup>37</sup> In this study, I use it not to create a type but to explore new ways of thinking about transnational feminist movements.

In contrast to the concept of the example, which merely *illustrates* a theoretical point of view, the concept of the case is based on a complex relationship between singularity and generalisation: it is not a singular event but also does not merely represent a general rule. As Lauren Berlant has convincingly argued, to discuss a case means 'to query the adequacy of an object to bear the weight of an explanation worthy of attending to and taking a lesson from' and thus can test and even change a theoretical position.<sup>38</sup> Using the case of Käthe Schirmacher, I therefore hope to question approaches that either focus on movements in one country or conceptualise transnational networks mainly as relations between national movements.

However, a biographical approach to transnational history also poses particular challenges pertaining to genre and sources. The biographical genre is closely linked to European nation-building discourses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which resulted in the formation of national biographical canons (exemplified in national biographical dictionaries) that both nationalised transnational lives and obscured many lives that did not fit the specific concept of a contribution to the nation. Thus, a few exceptions notwithstanding, national biographical dictionaries tend to focus on the achievements of white, elite men with unambiguous national identities.<sup>39</sup> Investigating past lives that do not fit this norm is in many cases impossible and often much more challenging than continuing to work on already canonised historical figures. Even basic information such as life data often remains untraceable.

Exploring the lives of migrants and travellers also often means searching for fragments in archives around the world; it confronts the researcher with the hierarchies and asymmetries of national, imperial, and colonial archives. Multilingualism is also an issue, as transnational

personalities live in different cultural contexts and languages; a scholar's linguistic capacities open up certain perspectives but exclude others.<sup>40</sup> Both the archival situation and the language question very often reinforce Eurocentrism in research. It is, therefore, important to me to make clear my own situatedness and the partiality of my perspective.<sup>41</sup> I am a white middle-class female European historian working on European history whose first language is German. Educated in Central Europe in the late twentieth century, speaking English as fluently as possible was an important prerequisite for me to survive in the academic world. I understand enough French to read the French sources with which my case confronts me and have some rudimentary knowledge of Italian and Latin. But otherwise, I do not know any other language well enough to research a case using original sources.

My own research experience, therefore, exemplifies the effects of national historiographical traditions. I came across the works of Käthe Schirmacher because of my interest in German nationalism and gender and therefore started by analysing her anti-Semitic and ultra-nationalist writings from the last two decades of her life. Only gradually did I become aware of how transnational her life was until 1914 and how she contributed to transnational exchanges among women's movements.<sup>42</sup>

If it is, therefore, partly for pragmatic reasons (my knowledge of the material and of the languages used in the sources) that I chose Schirmacher for my study, I argue that the kind of limitations I have to face are relevant in some way or other to anyone researching transnational history. Even those who speak and read a number of languages extremely well are still restricted in their analysis of untranslated sources to exchanges in and between these languages. If these limitations are not acknowledged, the hierarchies between powerful and marginalised languages are maintained; addressing them opens up possibilities for exchange. Hence translation can never just be an object of research, it must necessarily also be considered as a part of the methodological approach.

Given the transnational life Schirmacher led for several decades, it is an extraordinary stroke of luck that this rich material, which allows for a variety of research projects on different topics, has been preserved. We must, however, consider how Schirmacher's particular form of legacy

awareness, her autobiographical interest, and the archiving context define the composition of the material.<sup>43</sup> During the last years of her life, Schirmacher was a venerated figure among a group of younger German women of the far right. This may well have reinforced the University Library of Rostock's decision to accept and store her voluminous estate in 1930, where it survived the Second World War unscathed. Schirmacher's papers are now one of the very few comprehensive legacies of a European women's rights activist in the German-speaking countries. Other renowned radicals, like Lida-Gustava Heymann (1868–1943), Anita Augspurg (1857–1943), or Helene Stöcker (1869–1943), had to flee from National Socialism and most of their material is therefore lost.

From her youth onwards, Schirmacher continuously collected and archived tens of thousands of documents from her life. Among other things, we have her diaries from several decades, extensive private and political correspondence (often from both sides), manuscripts, publications, and reviews of her lectures and publications. In the last years of her life, Schirmacher reassessed her papers and reinterpreted her transnational engagement as a German mission abroad.<sup>44</sup> The extant material is mostly in German or French, but there are some smaller holdings in English. As I have argued elsewhere, we can discuss Käthe Schirmacher as a 'case' because she herself already saw many aspects of her life (such as her lack of professional opportunities) as political and therefore publicly narrated and re-narrated her life in various ways.<sup>45</sup>

The sources on women's movements and feminisms of the time are full of references to transnational activists similar to Schirmacher, many of whom are little known. Their contributions to women's movements and feminisms, which go far beyond organisational links or linguistic translation, have not yet been studied in their full dimensions.<sup>46</sup> One of the aims of this case study is to call for broader research on the transnational feminist milieu before the outbreak of the First World War, and motivate the development of a research programme on the informal networks, the professional and political practices, and the biographies of these activists who constantly crossed borders and switched languages.<sup>47</sup>

## Travelling, Living Transnationally, and Connecting Women's Movements in the West

The development of women's movements in the late nineteenth century had a strong transnational dynamic and was driven in particular by exchanges between the USA and European countries. The two major transnational women's organisations (the International Council of Women (ICW)—which connected a growing number of national umbrella organisations meeting for regular conferences from 1888—and the single-issue movement of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), founded in Berlin in 1904) both had their roots in similar national US associations. Still existing today, they both claim to be open to women's organisations from the whole world, striving to represent women's rights globally from the very beginning. It has to be stated, however, that in their first decades they mainly represented white middle-class women in industrialised countries. Moreover, their concept of feminism was closely linked to the idea that European civilisations and societies were the only ones that promised a path to emancipation and equal rights for women. This had particular problematic effects in the European empires, where white middle and upper-class women associated their ideas of womanhood and women's rights with the colonising policies of their countries.<sup>48</sup>

However, in the context of European and North American societies, the movement had a considerable dynamic and included a large number of women in many countries. Transnational exchanges and cooperation not only helped mobilise movements at the national level, but also created a shared agenda for changing cultures, social systems, and legal norms, and for the demand for political participation in many countries. To provide this exchange, multilingual mediators were in high demand in the developing movement. The Paris congress of 1896 discussed at the beginning of this chapter is a good case in point.

The media coverage of the *Congrès féministe* illustrates the agency of a multilingual personality familiar with different cultural contexts. Digging deeper into the material that Käthe Schirmacher kept about the

congress, we learn that her agency as a mediator was not just the result of her linguistic and cultural skills. Rather, her role was also supported by a more formal authorisation. She was a delegate of not just one but four German associations at the conference.<sup>49</sup> As the journey was exhausting and costly, several German societies that did not want to miss the event took advantage of the fact that they had a fellow campaigner and compatriot living in Paris. They trusted Schirmacher, who at the time was based in France writing a German book on the French philosopher Voltaire, to represent them at the Congrès féministe. Hence, Schirmacher's leverage in the event can be explained, at least in part, by her transnational mobility which linked her to both the French and the German movements.

Among other things, it was Schirmacher's task to promote the upcoming International Congress of Women (Internationaler Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen) that was to take place in Berlin later in the same year and to attract participants and speakers for the event.<sup>50</sup> This was a delicate mission even twenty-five years after the Franco-Prussian War. An American visitor to the Paris congress reported open anti-German resentment at the mention of the forthcoming Berlin event at the closing banquet: 'S'il faut aller à Berlin, il faut y aller pour autre chose!', and translated for her readers in Boston: 'If we have to go to Berlin, we'll be going for another reason!'<sup>51</sup> Despite these adverse conditions, Schirmacher was quite successful in her task. The French *Revue Féministe* not only published her lecture on the German women's movement but also published a three-page preview of the upcoming event in Berlin.<sup>52</sup>

Some interesting questions arise here. What, for instance, was the division of labour between those who travelled, translated, and kept the exchange going between women in different countries and those who worked more locally? There are several answers to this question. Certainly, linguistic competences and different national approaches to languages played a role. In Paris, not only was the French language a necessity, but also a certain style of speech to prevail over the rude audience.<sup>53</sup> A few months later in Berlin, speeches in various languages were accepted and as the Boston-based *Woman's Journal* reported 'with one



exception, all the English and American delegates addressed the Congress in their own language' and were understood well by the Germans.<sup>54</sup>

Schirmacher's case opens up perspectives on some more general questions of transnational communication and mediation. To deal with the complex situations in the growing transnational civil society of women's movements, experts were needed who were not only free and willing to travel but also knew the languages involved as well as the habits and the prejudices of the various milieus. How did associations react to this growing demand? Who took on these tasks? What was their background and training? Did they see themselves as members of a distinct group? In her various positions as a board member and translator in transnational organisations, Schirmacher could bring her transnational expertise of travel and transnational communication to bear. But she had no funds of her own and needed the support of transnationally active associations if she wanted to travel.

As the German associations' letters to Schirmacher in the spring of 1896 show, financial questions mattered. She received an allowance for her expenses during the conference in Paris, but it was also obvious that those who sent her were happy to avoid having to pay a delegate to travel from Germany.<sup>55</sup> Schirmacher, on the other hand, made a living as a multilingual writer and saw her conference participation also from an economic point of view. If she was successful, she would also gain new commissions as a journalist, she told her parents.<sup>56</sup> She had been actively seeking to be a delegate to Paris, but she must also have made clear that she could not work without at least some compensation.<sup>57</sup>

Mobility is a resource for a movement, as well as for an individual who wants to make a living from being mobile. Both perspectives can be analysed in the context of a critical travel history that reflects travelling as a set of practices with various aims and political meanings.<sup>58</sup> The implicit and explicit power hierarchies of travel and travel writing were reflected in research from early on.<sup>59</sup> Central questions of this critique must, however, constantly be kept in mind. Who travels, under what conditions, to which places, with what intentions? Who can and who cannot travel? Who *must* travel? How is travel linked to power and domination as well as to migration and inequality? What do travellers expect

and how do they use their impressions to change or confirm their identities? What is the meaning of race, class, and colonial power in these practices? Gendered perspectives on travel and travel writing are particularly relevant here. They demonstrate women's mobility in spite of the bourgeois ideology that a woman's place is in the home.<sup>60</sup> They have, however, also demonstrated the links between gender hierarchies, orientalisating discourses, and the Western ideology of European civilisation as a precondition of women's emancipation.<sup>61</sup>

Mobility played a role in the life plans and careers of many European middle-class women of the nineteenth century. They often migrated temporarily for work or education (or a combination of the two), to find a husband, or to earn a living.<sup>62</sup> These young middle-class women played an important role in the spawning of women's movements in the late nineteenth century, which recruited many of its travelling activists from this group—Schirmacher's career illustrates this connection.<sup>63</sup> Having studied in Paris for several years before living there as a writer, Schirmacher was well equipped to address critical French audiences at the 1896 congress in Paris.

Later in the same year, due to her emotional attachment to Germany, Paris-based Schirmacher was anxious to make the journey to the International Congress of Women in Berlin in autumn for political and personal reasons. Despite anti-German sentiment at the congress in Paris, she had managed to invite a French delegate to Germany. A report by Eugénie Pontonié-Pierre (1844–1898) on the French women's movement was indeed presented at the Berlin congress. It turns out, however, that Pontonié-Pierre never went to Berlin herself. Rather, it was Schirmacher who presented her paper there.<sup>64</sup> Again, Schirmacher's willingness to travel and her mastery of French and German made her a mediator in a literal sense of the word. How she financed the expensive journey to Berlin remains unclear.<sup>65</sup> Most probably, she could afford it in the end by selling several reports on both congresses to journals and newspapers and by going on a lecture tour in the autumn of 1896.<sup>66</sup>

## Translating, Activism, and Trust

Translation took place in various forms in activist milieus around 1900. Again, the Paris feminist congress of 1896 illustrates this. Since all foreign delegates presented their papers in French, their speeches must have been translated into that language, either by the authors themselves or by someone else. Schirmacher's text, on the other hand, was translated into English and Swedish for publication in Swedish and American journals.<sup>67</sup> This points to a strong interest in transnational information in different languages and media. Many journal editors kept up to date with newest developments in other countries through exchange subscriptions, reporting on them in extracts and translations.<sup>68</sup> Multilingual activists reported on major events like international conventions for different audiences in their languages. At the Paris congress, Schirmacher translated in both directions between French and German, as the German associations she represented had asked her to communicate their point of view on the declaration of the congress. We are fortunate to find both versions—her letter to the president of the convention in French and her German translation of this intervention on behalf of the German associations—in her papers.<sup>69</sup> However, these documents of an exchange that would otherwise have taken place orally also point to interpreting as another type of translation relevant at international meetings.

Feminist research on how translations transfer and transform concepts of gender emerged in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Reflections on feminist translation, and more particularly on translations relevant in and for women's movements, were already developed in the 1980s by Susan Bassnett.<sup>70</sup> Luise von Flotow, Sherry Simon, and others discussed feminist translation practices and argued for the forging of transdisciplinary connections between gender studies and translation studies.<sup>71</sup> Interventions in colonial and postcolonial contexts both through translation and reflections on translation, such as those undertaken by Gayatri Spivak or Marilyn Booth, pointed to the power relations and hierarchies associated with all translation processes, while also highlighting the diversity of powerful female voices and feminisms around the world that have so often been ignored by Western feminists.<sup>72</sup> Recently, Stefania Arcara, Maude Bracke, and others have

initiated research on translating feminism in the second half of the twentieth century and on the transfers, transgressions, and transformations involved.<sup>73</sup> However, broader research on the role of translation in the earlier women's movements is still lacking.<sup>74</sup> This pertains both to how particular feminist concepts have been translated and circulated and to the various translation practices in historical women's movements.

Recent approaches to translation history also provide helpful concepts for analysing the relationship between feminist activism and translation. In her work, Maria Tymoczko points to the centrality of translation to revolutionary movements and investigates translation as an important way of creating images that incited resistance in colonised societies.<sup>75</sup> Using the case of the Irish translation movement, which inspired the Irish national movement and thus became a model for other anti-colonial activists, she develops a theoretical perspective on translation, engagement, and activism.<sup>76</sup> Based on a critical reading of Venuti's use of the term 'resistance', she problematises mere attitudinal shifts through engaged translations. Tymoczko argues for activism as a concept that should be reserved for translation movements that have actually been involved in the transformation of societies.<sup>77</sup>

Following on from this idea, in this study I explore the links between women's activism and translation. I argue that to include issues of translation, as an essential part of their history, broadens and significantly changes the perspective on social and political movements. However, two modifications are necessary from a historical perspective. First, as convincing as I find the differentiation between activism and mere engagement, from a historian's point of view this distinction also causes conceptual problems. Tying a central analytical concept to a historical impact (here, of an activism) that can only be assessed in retrospect does not only leave important but unsuccessful activisms out of the picture, but also prevents us from finding out why some movements were more effective than others. I use the term activism for all forms of political engagement that aim to change societies (and not just attitudes) regardless of their subsequent success or failure. Second, I argue that translation is only one among several strategies of transnational mediation that interact with each other in social and political movements. From a historical perspective, we therefore need to examine how

practices of translation are linked with other forms of mediation and communication such as speaking tours, conference travel, journalistic correspondence, and reporting, all of which are part of political activism.

Considering the multiplicity of translation practices (translating various textual genres, self-translations and re-translations, interpreting, excerpts from foreign texts) in national and transnational social and political movements, I argue that these practices are a necessary element not only of communication but also of high practical and symbolic value for a movement. Thus, it is important to know what was rendered into another language and what remained untranslated, who decided on what was transmitted, and what was changed. We need to ask who in a movement takes care of translations and who supports these efforts, for example with space for publications in journals, with patronage, or with money. We need to ask about the economic and practical conditions of the work of translators in activist milieus as well as about their formal and informal training.

In answering these and other related questions, the humanising approach in translation history introduced by Anthony Pym and the concept of trust as developed and explained by Andrea Rizzi, Birgit Lang, and Anthony Pym are particularly helpful.<sup>78</sup> First of all, it is only from a process-based perspective that we can develop an analytical perspective on translators and see them as agents in complex social milieus. The focus on who mediates and how, as well as on flows of translation in different directions, allows us to explore transnational milieus that cannot always be separated into 'sending' and 'target' cultures. What is more, the concept of trust unfolds a particular relevance when engaged translations and mediation in political activism are discussed. While translations are always potentially controversial, they are particularly so in political contexts where translators also have to make political choices.<sup>79</sup> It is thus important to understand the dynamics of political trust networks and the particular claims to trustworthiness of translations made in transnational movements.<sup>80</sup> When discussing what kind of trust translators aspired to when working in transnational political contexts, gender-specific aspects must also be considered.<sup>81</sup> Women were long denied institutional training on which they could have built the 'thin trust' created by professionalism. We should, therefore, ask whether

practices based on personal relations (creating ‘thick trust’) were more important for women.

Last but not least, I argue that the dynamics of trust networks of political movements are characterised by a specific temporality. On the one hand, they are supported by specific cultures of mediation that include both personal and institutional aspects and provide a certain stability even in moments of conflict. On the other, the transformations and developments of movements also influence these stabilising cultures. The more debate there is about the goals and values of a movement, the greater the risk that mediators and translators will become involved in conflicts.<sup>82</sup> Phases of change in movements hence entail both opportunities and risks for the mediators and translators involved in them. A particular loss of trust therefore needs to be examined from the perspective of the translator’s choice, but also in consideration of the changes that made a particular choice unacceptable that had not been problematic before. Understanding the specific cultures of mediation created by transnational movements has a high explanatory value in these cases. It should, however, be contextualised within the broader cultural history of trust, a sentiment that gained particular relevance as social cohesive with the rise of middle-class values and national identities.<sup>83</sup>

Following on from the questions above, I argue that apart from language skills and cultural competence, a specific personality was necessary to become a trusted mediator and translator in a transnational political movement in the period under discussion. Assuming that mediators around 1900 participated with a certain social capital and interest in women’s movements, one can now ask how they invented a particular self that accorded with particular necessities and how they tried to meet the expectations prevailing in the movement. A number of questions follow from this. Were there models one could aspire to? How did mediators like Käthe Schirmacher appropriate and possibly change these models? Did the political movements of the second half of the nineteenth century develop a specific type of a transnational mediator that differed from other translators and mediators of the time? What part did multilingual, translating, and mediating individuals like Schirmacher have in developing specific practices and social norms for mediators and translators in social movements?

## The Language of Translation and the Risk the Transnational Mediator Takes...

The case of Schirmacher's transnational mediation practices is particularly rewarding for several reasons. First, Schirmacher's meticulous archiving and self-documentation provide differentiated insights into the conditions and decisions of her transnational life. Second, her complete break with both the German and the international women's movement meant that she never really became part of a movement's official memory. Thus, there are many references to tensions and rifts that would otherwise have remained hidden. Third, her turning to extreme nationalist views after more than two decades of a transnational life points to some intricate linkages between these seemingly opposing attitudes. Her case therefore also promises to bring questions about processes of nationalising appropriation and exoticising othering in the context of transnational exchange more sharply into focus.

With this in mind, let us now return to Käthe Schirmacher at the 1896 Paris congress and examine her changing reactions to the praise she received from the press. After her success at the conference, she wrote to her parents telling them how glad she was to have found a way to meet the expectations of the heterogeneous audience without hurting the feelings of the socialists present at the event or stirring up French nationalism. She consequently hoped that her clever tactical behaviour would be rewarded by new assignments from the French and German press.<sup>84</sup> We can deduce from this that Schirmacher, who depended on the income from her various commissions as a translator, journalist, and writer, wanted to control her public image and, to this end, closely monitored the media response to her appearances. Hence, she did not archive all the articles and newspaper clippings about her performances merely out of vanity. Rather, they were collected partly to enable her to control the process by which she negotiated her position as a public figure.

As Schirmacher's archiving practice became a lifelong professional habit, we can trace how her assessment of public descriptions of her personality changed. In the case of the problematic choice between two nationalist appropriations of her personality mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this change is significant. In 1896, she felt extraordinarily

honoured by the appreciation of her French appearance in French papers. Referring to the mentions in *Gil Blas* and *Le Figaro*, she explained to her parents that the way she was respected in France could show them why she felt so much more comfortable there: ‘This might explain to you why I love Paris so much. I am *très française* in many respects’ (Das wird euch vielleicht erklären, warum ich Paris so liebe. Ich bin in vielen Dingen *très française*).<sup>85</sup>

Twenty-five years later, in her autobiography published for a nationalist German audience in 1921, Schirmacher came back to the laudatory article that had credited her with not appearing like a ‘typical German woman’.<sup>86</sup> She now presented it as an example of how her feelings as a German had been repeatedly hurt during her two-decade stay in Paris.<sup>87</sup> Even decades later, talking about her transnational past life still meant having to decide whether she felt more French or more German and risking alienating her friends and contemporaries in one of the two countries. From this, we can conclude that those who have once lived between cultures always have to make choices—be it between the cultures they have lived in, or between belonging to a particular community (or imagined noncommunity) or remaining in that border space ‘outside’ the ‘language forest’ in which Walter Benjamin places the translator.<sup>88</sup>

This book on transnational practices in women’s movements has been written over the last three years in London, Florence, and Vienna and was thus itself developed in a transnational context. It has been written in English by a foreigner who is not a native speaker. In her impassioned plea to live with many languages and never to give up the ‘Language of Translation’, Indian writer and activist Arundhati Roy powerfully characterises the status of English as a colonial legacy on the Indian subcontinent as a language both of privilege and exclusion and of emancipation. While this, albeit differently, is also true for other regions of the world, we should not overlook the fact that there are also other ambivalent languages, such as Mandarin or Spanish, which have their own potential for oppression and liberation. Roy’s detailed but firm answer to Pablo Neruda’s question ‘In what language does rain fall over tormented cities?’—‘in the Language of Translation’—has always encouraged me



when I was despairing at the effort of writing in a language that is not my mother tongue.<sup>89</sup> Although I received invaluable help from various sides and would not have been able to complete this book without the advice from my copy editor, Emily Richards, writing in the Language of Translation remains a precarious endeavour. However, it also gives me insight into one of the central questions of my study. Writing in a foreign language constantly reminds me of what every translator, every traveller in foreign countries knows: that words do not come of their own accord but have to be coaxed into meaningful sentences again and again.

In this book, I approach the practices of transnational communication from different angles and examine various forms of translation, correspondence, and travel in order to gauge their respective possibilities and limitations. Each chapter focuses on a particular (group of) source(s), describes the historical and biographical constellation of the processes of translation and mediation, and discusses theoretical concepts related to the interpretation of the source(s) in question. In this, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of how, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the transnational mobility and communication of citizens contributed to the emergence of social and political movements and a transnational sphere where these movements could thrive.

Based on the case of Käthe Schirmacher, I also show that the ability to navigate between languages and cultures and to mediate between different groups in a transnational space of communication does not necessarily prevent nationalist appropriation by others or preclude the possibility of the mediator becoming a nationalist. Rather, I argue, the interstitial space the mediator inhabits and the Language of Translation spoken there are vulnerable tools. The richness of multiple meanings can collapse into foreignising or nationalising attitudes. Equally, the contact zones that enable communication and exchange can turn into spaces of domination and violence. Differentiated knowledge about the practices that keep spaces of exchange and ambivalence open is an important investment in creating and maintaining a transnational civil society, which we need now more than ever.

## Notes

1. University Library Rostock: Schirmacher Papers (in the following: NI Sch) 905/106, *Congrès Feministe International de 1896* [conference programme].
2. NI Sch 905/107–108; NI Sch 905/112–118, NI Sch 905/125, *Congrès Feministe International de 1896* [Collection of newspaper clippings].
3. Louis Gaillard, ‘Un Congrès fuministe [sic]’, *Gil Blas*, 11 April 1896; All translations in this book by the author unless stated otherwise.
4. It remains unclear if the article’s title ‘Un Congrès Fuministe’ was a typo or an antifeminist joke. For an antifeminist use of the term ‘fuministe’ referring to the habit of smoking see Helen Chenut, ‘Anti-feminist Caricature in France: Politics, Satire and Public Opinion, 1890–1914’, *Modern & Contemporary France* 20 (2012), 437–52, at 450.
5. Edith Glaser, “‘Sind Frauen studierfähig?’ Vorurteile gegen das Frauenstudium’, in *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung. vol 2: Vom Vormärz bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Claudia Opitz Elke Kleinau (Frankfurt/Main and New York: Campus, 1996), 299–309.
6. V. Taunay, ‘Séductions féminines (Chronique)’, *La Gazette de France*, 11 April 1896.
7. NI Sch 905/107, 905/108, 905/109, 905/113—newspaper clippings.
8. Jules Bois, ‘Quelques silhouettes de féministes’, *Le Figaro*, 8 April 1896.
9. Anon., ‘Aus Paris. Der internationale Frauenkongress’, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 19 April 1896; NI Sch 105/002, ‘Frl. Dr. Käthe Schirmacher (aus Danzig)’ (newspaper clipping 1896). At that time, the German term ‘Propaganda’ did not yet have the negative connotation it later acquired.
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18. Basic to transnational history: Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan); fundamental to descriptive translation studies: Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies—And Beyond*, Rev. ed. (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishers, 2012).
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26. de Haan, ‘Writing’, 508.
  27. See for definitions of transnational history: Thomas Adam, ‘Transnational History. A Program for Research, Publishing, and Teaching’, *Yearbook of Transnational History* 1 (2018), 1–10; Akira Iriye, ‘Transnational History’, *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (2004), 211–22, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777304001675>; Patricia Clavin, ‘Defining Transnationalism’, *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (1 November 2005); Philipp Gassert, ‘Transnationale Geschichte, Version: 2.0’, Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. Begriffe, Methoden und Debatten der zeithistorischen Forschung, accessed 17 June 2022, [https://docupedia.de/zg/Transnationale\\_Geschichte\\_Version\\_2.0\\_Philipp\\_Gassert](https://docupedia.de/zg/Transnationale_Geschichte_Version_2.0_Philipp_Gassert); Kiran Klaus Patel, ‘Transnational History’, EGO European History Online (2010), accessed 17 June 2022, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/theories-and-methods/transnational-history>.
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  29. Using Francisca de Haan’s broad notion of women’s movements and feminisms I want to emphasise the plurality and diversity of various activisms that become even more obvious when looking

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  33. This study builds on a multi-year research project that resulted in a comprehensive biography. For biographical details and further literature see Johanna Gehmacher, Elisa Heinrich, and Corinna Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik* (Vienna et al.: Böhlau, 2018); see also Gehmacher, 'A Case'; Johanna Gehmacher, 'Im/Possible Careers. Gendered Perspectives on Scholarly Personae Around 1900', *European Journal of Life Writing* 11, Cluster: When Does the Genius Do the Chores? Knowledge, Auto/Biography and Gender (2022): WG70–WG102, <https://doi.org/10.21827/ejlw.11.38786>; Elisa Heinrich and Corinna Oesch, 'Prekäre Strategien? Käthe Schirmachers Agieren in Frauenbewegungen vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg', *Ariadne. Forum für Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte*, 67–8 (2015), 100–108; Corinna Oesch 'Zwischen Wissenschaft und

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39. Hannes Schweiger, 'Global Subjects: The Transnationalisation of Biography', *Life Writing* 9, no. 3 (2012), 249–58; Falko Schnicke, '19. Jahrhundert' in *Handbuch Biographie. Methoden, Traditionen, Theorien*, ed. Christian Klein (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2009), 243–250; Anne-Kathrin Reulecke, "Die Nase der Lady Hester". Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Biographie und Geschlechterdifferenz', in *Theorie der Biographie. Grundlagentexte und Kommentar*, eds. Bernhard Fetz and Wilhelm Hemecker (Berlin et al.: De Gruyter, 2011), Anita Runge, 'Gender Studies', in *Handbuch Biographie. Methoden, Traditionen, Theorien*, ed. Christian Klein (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2009), 402–407.
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42. Johanna Gehmacher, 'Narratives of Race, Constructions of Community and the Demand for Female Participation in German-nationalist Movements in Austria and the German Reich', in *The Persistence of Race from the Wilhelmine Empire to National Socialism. Re-Examining Constructions and Perceptions of Cultural Narratives of Race in German History, 1871–1945*, eds. Lara Day Benjamin and Oliver Haag (Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2017), 154–74; Gehmacher, 'Der andere Ort der Welt'; Gehmacher, 'De/Platzierungen'.
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48. Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women. The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997); Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, 'Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement: A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 2 (1999), 363–86; Burton, *Burdens of History*; Kathryn Gleadle and Zoë Thomas, 'Global Feminisms, c. 1870–1930: Vocabularies and Concepts—A Comparative Approach', *Women's History Review* 27, no. 7 (2017), 1209–24, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09612025.2017.1417685>; see for a perspective on transnationality also beyond imperial contact zones Haggis et al., *Cosmopolitan Lives*.
49. Schirmacher represented the following associations: Association Frauenwohl Berlin (Verein Frauenwohl Berlin), General German Women's Association (Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein), Federation of German Women's Associations (Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine) and the committee of the women's congress that was to be held in Berlin in September 1896. Also, she had a commission to report on the congress in the German feminist journal *Die Frauenbewegung*. Nl Sch 904/122, Minna Cauer to Käthe Schirmacher (in the following: KS), 17 March 1896; Nl Sch 905/119, Lina Morgenstern to KS, 19 March 1896; 905/121, Auguste Schmidt to KS, 4 April 1896.

50. NI Sch 905/119, 120. Lina Morgenstern to KS, 11 and 19 March 1896. The committee of the congress had printed a preliminary programme in French to be distributed in Paris. NI Sch 570/005, *Congrès International des Femmes à Berlin* [conference programme].
51. B. Phillips, 'Women's Congress in Paris', *The Woman's Journal* 27, no. 20 (1896), 157: 'Some of the ladies spoke French with fluency and elegance [...]. Still, whenever a delegate was unfortunate enough not to be able to use the language in the oratorical style demanded by tradition at public meetings, she was jeered at and ridiculed...'
52. Anonymous, 'Chroniques et nouvelles féministes', *La Revue Féministe* (1896), 308–311.
53. B. Phillips, 'Women's Congress in Paris', *The Woman's Journal* 27, no. 20 (1896), 157.
54. Anonymous, 'The German Women's Congress', *The Woman's Journal* 27, no. 44 (1896).
55. NI Sch 904/122, Minna Cauer to KS, 17 March 1896.
56. NI Sch 11/013, KS to Richard and Clara Schirmacher, 10 April 1896.
57. NI Sch 905/120, Lina Morgenstern to KS, 11 March 1896; NI Sch 904/123, Minna Cauer to KS, 12. March 1896.
58. Jan Born, 'Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology', in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, eds. Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Aldershot and Burlington, 2004), 13–26; see also Arnd Bauerkämper, Hans Erich Bödeker, and Bernhard Struck, eds., *Die Welt erfahren. Reisen als kulturelle Begegnung von 1780 bis heute* (Frankfurt, New York: 2004); Hagen Schulz-Forberg, ed., *Unravelling Civilisation. European Travel and Travel Writing* (Brussels et al.: 2005).
59. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; Timothy Mitchell, 'Die Welt als Ausstellung', in *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (Frankfurt/M. and New York: Campus, 2002), 148–76.

60. E.g. Alba Amoia and Bettina L. Knapp, eds., *Great Women Travel Writers. From 1750 to the Present* (New York, London: Continuum, 2006).
61. Gabriele Habinger, *Frauen reisen in die Fremde. Diskurse und Repräsentationen von reisenden Europäerinnen im 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Promedia, 2006); Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference. An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Ulla Siebert, *Grenzzlinien. Selbstrepräsentationen von Frauen in Reisetexten 1871 bis 1914* (Münster u.a.: Waxmann, 1998); Natascha Ueckmann, *Frauen und Orientalismus. Reisetexte französischsprachiger Autorinnen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2001).
62. Levke Harders, 'Migrationsgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte: "Der Mädgemarkt in Ripen"', Migration and Belonging, accessed 17 June 2022, <https://belonging.hypotheses.org/286>; Mareike König, 'Femina migrans. German Domestic Servants in Paris, 1870–1914. A Case Study', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 33, no. 3 (2012), 93–115; Wolfgang Gippert and Elke Kleinau, *Bildungsreisende und Arbeitsmigrantinnen. Auslandserfahrungen deutscher Lehrerinnen zwischen nationaler und internationaler Orientierung (1850–1920)* (Köln et al.: Böhlau, 2014).
63. Johanna Gehmacher, 'Reisende in Sachen Frauenbewegung. Käthe Schirmacher zwischen Internationalismus und nationaler Identifikation', *Ariadne*, no. 60 (November 2011), 58–65; Johanna Gehmacher, 'Reisekostenabrechnung. Praktiken und Ökonomien des Unterwegsseins in Frauenbewegungen um 1900', *Feministische Studien* 35, no. 1 (2017), 76–92; Johanna Gehmacher, 'Moderne Frauen, die Neue Welt und der alte Kontinent. Käthe Schirmacher reist im Netzwerk der Frauenbewegung', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften (OeZG)* 22, no. 1 (2011), 16–40; See also on Schirmacher's travel writing Ulla Siebert, "'Von Anderen, von mir und vom Reisen". Selbst- und Fremdkonstruktionen reisender Frauen um 1900 am Beispiel von Käthe Schirmacher und Emma Vely' in *Nabe Fremde – Fremde Nähe*.

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64. E. Dely, 'Vom Internationalen Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen zu Berlin', *Die Frau. Monatsschrift für das gesamte Frauenleben unserer Zeit* 4, no. 1 (October 1896); Schirmacher also brought the greetings of the Vice-President of the Women's International League for General Disarmament (*Ligue internationale des femmes pour le desarmement general*), Ms Flammarion, to the Congress in Berlin; see 'Grüße aus Frankreich', in *Der Internationale Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen in Berlin 19. bis 26. September 1896. Eine Sammlung der auf dem Kongress gehaltenen Vorträge und Ansprachen*, eds. Rosalie Schoenflies et al. (Berlin: H. Walther, 1897) 346.
  65. In July, she was still not sure if she could go as she could not afford the travel. Her well-to-do brother-in-law Otto Münsterberg had offered support which she hesitated to accept. NI Sch 11/022, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 6 July 1896.
  66. E.g. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le Congrès féministe international de Berlin', *Journal des débats*, 8 August 1896; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der Internationale Frauenkongress in Berlin', *Badische Landeszeitung*, 27 September 1896.
  67. NI Sch 11/013, KS to Richard and Clara Schirmacher, 10 April 1896.
  68. NI Sch 905/123, Minna Cauer to KS, 12 March 1896.
  69. NI Sch 905/110, A Madame la Présidente du Congrès féministe international..., 12 April 1896.
  70. Susan Bassnett, *Feminist Experiences. The Women's Movement in Four Cultures* (London and Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986).
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# 2

## Become a Translator! Formations of an Im/Possible *Persona*

Drawing both on the history of women's education and on the interdisciplinary concept of the *persona*, this chapter discusses the discourses and the institutionalised and other practices that framed and limited young middle-class women's chances of learning and becoming a learned person in late nineteenth-century Europe. Exploring young Käthe Schirmacher's correspondence with her family, and particularly with male family members who were connected to academia, I analyse prevalent norms of femininity in a liberal Protestant milieu and indications of transnational gendered practices of education in the 1880s. Delving into an exchange between Schirmacher and Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916), who was later to become a renowned German-American psychologist, I argue in this chapter that it was not only institutional exclusion and the middle-class ideology of women's place in society that hindered women's intellectual development, but also the double standard that was applied to male and female learnedness.<sup>1</sup> The socio-economic constellations and constraints that affected Käthe Schirmacher in her striving for an academic career, as well as the arguments she used to negotiate an independent life for herself, point to the challenging conditions under which a growing number of middle-class European women tried to earn their

living based on an education they still had to fight for. Considering the precarious links between accepted models of femininity and new forms of professional identity, I argue that the concept of gendered scientific/scholarly *personae* can be helpful in understanding both the considerably high numbers of productive female translators in the nineteenth century and the marginal attention they received and still receive.<sup>2</sup>

## Gendered Scientific/Scholarly *Personae* and the Exclusion of Women

This chapter starts from the premise that gendered divisions of labour and gender ideologies play a vital role in the process of producing academic knowledge. In the nineteenth century, the sciences paved the way for the growing importance of rational thinking and secular knowledge in Western societies; the humanities also differentiated into a growing number of professionalised disciplines with specific concepts and standards. As historians of science have shown, this process was not only structured by hierarchies of class and race but also accompanied by the almost complete exclusion of women from the universities.<sup>3</sup> While this development varied across countries and disciplines, it was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that the call for equal rights to study at a university and to pursue an academic career as a woman gained momentum. As the founding stories of the first women's colleges in England, Girton (1869) and Newnham (1871), show, the fight for equal inclusion was often closely linked to women's movements.<sup>4</sup> In other cases, individual women's striving for an academic education was embedded into socialist or nationalist liberation movements.<sup>5</sup> However, full admission of women to universities was only achieved after decades of struggle and in most countries, did not happen until well into the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

Already these very basic facts demonstrate clearly that the success story of science since the Enlightenment cannot be adequately analysed without examining the effects of women's exclusion—both in terms of individual biographies of men and women and on the topics, perspectives, and categories of knowledge production.<sup>7</sup> Although important

work has been done on women's institutional exclusion and the struggles to overcome it, women's contributions to scientific/scholarly knowledge remain severely under-researched.<sup>8</sup> Case studies of women scientists and scholars show that many of them collaborated with male relatives.<sup>9</sup> Exciting work has also been done on how a certain (hegemonic) form of masculinity was established and enforced in many disciplines in the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> The use of the *persona* concept has proved to be particularly fruitful both for the analysis of collaborative processes and for the exploration of gendered identities in the academe.

The concept of the *persona* offers a means of understanding the influence of cultural practices on knowledge production in the sciences and the humanities. Referring to the functions of the mask (Lat. *persona*), which the actors in classical Greek theatre used to enhance their presence and to convey specific characters familiar to their audiences, the *persona* concept helps to analyse how scholars use 'cultural templates' to adapt their biographies to institutional requirements and social expectations in and beyond academia.<sup>11</sup> *Persona* studies also show how a particular *persona* develops, gains acceptance, and changes in a society.<sup>12</sup> These transformations are influenced by how scholars interpret, negotiate, and reshape the values and cultures of knowledge production.

Building on anthropologist Marcel Mauss' theory on the critical phase of transition between a social role and the development of an individual self, Lorraine Daston and Otto Sibum use the term *persona* to describe the complex relation between individual biographies and social institutions.<sup>13</sup> *Persona*, for Daston and Sibum, is 'a cultural identity that simultaneously shapes the individual in body and mind and creates a collective with a shared and recognisable physiognomy'.<sup>14</sup> Mineke Bosch observes that the *persona* concept which links 'science as knowledge' with 'science as social process' makes it possible to overcome the problematic divide between (often idealising) biographies of scientists on the one hand and the history of scientific progress in a particular field of knowledge on the other.<sup>15</sup> However, Bosch also points out that previous to this development in science history, gender studies had already devised similar concepts of gender as 'performed' or created through 'doing'.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, biographical research has also developed elaborate concepts to discuss the complex relationship between cultural norms, biographical

models, individual self-representations, and the habitus of a particular profession.<sup>17</sup> The concept emphasises the (often also self-reflexive) agency of the historical protagonists: to form a specific *persona* is something one does deliberately, even if its acceptance has to be negotiated in the milieu to which it is addressed.<sup>18</sup>

Since Daston's and Sibum's 2003 intervention, the concept has become a well-calibrated analytical instrument to describe the complex connections between institutional careers, scientists' individual *curricula vitae*, and how researchers claim relevance for their research in many disciplinary fields. It helps us to understand selection processes and relevance regimes as well as individual strategies for shaping a biographical narrative adapted to prevailing norms in a particular academic field. It took some time, however, until a broader effort was made to delve deeper into the concept's gendered meanings and effects. Lorraine Daston, focusing on the male academic within his family environment and his gendered role models, analysed what she called the domestication of the scientific *persona* in the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> Gadi Algazi's investigation on scholarly work in private spaces demonstrates the complex relations between the professionalisation of learnedness and the development of academic households in the early modern period.<sup>20</sup> More recent work has shown the embodiment of scientific/scholarly *personae* in gendered behaviours and performances and demonstrated the productiveness of the concept for various disciplines.<sup>21</sup>

Whereas historians often focus primarily on the 'reflexive co-creation of personal and social realities', media studies point to the variability and diversity of *personae* that one individual can construct and inhabit.<sup>22</sup> They thus emphasise the performative character of *personae* in the constitution of sociocultural realities. Following this, we can ask what kind of women in the nineteenth century dared to imagine and sometimes successfully create a scholarly/scientific *persona* for themselves despite an all-male academic milieu that was highly hostile to them. The teenage Käthe Schirmacher, searching for possibilities of developing an independent life, is a good case in point.

## Danzig 1882: Can I be a Student?<sup>23</sup>

At the age of sixteen, Schirmacher began a correspondence about her education and her future with her grandfather Julius Scharlok (1809–1899), a botanist and apothecary in Graudenz (now Grudziądz) and at that time the only person in her family with a close connection to science.<sup>24</sup> In her once well-to-do family (involved in transnational trade), she observed growing difficulties fuelled by the economic failure of her father's company and the various illnesses of both her parents. She had begun to study languages (Dutch and French) and philosophy on her own from books the year before<sup>25</sup> and now pondered ways of becoming self-employed.<sup>26</sup> She hoped that she would be allowed to attend the teachers' seminar the following year as the first step to further learning. Despite her otherwise liberal grandfather's firm conviction that a woman's destiny was to become a loving wife and mother, she defended her wish to study and her belief in women's ability to reason. Against his verdict that reason and science were no field for women, she held that the borders between male and female characteristics were blurred; something that could be seen, for example, in men writing soulful poetry or girls developing an interest in science.<sup>27</sup> She repeatedly implored her grandfather to endorse her plan to study:

Grandfather, I want to work seriously, to be educated, then I will be useful and happy. It's worth living for, isn't it, grandfather? (Großvater, ich will ernst arbeiten, wissenschaftlich gebildet, dann werde ich nützen und glücklich sein. Darum lohnt es doch zu leben, nicht wahr, Großvater?)<sup>28</sup>

That same year, as a Christmas present, she sent him an essay in which she had elaborated detailed arguments for women's right to study at the university. Embracing the contemporary concept of progress, she held that everything was subject to change, and therefore, women should also be allowed to evolve; just as men had educated themselves, women also should have the chance to develop.<sup>29</sup> She ended her fervent call for women to have access to higher education and more diverse lifestyles with a double reference to economic circumstances and the common humanity of men and women:

Many women, either voluntarily or forced by circumstances, will have to renounce their once [only dream] of complete happiness [...], in order to reach happiness by other means [...] as a worker equal to man in striving to perfect not man, not woman, but humankind! (Viele Frauen werden freiwillig oder durch Verhältnisse gezwungen, dem einstmals [einzigem Traum] zum vollen Glück, entsagen [zu] müssen, und dann in anderen Bahnen [...] zum Glück [zu] gelangen [...], gleich dem Mann als Arbeiterin im Vervollkommnungswerk nicht des Mannes nicht der Frau, sondern des Menschen!)<sup>30</sup>

Books from the family library, for instance by radical early feminist thinker Hedwig Dohm (1831–1919), as well as Schirmacher's connection with the Free Church in her city, may have encouraged her in her ideas.<sup>31</sup> However, to put her plan into action, she needed not only the support of her family, but also practical advice.

While Schirmacher discussed the appropriateness of higher education for women with a respected older member of her family, she sought information about the opportunities open to her personally from a peer. Her sister's brother-in-law Hugo Münsterberg, two years Schirmacher's senior, had begun his studies in Geneva in 1882 and told her about the famous Russian women students he had met there. In the summer of the same year, Münsterberg wrote detailed letters to Schirmacher answering her questions about her chances of enrolling as a student. One particularly long epistle he sent to her on her seventeenth birthday was not without a certain unintentional humour. In stilted terms, the nineteen-year-old fledgling student lectured Schirmacher about marriage and motherhood being incompatible with a woman's public appearance on a lectern:

A woman's soul should be like a temple where only a few worshippers kneel, not a funfair where a crowd can pay money to gawp and cheer. (Die Seele der Frau soll wie ein Tempel sein, wo wenige Andächtige niederknien, nicht wie eine Jahrmarktsbude, wo sich für Geld die große schaulustige Menge jubelnd amüsiert.)<sup>32</sup>

The young man's verbose response to the information Schirmacher had requested from him offers deep insights into the misogynist discourse

of the era. Many of his utterances reflected popular pamphlets against women's higher education which enjoyed considerable circulation among male students of the time.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, I take him as an exemplary source for exploring these discourses.

However, I am also interested in other aspects of Münsterberg's advice. He presented in grim terms the major obstacles that, in his view, Schirmacher would have to overcome. After years of private learning to acquire the necessary knowledge for admission to a university, she would have to study abroad where, without the support of her family, she would face hostility from male students and professors. After all these costly efforts, her marriage prospects would be poorer than before.

Despite this daunting picture, Münsterberg also outlined two possible paths into the academic world. Using the example of the Russian students he had met, he acknowledged that there was a natural force of true vocation. Against their express desire to become mothers and wives, some extraordinary women were drawn to science and to work for the greater good by an irresistible calling. However, he claimed that such women never made a principle of their extraordinary path but humbly accepted it as their fate, a burden they had to bear.<sup>34</sup> The exclusionary intention of this argument was obvious. It derived from Theodor von Bischoff's (1807–1882) assertion that there was no need for change in the gendered system of higher education because female genius in a woman, if it were truly present, would always prevail no matter what the circumstances.<sup>35</sup> As early as the 1870s, Hedwig Dohm had criticised this position in one of her sharp and lucid treatises.<sup>36</sup> However, by referring to the concept of vocation, Münsterberg also sketched a possible, if uncomfortable, *persona* for a female scholar: the brilliant woman who was unable to escape her vocation and therefore had to forgo the happiness of love and motherhood. According to this model, one way for a woman to enter academe was to present herself as drawn to an irresistible calling, even if this meant denying her feminine identity, since academic virtues were inextricably linked to masculinity.

For different reasons, however, both Schirmacher and Münsterberg rejected this possible view of Schirmacher as a unique, gifted personality with a vocation. He preferred to admire her feminine charms instead of seeing her as a genius. She, on the other hand, argued politically by



declaring that she did not want to be an exception but to pave the way to higher education for all women—an approach her pen pal strongly objected to.<sup>37</sup> Still, Münsterberg had another suggestion, based on his own needs, which could indirectly open a door into the academic world for her. While he had studied Greek and Latin at grammar school, he knew that Schirmacher was good at modern languages, considered a more appropriate skill for women.<sup>38</sup> In order to study his particular interests, anthropology and cultural history, he needed someone to translate books from English and French (which he did not read well enough) into German. He would send her these texts, and in exchange for her translating excerpts from them, he would teach her about his innovative field of research. ‘Schulter an Schulter’ (shoulder to shoulder) they would go through life exploring new ideas as scientists. As he put it, a clear decision was required:

Yes or no, Käthe? I am waiting for an answer, a quick answer without long deliberation, yes or no? (Ja oder nein, Käthe? Ich warte auf Antwort, auf schnelle Antwort, ohne langes Besinnen, Ja oder nein?)<sup>39</sup>

He did not explain the urgency—was this a covert marriage proposal, or did he just need the translations quickly? Soon after this intense exchange, the relationship between the two cooled. Still, with his proposal, the self-assured Münsterberg had also outlined another model that could be adopted by a female scholarly/scientific *persona*: the educated helpmate of a brilliant man.

Münsterberg warned Schirmacher that men would question a woman’s qualification in an academic discipline and disparage what she might have learned outside the university as ‘mere pastime’ (Spielerei) like other women played with cats.<sup>40</sup> He pointed to the greater openness of new fields such as his own special interest, cultural history. If she chose a field such as this, that was not yet recognised as a university discipline, she would not be seen as an unwelcome competitor, and there would be room for her to contribute to and participate in this innovative venture. Münsterberg also pointed out the lack of translators for academic texts in all disciplines. Many were willing to translate novels, but few were learned and willing enough to translate texts that required

scientific/scholarly knowledge. He knew a young French woman who earned a considerable income by rendering English academic books into French.<sup>41</sup>

But, he argued, the satisfaction that Schirmacher could derive from this could be more than just financial; her competency in modern languages could be a pathway into academia. Münsterberg wrote at some length about Johanna Mestorf (1828–1909) who, without ever having attended a university, had translated anthropological books from Danish into German, written introductions to texts she had translated, and developed, step by step, into a recognised scientist. He emphasised that Mestorf had always remained womanly, and that there was nothing ‘widernatürliches’ (unnatural) in her development. He also pointed out that it had been easier for her because her field of work was not a university discipline.<sup>42</sup>

Johanna Mestorf, the first woman to be awarded an honorary professorship in Prussia (1899), is indeed an interesting case.<sup>43</sup> Her extraordinary career exemplifies the challenges a woman had to face in academic life. After her father’s death, Mestorf’s family lived under difficult circumstances, and at the age of 21, she went to Sweden as a governess to support herself. She learned Scandinavian languages and later also travelled through Europe for several years as the companion of a member of her employer’s family.<sup>44</sup> After returning to Hamburg, she worked as a secretary for foreign correspondence and privately acquired a broad knowledge of Scandinavian archaeology, whose major works she translated into German.<sup>45</sup> She also contributed numerous research texts of her own and coined technical terms which are still in use today. An expert, she gradually rose from being a volunteer at Kiel’s Museum of Antiquities of the Fatherland (Museum vaterländischer Alterthümer) to becoming its director.<sup>46</sup> It was mentioned on various occasions that she always insisted on being addressed as ‘Fräulein’ (Miss), the formal German address for an unmarried woman.<sup>47</sup> This striving for a *persona* that did not transgress conventional norms was reflected in Hugo Münsterberg’s praise that there was nothing unnatural about Miss Mestorf.<sup>48</sup>

## Paris 1887: An Aspiring Young Woman Negotiates Her Future

Two themes stand out in Münsterberg's letters to Schirmacher: gender-specific social norms and his problematisation of competition between men and women. This had not changed when the two resumed their correspondence five years later. In the meantime, Schirmacher had continued her education against all the odds. Becoming a governess or teacher for young children was still one of the very few paths a young educated middle-class woman who had to make a living could take. Finishing the teachers' seminar in Danzig at the age of eighteen, Schirmacher had reached the highest official level of education a woman could achieve in Prussia at that time. She became a governess in a private household in Thuringia, where she fought for a few free hours in the evenings to read the books Münsterberg had recommended to her.<sup>49</sup> A year later, she left her job after a conflict with her employer. With the financial help of her affluent brother-in-law Otto Münsterberg (1854–1915), Hugo's older brother, she then went to France to improve her French. Soon after her arrival in France, she began to study German at the Sorbonne, with Otto Münsterberg's consent but without the knowledge of her wider family.

Late nineteenth-century Paris was a significant place in terms of gendered educational strategies and transnational cultural relations. To learn modern languages, French in particular, was deemed a suitable occupation for young, unmarried, middle-class women in Germany. To send daughters to France or Switzerland to refine their education was seen as a good way of bridging the time between school and marriage. While wealthy families could afford to send their offspring to a girls' boarding school, less well-off young women went abroad for a stay in a private household—some as a guest or adopted family member and others as a governess or maid.<sup>50</sup> So there was nothing unusual in sending the somewhat unruly young Schirmacher to France for a while after her short career as a governess. However, she soon changed the character of her sojourn in the French capital. The peculiarities of the French educational system offered her some opportunities. On the one hand, France allowed women free access to study languages at the university in order to

train first-class female teachers for their strictly gender-segregated secular schools that competed with religious schools. On the other hand, due to the growing importance of the German Reich in Europe, there was a market for private German language lessons in Paris.<sup>51</sup> Schirmacher took advantage of both circumstances. She studied German (and thus also French) at the Sorbonne, and to earn at least part of her keep and burden her brother-in-law as little as possible, she gave language lessons to fellow students.<sup>52</sup> A stipend from the General German Women's Association (Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein) in her second year facilitated this endeavour.<sup>53</sup>

In August 1887, she was the first German woman to pass the French *agrégation*, a competitive final exam for language students from the whole country. In 1887, out of 56 candidates (of both sexes) who took the written examination only nine were admitted to the final oral exam. Schirmacher graduated second best in this group.<sup>54</sup> In the months before the exam, however, her letters wavered between hope, optimism, and doubt as to whether she would succeed. One contributing factor to her ambivalence was her uncertainty about her future. If she did not marry (which she did not intend to do), she would have to earn money. Although she seemingly had no other option than to become a teacher, she was determined to continue her studies, so she planned to go to England and improve her English while teaching there. She saw this as just another step on her way to America, where she hoped to study further and eventually become a professor at a women's college.<sup>55</sup> In this situation of stress, hope, and planning, in the early summer of 1887 Schirmacher resumed her correspondence with Hugo Münsterberg. At the age of only 24, he was about to finish his university studies with a *Habilitation* in psychology and to marry the painter Selma Oppler (1867–?). When Schirmacher learned about his impending marriage, she asked Münsterberg—probably mockingly—for his opinion on the dangers and advantages of the married state, but, more earnestly, also sent him an essay she had written and asked him for feedback. After an initial excuse saying that he was busy preparing for his *Habilitation* examination, Münsterberg finally answered her two questions in a detailed letter about a month later.<sup>56</sup>

We have neither Schirmacher's essay, which she had presumably written in preparation for her exam in German literature, nor her letters to Münsterberg. Nevertheless, his rather patronising response not only displays a conventional gender ideology—a woman, he held, was made for love and if she met the right man she would not think about marriage in such a utilitarian way. It also shows his gendered reading of a scholarly work that posited certain ideas about cooperation between men and women in science. Münsterberg suspected—probably correctly—that Schirmacher wanted feedback on her essay to find out whether she could be an academic in her own right. Based on this assumption, Münsterberg sharply criticised her work, which he considered full of empty phrases and thus a danger to 'empirical/scientific' (positive) knowledge. More, he reprimanded her for following presentations in textbooks without developing an independent argument based on work with primary sources. While we could ponder which of these criticisms the ambitious Münsterberg had perhaps been subjected to himself and how he probably enjoyed repeating them to someone else, in his letter he distanced himself entirely from all these flaws. In his opinion, they were typical of women who, in addition to all their other faults, liked to pick important topics but, lacking the knowledge to address them adequately, made do with generalisations and emotional arguments instead.

This firm, if unsubstantiated, conviction of the difference between men and women led him to a number of other discriminatory statements. First, Münsterberg emphasised the distinction between aesthetic and rational judgement, the latter being a masculine attribute in his view. Second, precisely because men would accept a woman's better judgement in taste and feeling, women would have to acknowledge, he claimed, male supremacy in rational arguments:

Every prudent man accepts a woman's opinion in matters of delicacy, tact and taste; why should a woman not admit that nature has bestowed the gift of consistent, rigorous, logical thinking [...] only on men. (Jeder besonnene Mann erkennt in Sachen des Feingefühls, des Taktes und Geschmackes dem Weibe das Urteil zu; weshalb soll da die Frau sich scheuen einzugestehen, daß die Natur die Gabe des consequenten streng logischen Denkens [...] dem Manne allein verliehe.)<sup>57</sup>

Another, related distinction Münsterberg made was between ‘producing’ (producieren) and ‘reproducing’ (reproducieren) in science. While women could contribute through reproducing existing knowledge, the innovative production of new knowledge was the burden and privilege of men. In his view, productive thinking consisted above all of deviating from the textbook and therefore required ‘fighting with the established’ (Kämpfen mit dem Hergebrachten), a struggle in which ‘a woman’s mind can only fail’ (da muß der Geist der Frau unterliegen). Münsterberg distinguished between knowledge from books, which was open to all who were eager enough to learn, and the more serious engagement with source texts, which, he said, required a man’s impartial judgement.<sup>58</sup> His doctrinal views thus resulted in a gender-specific division of labour in academia. While he was willing to let women do the necessary reproductive work of copying, excerpting, and translating, perhaps also teaching younger students, it was only men whom he believed to be able to break new ground, to develop innovative and challenging arguments, or to explore new material. That he envisaged this as a model for his own marriage became clear when he mentioned his bride’s exhaustion after reading scientific books in preparation for continuing to work with him.

After having scolded Schirmacher so harshly, at the end of his epistle Münsterberg completely changed his tune and stated that if the text Schirmacher had sent was not a scholarly work that she wished to publish but simply a kind of practice run to demonstrate that she had read the books thoroughly, he would not hesitate to congratulate her on her witty and comprehensive acquisition of the research literature, and the subtlety and taste of her stimulating writing. If her essay was lacking in critical argument and scientific analysis of the sources, it was not her duty as a woman to demonstrate these.<sup>59</sup> He corroborated this view in his final advice:

So then, I see in your essay that with luck and skill you most nobly testify to your talent and zeal; may you always do your service to science by diligently acquiring and processing knowledge, but may you never let false friends persuade you that you can do more than nature has permitted to woman. (So sehe ich denn in Ihrem Aufsatz, daß Sie mit Glück und Geschick Ihre Begabung und Ihren Eifer aufs edelste bezeugen;

mögen Sie alle Zeit der Wissenschaft durch fleißige Aneignung und Verarbeitung Ihre Dienste leisten, aber mögen Sie nie durch falsche Freunde sich einreden lassen, daß Sie mehr können, als die Natur dem Weibe gegeben.)<sup>60</sup>

Schirmacher was probably able to take this discouraging remark calmly, especially after the information that she had been admitted to the final exam arrived just a few days later.<sup>61</sup> Shortly after her successful *agrégation*, Schirmacher started to write publicly about women's struggle for higher education. In her comprehensive review of an omnibus volume by German professors on academic women which she published a decade later, she did not honour Münsterberg (who had contributed to the volume) with a mention. She did, however, point out the profound lack of logic in some of the professors' arguments and concluded by saying that the performance of men and women should only be judged individually and independently of their gender.<sup>62</sup>

## Gendered *Personae* in Academia

In the 1880s, a female academic cooperating with men on equal terms was not yet a realistic model. Schirmacher knew that her university exam would not entitle her to equal participation in the professions, let alone in academia. Rather, she was quite conscious that the fact that she was studying at a university in itself had the effect of subverting prevalent gender norms. But how is one young woman's struggle for a place in the academic world connected to the question of the figure of the translator? Is there a female *persona* of the translator? What at first glance appears as individual advice to an aspiring young woman actually reveals a broader but hidden strand of meaning in relation to academic *personae*. Münsterberg pointed, possibly unintentionally, to a well-established pattern of women's participation in intellectual discourses through translation and other supportive practices.

In her study on German women writers and their translation practices in the Enlightenment period, Diana Spokiene highlights the important, but widely forgotten contribution of women translators to European

literary history.<sup>63</sup> While the history of knowledge only mentions this group in passing, translation history and feminist translation studies have pointed to the important contribution of women in this field.<sup>64</sup> However, many historical protagonists, Schirmacher included, are not easy to place in the history of translation. They translated, but they were also writers, researchers, journalists, or activists who translated occasionally or at a certain period of their careers. The diversity of women's translation practices does not suggest the existence of a particular *persona*. The fact that many women translated anonymously or as collaborators with their husbands, fathers, or brothers also complicates our understanding of this *persona*. We could thus follow Daston and Sibum's conclusion that not every profession or occupation leads to the creation of a *persona*.<sup>65</sup> Despite these reservations, however, I would like to propose introducing the concept of the gendered *persona* into translation history and examining more closely the various connections between women's demands for access to academic education and their translation practices in the context of the history of knowledge.

The exchange between Schirmacher and Münsterberg points to hidden biographical models for women that were closely linked to the *persona* of the male scientist developed during the nineteenth century. These female, subordinate *personae* were established and maintained by the gendered double standard inherent in the distinction between productive and reproductive work. Lorraine Daston mentions that when Charles Darwin was introduced to a professor's daughters as potential brides, their ability to translate was particularly emphasised; she also points to the translation work carried out by other professors' wives as one of the ways in which they supported their husbands.<sup>66</sup> Hence, we should investigate further how the *persona* of the professional academic's ideal spouse, and other subordinate *personae* (such as translators and secretaries of both genders) that complemented the hegemonic male *persona* of the academic, were defined in a period when a growing number of academics married.

First, we should not suppose that for all women aspiring to be included in scientific/scholarly work there was only one solution and they either strived to achieve the hegemonic male model for themselves or succumbed to the prevalent model of femininity. Therefore, it could



be rewarding to delve deeper into the various individual negotiations and solutions found in the biographies of many educated women.

Second, the example of Johanna Mestorf points to the transformative potential of working as a translator; it could be rewarding to investigate how women who fought for their place in academia and in the professions actively used this potential. In other words, we should look into the protagonists' agency in forming a *persona* as a translator and inhabiting it for a while, either alone or together with other *personae* (Fig. 2.1).



**Fig. 2.1** Käthe Schirmacher (in the middle, seated) together with fellow students after her first university degree, the *certificat d'aptitude* in Paris in 1886 (University Library Rostock, Käthe Schirmacher Papers)

## Notes

1. See on Hugo Münsterberg: Jutta Spillmann and Lothar Spillmann, 'The Rise and Fall of Hugo Münsterberg', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 29 (1993), 322–38.
2. To convey the meaning of the German term 'wissenschaftlich', which refers to work in the sciences *and* the humanities, I use the split term scientific/scholarly.
3. James C. Albisetti, *Mädchen und Frauenbildung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2007); Juliane Jacobi, *Mädchen- und Frauenbildung in Europa. Von 1500 bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt/M. and New York: Campus, 2013); Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz, eds., *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*, 2 vols (Frankfurt/M. and New York: Campus, 1996); Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History. Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, Mass et al.: Harvard University Press, 1998).
4. From a contemporary perspective: Maria G. Grey, 'The Women's Educational Movement', in *The Woman Question in Europe: A Series of Original Essays*, ed. Theodore Stanton (New York et al.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1884), 30–62; J. Kettler, *Was wird aus unseren Töchtern?* (Weimar: Weimarer Verlagsanstalt, 1889); Helene Lange, *Frauenbildung* (Berlin: L.Oehmigke's Verlag, 1889); Helene Lange and Gertrud Bäumer, eds., *Der Stand der Frauenbildung in den Kulturländern*, vol. III, *Handbuch der Frauenbewegung* (Berlin: Moeser, 1902); Käthe Schirmacher, 'Newnham', *Nationalzeitung* 12 July 1891 (republished in Käthe Schirmacher, *Aus aller Herren Länder* (Paris and Leipzig: Welter), 269–82).
5. Monika Bednarczuk, 'Akademicka "międzynarodówka" kobieca? Solidarność, rywalizacja i samotność w Szwajcarii (1870–1900)', *Wielogłos Pismo Wydziału Polonistyki UJ* 44 no. 2 (2020), 5–34, <https://doi.org/10.4467/2084395XWI.20.010.12401>; Katharina Belser, ed., *Ebenso neu als kühn'. 120 Jahre Frauenstudium an der Universität Zürich* (Zürich et al.: eFeF-Verlag, 1988);

- Franziska Rogger, *Der Doktorhut im Besenschrank. Das abenteuerliche Leben der ersten Studentinnen – am Beispiel der Universität Bern* (Bern et al.: eFeF-Verlag, 1999); Käthe Schirmacher, *Züricher Studentinnen* (Leipzig and Zürich: Th. Schröter, 1896); Romana Weiershausen, *Wissenschaft und Weiblichkeit. Die Studentin in der Literatur der Jahrhundertwende* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004).
6. Ilse Costas, 'Der Kampf um das Frauenstudium im internationalen Vergleich. Begünstigende und hemmende Faktoren für die Emanzipation der Frauen aus ihrer intellektuellen Unmündigkeit in unterschiedlichen bürgerlichen Gesellschaften', in *Pionierinnen – Feministinnen – Karrierefrauen?*, ed. Anne Schlüter (Pfaffenweiler: 1992), 115–44.
  7. Falko Schnicke, 'Fünf Analyseachsen für eine kritische Geschlechtergeschichte der Geisteswissenschaften. Aufriß eines Forschungsfeldes', *Jahrbuch für Universitätsgeschichte* 20 (2017 [2019]), 44–68.
  8. E.g., Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann, 'Zum Engagement der österreichischen Frauenvereine für das Frauenstudium', in *Durch Erkenntnis zu Freiheit und Glück...*: *Frauen an der Universität Wien (ab 1897)*, ed. Waltraud Heindl and Martina Tichy (Vienna: WUV-Universitätsverlag, 1993); Miriam Wallraven, 'Die Petitionspolitik der bürgerlichen Frauenbewegung. Mathilde Weber und Helene Lange', *Hundert Jahre Frauenstudium an der Universität Tübingen*, <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/frauenstudium/>, last modified 22 April 2015.
  9. For example, Pnina G. Abir-Am and Dorinda Outram, eds., *Uneasy Careers and Intimate Lives. Women in Science 1789–1979* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Helena M. Pycior, Nancy G. Slack, and Pnina G. Abir-Am, *Creative Couples in the Sciences* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Theresa Wobbe, ed., *Zwischen Vorderbühne und Hinterbühne: Beiträge zum Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen in der Wissenschaft vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Bielefeld: Transkript, 2015).

10. Falko Schnicke, *Die männliche Disziplin. Zur Vergeschlechtlichung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft 1780–1900* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015); Kirsti Niskanen and Michael Barany, eds., *Gender, Embodiment, and the History of the Scholarly Persona: Incarnations and Contestations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).
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12. Lorraine Daston, 'Die wissenschaftliche Persona. Arbeit und Berufung', in *Zwischen Vorderbühne und Hinterbühne: Beiträge zum Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen in der Wissenschaft vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Theresa Wobbe (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2015).
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14. Daston and Sibum, 'Introduction', 2.
15. Mineke Bosch, 'Persona and the Performance of Identity. Parallel Developments in the Biographical Historiography of Science and Gender, and the Related Uses of Self Narrative', *L'Homme* 24, no. 2 (2013), 14–5.
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  19. Daston, ‘Die wissenschaftliche Persona’.
  20. Gadi Algazi, ‘Scholars in Households: Refiguring the Learned Habitus, 1480–1550’, *Science in Context* 16, no. 1/2 (2003), 9–42.
  21. Falko Schnicke, ‘Kranke Historiker. Körperwahrnehmungen und Wissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert’, *Historische Anthropologie* 25 (2017), 11–31; Kirsti Niskanen, Mineke Bosch, and Kaat Wils, ‘Scientific Personas in Theory and Practice—Ways of Creating Scientific, Scholarly, and Artistic Identities’, *Persona Studies* 4 (2018), 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.21153/ps2018vol4no1art748>.
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  25. Nl Sch 522/004, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 5 June 1881; Nl Sch 686/004, KS to Julius Scharlok, 9 March 1882.

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27. Ibid.
28. NI Sch 686/010, KS to Julius Scharlok, 2 September 1882.
29. NI Sch 686/013, KS to Julius Scharlok, December 1882.
30. Ibid.
31. On her acquaintance with Dohm's book: NI Sch 752/001, Käthe Schirmacher, *Flammen*, Manuscript, 31; on her relation to the free religious church: NI Sch 538/005, Konfirmationsurkunde Käthe Schirmacher, 18. May 1882. On emancipatory thought among religious dissenters in Germany: Sylvia Paletschek, *Frauen und Dissens. Frauen im Deutschkatholizismus und in den freien Gemeinden 1841–1852* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990).
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33. Weiershausen, *Wissenschaft*, 9 and 119; Edith Glaser, "Sind Frauen studierfähig?" Vorurteile gegen das Frauenstudium', in *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung. vol 2: Vom Vormärz bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Claudia Opitz Elke Kleinau (Frankfurt/M., New York: Campus, 1996), 299–309.
34. NI Sch 522/007, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 6 August 1882.
35. Theodor Ludwig Wilhelm Bischoff, *Das Studium und die Ausübung der Medicin durch Frauen* (München: Th. Riedel, 1872).
36. Hedwig Dohm, *Die wissenschaftliche Emancipation der Frau* (Berlin: Wedekind & Schwieger, 1874), 35–6.
37. NI Sch 522/007, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 6 August 1882.
38. On the creating of different gender characters through (among other things) girls' school curricula: Hausen, Karin, 'Die Polarisierung Der "Geschlechtscharaktere" – Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben.' In *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas. Neue Forschungen*, ed. Werner Conze, 363–93 (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1976), 388–9.
39. NI Sch 522/007, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 6 August 1882.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.

43. Alexander F. Chamberlain, 'Miss Johanna Mestorf', *American Anthropologist* 11 (1909), 536–7.
44. Dagmar Unverhau, 'Johanna Mestorf – Lebensabschnitte statt einer Biographie. Frühe Jahre und der Weg nach Kiel als Kustodin am Museum vaterländischer Alterthümer', in *Eine Dame zwischen 500 Herren: Johanna Mestorf – Werk und Wirkung*, ed. Julia K. Koch (Münster et al.: Waxmann, 2002), 103–45, at 118–21.
45. Unverhau, 'Johanna Mestorf', 103–45, at 126–7.
46. Chamberlain, 'Miss Johanna Mestorf.'
47. Nicole Schultheiß, 'Professor Johanna Mestorf', Kieler Frauenportraits, accessed 13 March 2022, [https://www.kiel.de/de/kiel\\_zukunft/stadtgeschichte/frauenportraits/buch19\\_portrait\\_mestorf.php](https://www.kiel.de/de/kiel_zukunft/stadtgeschichte/frauenportraits/buch19_portrait_mestorf.php).
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50. Mareike König, 'Konfliktbeladene Kulturvermittlung – Deutsche Dienstmädchen und Erzieherinnen in Paris um 1900', in *Transkulturalität. Gender- und bildungshistorische Perspektiven*, ed. Wolfgang Gippert, Petra Götte, and Elke Kleinau (Bielefeld: Transkript, 2008), 238–55; Wolfgang Gippert, 'Ambivalenter Kulturtransfer. Deutsche Lehrerinnen in Paris 1880 bis 1914', *Historische Mitteilungen* (HMRG) 19 (2006), 105–33.
51. For a detailed description and further literature, see Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 65–9.
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53. Käthe Schirmacher, 'L'agrégation d'allemand', *Die Lehrerin in Schule und Haus* 4, no. 9 (1888), 271.
54. Schirmacher, 'L'agrégation d'allemand', 271.

55. NI Sch 316/016, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 14 Mai 1887; NI Sch 718/020, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 13 July 1887.
56. NI Sch 522/015, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 29 June 1887; NI Sch 522/016, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 20 July 1887.
57. NI Sch 522/016, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 20 July 1887.
58. On the work with sources in history as something only a ‘whole man’ could do, see Schnicke, *Disziplin*, 114–6.
59. NI Sch 522/016, Hugo Münsterberg to KS, 20 July 1887.
60. *Ibid.*, emphasis in the original.
61. NI Sch 994/010, Ernest Lichtenberger to KS, 25 July 1887.
62. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Die akademische Frau (Schluß.)’, *Die Frauenbewegung* 3, no. 3 (1897), 28.
63. Diana Spokiene, ‘Found in Translation: German Women Writers and Translation Practices Around 1800’, in *Historical Textures of Translation: Traditions, Traumas, Transgressions*, ed. Markus Reissenleitner and Susan Ingram (Vienna: Mille-Tre-Verlag, 2012), 95–108; see also Michaela Wolf, ‘The Creation of a “Room of One’s Own”. Feminist Translators as Mediators between Cultures and Genders’, in *Gender, Sex and Translation: The Manipulation of Identities*, ed. José Santaemilia (Manchester et al.; St. Jerome, 2005), 15–25.
64. Susan Bassnett, *Feminist Experiences. The Women’s Movement in Four Cultures* (London and Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986); Luise von Flotow, ed., *Translating Women. Perspectives on Translation* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011); Sabine Messner and Michaela Wolf, *Mittlerin zwischen den Kulturen – Mittlerin zwischen den Geschlechtern? Studie zu Theorie und Praxis feministischer Übersetzung* (Graz: Institut für Translationswiss., 2000); Stefanie Kremmel, Julia Richter, Laris Schippel, and Tomasz Rozmysłowicz, *Österreichische Übersetzerinnen und Übersetzer im Exil* (Vienna and Hamburg: New Academic Press, 2020).
65. Daston and Sibum, ‘Introduction’, 3.
66. Daston, ‘Die wissenschaftliche Persona’, 111.



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# 3

## *Men, Women and Progress. Literary Translation*

In discussing the literary translations that Käthe Schirmacher produced between 1888 and 1904, this chapter asks how texts are changed in the course of their translation. Although the focus is on textual analysis rather than biography, contexts and constellations are considered an important perspective for understanding this process. Tying in with the 'trust-based' approach to translation history, I am interested in the broader field of cultural mediation and the role of translation in this field.<sup>1</sup> In line with Pym, Rizzi, and Lang's suggestion of addressing 'issues of complex social causation that enable or hinder intercultural communication',<sup>2</sup> I follow the translation process downstream and examine the conditions in which the source text was conceived, the milieus in which it was selected for translation, and the relationships and practices that enabled its transmission into another language and culture.

The chapter starts by examining Schirmacher's first published translation of a literary text, *Men, Women and Progress* by Emma Hosken Woodward (1845–1884). It outlines the structure and narrative of Woodward's novel and describes the milieu in which a young female German teacher came across the book.<sup>3</sup> I argue that the temporary migration of young middle-class women between European countries

in search of education and/or occupation contributed to the formation of an informal, transnational space. In this space, personal relationships between women from different countries and backgrounds could develop and political ideas as well as new practices could circulate. I argue that since women were excluded from the more prestigious institutions of knowledge production, they could not draw on the trust created by these institutions and their norms. They often had their first translating experiences in the more informal milieu of transnational female networks; here, they could build personal relationships based on trust and gain confidence in their own abilities.

By looking at other literary translations by Schirmacher, I show the difference between a translation that is produced in the context of a political movement for an activist audience on the one hand and commercial translation on the other, focusing on the practice of translation and the different ways in which trust is generated. Finally, I explore the extent to which Schirmacher's novella *Die Libertad* (1891), her first literary publication, might have taken Emma Hosken Woodward's book as a model and how it can be interpreted as a statement in a transnational dialogue.<sup>4</sup>

## A Romantic Novel on the 'Dreadful Woman Question' and Its Author

Despite its title, *Men, Women and Progress*, published in London in 1885, is a romantic novel. After some trials and tribulations, Madeline, a well-to-do young lady and committed activist for the women's cause, and Henry, a promising young man and future peer, are happily engaged. Step by step, Henry, hitherto unconcerned, becomes convinced of the significance of women's rights, while Madeline must acknowledge that against her will, she has fallen in love with the handsome brother of her friend Nellie. After a struggle, she accepts that the fight for a more equitable society can also be fought together with a loving male partner. However, the way the author unfolded the conventional, heterosexual story was unusual for a Victorian novel.<sup>5</sup> Since the 'woman question' is the main cause of misunderstanding between the lovers, debates on social and political issues form an important part of the narrative.

Taking this somewhat contradictory mixture of love story, political treatise, and symposium into account, we can both characterise it as feminist theory *avant la lettre* and as domestic fiction reflecting the ongoing debate on the women's cause.<sup>6</sup> Both features made it highly interesting for the growing number of young women fending for themselves as teachers and governesses, who often worked abroad, like Schirmacher after her 1887 *agrégation* in Paris.

About Emma Hosken Woodward we know little; the information we do possess is mostly based on the circumstances and contents of her work. The way her literary style and the plot lines of her novels develop, as well as the publication contexts of her writings, supports certain conclusions about her life. Her novels *Married for Money* (1875) and *Bitter to Sweet End* (1877) portray the troubles of young middle-class women and their struggle to find fulfilment, livelihood, and a place in society.<sup>7</sup> These first two narratives only implicitly reveal the injustices of a patriarchal society through the fates of the female protagonists. The last book, *Men, Women and Progress*, tackles the matter more directly. Set in Crag's Nest, the country home of newlywed Nellie Silverton and her husband Fred, it features a series of talks between a group of friends enjoying a leisurely summer stay at the house. Representing typical positions, the participants express strong opinions on issues such as women's education, a girl's proper place, women's welfare activism, and demands for political rights for women. While Madeline Acton, Nellie Silverton, and Professor Wray hold the most progressive views, retired Major Knagge and his manipulative wife stand for conservative beliefs.<sup>8</sup> The host's husband Fred, her brother Henry, and their aunt Miss Wynter take varying and changing positions, thus spurring on the debate.

Emma Hosken Woodward (1845–1884), who married twice, was widowed in 1870 at the age of only 25, shortly after the death of her infant son from diphtheria. She published her first two novels anonymously. Records show that she was registered as a boarder at the Sisters of St Margaret in Bloomsbury, London, in 1881, after living together with her mother and her two young daughters for several years in her native Penryn (Cornwall) after the death of her first husband.<sup>9</sup> We know nothing about the family's financial circumstances, but the means of the young widow of a pastor of a small Welsh parish were probably very

limited. Both the fact that she remained anonymous and the kind of publisher she chose suggest that Emma Hosken Woodward (then Emma Hosken) wrote her first two novels mainly for money.<sup>10</sup> Samuel Tinsley (1846–1903), the younger brother of publishers William and Edward Tinsley, founded his company in 1872 at the age of 26, specialising in low-quality fiction and publishing several dozen books each year.<sup>11</sup> Published anonymously, young Emma Hosken's first book was among Samuel Tinsley's early productions. The fact that he soon published a three-volume novel by the anonymous author suggests some success of her debut novel.

The 'three-volume' was a major publishing format for new novels in Victorian Britain. With their standardised format and relatively high price, these books did not primarily address private buyers. They were often marketed via subscription and mainly produced for circulating libraries that lent reading matter to middle-class readers for an annual fee. The division into three parts helped create the demand for the next volume and pay the printing cost of the later volumes from the income by the first. The system promised a stable profit to the author, publisher, and librarian, with limited editions. But the way they were marketed also strongly influenced the style and composition of Victorian novels over several decades.<sup>12</sup> Featuring complicated and adventurous stories of impossible love, orphans of mysterious background, and momentous misunderstandings between protagonists, Emma Hosken's first two books were a good fit for the concept. Probably because they were part of a mass production, no reviews of them can be found.

Soon after her move to London, Emma Hosken married Bernard Barham Woodward (1853–1930), a natural scientist and librarian at the Natural History Museum.<sup>13</sup> He was to edit her one-volume third novel *Men, Women and Progress* in her name in 1885, a couple of months after her unexpected death at the age of only thirty-nine. In his foreword, he declared he had changed nothing apart from correcting minor errors.<sup>14</sup> He thus claimed to pass on his late wife's unmitigated positions on controversial issues while he protected her memory by pointing to the fictional character of the book where 'the personal views of the author will not be found in any isolated member of the group'.<sup>15</sup> It is only thanks to him that we can attribute authorship of Emma Hosken

Woodward's first two books to her and know the names of her daughters, Agnes Emily and Gwendoline Mary, to whom he dedicated the book.<sup>16</sup>

In his dedication, Bernard Barham Woodward mentioned the beneficial work his late wife had done for 'the weak and helpless'. We should bear in mind, however, that unlike writing popular fiction for money, working for the welfare of others was among the few socially accepted employments for a middle-class woman at the time. But certainly the author shared the experience of being a working woman with her novel's main character, Madeline. In this respect, it is also noticeable that the author's depiction of marriage changed. While in her earlier novels, marriage was an onerous burden for a young woman (marrying for money to support a poor family) or an unattainable romantic goal (hoping for a sweet end to a bitter story), Emma Hosken Woodward expressed optimistic expectations of conjugal partnership in her third novel. Presumably, like Madeline, she also hoped to find support from her husband for her plan to write a serious book. By publishing her last work, her husband showed his willingness to fulfil his late wife's hopes.

Unlike Emma Hosken Woodward's earlier novels, *Men, Women and Progress* was published with Dulau & Co, a publisher focusing on scientific books and catalogues for the British Museum as well as on cooperations with foreign booksellers such as Hachette in Paris or Baedeker in Germany.<sup>17</sup> Bernard Barham Woodward had clearly chosen a publisher from the context of his profession as a librarian.<sup>18</sup> We have no record of how the publication was financed. However, the fact that Dulau produced books that must have either been commissioned by an institution (such as catalogues) or that promised considerable profit (such as travel guides) suggests that the editor (or somebody else) had sponsored the enterprise.<sup>19</sup>

After its publication, the book was announced several times in the press as a reference book on the woman question, while the fact it was a novel only figured as a secondary feature. An elaborate review lauded the book for its lively narrative as well as for its accurate description of the woman question:

The volume bristles with stories, and illustrations. And repartees, so that nobody could find it dull; while the whole subject is set out fully and

logically. Thus anybody who wants to read up this topic could not do better than see ‘Men, Women, and Progress’.<sup>20</sup>

The reviewer, writing under the name Filomena, also mentioned that she had met ‘the authoress’, a ‘gracious young woman’, some weeks before her untimely death when she was ‘full of eager interest’ about her forthcoming book.<sup>21</sup> While ‘Filomena’ underlined the memorial character of the posthumous publication, a short critique in *The Saturday Review* incited interest in the novel by characterising it as ‘a stoutish book [...] full of the dreadful woman question, debated [...] by people who sit down and spout at one another in cold blood’.<sup>22</sup> The ‘dreadful woman question’ was, indeed, a much-discussed topic in the UK in the early 1880s—certainly more so than in any other European country at that time.<sup>23</sup> Periodicals like the *Women’s Suffrage Journal* regularly informed about women’s demands and achievements. The transnational character of the movement and the importance of its British strand are exemplified in an anthology published by the American journalist Theodore Stanton (1851–1925) in 1884. The son of feminist activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) collected reports on the ‘woman question in Europe’ from local activists and translated them into English where necessary.<sup>24</sup>

Published just when Emma Hosken Woodward was writing her book, this anthology (and the many references it gave for further reading) may well have been one of the sources of information for her. She depicts the feminist protagonists of her novel, Nellie Silverton and Madeline Acton, as graduates of Girton, the first women’s college, founded near Cambridge in 1869, which is prominently portrayed in Stanton’s book.<sup>25</sup> The figure of Professor Wray, an articulate supporter of the women’s cause, may well have been modelled on liberal academics like Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900) who together with his wife Eleanor Sidgwick, née Balfour (1845–1936) had helped open British universities to female students in the 1870s.<sup>26</sup>

A volume by an unknown author who had already died at the date of publication had a difficult position on the book market. There certainly was an interest in novels on the woman question in the UK, where

women's rights issues were already discussed in the general public in the 1880s, but the book's timeliness probably also limited its reception.

## In a Transnational Community of Woman Teachers

*Men, Women and Progress* must still have been in circulation three years after its publication, when twenty-four-year-old Käthe Schirmacher moved to the UK to work as a language teacher in Liverpool during the school year 1888/89.<sup>27</sup> Her correspondence with her family and friends during that year gives a good impression of the milieu of educated middle-class women the novel addressed. On her arrival, the aspiring young Schirmacher, who had obtained the title of *agrégée d'université* in Paris the year before, envisaged teaching at an English high school only as a transitional occupation. Lacking professional opportunities in her own country, she strived for a university career in the USA.<sup>28</sup> For this personal goal, she had sought prominent backing on her way to London. Through the help of a friend she had met former US secretary of the interior Carl Schurz (1829–1906), a one-time German revolutionary, during his family visit to Kiel. As Schirmacher wrote to her parents after the encounter, the renowned politician had encouraged her to apply for a professorship in his country and promised his support. However, he had also termed the perfect command of English, French, and German as well as the knowledge of the literatures of these languages as indispensable prerequisites for her plans.<sup>29</sup>

Schirmacher claimed to speak French like a native but she knew that her English had weaknesses.<sup>30</sup> In June 1888, she travelled to the UK with a stipend from a German women's organisation which she had promised a report on the English women's education system.<sup>31</sup> But within three weeks of her arrival in London, she had secured herself a position as a teacher of German and French at the Blackburne House High School for Girls in Liverpool.<sup>32</sup> To perfect her command of the English language now became her most important task: 'I'll try to write in English, for I have not a moment to loose [sic]', she told her mother and father, in English.<sup>33</sup> For this purpose, she actively sought the friendship and



help of other young women. Her dearest friend in England became Amelia Hartley (life dates unknown). She had become acquainted with her during her stay at Amelia's family's boarding house in Kew where young middle-class women lodged while visiting London on their way to a new employment as a governess or teacher.<sup>34</sup>

The friendship between them was filled with excitement about architecture (Amelia's special passion) and literature and political thought (Schirmacher's area of interest).<sup>35</sup> They remained close even after Schirmacher's departure, which they both regretted bitterly.<sup>36</sup> During the winter of 1888/89, three young women, Rheims-based French teacher Julie Barbezat (life dates unknown), with whom Schirmacher had shared an apartment and exchanged language lessons during their studies in Paris, Amelia Hartley in Kew, and Schirmacher in Liverpool established a vibrant transnational learning group in which translating as a daily practice figured prominently. They exchanged letters in French, German, and English about literature and the arts. They circulated excerpts of books they had read and essays in the three languages and corrected them for each other.<sup>37</sup> They reported on the lectures they had heard, the theatre plays they had seen, and the topics they had studied at the library. Hartley not only wrote about her visits to the British Museum but also about the books suggested by the educated boarders at her mother's house.<sup>38</sup>

Emma Hosken Woodward's book may well have come up in these young women's correspondence on authors like Chaucer, Shakespeare, or John Stuart Mill.<sup>39</sup> It could, however, as well have been talked about at Blackburne House, where Schirmacher had established a special friendship with the school's headmistress Kate Vokins (life dates unknown) who had been one of the first students at Newnham College and was one of the first women to hold a degree in mathematics from Cambridge University.<sup>40</sup> Vokins, who had become headmistress not long before, sought to bring an atmosphere of serious learning into the institute and encouraged the teachers to continue their education.<sup>41</sup> Schirmacher soon began to study at the University of Liverpool with tremendous zeal and more and more saw teaching as only her secondary task. Winning a prize for the best essay on English literature, she excelled even among her English native fellow students.<sup>42</sup>

However, in the spring of 1889, Schirmacher became seriously ill, and this time her already chronic sore throat did not immediately improve. It is not known whether this was due to overworking (as her family suspected) or if a chronic lung disease had broken out. In any case, her doctors advised her to speak as little as possible and teaching was out of the question after the end of the school year 1888/89.<sup>43</sup> After this bitter setback, she stayed at home with her family in Danzig for the following years. But she made the most of her time by continuing her Romance studies, writing literary texts and journalistic articles (on topics including British schools and colleges for girls and women<sup>44</sup>), and teaching French to young women in Germany using the method she had developed with Amelia Hartley and Julie Barbezat in 1888: correspondence.<sup>45</sup> In this critical phase of her life, Schirmacher took up translating—not only as a language exercise but as a political initiative. Her first translation was of *Men, Women and Progress*, which she started translating in September 1889 during an extended stay at her aunt's house in Graudenz (now Grudziądz). Enthusiastically, she wrote to her mother that she enjoyed the book's 'simple truth' (einfache Wahrheit) and hoped it would 'do good' (es wird gut tun) in her country.<sup>46</sup>

## **Adapting *Men, Women and Progress* for a German Audience**

The 'simple truth' in Emma Hosken Woodward's novel was, for a considerable part, rather dry material on history and society. In their conversations, the protagonists quote from scientific papers and journals and exchange sophisticated reasoning on social problems and scientific arguments. To detail the information, the author did not shirk from including scholarly material such as statistics, legislation, and recent political debate.<sup>47</sup> By including footnotes and references, Woodward transcended the fictional character of her text.<sup>48</sup> Under the guise of a romantic novel, she provided her readers with information on political questions, pragmatic arguments for women's equality, and indications for further reading.

Supported by Professor Wray, the characters Madeline Acton and Nellie Silverton demand equal chances for women to educate themselves, find employment, and develop an individual character instead of complying with men's wishes. Women should have the opportunity to contribute to the general welfare in individual ways, they argue, not just as the 'mother[s] of heroes'.<sup>49</sup> The statements of their opponents about motherhood, domestic virtues, the supposed weakness of women, and female honour (especially on the part of Major Knagge and his domineering wife) motivate them to defend the struggle for women's equality against the claim that female nature or religious belief opposes it.<sup>50</sup> Conceivably, this was a welcome storyline for ambitious women like the Liverpool headmistress Kate Vokins or the young correspondents Hartley, Schirmacher, and Barbezat who were struggling with the bars to their high aspirations. Very likely, they enjoyed reading about cultured conversations among educated women in which female ambitions were not deprecated or belittled.

The German translation appeared as *Männer, Frauen und Fortschritt* eight years after the publication of the start text.<sup>51</sup> Although it covered only a small part of the English book, the considerable abridgement was not mentioned on the title page, which rendered the English original title literally and named Emma Hosken Woodward as the author and Käthe Schirmacher as the translator. In her foreword, which supplanted B. B. Woodward's editorial remarks, Schirmacher presented the author as a recently deceased Englishwoman and hinted in a veiled way at the abridgement of the text.<sup>52</sup> She briefly sketched the plot of the book, but did not make it clear that she had left out about two-thirds of the English text. Consisting of only four chapters, Schirmacher's translation focused on four themes: women's domestic and their professional work, prostitution, and the concept of progress. She cut all chapters on the romantic relationship and did not even mention it in her introductory description of the characters. Whereas the narrative of the English text ends with an emotional engagement scene, the translation concludes with a speech by Professor Wray. In a way, Schirmacher continued the change of perspective that Woodward had started herself: to turn a novel into non-fiction. However, in her translation, the charming ambiguity of romantic novel and non-fiction book on the situation of women in society is lost and

what remains is a political treatise presented in the pleasant form of a fictional symposium.

That said, what were the political topics presented and what was left out? To cut two chapters on education was probably the most reasonable abridgment, since the issue ran through the book and the argument for equal education rather prominently returned in the chapter on women's employment, which Schirmacher did translate.<sup>53</sup> Also, the section on education in the source text focused on the demands of women from the educated classes, whereas in the chapter on employment the request for women's equal opportunities was firmly linked to poverty and the fact that the vast majority of working-class women had to earn their and their children's living.<sup>54</sup> We can infer, therefore, that Schirmacher chose to translate the more socially inclusive part of the book. The shortening of the chapter on British marriage property laws reflects the national specificity of the legal matter: German and Austrian women faced somewhat different legal problems in their marriages. It was, however, a significant political decision to omit two chapters on women's suffrage, a disputed topic in the German-speaking women's movement.<sup>55</sup>

Given the controversial nature of the debate on suffrage, its omission could be interpreted as a de-radicalisation of the start text. But Schirmacher might also have considered it a distraction from another contentious issue she wanted to highlight, the question of prostitution, which turns up rather late in the start text. Schirmacher overturned the chapter order and made this the second chapter of her translation. She rephrased the title 'Some Social Problems' to 'Einige soziale Fragen' (some social questions) thus more closely linking the chapter's topic with the most burning social and cultural 'questions'. The issue is introduced by a private conversation between Professor Wray and Henry Tregarthen, who reflect on whether it is appropriate for Madeline to visit a woman who had made herself 'notorious'.<sup>56</sup> Through Wray, who allays Henry's concerns, the novel unfolds key arguments of the abolitionist movement against the double standard that allowed young men extramarital sexual experiences but ruined a woman as soon as her virtue was doubted. Wray also argues that very often, only poverty forces women to seek refuge in prostitution.<sup>57</sup> Referring to a conference report on the subject, the professor openly criticises the state regulation of prostitution, a position

most certainly too radical to be expressed in a German romantic novel at the time.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the cuts and the reordering of the chapters, some other details in the translation significantly changed the text. Woodward had opened each chapter with several mottos, quotes from famous writers, scholars, and politicians who supported the women's cause, thus bolstering her arguments by linking them to acclaimed living and dead figures. Obliterating this element completely, Schirmacher waived this potential opportunity to back up her arguments and thus changed the book's character. With the substantial shortening of the contextual information and the omission of many references to public figures, the text became a sequence of views and beliefs; the arguments could now be used everywhere but had lost their link to a specific society.

The effort to make the text acceptable in different cultural contexts is even more evident in the last translated chapter, which deals with the concept of progress. In a public speech by Professor Wray, all arguments for the emancipation of women are placed within the framework of evolution. Outlining various stages of societies across time and space, the professor asserts that progress must eventually occur, thus dismissing all counter-arguments as useless defences against a necessary development. Using various natural metaphors, he concludes that resistance against the equality of women would, to the detriment of all, only postpone the advancement of society. In the start text, among other things, he declares:

The great tree of progress, too, [...] goes on growing year after year, blossoming and bearing fruit, and close observation of its development only makes more and more apparent the fact that all social advancement has been, and ever will be, in the direct ratio of the extension of equal freedom to the two halves of the human family.<sup>59</sup>

Leaving out references to ambience and audience and deleting the redundancies that often characterise the spoken word in Woodward's text, Schirmacher in her translation turned the vivid description of a public event at a London learned society into a sequence of doctrines.<sup>60</sup> The prominent position given to this speech at the very end of her translation intensifies this effect. The decision to translate both 'evolution'

and 'progress', used mostly as synonyms and by turns in Wray's original speech, with the German term 'Fortschritt' (literally: step forward but generally used to mean 'progress', never 'evolution') led to a momentous change to the chapter title: 'Women and Evolution' became 'Frauen und Fortschritt'.<sup>61</sup> This underlined the call for political agency and attenuated the idea of a natural process. Certainly, the English word 'evolution' would have called for a definition in any case, as both the rather unspecific German term 'Entwicklung' (meaning development, but literally: unfurling) and the Latin loan word 'Evolution' could have been used. The latter, pointing to natural science generally and to Darwinism more specifically, would have done justice to the many social Darwinist references to natural evolution<sup>62</sup> and even to the 'survival of the fittest'<sup>63</sup> in the English text. But it would have struck another, rather contested ideological tone in Germany where the popularisation of Darwin's theory was closely linked with atheistic and free religious groups.<sup>64</sup> Thus, Schirmacher's choice of 'Fortschritt' over 'Evolution' was perhaps not so much a politicisation but most likely aimed at a wider acceptance of the translated text.

This may also have been the reason for some mitigations of pejorative cross-cultural comparisons. For instance, Schirmacher omitted the comparison between 'Turkish women held like slaves in bondage' and the 'freedom enjoyed by their sisters in America' in the source text, translating only Woodward's more abstract conclusion that the 'effete condition of the one country' and the 'growth, prosperity, and power of the other' were in the 'exact ratio with the freedom and advancement of [...] women' in the respective countries.<sup>65</sup>

Another concept used prominently in *Men, Women and Progress* already had a history of translational consideration: the term 'strong-minded', which appears in the English novel as a controversial characterisation of publicly active women. The way the participants in the conversations name female activists and reformers reveals their opinions and, thereby, the lines of conflict. The semantic field stretches from the terms 'active-minded' and 'strong-minded' (by which label Madeline Acton is introduced)<sup>66</sup> to the expletive 'shrieking sisterhood' as Major Knagge disparagingly describes politically active women.<sup>67</sup> The term 'movement' (without modifier) appears only in affirmative

contexts.<sup>68</sup> ‘[S]hrieking sisterhood’ and ‘movement’ are thus unambiguously negative and positive characterisations respectively of the same activities, whereas the contested term ‘strong-minded’ has more fluid associations.<sup>69</sup> On the one hand, it is put on a level with ‘shrieking’ as Knagge alternatively speaks about the ‘strong-minded sisterhood’.<sup>70</sup> On the other, the word’s meaning is negotiated where the reform of women’s rights and opportunities is at stake. Major Knagge’s contention that rallies for woman suffrage are only instigated by ‘ultra strong-minded women who like making a stir’ is met with vehement contradiction: ‘If by “strong-minded” said Professor Wray, ‘you mean practical, sensible, self-reliant women, I do not see that these qualities unfit any one for the duties of citizenship, rather the contrary’.<sup>71</sup>

Emma Hosken Woodward was obviously striving to redefine the derogatory term and thus create a new female identity. The commitment to a change in the word’s meaning was, however, a recent development. ‘Strong-minded’ had negative connotations even for those who fought for women’s right to study. In her 1876 recollection of her time spent at Girton, US-American citizen Eliza Minturn (life dates unknown) emphasised the good spirit and eagerness that prevailed in the newly founded women’s college but vehemently distinguished the students from ‘the “strong-minded” type, which has become so justly odious’.<sup>72</sup> When in 1889 German educational reformer Helene Lange (1848–1930) quoted Minturn in her study on women’s education in England, she left the term ‘strong-minded’ untranslated and explained such women as the ‘emancipated ones’ (die Emanzipierten), a characterisation used ambivalently in German as well.<sup>73</sup>

It is safe to say that in 1885 the meaning of ‘strong-minded’ was still controversial. Woodward takes full advantage of its ambiguity as a word with which her characters can negotiate arguments about differently valued characteristics in women. This includes a debate whether the same standards should be relevant for men and women.

In a dispute with her brother Henry, who considers himself unfit to face a ‘strong-minded’ woman, Nellie claims that ‘strength of mind’ is a ‘quality very valuable either to man or woman’, which implies

‘a corresponding strength of all the other faculties, good brains, [...] and yes, [...] warm feelings too’.<sup>74</sup> Conversely, Major Knagge sees this potential equality of values between the sexes as a hindrance to marital harmony. He wishes for a wife who would ‘refresh the heart of man’ instead of meddling with his affairs: ‘You do not love a woman any the better for being learned or strong-minded’.<sup>75</sup>

That said it is particularly interesting how Schirmacher translated ‘strong-minded’. Usually rendered as ‘willensstark’, the German expression connotes determination, a strong character, sometimes also headstrongness. But she chose instead the rather uncommon term ‘starkgeistig’.<sup>76</sup> This literal translation focused on the intellectual aspect of the mind, which is qualified as ‘strong’ (stark).<sup>77</sup> We can assume that this was one of the ‘un-German expressions’ (undeutsche Wendungen) Otto Münsterberg criticised in a letter to Schirmacher when writing about ‘the book translated by you’.<sup>78</sup> It is, however, interesting that she uses the uncommon German word only when the character Major Knagge speaks deprecatingly about women. Woodward had derided her most negative character by onomatopoeically letting him clear his throat with ‘r-r’-sounds before he spits out a contemptuous remark. Schirmacher leaves this peculiarity untranslated. She might, though, have wanted to compensate by making him use a ridiculous-sounding expression associated with alcohol—the German word ‘Geist’, like the English ‘spirit’, is used to denote ‘ghost’ and ‘mind’ but is also used for distilled liquors such as whiskey or gin. This interpretation is supported by the negative use of ‘starkgeistig’ in the German novel *Der grüne Heinrich* by Gottfried Keller, which she certainly knew.<sup>79</sup> For positive descriptions of women, Schirmacher decided on a less ambivalent term. She translated ‘active-minded’ (used synonymously with ‘strong-minded’ by Woodward as a positive attribute in relation to women) with the common German term ‘energisch’ (energetic) thereby stressing vigour but not necessarily dominance.<sup>80</sup> We can thus safely infer that she strived to communicate the autonomy and strength of the novel’s female characters even if she erased most of the book’s fictional plot.



## Publication in an Activist Context

The short text of eighty-two pages that appeared as the German translation of *Men, Women and Progress* in 1893 had a rather different character to the English novel of nearly four hundred pages from 1885. Stripped of most of its fictionality and of many detailed references to British politics (some of which were also outdated by the time the translation was published), it had become a general argument for women's emancipation focusing on women's work, prostitution, and the concept of progress. How is this transformation to be explained?

Probably, the massive shortening of the text was not intended from the onset. When in 1889 the twenty-four-year-old Schirmacher reported to her mother that she was translating an English book, there is no hint that she may only be translating excerpts.<sup>81</sup> Also, she seems to have intended to contact the author's family as she noted the address of one of Emma Hosken Woodward's relatives in her diary in 1888.<sup>82</sup> Three years after her stay in the UK, however, Schirmacher must have decided that only 'extracts' could be published in German. In 1891, Amelia Hartley asked Schirmacher about her correspondence with Bernhard Barham Woodward.

Have you published the extracts of Men Women & Prog. You did not tell me if you had made good arrangements with M. Woodward—Did he write nicely to you? I liked the notes he sent me so much. I had a strong desire to become acquainted with him. I shall like to know what you think.<sup>83</sup>

Since we do not have Bernhard Barham Woodward's letter, we can only speculate about this development. The considerable time-span between the first mention of the translation and its actual publication suggests that it was probably difficult to find funds and a publisher for a substantial novel by a barely-known foreign (female) author. The eventual context of the German publication supports this.

The German excerpts came out as a brochure in the Weimar-based 'Library of the Women's Question' (*Bibliothek der Frauenfrage*). In this series, Hedwig Johanna Kettler (1851–1937), who was also editor of the

radical German journal *Frauenberuf* (Women's Profession) republished much-debated journalistic works, talks, and political pamphlets—many of them by herself.<sup>84</sup> The first issue, consisting of her own text 'Was wird aus unsern Töchtern?' (What will become of our daughters?) put forward her central political argument in a sequence of rhetorical questions. Here, she argued that women, who formed the majority of the German population, needed to be educated and allowed to work and in doing so to compete with men.<sup>85</sup> This pamphlet was republished several times and reviewed even in the British press.<sup>86</sup> Kettler, one of the first German activists to demand the admission of women to all university studies, was obviously well connected with British radical feminists, as the *Women's Herald* introduced her in its series of interviews with famous activists as 'one of the leaders of the women's movement in Germany'.<sup>87</sup> Rather gloomily, Kettler depicts Germany as a country where women were 'contending with difficulties even now, which are difficulties of the past to the women of most of the veteran cultivated nations'. Still, she defended the German women's activists' strategy to keep their distance both from political parties and international organisations, with a hint of German peculiarities that required that German women fought their 'own fight on their own ground'. She, however, appreciated 'expressions favourable to the movement of German women in the papers of other countries' as they influenced the 'attitude taken by our press'.<sup>88</sup> She thus hoped for a transnational mediation that would motivate women to fight for more independence in Germany but would not appal the conservative German public.

When Kettler published Schirmacher's translation of *Men, Women and Progress* a year later, she may have intended a similar effect. The novel demonstrated how the women's movement had arrived at the heart of the educated English middle classes. However, by promoting the testimony of an already deceased author, Kettler could steer clear of controversial debates that a living activist could have ignited. As the only translated and the only fictional text in the *Bibliothek der Frauenfrage* series, Schirmacher's excerpts of Emma Hosken Woodward's book went well with the argumentative style of the other pieces that posed questions like 'what is women's emancipation' or attacked the movement's opponents.<sup>89</sup>

Whereas the translated text's focus on professional women matched Kettler's political agenda, the stress on prostitution reflected Schirmacher's commitment to the international abolitionist movement.<sup>90</sup> A more personal tendency was her repudiation of matrimony, in which she differed from Kettler, whose marriage was said to have been a happy one. From a very young age, Schirmacher had told her family that since 'women like me do not usually marry' (Frauen wie ich verheirathen [*sic*] sich gewöhnlich nicht) she wanted to keep her freedom, study and earn her own living.<sup>91</sup> Although the notion of the time was that this feeling would dissolve the moment the right husband appeared, Schirmacher stood by her conviction. More and more, she identified as a 'new species' inhabiting a 'place between man and woman' (einen Platz zwischen Mann und Frau) that should be given as much as possible of the freedom men enjoyed.<sup>92</sup>

From a political perspective, she also criticised heterosexual marriage sharply for all the injustice it entailed for the female partner.<sup>93</sup> Clearly, Woodward's storyline reconciling marital love and feminist activism was not to Schirmacher's liking. Confronted with the requirement to shorten the text, it comes as no surprise that she cut out the romantic part.

The decision to transform the novel the way that she did, however, is not only to be read as an expression of Schirmacher's personal attitude but also as an indication of the nature and aims of the translation. Given the character of the English book (published by the author's husband as a token of remembrance) and of the context of the publication of the translation (in a series of political treatises), it was unlikely that the project was an economic venture. To flag the original book and its publisher in the introduction (as Schirmacher did) was probably the only obligation she and Kettler had committed to in exchange for the right to translate the book. It is also unlikely that even if there was a contract, Schirmacher received a noteworthy fee for her translation or an income from the publication. Literary ambition and economic interests may have played a role at the beginning of the process of translating the novel but when the text finally came out in Germany it was, more than anything else, a political statement. In alignment with Maria Tymoczko's definition of 'activist translation' as a practice oriented towards the intended effect in

the target culture rather than fidelity to the source text, the way Schirmacher dealt with *Men, Women and Progress* can be interpreted both as an activist translation and as a specific intervention targeting the women's movement in Germany.<sup>94</sup>

## A Transcultural Literary Exchange

When, after her illness and resulting personal crisis in 1889, Käthe Schirmacher had to make a new life plan, becoming a translator seems to have been a possibility. However, it was one of several perspectives. To earn some money without endangering her throat, she developed a system of teaching French through correspondence.<sup>95</sup> During the years back in her hometown of Danzig, she became a well-connected women's rights activist and started writing both journalistic and literary texts. By 1893, when her German translations from Emma Hosken Woodward's last book were finally published, Schirmacher had already made herself a name as an author. Whereas the young woman who had come across the novel in 1888 was an aspiring if naïve student and teacher abroad dreaming of a university career in the USA, the personality who successfully published her first translation of a literary text was an experienced writer who had brought out two books and a number of articles.<sup>96</sup> It is, however, worth reflecting on how Woodward's narrative influenced Schirmacher's first literary work, the novella *Die Libertad* (1891).<sup>97</sup> Published anonymously two years before the translation of *Men, Women and Progress*, it was later characterised as the first German female student novel.<sup>98</sup>

The novella has certain similarities with Woodward's book. Schirmacher not only adopted parts of the latter's narrative strategies and storylines, but *Die Libertad* can also be read as a sequel to *Men, Women and Progress* and a response to its central message, with its plot also featuring many similarities. A young woman known by the nickname 'Phil' visits her friend Charlotte at her temporary summer residence in a scenic landscape. Travelling alone and arriving on foot at the beginning of the story, Schirmacher's Phil, like Woodward's Madeline, stands for independence and female autonomy. Located in a lonely place in the

Black Forest, Charlotte's house with its relaxed and informal atmosphere resembles Crag's Nest. Here, also, a series of talks on the women's movement among the house's temporary inhabitants is at the centre of the narrative. Woodward's references to German books, and Schirmacher's citations of English texts as well as short, untranslated French phrases, serve as symbols for open-mindedness and transnational communication. In both books, the central characters are former fellow students exchanging memories and telling each other how they have fared since those days. While the remote location of both houses symbolises distance from the society and its constraints and injustices, the outsider position of the protagonists in Schirmacher's novella is more clearly emphasised by the house's name 'Libertad' that alludes to a foreign country, a place of freedom, a refuge. And a refuge it is for the painter Ann-Marie, another friend from Charlotte's and Phil's college days, who has fallen fatally ill. Her condition is, as the narrative suggests, a consequence of the strains she has imposed on herself for the sake of her art. She is portrayed both as a proud character who despite hardship will not ask for help and as a fallen woman. It remains unclear whether she has lost her respectability because of an illegitimate sexual relationship or if the circumstances of her life simply reflect her destitution.

Schirmacher's critical reply to Emma Hosken Woodward's romance of progress culminates in the character of this promising young artist, who dies at the end of the book. The question remains as to how her hopes, and those of many other gifted women, are to be fought for by activists like Phil, Charlotte, and Charlotte's supportive husband Kent. There are two answers in the novella, a political and a personal one. At the political level, Schirmacher puts the spotlight on prostitution, which in her opinion is at the centre of women's exploitation and lack of rights. Together, the three activists of the 'Libertad' write a book about prostitution that they intend should reveal the facts and shake up the public. That this was an extremely avant-garde position in Germany in the early 1890s is made clear by fellow radical Minna Cauer's (1841–1921) reaction to the novella. She saw Schirmacher standing on a 'cliff edge' (auf dem vorgeschobensten Felsen).<sup>99</sup> What was so radical about Schirmacher's narrative was the fact that she used the character of the artist Ann-Marie to unite two questions that the middle-class women's

movement sought to keep neatly apart: the access of middle-class women to the professions and the situation of working-class women, who were often forced into some form of prostitution to fend for themselves.

The character Charlotte, who has become a lawyer and is married to a fellow advocate in a US city where both are involved in welfare politics, also recalls Madeline, who was about to wed future peer Henry and build public welfare institutions with him at the end of Woodward's book. In the talks between Charlotte and Phil, the latter dissects her friend's marital happiness, distinguishing the professional aspect of the relationship and its practicality for the couple on the one hand, and love for the intimate partner on the other. The emotional aspect of the relationship, she argues, is based on a freely-made decision possible only because Charlotte's independence had been established beforehand. For Schirmacher's *alter ego* Phil, however, marriage is not an option. Her development from a stubborn rebel, always prone to vocal outrage, to a focused strong personality waiting for political change and her chance in the world, is central to the narrative. Whereas Woodward had imagined a romantic solution to the challenging contradictions strong-minded women had to deal with, Schirmacher's novella ends rather gloomily with Anne-Marie's death and Phil's determination to be prepared for whatever fate will throw at her. She expresses this attitude in a famous quote from Shakespeare's *King Lear*: 'Ripeness is all' (Reifsein ist alles).

The two books, published in two different countries and languages, share the question of how women who, against all odds, have achieved an academic education, can develop their lives and careers after graduation. Schirmacher's answer, published in Zurich in 1891, was less pleasant than Woodward's feminist romance of 1885. According to Schirmacher, the future for female academics was grim and uncertain, at least in Germany. Precisely, this realistic attitude presumably won her the most enthusiastic followers among her readers, with whom she sought contact in her book, where a note at the end stated that letters to the author would be forwarded by the editor.<sup>100</sup> Schirmacher's growing network of correspondence won her publicity and encouraged her to publish a second book, the novel *Halb* (Halfway, 1893), in her own name.<sup>101</sup> Most probably, it also secured the connections that, finally, made it possible to publish at least excerpts from Woodward's novel in Germany.

The referral to Shakespeare in the concluding scene of *Die Libertad* is only one of several references to the English literary canon and is interesting in more than one respect. It recalls Schirmacher's formative phase in Kew, where she shared the enthusiasm for a book by Edward Dowden (1843–1913) on Shakespeare with Amelia Hartley.<sup>102</sup> In a key passage of *Die Libertad*, Phil quotes a long paragraph from this very book. It can be read as an allusion to translation, as Schirmacher launches the German quotation with the remark 'she read in English'. What follows, however, is a German version of a long passage from the same work in which the author connects the play *Timon of Athens* with Shakespeare's life, arguing that Shakespeare had overcome his strong passions as well as his bitterness and had put this formative experience into the character of Timon. In *Die Libertad*, the crucial scene starts with Phil's autobiographical confession to Charlotte about having mastered her bitterness, which clearly reflects Schirmacher's own experience in England in 1888/89. Timon/Shakespeare and Phil/Schirmacher converge into a symbolic character that through its growing 'ripeness' survives and prevails against all odds. The free and elegant German rendering of Dowden's text, however, differs significantly from the more literal German translation of the same book by Wilhelm Wagner published in 1879.<sup>103</sup> Obviously, Schirmacher had created a new version, thereby revealing her expertise as a translator. When she sent the book to Edward Dowden, he thanked her politely for 'making new friends for me in Germany' with *Die Libertad*.<sup>104</sup> However, no commission for a translation of an academic article or book ensued.

## Translating for Money

We know of only one academic translation by Schirmacher, of excerpts from German books for the personal use of a French scholar.<sup>105</sup> She did, however, undertake translations of literary works later in her life. Those were assignments she accepted for money and, clearly, she did not intervene with the content in the same way as she had done with *Men, Women and Progress*. Apart from shorter pieces published in journals, we know of two other novels, both romantic stories narrated from

a female perspective: *Mariage romanesque* by Belgian writer Marguerite Poradowska (1848–1937) and *The Reflections of Ambrosine* by British bestselling author Elinor Glyn (1864–1943).<sup>106</sup> In July 1903, thirty-eight-year-old Schirmacher wrote to her mother that she had been ‘ferociously industrious’ as the publisher Engelhorn from Stuttgart had asked her to translate *Mariage romanesque* from French into German. As she also confided in that letter, she had rather amused herself with the inventive story and had had the ‘stuff’ (Krempel) ready within ten days (although eventually, her translation was not published until 1906 due to the publisher prioritising other projects<sup>107</sup>). Her fingers, however, ached after the exertion.<sup>108</sup> The ‘stuff’ and its message, it seems, was not worth getting involved in too deeply; Schirmacher only wanted to get it done as fast as possible. Obviously, Engelhorn was content with the result, as in October 1903 he enquired if Schirmacher was willing to translate another book, this time from English. ‘We are on very good terms’, Schirmacher wrote to her mother in that language.<sup>109</sup> This second commission, a translation of Elinor Glyn’s highly successful third novel *The Reflections of Ambrosine* (1902), was published by Engelhorn in 1904 as part of the publisher’s series of translations of successful French and English novels, ‘Engelhorn’s General Novel Library’ (*Engelhorn’s Allgemeine Romanbibliothek*).<sup>110</sup> Most likely, he was eager to secure the promising book for his series as soon as possible and Schirmacher’s swiftness in translating contributed to the ‘good terms’ between the two of them. The series became the financial backbone of the publishing house and soon was to finance other more risky and costly enterprises.<sup>111</sup>

We do not have the contracts between Engelhorn and Schirmacher, but we know about her working routines, as they are documented in her diary. She often translated for some hours in the early morning, before breakfast. After having taken care of her various tasks as a journalist, writer, and activist during the day, she usually resumed translating in the evening. In the first stages of an assignment she also jotted down how many (hand-written) pages she could produce daily (she translated twenty pages of Poradowska’s book on the first day, even forty on the next day in July 1903).<sup>112</sup> From the way in which Schirmacher used her diary over many years as a tool to organise her working process, we can suppose that there was a practical and economical background for



how she wrote about her translation work; by recording her progress, she could both better coordinate it with her many other tasks and know if a specific assignment was worth the effort economically. While she manifestly appreciated translating novels as a comfortable way to earn money and later took on (smaller) literary translation tasks, she never made it her main source of income.

## Constellations of Translation and Transnational Transfer

In this chapter, I analyse translations as cultural objects that circulate between languages and movement cultures. I take the case of a rather particular English novel of the 1880s and its (partial) translation into German as a starting point to explore the milieus, the dynamics, and the practices of transnational transfers between European women's movements of the late nineteenth century and to analyse different forms of translation. In so doing, I argue that to analyse the political and social contexts in which a text is translated as well as its relation to other, accompanying forms of transfer, is a prerequisite to understanding the character and the rationale of a specific translation.

The significant thematic shift in Schirmacher's translation of an English novel can be read as an indicator of commonalities and differences between German and English women's movements, while her de-contextualising cuts transform a quite specific documentation of conflicts on gender issues in British politics into a more general statement on women's emancipation applicable in many different contexts. At the same time, the German text strengthens the focus on prostitution and suppresses the issue of woman suffrage and, thereby, supplants one type of radicalism with another. However, there is also strong evidence for many commonalities of the milieus of reception. For example, despite differing connotations of the concepts of evolution and progress, the shared idea of cultural hierarchy and different paces of progress in gender relations are evident in start and target text.

We can infer, too, from the fact that Schirmacher published a novella and a novel on similar issues in the same period, and that a story on

the ‘woman question’ in the style of Emma Hosken Woodward’s novel would have been well received in German-speaking countries. Its transformation into a short treatise was thus probably less a result of a lack of audience but of the difficulty in finding a publisher willing to bear the financial risk of a translation of the entire text. The exemplary cases of two popular novels written for a mass audience that Schirmacher translated for money show the differences in both content and translational practice between activist translation and products aimed at commercial success.

To more fully understand the meaning of a particular translation, however, it is essential to contextualise it with other forms of transcultural mediation between the start text’s and the target text’s audiences and their milieus. In this context, Schirmacher’s novella *Die Libertad*, which represents a continuation of and a response to Woodward’s *Men, Women and Progress*—the book that Schirmacher had translated—can be seen as an elaborate intertextual and transnational communication, revealing the complex cultural exchanges inherent in Schirmacher’s translation and writing activities alike.

## Notes

1. Anthony Pym, ‘Humanizing Translation History’, *Hermes—Journal of Language and Communication Studies* 42 (2009), 23–48; Andrea Rizzi, Birgit Lang, and Anthony Pym, *What Is Translation History? A Trust-Based Approach* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Pivot, 2019).
2. Rizzi, Lang, and Pym, *Translation History*, 1.
3. Emma Hosken Woodward, *Men, Women, and Progress*, ed. Bernard Barham Woodward (London: Dulau & Co., 1885).
4. Käthe Schirmacher, *Die Libertad. Novelle* (Zürich: J. Schabelitz, 1891).
5. Woodward, *Men*.
6. On the mediation of feminist theory in Victorian novels see Miriam Wallraven, *A Writing Halfway between Theory and Fiction* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007); on domestic

- fiction: Elaine Freedgood, 'Domestic Fiction', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*, vol 2, ed. David Scott Kastan (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, 2006).
7. Anonymous (Emma Hosken), *Married for Money* (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1875); Anonymous (Emma Hosken), *Bitter to Sweet End* (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1877); having married a remote cousin, Emma's birth name as well as her first married name was Hosken.
  8. '[H]e was under control, and no one knew this better than his wife', Woodward, *Men*, 30.
  9. UCL-Bloomsbury Project, accessed 6 January 2021, [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/institutions/east\\_grinstead\\_nuns.htm](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/institutions/east_grinstead_nuns.htm); 'Author: Emma Hosken Woodward', At the Circulating Library. A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837–1901', accessed 6 January 2021, [http://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/show\\_author.php?aid=2579](http://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/show_author.php?aid=2579).
  10. That Woodward most probably had personal knowledge about various forms of writing for money is also indicated by a side-story in her last book. Nellie and Madeline talk about a former fellow student who lacked the money to finish her studies and started anonymously writing sermons for money on a regular basis. Woodward, *Men*, 114.
  11. 'Publisher: Samuel Tinsley', At the Circulating Library. A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837–1901, accessed 15 June 2022, [http://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/show\\_publisher.php?pid=15](http://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/show_publisher.php?pid=15).
  12. Richard Menke, 'The End of the Three-Volume Novel System, 27 June 1894', accessed 6 January 2021, [https://www.branchcollecrive.org/?ps\\_articles=richard-menke-the-end-of-the-three-volume-novel-system-27-june-1894](https://www.branchcollecrive.org/?ps_articles=richard-menke-the-end-of-the-three-volume-novel-system-27-june-1894).
  13. 'Mr. B. B. Woodward', *The Times*, October 30, 1930, 19.
  14. Woodward, *Men*, V.
  15. *Ibid.*, VI.
  16. *Ibid.*, III.
  17. 'Dulau & Co', The British Museum, 16 accessed June 2022, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG25858>.

18. For a later collaboration between B. B. Woodward and Dulau see Bernard Barham Woodward, *Catalogue of the British Species of Pisidium (Recent & Fossil) in the Collections of the British Museum (Natural History), with Notes on Those of Western Europe* (London: Printed by Order of the Trustees, 1913).
19. A hand-written dedication 'With the publishers' compliments' in a library copy points in the same direction.
20. Filomena, 'Lady's London Letter', *Shields Daily News*, August, 21, 1885; republished as 'Woman's Position in Life' (From a Lady Correspondent), *The Northern Daily Mail, Hartlepole*, August 22, 1885.
21. Ibid.
22. Anonymous, 'New Books and Reprints', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art, London*, March 7, 1885.
23. For comparative perspectives see Lucy Delap, *Feminisms: A Global History* (London: Penguin Books, 2020); Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700–1950. A Political History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000).
24. Theodore Stanton, ed., *The Woman Question in Europe: A Series of Original Essays*, (New York et al.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1884).
25. Maria G. Grey, 'The Women's Educational Movement', in *The Woman Question in Europe: A Series of Original Essays*, ed. Theodore Stanton (New York et al.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1884), 30–62, at 42–5. See also: Sophie Forgan, 'Eine angemessene Häuslichkeit? Frauen und die Architektur der Wissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert', trans. Kira Kosnick', in *Zwischen Vorderbühne und Hinterbühne. Beiträge zum Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen in der Wissenschaft vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Theresa Wobbe (Bielefeld: Transkript, 2003), 137–57.
26. Donald L. Opitz, 'Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick, Country House Science, and Personae for British Women in Science at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', *European Journal of Life Writing* 11 (2022), WG13–WG43, Cluster: 'When Does the Genius do the Chores? Knowledge, Auto/Biography and Gender', <https://ejlw.eu/article/view/38784/36264>.

27. Johanna Gehmacher, Elisa Heinrich, and Corinna Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik* (Vienna et al.: Weimar: Böhlau, 2018), 531.
28. *Ibid.*, 531.
29. NI Sch 312/011, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 15 June 1888.
30. NI Sch 718/026, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 16 August 1887.
31. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 531.
32. NI Sch 312/015, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 6 July 1888; NI Sch 995/002, Blackburne-house-Highschool to KS, 8 August 1888 [employment contract].
33. NI Sch 312/016, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 12 July 1888.
34. NI 470/008, Amelia Hartley to KS, 19 November 1888.
35. *Ibid.*
36. NI Sch 922/002, diary, 5 September 1888: ‘Départ de Kew, c’était très dur; “je travaillerai pour vous” “Ripeness is all.”’ The famous quote from King Lear, obviously, reflected Amelia’s and Kate’s shared reading of classical works. As a guide to Shakespeare’s work they particularly enjoyed Edward Dowden, *Shakspeare. A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (London, 1875). See Amelia Hartley to KS, 12 October 1888, see also Käthe Schirmacher, *Flammen. Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* (Leipzig: Dürr&Weber, 1921), 18.
37. NI Sch 312/028, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 24 October 1888. With Julie Barbezat she had started translating together three years before, ‘one being the competent master, the other the pupil’: NI Sch 905/023, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 23 July 1885.
38. NI Sch 470/ 007, 008, Amelia Hartley to KS, 24 October 1888, 19 November 1888; see also: Ruth Hoberman, ‘Women in the British Museum Reading Room during the Late-Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: From Quasi- to Counterpublic’, *Feminist Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002), 489–512.

39. NI Sch 470/005, 006 007, Amelia Hartley to KS, 28 September 1888, 12 October 1888, 24 October 1888.
40. NI Sch 312/026, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 10 October 1888; 'Vokins, Kate', MacTutor History of Mathematics Archive, accessed 30 December 2020, [https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Davis/Names/Vokins\\_Kate.html](https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Davis/Names/Vokins_Kate.html).
41. NI Sch 312/035, 312/037 KS to Clara Schirmacher, 29 January and 27 February 1889.
42. NI Sch 1000/024, Arthur Bradley to KS, 14 May 1889: Rathbone-Prize for English Literature for Käthe Schirmacher.
43. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 100–103.
44. Example Käthe Schirmacher, 'Newnham', *Nationalzeitung*, 12 July 1891; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Ann Clough', *Neue Bahnen. Organ des allgemeinen deutschen Frauenvereins* 27, no. 12 (15 June 1892).
45. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Korrespondenz-Lehrzirkel', *Die Lehrerin in Schule und Haus* 6, no. 19 1889/1890.
46. NI 312/057, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 17 September 1889.
47. Example Woodward, *Men*, 207, 302–303, 258.
48. *Ibid.*, 105.
49. *Ibid.*, 163.
50. *Ibid.*, 209.
51. Emma Hosken Woodward, *Männer, Frauen und Fortschritt. Aus dem Englischen von* [from English by] *Käthe Schirmacher* (Weimar, 1893).
52. Woodward, *Männer*, 5.
53. Woodward, *Men*, 89–91.
54. Woodward, *Men*, 94, 126.
55. Gisela Bock, 'Das politische Denken des Suffragismus: Deutschland um 1900 im internationalen Vergleich', in Gisela Bock, *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 168–203.
56. Woodward, 202.
57. *Ibid.*, 207–208.

58. Ibid., 207; it was not before the turn of the century that a German branch of the movement was founded. See Bettina Kretzschmar, *'Gleiche Moral und gleiches Recht für Mann und Frau': Der deutsche Zweig der Internationalen abolitionistischen Bewegung (1899–1933)* (Sulzbach: Helmer, 2014).
59. Woodward, *Men*, 372.
60. Woodward, *Männer*, 82.
61. Woodward, *Men*, 351, Hosken Woodward, *Männer*, 71.
62. Woodward, *Men*, 353.
63. Ibid., 372.
64. Andreas Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert. Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit 1848–1914* (Berlin and Boston: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2018).
65. Woodward, *Men*, 355, Hosken Woodward, *Männer*, 73.
66. Woodward, *Men*, 5, 15–17.
67. Ibid., 67, 145.
68. Ibid., 6, 22, 239, 248, 252, 273.
69. Strong-minded women are described as 'passion-blinded' (Hosken Woodward, *Men*, 15) and 'eccentric' (Ibid. 152), as 'clamouring for their rights' (Ibid. 249) and looking 'upon men as enemies' (Ibid. 5). In other instances they figure as 'practical, sensible, self-reliant' (Ibid. 248).
70. Woodward, *Men*, 154.
71. Ibid., 248.
72. Eliza Theodora Minturn, *An Interior View of Girton College, Cambridge* (London: London Association of Schoolmistresses), 7.
73. Helene Lange, *Frauenbildung* (Berlin: L.Oehmigke 's Verlag, 1889), 19; see on the concept of emancipation Gisela Bock, 'Begriffsgeschichten: "Frauenemanzipation" im Kontext der Emanzipationsbewegungen des 19. Jahrhunderts', in Gisela Bock, *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 100–52.
74. Woodward, *Men*, 5.
75. Ibid., 160.

76. *Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Deutsches Wörterbuch vol. X,II,I (1919), Sp. 904, Z. 18.*
77. Woodward, *Men*, 154, 160; Woodward, *Männer*, 14, 19.
78. Nl Sch 313/023, Otto Münsterberg to KS, 22 April 1894.
79. Gottfried Keller, *Sämtliche Werke in sieben Bänden. vol 3: Der grüne Heinrich. Zweite Fassung*, ed. Peter Villwock (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1996), 788.
80. Woodward, *Men*, 87; Woodward, *Männer*, 38.
81. Nl Sch 312/057, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 17 September 1889.
82. Nl Sch 922/002, diary 1888, 121: G[wendoline] M[ary] Hosken, Roxwell Vicarage.
83. Nl 470/019, Amelia Hartley to KS, 8 September 1891. Till now, we could not find the correspondence with B.B. Woodward in Schirmacher's papers.
84. Marianne Schmidbaur, 'Hedwig Kettler und der Verein Frauenbildung Reform', in *Mütterlichkeit als Profession? Lebensläufe deutscher Pädagoginnen in der ersten Hälfte dieses Jahrhunderts*, ed. Ilse Brehmer (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1990); see also Martina Nieswandt, 'Hedwig Kettler (1851–1937)', in *Erziehung und Bildung des weiblichen Geschlechts. Eine kommentierte Quellensammlung zur Bildungs- und Berufsbildungsgeschichte von Mädchen und Frauen*, eds. Elke Kleinau and Christine Mayer, vol 1 (Weinheim: Dt. Studien-Verlag, 1996), 123.
85. J. J. Kettler, *Was wird aus unseren Töchtern?* (Weimar: Weimarer Verlagsanstalt, 1889); on Kettler see Elke Kleinau, 'Gleichheit oder Differenz? Theorien zur höheren Mädchenbildung', in *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*, vol 2: *Vom Vormärz bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz (Frankfurt/M., New York: Campus, 1996), 125–27.
86. 'Editor's Notice. Was wird aus unseren Töchtern? Von Frau Kettler', *Women's Penny Paper*, June 22, 1889; on *The Women's Penny Paper/The Woman's Herald* and its multilingual editor Henrietta Mueller/Helena Temple see Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Chesham: Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press 2005), 136–70.



87. 'Interview. Madame Kettler', *Woman's Herald*, January 9, 1892, 1.
88. Ibid.
89. J. Kettler, *Was ist Frauenemanzipation?* (Weimar: Weimarer Verlagsanstalt, 1891); J. Kettler, *Streiflichter auf unserer Gegner* (Weimar: Weimarer Verlagsanstalt, [without year]).
90. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 326–350 (Oesch).
91. NI Sch 718/009, KS to Richard Schirmacher, 9 July 1886; see also Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 201 (Heinrich).
92. NI Sch 017/055, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 16 April 1895.
93. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Journalistin und Schriftstellerin Dr. Käthe Schirmacher schreibt', in *Ehe-Ideale und Ideal-Ehen. Äusserungen moderner Frauen, auf Grund einer Rundfrage*, ed. Rosika Schwimmer (Berlin: Continent, 1905), 63–4.
94. Maria Tymoczko, 'The Space and Time of Activist Translation', in *Translation, Resistance, Activism*, ed. Maria Tymoczko (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 227–54, at 234.
95. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Korrespondenz-Lehrzirkel', *Die Lehrerin in Schule und Haus* 6, no. 19 1889/1890.
96. Käthe Schirmacher, *Halb. Roman* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich, 1893); her journalistic articles appeared both in movement journals and in daily newspapers.
97. Schirmacher, *Libertad*.
98. Romana Weiershausen, *Wissenschaft und Weiblichkeit. Die Studentin in der Literatur der Jahrhundertwende* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), 61–2.
99. NI Sch 309/003, Minna Cauer to KS, 5 June 1891.
100. Schirmacher, *Libertad*, 81.
101. Schirmacher, *Halb*.
102. Dowden, *Shakspeare*; NI Sch 312/016, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 12 July 1888.
103. Woodward, *Männer*, 76; Dowden, *Shakspeare*, 341; Edward Dowden, *Shakspeare, sein Entwicklungsgang in seinen Werken*,

- mit Bewilligung des Verfassers übersetzt von Wilhelm Wagner [translated with the author's permission] (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1879), 287.
104. Nl Sch 309/008, Edward Dowden to KS, 17 September 1891. For more detail on the book and its reception Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 107–118.
105. Nl Sch 011/017, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 10 May 1896.
106. Marguerite Poradowska, *Mariage romanesque* (Paris: Plon, 1903); Elinor Glyn, *Reflections of Ambrosine* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1902); on Poradowska see Anne Arnold, 'Marguerite Poradowska as Conrad's Friend and Adviser', *The Conradian. The Journal of the Joseph Conrad Society (U.K)* 34 (2009), 68–83; on Glyn as a bestselling author and film writer see Vincent L. Barnett, *Elinor Glyn as Novelist, Moviemaker, Glamour Icon and Businesswoman* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); see also: 'Elinor Glyn in Tauchnitz Editions', Paperbackrevolution, accessed 16 June 2022, <https://paperbackrevolution.wordpress.com/2020/04/26/elinor-glyn-in-tauchnitz-editions/>.
107. Marguerite Poradowska, *Eine romantische Heirat. Aus dem Französischen von* [from French by] *Käthe Schirmacher* (Stuttgart: Engelhorn, 1906).
108. Nl Sch 121/021, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 26 July 1903.
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# 4

## To America! Transatlantic Mediation

In 1893, the same year that *Männer, Frauen und Fortschritt* appeared in German, Käthe Schirmacher's life changed dramatically with a journey to the USA that she had long craved for. This chapter describes the circumstances of this voyage and ties in with questions raised earlier about women's opportunities for university education and the possibility for them to develop professional *personae*. The chapter follows Schirmacher on her way to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the women's congress that took place there. It examines how she positioned herself as a transatlantic mediator both before and after the congress and demonstrates the importance of linguistic competence in a transnational space of activism as well as the need for transnational mediators in a movement that was becoming increasingly international.

The chapter also explores how Schirmacher spoke about and thus helped to create a new type of female personality, the 'modern woman'. I argue that in so doing, she participated in a transnational discourse that framed the 'dreadful woman question' that Emma Hosken Woodward had grappled with in the 1880s, in a new way. She helped to replace negative notions of certain types of women and contributed to the creation of a new role model. I argue that the fact that Schirmacher

depicted the 'modern woman' both as a type that already existed and as something that had yet to be created, should not be read as a contradiction but as a necessary transitional instance in a transformative discourse leading the development of a new *persona*.

## Transatlantic Exchanges

The history of transatlantic networks of European and North American women active in various forms of social reform dates back to the early nineteenth century. Political and economic emigration from Europe to the USA, and the travels of American activists to European countries, played an important role in this.<sup>1</sup> The progress of the women's movement in the USA compared to that in many European countries became particularly visible at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.<sup>2</sup> An entire exhibition hall, the Woman's Building, was dedicated to expositions on women's achievements in different countries, prepared by national committees.<sup>3</sup> Among the many conferences held on the occasion, a women's congress was held in May 1893.<sup>4</sup>

The international event had its roots in networks established during a transatlantic trip made by US suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the early 1880s, which led to forging of the International Council of Women (ICW). At the 1888 convention of the US National Woman Suffrage Association, a number of foreign delegates were present. Together with their American co-activists they committed to organising an international women's conference every five years.<sup>5</sup> The ambivalence of this movement of predominantly white women from the upper and middle-classes of Western countries, who wanted to design an inclusive project for 'all women', can be seen both in the marginalisation of early Afro-American protagonists in the US movement and in the hierarchical concept of civilisation on which the international activists based their ideas.<sup>6</sup>

That said, the organisers of the 1893 conference were aware of the audacity of their undertaking. In her opening address, May Wright Sewall (1844–1920), president of the National Council of Women of the USA and chair of the organisational committee of the conference,

defended the convention's 'high-sounding title, "The World's Congress of Representative Women"' by pointing to the presence of participants from most European countries and to delegates from Asia, Africa, and South America as well.<sup>7</sup> She emphasised that the American organisers had made an effort to invite and involve as many women as possible from different countries and organisations. She also outlined the envisaged structure of the ICW that was to build on national umbrella organisations, each representing their respective country's movement.<sup>8</sup> Sewall optimistically imagined these national associations as democratic institutions that would envoy delegates to a 'permanent international parliament of women', which, in a far future, would motivate the creation of a world parliament of men and women. However, there was a problematic hierarchy between the bonds created by well-established transatlantic networks and their looser and less egalitarian relationship to other countries. The built-in nationalising strategy caused severe asymmetries in the later development of the organisation.<sup>9</sup>

In the winter of 1892/1893, when there were hardly any national councils, the invitation procedure was still quite informal. It seems that in their wish to encourage the founding of national councils in as many foreign countries as possible, the organising committee wrote to a variety of federations abroad asking them to suggest topics and to name major activists in their movement who might be willing to come to Chicago. When one of these letters arrived at the Danzig feminist association Verein Frauenwohl, for which Schirmacher did secretarial work, Schirmacher—who saw her return home due to illness as only temporary—seized the opportunity. After three years in Danzig, during which she had continued her study of Romance languages privately and earned money by teaching French to women through correspondence, she longed to set out into the world once more.<sup>10</sup> The head of the association, Marianne Heidfeld (life dates unknown), who knew of Schirmacher's yearning to make contact with American women, asked her to answer the letter and politely inform the organisers that it was unlikely that they would be able to send someone to Chicago.<sup>11</sup>

Schirmacher interpreted the task in her own special way. As instructed, she did inform May Wright Sewall (in English) 'that we have here no

first class notoriety, we could send over' but she also took the question concerning topics for discussion quite seriously and suggested the following:

The subject I would venture to propose to you is: Characterize the true type of the modern woman. Mark the difference between her and the fin de siècle woman. – The judgement of Germany on modern women. Why is marriage less attractive and less easy to be attained by the modern woman, particularly in Germany?<sup>12</sup>

She then went a step further and asked Sewall if she could help her to get to Chicago herself, emphasising her achievements:

If I have not yet attained a well acknowledged position in Germany, yet I am already to a certain extent known by my essays, my first book: Liberty! [...] As you will already have guessed from the choice of my subjects, I am myself a modern woman and a young one, in a very old part of an old world, where it is not easy to make one's way. Now, ever since I heard of the Chicago Exhibition my *sehnlichster Wunsch* ['dearest wish', German original] has been to be able to go to Chicago and see it.<sup>13</sup>

However, lacking the money to pay for her own travel, she inquired about the meaning of the statement in the invitation letter that the National Council of Women of the USA 'pledged themselves to entertain during the Congress the delegates attending it from foreign countries'. She concluded by offering herself as a mediator between their different countries:

I am so eager [...] to see and to help, I should so like to come into contact with you, your work and ideas, [...] I think too, it would not be so bad an investment of capital, and humanity would profit by it, if I had the opportunity of seeing great things and afterwards using them in the service of a cause I am most truly devoted to.<sup>14</sup>

With her fervent plea Schirmacher managed not only to attract Sewall's attention (even though the committee had to organise hundreds of lectures) but also to win her support.

'I do, my dear young woman, appreciate your eager curiosity for a glimpse of this new world', the head of the conference committee assured her in a three-page personal letter. Sewall not only extended an invitation to speak at the conference, but also explained the support the National Council (of which she was the president) offered to foreign delegates:

In regard to the meaning of the sentence which you quote from our National Council statement, I can say that it means exactly what its words say in English; but that meaning might not be correctly interpreted by a foreigner, and I therefore take pleasure in stating to you explicitly its significance:- It means that on the arrival in Chicago of delegates from foreign countries, they will be welcomed at a hotel, -- a good one, -- which will be chosen as their headquarters; and that their expenses of living at that hotel, namely: the expenses of lodging and board during the one week that the sessions of the Congress continue, will be paid out of the treasury of the National Council.<sup>15</sup>

In her effusive letter of thanks, Schirmacher hastened to assure Sewall that she would be happy to use her own savings to cover the travel expenses.<sup>16</sup>

In bypassing the senior leaders of the German movement, Sewall and Schirmacher caused irritation among the official German delegates, who kept their distance from Schirmacher in Chicago.<sup>17</sup> However, it was Schirmacher who became the darling of the congress, was praised in the newspapers, and was invited to further talks with which she was able to finance an extended stay in the USA.<sup>18</sup> Her boldness and her youth may have helped her. But three aspects certainly contributed to her success: her linguistic skills, her promise to mediate across national and cultural borders and, last but not least, a subject that promised lively debate.

## The Modern Woman

Already at the opening session of the congress, attended by thousands, Schirmacher's choice of topic had secured her special attention. She reported to her parents that May Wright Sewall, holding her hand, had presented her to the large audience as 'the bravest of the brave' as she



had ‘undertaken to treat a subject nobody would venture upon—the marriage prospects of the modern woman!’<sup>19</sup> She was among the few foreigners to make a short statement at the opening ceremony; but while most of the other speakers rather formally delivered the greetings of their associations, Schirmacher told her audience in a personal way how she had ‘set’ her ‘heart’ on being there and how she had made it to America with courage, luck, and thanks to the support of Mrs Sewall.<sup>20</sup> Language competence was an issue also on this occasion; the anonymous introductory note to the opening session in the minutes regretted that ‘foreign delegates whose knowledge of English was imperfect, were deterred by diffidence’ from speaking at the opening.<sup>21</sup>

But what was so ‘brave’ about Schirmacher’s topic? As a painting of the ‘Modern Woman’ commissioned for the Women’s Building aptly illustrated, the self-educated, self-sufficient woman she propagated was the declared ideal of the congress. The central panel of the large, three-part mural by American impressionist painter Mary Cassatt (1844–1926) showed ‘Young Women Plucking the Fruits of Knowledge and Science’.<sup>22</sup> The academically educated woman may have been a provocation for the broader public but not for the majority of visitors to the women’s congress. However, the way in which Schirmacher linked matrimony, higher education, and the demand for women’s admission to the professions revealed tensions and contradictions in the concept on both a theoretical and practical level.

While Emma Hosken Woodward’s *Men, Women and Progress* had invoked the possibility of married life on equal terms, Schirmacher remained critical of the chances of realising that hope in the near future. In her 1893 novel *Halb* (Halfway), which took up some characters from her earlier work *Die Libertad*, she painted a grim picture of such a relationship.<sup>23</sup> Her contribution at the Chicago conference provided a sociological and theoretical rationale for this assessment, but also outlined a future type of woman that she believed still needed to be developed.

Schirmacher named three reasons why many women in Germany could not secure a livelihood through marriage. First, there was the demographic background: since women made up the majority of the population, there was a shortage of eligible men. Second, she pointed

to difficulties in setting up a household due to the fact that many men lacked economic opportunities and well-paid jobs.<sup>24</sup> Her third reason, however, was a cultural one, namely the fact that the average German man, supported by all institutions of society, expected his wife to be '[h]is inferior, but a pleasant one'.<sup>25</sup> Under these conditions, she said, modern women could not find fulfilment in marriage. Schirmacher demanded full access for women to higher education and the professions:

[A modern woman] asks as her right, considers as her personal duty, considers as a general necessity, that a woman should in the first place be a character and full-grown personality; that she should, secondly, make sure of her chief gift or capacity, and train it, so as to know what regular work means and be able to support herself.<sup>26</sup>

Reframing equal participation both as a duty vis-à-vis society and as a necessity, she avoided being criticised for individualism or, worse, egoism and prepared the ground for her main argument as to why the modern woman would not marry:

She supports herself, and so does not want to marry in order that she may be provided for. She is fond of her work, absorbed by it, makes friends by it, is respected for it, and so need not marry in order to obtain the regards due to a useful member of society.<sup>27</sup>

Schirmacher also argued that the modern woman's increased knowledge of the world, and of its double moral standard in particular, led to a loss of respect for and an 'estrangement' from men.<sup>28</sup> However, she rejected the accusation that modern women were opposed to marriage on principle. Instead, she called for an improvement in society—and in men. Together with the 'modern man' that still had to be developed, the 'modern woman' would be 'able to grapple with the great problems at issue'.<sup>29</sup>

With her argument, Schirmacher decisively changed the perspective of the debate. She replaced the negative discourse about surplus women who could not find a husband and therefore had to be cared for (or become scary women's activists) with the positive image of the 'modern woman' who was not only self-sufficient but also expected men to change

if they wanted to find a wife. Two argumentative strategies facilitated this turnaround: national comparison and the ambiguity of her concept of the 'modern woman'. In talking about Germany and its conservative culture, she limited her argument to a specific time and place and thereby opened up the possibility of change. By invoking the USA as a positive model that Germany should emulate, she praised her host country and yet was able to address problems that also resonated with American women.<sup>30</sup> The in-depth and thoroughly positive discussion after her presentation at the conference bears witness to the success of this strategy.<sup>31</sup>

The title of Schirmacher's lecture was given differently on different occasions, reflecting her multi-faceted argument. Whether it was 'modern life' that changed *all* women's marriage prospects, or whether it was the 'modern woman' responding in specific ways to social change, remained a matter of perspective. The variations illustrate that the issue was still under negotiation and on shifting ground.<sup>32</sup> In the analytical part of her talk, Schirmacher made it clear that all women were affected by modern life and therefore had to become modern women, whether they wanted to or not. In the political conclusion, however, the modern woman appears as a more specific type, a personality that is aware of her particular situation and acts accordingly. Schirmacher then even went one step further and invoked an ideal model for a future society, also called 'the modern woman'. With this threefold (sociological, political, and utopian) definition, she grounded her demand for change in an analytical understanding of society but also created a complex revolutionary subject: the oppressed woman and the woman who is able to analyse her situation and fight for change for all women. The third, utopian figure of the 'modern woman' included both, knowledge of social hierarchies and a political agenda, in this way claiming that her political goal was reachable and not a mere wish. Tying in with how Gadi Algazi has conceptualised the *persona* as a tool for negotiating new social roles that include, but also transcend professional contexts, I argue that Schirmacher and others used the concept of the 'modern woman' to argue for a fundamental cultural shift.<sup>33</sup> By positing individuality and autonomy as legitimate and necessary qualities of women in modern societies, they sought to create a new *persona* that would serve as the

basis for a variety of professional *personae* that could be inhabited by a woman.

## Becoming a Mediator

Early in her life, Schirmacher had imagined the USA as the land of freedom for women. Her idealisation of American life deliberately contradicted the negative ideas about the New World prevalent in late nineteenth-century Germany and turned them into a critique of her own society. In a pamphlet published shortly before the Chicago congress, German radical Minna Cauer (1841–1922) had criticised these prejudices in a similar way and pointed to the important contribution women had made to the rise of the USA.<sup>34</sup> The young Schirmacher's love affair with the New World, like the more prudent assessment of Cauer, her senior, illustrates the thirst for information in Germany about the development of the women's movement in the USA. American activists, on the other hand, saw the internationalisation of the movement both as a civilising project for the whole world and as a way to strengthen their movement at home by highlighting its global relevance.<sup>35</sup> However, the great success of the World's Congress of Representative Women, attended by around 150,000 visitors, had also made clear how urgently mediators between different languages and cultures were needed. If the ideal world parliament imagined by May Wright Sewall in the opening ceremony was to become a reality, an enormous amount of translation had to be accomplished, and detailed and profound information about participating countries had to be exchanged. A variety of ideas about society and political agendas had to be shared and discussed, and there had to be constant learning about different cultures.

Schirmacher had already emphasised her willingness to act as a transatlantic mediator for the movement in her application. In a first step, she became a mediator in a reverse sense to that which she might have imagined: she became an expert at explaining German society to American audiences. The celebrity status that she had won by her appearances in Chicago spurred further invitations.<sup>36</sup> Schirmacher was asked to repeat her much-discussed speech in private gatherings and was invited to speak

at other conferences that took place during the World's Fair.<sup>37</sup> She won particular acclaim with a speech at the Congress of Higher Education on 'Why German Universities are the last to Admit Women'.<sup>38</sup> The local German women's association sent a detailed, admiring congratulatory letter the following day.<sup>39</sup> Her performance also won her high praise in the press. Comparing her with two professors who had spoken before her the reporter reflected her success at the conference:

The first two addresses [...] were delivered in German, while the last paper was delivered in excellent English, leaving the inference [...] that German professors [...] have not the admirable command of English shown by the lady who so ably and tellingly made her point against the German exclusion of women from the higher education open to men, Fraulein [*sic*] Schirmacher's address, indeed, justly carried off the honors from the learned professors from Berlin and Bonn, as was amply demonstrated in the applause with which she was greeted at every point she made [...]<sup>40</sup>

A few days later, Schirmacher was invited to participate at the conference of the International Association of University Women as a representative of Germany.<sup>41</sup> It must have been a particular satisfaction for her to represent her home country's university women, who, according to German law and German university practice, should not have existed at all. A report on a reception on the occasion of the conference, attended by several hundred people, mentioned the five most important guests at the event. Among them was 'Fraulein Schirmacher of Dantzig, Germany' [*sic*].<sup>42</sup> Probably the first text by Schirmacher to be translated into a language she did not speak appeared in a Swedish journal shortly after this success: an article on why woman needed to be scientifically educated for the sake of social reform across the whole of society.<sup>43</sup>

Part of Schirmacher's success in the USA may have been that she was happy to take part in the proselytising kind of engagement that was central to the American women's internationalising campaign. However, she also learned to talk in public to large audiences. This enabled her to become a mediator in the call for women's international cooperation at home, too. After her return to Germany in the autumn of 1893, she published several reports on the event in German papers.<sup>44</sup> She

also travelled through German towns to give talks about the Chicago congress. After her lecture tour to Danzig, Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), Dresden, Munich, and Stuttgart she went to Zurich to complete her studies in Romance languages.<sup>45</sup> Her American experience thus helped her to break free from her isolation in Danzig and achieve the goal she had long strived for. Whether it was personal encouragement, the public recognition she now also received in Germany, or the reasonable expectation of being able to make a living from her writing and lecturing, or a combination of factors, remains open. Instead of holding on to the elusive goal of becoming a university professor in a country she had imagined as a utopian place of equality between men and women, she now developed the more realistic *persona* of a mediator of feminist ideas across national borders and the Atlantic.

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  41. NI Sch 905/009, International Association of University Women to KS [without date].
  42. 'College Women', *The Woman's Journal* 24, no. 32 (12 August 1893), 263.
  43. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Kvinnofrågan och vetenskapen', *Idun. Praktisk Veckotidning för Kvinnan och Hemmet*, no. 31 (4 augusti 1893), 242 [no translator mentioned].

44. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der internationale Frauenkongress in Chicago', *Nationalzeitung* 25. Juni 1893; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der internationale Frauencongress in Chicago 1893', *Lose Blätter im Interesse der Frauenfrage* no. 11 (1894); Schirmacher, 'Das Frauengebäude'.
45. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 131; see also Gehmacher, 'Moderne Frauen'.

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# 5

## Correspondences: Transnational Journalism

This chapter discusses the growing participation of women in *journalism*, which was driven both by the expanding newspaper market in the late nineteenth century and by educated women through their search for gainful employment in the liberal professions. After an insight into contemporary perceptions of the profession and the hopes that the activists of the German women's movement associated with journalism, I examine the beginning of Käthe Schirmacher's career as a transnational and multilingual journalist.

Taking Schirmacher as an example, I ask about the possibilities and challenges involved in her work as a journalist, situated as she was in this role between different languages, cultures, political arenas, and markets. Out of the broad variety of her writings in French and German, I discuss Schirmacher's first reports from Paris for German newspapers and journals (often simply titled 'Pariser Brief' (Letter from Paris)) and her coverage of German politics in the Parisian daily *La Fronde* under the title 'Lettre d'Allemagne' (Letter from Germany). I also examine examples of two more specific transfer practices. A report for a French feminist journal on women workers in Vienna exemplifies Schirmacher's information-gathering strategies, while a translation of a French article

for a German journal points to links between journalism, translation, and activism. I conclude by arguing that both Schirmacher's experience in translating and her personal practice of letter-writing were important resources that she could draw on as a transnational correspondent.

## Journalism as a Profession for Women

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, with the burgeoning of women's movements in many countries, a diverse press market emerged that specialised in women's issues. A growing number of journals and newspapers provided a space where female journalists could not only learn the profession and test their skills but sometimes also find an income.<sup>1</sup> But even before this development, a considerable number of women had published in newspapers and magazines not specifically aimed at women. Many of these early journalists wrote anonymously, thus veiling their professional work, as it did not conform with bourgeois ideals of femininity. Editors, for their part, also often preferred to conceal the fact that women contributed to their newspapers and journals, seeing this as detrimental to their papers' and their own reputations. For similar reasons, many books by women appeared anonymously.

The lack of knowledge about women writers was one of the things that motivated Sophie Pataky (1860–1915)—who first came into contact with the women's movement at the International Congress of Women in Berlin in 1896—to compile a lexicon providing reliable information about German women writers, their works, and their pseudonyms.<sup>2</sup> Of the 4,547 writing women documented by Pataky, 2,047 were active when her directory appeared in 1898. More than half of these women (1,133) (also) published in newspapers and journals.<sup>3</sup> Schirmacher was one of them. The considerable proportion of women writing for the press in one form or another reflected changes in the German print market and suggested the emergence of a special, if not yet clearly defined group: women journalists.<sup>4</sup>

A booklet published in 1905 by the German writer Eliza Ichenhaeuser (1869–1932) considered the possibilities that journalism offered for women.<sup>5</sup> Combining a sociological examination of the current situation, a guidebook for women in search of rewarding gainful employment,

and a political call for the development of professional standards, the handbook addressed a mixed audience. It gave an insight into the growing presence of women in journalism and their difficult working conditions. Drawing on a survey of colleagues, Ichenhaeuser concluded that women, who ten years earlier had hidden behind pseudonyms and mostly confined themselves to fashion and household topics, had entered all areas of journalism after the turn of the century.<sup>6</sup> More than 60% of the publishers she contacted said that women wrote for their newspapers, although she suspected that the proportion was in fact even higher.<sup>7</sup> For Ichenhaeuser, one issue, related to visibility, was of particular importance: how women were paid. She strongly warned women against working anonymously for too little money or even for nothing. This would ruin the market and women journalists would be seen by men as 'dirty competitors' (Schmutzkonkurrentinnen).<sup>8</sup>

Ichenhaeuser explained the increasing participation of women in journalism as resulting from the profession's openness. Most liberal professions did not admit women; therefore, the press was one of the few places where they could try their luck.<sup>9</sup> Since no formal qualifications were necessary, the rapidly expanding market provided them with a variety of opportunities. Ichenhaeuser recommended a journalistic career as a possible job for eager young women. She, however, also specified the requirements they should fulfil. Citing answers she had received from her respondents, she stressed not only the need for good general education and special language skills but also the willingness to work hard and to be prepared for particular challenges. Addressing official representatives of the profession, however, she called for a clearer definition of journalism and demanded the creation of a school for future journalists that would set standards.<sup>10</sup>

The extent to which this was also a transnational development was reflected in debates at the 1899 ICW congress in London. In her remarks, Ichenhaeuser drew heavily on the minutes of the congress, where the training of women journalists had been discussed in detail.<sup>11</sup> A lecture by the famous American journalist Ida Husted Harper (1851–1931) focused strongly on a report Harper had received from political journalist Isabelle Worrell Ball (1855–1931) on her working conditions at the Press Galleries of the U.S. Senate. In a combination of hints on

the required skills ('powers of observation, command of good newspaper English') and remarks on how to behave vis-à-vis male colleagues, these explanations more than anything else demonstrated the precarious situation of women in journalism. As Harper quoted, in the words of her respected colleague, a woman journalist should 'forget that she was a woman' but nevertheless remain 'womanly'. She should accept her male colleagues' disrespectful behaviour towards her but 'not ape mannish actions' herself.<sup>12</sup> At the end of her report, Ball asserted that personally, she had never had bad experiences with male colleagues. Both Harper and Ichenhaeuser felt that this ambiguous message was worth rendering it in its entirety and approvingly. I argue that their focus here was less on the paradoxical and daunting advice to be and not to be womanly at the same time, nor was it on Ball's implied victim-blaming when it came to negative experiences with male collaborators. Rather, they seem to have been fascinated by the still undefined, and thus malleable position of the woman journalist; as such, journalism could be seen as a challenging but promising space for adventurous personalities.

When Käthe Schirmacher's career as a French and German journalist took off in Paris in the 1890s, the situation was even less clearly defined. Her story, however, allows some insights into a field Ichenhaeuser mentions only in passing, that of the transnational correspondent.<sup>13</sup> The shaping of Schirmacher's transnational career was aided both by her position between several countries with different public cultures and by her multilingualism. She earned a doctorate in Romance languages from the University of Zurich in 1895 and was one of the first German women ever to attain a doctoral degree.<sup>14</sup> But her chances of finding a position in an exclusively male academic world were practically nil. It is, therefore, not particularly surprising that both before and after her time in Zurich she did not limit herself to academic writing but published fiction and non-fiction, literary criticism, political pamphlets and sociological studies, monographs, and contributions to journals and newspapers.<sup>15</sup> For some time, she occupied an undefined position somewhere between various professions, as no formalised position (or *persona*) was open to her as a woman. Her detailed autobiographical contribution to Sophie Pataky's lexicon reflects this ambivalence; it narrates her career as a student, writer of fiction and non-fiction, translator, and travelling

activist without identifying with any single profession.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, however, Schirmacher assessed her chances of employment by the German and French press in letters to her mother.<sup>17</sup> Soon she would publicly call herself a journalist.<sup>18</sup>

## Letter from Paris

In early 1895, Schirmacher, together with her companion, Margarethe Böhm (life dates unknown), moved to Paris to write a German biography of Voltaire. Her doctoral supervisor, the philosopher Richard Avenarius (1843–1896) had facilitated this assignment with a publisher.<sup>19</sup> Although she probably received an advance for the book, she began writing smaller pieces for periodicals shortly after her arrival in Paris.<sup>20</sup> As she received no financial support from her parents, but rather, regretted not being able to support them financially, she needed a steady income if she wanted to stay in Paris.<sup>21</sup> Having occasionally published in German newspapers since 1890, one of her first publications after settling in France was a piece for the newly founded German radical periodical *Die Frauenbewegung*, edited by Minna Cauer.<sup>22</sup>

Published during the summer lull, Schirmacher's first article combined the catchy topic of women's bicycling, fashionable in Parisian society at the time, with the provocative issues of prostitution and sexual exploitation.<sup>23</sup> Under the title 'Pariser Brief' (Letter from Paris) Schirmacher described female cyclists' costumes and the sensation they caused. Then, quoting from the magazine *Echo de Paris*, she cited the debate on whether this kind of dress should be permitted only for sport in order to prevent prostitutes from attracting clients by wearing the revealing outfit. She justified this exploration of issues relating to prostitution by arguing that all women had a duty to learn about the darker side of life and continued with translated excerpts from an article by the sociologist Léopold Lacour (1845–1939) on the sexual harassment of female servants in middle- and upper-class households. Lacour gave as an example the story of a young woman from Alsace who had fled several jobs because of the sexual importunity of male household members and finally tried to drown herself in the Seine; based on this example, he deplored what



he called 'men's smut' (*cochonnerie des males*).<sup>24</sup> In her German translation, Schirmacher left the strong phrase in French and noted that here, it was a man who was criticising men's behaviour so harshly. She concluded by saying that Lacour had thus expressed that 'the modern woman' would 'rather die' than accept 'sexual slavery' (*daß die moderne Frau 'lieber sterben' als sich in die geschlechtliche Sklaverei begeben wird*).

The article shows how Schirmacher utilised the mode of correspondence and her translation strategies. She mixed light entertainment with social reportage and political demands, drawing on her transnational position and her multilingualism to get her point across. First, by reporting from Paris she could give her readers the opportunity to draw their own conclusions on the situation in German cities without having to discuss the exact circumstances of her examples. Second, by excerpting and translating from the French press, she was able to express her opinion in her selection of topics and at the same time show that she was not alone in her views. Third, by leaving certain words untranslated she not only addressed her readers as educated cosmopolitans (and at the same time excluded those who did not understand French) but also foregrounded a particular notion or statement. Finally, she in fact created two translations, one literal (where she cited passages from Lacour's text) and one that summed up what she thought the author had actually been trying to say.

The contribution was well received, and Schirmacher's very next 'letter' became a three-page cover story. In this, she reported on a celebration held for French women's rights activist Maria Deraismes (1828–1894) in her native town of Pontoise, where a street was named after her and a monument erected in her memory.<sup>25</sup> Schirmacher pointed out how special and unexpected such an honour was in Europe, implying that it would be almost unthinkable in Germany. After having described Deraismes' struggle for the rights of children of unmarried mothers, and for women's political rights, she summarised the author's comprehensive writings and translated a number of iconic sentences by Deraismes, most importantly her call for women's full participation in society.

These transfer strategies—selecting, translating, leaving important words untranslated, summarising from her own point of view—were similar to those Schirmacher had used in her first 'Letter from Paris'. But

this time, she conveyed more of her own perspective, both in her description of the event and in her account of the French women's movement in which Deraismes was such an important protagonist. One might also detect a veiled autobiographical note in her emphasis on the fact that Deraismes, as a woman, had not been allowed to make full use of her great talents. Schirmacher compared her to the protagonist in George Meredith's bestselling novel *Diana of the Crossways* (1885). Quoting from the English original, she lamented the fate of a gifted woman who was 'born an active' [sic] but could only act politically indirectly, through men.<sup>26</sup> During the following ten years, Schirmacher remained an important contributor to *Die Frauenbewegung*, publishing several articles every year.<sup>27</sup> Many of her articles were written as reports from abroad, often covering congresses, legal issues in other countries, social statistics, or debates in the women's movement.<sup>28</sup>

Schirmacher also employed the epistolary genre in other parts of the German press. In her home town Danzig's newspaper *Danziger Zeitung*, the literary journal *Der Bazar* and other journals and newspapers she reported picturesque scenes from the Paris boulevards, everyday life in the French capital, as well as the newest fashions and street songs, all under the title 'Pariser Brief'.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes the more entertaining character of these articles was indicated by titles like 'Plauderbrief' (Chat Letter).<sup>30</sup> A 'Paris letter' by Schirmacher seems to have become a recognisable brand; she also used the title for texts on specific topics, for instance conveying a description of educational institutions in France or a report on the situation of unmarried mothers in Paris.<sup>31</sup>

Most texts written by Schirmacher in 1895 (and many of the later articles) drew in one way or another on the letter form: they were reports to a German audience from elsewhere, sometimes from far away. For example, an essay on woman students in Zurich aimed at both deconstructing the exotic flair of the figure and promoting women's higher education.<sup>32</sup> But even a literary text for a society magazine invoked the experience of being far from home by telling the story of a young girl's first trip to her country's capital in two different versions—in one, she is accompanied by male family members, in the other she travels alone.<sup>33</sup>

Schirmacher's private letters from this period show her daily routine; she worked on her Voltaire book at the Bibliothèque nationale de France during the day and read the journal *Gil Blas* in the evening, where she

found valuable sources for her writing on public life in Paris without having to wander the dangerous streets herself. The letters provide insights into her life with Margarethe Böhm, with whom she shared a flat and later moved to a larger rented dwelling.<sup>34</sup> These letters also clearly show that she tried everything to earn money with her writing. She reported home on the articles she could place in journals and newspapers, recorded how much she got for them, and assured her parents that she would soon have a steady income.<sup>35</sup> Although she already had an ambitious academic book project and was writing regularly for German papers, she negotiated contracts for two more publications, a German book on women students and a French handbook surveying women's movements in different countries.<sup>36</sup>

The pressure she felt was related to yet another challenge. If she wanted to use the title of Dr. phil., which would help her in her journalistic work, she had to publish her dissertation, which was a costly endeavour.<sup>37</sup> The University of Zurich had already warned her that she had no right to use her title before the publication of her thesis.<sup>38</sup> She, therefore, had to earn as much as possible as a journalist in order to be able to sustain what many of her contemporaries regarded as a vanity project: her doctorate. In 1896, finally, the first part of her dissertation, a biography of the French poet Théophile de Viau, was printed as a book, the University of Zurich agreeing that the legal requirements were deemed to be met with this partial publication.<sup>39</sup> By 1896 she had established herself as a feature writer, reporting from Paris for several German journals and newspapers. The French press, however, was still closed to the young German woman.

## Becoming a French Journalist

The feminist congress that took place in Paris in April 1896 (see Chapter 1) was an event that opened many doors to Käthe Schirmacher in France. She had strived to become connected with local networks from her arrival and had made fruitful contacts with the Society for the Propagation of Foreign Languages (*Société pour la propagation des langues étrangères*) and with the Romance philologist Gaston Paris

(1839–1903) who included her in a collaborative editorial project.<sup>40</sup> But it was her acclaimed speech on the German women's movement at the Paris congress in 1896 that led to numerous invitations and new connections. The day after her appearance at the event, she wrote to her parents that many people had congratulated her after her talk and a journalist from the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* had interviewed her on the spot. Her speech was eventually printed in *La Revue Féministe* and translated for journals in the USA and in Sweden. In her letter home she resumed that since 'a lot of respected people were in the auditorium' (Da sehr viele angesehenen Leute im Saal waren...), this would probably help her journalistic ambitions.<sup>41</sup> The publication in the *Revue Féministe* was the beginning of other invitations from French journals to write for them.<sup>42</sup>

One of Schirmacher's first French articles referred to correspondence and translation in yet another way. She reported on an inquiry that had taken place in Vienna in March and April 1896.<sup>43</sup> Initiated by a socio-political association in cooperation with representatives of the liberal women's movement and the Austrian Social Democratic Party, the inquiry investigated the living conditions of working-class women. In thirty-five day-long sessions sociologists, welfare activists, and socialist politicians interviewed women about wages and working conditions in the sectors in which they were employed—from construction to tailoring, from metalworking to food production. It revealed the disastrous situation of women workers and attracted wide attention.<sup>44</sup>

As Schirmacher's private correspondence during this period shows, she herself was not present when this investigation took place in Vienna. What, then, were her sources? The report from the inquiry was not published until 1897. After each session, however, excerpts from the stenographic notes were handed out to journalists and the Viennese press reported extensively from these.<sup>45</sup> Thus Schirmacher, stationed in Paris but a diligent reader of the Austrian and German press, was able to draw on this coverage for her article. She provided systematic excerpts on working conditions, working hours, and wages in twenty-three occupations and summarised the 'facts established by the Viennese commission' from her own point of view.<sup>46</sup> Systematically compiling the fragmented information, she created her own overview, highlighting the low wages, poor hygienic conditions in workplaces, the widespread harassment of

women by their male superiors, and their generally unhealthy living conditions.<sup>47</sup>

Schirmacher concluded by saying that the situation of woman workers revealed by the Vienna inquiry was a 'disgrace for a civilised country' that had to be remedied for the sake of the 'race they produced'.<sup>48</sup> The text thus pointed to two aspects of Schirmacher's writing that would soon gain significance: on the one hand, critical social reportage, which became an important theme in her French journalism from the turn of the century, and, on the other, her use of the categories race and civilisation which foreshadowed the racist social constructions of her writings in the years leading up to the First World War.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of transfer strategies, the article, similarly to her texts for the German press, relied on the strategies of excerpting, translating, and summing up from her own perspective. However, much more than in her German texts, Schirmacher blurred her sources and erased cultural difference. The way she presented financial issues is an example of this. Schirmacher provided her information on the financial circumstances of the Austrian women workers in francs, based on currency conversions she had carried out. Nowhere in her article did she problematise this form of invisible 'translation' that blanked out specific contexts and implicitly reframed the information. She even went one step further, neither stating the source of her information nor admitting that she had never been present at the event itself. Her report on the Vienna inquiry relied entirely on information gathered from unnamed newspapers.

Schirmacher's ability to read foreign papers knowledgeably was also at the heart of her most important journalistic engagement of her early Paris years, her work for the newspaper *La Fronde*.

## Letter from Germany

*La Fronde* was a spectacular project in more ways than one. It was written and produced exclusively by women. However, it was not limited to women's issues, but reported daily on national and international political topics. In addition, many contributions also openly addressed controversial political issues and took decided perspectives. The paper was able to gain considerable attention through the fame and the

publicity of its founder Marguerite Durand (1864–1936), which transformed the paper's name into a symbol for a new form of women's self-empowerment.<sup>50</sup> In her inspiring book on *La Fronde* and Durand, Mary Louise Roberts uses the French term *cabotinage* to characterise the paper's subversive strategies. The word signifies both a cheap comedic performance and the art of improvisation. It can thus also convey the audacity of the famous former actress Durand in behaving as if she were entitled to do what she was doing.<sup>51</sup> When Durand founded *La Fronde* in 1897, she declared in an interview for *Gil Blas* that the *Congrès féministe*, the international women's conference in Paris in April 1896 had been decisive for the project. A divorced single mother, she was working for *Le Figaro* at the time and had intended to write an ironic article about the women activists, but the experience of the conference had converted her to the women's cause<sup>52</sup> (Fig. 5.1).



Fig. 5.1 *La Fronde* editorial offices, Paris around 1900 (University Library Rostock, Käthe Schirmacher Papers)

Schirmacher wrote for *La Fronde* from the very first issue. In the year and a half between the 1896 feminist congress and the founding of the newspaper, she had gained a foothold in Paris liberal society and journalism. She had befriended representatives of the Left and the social reform milieu such as Marie Léopold-Lacour (née Jourdan, 1859–1942; married to the author and co-education campaigner Léopold Lacour mentioned above) as well as the protagonists of the annual women's conferences in Versailles, which brought together philanthropists and moderate women's rights activists.<sup>53</sup> She had begun to work with economic historian Georges Blondel (1856–1948) for whom she made excerpts from German books.<sup>54</sup> As the 'doctoresse allemande', 'the German woman with the doctorate', she had been invited to a banquet given for the natural philosopher and Darwin translator Clémence Royer (1830–1902) in the spring of 1897, at which many influential personalities from politics and intellectual life were present.<sup>55</sup> She wrote in French journals on socio-political issues and by the end of 1897 had gained some notoriety in Paris.<sup>56</sup> However, it was Léopold and Marie Lacour who recommended Schirmacher to Marguerite Durand.<sup>57</sup>

The collaboration with *La Fronde* opened up a new field of work for Schirmacher. She benefited directly from the paper's approach of not limiting itself to what were seen as 'women's issues'. Her first contribution in December 1897 was a column on joint foreign policy written together with Claire de Pratz (1866–1934); the text was divided into two sections, 'Allemagne' and 'Angleterre'. Both sections consisted of short factual extracts from major newspapers of the respective country and mainly reported on parliamentary debates, which in Germany at that time focused on the financing of the expansion of the German military fleet and the German Reich's politics in China. (The winter of 1897/98 saw the German occupation of Kiautschou Bay.)<sup>58</sup> Although Schirmacher was initially uncertain whether her collaboration with *La Fronde* would last, by the end of December 1897 she already had her own column.<sup>59</sup> Titled 'Lettre d'Allemagne' (Letter from Germany), or sometimes just 'Allemagne', it appeared weekly for the next year and a half.<sup>60</sup> Subsequently, she wrote more thematic pieces; these, however, were usually also related to Germany in one way or another.<sup>61</sup> Her task as agreed with Durand was to report once a week 'in epistolary form' on

German politics.<sup>62</sup> As she told her parents, she was rather pleased about the assignment, which was financially lucrative and interested her as it brought her closer to questions of power.<sup>63</sup>

Schirmacher's first 'Lettre d'Allemagne' at Christmas 1897 had a feuilletonistic touch. She wrote about the German Christmas tree tradition, while including a detailed account of how the German feminist press congratulated the *Fronde* on its courageous undertaking and hoped to follow its example soon.<sup>64</sup> From then on, however, she focused on political issues. The column usually began with factual reports on the proceedings in the German Reichstag or the Landtag of Prussia followed by an overview of major events in German politics. Thereafter, Schirmacher very often added a short section on the women question. In so doing, she established and confirmed a connection between politics and women's emancipation and thus helped spawn a political understanding of women's issues. Within this recurring framework of fact-oriented extracts from the press, her choice of topics was her main means of expressing her point of view. She often focused on foreign politics, particularly colonial politics in China, thereby emphasising her country's international importance and power.<sup>65</sup> In her dealings with interior politics she revealed her liberal orientation by recurrently reporting on social politics or on the debate on the 'Lex Heinze', a law that sought to restrict public indecency and was seen as a severe threat to the arts by liberals.<sup>66</sup> In her notes on the German women's movement, her radical leanings became visible. She reported on the public activities of the Berlin Verein Frauenwohl association and conveyed information on women students at German universities and the limitations and difficulties they were confronted with.<sup>67</sup> German opinions about French culture and politics were also an important, if sensitive, subject of Schirmacher's public 'letters from Germany' written in Paris.

A detailed account of German reactions to the Dreyfus affair, that divided French public opinion for more than a decade, shows how she managed the delicate task of explaining France's image in Germany to a French audience. Addressing the challenges at the very beginning of her first article on the issue in January 1898, she legitimised her critical observations of the French public with her 'duties as a correspondent' (*devoir de correspondant*), before describing the heated and polarised



atmosphere in France where, she said, anyone who defended Dreyfus was insulted as unpatriotic. Under these circumstances the categories of the other, the foreigner, and the enemy coalesced:

For a long time now, all those who have had doubts about the guilt of Captain Dreyfus, [...] have been treated by a large part of the French press as Jews, Protestants, bad patriots, and above all, as foreigners. The word [...] has become [...] the ultimate insult. [...] [I]t took on the original meaning of the old Latin *hostis*, which meant both stranger and enemy. (Depuis longtemps, tous ceux qui ont conservé des doutes sur la culpabilité du capitaine Dreyfus [...] ont été, par une grande partie de la presse française, traités à tour de rôle de juifs, de protestants, de mauvais patriotes et surtout d'étrangers. Le mot [...] est devenu [...] l'insulte suprême. [I]l a repris le sens primitive de l'ancien *hostis* latin, qui signifiait à la fois l'étranger et l'ennemi.)<sup>68</sup>

Schirmacher, herself a foreigner in France, argued that these reflections on how the French public might react to statements from abroad, especially from Germany, were a necessary prerequisite for understanding the German newspapers' handling of the affair. She pointed out that the major German newspapers mostly limited their coverage to factual accounts of the proceedings before the French military court, reiterating only official German government statements denying any attempt at espionage on their part. Making the court proceedings publicly known, was, however, a major strategy used by the defenders of Dreyfus in France, a strategy on which the *Fronde* would soon also embark by publishing the minutes of the proceedings.<sup>69</sup>

Among the newspapers that raised questions was the national-liberal *Kölnische Zeitung* which criticised the fact that Dreyfus was condemned on the basis of secret documents that neither he nor his lawyer were allowed to see. From a German legal perspective, this could be seen as a bending of the law.<sup>70</sup> To stress the seriousness of the point, Schirmacher conveyed both the French and the German phrases for this: 'courbure du droit' and 'Beugung des Rechts'. At the end of her excerpts she expressed her hope that light might soon be shed on the dark affair; she ended on the somewhat ironic note that the *Kölnische Zeitung* had basically

repeated what had appeared in the French paper *Le Siècle* a few days earlier.<sup>71</sup>

Schirmacher's short article not only illustrates how she used her transnational position to express her views without exposing herself as partisan. A few days later, after her mother's admonitions not to risk her job with her sharp tongue, she sent home this article to prove that she was careful, and her mother had nothing to worry about.<sup>72</sup> The article also demonstrated her detailed knowledge of public opinion and both the German and French press, which became the basis of her professional journalism.

## A Public Exchange on Women Artists and Old Maids

A translation from the *Fronde* made by Schirmacher for a German journal reveals how French radicalism became re-contextualised in Germany. The *Fronde* was famous for sparking controversial debates on the situation of women in French society. Among these often deliberately provocative contributions was a text by the acclaimed novelist Marcelle Tinayre (néé Chasteau, 1870–1948) on artists' marriages. Tinayre, who had given up her university studies to marry the painter Julien Tinayre (1859–1923), not only gave birth to three children but also published three novels within a few years, with which she earned a living for her family.<sup>73</sup>

In February 1898, Tinayre published an article in the *Fronde* which more than a few readers may have read as a reflection on her own situation.<sup>74</sup> In a review of the life of the famous French writer George Sand (1804–1876) on the occasion of the death of one of her lovers, Tinayre lamented that women only had three options: to marry, to become an old maid, or to become a courtesan (il y a l'épouse, la vieille fille, la courtesan). Outside of marriage or celibacy women were denied respect without enjoying the benefits of being what she called a hetaera (hétaïre). She wondered how Sand would have fared in the society of the late nineteenth century when French middle-class education doomed girls to become housewives and nothing else. For a talented woman this entailed

the necessity either of finding an exceptional husband who accepted an artist as a wife, or of sacrificing her talent and intellect.

Tinayre's bold statements drew criticism. Two weeks later she published a response to one critic, whom she said she 'respected and loved'. Without naming the addressee, Tinayre pleaded with her, as a representative of the older generation, to understand and support the younger woman's protest against these unjust restrictions. To justify and explain her earlier statements she took a critical look at how girls were educated and examined the psychology of the relation between generations of women.<sup>75</sup> She thus shifted her focus from women who, like George Sand, led unconventional lives to follow their artistic genius, to those who remained unmarried because of the duties they fulfilled to their parents and families. These were as the title of her second article, 'Les Sacrifiées' (The Sacrificed) suggested, sacrificed for the sake of their relatives.

It was this second article that Schirmacher translated into German for the biweekly journal *Neue Bahnen*, the oldest then still active journal of the women's movement in Germany, in Summer 1898.<sup>76</sup> However, she decontextualised the passionate appeal to the older generation of women. The only circumstantial information she conveyed was the fact that the text had been published in the *Fronde* and that her translation had been authorised. But she neither introduced the writer Marcelle Tinayre, who had achieved a certain fame in France at that time but had not been translated into German, nor did she explain the reason why Tinayre had published her appeal to her critic. The controversial issue of the female artist's private life, which had triggered the whole exchange, was thus left out of the picture. What is more, Schirmacher deleted the whole first paragraph of the French article where the author addressed her critic and also justified her earlier statement that one should not force 'intellectual suicide' (suicide intellectuel) on an artist 'under the pretext of morality' (sous prétexte de morale).<sup>77</sup>

By shortening the text by nearly a third, Schirmacher intensified Tinayre's shift in focus between her first and her second article. What was still present in Tinayre's text—the plea for female artists to be exempted from the dreadful choice of becoming either a wife, a celibate, or a courtesan—was now completely supplanted by Tinayre's second focus,

the sacrificed women who remained spinsters to serve their families. Educated to help their loved ones, many of them accepted a fate of quiet renunciation raising younger siblings or caring for elderly parents without receiving much thanks in return. These women, who had lived bitter lives, often regarded young, aspiring women as future victims who did not yet know of the disappointments that awaited them. Tinayre appealed to them not to frown upon the protest of a younger generation, not to deprecate their call for an individual life. In return, she assured them that the women who were now publicly standing up for their rights would never mock or devalue the lives of the previous generation and their hidden heroism but would revere them and demand change precisely in the name of the tears they had shed.<sup>78</sup>

Schirmacher's abridgements depersonalised and decontextualised the text she translated. Concealing the link to Tinayre's earlier text and the artistic milieu it had described, Schirmacher abandoned the bold but clever association between 'old maids' and the potential freedom to be enjoyed by unmarried women made by the French woman. She also renounced the clever epistolary style with which Tinayre had softened the generational conflict. Schirmacher thus laid bare the central conflict about the economic character of marriage arrangements and also avoided the ambivalence that references to illegitimate sexual relations might have sparked among German audiences. But her translation also lost much of the charm of the French article. Whereas Tinayre had used the suffering of quietly exploited unmarried women as an argument for carving out opportunities for women to have their own careers—to develop professional or artistic *personae*—Schirmacher's translation gave only a rather vague impression of that goal. Fittingly, the title also underwent a significant change. Whereas the French title 'Les Sacrifiées' (The Sacrificed) implied the existence of an actor, whether this was somebody who sacrifices another, or the person who chooses to sacrifice herself, the German title chosen by Schirmacher, 'Die Opfer' does not have this connotation. It simply means: the victims.

It is not clear from this text and its German publication whether the German editors had advised against discussing female libertinage, or whether Schirmacher herself had not considered her country of origin ready for this debate. Perhaps she did not want to feed the widespread

opinion that her adopted country, France, was characterised by loose morals, if not depravity. We do, however, have some indication that the adaption of Tinayre's text was not only a result of her assumptions about the readers of the *Neue Bahnen* but also an expression of her own view. In a later German review of Tinayre's novel *La Rançon* (The Ransom) she revealed both her admiration for Tinayre and the high moral standards she thought it necessary to defend. She praised *La Rançon* for being the first novel to portray a 'modern woman' in French literature. However, what she also lauded was the fact that the female protagonist decided against continuing an illegitimate relationship and returned to the sincerity that she could only have in her marriage.<sup>79</sup>

Reading Schirmacher's rendering of Tinayre's article as an activist translation, in which she focuses on its political efficacy for its intended readers, reveals both the effects and limitations of the transnational transfer of activist agendas.<sup>80</sup> It helps us to understand the incomplete transfer of the text's message. By choosing a certain aspect of the text (about unmarried women sacrificing their happiness for the support of their families) she felt would resonate particularly well with a German audience, Schirmacher certainly maximised its mobilising effects there; but she also omitted an important concept that Tinayre had wanted to communicate to her French audience—that women artists should not be forced into marriages that entailed sacrificing their art.

## A Transnational Journalist

For several years, the well-paid work for *La Fronde* seems to have been Schirmacher's main source of income.<sup>81</sup> However, the column 'Lettre d'Allemagne', usually signed with the abbreviation 'S.', was only a part of her work for the newspaper. From the beginning, she also wrote longer, more detailed texts under her full name. The first of these texts was a three-part essay on the German women's movement published in December 1897.<sup>82</sup> In 1899, Schirmacher published a series of articles on Germany and the German women's movement under the pseudonyms 'Sigma', 'Avanti', or 'Gédania', but from January 1900 onwards, she published all her articles under her own name.<sup>83</sup> Her

various pseudonyms can only be decoded because Schirmacher meticulously documented her writings and archived them in her papers.<sup>84</sup> Articles by Schirmacher appeared in the *Fronde* until November 1900. However, she was still listed as a 'redactrice' (contributor) in 1901.<sup>85</sup> Schirmacher also portrayed the project in several favourable accounts in German journals, thereby both utilising her personal knowledge of the editorial team and its work for her German journalism and creating publicity for *La Fronde* abroad.<sup>86</sup>

Schirmacher's relationship with the paper was not without conflict. Her use of various pseudonyms pointed to her multiple public roles as a researcher, journalist, activist, and travelling lecturer. This practice was not always to the liking of her editor who accepted other, more stable pseudonyms of some of the journalists working for her but insisted that Schirmacher should use her own name in *La Fronde* as she did in other papers.<sup>87</sup> Another problematic topic was that of subscriptions to foreign newspapers, an important resource for foreign correspondents. Exchange subscriptions were not always granted, and Marguerite Durand was not prepared to finance as many subscriptions as Schirmacher wanted.<sup>88</sup> It was probably due to Schirmacher's work as an official collaborator of the Women's Palace (Palais des Femmes) at the 1900 Paris Exposition (Exposition Universelle) in Paris and the new opportunities this assignment entailed that her documented work for the *Fronde* came to an end in the autumn of 1900.<sup>89</sup>

By the turn of the century, Schirmacher had established herself as a journalist in more than one country and as a personality who linked women's activism across borders. Her years with *La Fronde* had been formative for this in more ways than one. Her work for the paper had enabled her to venture into political journalism and significantly broaden her thematic horizons. It had also helped her to develop her own journalistic style and to become known as an expert on German and Austrian issues in France and as a Paris correspondent for several German and Austrian papers. Last but not least, her status as a journalist not only secured her theatre tickets and opened many doors to famous personalities she wanted to write about, but also allowed her to visit places to which an unmarried middle-class woman of her time normally would not have had easy access.<sup>90</sup> By 1900, it could be argued, Schirmacher

had not only found a way to earn a living and, at least to some extent, to match her personal career goals with the opportunities available to her, but she had also developed a recognisable and respected *persona*: she had become a sought-after transnational journalist who could make her own choices about what and where to publish.

Schirmacher lived as a journalist in Paris for fifteen years, until 1910. During this time, she was an extremely prolific writer, author of several fiction and non-fiction books, and a researcher on social questions publishing in scholarly journals. As a journalist she wrote for French, German, Austrian, and Swiss, sometimes also for British and American newspapers and journals; we also know of texts written by her and translated into English, Polish, Swedish, and Serbian.<sup>91</sup> Often publishing several articles a week and making lengthy annual lecture tours through Europe, she connected feminist and non-feminist publics in various countries.<sup>92</sup>

However, her position in French journalism became increasingly difficult after Schirmacher's increasingly fierce attacks on Czech and Polish nationalism and her support for ideas of German supremacy in the mixed regions in Bohemia and Prussia.<sup>93</sup> She was not only harshly criticised for her German nationalism by the French but also had growing difficulties in publishing her French articles, particularly when she also started to write critically about France.<sup>94</sup> In 1910 Schirmacher, who had been contemplating a return to Germany for several years, moved to the small Mecklenburg town of Marlow to live with her partner Klara Schleker (1852–1932), whom she had met in 1903. In her journalism she now focused on German-speaking media. A considerable part of her contributions in these papers dealt with French culture and politics.

## Correspondences, Audiences, Epistolary Selves

Although Käthe Schirmacher experienced a severe setback in her career in the years before the First World War, we can still consider her fifteen years as a Paris-based transnational journalist as a great success for a self-made woman. She was one of the women who knew how to seize the

opportunities of the expanding media market. But where and how had she learned the skills she needed for the profession?

I argue that her multilingualism, her extensive travels to various countries, and her experiences abroad were important prerequisites for her intimate knowledge of the media landscapes of several European countries and thus for her success. This enabled her to write from a transnational perspective early on. Even her early journalistic writings on the social question in the UK, on French literature, and on her travel to the international women's congress in Chicago were based on her experiences abroad.<sup>95</sup> When Schirmacher settled in Paris in 1895, she continued along this path and gradually began to connect French and German-speaking publics.

However, another important resource for her journalism was her ability to adapt the focus and degree of explicitness of a text according to the intended audience, a skill she had acquired and perfected long before writing for publication. It reflected the widespread, highly developed epistolary practices of middle-class women in the nineteenth century. Since leaving Danzig at the age of eighteen in 1883, Schirmacher had shared many of her experiences with her parents and wider family in weekly letters, a habit she kept up until her mother's death in 1915. Nearly every week she gave a summary of the past days, reported on difficulties and successes, wrote about her work and her experiences. Her detailed letters home, many thousands of which have been preserved, document both the complexity of these exchanges and Schirmacher's special skills as a letter-writer.

Through their extensive written exchanges, many women of the nineteenth century not only kept in touch with each other, but also acquired what Rebecca Earle calls 'epistolary selves' in the process.<sup>96</sup> The distance between correspondents made it possible and to a certain extent necessary to create written identities that ensured continuity within the correspondence but did not always reflect the personal practice of the writers. The longer this distance lasted, the more narratives of daily experiences—surrogates for a shared life—necessarily became artistic constructions, emphasising certain aspects and omitting others.<sup>97</sup>

Schirmacher's letters home are a good example of this in more ways than one. In the early years when she was away from home, she sought



her parents' approval of how she lived and what she did. Later, there were several conflicts with her family about her lifestyle, which led to debates on how openly she could and would write to them, once resulting in a letter strike for several weeks. Later again, when her mother was a widow and Schirmacher a successful writer who had many other correspondence partners with whom she could exchange views, her letters home were meant to divert her often depressed mother. In many of these letters sent over more than thirty years, the audience was specified at the beginning. Schirmacher often stated whether her mother, her parents, or the extended family in Danzig should read a specific letter. Time and again she imagined the whole family reading her epistle together. These writings to intimate publics were often complemented with other texts: seminar papers during her studies, published articles after she became an author. They were passed from one relative to the other and discussed by them amongst themselves and with Schirmacher. In exchange, her parents sent newspapers and magazines from Danzig which their daughter could use for her articles about Germany.<sup>98</sup>

In her letters home Schirmacher combined small scenes and short narratives of events she had witnessed with reviews of books, descriptions of places and personalities, and added her views and observations. This specific form may well have been a model also for her published letters. Here, too, she presented various themes in a succession of accounts, sometimes linked by a piquant association. As with her writings for different members of her family in Danzig, she kept in mind the audiences she addressed, the national sensitivities, the various degrees of radicalism in women's journals, and the more general interests in newspapers she wrote for. More than once Schirmacher also used her private correspondence as a testing ground for later publications. Many of her travel experiences, for example, can be traced through various private and public media. This was the case with her reports from the USA in 1893, conveyed in elaborate descriptions in letters to her Danzig family, in newspaper reports and in public speeches after her return.<sup>99</sup> Schirmacher also received feedback from her intimate friend in Paris, Henri Chastenet (life dates unknown), who at the beginning of her career helped her with her French writing and the specific conventions of addressing a French audience.<sup>100</sup> These private echo-chambers also

represented specific national identities and different political leanings. They thus expanded Schirmacher's awareness of different opinions and sensitivities.

Schirmacher's lifelong experience of communication with geographically remote individuals and intimate publics through correspondence allowed her to develop sophisticated strategies in connecting networks and media landscapes as well as different national cultures. All the more reason to ask why she turned more and more to aggressive German nationalism, in so doing damaging her professional reputation as a journalist. This was for more reasons than can be discussed here, but I would like to mention two aspects of this ideological conversion that are related to her identity as a transnational personality and as a writer. First, strong ideological identification with a national community is often closely linked to the experience of migration and exile, to the experience of being seen as and feeling like a stranger. It is, therefore, interesting that Schirmacher's first conflicts about national identification arose in the context of exile: conflicts between her as a German in Paris and the Polish and Czech communities in the same city.<sup>101</sup> Second, Schirmacher adopted German nationalism the same way she acquired her information as a journalist: through reading. It was above all Wilhelm Massow's comprehensive anti-Polish book *Die Polen-Not* (The Polish Emergency) that she read with fascination in 1904 and soon recommended publicly.<sup>102</sup> We can say, then, that her nationalist feeling was initially based less on a lived experience of belonging than on an intimate relationship with a text.

As this chapter has shown, excerpting, translating, and summarising from media sources were important practices and techniques in transnational journalism. However, as Schirmacher's participation in various national media markets increased, another type of practice also became important for her: the translation and free reproduction of her own early texts. An example of this is Schirmacher's work on women students in Zurich (discussed earlier in this chapter) which she herself translated into French and published in an abridged version for a French audience.<sup>103</sup> Very soon, however, far more extensive practices of reproduction followed. They are the focus of the subsequent chapter.

## Notes

1. On the women's journalism and feminist press in different countries around 1900: Faith Binckes and Carey J. Snyder, *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1890s–1920s: The Modernist Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019); David Doughan and Denise Sanchez, eds., *Feminist Periodicals, 1855–1984: An Annotated Critical Bibliography of British, Irish, Commonwealth, and International Titles* (New York: New York University Press, 1987); Li Dzeh-Djen, *La Presse féministe en France de 1869 à 1914* (Paris: L. Rodstein, 1934); Susanne Kinnebrock, 'Schreiben für die politische Öffentlichkeit. Frauen im Journalismus um 1900', in *Frauen in der literarischen Öffentlichkeit 1780–1918*, eds. Caroline Bland and Elisa Müller-Adams (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007); Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, and Beth Rodgers, eds., *Women, Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900s: The Victorian Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019); F. Elizabeth Gray, *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle. Making a Name for Herself* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Elisabeth Klaus and Ulla Wischermann, *Journalistinnen. Eine Geschichte in Biographien und Texten, 1848–1990* (Vienna et al.: Lit-Verlag, 2013); Barbara Onslow, *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Mary Louise Roberts, 'Copie subversive: Le journalisme féministe en France à la fin du siècle dernier', *Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés [En ligne]*, 6 | 1997, mis en ligne le 01 janvier 2005, <https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.390>, <http://clio.revues.org/390>; Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Ulla Wischermann, 'Interaktion von Öffentlichkeiten. Zur Geschichte der Frauenpresse im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert', in *Kommunikationswissenschaft und Gender studies*, ed. Elisabeth Klaus (Wiesbaden: Westdt. Verlag, 2002), 212–40.

2. Sophie Pataky, *Lexikon deutscher Frauen der Feder. Eine Zusammenstellung der seit dem Jahre 1840 erschienenen Werke weiblicher Autoren, nebst Biographien der Lebenden und einem Verzeichnis der Pseudonyme* (Berlin: Carl Pataky, 1898), V–VI (Introduction).
3. Susanne Kinnebrock, *Journalismus als Frauenberuf anno 1900. Eine quantitativ inhaltsanalytische sowie quellenkritische Auswertung des biografischen Lexikons 'Frauen der Feder'* (Berlin: German Council for Social and Economic Data [RatSWD], 2008), 13.
4. On the gendered difference between journalists and writers in nineteenth-century Germany Kinnebrock, 'Schreiben', 144–45.
5. Eliza Ichenhaeuser, *Die Journalistik als Frauenberuf* (Berlin u.a.: Frauen-Rundschau, 1905); see for another example: Henriette Jastrow, 'Der Journalistinnenberuf in England', in *Jahrbuch für die deutsche Frauenwelt*, eds. Elly Saul and Hildegard Obrist-Jenicke (Stuttgart: Greiner & Pfeiffer, 1899).
6. Ichenhaeuser, *Journalistik*, 7–8; Ichenhaeuser did not refer to Pataky's lexicon but compared her results to an earlier overview: Max Osborn, *Die Frauen in der Litteratur und der Presse* (Berlin: Taendler, 1896).
7. Ichenhaeuser, *Journalistik*, 8–9.
8. *Ibid.*, 11.
9. *Ibid.*, 15.
10. *Ibid.*, 16–17.
11. The Countess of Aberdeen, ed., *Women in Professions. Being the professional Section of the International Congress of Women, London, July, 1899* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1900).
12. *Ibid.*, 54 [all quotations from the English original]; the passage by Ball is translated into German in Ichenhaeuser, *Journalistik*, 27.
13. *Ibid.*, 9–10.
14. Johanna Gehmacher, Elisa Heinrich, and Corinna Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik* (Vienna et al.: Böhlau, 2018), 532.
15. By 1895 she had published two books of her own, the novella *Die Libertad* (1890) and the novel *Halb* (1893), as well as a translation of Emma Hosken Woodward's *Men, Women and*

- Progress* (1893). She was in the process of publishing her dissertation on the eighteenth-century poet Théophile de Viau.
16. Pataky, *Lexikon*, 241–42.
  17. NI Sch 011/020, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 1 June 1896; NI Sch 126/008, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 9 April 1897.
  18. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Was eine Journalistin erlebt’, *Schlesische Zeitung*, 26 Oktober 1901.
  19. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 532.
  20. NI Sch 010/013, KS to Richard Schirmacher, 19 July 1895.
  21. NI Sch 011/001, KS to Richard Schirmacher, 11 January 1896; NI Sch 126/027, KS to Richard Schirmacher, 30 October 1897. Less than three years later, Schirmacher was earning enough to offer her father a larger sum: NI Sch 718/032, KS to Richard Schirmacher, 20 May 1900.
  22. For the first few months Lily von Gizycky (Braun) (1865–1916) was Cauer’s co-editor.
  23. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Pariser Brief’, *Die Frauenbewegung. Revue für die Interessen der Frauen*, 15 September 1895.
  24. Léopold Lacour, ‘Plutot la Mort!’, *Gil Blas*, 13 August 1895.
  25. Schirmacher, ‘Pariser Brief’, *Die Frauenbewegung*, 15 September 1895.
  26. *Ibid.* Schirmacher quotes from a longer statement by the protagonist on activity and passivity in women. See George Meredith, *Diana of the Crossways* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911 [1885]), 64; see on the widely read author Richard Cronin, *George Meredith: The Life and Writing of an Alteregoist* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
  27. Some articles were also published as ‘Pariser Brief’ (Letter from Paris), e.g., *Die Frauenbewegung*, 15 March 1896, 1 April 1896, 1 June 1897.
  28. For example, Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Der internationale Frauenkongress in Paris, 8. bis 12. April 1896’, *Die Frauenbewegung*, 15 April 1896; Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Übersicht des ehelichen Güterrechts in den verschiedenen Ländern’, *Die Frauenbewegung*, 1 February 1899.
  29. For example, Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Pariser Brief’, *Danziger Zeitung*, 1 December 1895.

30. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Pariser Plauderei', *Illustrierte Frauen-Zeitung* 22, no. 24 (1895); Käthe Schirmacher, 'Pariser Plauderbrief', *Der Bazar*, 23 September 1895.
31. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Pariser Brief', *Neue Bahnen. Organ des allgemeinen deutschen Frauenvereins*, 15 December 1896; Schirmacher, 'Pariser Brief', *Die Frauenbewegung*, 1 June 1897.
32. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Züricher Studentinnen', *Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 6, no. 8 (1895), 817–25.
33. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Gesellschaftliche Schranken', *Der Bazar*, 4 November 1895.
34. Nl Sch 010/013, 016, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 19 July 1895 and 10 August 1895.
35. For example, Nl Sch 010/013, KS to Richard Schirmacher, 19 July 1895; Nl Sch 010/018, KS to Richard Schirmacher, 15 August 1895; Nl Sch 010/020, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 7 September 1895.
36. Nl Sch 602/001, Th. Schröter to KS, 24 September 1895 [publication contract]; Nl Sch 602/021, Armand Colin and Käthe Schirmacher, December 1895 [publication contract]; Nl Sch 011/004, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 21 January 1896.
37. Nl Sch 303/019, 020, Neukomm & Zimmermann [publishers] to KS, 6 August 1895, 10 August 1895; Nl Sch 303/033, 034 O. R. Reiland [publisher] to KS, 29 August 1895, 7 September 1895.
38. Nl Sch 303/036, Heinrich Morf to KS, 4 December 1895.
39. Käthe Schirmacher, *Théophile de Viau. Sein Leben und seine Werke (1591–1626). Erster Teil: Die Biographie* (Leipzig, Paris, 1896), 108.
40. Nl Sch 569/014, Société pour la propagation des langues étrangères to KS, 15 February 1896; Nl Sch 11/003, 009: Käthe Schirmacher an Clara Schirmacher, 24 January 1896 and 5 March 1896.
41. Nl Sch 011/013, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 10 April 1896.
42. Käthe Schirmacher, 'En Allemagne', *La Revue Féministe* (1896), 308–11.

43. Käthe Schirmacher, 'L'enquête sur le travail des femmes à Vienne', *La Revue Féministe* (1896), 454–60; Käthe Schirmacher, 'L'enquête sur le travail des femmes à Vienne', *La Revue des Femmes Russes et des Femmes Françaises: Organe international de science, art, moral*, no. 3 (July 1896), 198–204. The identical article was published in two journals.
44. Anonymous, *Die Arbeits- und Lebensverhältnisse der Wiener Lohnarbeiterinnen. Ergebnisse und stenographisches Protokoll der Enquête über Frauenarbeit abgehalten in Wien vom 1. März bis 21. April 1896* (Vienna: Ignaz Brand, 1897); see also Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein, 'Die Arbeiterinnen-Enquête in Wien', in *Der Internationale Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen in Berlin 19. bis 26. September 1896. Eine Sammlung der auf dem Kongress gehaltenen Vorträge und Ansprachen*, eds. Rosalie Schoenflies et al. (Berlin: H. Walther, 1897), 191–95.
45. Anonymous, *Die Arbeits- und Lebensverhältnisse*, V.
46. Schirmacher, 'L'enquête sur le travail des femmes à Vienne', 204.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Karen Offen has rightly pointed to the prominence of social questions in Schirmacher's French writings. It is, however, necessary to clarify that the French 'Paris writings' included many other topics and that the German writings of these years were also written in Paris. Karen Offen, 'Kaethe Schirmacher, Investigative Reporter & Activist Journalist: The Paris Writings, 1895–1910', *Proceedings of The Western Society for French History* 39 (2011), accessed 19 June 2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0642292.0039.019>; on Schirmacher as a journalist see also Corinna Oesch, 'Zwischen Wissenschaft und Journalismus. Weibliche Lebensentwürfe und politisches Engagement um 1900 am Beispiel von Käthe Schirmacher und Anna Schapire', in *Rosa und Anna Schapire – Sozialwissenschaft, Kunstgeschichte und Feminismus um 1900*, eds. Burcu Dogramaci and Günther Sandner (Berlin: Aviva, 2017), 102–18.

50. See, e.g., a story featured on the newspaper project in Britain: Anonymous, 'Life on the Continent [From our special Correspondent]', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 14 December 1897; the paper's symbolic value became visible on the stage, too. In 1900, a play about feminism and feminists entitled *La Fronde* came out in Paris. See Käthe Schirmacher, "La Fronde". Eine interessante Première', *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 26 April 1900.
51. Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts. The New Woman in fin-de-siècle France* (Chicago et al.: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002); see also on *La Fronde*: Roberts, "Copie"; Maggie Allison, 'Marguerite Durand and La Fronde: Voicing Women of the Belle Epoque', in *A 'Belle Epoque'? Women in French society and culture 1890–1914*, eds. Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr (New York and Oxford, 2006), 37–50; Colette Cosnier, 'La Fronde, un "journal entièrement dirigé, rédigé... par les femmes" au cœur de l'Affaire', in *Être dreyfusard hier et aujourd'hui*, eds. Gilles Manceron and Emmanuel Naquet (Rennes: Tout OpenEdition Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), accessed 19 June 2022, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.124812>; for a contextualisation of *La Fronde* in the French newspaper market see Rachel Mesch, *Having It All in the Belle Epoque: How French Women's Magazines Invented the Modern Woman* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2013).
52. Marie Louise Roberts, 'Acting Up: The Feminist Theatrics of Marguerite Durand', *French Historical Studies* 19, no. 4 (1996), 1103–38, at 1117.
53. Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand 2/201 Sch, KS to Léopold Lacour, 21 May 1896; L. M., 'Conférence de Versailles. Compte rendu de la Conférence de Versailles', *La femme*, 1 July 1897, 98.
54. N1 Sch 011/017, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 10 May 1896.
55. N1 Sch 126/005, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 1 March 1897.
56. For the years 1896 and 1897 nineteen publications in French periodicals can be documented, reports from the international women's congress in Berlin in autumn 1896 figured prominently among them.



57. NI Sch 126/030, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 1 December 1897.
58. Claire de Pratz and Anonymus [Käthe Schirmacher], 'A l'Etranger, Allemagne, Angleterre' *La Fronde*, 11 December 1897; S. [pseud. Käthe Schirmacher], 'A l'Etranger, Allemagne ("Les journeaux...")', *La Fronde*, 9 December 1897.
59. NI Sch 016/002, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 17 December 1897.
60. S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("C'est la Noel...")', *La Fronde*, 26 December 1897. All these columns are signed 'S.', Schirmacher's authorship is clear by her papers.
61. The change was due to a change in the way *La Fronde* covered foreign affairs. See NI Sch 478/005, Emmy Fournier to KS, 21 September 1899.
62. NI Sch 478/001, Marguerite Durand to KS, 25 July 1898.
63. NI Sch 11/039, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 23 December 1897.
64. S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("C'est la Noel...")', *La Fronde*, 26 December 1897.
65. For example, S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("A cette époque de l'année...")', *La Fronde*, 2 January 1898; S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("Le Landtag de la Prusse...")', *La Fronde*, 6 February 1898.
66. S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("La nomination de M. Petri...")', *La Fronde*, 24 January 1898; see also Käthe Schirmacher, 'Lex Heinze', *La Fronde*, 21 February 1900.
67. For example, S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("La nomination de M. Petri...")', *La Fronde*, 24 January 1898; S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne. ("L'affaire Dreyfus...")', *La Fronde*, 16 January 1898; S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("Le Landtag de la Prusse...")', *La Fronde*, 6 February 1898.
68. S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("L'affaire Dreyfus...")', *La Fronde*, 16 January 1898.
69. Having reported on the affair from the beginning *La Fronde* started printing daily stenographic minutes in August 1899.
70. On the history of the paper see Georg Potschka, 'Kölnische Zeitung (1802–1945)', in *Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. bis 20.*

*Jahrhunderts*, ed. Heinz-Dietrich Fischer (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 1972), 145–58.

71. S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("L'affaire Dreyfus...")', *La Fronde*, 16 January 1898. Schirmacher's report of January 1898 reflected several aspects of an article that had appeared a few days earlier: Anonymous, 'Zum Esterhazy-Prozeß', *Kölnische Zeitung*, 12 January 1898.
72. NI Sch 607/002, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 22 January 1898.
73. Jennifer R. Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque. Historical and Literary Anthology. Texts Translated by Jette Kjaer, Lydia Willis and Jennifer Waelti-Walters* (Lincoln [u.a.]: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 67–68; Rachel Mesch, 'A Belle Epoque Media Storm: Gender, Celebrity, and the Marcelle Tinayre Affair', *French Historical Studies* 35 (2012), 93–121, at 10–11, <http://doi.org/10.1215/00161071-1424938>; On Tinayre, who published a new book every two or three years, see also: Diana Holmes, *Middlebrow Matters. Women's Reading and the Literary Canon in France since the Belle Époque* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 54–59.
74. Marcelle Tinayre, 'Ménages d'Artistes', *La Fronde*, 3 March 1898.
75. Marcelle Tinayre, 'Les Sacrifiées', *La Fronde*, 20 March 1898.
76. Marcelle Tinayre, 'Die Opfer. Von Marcelle Tinayre. (Fronde.). Autorisierte Uebersetzung von Dr. Käthe Schirmacher', *Neue Bahnen. Organ des allgemeinen deutschen Frauenvereins* 33, no. 15 (1898); on the history of the journal *Neue Bahnen* see Kerstin Wolff, 'Ein ungewöhnlicher Schreib-Ort? Frauenrechtlerinnen im deutschen Kaiserreich und ihr politisches Schreiben im Frauenverein – Eine Annäherung', in *Frauen in der literarischen Öffentlichkeit 1780–1918*, eds. Caroline Bland and Elisa Müller-Adams (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007), 121–42.
77. Tinayre, 'Les Sacrifiées'.
78. *Ibid.*
79. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Marcelle Tinayre (Feuilleton)', *Fremden-Blatt*, 4 Februar 1900.

80. On activist translation see Maria Tymoczko, ed., *Translation, Resistance, Activism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).
81. Nl Sch 125/028, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 28 August 1899.
82. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le féminisme allemand (La Tribune)', *La Fronde*, 22 December 1897; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le féminisme allemand. Suite. (La Tribune)', *La Fronde*, 23 December 1897; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le féminisme allemand. Suite II. (La Tribune)', *La Fronde*, 24 December 1897.
83. Sigma [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Le Féminisme dans la ville de Kant', *La Fronde*, 10 October 1899; Avanti [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Une Doyenne de Féminisme Allemand', *La Fronde*, 17 December 1899; Gédania [Käthe Schirmacher], 'L'Association des Étudiantes à Berlin', *La Fronde*, 1 February 1900.
84. Nl Sch 581/001–134, Käthe Schirmacher, newspaper articles 1898–1900; see also Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 270–71 (Oesch).
85. Käthe Schirmacher, 'L'art dramatique allemand à Paris', *La Fronde*, 23 November 1900; Anonymous, 'Couturières et Tailleurs pour Dames. Souscription en faveur des ourvrières tailleurs por dames', *La Fronde*, 24 February 1901.
86. For example, Sigma, Paris [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Die "Fronde" und ihre Organisation', *Dokumente der Frauen* 1, no. 8 (1899), 9; Käthe Schirmacher, 'La Fronde', *Der Bazar*, 13. Februar 1899; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Fronde', *Jahrbuch für die deutsche Frauenwelt*, eds. Elly Saul and Hildegard Obrist-Jenicke (Stuttgart: Greiner & Pfeiffer, 1899), 175–81; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die einzige Frauenzeitung der Welt', *Die Woche*, 7 April 1900.
87. Nl Sch 478/009, A. [Gile] (La Fronde) to KS, 28 January 1900; many articles in *La Fronde* were either anonymous or signed with pseudonyms. However, the real names were usually familiar to the readers as in the case of Séverine (Caroline Rémy de Guehard, 1855–1929) or Savioz (Adrienne Avril de Sainte-Croix, 1855–1939).

88. NI Sch 478/008, G. [Bassin] (La Fronde) to KS, 16 January 1900.
89. Financially rewarding were a popular illustrated book on Paris in German (Käthe Schirmacher, *Paris!* [Berlin, 1900].) and a *laterna magica* show on the Exposition universelle with daily presentations in Vienna for which Schirmacher received 30% of the profit. NI Sch 124/017, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 10 July 1900. On Schirmacher's changing relationship with *La Fronde* see also Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 270–71 (Oesch).
90. NI Sch 126/028, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 15 November 1897; see also Käthe Schirmacher, 'Französische Schriftstellerinnen', *Das litterarische Echo*, 1 May 1899 [interviews with well-known French writers Gyp, Jeanne Marni, Daniel Lesuer and Jean Bertheroy]; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Im Pariser Frauengefängnis', *Der Tag*, 20 November 1902 [report on a visit to a female prison].
91. For a bibliography of her writings: Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*.
92. On the concept of the transnational mediator: Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 261–81 (Oesch).
93. For example, Käthe Schirmacher, 'La Question des langues en Autriche', *L'Européen*, 12 September 1903; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le Partage de la Bohême', *L'Européen*, 14 May 1904; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Polonais et Ruthènes (Galicie)', *L'Européen*, 1 July 1905.
94. Théodore Brix, 'Sur la question polonaise (Pologne Allemande)', *L'Européen*, 7 January 1905; Anonymous, 'Le Courrier Européen avait publié le 4 mai dernier...', *Bulletin Polonais*, 15 June 1906; for more see detail see Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 387–389, 402, 533 (Oesch).
95. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Das dunkle England. "In darkest England and the way out", by William Booth', *Unsere Zeit*, Februar 1891; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Frederic Mistral', *Schlesische Zeitung*, 4 September 1891; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der internationale Frauenkongreß in Chicago', *National-Zeitung*, 25 June 1893.

96. Rebecca Earle, *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945* (Aldershot [u.a.]: Ashgate, 1999).
97. On the gendered art and practice of letter-writing see also Klaus Beyrer and Hans-Christian Täubrich, eds., *Der Brief. Eine Kulturgeschichte der schriftlichen Kommunikation* (Heidelberg: Edition Braus, 1996); Barbara Hahn, “‘Weiber verstehen alles à la lettre’”. Briefkultur im beginnenden 19. Jahrhundert’, in *Deutsche Literatur von Frauen*, ed. Gisela Brinker-Gabler (Munich: Beck, 1988), 13–27.
98. For examples cf. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*.
99. Johanna Gehmacher, ‘Moderne Frauen, die Neue Welt und der alte Kontinent. Käthe Schirmacher reist im Netzwerk der Frauenbewegung’, *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* (OeZG) 22, no. 1 (2011), 16–40.
100. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 216–17 (Heinrich).
101. *Ibid.*, 387 (Heinrich).
102. Wilhelm von Massow, *Die Polen-Not im Deutschen Osten: Studien zur Polenfrage* (Berlin: A. Duncker, 1903); Käthe Schirmacher, ‘La question polonaise’, *L’Européen*, 24 December 1904.
103. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Le féminisme à l’université de Zurich’, *Revue Politique et Littéraire - Revue Bleue*, no. 10 (1896), 310–14.

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# 6

## ***Féminisme: Translations, Transfers, and Transformations***

The French neologism ‘féminisme’ began to migrate into other languages around 1900. However, its journey did not leave the term unchanged. Although it had already arrived in German and English by the first decade of the twentieth century, it served as a translation of the French concept only in exceptional cases. The closely connected French, German, and English publications on which this chapter focuses illustrate this. In the following, I examine Käthe Schirmacher’s most successful book, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* (1905, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1909), and compare it with its less comprehensive precursor, *Le féminisme aux États-Unis, en France, dans la Grande-Bretagne, en Suède, et en Russie* (1898), and the German book’s English translation *The Modern Woman’s Rights Movement. A Historical Survey* (1912).

Schirmacher’s French book compared women’s movements and the circumstances that gave rise to them in five different countries, while her German book and its English translation attempted to outline women’s movements across the world, although in reality gave strong priority to European and North American developments of the nineteenth century. By examining the contexts and constellations in which these transnational histories were created, I show the emerging market for concise

descriptions of the new movement and characterise the readership and the use of such surveys. Turning to the books' contents, I analyse some of Schirmacher's strategies with regard to the challenging task of integrating different national histories and stories and finding a common perspective. In comparing the French and German texts, I demonstrate a change of strategy in building transnational connections from a typifying to an ethnicising approach.

Drawing on a conceptual history approach and theoretical reflections on self-translation, I analyse strategies of transfer and translation between these books and also discuss the transfers and transformations of the French key term 'féminisme' in a broader context.<sup>1</sup> I am interested both in how a concept is transformed while it travels and in the ways an author who translates her own texts behaves much more freely with those texts than a translator would do. I trace the translations of this term in German and English and of the German term 'Frauenbewegung' in English and French and also point to early occurrences of the terms 'Feminismus' and 'feminism' in German and English. The final section of the chapter outlines some reviews and receptions and asks how these accounts have been reflected in other summary histories of feminism and women's movements.

## **Public Interest in Women's Activism as a Transnational Phenomenon**

The upswing of women's movements in several European countries in the 1890s aroused a growing public interest both in the forces behind this development and in the protagonists and their strategies. The 1893 women's congress at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (see Chapter 4) was an important event, where activists began to create transnational links between their movements. In so doing, they also contributed to making this activism and its transnational dynamics visible across national borders. The 1896 conferences in Paris and Berlin (see Chapters 1 and 5) marked the arrival of transnational strategies on the European continent.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, activists reporting on the conferences used accounts of other countries and the movement's



successes there to push the cause in their own country.<sup>3</sup> As a result, they also created interest in the women's movement as a transnational phenomenon in the general public.

Having been in Chicago in 1893 and attended both the Paris and Berlin congresses in 1896, Käthe Schirmacher was well equipped to respond to this interest. Her multilingualism gave her access to a wealth of information obtained at the congresses and through the contacts she made there. This soon became visible in her French and German journalism. She reported on the Paris *Congrès féministe* in spring and the International Congress of Women in Berlin in September 1896 in various papers.<sup>4</sup> In the following year, she wrote about the French movement in German and Swiss media and about the German movement in the French press.<sup>5</sup> She also wrote on women's issues in other countries, for example in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup> With these texts and her earlier writings on Britain and the USA, she qualified as an expert on women's issues and movements in many countries.<sup>7</sup> As a result, she planned to generate an income from the growing interest in accurate information about the transnational development. In February 1897, she informed her mother that the French publisher Armand Colin had accepted a proposal she had already ventured a year earlier to write a concise account of women's movements in different countries. However, she hoped it would go into several editions, as the assignment did not pay particularly well.<sup>8</sup> In fact, only one edition appeared, but she was able to sell an abridged version to a French social-political journal shortly afterwards.<sup>9</sup>

Schirmacher's 1898 and 1899 accounts were addressed to a wider public in France, where a considerable number of male intellectuals supported the movement.<sup>10</sup> Her German book *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, published in 1905, had other audiences and functions in mind. The publication appeared shortly after the official founding of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) at the 1904 congress of the International Council of Women (ICW) in Berlin and was strategically linked to this event (see also Chapter 8).

In the following years, the new organisation had to define its place in transnational activism, and exchanges of information about conditions and policies across borders became an important strategy in this context. Schirmacher's *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* provided this sought-after

information for a German audience.<sup>11</sup> Alice Zimmern's 1909 *Women's Suffrage in Many Lands*, which used Schirmacher's study as one of its primary sources, supplied similar content for an English audience.<sup>12</sup> Both books served as quasi-official handbooks of the IWSA, as was shown by President Carrie Chapman Catt's response to the request for the creation of an official manual at the 1911 congress in Stockholm. She drew attention to the 'books written by Miss Zimmern and Miss Schirmacher' which, she said, 'fulfilled the purpose'.<sup>13</sup> It may well be possible that this official recognition motivated the translation of the 1909 second edition of Schirmacher's book into English by American historian Carl Conrad Eckhardt (1878–1946) in 1912. It could explain why, despite the wealth of information on women's movements and the suffrage available in the English language media, a German book was translated into English. However, the most important market for this publication—those many members of the IWSA for whom English was either their mother tongue or the most accessible foreign language—was lost when Schirmacher left the organisation as a result of disputes soon afterwards (On the conflicts that resulted in this divide see Chapters 8, 9 and 10).

## Comparing Constellations and Connecting Activists

When Käthe Schirmacher's *Le féminisme aux États-Unis* was published by the prestigious publisher Armand Colin in 1898, the eighty-page book portraying women's movements in five countries was innovative in several respects. Its systematic approach can be analysed in the context of the developing sociology of the time. As a collaborator of the *Musée social*, a then-new institution that studied and documented social realities and social movements in industrialising societies and advocated for better social politics, Schirmacher had insight into and made use of this new type of research.<sup>14</sup> Her accounts of the different countries all began with statistical information on the population and included details on economic development, politics, law and major political and social institutions, thus explaining the situation of women in a broader social

context. Although Schirmacher's focus was on the middle-class women's movement, working-class women and socialist movements were also considered. What is more, she claimed that women's movement activists understood their movement as an answer to the social question.<sup>15</sup>

In conjunction with this empirical approach, Schirmacher created a typology of feminist movements based on cultural and political criteria such as religious belief, form of governance and, in the case of monarchies, the influence of the sovereign.<sup>16</sup> Distinguishing Protestant and Catholic republics, constitutional, progressive, and absolute monarchies, she presented five case studies, each representing a particular type of society. In her conclusion she stated commonalities and differences between the movements she had examined. Thus, on the one hand, she asserted the existence of an international movement with common roots in larger economic and political developments. At the same time, she provided reflections and concepts to help understand differences between the movements in the context of the general development of their respective countries.<sup>17</sup> Most importantly, however, Schirmacher firmly rejected the idea that ethnic differences could explain or legitimise the different levels of women's emancipation and rights in different countries. These differences, she emphatically proclaimed, pointed exclusively to the fact that the idea of social justice had not yet made sufficient progress in a particular country.<sup>18</sup>

The book not only supplied information about the social situations and movements, but also references to English, German, and French sources. Schirmacher listed scientific studies, essays, articles, and anthologies, not least the minutes of women's congresses in the USA and Germany and movement journals.<sup>19</sup> By giving indications for further reading, she addressed a multilingual readership and thus developed a transnational common discussion space.

In addition to concise information on social and political situations, Schirmacher reproduced iconic narratives of the history of the movement and described constellations that were conducive to change; she supplied information on names of personalities, associations (and their membership and missions), and media and added anecdotes about prominent protagonists. With this combination she facilitated transnational networking in a practical sense but also created models for identification

across borders. Another transnational dynamic, namely that of competition, was present in this account in a more veiled way, for instance, when she quoted a statement that France should promote women's suffrage because it 'had to set a good example for the civilised world' (La France doit au monde civilisé l'exemple de cette grande initiative).<sup>20</sup>

Schirmacher began her book with a particularly detailed case study of the USA, which she described as the 'birthplace of feminism'.<sup>21</sup> She recounted the mythicised founding story of how Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) and other American women decided to fight for women's rights when they stayed in London in 1840. After having crossed the Atlantic to attend the international anti-slavery congress in the British capital, these experienced abolitionists faced a serious exclusion: as women, they were not admitted as delegates to the conference for which they had come so far and had to watch silently from the gallery.<sup>22</sup> I argue that Schirmacher placed this narrative so prominently at the beginning of her book because the transnational character of political mobilisation that became evident here was particularly important to her.

Her interest in transnational dynamics is also apparent at the point where she posits that Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) had effectively initiated the women's movement in Europe with the publication of the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792, claiming that Wollstonecraft had based her feminist thinking on the ideas of the French Revolution.<sup>23</sup> A footnote links this statement to the book's description of the *Declaration of the Rights of Women* (1791) by Olympe de Gouges (1748–1793). There, at the beginning of the chapter on France, another footnote refers the reader to the chapter on the USA to prove that American women had included Gouges' claim in their declaration of objectives.<sup>24</sup> Here one could assume that Schirmacher, in identifying the real origin of feminism in France, was also honouring her second homeland and thus hoped to inspire feminism there.

The most conspicuous omission in this comparative study is the German Reich. Schirmacher knew the movement in her country of origin well and had already published a detailed report in *La Fronde* in 1897; another was to follow in the *Revue de Paris* in 1898.<sup>25</sup> It would have been easy to fill the pages of the book she published with Armand Colin with this knowledge in a time when she was struggling to earn

enough money through her writing. Why did she leave it out? The three-part article in *La Fronde* provided information about the movement and its history. Here she went into detail about its factions and organisations, personalities and activities and gave useful hints on possible connections between the French and German movements. The article in the *Revue de Paris*, addressed to a wider audience, elaborated on German society, economy and culture, as well as on various social groups, and then explained why the movement was a logical development. Together they contained all the information she conveyed in the studies of individual countries in the Colin book.

However, at this time she avoided comparing Germany with other countries. With one exception (a reference in the *Revue de Paris* to partial municipal voting rights of American, Australian, and British women, which German women did not have), she treated Germany as a stand-alone case.<sup>26</sup> Also, the German development could not easily be placed in the typifying categories she had established—at least not if one knew as many details as Schirmacher did. This also sheds light on the selection of cases examined in the French book *Le féminisme aux États-Unis*. The first three, long chapters on the USA, France, and Great Britain (under which chapter heading Schirmacher discussed England and Scotland) dealt with countries where she had lived for some time, a fact Schirmacher also mentioned in the preface. The much shorter chapters on Sweden and Russia were based on written material. In their extreme dissimilarity they helped to put into perspective the lesser differences between the first three countries she discussed. Apparently based on information from Schirmacher herself, a German newspaper announced the *Revue de Paris* article and stated that this text on Germany appeared as a separate article because there had not been enough space in Schirmacher's study *Le féminisme aux États-Unis*.<sup>27</sup> Thus Schirmacher kept the two French publications, the comparative book on feminisms in different countries and the report on the women's movement in Germany, together and apart at the same time. But the missing space could possibly also have been a conceptual one.

A year later, Schirmacher included the German Reich in another, much shorter overview of the state of women's movements, 'Notes sur

l'état actuel du féminisme' (1899), now following a simpler classification. Claiming that up to the present day, feminist movements had only appeared in Western countries, she now distinguished Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox countries (consequently blanking out other religions from the map).<sup>28</sup> She affirmed that feminism was an international movement with the same causes in all societies, but added that it found the best conditions in Protestant countries, while it faced stronger obstacles in Catholic countries and was only beginning to emerge in Orthodox countries. She included Germany, as a 'predominantly' Protestant country, in the leading group of this hierarchy; at the same time, she claimed that the entire women's movement had a humanising mission from which women and men all over the world would benefit if only legislators would adopt its principles.<sup>29</sup> It seems that Schirmacher's global perspective was based on the introduction of a clear hierarchy that set the direction of the envisaged mission.

## A Global Perspective Based on Ethnicised and Racialised Differences

By the time *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* was published in 1905, the movement and also Schirmacher's position in the movement had changed considerably compared to 1898. This is clear even from the preface, where she explains her opinion on the division between bourgeois and socialist feminists in some countries and discusses the relationship between the older ICW and the newly formed IWSA. She openly took sides in ongoing debates, claiming that working-class and middle-class women had many common interests which socialists and liberal women's movements would do best to address together—as they did in many countries other than Germany. She also posited that a productive division of labour existed between the ICW and the IWSA, with the former being the integrative and the latter the driving force.<sup>30</sup> These performative statements document her efforts to bridge the deep rifts that marred the growing movement.

Among the textual elements that made their way from the French into the German publication unchanged are iconic descriptions such as the

notorious narrative of the American activists at the London anti-slavery congress described above.<sup>31</sup> A telling example of self-translation is the anecdote on American activist Lucy Stone (1818–1893), who had justified her desire to study Hebrew and Greek with her doubt of translations of the Bible that legitimised the subordination of women.<sup>32</sup> It communicates Schirmacher's conviction that education was a way to challenge power relations and demonstrates her awareness of the political relevance of translation.

The transnational character of the women's movement had been only a theoretical perspective in her French publications of 1898 and 1899; in the new book the organisational structures of the transnational networks are an explicit theme. Furthermore, the German study describes the transnational character of activism and its organised nature, which contributed decisively to its success, as the main criteria for defining the women's movement as 'modern'.<sup>33</sup>

The structure of the book ties in with her earlier classifications based on religion and political system, but is different in two respects. First, Schirmacher translates the criterion of religion used in the French publications into ethnic differences. Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox countries were now classified instead as Germanic, Romance, and Slavic lands respectively (the ethnic sections for the most part encompassing the same countries as the former religious ones), and the reference to the West was substituted by the claim that the women's movement was 'led by women of the white race' (Den Frauen weißer Rasse ist hierbei die Führerschaft zugefallen).<sup>34</sup> Second, she added another group of countries she called 'Orient and Outer Orient' (Orient und äusserster Orient). Thus, and by subsuming Central and South America under the Romance lands, she sought a global perspective; this, however, is in the end only expressed in brief remarks on a few pages of her book.

The global perspective Schirmacher now was aiming for reflected the IWSA's international mission. However, when she wrote *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* in 1904/05, she established this perspective through an orientalisising discourse; for example, she postulated that 'the woman' is a 'beast of burden and slave in most parts of the world' (In dem größten Teil der Welt ist die Frau Lasttier und Sklavin) and combined

this with her only reference to Africa by stating the (estimated) populations of Africa and Asia in a footnote.<sup>35</sup> However, she also held that in most countries of 'European civilisation' women were infantilised and unfree, existing as 'mere sexual beings' (Geschlechtswesen).<sup>36</sup> Although she was thus also critical towards countries she called 'civilised', she continued to use the terms 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' to explain women's subordination:

She is free and a human being only in a very, very small part of even the civilised world. And even here we are daily confronted with tough, not yet dead remains of the old barbarism and tyranny. (Frei aber und ein Mensch ist sie nur in einem ganz, ganz kleinen Teile selbst der zivilisierten Welt. Und auch in diesem Teile treffen wir tagtäglich auf zäherhaltende und noch nicht abgestorbene Reste der alten Barbarei und Tyranis).<sup>37</sup>

In the logic of this argumentation, she could refer to non-Western civilisations only by othering them in orientalising categories.<sup>38</sup> This approach was linked to the concept of calling all diverse forms of women's action against male domination since prehistoric times women's movements, but reserving the term 'modern women's movement' for the organised international activism that first appeared during the French Revolution and took shape in Western countries in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

The new approach created more than one problem. This became evident in the way Schirmacher covered national conflicts in the Habsburg Empire. She created different sections on the various parts of the empire, placing 'German Austria' (Deutschösterreich) and Hungary in the Germanic section and 'Czech Bohemia' (Tschechisch-Böhmen) and Moravia, Galicia, and Slovenia in the Slavic section. Bosnia and Herzegovina she assigned to the 'Orient' section. Terms such as 'German Austria' reflected the colloquial language of national differences but were not official designations. Schirmacher only admitted certain inconsistencies in her system in a footnote on Hungary, saying the country was incorporated into the Germanic section for 'political and factual reasons'.<sup>40</sup> Since she had no problem putting other parts of Austria-Hungary into other sections of her book, the unity of the Empire was



obviously not the 'political' reason for this grouping of the countries; the positioning of Hungary suggests another very likely rationale. With two exceptions (Canada and Finland), all the countries in the first section were either founding members of the IWSA, or delegates from these countries had been present at the founding meeting. This was also the case with Australia and New Zealand, which Schirmacher dealt with in a long chapter in the Germanic section without mentioning this in the table of contents.<sup>41</sup>

Following this logic, the splitting of the Habsburg Empire and women's movements there in Schirmacher's book can again be linked to the politics of the IWSA. As Susan Zimmermann has convincingly argued, the issue of empires and the stateless nations they ruled posed significant problems for the politics of both the ICW and the IWSA, with the Habsburg monarchy being the most contentious issue in the early years. The ICW restricted membership to umbrella organisations representing a state (and in the case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire finally accepted only two organisations, Austria and Hungary, while tacitly accepting that the Czech, Polish, Croatian, and Slovenian movements were not represented). In contrast, the IWSA tended to support nation-building movements within the Habsburg Empire.<sup>42</sup> This became visible, for instance, when in 1909 a Czech-Bohemian and a German-Austrian suffrage committee were both affiliated with the IWSA on an equal footing.<sup>43</sup> In a sense, Schirmacher's decision to classify parts of the Habsburg Empire as 'countries' and to discuss them separately in three different sections of her book not only reflected the political reality that women's movements of different nationalities barely cooperated with each other within the multinational empire, but also foreshadowed the IWSA's future policy towards national movements.<sup>44</sup>

## Useful Information for Activists

Schirmacher included case studies of very different lengths in the ambivalent structure of her book. Clearly depending on the material which she had to hand, and on the relevance of a particular country for the international movement and the IWSA particularly, some of

the chapters were more detailed, others rather vague. This reinforces the impression that this was not a study with a systematic approach (as had been the case with *Le féminisme aux États-Unis*) but a handbook intended to provide useful information for activists, journalists, and the interested public.<sup>45</sup> For this purpose, Schirmacher compiled statistics and information on populations, women's participation in the labour force, working conditions, and wages. She described political and legal conditions and social and educational institutions, as well as organisations and personalities who worked for women's social and political rights. Wherever she had gained knowledge about achievements of women in the professions, universities, or legal institutions, she passed it on, often mentioning the names of these women.

There is thus considerable tension between the ideology conveyed in the book's structure and framing argument and the more fact-based approach in the chapters. It seems that Schirmacher in many cases did not sacrifice a detail she considered worth telling to the concept of civilisation that had become so important to her. The chapter on Turkey is one of many examples that illustrate this. Although in this chapter she reiterates her view that in Muslim countries women are 'slaves' and 'beasts of burden', she not only lists the demands of the developing Turkish women's movement, but also adds that the Quran gives the wife much better rights than the Code Napoléon or German civil law. Such insights were possibly behind her lament in the opening remarks of the book section that there were also relapses into barbarism in Europe that were not sufficiently condemned.<sup>46</sup> This argumentative manoeuvre, however, also points to Schirmacher's ambiguity: although she was interested in a variety of details, she also sought to impose her concepts of civilisation and barbarism on what she reported, even if this created arbitrary statements.

The very long chapter on the German Reich tied into this argument to some extent by stating that the women's movement had not been confronted by more difficult circumstances in any other European country, a statement that contradicted Schirmacher's previous view that the women's movement had found most favourable conditions in the Germanic countries.<sup>47</sup> Having shied away from comparisons between

Germany and other countries for French audiences, she now offered a multitude of comparisons for her German readers:

In Germany, there is no talk of support for women's aspirations by a large liberal majority in parliament, as is the case in England, France, and Italy. (Von einer Unterstützung der Frauenbestrebungen durch eine große liberale Majorität in den Volksvertretungen, wie England, Frankreich, Italien sie aufzuweisen haben, ist in Deutschland nicht die Rede).<sup>48</sup>

Following on from this introduction, Schirmacher critiqued in much detail German women's lack of rights in education, employment, and marriage, as well as in politics. Here her argument had a double dynamic. On the one hand, she highlighted the steadfastness of the German movement, which had developed and prevailed despite these hindrances and obstacles.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, the comparative approach, which was also made clear in other chapters, aimed at questioning and combating the status quo in Germany, particularly concerning the lack of collaboration between middle-class and socialist women's movements.<sup>50</sup>

A major focus of the chapter was on events at the 1904 congress in Berlin and the conflicts that had escalated there. As in earlier publications, Schirmacher gave insights into the factions of the movement and their protagonists. But other than in her French publications a couple of years earlier, she no longer painted a picture of peaceful cooperation. Her more controversial approach can be seen as a reaction to the different audience she was now addressing, namely the German movement, in which she was trying to define her position.

At the 1904 conference, Social Democratic women had rather aggressively affirmed their view that cooperation between the middle-class-dominated women's movement and socialist women was not possible. The moderate organisers of the conference, on the other hand, had hindered the radicals by forbidding them to distribute a pamphlet about their aims.<sup>51</sup> In this way, the radicals were under attack from both sides since the Social Democrats did not differentiate between them and the moderates whereas the latter left no space for them to explain their programme.<sup>52</sup>

Addressing the Social Democrats in her book, Schirmacher pointed out that the radicals were not the ones who had excluded women workers' associations from the women's movement's umbrella organisation but had actually called for their inclusion.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, she sought to define a place and role for radicals in the larger women's movement. She used the metaphor of the 'leaven' (Sauerteig) to characterise them as a driving force and held that the radicals had initiated all major innovations and programmatic demands in the movement; this had only been obscured by the fact that some of these protagonists had later become either socialists or moderate feminists.<sup>54</sup>

Schirmacher's account of the German movement conveyed the major factions and their activities quite clearly. But although she tried to use factual language, it was clear she was speaking as a participant in ongoing conflicts. At some points her views on the international movement became visible, too. It is noticeable, for example, that she pleaded for a stronger influence of European activists within transatlantic cooperation and to that aim explicitly emphasised the historical role of Europeans in the USA.<sup>55</sup> This was also reflected in the opening of the chapter on France. Having attributed the parenthood of the movement to both the USA and the Englishwoman Mary Wollstonecraft, here she identified its birthplace as France: 'The European women's movement is born in France...' (Die europäische Frauenbewegung wird in Frankreich geboren).<sup>56</sup>

In the second edition, published in 1909, Schirmacher added two types of information. She described developments since 1904, particularly on the suffrage movement, and also included knowledge she had gained through further investigations, particularly in the sections on Eastern Europe and Asia, where she also added a chapter on Serbia. In the considerably expanded chapter on Russia, Schirmacher referred to English translations of resolutions, speeches and court cases commissioned and made available to her by a Russian activist.<sup>57</sup>

The chapters on China, Japan, India, and Turkey now included descriptions of legislative initiatives, congresses, associations, journals, and personalities. In the China chapter she also referred to a Paris lecture on women in China by a Chinese official, Sie-Tou-Fa (life dates unknown). Criticising his claim that there was no 'féminisme' in China

in the light of what she had learned about the movement there, on one occasion she also uses the German term 'Feminismus' as a translation of his French statement. However, it remained a one-off use. The new insights Schirmacher had acquired in the meantime also led to a readjustment of her concept of civilisation. She now distinguished between 'uncivilised countries' and 'countries of non-European civilisation' (nicht zivilisierte Länder und Länder nicht europäischer Zivilisation).<sup>58</sup>

## Transfers and Translations of a Concept

Despite the changes in perspective and framing, both the French and German publications discussed in this chapter focus on a phenomenon that from today's perspective we would call the feminist movement. Their common focus was on activism aimed at changing women's situation in society. This identical theme was not conveyed by a common term, but rather by a stable translation of the French notion 'féminisme' into the German notion 'Frauenbewegung'—literally, 'women's movement'—and vice versa. Nowhere in *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* (or indeed anywhere else) did Schirmacher advocate the transfer of the French word 'féminisme' into the German language. Quite on the contrary, in her German writing for many years she invariably called the French movement 'Frauenbewegung'.<sup>59</sup> In her 1905 book, she even clarified that by this German word she meant *all* factions of the French movement. By including the French words 'le féminisme chrétien' in this statement she also affirmed that in her view the notion 'féminisme' was not reserved for the radical wing in France.<sup>60</sup> This was mirrored in her consequent use of the term 'féminisme' whenever writing in French about the German movement and all its different groupings.<sup>61</sup>

An even broader concept of 'féminisme' became evident in Schirmacher's (abridged) self-translation of her own German article 'Züricher Studentinnen' (Zurich Women Students), to which she gave the French title 'Le féminisme à l'Université de Zurich' (Feminism at the University of Zurich).<sup>62</sup> In the German version, the term 'Frauenbewegung' had not appeared anywhere, and scattered references to the woman question and emancipation only served to identify issues discussed among

professors and students, among many other things. Schirmacher's choice of the word 'féminisme' in the French translation indicated differences both of language and culture. First, in nineteenth-century Germany, the mentioning of 'women students' (Studentinnen) without further comment in itself already connotes the idea of a right that women did not have there, namely to study, implying a connection to the women's movement. This was not the case in France, where the universities had admitted women since the 1860s; women students there were not necessarily connected to the women's movement. A literal translation such as 'Les Étudiantes', for example, would therefore have omitted an important connotation of the German title. Second, in France, where women's emancipation was an idea supported also by men, and feminist associations (which did not have a mass membership) existed mainly in Paris, the term 'féminisme' denoted a different kind of movement than in Germany and the Anglo-Saxon countries, where organising was an essential strategy.<sup>63</sup> In France, 'féminisme' described a more general view of the world, a view that was also found among women students (and some of their professors) in Zurich.

The conceptual history of both the French and the German terms can help explain the clear (and influential) choices Schirmacher made as a translator, self-translator, and author in both languages.<sup>64</sup> In her research on the emergence of the French neologism, 'féminisme' Karen Offen has shown how the concept was brought to the fore in the growing feminist movement of the 1890s. She points to the misattribution to Charles Fourier (1772–1837) (which, however, helped to give the term some history) and traces its evolution from a pejorative term coined by Alexandre Dumas the Younger (1824–1895) into a positive label indicating a demand for women's rights, first used in this sense by Hubertine Auclert (1848–1914).<sup>65</sup> Gisela Bock has contributed to this research in her illuminating conceptual history of the term 'Frauenemanzipation' (women's emancipation) and its onomasiological alternatives with her research on early uses of the term 'Feminismus' in the German language. She points out that 'Feminismus' was mentioned only very sporadically around 1900; its meaning remained disputed, and, above all, no faction of the women's movement identified with the term in Germany.<sup>66</sup> Its French original version, however, took off steeply from the mid-1890s

onwards. Despite some criticism, it soon became the collective term for the entire movement.<sup>67</sup>

Bock and Offen mention an early record of the concept 'féminisme' in Germany, namely Eugénie Pontonié-Pierre's (1844–1898) report on the French women's movement at the International Congress of Women in Berlin 1896.<sup>68</sup> However, as noted already in Chapter 1, Pontonié-Pierre did not attend the congress in person, instead entrusting Käthe Schirmacher with the task of presenting a German translation of her report.<sup>69</sup> But in the minutes of the congress, which comprised English, French, and German texts, the French original was published in French without mentioning that the author had not been present at the congress personally and a German summary of her speech had been given on her behalf.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, we have no record of whether Schirmacher proposed a use of the term in Germany on this occasion. However, her German press reports on the 1896 congress in Paris and her French reports on the women's congress in Berlin in the same year speak strongly against this possibility, as Schirmacher consistently used 'Frauenkongress' for both events in German and 'Congrès féministe' for the same events in French.

In France, Schirmacher, as a writer for *La Fronde*, was among the activists who successfully propagated the new word 'féminisme'. Among the contributions of the *Fronde* to its introduction was a column entitled 'Chronique féministe', which noted achievements of women and activities of the movement and thus defined a certain type of event and statement as pertaining to that category.<sup>71</sup> Schirmacher, for her part, being both a French and German journalist, helped to establish 'féminisme' precisely by *not* transferring it into the German language. Consistently translating 'féminisme' into the then well-established German word 'Frauenbewegung' (and vice versa), she provided it with a stable meaning in her writings. Karen Offen's claim that Schirmacher was 'one of a handful of Germans who did use the French terminology' and thus advocated the concept 'feminism', is misleading in more ways than one, as it disregards the fact that although Schirmacher propagated the French term 'féminisme', she used neither the German word 'Feminismus' nor the English word 'feminism'.<sup>72</sup> It also ignores the complex transnational dynamics of transfer and translation of key concepts of a movement.

How important it was for Schirmacher to avoid any confusion between the German term 'Frauenbewegung' and occasional and tentative uses of the Germanised term 'Feminismus' became clear in 1904. In a debate with a critic of the women's movement who had identified the movement with 'Feminismus', she firmly rejected the equation of the two terms. The healthy and empowering 'Frauenbewegung', she declared, had nothing to do with the 'unhealthy eroticism' (ungesunde Erotik) and 'liberation only of carnal desires' (einseitige Emanzipation des Fleisches) that characterised 'Feminismus'.<sup>73</sup> The exchange illustrates the use of the term as early as 1904; but it also demonstrates that the meaning of 'Feminismus' was very similar to that of the concept 'Frauenemanzipation' (women's emancipation) which in the early nineteenth century had become associated with the 'liberation of carnal desires'. Many activists of the women's movement, therefore, avoided references to 'women's emancipation' which consequently led to the introduction of the terms 'Frauenfrage' (women question) and 'Frauenbewegung' (women's movement).<sup>74</sup> Taking this history into account, we can understand that Schirmacher, in order to maintain the stability of her translation between 'féminisme' (which she sought to promote in France) and 'Frauenbewegung' (which denoted a clear feminist agenda in Germany), perceived an ill-defined but sexually connoted German term 'Feminismus' only as a threat.

In Switzerland, however, the development differed from that in Germany. In 1900, in a Swiss article quoting Schirmacher's 1899 overview on the state of the women's movements in various countries, the author considered it necessary to clarify that 'féminisme' was to be translated as 'Frauenbewegung'.<sup>75</sup> But in the following years, the German neologism 'Feminismus' was increasingly used as a parallel term to 'Frauenbewegung' in Switzerland. Here, the Swiss proximity to French culture played an important role, as shown by several articles discussing 'Feminismus' in the sense of 'féminisme' in 1909. They all either referred to the movement in France or were translations from French Swiss publications. As in France, male supporters were prominent in Switzerland, too.<sup>76</sup> This exceptional development, however, does not seem to have had much influence on the word's use in other German-speaking countries.



In 1912, the 1909 edition of Schirmacher's book *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* was translated by Carl Conrad Eckhardt into English and published under the title *The Modern Woman's Rights Movement. A Historical Survey*, which reflected the American terminology by using the singular 'woman'.<sup>77</sup> In any case, the term 'women's/woman movement' conveyed such a broad concept that its meaning had to be specified. Schirmacher was already aware of this in 1898 when she distinguished between 'the women's movement' and 'the women's rights movement' which she identified with the 'woman suffrage movement'. In her French publication she used the English terms and added the French translations 'mouvement des femmes', 'mouvement pour les droit des femmes', and 'mouvement pour le suffrage des femmes'.<sup>78</sup> Her translator Eckhardt, however, decided to refer to 'rights' in the title of his translation, which the German title does not. Presumably he did this because a reference to suffrage would have been too narrow given the book's diverse content that included social and legal situations and movements. Thereby, he also highlighted a particular perspective of the text: its character as a handbook on different situations of women in different countries and various initiatives to change them. In a translator's note, Eckhardt pointed to the book's ambivalent character but also emphasised its practical usefulness. Since 'there has been no English book giving a history of the woman's rights movement' he hoped it would be welcomed by English and American readers although it was also a 'political pamphlet' communicating views not everybody would agree with.<sup>79</sup>

At this time, the term 'feminism' was already circulating in the English language. That Eckhard decided not to use it as a translation for 'Frauenbewegung' points to the instability of the new buzzword. On its way from France to the UK and the USA it had adopted various new meanings. It connoted a younger generation of women and their dissatisfaction with the restricted aims and tactics of the older women's movement.<sup>80</sup> Sometimes, however, 'feminism' was also used in a very broad sense, referring for example to a distant historical period, or it was used in a pejorative context.<sup>81</sup> These uses exemplify the term's availability for diverse meanings. After 1910, the notions 'feminism' and 'feminist' became linked to radical factions of the women's movement in the UK

and the USA, most prominently represented in the magazine *Freewoman*. *A Weekly Feminist Review*, which first came out in 1911.<sup>82</sup> Here, the term 'feminism' signalled a new formation of thinking that was characterised by a stress on individualism and self-realisation unknown to the older generation of activists.<sup>83</sup>

Unlike in Germany, in the UK and in the USA the term was adopted by a group of activists. These women, formerly associated with militant suffragism, called themselves the 'feminist avant-garde' and thus aimed at linking 'feminism' with a specific political idea.<sup>84</sup> Translation was part of the strategy of these activists, as demonstrated by a 1911 publication by the recently-founded International Suffrage Shop.<sup>85</sup> The third issue of the shop's series 'New Era Booklets' had the title *The Feminist Catechism*. This was the English translation of the last chapter of the small book *La Femme et le Peuple* by French writer Léonie Rouzade (1839–1916). The English title indicates a programmatic text, but this is not reflected in the book's style and content. And indeed, in the original French publication the translated chapter, a dialogue between 'the people' and 'the woman' about the future organisation of social life, has a different title, namely 'Le Peuple et la Femme'. Moreover, the term 'féminisme' (or 'catéchisme' for that matter) is nowhere to be found in the entire French book. So we may say that the anonymous English translator had transformed a much more explorative and experimental text into a political programme and attributed the term 'feminism' to it in order to create an origin for this term.<sup>86</sup> The English edition of Rouzade's book chapter indeed was an activist translation as defined by Maria Tymoczko: it left out what was not useful in the new context (the first part of the booklet), changed the meaning, and imagined a model (a movement inspired by this catechism in France) for a new movement in the Anglo-Saxon world to emulate.<sup>87</sup> It is worth mentioning that Rouzade's French booklet published in 1905 was actually written in May 1896, as indicated on the last page. The absence of the term 'féminisme' makes it clear that neither in the year in which the French activists claimed to have introduced the very concept 'féminisme' successfully, nor nine years later, was 'féminisme' a necessary element of a text from the heart of the movement.

## Reviews, Receptions, and Reflections

If one compares Käthe Schirmacher's French overviews of women's movements from 1898 and 1899 with her German survey from 1905/1909, the continuity of many themes and perspectives is conspicuous: the sociological perspective on the situation of women in a given society, the awareness of class differences, the focus on the history of the movement and its organisations, the details of education, work, legal and political situations.<sup>88</sup> Information from her French studies was clearly excerpted, regrouped, and supplemented for the German book. Schirmacher used her earlier texts as a resource, as a repository for details and facts which were integrated in new contexts, but also for self-translations. The transfer of many elements from one text to the other may also help to explain the conceptual and formal heterogeneity of the German study, which not only contained chapters of varying length, clarity, and detail, but also left (or bent) its own conceptual framework when it got in the way either of Schirmacher's intention of providing practical information for activists or of an argument she wanted to make.

However, several changes in terms of argumentative framework, message, and readership are also noticeable. The analytical comparative approach to a few European countries was replaced by the claim to cover the whole world. This resulted in a hierarchical ordering of countries based on the concept of civilisation. Instead of providing information for a general audience the new publication addressed activists' need for politically useful information. Against this background, it is interesting to examine how these texts were received in different contexts.

Käthe Schirmacher's small French book *Le féminisme aux États-Unis* and her *Revue de Paris* essay on the women's movement in Germany in the same year were received well in France and in Germany. A French reviewer praised the clarity and conciseness of the comparative study and only regretted that the author had not included personal observations and views.<sup>89</sup> A review of the essay on Germany reported on its content in detail and Schirmacher's further publications in well-established intellectual journals not associated with the women's movement show that she had been able to establish herself in the French press as an expert on the subject.<sup>90</sup>

The German *Neue Bahnen* not only praised the author for her multilingual writing and her academic achievements but—withstanding a minor critique of the Russia chapter—summarised all the book's chapters approvingly and thanked Schirmacher particularly for all the new information about France. The reviewer A. S. also acknowledged the comparative approach saying that it would serve to better understand the movement in Germany, too. A. S., presumably the journal's editor Auguste Schmidt (1833–1902), also reflected on the term 'féminisme' which in her opinion was not identical with the German words 'Frauenbewegung' and 'Frauenfrage', as it included also the activities of male supporters and was more focused on the issue of women's rights. For lack of an alternative the author worked with the translation 'Feminismus' for her review, although she felt uncomfortable about it.<sup>91</sup> And indeed, the word was not used again in this journal.<sup>92</sup>

Schirmacher's German book *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* received mainly German reviews, most of them favourable, some criticising its polemics against men.<sup>93</sup> All reviewers welcomed the comprehensive information, some particularly pointing to the statistical material, others to the information on juridical questions.<sup>94</sup> The most critical (and also longest) review was by the Austrian Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein (1863–1940), former fellow feminist activist and a Social Democrat since 1897. She rejected Schirmacher's criticism of socialist propaganda and accused her of political naivety and misrepresentations of the political aims of the Social Democratic Party. However, she also appreciated the wealth of data and the concise presentation and characterised the book as a useful handbook for the middle-class women's movement, partly thanks to its brevity. Having obviously read the whole book, she listed errors but also appreciated Schirmacher's careful research on the living and working conditions of working women of all classes. Like other reviewers, she disliked Schirmacher's sharp remarks against men. Her respect for the author despite their political differences was expressed in the fact that she also reviewed the second edition and acknowledged the additions and corrections.<sup>95</sup>

Notwithstanding some positive reviews and an honourable mention in an edition of the suffragettes' journal *Votes for Women*, the most decisive (and damaging) reaction to Schirmacher's English book was a

non-reaction.<sup>96</sup> Schirmacher's fellow activists of the IWSA greeted her new publication with complete silence. After the book's German version had been praised as an informal handbook of the IWSA congress in Stockholm 1911, making the creation of a new handbook unnecessary, the translation of Schirmacher's book into English had been a sensible undertaking.<sup>97</sup> However, this changed after Schirmacher's break with the IWSA. In 1913, a handbook of the IWSA was published in three editions—English, German, and French. Its editors claimed that the decision to produce these joint publications had been taken at the 1911 Stockholm congress.<sup>98</sup> In these books Schirmacher's writings, which had hitherto connected the movement across languages and borders, were not mentioned, either in the text or in the bibliography. Her work was increasingly erased from institutional memory. This was also exemplified in her growing disputes with the journal *Jus Suffragii*, which had refused to print an article by her in German but had instead (in Schirmacher's view) mistranslated and abridged it.<sup>99</sup> Schirmacher reacted by sending nit-picking corrections to the editor.<sup>100</sup>

The reception of Schirmacher's English book took place only outside of her former political context of international suffrage activism. One such example was the book *The Feminist Movement* by socialist feminist Ethel Snowden (1881–1951). Being an outsider to the IWSA, she had no problem with quoting Schirmacher in the bibliography. Her book appeared in 1913, in the same year that the term 'feminism' gained prominence in the Anglo-Saxon countries and several books and programmatic articles propagated the new political identity of a group of younger women discontented with the 'rights' movement of an earlier generation and its moral rigour.<sup>101</sup>

Snowden, for her part, reflected the individualism of the British feminist avant-garde by claiming that the object of feminism was 'to make female human beings as free as male human beings, and both as free as it is possible for the individual to be in a complex society like that of the present'.<sup>102</sup> Like Schirmacher, on whose writings she drew heavily, Snowden embraced the concept of modernity and claimed to be speaking for the entire world. And like Schirmacher again, Snowden compared countries in an orientalisising way. She declared: 'the Romance countries are far behind the Teutonic communities in their treatment of women,

whilst the Slavic and Oriental races are still in the earlier stages of development in this particular'.<sup>103</sup> This hierarchisation of the world in the name of 'feminism' can serve as an example of what Lucy Delap has called the darker aspects of 'vanguard feminism' of the 1910s that also informed later uses of the term.<sup>104</sup>

By 1912, when the English translation of *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* was published, the movement Käthe Schirmacher had described in *Le féminisme aux États-Unis* in 1898 had grown considerably in many countries, a development Schirmacher documented in her subsequent publications. At the same time, the term with which she had characterised the phenomenon, the French neologism 'féminisme', had also emerged into the world. However, as I have shown in this chapter, it changed its meaning in various ways due to the varying uses by particular groups in different places. The term 'feminism' that the socialist internationalist Snowden used in 1913 differed significantly from what had been described as 'féminisme' fifteen years earlier. A neologism that described a male-supported movement for women's rights had turned into an ambivalent term that on the one hand pointed to a radical faction of the women's movement but at the same time also stood for a racialising and orientalisating view of the situation of women from a global perspective.

## Notes

1. On conceptual history see Reinhart Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten. Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2006); Kari Palonen, 'Translation, Politics and Conceptual Change', in *Global Conceptual History: A Reader*, eds. Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic,) 2016; Willibald Steinmetz, Michael Freeden, and Javier Fernández Sebastián, *Conceptual History in the European Space* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2017); on the concept of self-translation

- see Olga Castro, Sergi Mainer, and Svetlana Page, eds. *Self-Translation and Power: Negotiating Identities in European Multilingual Contexts* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Sara Kippur, *Writing it Twice: Self-Translation and the Making of a World Literature in French* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2015); Ilan Stavans, *On Self-Translation: Meditations on Language* (New York: State University of New York, 2018).
2. On the development of an inter/transnational women's movement: Francisca De Haan, Margaret Allen, June Purvis, and Krassimira Daskalova, eds. *Women's Activism. Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women. The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); on the concepts transnational and international: Corinna Oesch, 'Internationale Frauenbewegungen. Perspektiven einer Begriffsgeschichte und einer transnationalen Geschichte', *Traverse. Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 22, no. 2 (2016), 25–37.
  3. For example, Maikki Friberg, 'Den internationella kvinnoakskongressen i Paris', *Nutid: Tidskrift för Samhällsfrågö och Hemmets Intressen* (1896), 104–110; B. Phillips, 'Women's Congress in Paris', *The Woman's Journal* 27, no. 20 (1896); Arap-Vely, 'Charakterköpfe aus der modernen Frauenbewegung. Zum Internationalen Frauen-Congreß in Berlin, 1.-26. September 1896', *Prager Tagblatt*, 17 September 1896; Ozv Nendtvichne Hoffmann Jolan, 'A BERLINI NOI KONGRESSZUS', *Nemzeti Noneveles* 17, no. 8 (October/November 1896).
  4. For example, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der internationale Frauenkongress in Paris, 8. bis 12. April 1896', *Frauen-Reich: Deutsche Hausfrauen-Zeitung* 23, no. 17 (1896); Käthe Schirmacher, 'Congrès Féministe International de Berlin', *Journal des Débats*, 04 September 1896.
  5. For example, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Frauenbewegung in Frankreich (Feuilleton)', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 21 Januar 1897; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le féminisme allemand (La Tribune)', *La Fronde*, 22–24 December 1897; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die

- Frauenbewegung in Frankreich', *Schweizer Frauen-Zeitung* 19, no. 15 (1897).
6. For example, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Frau im Orient', *Vossische Zeitung*, 8 August 1897.
  7. A selection was republished as a book already in 1897: Käthe Schirmacher, *Aus aller Herren Länder. Gesammelte Feuilletons* (Paris, Leipzig: H. Welter, 1897).
  8. NI Schirmacher 126/003, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 1 February 1897; NI Schirmacher 011/004, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 21 January 1896; Käthe Schirmacher, *Le féminisme aux États-Unis, en France, dans la Grande-Bretagne, en Suède, et en Russie* (Paris: A. Colin, 1898).
  9. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Notes sur l'état actuel du féminisme', *Revue de Morale Sociale*, no. 2 (June 1899), 220–36.
  10. On the male support of the movement: Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1–11.
  11. Käthe Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung. Ein geschichtlicher Überblick* (Leipzig: Tebner, 1905).
  12. Alice Zimmern, *Women's Suffrage in Many Lands*, (London: Francis, 1909); the book was translated into French in 1911.
  13. The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, *Report of the Sixth Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Stockholm Sweden, June 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 1911* (London: Women's Printing Society 1911), 34. The creation of a handbook had first been discussed in Copenhagen 1906. See International Woman Suffrage Alliance, *Report: Second and Third Conferences of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Berlin, Germany, June 3, 4, 1904, Copenhagen, Denmark, Aug. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 1906*, 36.
  14. Janet R. Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France. The Musée Social & The Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002); The Musée's approach is exemplified in a typical lecture: Georges Blondel, *Les transformations sociales de l'Allemagne contemporaine, conférence faite au Musée social le 15 mars 1898* (Paris, 1898); Schirmacher, who



made excerpts from German books for Blondel (NI Schirmacher 011/017, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 10 May 1896) reviewed one of his books and referred to his social statistics: S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("Le monde officiel est en vacances...")', *La Fronde*, 11 April 1898; S. [Käthe Schirmacher], 'Lettre d'Allemagne ("Si le conflit hispano-américain...")', *La Fronde*, 26 April 1898.

15. Schirmacher, *Le féminisme aux États-Unis*, 72.
16. *Ibid.*, 1.
17. *Ibid.*, 70.
18. *Ibid.*, 73.
19. *Ibid.*, 3.
20. *Ibid.*, 35.
21. *Ibid.*, 4.
22. *Ibid.*, 7–8.
23. *Ibid.*, 40–41.
24. *Ibid.*, 12, 26, 40–41.
25. 'Le féminisme allemand (La Tribune)', *La Fronde*, 22–24 December 1897; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le Féminisme en Allemagne', *Revue de Paris*, 1 July 1898, 15–176.
26. Schirmacher, 'Le Féminisme en Allemagne', 172.
27. Anonymous, 'Bücher- und Zeitschriftenschau', *Norddeutsche allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 July 1898, 3.
28. Schirmacher, 'Notes sur l'état', 221.
29. *Ibid.*, 236.
30. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, III–V.
31. Schirmacher, *Le féminisme aux États-Unis*, 7–8; Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 3–4.
32. Schirmacher, *Le féminisme aux États-Unis*, 9; Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 13.
33. *Ibid.*, III.
34. *Ibid.* Schirmacher used the term 'race' as an equivalent for the human race she then specified through various national and cultural adjectives, e.g., 'Anglo-Saxon race' or 'Romanic race'. See Käthe Schirmacher, *Die Frauenbewegung, ihre Ursachen, Mittel*

- und Ziele* (Prag: J.G. Calve'sche k.u.k. Hof- und Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1904, second edition 1909, 133.
35. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 129.
  36. Ibid.
  37. Ibid.
  38. On ethnicising and racialising tendencies in international women's movements see Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History. British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915* (Chapel Hill, NC u.a.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1994); Mrinalini Sinha, Donna Guy, and Angela Woollacott, eds. *Feminisms and Internationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).
  39. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, III.
  40. Ibid., 84.
  41. Ibid., 22–30. The countries represented (either by delegates or messages) at the Berlin founder meeting were: USA, Australia, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the USA. Alliance, *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 5–10; the countries represented at the first suffrage conference in Washington 1902 (Canada among them) were invited to stand as charter members. See *Report: First International Woman Suffrage Conference. Held at Washington, U.S.A., February 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 1902* (New York, NY: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1902).
  42. Susan Zimmermann, 'The Challenge of Multinational Empire for the International Women's Movement: The Habsburg Monarchy and the Development of Feminist Inter/National Politics', *Journal of Women's History* 17, no. 2 (2005), 107–8; see also Corinna Oesch, 'Kooperation, Konkurrenz und Separation. Von transnationalen Beziehungen und Nationalitätenkonflikten in der bürgerlich-liberalen Frauenstimmrechtsbewegung in Österreich vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg', in *'Sie meinen es politisch!' 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht in Österreich: Geschlechterdemokratie als gesellschaftspolitische Herausforderung*, ed. Blaustrumpf ahoi (Wien: Löcker, 2019), 83–93; on the women's movement in the Habsburg monarchy: Birgitta Bader-Zaar, 'Frauenbewegungen

und Frauenwahlrecht', in *Politische Öffentlichkeit und Zivilgesellschaft*, eds. Helmut Rumppler and Peter Urbanitsch, *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 1005–27; Gabriella Hauch, *Frauen bewegen Politik. Österreich 1848–1938*, *Studien zur Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung* (Innsbruck et al.: StudienVerlag, 2009).

43. Zimmermann, 'The Challenge', 104.
44. Schirmacher also classified Norway and Finland as 'countries', although the former only left the union with Sweden in 1905 and the latter was under Russian rule.
45. With a footnote that the 'theoretical side' of the book was dealt with in another publication published in Prague in the same year, Schirmacher herself pointed out the pragmatic character of the compilation. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, III. The theoretical text she referred to was: Schirmacher, *Die Frauenbewegung, ihre Ursachen, Mittel und Ziele*.
46. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 121, 123.
47. *Ibid.*, 69.
48. *Ibid.*, 70.
49. *Ibid.*, 76.
50. For example, Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 43, 90.
51. Else Lüders, *Der linke Flügel. Ein Blatt aus der Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung* (Berlin: Loewenthal, 1904); Anonymous, 'Die Kongressleitung und die Radikalen', *Die Frauenbewegung*, 15 August 1904.
52. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 73; see also: Johanna Gehmacher, 'Frauenfrage – Frauenbewegung. Historisierung als politische Strategie', in *Rosa und Anna Schapire. Sozialwissenschaft, Kunstgeschichte und Feminismus um 1900*, ed. Burcu Dogramaci and Günther Sandner (Berlin: Aviva, 2017), 94–95.
53. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 74.
54. *Ibid.*, 73–74.
55. *Ibid.*, 5.
56. *Ibid.*, 87.

57. Käthe Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung: Ein geschichtlicher Überblick* (second edition, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1909), 125.
58. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* (second edition 1909), 142.
59. For example, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Frauenbewegung in Frankreich (Feuilleton)', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 21 Januar 1897; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Frauenbewegung in Frankreich', *Hilligers Illustriertes Frauen-Jahrbuch* (1904/1905), 867–87.
60. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 93.
61. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le féminisme allemand (La Tribune)', *La Fronde*, 22–24 December 1897; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le féminisme allemand', *Revue germanique* 1, no. 3 (May/June 1905), 257–84.
62. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Züricher Studentinnen', *Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 6, no. 8 (1895), 817–25; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le féminisme à l'université de Zurich', *Revue Politique et Littéraire—Revue Bleue*, no. 10 (1896), 310–14.
63. Schirmacher, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, 90.
64. Here I limit myself to aspects of the transnational history of the term feminism. To explore it as a 'travelling concept' in the sense suggested by Mieke Bal would imply an in-depth discussion on different theories of feminism which is beyond the scope of this book. See for this approach Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities. A Rough Guide*. (Toronto u.a., 2002).
65. Karen Offen, 'On the French Origin of the Words Feminism and Feminist', *Feminist Issues* 8, no. 2 (1988), 45–47.
66. Gisela Bock, 'Begriffsgeschichten: "Frauenemanzipation" im Kontext der Emanzipationsbewegungen des 19. Jahrhunderts', in Gisela Bock, *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 100–52, at 125–6.
67. On contemporary rejections of the concept and alternative definitions: Rachel Mesch, *Having It All in the Belle Époque: How French Women's Magazines Invented the Modern Woman* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2013), 5, 21.

68. Offen, 'On the French Origin', 48; Bock, 'Begriffsgeschichten', 125.
69. E. Dely, 'Vom Internationalen Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen zu Berlin', *Die Frau: Monatsschrift für das Gesamte Frauenlebe Unserer Zeit* 4, no. 1 (October 1896).
70. Rosalie Schoenflies et al., eds., *Der Internationale Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen in Berlin 19. bis 26. September 1896. Eine Sammlung der auf dem Kongress gehaltenen Vorträge und Ansprachen* (Berlin: H. Walther, 1897), 39–42.
71. The irregularly published column was written by the Clotilde Dissard (1873–1919), the editor of *La Revue Féministe*. See, e.g., Clotilde Dissard, 'La chronique féministe', *La Fronde*, 12 January 1899.
72. Offen, *Debating*, 179.
73. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Frauenbewegung und Feminismus', *Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung* (15 May 1904), 2116.
74. Bock, 'Begriffsgeschichten', 111.
75. Lina Hug, 'Die Frauenbewegung in England und in der Schweiz', *Neue Züricher Zeitung und schweizerisches Handelsblatt*, 26 April 1900.
76. Combe, T, 'Feminismus ohne Polemik', *Frauenbestrebungen*, no. 2 (1909), 11–2; A. de Morsier and C. C. St., 'Feminismus mit Polemik', *Frauenbestrebungen*, no. 4 (1909), 28–30; L. L., 'Einiges über den Ursprung des heutigen Feminismus (Vortrag)', *Frauenbestrebungen*, no. 4 (1909), 31–2.
77. On this terminology: Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, Conn. Et al.: Yale Univ. Press, 1987), 3.
78. Schirmacher, *Le féminisme aux États-Unis*, 4.
79. Käthe Schirmacher, *The Modern Woman's Rights Movement: A Historical Survey. Translated from the Second German Edition by Carl Conrad Eckhardt, Ph.D.*, (New York: Macmillan, 1912), VII.
80. Cott, *The Grounding*, 6.
81. Marie Alphonse René de Maulde-La-Clavière, *The Women of the Renaissance: A Study of Feminism* (New York and London: Putnam's Sons and Swan Sonnenschein, 1900), this book was

- translated from French: Marie Alphonse René de Maulde-La-Clavière, *Les Femmes de la Renaissance* (Paris: Perrin, 1898); see also: Ernest Belfort Bax, *The Fraud of Feminism* (London: Grant Richards, 1913).
82. On the founding of the journal: Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20–29.
  83. *Ibid.*, 130–132.
  84. *Ibid.*, 29–44.
  85. On the history of the shop and other retail outlets of badges, pamphlets, books and other material in support of the suffrage movement cf. John Mercer, ‘Shopping for Suffrage: the campaign shops of the Women’s Social and Political Union’, *Women’s History Review* 18, no. 2 (2009), 293–309.
  86. Léonie Rouzade, *La femme et le peuple. Organisation sociale de demain*, (Meudon: published by the author, 1905); Léonie Rouzade, *The Feminist Catechism. The Social organization of To-Morrow. From the French of Léonie Rouzade* (London: The International Suffrage Shop, 1911).
  87. Maria Tymoczko, ‘Translation and Political Engagement’, *The Translator* 6, no. 1 (2000), 41–2.
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  89. H. Bouet, ‘Le féminisme aux États-Unis, en France, dans la Grande-Bretagne, en Suède et en Russie, par Kaethe Schirmacher, in -16°. Paris, Aramand Colin et Cie, 1898’, *Journal des économistes. Revue mensuelle de la science économique et de la statistique* 57, no. 5°, XXXVI (October/December 1898).
  90. P. Moreau, ‘Kaethe Schirmacher—Le féminisme en Allemagne’, *Revue du droit public et de la science politique en France et à l’étranger* 6, no. 4 (July/August 1899); further similar publications by Schirmacher, e.g.: Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Le mouvement féministe à travers le monde’, *La Revue*, 1 December 1901; Käthe

- Schirmacher, 'Le travail des femmes en France', *Le Musée Social. Mémoires & Documents*, no. 6 (May 1902); Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le mouvement féministe', *La Revue*, 15 June 1902.
91. A. S. [Auguste Schmidt?], 'Le Féminisme...' [review], *Neue Bahnen. Organ des allgemeinen deutschen Frauenvereins*, 15 September 1898.
92. See also Bock, 'Begriffsgeschichten', 125–126.
93. Anonymous, 'Dr. Käthe Schirmacher, Die moderne Frauenbewegung (Bücherschau)', *Frauenbildung: Zeitschrift für die gesamten Interessen des weiblichen Unterrichtswesens*, 14 September 1905),  
; G. H., 'Die moderne Frauenbewegung. Von Dr. Kaethe Schirmacher', *Die Frauenbewegung* 15 September 1910.
94. Anonymous, 'Die moderne Frauenbewegung (Vom Bücher-tisch)', *Der Bazar*, 8 October 1905; Anonymous, 'Die moderne Frauenbewegung. Von Dr. Käthe Schirmacher in Paris', *Schweizer Frauen-Zeitung*, no. 7 (1905).
95. Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein, 'Dr. Käte [sic] Schirmacher, Die moderne Frauenbewegung, ein geschichtlicher Überblick. Leipzig 1905 [review]', *Die neue Zeit* 23, no. 25 (1905), f828–9; Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein, 'Käte [sic] Schirmacher, Die moderne Frauenbewegung. Zweite Auflage. Leipzig 1909, Kamilla Theimer, Frauenarbeit in Österreich. Wien 1909 [review article]', *Die neue Zeit* 28, no. 14 (1910), 508–9.
96. Anonymous, 'The Modern Woman's Rights Movement. A Historical Survey (Book Reviews)', *The Evening Star*, 16 March 1912; Juanita Lea, I, 'Woman's Rights Movement by Dr. Kaethe Schirmacher', *The Detroit Times*, 3 June 1912; K. D. S. [Katherine Douglas Smith], 'An Irrestistible Force', *Votes for Women*, 19 April 1912.
97. Alliance, *Report of the Sixth Congress 1911*, 34.
98. Chrystal Macmillan, Marie Stritt, and Maria Verone, *Woman Suffrage in Practice. Second Impression with Corrections and Addition*, ed. International Woman Suffrage Alliance and IAW (London and New York, 1913), vii.
99. NI Sch 001/024, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 6 October 1913.

100. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Report of Galicia', *Jus Suffragii*, 1 September 1913); Käthe Schirmacher, 'Dr. Schirmacher's Corrections', *Jus Suffragii*, 1 October 1913, 2–6; NI Sch 001/022, Mary Sheepshanks to KS, 12 September 1913.
101. Cott, *The Grounding*, 13–5.
102. Ethel Snowden, *The Feminist Movement* (London: Collins' Clear-Type Press, 1913), 18.
103. Snowden, *The Feminist Movement*, 43.
104. Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*.

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# 7

## Travel as Political Practice and Economic Strategy

Travelling can be many things. The traveller spreads news and ideas but also captures information and goods and is therefore both admired and eyed with suspicion. Travelling can be the search for a utopian better way of life, an instrument of knowledge production, but also implies an element of domination and dispossession of others. The European bourgeois ideology of the home as the woman's proper place has made travel a rebellious practice for women per se.<sup>1</sup> However, early praise of courageous woman travellers breaking free from constricting gender norms in the nineteenth century often ignored the close intertwining of many of these self-liberations with imperial power and colonial politics.<sup>2</sup> We should also keep in mind that the elite women who were the focus of early feminist research on travel represented only a very small group among the many barely visible mobile women: the workers and servants, governesses, and teachers in search of an income far from home.<sup>3</sup> The considerable cosmopolitan mobility between non-European countries and from those countries to the imperial centres has also long been overlooked.<sup>4</sup>

The travel practices developed by the women's movements of the late nineteenth century must thus be seen against the background of class hierarchies and global power relations of the time.<sup>5</sup> Many of those travelling to support the struggle for women's rights and better living conditions were caught up in Eurocentric views of the world and perceived gender relations in many countries they visited from a European middle or upper-class perspective.<sup>6</sup> Preconceptions about other cultures, modernity, and civilisation also influenced their travel experiences within Europe and in the USA. Käthe Schirmacher's travels and travel writings serve as a good starting point for discussing these issues. As shown earlier in this book, she sought her fortune in foreign lands at an early age and saw the USA in particular as a place of promise (see Chapter 4). In her writing on the women's movement as a global endeavour, she contributed to the exchange of knowledge between many countries but also spread orientalising views on gender relations and women's movements in different lands (see Chapter 6).

In this chapter, I explore contexts and constellations of Schirmacher's frequent travels and discuss narratives and images she created about the places she visited or imagined. In so doing, I first point to the importance of travel for all kinds of social and political movements and consequently for the spawning of national and transnational civil societies. I argue that analysing political travel practices and the motives and experiences of (often multilingual) travelling activists are crucial to understanding of social and political movements in nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>7</sup> Second, I submit that for many political travellers travel was not just a mission but also a way to earn a living. Schirmacher is a good example of this, too.

Starting from an article in which the author depicted herself as an 'apostle' on a journey through Germany, this chapter first examines the political practice of connecting and developing a movement through the travelling of activists. It then elaborates on how travel became an economic strategy for Schirmacher.<sup>8</sup> The third section of the chapter focuses on examples of Schirmacher's travel writing that illustrate both her intercultural assumptions and the expectations of the print market.

## Apostle Journeys

The lead article in the 1896 Christmas issue of *Neue Bahnen* promised to convey impressions of an ‘apostle journey’ (Apostelreise) in the headline.<sup>9</sup> The text creates the image of a message of salvation carried from one town to the next. The author—Käthe Schirmacher—identifies herself as such an ‘apostle’ and claims that on her last lecture tour she had witnessed a growing excitement, indeed an awakening throughout Germany and hopes that during the winter following her travels, self-educating groups of women might form in the whole country. For these emerging women communities who wanted to learn to think and argue in a structured and clear way, she recommended literature and gave advice on reading and debating strategies.<sup>10</sup>

Schirmacher had been travelling in Germany (and Austria) in early 1896 and later in the autumn. In January of that year, she had given a speech on the importance of the woman question for family life in the famous Gürzenich Hall in Cologne and another lecture on the same topic in Wiesbaden.<sup>11</sup> After the International Congress of Women in Berlin, where she had talked about university studies for women, she toured from Rostock to Breslau, Dresden, Prague, and Munich with a lecture on women students.<sup>12</sup> In view of this lecture tour, she described herself as a ‘true apostle-speaker’ (der reine Apostel-Redner) in a letter to her mother in 1896.<sup>13</sup> Her text in *Neue Bahnen* ties in with this self-perception. It conveyed the same thoughts about women activists’ desire for knowledge and the importance of self-development, on both a personal and practical level, for the movement’s advancement that she had already expressed in her talk in Berlin.<sup>14</sup> The article points to both how Schirmacher saw herself as a travelling missionary and the importance of travel practices for the development of women’s movements. It illustrates the practical and thematic links between different forms of political travel (conference trips, lecture tours) and the performative character of Schirmacher’s writing.

The circumstances of some of Schirmacher’s appearances in 1896 were quite remarkable. In Cologne, the mayor’s wife presided over the association for women’s further education and the dignitaries of the city were present at the event, which was attended by about a thousand people, as

well as the subsequent banquet for a hundred guests.<sup>15</sup> The prominent participation and lively attendance indicated a well-established public lecture culture. What was more, although the city was not known for its liberal-mindedness, the middle-class audience was familiar with speakers from the women's movement.<sup>16</sup> Young Schirmacher proudly noted that the famous senior leader of the movement, Helene Lange (1848–1930), had spoken at the same venue the year before.<sup>17</sup> While these details hint at close ties of the movement with an elite milieu, it is worth exploring why Schirmacher in particular could attract such large audiences. Certainly, one can assume that as one of the very few German women to hold a doctorate, she aroused some curiosity about her personality. But the fact that she was able to build a career as a public speaker in the following years indicates more specific competences and aspirations.

As shown by Ulla Wischermann, the women's movement in the German Reich (the liberal as well as the socialist organisations) developed dense networks through travelling speakers commuting between local and regional groups and associations.<sup>18</sup> A considerable part of the movement's activities consisted of meetings with invited speakers. 'Propaganda' committees organised extensive lecture programmes and the publicity put out by the movement announced the travel itineraries of major speakers in advance as well as reporting on many events afterwards, often also covering the discussion that had followed a talk.<sup>19</sup> There were different types of events, including public lectures for a general audience as well as smaller meetings with local activists. The supra-regional and national federations hoped in this way to strengthen the close ties between their branches and members, but also to stimulate the founding of new local groups.<sup>20</sup> Some lecturers had a more regional significance, while others achieved national and even international prominence, some of them giving several talks a week in different cities.<sup>21</sup> The strategy followed the example of other countries, the USA particularly. Prominent activists from the USA travelled extensively throughout Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, shaping both the American view of Europe and the model of political travel.<sup>22</sup>

Travelling lecturers were indeed a widespread phenomenon at the time. This was greatly facilitated by the rapid development of the technology and logistics of travel, especially the growing railway network.

Artists as well as scholars and scientists went on extended tours and developed transnational lives.<sup>23</sup> On a more local level, too, travelling speakers commuted between communities. Adult education centres and workers' education movements in many countries contributed to the phenomenon, while magic lantern presentations also attracted large audiences.<sup>24</sup> Based on the example of political activists travelling in Galicia, Dietlind Hüchtker has pointed to a particular type of travel that was central to the spawning of political movements there.<sup>25</sup> Building on this argument and other research about travel as a cultural practice, Elizabeth Harvey and I have argued that the social and political movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be understood properly without analysing the important contribution of travelling activists to their development.<sup>26</sup> New political ideas were not only spread by books and newspapers, but also by national and transnational meetings and conferences as well as by lecturers who took them from town to town and also to villages.<sup>27</sup>

Käthe Schirmacher was an important travelling speaker not only in Germany. She was a good networker and was considered by many to be an excellent speaker, so that she connected French and German-speaking countries through her lecture tours for about two decades. While the majority of her talks were held in German towns and cities, she also went to Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, and once also to Russia.<sup>28</sup> Schirmacher, who found it easy to connect with other people, made an effort to maintain relationships through correspondence once they had been established. In Prague, for example, she stayed at the home of Hugo and Emmanuel Grab, two fellow travellers she had met in the USA, and it seems very likely that they had facilitated her speech in the city.<sup>29</sup> Her other appearances in 1896 had obviously been arranged in connection with the International Congress of Women in Berlin in September.<sup>30</sup>

In connection with her networking practices, Schirmacher also carefully prepared the circumstances of her lectures by gathering information in advance about the places she visited. During her travels, she also made notes about her experiences and observations. In this way she created several notebooks organised by place.<sup>31</sup> She usually included statistical data on the population, information about the economy (the main

industries, the numbers of workers, their social situation, etc.), on the political situation and influential groups, the state and the main protagonists of the women's movement, and on whether there was a nursery or a girl's school. In addition to this general information, Schirmacher also recorded personal experiences in other people's homes where she was usually a guest during her stays. She often jotted down the names and occupations of those who were present at a social event, what they had talked about and whom she liked. Last but not least, she took notes about topics that went down well with her hosts and influential ideologies or beliefs in particular locations. In spring 1897, for example, she documented that the people in a certain town adhered to a particularly strict form of Protestantism and preferred Bible study to theatre. She cautioned herself in her notebook never to attack the Bible there.<sup>32</sup>

With all this information in mind, Schirmacher developed a number of speeches on different topics which she adapted to specific occasions and circumstances. Her topics included women's higher education, the protection of women workers, prostitution, the right to vote, and domestic work. She often used striking, pointed titles, sometimes with an ironic touch whose irony only became clear in the speech. The title of one very successful speech, for instance, claimed that a woman's proper place was the home, another asked what use the women's movement was for men.<sup>33</sup> As in her journalistic work, she also made use of her transnational experience and gave talks on social life in France, on the American women's movement, or reported on women's conferences she had attended. Sometimes she combined her lectures for the women's movement with a second talk in the same city on a more general subject such as French literature. She also appeared at discussion evenings with smaller groups on an agreed topic; sometimes these evenings resulted in the founding of an association, for example for suffrage or against the regulation of prostitution.<sup>34</sup> Since she used the same speeches more than once, they must have developed into well-calculated performances. These seem to have been quite successful, as is suggested not only by her letters to her mother, in which she reports dozens, sometimes hundreds of listeners and lively debates, but also by the newspaper reports of her performances that she collected and kept.<sup>35</sup> The performative aspect of

her speeches was also supported by her great interest in becoming a playwright—in 1904 she had huge success reading a theatre piece she had written herself before large audiences in Berlin.<sup>36</sup>

## Fishing Hauls

Between 1893 (the year of her transatlantic trip) and the beginning of the First World War, Schirmacher travelled mainly for purposes in relation to women's movements and abolitionism (the fight for the abolishment of laws regulating prostitution), although from 1905 onwards and particularly after 1910 she increasingly included appearances in German nationalist contexts.<sup>37</sup> The political mission and message notwithstanding, the lecture tours also created part of her income. Although the question of lecture fees was controversial in the women's movement, Schirmacher received payment for her lectures and was even known for the high fees she demanded.<sup>38</sup> Her income was increased by the way she organised her trips. Most of her travels were made in winter, between November and March. In this way she saved on heating costs in her Paris apartment. Since she mostly stayed in the private houses of local activists, she had no living costs either. As a prominent public figure of the movement, she was often cared for by her hosts very generously. Many of these women saw her as a friend and some invited her for recreational sojourns to their country homes.<sup>39</sup> A 1905 letter to her mother captured a typical situation:

Today a day of rest. It is grey outside, dark and very wet. From 9.45 to 11.15 I studied the railway guide to organise my ten cities. Wrote until 1.30 pm. Since 5 pm back at the writing desk. Nobody worries about me. I am happy. Very rich house, every comfort. (Heute Ruhetag. Ganz grau, trüb, hundenass. Ich habe von 3/4 10 – 11 1/4 das Cursbuch studirt, um meine 10 Städte zu disponiren. Bis 1/2 2 geschrieben. Und jetzt wieder seit 5 Uhr am Schreibtisch.– Keine Seele kümmert sich um mich. Ich bin glücklich.– Sehr reiches Haus, aller Comfort.)<sup>40</sup>

This description shows that Schirmacher used her temporary homes as workplaces for her journalism and, therefore, preferred houses where she could retire to a quiet, undisturbed place to read and write. But she also sometimes praised herself as someone who could write anywhere. For example, when she missed a connecting train on her transcontinental journey from Chicago to San Francisco in 1893, she wrote to her sister that she went to a local hotel, rented a room for a few hours and composed a report on the Chicago events for a German newspaper—and a letter home describing the situation.<sup>41</sup>

Schirmacher planned her lecture tours well in advance. During her winter journeys she inquired of her hosts whether a visit in the following year would be welcome, and what topic would be of interest. About six months before setting off, she usually had some fixed appointments and developed an itinerary. She then wrote to associations, activist groups, and single personalities in the cities along her planned route proposing topics and asking whether they were interested in a lecture. In this way she organised her travels for several months every year. She gave talks in both French and German, often starting off with one language and then translating her own text into the other and publishing them in both languages.<sup>42</sup> The lecture 'La femme au foyer' first given in Brussels in 1897 is a good case in point. It was translated into 'Die Frau gehört ins Haus' (Woman's place is in the home) in the same year and given in many German venues.<sup>43</sup> A favourable newspaper report on one such presentation conveyed what was part of the attraction, at least in Schirmacher's early travelling years: her charming personality that contradicted assumptions about woman scholars and feminist activists.<sup>44</sup> Reports in women's magazines on her career considerably raised her profile among women; the younger ones often saw her as a role model.<sup>45</sup> The intentional play with both negative and positive preconceptions of learned women was part of Schirmacher's performance, a strategy she must have learned at *La Fronde* where Marguerite Durand deliberately used her own past as an admired stage beauty to propagate her political ideas.<sup>46</sup>

For several years this was a successful financial strategy. The more continuous income from journalism (particularly for those newspapers where she had an agreement to provide regular articles) was upped by the payments Schirmacher received from her talks. For her, this was



more lucrative than a permanent teaching engagement. She refused a position as the director of a newly founded reform school in Hamburg that required a permanent presence in the city.<sup>47</sup> On another occasion she wrote to her mother that a permanent position was not attractive for her as it forced her to abstain from important 'fishing hauls' (Fischzüge) that her current position as a freelance writer allowed.<sup>48</sup> Schirmacher, who was one of the most sought-after speakers in the movement, gave several dozens of lectures per year.<sup>49</sup> For the year 1905, for example, she documented fifty-six lectures in different cities.<sup>50</sup> Payment usually came from the local groups. However, there was also funding from the higher ranks. When planning their 'propaganda trips' (Propagandareisen) for the next year, the 'propaganda department' (Propagandakomitee) of the German Federation of Progressive Women's Associations (Verband Fortschrittlicher Frauenvereine, VFF) listed those speakers who needed funding and those who were wealthy enough to travel at their own expense.<sup>51</sup> What is more, rich supporters of the movement like Lida-Gustava Heymann, who had inherited a fortune, also subsidised speaking tours. When they fell out over political issues, Heymann told Schirmacher in one angry letter that she had funded many of her travels for the International Abolitionist Federation in Germany (Fig. 7.1).<sup>52</sup>

However, in the course of her growing conflicts with the German radicals, it became more difficult for Schirmacher to organise her lecture tours. She now had a leaflet printed that announced several talks she was prepared to give with a short biography on the back page and a list of her most important publications.<sup>53</sup> At a time when she could no longer rely on networks established by the movement, she had to find new ways to advertise herself.

## Imagining the Other

Travel is not only a practice, it also has a strong self-reflexive side and motivates diverse forms of autobiographical writing. Travellers often document their journeys for themselves, to keep a record of their experiences. But many of them also turn these reflections into a commodity.<sup>54</sup> Schirmacher also utilised her transnational life in her work for her



**Fig. 7.1** Käthe Schirmacher posing as a public speaker, Nantes 1902 (University Library Rostock, Käthe Schirmacher Papers)

writing. Many of her essays show her as a passionate traveller who was on the road to learn, relax, and work. Some of her most successful texts addressed travellers who came to places she knew well. For example, her book on Paris, published in 1900, the year of the world exhibition, introduced her readers to the city that was then her home.<sup>55</sup> An enthusiastic review recommended it as perfect reading material for the railway journey to the French capital.<sup>56</sup> However, many of her articles also were travel writing in a more conventional sense: descriptions of holidays in the mountains and at sea, reports from travels in foreign

countries, and excursions into parts of cities which middle-class travellers often avoided.<sup>57</sup> With all these texts Schirmacher participated in a genre that provided narratives and pictures of a variety of particular places for its readers and thereby established both a stabilised understanding of the self of the author and an image of a distant 'other'. I briefly analyse three different examples here to show that factual reports and various forms of idealisation and exoticisation are often closely interwoven.

A journey to Egypt, where Schirmacher stayed for several weeks in the house of a befriended family in the spring of 1895, was not only reflected in lively letters home in which she described street life in Cairo and excursions to famous sites of ancient Egypt, but also resulted in a lecture in Paris and a long article in a German newspaper.<sup>58</sup> Ulla Siebert has rightly emphasised the exoticisations of this text (and Schirmacher's letters home); she has shown in detail the hierarchies that Schirmacher implies between European culture and the image of the 'primitive people' that is behind many of Schirmacher's descriptions. Her analysis also demonstrates how European women strengthened their concept of themselves as emancipated women through exoticising depictions of native women.<sup>59</sup>

A close reading of Schirmacher's text on Egypt, however, also reveals other dimensions: her idealisation of disappearing 'originality' (Originalität) from the entire world is linked to praise of the cultural richness of a multicultural society, with reflections on the ambivalence of modernisation and critiques of the banality arising from mass tourism. Underpinned by anti-British sentiment, Schirmacher feared that British rule would 'reduce and purge primitive Egypt until it was a well-ordered travel region for the Thomas Cook Company'.<sup>60</sup> She pointed to the multilingualism of the country and to its important poetry as well as to the different cultures and the tolerance that shaped daily life in Egypt. In her view, Europeans often were unable to deal with the complex situations this created.<sup>61</sup> As an experienced traveller, she stressed the importance of knowing the language and shared some of her strategies of getting closer to native people by accepting their habits.<sup>62</sup> We can thus say that in her descriptions of Egyptian life, two conceptions of

civilisation collided: she emphasised both the destructive side of European civilising missions and the emancipatory effects as experienced by women in particular.<sup>63</sup>

A vivid description of a stay in a very different place, the Tyrolean mountains, reveals similar ambivalences. Schirmacher depicts the natives there as people with strange habits, tastes, and beliefs, but claims that by accepting and embracing these oddities she has experienced great pleasure.<sup>64</sup> She portrays herself as an intrepid mountaineer, hiking and climbing high mountains, mingling with the locals, and enjoying the company of unkempt fellow travellers with patched clothes and rude manners.<sup>65</sup> Schirmacher praises the lack of culture and the free atmosphere in the mountains and declares that the 'filth of the cities' (Grosstadtschmutz) and 'racial hatred' (Rassenhass) have no place there. Women, she claims, dress in the same practical way as their male companions and have the right to roam freely in the wilderness of the forests.<sup>66</sup> Her critique of civilisation becomes even clearer where she depicts her return to the lowlands and regrets being confronted again with culture, people, and their vanities.<sup>67</sup>

Although the description of the Austrian mountains testifies to greater cultural proximity than the encounter with Egypt, the exoticisation of the Tyroleans, who supposedly wore earrings and knives and believed in saints and angels for whom they set up naïve commemorative signs all over the landscape, is striking. And she indeed implies a similar political message in both travel reports. In both cases, she observes other tourists and divides them into those who are able to overcome their sensitivities and become friends with the locals and those who are unable to see and enjoy what is foreign to them.<sup>68</sup> I argue that by thus creating images of various 'others', Schirmacher formulated a critique of civilisation that left room for differences; at the same time she also developed an image of herself as a liberal-minded person and as a traveller who was genuinely interested in places she visited. In both cases she praised the openness and the tolerance of the locals and appreciated those fellow tourists who were able to adapt their manners to their environment. In this way, she also contributed to the creation of a *persona* capable of adapting to different circumstances and acting accordingly: the modern traveller.

A further text describing conditions in a country Schirmacher visited sheds light on yet another use she made of the concept of civilisation. In her reports on girls' schools and women's universities in Britain she unequivocally acknowledged the country's efforts to support women's pursuit of higher education.<sup>69</sup> Telling the story of women's struggle for access to universities, she explains the most important institutions and describes life and learning at women's colleges.<sup>70</sup> She gives a particularly enthusiastic description of the newly founded 'Holloway University' [sic; at that time Royal Holloway College] which was established through the financial support of a generous sponsor and his wife. She praises the combination of scientific and humanist education, physical exercise, and political debate and emphasises the generosity of the institution, which was dedicated above all to those women who could not afford to study at university from their own means.<sup>71</sup> Expressing her admiration also for the magnificent buildings, she compliments the 'splendid and 'regal' appearance and calls the whole institution a 'flower of civilisation' which other countries can only emulate.<sup>72</sup>

Despite her ambivalence about civilisation in her articles on Egypt and Tyrol, Schirmacher uses the notion 'civilisation' as a clearly positive term in her descriptions of women's higher education in the UK. Two conclusions can be drawn from this. First, it shows that in her writings Schirmacher placed comprehensiveness and differentiation above consistency with previous opinions she had expressed. This has already been demonstrated in relation to her adaptations of the concept of civilisation in the second edition of *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* (see Chapter 6). Second, it shows that she used her descriptions of places she had visited to present alternatives to the political and social status quo. By presenting images of other ways of living in other countries, she was able to imagine as feasible what seemed so difficult to change in the time and society in which her readers lived. Consequently, in these articles, it was not so important for her to convey consistent and durable sociological concepts, but rather to have a useful vocabulary to explore a variety of political and cultural possibilities. In this context, the terms 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' had shifting meanings.

## Notes

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  12. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Das Universitätsstudium der Frauen', in *Der Internationale Kongress für Frauenwerke und Frauenbestrebungen in Berlin 19. bis 26. September 1896. Eine Sammlung der auf dem Kongress gehaltenen Vorträge und Ansprachen*, eds. Rosalie Schoenflies et al. (Berlin: H. Walther, 1897), 158–60; *Rostocker Zeitung*, 30 October 1896; Nl Schirmacher 011/030, 032, 033, 034 KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 28, 31 October, 2 and 5 November 1896.
  13. Nl Schirmacher 011/001, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 11 January 1896.
  14. Schirmacher, 'Das Universitätsstudium', 158.
  15. Nl Schirmacher 011/006, KS to Clara and Richard Schirmacher, 6 February 1896.
  16. Mathilde von Mevissen, who invited Schirmacher on behalf of the Cologne Women's Association for Further Education (*Frauen-Fortbildungsverein*) had asked her to avoid controversial issues such as religion or political rights. Nl Schirmacher 567/026, Mathilde von Mevissen to KS, 10 January 1896.
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- Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik* (Wien et al.: 2018), 264–265 (Oesch).
29. NI Schirmacher 011/033, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 2 November 1896.
  30. Just one example for this is Mathilde von Mevissen who had organised her first lecture in Cologne. Obviously Schirmacher encouraged her to write her about her life which she did in extended letters kept in Schirmacher's paper. NI Schirmacher 546/001-3, Mathilde von Mevissen to KS, 9 February 1896, 16 March 1896, 14 May 1896.
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  32. NI Schirmacher 980/002, Notebook 1896/97, 9.
  33. Was nutzt die Frauenbewegung dem Manne? ['What use is the women's movement for men?']; 'Die Frau gehört ins Haus' ['Woman's place is in the home']; the second title had been used before for a lecture by another activist: Marie Stritt, 'Die Frau gehört ins Haus', vol. 8, *Lose Blätter im Interesse der Frauenfrage*, 23 October 1893.
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62. *Ibid.*, 71, 75–76.
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# 8

## Interpreting and Translating Transnational Activism

For nearly two decades, attending conferences formed an important part of Käthe Schirmacher's travel activities. From the mid-1890s onwards she participated in the transnational conventions and activities of various associations, especially of the International Council of Women (ICW), the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), and the International Abolitionist Federation (IAF).<sup>1</sup> This chapter takes her work in the IWSA as a case study for exploring how Schirmacher helped to connect national activism through her language abilities. A major focus is on oral interpretation at transnational meetings, but the chapter also discusses other forms of mediation such as writing conference reports and translating written texts that provided information and publicity across borders.

Digging deeper into the contexts of these activities reveals tensions and contradictions on various levels. The different political situations and cultures from which the members of the IWSA came made it a challenging endeavour to find common ground and develop shared goals and strategies. To assist this process through interpreting was a delicate task that required differentiated knowledge and competences transcending mastery of languages alone.

What is more, the participants at the regular conventions often had to take on several functions, both on national and transnational levels. Schirmacher is a good case in point for this, too. She was officially appointed interpreter at several IWSA conferences but was also a board member. In addition, she was on the board of national organisations and reported publicly on meetings in various arenas. Taking these at times conflicting roles into account, this chapter gauges the particular agency of the person who translates and the limits of mediation in transnational civil spaces during the years of rising nationalism before the First World War.

## Suffrage Activism in a Transnational Arena

The creation of the IWSA, as a transnational organisation with suffrage as its single issue, was a direct reaction to the very general approach of the older ICW. Since the ICW only accepted national umbrella organisations of women's associations as members, it represented a broad variety of agendas, positions, and political practices. Although the ICW founders were suffragists themselves, both the relevance and the priority of suffrage in relation to other legal or economic aims were disputed.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, a group of activists from the USA and various European countries aspired to create an organisation that had a clear political focus.<sup>3</sup> Like the ICW, the IWSA had strong roots in the USA. In 1902, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) invited suffrage organisations from all over the world to send delegates to their thirty-fourth annual convention and called the event the 'First International Woman Suffrage Conference'.<sup>4</sup> To underline its international orientation, the organisers had sent letters to countries around the world asking questions about the status of women there. However, many of the reports replying to these questions were given by speakers who obviously belonged to the English-speaking colonies in the countries they represented.<sup>5</sup> Both a genuine interest in the situation in other countries and a hierarchy of perspectives became visible at this event.

At the conference in Washington, delegates from seven countries agreed on a declaration of principles and thus prepared the creation of

a more formalised transnational collaboration in the fight for women's suffrage.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, the IWSA was founded in Berlin in 1904 by Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), senior leader of the suffrage movement in the USA, Carrie Chapman Catt (1859–1947), the president of the NAWSA, Anita Augspurg (1857–1943), president of the German Union for Women's Suffrage (Deutscher Verein für Frauenstimmrecht, DVF), Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847–1929), president of the British National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), and others.<sup>7</sup> The DVF, established in 1902 in preparation for the German participation in the Washington conference, had organised the meeting in Berlin. Attended by delegates from nine European countries and the USA, it took place a few days before the opening of the ICW conference in the same city. Käthe Schirmacher was among the members and reported on the event.<sup>8</sup>

The ICW and the IWSA, founded sixteen years apart, were often portrayed as representing the moderate older generation and the more radical younger activists respectively.<sup>9</sup> However, the two transnational organisations, linked by many protagonists engaged in both, can also be characterised by their respective strategies, both of which had advantages and limitations.<sup>10</sup> Whereas the ICW had difficulties in developing a clear political stance without the risk of losing member organisations, the IWSA restricted its activities to the very specific agenda of suffrage to which all its interventions were linked. The initiative for the founding of a network of suffrage organisations was actually triggered by the inclusion of an anti-suffrage statement at the ICW congress in London 1899, but in 1904 the ICW also included women's suffrage in its official programme.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the IWSA's single focus also had developed only incrementally. This is illustrated by the questionnaires sent out across the world in 1902, which touched on many legal and social issues and in which suffrage was mentioned only at the twenty-fifth question.<sup>12</sup> The difference between inclusive approaches and single-issue strategies mirrored the situation in many countries in which women's movements consisted of both large umbrella organisations representing a variety of agendas and single-issue associations exclusively campaigning for the vote for women.<sup>13</sup> However, since the actual campaigning for



any kind of rights had to take place on the national (rather than international) level, the main activities of the ICW and IWSA were building networks and circulating information.

The IWSA's rather abstract goal of equal political participation left open the question of the form future societies might take. The single focus allowed the members to share a utopian discourse on a more just society without having to reach an agreement on this society's concrete design. But this openness also meant that many other burning issues could not be touched upon at an official level. However, although the IWSA had a rule that debates on issues other than suffrage should be excluded, this did not exempt its members from having to deal with two particularly contentious issues: the choice of strategies and the debate over what kind of suffrage to campaign for: equal or universal? The growing militancy in parts of the suffrage movement in the UK called for a decision on whether to endorse their methods or at least not to condemn them.<sup>14</sup>

On both questions—militancy and universal suffrage—the transnationally active IWSA decided not to interfere in politics at the national level, although emotions sometimes ran high during the arguments over this question. This meant different things, however, in different places. The formula to fight for 'equal suffrage such as men had or will have it' that was widely accepted in the UK had a more ambivalent meaning in the German Reich or in Austria, where the immediate fight for universal suffrage was an option for many but not for all.<sup>15</sup> The IWSA's policy of non-interference regarding the use of militant or constitutional methods significantly changed its meaning as the degree of some associations' militancy increased. In 1906 in Copenhagen, the IWSA demonstrated its neutrality by inviting representatives from militant associations and thus created a possibility of discussing the different approaches.<sup>16</sup> When, however, in 1913 the congress in Budapest refused to either endorse or condemn militancy, this also meant that the international community of suffrage activists failed to find clear words in response to the death of suffragette Emily Wilding Davison (1872–1913), who two weeks earlier had thrown herself in front of the king's horse at the Epsom Derby for the cause.<sup>17</sup>

## Interpreting at the IWSA Conferences

The function of the interpreter, like all the other positions on the board of the IWSA, was voluntary, not paid work.<sup>18</sup> The declared official languages of the Alliance were English, German, and French. This was reflected in the constitution adopted in Berlin in 1904, which stated that the three secretaries on the board ‘shall represent the English, German and French languages’.<sup>19</sup> This was not intended to mean that these *countries* should necessarily be represented, as Schirmacher was to clarify on a later occasion.<sup>20</sup> However, according to these stipulations, all participants had to communicate in one of these languages, regardless of their mother tongue. It is worth noting that French, as the language of diplomacy, was one of the official languages from the beginning, even though France was not a founder member. However, for structural and pragmatic reasons, from the very beginning, in many respects (correspondence, minutes, publications) English was the predominant language, although the regular conferences (later described as congresses) took place in various European cities using different languages.<sup>21</sup> In the historical documents of the IWSA, this dominance of one language is both obvious—the minutes of the multinational organisation were only published in English—and barely perceptible: apart from the appointment of interpreters, the process of oral interpretation remained practically unmentioned.<sup>22</sup> Whether contributions to the debates had been made in another language than English or how many participants needed interpretation to understand the discussions was not stated in the minutes. In a newspaper report on the founding meeting in Berlin in 1904, Käthe Schirmacher said that the negotiations in Berlin in 1904 were held in German and English.<sup>23</sup>

Although educated, middle-class European women often learned several languages, only a minority spoke all three official languages and some probably spoke none of them well. Käthe Schirmacher, who was fluent in all three languages and had profound experience with international conferences, was an obvious choice as interpreter and was appointed to that function at the IWSA founding meeting in 1904.<sup>24</sup> She was also elected to the executive board as assistant secretary together with Dutch activist Johanna Naber (1859–1941).<sup>25</sup> They worked with

the secretary Rachel Foster Avery (1858–1919), the young companion of Susan B. Anthony in the latter's extensive travels through Europe.<sup>26</sup>

Another assignment at the same convention reflected Schirmacher's Romance language capacities. When the members of the executive board were tasked with establishing links with activists in countries not yet organised in the IWSA, she took responsibility for Italy and France.<sup>27</sup> Italy joined the IWSA in 1906,<sup>28</sup> with France following suit in 1909.<sup>29</sup> Schirmacher had supported this by attending the founding meeting of the French suffrage alliance, organised in preparation for the French participation in the IWSA conference in that year.<sup>30</sup>

At the next IWSA conference in Copenhagen in August 1906, Schirmacher served as interpreter together with Eline Hansen (1859–1919) from Denmark.<sup>31</sup> The appointment of a second interpreter was probably due to the fact that after some debate, at this conference it had been agreed that the speeches should be translated into Danish for the purposes of publicity in the host country.<sup>32</sup> Several speeches were translated into Danish and handed to the press; a meeting in Scandinavian languages was also held during the conference.<sup>33</sup> For the conferences in Amsterdam (1908) and London (1909), Schirmacher was again officially appointed as interpreter; on both occasions, she was supported by other delegates.<sup>34</sup> At the 1911 congress in Stockholm, however, she was only present as a member of the German delegation.<sup>35</sup> After losing her position as assistant secretary on the board of the IWSA in London (although she was appointed a member of the committee of admissions), she also no longer served as an interpreter.<sup>36</sup> This task was now assigned to Anna Lindemann (life dates unknown) as interpreter for German and to Martina Kramers (1863–1934) from the Netherlands as interpreter for French.<sup>37</sup> Like Schirmacher in the years before, they both also served as secretaries on the board of the IWSA.<sup>38</sup> The minutes of the Stockholm congress are the first to indicate the languages of interpretation (German and French), thus implicitly stating that English was the default language of the meetings. The growing conflict over language issues became apparent when the French member association published a resolution demanding that 'the reports of its delegates be printed in the French language' in the congress proceedings—a request that was not met.<sup>39</sup>

At the 1913 congress in Budapest, the organisers showed a growing awareness of the language problem. For two evening meetings (which presumably were addressed to a wider public) the languages of the speeches and the translations provided were announced in the programme. A Hungarian summary of all speeches was provided at the end of both sessions.<sup>40</sup> At several instances at this convention, language became an issue, for instance when Charlotte Despard (1844–1939) criticised that ‘the English language tended to swamp the other languages’ or when it was suggested that ‘considering that the discussion is conducted so largely in English, [...] the French and German speaking nations should be given the front seats’ at the IWSA conventions.<sup>41</sup> The increased efforts to enable an understanding between different languages in Budapest were reflected in the appointment of three ‘officers of the Alliance’ as main interpreters, Anna Lindemann, Martina Kramers, and Annie Furuhjelm (1859–1937).<sup>42</sup> They were supported by three assistant interpreters.<sup>43</sup> Although the assistants did not hold positions on the board, it is noticeable that two of them took offices at this conference; Marguerite de Witt-Schlumberger (1858–1924) was elected to the board and Mary Sheepshanks (1872–1960) was appointed editor of the IWSA journal *Jus Suffragii*.<sup>44</sup> At this congress, Schirmacher had conveyed official greetings and expressed her interest in a renewed position on the board, but did not attend in person.<sup>45</sup> The choice of interpreters, both in Stockholm and Budapest, once more emphasises how closely the function of the interpreter was linked to the board of officers and thus had a political character.

## Common Ground and Conflict Zones

Considering the contentious and momentous topics discussed at the transnational meetings of the IWSA, it becomes clear that the interpreters’ work was both important and delicate. Often, controversies and conflicts were hidden behind supposedly formal issues such as the order of business (e.g. who was permitted to talk for how long) or qualification for membership (which became relevant in 1909, when concurrent associations from one country wished to become affiliated). However, apart

from a general comment by the president in 1906, issues of language and communication between the different languages of the participants were rarely addressed in the minutes.<sup>46</sup> At one point, the question arose as to whether all delegates had 'understood the parliamentary procedure' by which a certain controversial vote had been taken.<sup>47</sup>

While interpretation was not raised as an issue, the translation of written texts was explicitly discussed when it came to those fundamental documents which were essential for finding common ground. An initial discussion on translation had already taken place at the IWSA founding meeting in Berlin. In addition to her role as interpreter, Schirmacher had been appointed to translate the Declaration of Principles into French and German together with Sophia Rodger Cunliffe (life dates unknown) from the UK and Camille Vidart (1854–1930) from Switzerland.<sup>48</sup> The minutes registered debates on translation and on rewordings of the principles in the same session but did not give details of the revisions. However, they recorded two significant decisions. First, the delegates declared both the German and the English versions as the official declarations of principles but did not clarify the status of the French version. This did not result in the inclusion of the German version in the minutes, which only contained the revised English version.<sup>49</sup>

Second, the delegates moved and carried that 'in the German text the same masculine form that is employed in law should be used, in order that the same neuter significance should be given as in English'.<sup>50</sup> It is likely that Schirmacher, as the German translator, suggested this solution to the differences in describing the gender of an individual in the two languages. Since the German version of the principles is not documented in the minutes, only an excerpt from it in a newspaper report shows what this meant: instead of using the usual feminine grammatical form of the noun 'citizen' (Bürgerin), the male form was modified by a female adjective (weiblicher Bürger—female citizen).<sup>51</sup> This translatorial decision entailed a certain Anglicisation of the German language, but also emphasised the fundamental equality of male and female citizens.

At the 1906 conference in Copenhagen, agreements on procedure were an important issue. Only then did the delegates decide to have the minutes printed. Thus, the Berlin protocols were published together with the proceedings from Copenhagen. In her message as president, Carrie

Chapman Catt recalled the still provisional format of the Berlin meeting two years earlier and linked the issue to the question of languages:

We came together as strangers; the point of view, and the experience of each body of delegates naturally differed from every other; the many languages created a 'Confusion of tongues', too, which prevented a quick understanding. We did not yet know what work the International Organization could do most effectively, nor how we could best help each other.<sup>52</sup>

Interestingly, she thus suggested a connection between linguistic understanding and the symbolic 'language' of procedure in a delegate body.

In the ongoing debate on the rules and orders of communication, Käthe Schirmacher successfully proposed asking for the standing orders of the Interparliamentary Conference for Peace that could be used as a model.<sup>53</sup> She also successfully moved that 'allusions to recent political conflicts between nations, must for the sake of international peace and courtesy, be carefully avoided, unless such subjects are on the program for discussion'.<sup>54</sup> In so doing, she made the single-issue approach an explicit norm. The effect was demonstrated immediately after her resolution had been carried when an appeal from the Russian delegate to her 'sisters in all nations' not to support the existing government of her country received the reply that the Alliance could not undertake any steps as an association, but individual members might do so.<sup>55</sup> Schirmacher also supported a proposal that not all country reports, but only the most important ones (selected by the general officers), should be read at the conference. The rest should be summed up by the secretaries and printed in the minutes.<sup>56</sup> This gave more power to the board (of which she was a member) and shortened the procedures, thus making the translators' work easier. At the following conference, only a selection of the printed country reports appeared on the programme, namely those which were newly formed or had 'accomplished important results'.<sup>57</sup>

In Copenhagen, in addition to her duties as an interpreter, Käthe Schirmacher was very active as a delegate. She not only intervened in the discussions on the rules of procedures but also gave one of the very few speeches on a theoretical question. Under the provocative English

title 'What Woman Suffrage is Not', she addressed the most common counterarguments to women's demand for suffrage.<sup>58</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that she dressed up her arguments in the form of a delimitation of a term, namely the concept of suffrage. The lecture was a continuation of a public debate in the press between Schirmacher and Martina Kramers about a possible link between suffrage and military service. While Kramers had argued for a substitute military service for women in order to qualify them for the right to vote, Schirmacher vehemently opposed any connection between the right to vote and compulsory military service.<sup>59</sup> In this exchange, Kramers supported her argument by providing a translation of a central document of the Dutch suffrage movement to illustrate that Schirmacher had not fully understood the Dutch women's approach.<sup>60</sup>

Schirmacher's public visibility at this conference, however, was also related to her work as interpreter. The major Danish newspaper *Politiken* covered the conference opening with a drawing of the delegates at work that took up the entire first page of the paper. The picture showed Carrie Chapman Catt addressing a large audience in a festive venue, and Schirmacher, presumably acting as interpreter, sitting at her side. The two women's names were the only ones mentioned in the caption, although Schirmacher's function was not specified.<sup>61</sup>

In 1908 in Amsterdam, Schirmacher had to juggle different roles. She was not only one of the secretaries on the board but also represented two 'fraternal' German organisations, the Liberal Women's Party (Liberale Frauenpartei) and the Federation of Progressive Women's Associations (Verband fortschrittlicher Frauenvereine, VFF).<sup>62</sup> 'Fraternal' organisations were those that were not official members of the IWSA, which only accepted affiliates that dealt exclusively with suffrage. In 1908, Schirmacher was not listed as a member of the official German delegation.<sup>63</sup> Both facts point to the complexities and tensions behind the process of becoming a delegate to a transnational body. No one just represented 'their country' but also certain standpoints and networks there. Schirmacher, despite living in Paris since 1895, was closely associated with the women's movement in the German Reich. For example, she sat on the board of the VFF which linked associations of the radical wing. In some of these associations, Schirmacher was also an active member and held

offices. In 1908, both the VFF and its member organisations struggled with conflicts over politics and strategies.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the controversies in the national arenas were reflected in the transnational debate—and vice versa.

Procedures were still a major issue in Amsterdam in 1908. Since practices in civil spaces varied greatly between different countries, it proved challenging to agree on 'parliamentary rules' for the transnational body.<sup>65</sup> However, using the statutes of another transnational organisation as a model did not prove to be a solution. As Käthe Schirmacher reported to the congress, her enquiries to the Interparliamentary Conference for Peace about rules they could use as a model had been fruitless. She had received an answer from M. Constant d'Estournelles, saying that he desired 'to see what international parliamentary rules the ladies would formulate for he had to confess the men had none'.<sup>66</sup> This may be evidence that women, who as a group had not previously had the opportunity to participate in transnational political negotiations, were more aware of the importance of a formalised process.

In 1908, the IWSA found a clearer strategy of political action in a transnational space. They published several resolutions in which the delegates expressed their views and sentiments on various national developments. They congratulated those who had made progress (such as Finland, where women had been fully enfranchised in 1906), noted with satisfaction that certain steps had been taken (e.g. by the UK Parliament), and criticised other countries for their resistance against innovations (Austria, for not having abolished laws forbidding women to join political organisations as Germany had done). Together with these comparative evaluations, they confirmed the priority of suffrage over all other goals and recommended their members should 'avoid any entanglement with outside matters'.<sup>67</sup> Many of the country reports took the same approach of a friendly form of transnational competition regarding the progress in which the activists hoped to engage their national governments. The consolidation of the transnational organisation was also expressed in a review of its first years.<sup>68</sup>

At the 1909 conference of the IWSA in London, the growing transnational organisation dealt with various controversial issues. These included the criteria for membership in countries where more than one federation



wished to participate, and the extent to which the Alliance should determine what kind of suffrage its affiliated federations should fight for.<sup>69</sup> Here, conflicts from different national and transnational arenas mingled. In the same debate, formal and political criteria of affiliation, views on strategies (especially militancy), the relationship with political parties, and the links between different political and social agendas were all up for discussion. Tensions were particularly strong among British activists, where the growing militancy of certain factions caused severe conflicts, and among German delegates, where the demand for universal suffrage was a controversial issue.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the controversies in the German Reich and in the UK, although different, became entangled in a problematic way. This became visible, for example, with regard to the official IWSA formula that women should demand 'suffrage for women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men'.

While constitutional and militant suffrage activists in the UK could agree with this formulation, it was a particularly contentious issue in the German Reich, where the question of whether women should explicitly demand universal suffrage, as the Social Democrats did, was hotly debated.<sup>71</sup> In the UK, on the other hand, the Liberal Party instrumentalised an adult male suffrage bill to block a women's suffrage bill that had already been accepted in two parliamentary readings. As a result, many British women's suffrage campaigners saw the demand for universal suffrage as a threat to their own cause.<sup>72</sup> The issue emerged in the context of the membership debate when it was stipulated that only associations working exclusively for women's suffrage should be considered for admission.<sup>73</sup> This formula, originally aimed primarily at excluding political parties from the IWSA, was only superficially neutral, as women's movements were structured differently in different countries and associations in Central European countries often had broader agendas. Potentially, it could even have implied the exclusion of founder societies.<sup>74</sup> However, the IWSA board clarified at the next conference that these rules only had a bearing on new applications.<sup>75</sup>

Schirmacher believed that these conflicts and the critical stance of a part of the German delegation to the board's way of dealing with them were the reason why she was not re-elected to the IWSA board in London.<sup>76</sup> The morning after the election procedure, she used her

role as interpreter to have her view documented in the minutes. She said (almost certainly in English) that ‘though I have been appointed as interpreter for this Convention, I feel that I must not continue my office if called upon, unless it is explicitly stated and entered into the minutes that I have always called for the suffrage for women on exactly the same terms as men have or may have it’.<sup>77</sup> This prompted distinguished American delegate Anna Shaw (1847–1919) to declare, seemingly out of context, that the IWSA should thank Schirmacher ‘for all she has done for the Alliance’, a vote that was adopted by a ‘hearty majority’.<sup>78</sup>

The interruption was followed by a debate on the problematic mode of election of officers.<sup>79</sup> Both reactions can be interpreted as confirmation of Schirmacher’s assumption about the reason for her non-re-election. In addition, the statement can be interpreted as a message to her German opponents that her critical position on universal suffrage, which had caused dispute in Germany, was in complete accordance with the IWSA’s politics at a transnational level.<sup>80</sup> In a letter to her mother, Schirmacher analysed her defeat. She was convinced that her critical stance on universal suffrage, which had been known in the German movement since 1903 and had already cost her a seat on the board of the German Suffrage Association, was the reason why she was not supported by the German delegation in London. She also suspected that her refusal to give a speech in Budapest in French that had been announced in German, had led to negative feelings towards her among the Hungarian delegation.<sup>81</sup> Thus the politics of language use and political differences mingled in an explosive way.

A report in the newly found British suffrage journal *Common Cause* covering the conflict-ridden conference in London 1909 highlights the issue of language but also emphasises the ‘fundamental understanding’ among the participants:

Someone, during the interminable discussions upon the conditions of affiliation, said, it was not easy to quarrel when you spoke different languages, and this may be true; but if it is hard to quarrel in an unknown tongue, it is equally hard to understand, and yet what struck us most was the deep and fundamental understanding in all things essential.<sup>82</sup>

The text's praise for the earnest way in which the women from the other countries discussed the controversies over strategies employed by the suffrage movement in the UK and yet were united for a common cause also reveals a certain transnational dynamic, as the peaceful discussion was held up as a mirror to the quarrelling British activists.

The article lauds two personalities in particular—the president, Carrie Chapman Catt, who enticed the participants to find some agreement with her ‘humour and sweetness’ and the interpreter Käthe Schirmacher, who ‘did her work with such art as to make one revel in the mere doing of it’:

Anyone who understood both languages with which she was dealing, could not but feel that her use of the precise and logical French tongue was a positive illumination upon what one had thought one already understood.<sup>83</sup>

This recognition shows an awareness of both the value of good interpretation and the importance of emotional investment for the success of negotiations. But it also illustrates what makes any translation so precarious: the fact that what is said in a start language always has something added to it, an interpretation, a way of understanding a particular sentence, a decision about what undertones to include and what to leave out. This particular bilingual listener to Schirmacher's oral translations appreciated her interpretations as clarifications. But someone else might criticise her precisely for how she had shed light on a particular meaning and thus obscured something else.

## **Covering Conferences, Transferring the Suffrage Cause into National Arenas**

Transnational propaganda played a central role in the activism of the IWSA. However, since the change of the law had to be fought for on the national level, be that by militant or political methods, the IWSA activists developed a special type of propaganda that made use of the exchange of knowledge across national and language borders in a specific

way. They provided rich information on argumentations, strategies, and successes in many countries but left open the way in which this information was to be incorporated into activism and propaganda on the ground.

To provide these transfers, the IWSA developed several instruments. First, their public international meetings were designed not only as platforms for the exchange of national reports but also as publicity events. Even the founding convention in Berlin in 1904, where only a small group of invited delegates had met, was attended by the press.<sup>84</sup> What is more, the locations of the conferences and congresses were often chosen in accordance with local developments and interests. For example, the IWSA decided on London in 1909 because the struggle for suffrage seemed to be coming to a head there.<sup>85</sup> Second, the IWSA activists strived to advertise knowledge about their platform and activities to a broader public. They did so by making their debates available to as many as possible by printing and selling the minutes.<sup>86</sup>

Third, since the protocols were published only in English, the transfer to national publics had to be done differently, namely through the work of journalists who were involved in the movement. Among those who contributed to the coverage of the transnational activities in national arenas, Schirmacher also played an important role. Since the early 1890s, she had regularly attended international events and reported on them in the press and on lecture tours; her experience with more than one role gave her particularly nuanced insights into the dynamics of transnational activism. Her numerous conference reports, published in German and French journals of the movement and newspapers, meant that in many places in France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland people learned about the events through her lens. However, her work as an activist and professional journalist also placed her in a precarious position between countries, professional roles, and political factions.

The IWSA was founded on the occasion of the ICW congress in Berlin in 1904. Käthe Schirmacher reported on both the large congress that took place in mid-June 1904 and the meeting of suffrage activists from different countries a few days earlier that resulted in the establishment of the Alliance. When covering the ICW congress, Schirmacher, who had been to all major women's congresses since her visit to Chicago in

1893, took a historical perspective and compared the events that had taken place in various countries in the last decade.

Her article critically reflects the encyclopaedic nature of the large congresses that had attempted to cover all dimensions of the woman question. Given the growth of the women's movement and the many different issues it had taken up, Schirmacher advocated holding more focused congresses on specific topics in the future. She registered the growing approval of the women's movement in elite circles with satisfaction, but also mentioned political conflicts she had been involved in at the conference, namely her argument with the Social Democrats and her critical view of universal suffrage. She referred only very briefly to the founding meeting of the IWSA.<sup>87</sup> Yet, in another report she focused on this earlier gathering, to which she attributed globally historical significance. She also discussed the relationship between the two organisations, the ICW and the newly formed IWSA, and stressed the importance of a single-issue movement that was able to push a particular agenda as a large organisation like the ICW could not.<sup>88</sup> In both reports, she pointed to the predominance of what she called the 'Anglo-Saxon-Germanic nations' in the movement, implicitly expressing her growing distance from the French culture in which she had lived for so many years.<sup>89</sup>

The comparison between these accounts published in different media and the analysis of other reports she penned about the events in Berlin in June 1904 shows that Schirmacher adapted her descriptions to the audiences she expected. She made this explicit in her coverage of the ICW congress for the Viennese *Fremden-Blatt*, noting that readers unfamiliar with the women's movement might be interested in more general observations, and this was why she included information on costumes and decorations. When writing for a French paper she listed the many nations that had participated and mentioned the members of the French delegation by name before noting the strong English-speaking and German presence during at the event.<sup>90</sup> For the French public, too, she addressed specific audiences, for example by focusing on social issues in one article and discussing suffrage in another.<sup>91</sup> However, in all reports about the two different meetings in Berlin (the ICW and the IWSA), she included information on language issues. For example, in the German text on the IWSA conference, she mentioned that the negotiations had

been conducted in English and German and she had been the interpreter.<sup>92</sup> In the feature for the *Fremden-Blatt* she claimed that German had been the dominant language at the ICW congress and that even the English-speaking representatives of the board made an effort to speak the language of the host country.<sup>93</sup> In one of the French reports, she pointed out that the official languages at the ICW congress had been French, German, and English, but that the French delegates had problems following some discussions that were not translated.<sup>94</sup>

Several aspects are to be noted here. First, as a multilingual mediator and translator, Schirmacher is always attentive to language issues and considers them worthy of inclusion in her accounts of transnational events. Second, she depicts language as something to do with power and as therefore an instrument of politics. Third, as a journalist, Schirmacher accurately assesses her audiences and tailors her reports accordingly. This illustrates her nuanced knowledge of perspectives, cultures, and idiosyncrasies in different national and political environments. It also shows that she not only juggled several professional roles but also acted differently in different milieus, as is also evident in her coverage of the subsequent IWSA conferences and congresses. Here, too, language is a recurring theme. Increasingly, she also includes remarks about the suffragettes, whom she obviously regards as an avant-garde of the movement.<sup>95</sup> Her strong political attachment to the IWSA is shown by the fact that she always writes positively about the association, even after the turbulent events at the conference in London in 1909 that cost her a position on the board.

The public echo of the 1909 London conference in Germany was, however, dominated by others. Whereas Adelheid von Welczeck (life dates unknown) had given a rather neutral report in the *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, Lida-Gustava Heymann countered this description by an extremely critical review of the conference in the same journal.<sup>96</sup> Heymann, the German delegate whom Schirmacher more than any other held accountable for her not being re-elected to the board, lamented two things in particular, the rejection of universal suffrage as a common IWSA demand and the exclusion of the suffragette association Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) via the strategical criteria of affiliation.<sup>97</sup> Schirmacher countered this by publishing a factual report in

a newspaper that emphasised both the difficult negotiations and the important documents the congress had produced. It is worth noting that Schirmacher saw the IWSA constitution negotiated in London as an important contribution to transnational collaboration precisely because it left the agenda and the strategies largely to the affiliated associations.<sup>98</sup>

Neither of the two women (who had close if increasingly conflictual links in other organisations) mentioned each other's name or the tensions between them publicly. Schirmacher did write a sharp rebuttal to Heymann's article, but it seems to have remained unpublished.<sup>99</sup> Whether this was a deliberate decision by Schirmacher or whether the editors of the *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht* refused to print it remains unclear. However, Schirmacher's partner Klara Schleker, also a delegate in London, had tried to publish a critical response to Heymann's report in the journal, but was refused.<sup>100</sup> In her unpublished text, Schirmacher criticises the German delegation, and in particular Heymann's life partner Anita Augspurg, who had resigned her vice-presidency in protest, for their bad conduct at the congress. And she argues that a correction of Heymann's account is necessary to do justice to IWSA President Carrie Chapman Catt. She points to how the British suffrage journal *The Common Cause* had stressed Catt's 'admirable impartiality' to which all participants at the congress could bear witness.<sup>101</sup> The many German activists who had not been in London need to be informed of this impeccable conduct, Schirmacher argues.<sup>102</sup> In this way, she references her knowledge of events in the transnational arena and its rules of communication to prevail in her conflict with German suffragists. In a sense, she is saying that she was the better mediator in political arenas outside Germany.

Schirmacher's precarious status in the German movement is reflected in the fact that in London in 1909, as in Amsterdam the year before, she was not a member of the German delegation.<sup>103</sup> A letter to her mother illustrates the extent to which she perceived the transnational arena as the basis of her activism, the community where she contributed important work and was celebrated. It also shows her growing nationalism and anti-Semitism in the way she describes her opponents and in her description of Anglo-German political relations. She explained to her mother that already in Berlin in 1904, despite the reservations German activists

had about her, they could not prevent her being appointed to the board because of her important services as an interpreter. She listed her accomplishments for the IWSA, her work as interpreter at the congresses and all the Alliance's French correspondence. She also reminded her mother of her lecture tours to many European countries and the associations she had helped to found, work, she suspected, that many London delegates probably knew nothing about.<sup>104</sup>

Despite her disappointment, however, Schirmacher did not hold the international association responsible for her failure. This is apparent not only in the way she reported on the London congress but also by her ongoing work for the IWSA, for example on the Committee of Admissions to which she was appointed in 1909.<sup>105</sup> The fact that she still had support in Germany and was held in high esteem by the board of the IWSA is also shown by the fact that Schirmacher was again a member of the German delegation in 1911 and was entrusted with a new task, the translation of a brochure from the USA.<sup>106</sup> How much she valued her involvement in the transnational work and saw it not as a contradiction to her nationalism but as a context in which she could build alliances and gain influence is evident in her efforts to be re-elected to the board in Budapest in 1913. However, by this time she was much more marginalised than four years earlier and did not receive nearly enough votes to achieve this goal.<sup>107</sup>

## Media and Means for Transnational Transfer—*Jus Suffragii* and the Translation Fund

Journalism in the national media was an important means of bringing the cause of women's suffrage and the goals and activities of the IWSA to the attention of wider publics. To support this effort and to connect the work across countries, the IWSA established its own journal in 1906. The founding editor and driving force until 1913 was the multilingual Martina Kramers from the Netherlands. At the Copenhagen congress in 1906, following debates about the fallacies and misrepresentations of women's suffrage work in the press, she had been tasked with launching



a monthly bulletin in English to help to provide the affiliated associations with accurate information on the suffrage cause across national borders for their own publicity.<sup>108</sup> At first, this was a hectographed typed report on the press coverage of the conference, with insider information such as who was on a lecture tour in which part of Europe.<sup>109</sup> In the first and subsequent issues, Kramers repeatedly explains the concept and the approach. The affiliated associations were to send in reports on their countries, which she would translate into English. However, she could only do this if the reports reached her:

You may send newspapers with blue marks, if you have no time for a letter; you may send them in French, German or Italian, and I dare say, that with the help of friends, I can manage to understand the Scandinavian languages and Spanish too [...] Remember that I cannot make the bulletin valuable myself. All depends on you, each and all.<sup>110</sup>

She also reminded her readers that the enterprise could only be continued if enough subscriptions were made. The following issue was already printed in 500 copies and contained reports from ten countries. Kramers now also asked for free copies of major feminist journals in various countries.<sup>111</sup>

From January 1907, the journal, which until then had the rather prosaic name of *Bulletin* or *Monthly Correspondence*, was published under the title *Jus Suffragii*. The more intellectual title indicated both an interest in a wider audience and a desire to avoid the association with a particular national language; the choice of a Latin term, however, also demonstrates the elite European context in which the journal was conceived. Soon, *Jus Suffragii* spawned a lively exchange between countries and movements that continued even during the war years.<sup>112</sup> As an important space for transnational transfers of information and strategies that were also reflected in the various national suffrage journals, it was influential far beyond the small circle of its actual readers. Information from *Jus Suffragii* was used and republished in suffrage journals in various countries, often without naming the source.<sup>113</sup> In 1908, the journal, which proved financially profitable and was deemed a successful venture by all, was discussed at length at the Amsterdam congress. A

French edition and a German edition (the latter was proposed by Käthe Schirmacher) were considered, as well as the advantages of both variants and their cost.<sup>114</sup>

In 1911, the editor could report that through the generous support of two members, a French edition had been printed since 1910.<sup>115</sup> In the same year, the IWSA allowed for more space in *Jus Suffragii* and gave the editor the freedom to cover news outside the contributions of the affiliated societies, which can be seen as an important step towards a journal that was also of interest also outside the IWSA.<sup>116</sup> Articles by IWSA members on women's suffrage and the press appeared in the following issues, reflecting increased attention to press strategies and publicity.<sup>117</sup>

In 1913, however, a fundamental change took place. Carrie Chapman Catt planned to establish a headquarters of the IWSA and an international press office in London and to publish *Jus Suffragii* from there. She urged Kramers, who had published the journal from Rotterdam since 1906, to resign as editor and thus allow the move to London. When Kramers refused, Catt used knowledge she had about Kramers' extramarital relationship to a married man to force her to step down.<sup>118</sup> Kramers left the organisation deeply disappointed, but not without pointing out her skills and accomplishments and asking Catt whether she would be able to replace her with someone who, like her, was 'able to read nine languages' and had 'friends and correspondents in all nations'.<sup>119</sup> Her story, like Schirmacher's, shows that language skills were an important advantage but not a unique selling point.

That the IWSA board knew about the importance of transfer by translation and honoured it was evidenced, for example, by the fact that Catt provided a foreword for the French translation of one of the books she had acknowledged as an unofficial manual, Alice Zimmern's *Suffrage in Many Lands*.<sup>120</sup> In 1911, the IWSA also made funds available for the translation of another text that had previously been published as a pamphlet of the National American Suffrage Association, an article on experiences with women's suffrage in Colorado since 1893.<sup>121</sup> At the 1911 Stockholm congress, Käthe Schirmacher had suggested that this text, which demonstrated the positive impact of women's equal political participation, should be translated into German and French and published as IWSA publicity material. The move was carried and

a committee consisting of Schirmacher and Cécile Léon Brunschvicg (1877–1946) was entrusted with the task. Their translations appeared soon after.<sup>122</sup> The resources to accomplish this were provided by donations, as a remark by the editor of *Jus Suffragii* revealed:

Surely the generous contributors to the Translation Fund will rejoice to see mentioned in our organ how many nations wish to avail themselves of the proffered aid, and probably the zealous translators of the Lindsey-article will be no less eager to know in how great request their work is already.<sup>123</sup>

Which other translations were accomplished with the support of the said translation fund is difficult to say. Explicit mention is made of the translation of Catt's address into German in 1911. This was, however, funded by donations made specifically for that task.<sup>124</sup>

The text Cécile Brunschvicg and Käthe Schirmacher translated into French and German in 1911 was written by the well-known investigative journalist George Creel (1876–1953) and social reformer and judge Ben B. Lindsey (1869–1943), both of whom actively supported women's suffrage. Originally published as a journal article justifying women's suffrage, the text was soon republished as a brochure for suffrage publicity in the USA. It listed initiatives and laws passed since the enfranchisement of women in Colorado in 1911 and countered arguments against equal suffrage for women. Schirmacher translated the thirty-page treatise without cuts and quite literally. However, she made two interventions. First, she changed the title into 'Die Praxis des Frauenstimmrechts' (The Practice of Woman Suffrage) thus placing the focus on women rather than equality and on political practice rather than evaluation, in contrast to the original title 'Measuring Up Equal Suffrage'. Her translation of the subtitle 'An Authoritative Estimate of the results in Colorado' also reinforced this tendency by rendering 'estimate' as 'Urteil' (judgement). Second, Schirmacher provided examples given in the source text with additional contextualising information, including notes on Colorado's population and economy, political institutions, legal practices, and aspects of civic engagement in the USA, and also provided currency conversions for her German audience.<sup>125</sup> At two points, she

even corrected the authors. In particular, she countered Creel's and Lindsey's critical comments on militant methods in the fight for suffrage with a remark on different situations in different countries.<sup>126</sup>

The translation of this American pamphlet was obviously a success as the German translation appeared in a second edition as early as the end of 1911, and a third edition was published in 1912.<sup>127</sup> However, the most important project of translation and transfer that the IWSA accomplished in its first decade was the handbook on women's suffrage in different countries that had been under discussion for several conferences.<sup>128</sup> Despite her earlier work on the same issues, Schirmacher was no longer involved in this project, nor was she mentioned.

## Controversies in Translation

Translation and interpretation played a crucial role at various levels of the IWSA's work but were also a source of conflict. The ability to correspond in different languages (or efficient support in this task) was indispensable for the IWSA's leading officers. Among other things, *Jus Suffragii* was a vital instrument for providing translations of relevant information and establishing a common standard of knowledge. This also made it a subject of conflict which became apparent when President Catt decided to move the press office to London. To reach a common understanding of central topics, trusted translations of key texts were essential. At the transnational meetings, interpreting between the participants' different languages was of great importance and the choice of interpreters from the board of the Alliance demonstrated the political character of this particular office. Most importantly, in order to be able to communicate on these issues and to develop joint activities in a productive way, accepted rules of order, providing a common culture for the organisation, were needed. Getting the central message to the public and to policy-makers in national arenas required yet another form of 'translation': not only the mastery of different languages, but also the ability to 'translate' demands and arguments into concrete political situations on the ground. Many IWSA activists were active on several of these levels but were also entangled in activities and functions outside the IWSA. In the

case of Schirmacher, these positions were manifold. She was connected with civil society institutions and associations in France and in Germany. Most importantly, however, she earned her living as a journalist and travelling lecturer in various countries. Therefore, her relationship with the IWSA affected her standing in these professional fields—and vice versa.

The importance of translation was intersected by hierarchies of relevance, hierarchies between languages, countries, different associations, and between political factions. As the president and the vice president were from English-speaking countries, reflecting their countries' importance in the struggle for women's suffrage, the predominance of their language in IWSA correspondence and at the conferences was probably inevitable. However, this only underlines the entanglement of political and linguistic matters. Against the backdrop of a transnational strategy that used countries more advanced in women's political participation as examples for those that still refused to change their systems, the practices of translating and interpreting were also linked to questions of power. They served to propagate a particular culture and its norms worldwide.

Another way of dealing with different languages was to *not* translate. The ability to sometimes communicate in a common language and without the help of translators was particularly important in the IWSA. Unlike the 'encyclopaedic' conferences of the ICW, where a rough understanding of what was said at the lectern probably sufficed to enjoy the event, the serious political debates in the single-issue organisation required precise and direct communication. Those who wanted not only to find common ground but also to agree on a particular formulation had to understand each other as precisely as possible. Part of the solution was the development of a reduced but specialised language that was useful only for the topics under discussion.

The minutes of the IWSA conferences show that there was a growing awareness of the many languages spoken by the delegates. This, however, had more than one implication and was met by different, even contradictory responses. The diversity of languages led to increased efforts to facilitate communication by providing the necessary translations, but also to a call to learn each other's languages, especially English, the predominant conference language, in order to get by without translation. Whether the focus was on translation or a common language, the regular meetings of delegates from different countries not only led to



**Fig. 8.1** International Woman Suffrage Alliance Congress with [Millicent Fawcett](#) presiding, London 1909. Klara Schleker and Käthe Schirmacher as second and third in the second row (National Library of Norway)

the experience of being connected across borders by a common cause, but also reinforced the perception of national differences and fuelled nationalist sentiments. Sometimes—as we can see in the case of Käthe Schirmacher—one person could embody all these responses (Fig. 8.1).

## Notes

1. On the ICW and IWSA see Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); on the IAF: Bettina Kretzschmar, *'Gleiche Moral und gleiches Recht für Mann und Frau': der deutsche Zweig der Internationalen abolitionistischen Bewegung (1899–1933)* (Sulzbach: Helmer, 2014); Anne Summers, 'Introduction: The International Abolitionist Federation', *Women's*

- History Review* 17, no. 2 (2008), 149–52; despite their self-naming as ‘international’ bodies I refer to the ICW, IWSA and IAF as transnational organisations since they do not establish relations between states but rather link civil societies of different countries.
2. Gisela Bock, ‘Das politische Denken des Suffragismus: Deutschland um 1900 im internationalen Vergleich’, in Gisela Bock, *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 168–203, at 197–199.
  3. Rupp, *Worlds*, 21–22; on the contemporary use of the term ‘radical’: Bock, ‘Das politische Denken’, 194; Angelika Schaser, *Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1848–1933* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 6; Johanna Gehmacher, Elisa Heinrich, and Corinna Oesch, *Käthe Schir-macher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik* (Vienna et al.: Böhlau, 2018), 314–15 (Oesch).
  4. *Report: First International Woman Suffrage Conference. Held at Washington, U.S.A, February 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 1902* (New York, NY: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1902).
  5. Most of the reporters, some of them male, had English names. In some cases (e.g. Austria and Italy) a relation to the American embassy could be traced, others were characterised as Christian clergymen by their titles. See *Report: First International Woman Suffrage Conference*, 15–16.
  6. *Report: First International Woman Suffrage*, 4, 13.
  7. Rupp, *Worlds*, 21–24; see also Leila J. Rupp, ‘Transnational Women’s Movements’, in: *European History Online* (EGO), published by the Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz 16 June 2011, accessed 21 June 2022, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/ruppl-2011-en>; Anne-Laure Briatte, *Bevormundete Staatsbürgerinnen: Die ‘radikale’ Frauenbewegung im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt/M. and New York: Campus, 2020), 258–59, 271–72.

8. *Report: Second and Third Conferences of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Berlin, Germany, June 3, 4, 1904, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 1906* (Copenhagen, Capital Region: Bianco Luno, 1906), 5–6; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der zweite Internationale Kongreß für Frauenstimmrecht', *Frauen-Rundschau*, no. 23 (1904), 708–9.
9. E.g., with reference to contemporary characterisations: Rupp, *Worlds*, 20, 25.
10. The friendly relations were documented by the exchange of delegates: *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 19; *The International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of the Fourth Conference, Amsterdam, Holland, June 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 1908* (Amsterdam: F. Van Rossen, 1908), 12.
11. Gisela Bock, 'Wege zur demokratischen Bürgerschaft: transnationale Perspektiven', in *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis*, ed. Gisela Bock (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 204–40, at 220; on another (short-lived) initiative to develop a more radical transnational body, the *Union internationale des femmes progressistes*, in which Schirmacher also was involved: Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 316–18 (Oesch).
12. *Report: First International Woman Suffrage Conference*, 14–15.
13. Bock, 'Wege', 200.
14. On the militant suffragettes see June Purvis and June Hannam, eds., *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign: National and International Perspectives* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).
15. See for a comparative view on suffrage campaigns Birgitta Bader-Zaar, 'Zur Geschichte des Frauenwahlrechts im langen 19. Jahrhundert. Eine internationale vergleichende Perspektive', *Ariadne* 40 (2001), 6–13; Bock, 'Wege'.
16. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 26–27.
17. Johanna Gehmacher, 'Covering the Suffragettes. Austrian Newspapers Reporting on Militant Women's Rights Activism in the United Kingdom', in *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign. National and International Perspectives*, eds. June Purvis and



- June Hannam (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 199–221 at 213.
18. The detailed report of the treasurer listed expenses for stenographers and for typing the minutes, but not for the interpreters, see *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 51–54.
  19. *Ibid.*, 117. At later occasions, English, German, and French were called the ‘official languages’. See *ibid.*, 28.
  20. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Madame la Directrice [Nous recevons la lettre suivante...]', *La Française. Journal de Progrès des Féminin*, 4 April 1909.
  21. Rupp, *Worlds*, 74.
  22. German minutes were also kept but remained unpublished. See *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 7, 17.
  23. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Der zweite Internationale Kongreß für Frauenstimmrecht’, *Frauen-Rundschau*, no. 23 (1904), 708.
  24. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 5–6.
  25. *Ibid.*, 5, 7, 9, 10.
  26. *Ibid.*, 9.
  27. *Ibid.*, 10.
  28. *Ibid.*, 21.
  29. *The International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of Fifth Conference and First Quinquennial, London, England, April 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, May 1, 1909* (London: Samuel Sidders and Company, 1909), 26.
  30. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Union Française pour le Suffrage des Femmes’, *La Française. Journal de Progrès des Féminin*, 28 March 1909; Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Le prochain Congrès du Suffrage a Londres’, *La Française. Journal de Progrès des Féminin*, 21 March 1909; Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Madame la Directrice, [Nous recevons la lettre suivante...]', *La Française. Journal de Progrès des Féminin*, 4 April 1909.
  31. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 16.
  32. *Ibid.*, 17.
  33. *Ibid.*, 37, 25.
  34. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 19; *Report of Fifth Conference*, 25.

35. *International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of the Sixth Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Stockholm Sweden, June 12–17, 1911* (London: Women's Printing Society, 1911), 16. From 1911 onwards, the international meetings of the IWSA were called congresses.
36. *Report of Fifth Conference*, 46.
37. *Report of the Sixth Congress*, 24.
38. *Ibid.*, 14.
39. *Jus Suffragii*, 15 July 1911, 80; *Report of the Sixth Congress*, 96–9.
40. *The International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of Seventh Congress, Budapest, Hungary, June 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 1913* (Manchester, England: Percy Brothers, 1913), 9, 10.
41. *Ibid.*, 57, 67.
42. *Ibid.*, see also *Report of the Sixth Congress*, 3.
43. *Report of Seventh Congress*, 29.
44. *Ibid.*, 3, 66, see also: Sybil Oldfield, 'Mary Sheepshanks Edits an Internationalist Suffrage Monthly in Wartime: *Jus Suffragii* 1914–19', *Women's History Review* 12, no. 1 (1 March 2003) 119–31, at 119.
45. *Report of Seventh Congress*, 68.
46. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 45.
47. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 28.
48. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 7.
49. *Ibid.*, 4.
50. *Ibid.*, 8.
51. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der zweite Internationale Kongreß für Frauenstimmrecht', *Frauen-Rundschau*, no. 23 (1904), 708–9.
52. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 45.
53. *Ibid.*, 34.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*, 34–35.
56. *Ibid.*, 33.
57. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 15.
58. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 20.
59. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Schreiben an Frau Martina Kramers in Rotterdam von Dr. Käthe Schirmacher in Paris, 14 Juni 1906',

- Beilage der Frauenbewegung. Parlamentarische Angelegenheiten und Gesetzgebung*, 1 July 1906; Martina G. Kramers, 'Antwort an Dr. Käthe Schirmacher', *Die Frauenbewegung*, 1 August 1906.
60. Ibid.
  61. *Politiken*, 8 August 1906; see also Johanna Gehmacher, 'In/Visible Transfers: Translation as a Crucial Practice in Transnational Women's Movements around 1900', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* XLI (2019), no. 2 (2019), [https://www.ghil.ac.uk/publications/bulletin/bulletin\\_41\\_2/](https://www.ghil.ac.uk/publications/bulletin/bulletin_41_2/), 27–28.
  62. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 10, 11; On the VFF and the Liberale Frauenpartei: Briatte, *Bevormundete Staatsbürgerinnen*, 179–82, 308.
  63. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 8.
  64. See for more detail: Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 320–25 (Oesch); on the tensions in the VFF see also Briatte, *Bevormundete Staatsbürgerinnen*, 254.
  65. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 20.
  66. Ibid., 22.
  67. Ibid., 5–7.
  68. Ibid., 53–56.
  69. *Report of Fifth Conference*, 37–39.
  70. Anonymous, 'Our Point of View', *The Common Cause*, 6 May 1909; Adelheid von Welzeck, 'Kongress des Weltbundes für Frauenstimmrecht in London vom 26. April bis 1. Mai 1909', *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, 15 May 1909; Lida Gustava Heymann, 'Kritisches zum Kongress des Weltbundes für Frauenstimmrecht in London vom 26. April bis 1. Mai 1909', *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, 1 June 1909.
  71. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 351–62 (Oesch); cf. also Ute Gerhard, 'Im Schnittpunkt von Recht und Gewalt – zeitgenössische Diskurse über die Taktik der Suffragetten', in *Faltenwürfe der Geschichte. Entdecken, entziffern, erzählen.*, ed. Sandra Maß and Xenia Tippelskirch (Frankfurt/M. and New York: Campus, 2014), 416–30, at 416.
  72. Käthe Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes* (Weimar: Alexander Duncker Verlag, 1912), 75.

73. *Report of Fifth Conference*, 38; see on these debates: Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 363–64 (Oesch); Gehmacher, ‘In/Visible Transfers’, 34.
74. Lida Gustava Heymann, ‘Kritisches zum Kongress des Weltbundes für Frauenstimmrecht in London vom 26. April bis 1. Mai 1909’, *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, 1 June 1909.
75. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 363–64 (Oesch).
76. NI Sch 257/001, Käthe Schirmacher, Gegenkritik [manuscript].
77. *Report of Fifth Conference*, 48.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 363 (Oesch).
81. NL Sch 013/002, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 12 May 1909.
82. Anonymous, ‘Our Point of View’, *The Common Cause*, 6 May 1909.
83. Ibid.
84. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Der zweite Internationale Kongreß für Frauenstimmrecht’, *Frauen-Rundschau*, no. 23 (1904), 708–9; Anonymous, ‘International Women’s Suffrage Conference at Berlin’, *Women’s Suffrage Record*, June 1904.
85. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 26–27.
86. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 17.
87. NI Sch 414/025, Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Der Berliner Frauenkongress 1904’ [newspaper clipping].
88. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Der zweite Internationale Kongreß für Frauenstimmrecht’, *Frauen-Rundschau*, no. 23 (1904), 708–9.
89. Ibid.; NI Sch 414/025, Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Der Berliner Frauenkongress 1904’ [newspaper clipping].
90. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Der internationale Frauenkongress in Berlin’, *Fremden-Blatt*, 22 June 1904; NI Sch 414/008, Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Le Congrès Féministe International de Berlin’ [newspaper clipping, 1904].
91. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘Le Congrès féministe international de Berlin’, *La Semaine Littéraire*, 8 July 1904.

92. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der zweite Internationale Kongreß für Frauenstimmrecht', *Frauen-Rundschau*, no. 23 (1904), 708–9.
93. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der internationale Frauenkongress in Berlin', *Fremden-Blatt*, 22 June 1904.
94. NI Sch 414/008, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Le Congrès Féministe International de Berlin' [newspaper clipping, 1904].
95. E.g. NI Sch 180/049, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Ergebnisse des Frauen-Kongresses' [newspaper clipping, 1906]; NI Sch 585/038, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Vom internationalen Frauenkongress' [newspaper clipping, 29 June 1908].
96. Adelheid von Welczek, 'Kongress des Weltbundes für Frauenstimmrecht in London vom 26. April bis 1. Mai 1909', *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, 15 May 1909; Lida Gustava Heymann, 'Kritisches zum Kongress des Weltbundes für Frauenstimmrecht in London vom 26. April bis 1. Mai 1909', *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, 1 June 1909.
97. Lida Gustava Heymann, 'Kritisches zum Kongress des Weltbundes für Frauenstimmrecht in London vom 26. April bis 1. Mai 1909', *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, 1 June 1909.
98. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der fünfte internationale Kongress für Frauenstimmrecht (Frauen-Rundschau)', *Greifswalder Zeitung*, 30 May 1909.
99. NI Sch 257/001, Käthe Schirmacher, Gegenkritik [manuscript].
100. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 364 (Oesch).
101. Anonymous, 'Germany (Foreign News)', *The Common Cause*, 10 June 1909.
102. NI Sch 257/001, Käthe Schirmacher, Gegenkritik [manuscript].
103. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 8, 10, 11; *Report of Fifth Conference*, 17.
104. NL Sch 013/002, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 12 May 1909.
105. *Report of Fifth Conference*, 3.
106. *Report of the Sixth Congress*, 3, 16.
107. *Report of Seventh Congress*, 59.
108. *Report: Second and Third Conferences*, 25–33.
109. *Bulletin or Monthly Correspondence*, 15 September 1906.

110. Ibid.
111. *Bulletin or Monthly Correspondence*, 15 October 1906.
112. On the history of the *Jus Suffragii* see Sybil Oldfield, ed., *International Woman Suffrage: Jus Suffragii 1913–1920. Vol. IV October 1918–1920* (London: Routledge, 2003); see also Oldfield, ‘Mary Sheepshanks’.
113. I thank Dóra Czeferner for this information. For her work on the women’s movement in Hungary see Dóra Czeferner, ‘Weibliche Identität in Mitteleuropa und Wissenstransfer zwischen den ungarischen, österreichischen und deutschen Frauenorganisationen 1890–1914’ *Öt Kontinens/Five Continents* 2 (2015), 7–30.
114. *Report of the Fourth Conference*, 24–26, 29.
115. *Report of the Sixth Congress*, 27.
116. Ibid., 38.
117. Käthe Schirmacher, ‘How Can Women Influence the Press?’, *Jus Suffragii*, 15 August 1911; Mirovitch Zeneide, ‘What to Do against Press Calumnies and Misstatements?’, 15 August 1911; Catherine E. Marshall, ‘Women’s Suffrage and the Press’, *Jus Suffragii*, 15 December 1911.
118. Mineke Bosch and Annemarie Kloosterman, eds., *Politics and Friendship. Letters from the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, 1902–1942* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), 31; see also Rupp, *Worlds*, 95–96; Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik*, 238 (Heinrich).
119. Martina Kramers to Carrie Chapman Catt, 2 June 1913, in: Bosch and Kloosterman, *Politics and Friendship*, 127–29.
120. Alice Zimmern, *Le Suffrage des Femmes dans tous les Pays*, trans. C. Leon Brunschvicg, foreword: Carrie Chapman Catt (Librerie des Sciences Politiques et Sociales, 1911), 1–2.
121. George Creel and Ben B. Lindsey, *Measuring up Equal Suffrage* (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1911).
122. *Jus Suffragii*, 15 September 1911; George Creel and Ben B. Lindsey, *Die Praxis des Frauenstimmrechts. Ein maßgebendes Urteil*

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123. *Jus Suffragii*, 15 August 1911, remark by the editor, 82.
124. *Report of Seventh Congress*, 70.
125. Creel and Lindsey, *Die Praxis*, 1, 3, 5, 12, 15, 21.
126. *Ibid.*, 13, 15.
127. *Jus Suffragii*, 15 December 1911, 33; Creel, *Die Praxis*.
128. Chrystal Macmillan, Marie Stritt, and Maria Vérone, *Woman Suffrage in Practice. Second Impression with Corrections and Additions* (London and New York: National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies and The National American Women’s Suffrage Association, 1913); Chrystal Macmillan, Marie Stritt, and Maria Vérone, *Le Suffrage des Femmes en Pratique* (London and Paris: Maria Vérone, 1913); Chrystal Macmillan, Marie Stritt, and Maria Vérone, *Frauenstimmrecht in der Praxis* (London, 1913); see also Susan Zimmermann, ‘Schwimmer, Róza (Bédy-Schwimmer, Bédi-Schwimmer, Rózsa, Rosika) (1877–1948)’, in *Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Francisca de Haan, Anna Loutfi, and Krassimira Daskalova (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 485.

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# 9

## 'Suffragettes' in Germany: Translating Militancy

Käthe Schirmacher's last book with a transnational agenda was published in the autumn of 1912. The beautifully designed cover of the volume bore the short, bilingual title *Die Suffragettes* in reference to a controversial topic, namely the militant faction of the suffrage movement in the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The book reveals Schirmacher as an expert on contemporary British suffrage politics. Although not a translation as such, the text drew heavily on the extensive 500-page history of the first five years of the movement by Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1960) that had been published the year before.<sup>2</sup> Both books have in common the use of historicisation as a weapon to be instrumentalised in current political conflicts in their country.

This chapter examines Schirmacher's 160-page history of the movement (which was to remain the only German book on the suffragettes for several decades), its contexts and receptions in German-speaking countries and beyond. I begin by exploring Schirmacher's first references to the British militants and briefly outline the events and political stances on which she reported. I then discuss her decision to write a favourable book on the suffragettes in the context of her personal situation as well as the various controversies she was involved in at the time. Examining

Schirmacher's account of the movement and the arguments she used to explain militant strategies to a German audience, I analyse the ways in which she used and transformed the material available to her and how in her excerpts she adapted Pankhurst's messages for her own agenda. The last two parts of the chapter give insights into the book's considerable impact in various arenas, its contemporary reception, its translation into Polish, and its republications in the 1970s and 1980s.

## Not Like a Lady

At the 1906 IWSA congress in Copenhagen, Dora Montefiore (1851–1933) reported on the British militants as a fraternal delegate (see Chapter 8) and was greeted with a 'storm of applause'.<sup>3</sup> In her account of the intensifying struggle for women's suffrage, she reported that several women had been imprisoned 'only for the manner in which they had demanded the vote'.<sup>4</sup>

In her newspaper report on the conference, Käthe Schirmacher highlighted this fact and discussed it in relation to British leader Millicent Fawcett's (1847–1929) statement that every extension of the suffrage in history had involved some 'breaking of the palings', and that therefore suffrage societies should not be divided over militant or constitutional strategies.<sup>5</sup> Schirmacher used this expression of sympathy for the suffragettes to argue against critical reports in German media on the heightened conflict in the UK. In her view, it illustrated the solidarity between moderate and radical suffrage activists in the country.<sup>6</sup> Thus, her presumably first public reference to the militant activists already conveyed her support for these women whom she would adamantly defend in the years to follow. It also demonstrates how Schirmacher used a transnational reference as a way of intervening in controversies in the German Reich. At that moment, her critique was mainly directed at the press. She would, however, soon also use the example of the suffragettes in her confrontations with members of the German women's movement. But who were the British activists she supported so enthusiastically?

From today's perspective, the suffragettes are the most visible faction of the women's suffrage movement in the UK. However, in terms of

numbers and the time span of their activity, they represented only a small part of a much larger movement that dated back to mid-nineteenth-century initiatives.<sup>7</sup> As early as the 1860s, a trans-regional network of women's suffrage societies formed in the UK, and in 1896, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was officially founded.<sup>8</sup> Under the presidency of Millicent Fawcett, it was already connecting hundreds of associations shortly after the turn of the century. These societies had a large membership campaigning for women's suffrage, using petitions, publications, and the informal networks of politicians friendly to the women's vote.<sup>9</sup> Many of them hoped that the Liberals would help their cause, and some also officially supported the Liberal Party. However, despite the movement's broad support, its history also shows that political participation was difficult to achieve by purely constitutional means. As women were not part of the electorate (whereby suffrage at the time was also based on property and census), they did not have any direct leverage on the political public. The decade up to the beginning of the First World War was characterised by parliamentary initiatives for women's suffrage and various strategies to obstruct the bills on women's behalf by Liberal and Conservative politicians.

The obvious lack of interest among major political forces of the country in bringing women's suffrage about, and their strategies of deferring action, prompted the formation of a new and more radical association, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded in 1903 in Manchester and led by Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928). Although this had links to the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the WSPU activists committed themselves to non-partisanship and developed new and more visible forms of activism. From 1905 onwards, they disrupted public meetings of the ruling Liberal Party by pestering speakers with insistent questions about their stance on votes for women. When they were thrown out of the meetings, they provoked the authorities into arresting and sentencing them for obstructing the police, and then refused to pay the fines, risking imprisonment. In this way, they staged a spectacle of police and judicial violence against women, for which they (and a considerable proportion of the public) held the government accountable. Their intention to distinguish their cause from other forms of activism was symbolically expressed by the conscious

adoption of the originally pejorative term 'suffragettes' (in contrast to the older movement's self-designation as suffragists). The militancy of the early years consisted mainly of transgressing gender norms and not conforming to the behaviour expected of women, which provoked drastic reactions from public institutions and made the violence visible that went along with these reactions.<sup>10</sup> However, this strategy had a radicalising logic that led the WSPU activists, who had moved their offices to London in 1906, to increasingly resort to practices beyond legality.<sup>11</sup>

With spectacular actions such as chaining themselves to the railings in front of Downing Street in 1908, the militants attracted a great deal of media attention.<sup>12</sup> Provoking strong reactions, both negative and positive, they helped to bring the issue of suffrage onto the national agenda. The NUWSS leadership, therefore, initially credited the WSPU with revitalising the movement.<sup>13</sup> In the following years, the whole suffrage movement, not only the militants, began to organise public speeches, marches, and performances of their struggle by employing various sorts of art, in short, to use 'the street as a stage'.<sup>14</sup> However, when in 1908 WSPU members not only started smashing the windows of public offices but also urged women to 'rush the House of Commons' the NUWSS publicly distanced itself from these strategies.<sup>15</sup> This also led to tensions in the transnational arena. Although the delegates of the 1909 IWSA conference in London attended an event in honour of militant activists who had been imprisoned, the report on British suffrage politics also caused controversy on the question of whether to include recognition of extra-legal acts or not.<sup>16</sup> And although the IWSA committed itself to non-interference into national politics, its president, Carrie Chapman Catt, dedicated a considerable part of her official speech to the controversies in British activism.<sup>17</sup> In the same year, Schirmacher intensified her writing on the suffragettes in German journals,<sup>18</sup> making clear her support for the activists. However, unlike Lida-Gustava Heymann, for example, she did not mention the growing disunity among the British suffrage organisations, but instead focused on the support for the suffragettes among constitutional suffragists and in important sections of British society (see Chapter 8).<sup>19</sup>

Schirmacher had good relations with both the major suffrage journals in the UK—the NUWSS journal *Common Cause*, where she published

reports from Germany, and the WSPU journal *Votes for Women*, edited by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (1867–1954) and her husband Frederick (1871–1961), which favourably reviewed several of Schirmacher's books.<sup>20</sup> In 1911, she expressed her support for 'the suffragettes who have gone to prison for the cause' by sending them a poem of hers that she had had printed as a pamphlet.<sup>21</sup> *Votes for Women* published the German lines together with an English translation.<sup>22</sup> Two things are to be noted here. Schirmacher, who spoke and wrote English so well, did not try to translate her poem or find another way to address the suffragettes in their own language. Nor did the content explicitly refer to suffrage. It was a message about her own struggle, fought in a different place and language. But it conveyed the emotions that made her feel connected with the women she admired for their determination. In a mixture of rhyming and blank verse the poem alluded to chivalry, war, honour, and freedom and used the term 'Frauenwacht' (women's watch) to establish a link between femininity and militarism.<sup>23</sup> The anonymous translator gave up this connotation by choosing the gender-neutral title 'The Advance Guard' thus including an idea of progress that was not present in Schirmacher's poem.<sup>24</sup>

Schirmacher's German writings on the suffragettes bear witness of her admiration for the British militants. She stressed that these women were the first in history to use their efforts and their power for themselves. These women, she held, had ceased to contribute anonymously to the accomplishment of men through their work and sympathy; they did not support a cause important to men but demanded rights for themselves. Schirmacher was convinced that this new self-respect and the willingness to fight, suffer, and even die for the women's cause had historical significance. She even called it 'the biggest revolution in the world' (die größte Revolution der Welt).<sup>25</sup> Schirmacher also pointed out that the suffragettes were openly supported by a number of representatives of the Christian churches in the UK and described them as crusaders and martyrs for a just cause.<sup>26</sup> She defended the suffragettes' aggressive tactics by saying that to resist was the only way to win respect, a lesson that in her view was particularly hard to learn for women. In one of her articles she underlined this by inserting the French phrase 'L'homme respecte ce

qui lui résiste' (Man respects what resists him) into the German text, thus emphasising the transnational significance of the message.<sup>27</sup>

Schirmacher used the British press, particularly *Votes for Women*, as the primary source for her journalistic reports, often explicitly stating the titles and publication dates of the articles she used.<sup>28</sup> She combined this transfer to the German public with sharp criticism of the German press, accusing German journalists both of not being able to read English and of not recognising the heroic acts of women.<sup>29</sup> She was particularly outraged that they had failed to report on the suffragists' hunger strike in 1909, their self-sacrificing efforts, and their subsequent success in attracting public attention and their release from prison. This type of criticism remained a constant theme of her writings about the suffragettes in the years that followed. At times when she was not given space for an article, Schirmacher also got around this by writing letters to the editor adding information that she felt had been omitted from earlier reports in the same newspaper.<sup>30</sup>

In several of her articles Schirmacher chose a historical perspective, legitimising the suffragettes' actions through examples from the history of men's suffrage, which had also been won by violent methods.<sup>31</sup> She also used historical accounts of women's earlier suffrage campaigns to demonstrate how peaceful tactics had not been taken seriously.<sup>32</sup> The text in question also shows how closely she followed the arguments developed in *Votes for Women*. In the case of one article, she literally translated into German a chapter from the history of the movement by Frederick W. Pethick-Lawrence which had been published in issues of *Votes for Women* in the spring of 1910. In her translation, she added an introduction and brief explanations and omitted some information that she thought was interesting only to a British audience. Although she did not name the author, she indicated the journal from which she had drawn the text.<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting, however, that she cited Pethick-Lawrence's English chapter title 'Forty Years of Ladylike Methods' in her introduction, but titled her translation with 'Vierzig Jahre friedlicher Arbeit' (Forty Years of Peaceful Work), thus erasing both the gender and class aspects of the term 'ladylike'.

But she took up the notion of the 'lady' in a whole-hearted support for the suffragettes after their big window-smashing campaign in March

1912. Using the title 'Sind das noch Damen?' (Are These Still Ladies?) Schirmacher gave an overview of the history of the suffragettes' struggle, explicitly justifying their violence, in the suffrage journal *Frauenstimmrecht*.<sup>34</sup> Here, she distinguished the 'lady' and her class egoism from the suffragette and her thirst for justice. In their self-sacrifice, Schirmacher held, the militant suffrage activists 'followed Christ' and were thus recognised by the Christian church. The article combined comprehensive information drawn from British papers with burning support for the militant suffrage activists. The text was soon reprinted as a pamphlet, thus illustrating the propagandistic potential of transnational information transfer.<sup>35</sup>

## Contexts and Controversies

Käthe Schirmacher would remain one of the most ardent advocates of the suffragettes in German-speaking countries until the beginning of the First World War, and thus consciously occupied a very exposed position in relation to the German reading public.<sup>36</sup> Her 1912 book *Die Suffragettes* formed part of this. The significance of her support for the militant activists in the UK must be seen in the context of both the specific history of the demand for suffrage in the German women's movement and the various controversies within and outside the movement in which Schirmacher was involved. These conflicts and controversies concerned her position on universal suffrage, the relationship between radicals and moderates in the women's movement, and, above all, her growing commitment to German nationalism, one of the motives for her return to Germany in 1910.

As early as the 1890s, prominent representatives of the moderate movement were demanding equal suffrage.<sup>37</sup> However, this was only one among other issues raised by the wider movement. Organised suffragism developed within the radical wing. Here, a single-issue association, the Hamburg-based German Union for Women's Suffrage (Deutscher Verein für Frauenwahlrecht), soon to be transformed into an alliance of suffrage

organisations from different parts of Germany named German Federation for Women's Suffrage (Deutscher Verband für Frauenstimmrecht, DVF) evolved.<sup>38</sup>

However, the German suffragists active in the larger DVF were divided over the issue of democratic (universal) suffrage. Should they demand universal suffrage from the beginning, thereby risking a delay to women's right to vote, or should they ask only for the same voting rights as men? This was complicated by different voting rights for men in different German states. Since 1871, the German Reich had adopted universal male suffrage in elections at a federal level. However, several member states had various hierarchical systems based on property and income; thus, many elections to regional diets did not admit all men on the basis of universal male suffrage.<sup>39</sup> These differences, and the fact that the Social Democrats called for universal suffrage, meant that the question facing the DVF was difficult and controversial.<sup>40</sup> The German women's movement had committed itself to political neutrality and many saw it as a violation of that neutrality to explicitly demand what the Social Democrats also had on their platform, namely universal suffrage. The debates over these issues divided the member associations of the DVF, which in the end adopted universal suffrage in its programme in 1907. The controversies even led to the foundation of new associations that, like most British suffrage societies, simply demanded equal suffrage to men or left the question open. The split in the movement deepened in the following years and the conflicts could not be resolved until the beginning of the First World War.<sup>41</sup>

Unlike the majority of the radicals, Käthe Schirmacher, who had participated in the founding of the DVF, took a critical stance on universal suffrage for reasons of principle. In France, particularly, she viewed it as endangering the unity of society.<sup>42</sup> But she also openly criticised universal suffrage in the context of the German debate and believed her own frankness was to blame for the fact that she was not elected to the board of the DVF.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the disagreement about goals and strategies also became a question of her personal position within suffrage organisations in Germany.



Another controversy in which Schirmacher was involved concerned the relationship of the umbrella organisation of the radicals, the Federation of Progressive Women's Associations (Verband fortschrittlicher Frauenvereine, VFF) with the older League of German Women's Associations (Bund deutscher Frauenvereine, BDF), the German member organisation of the ICW. The VFF united organisations with more progressive political positions (on education, the opening of the professions, the social question, and suffrage) than the BDF. The relationship between the two political bodies was, however, complicated, as they had many members in common. When the possibility of a formal membership of the VFF in the BDF was debated in 1907, a majority (including Schirmacher) favoured the connection with the BDF and its important networks. However, a group around Anita Augspurg and Lida-Gustava Heymann thought the VFF should remain a separate organisation, thus aiming at a clean break with the moderate movement.<sup>44</sup> When this group left the board of the VFF, Schirmacher, although still living in France, was promoted to the position of vice president of the association, for which she went on extended lecture tours in 1908.<sup>45</sup> However, she soon lost this position due to another conflict related to German nationalism (see Chapter 7).

Although many activists linked their struggle for suffrage with sympathies for left or left-liberal politics, some German radicals, among them Schirmacher, participated in nationalist politics that gained influence in the years leading up to the First World War. An important background to the growing nationalism in the country was the tension between the internal nationalising dynamics triggered by German unification in 1871 and the multinational population of some parts of the country, especially in Prussia, where a significant proportion of citizens identified as Poles and campaigned for a Polish state.<sup>46</sup> The Prussian government, supported by nationalistic associations, in particular the German Eastern Marches Society (Deutscher Ostmarkenverein), pursued a harsh policy of Germanisation and internal colonisation via repressive language policies and the aggressive promotion of German settlement in the mixed parts of the country.<sup>47</sup> Notwithstanding her active participation in transnational feminist networks, the IWSA in particular, Schirmacher actively endorsed this policy from 1904 onwards.<sup>48</sup> It is worth noting that she

developed these two commitments simultaneously and obviously did not see them as contradicting each other. Her first nationalist public statement dates back to 1903 when she published anti-Czech and anti-Polish articles in a French political journal.<sup>49</sup>

In a heated correspondence on the issue, Anita Augspurg declared that she would always try to prevent Schirmacher promoting her nationalist ideas in the context of the suffrage association DVF.<sup>50</sup> In the VFF, two groups fought for dominance, a minority around Maria Lischnewska and the Liberal Women's Party (Liberale Frauenpartei), who promoted nationalistic and imperialistic positions in the German East, and an anti-imperialist majority.<sup>51</sup> As a member of the nationalist group, Schirmacher was not re-elected to the board of the VFF in the autumn of 1909 (see Chapter 7).<sup>52</sup>

The controversies that took place in and beyond the women's movement became known to the public through articles in the press in Germany, France, and in Polish-language newspapers.<sup>53</sup> Clearly, Schirmacher followed the various reports about her. In 1909, she published a rebuttal of an attack in a Polish paper, choosing a remarkable strategy; she published a translation of what had been said about her in Polish to illustrate the misogynistic strategies of her opponents, thus using translation as an instrument in a nationalist struggle to expose her Polish adversaries and to call for women's solidarity. In *Nowa Reforma* she had been presented as 'the rather ugly and now old Miss Dr. Schirmacher, or, as she is popularly called in Polish Poznań, "the furious Kasia"' (dość brzydkiej i starej już panny dra Schirmacher, czyli, jak ją popularnie Poznań polski nazywa, 'wściekłej Kasi').<sup>54</sup>

These conflicts increasingly threatened Schirmacher's professional position as a journalist.<sup>55</sup> Her move to Germany in 1910 must thus be seen in the context of her political involvement in German nationalist politics and of a professional crisis. Having estranged many of her network partners in the French press and in German liberal papers, she obviously thought that she could only establish a new position in German journalism if she also lived in Germany. The fact that she increasingly chose controversial topics should, therefore, not only be

taken as evidence that she was willing to abandon public consensus when she was convinced of a cause. It could also be seen as an escalation strategy by a journalist under pressure who hoped in this way to regain publishing space by creating visibility through polarising statements. The book on the suffragettes can be seen as evidence of both.

## Explaining a Militant Movement to a German Audience

Schirmacher followed the events in the UK closely, and in the first months of 1912, when the fight between suffragettes and the British government reached a new climax with the window-smashing campaign in March, she repeatedly wrote in her diary how concerned she was about the situation in the UK.<sup>56</sup> As early as February, she had made a plan to write a German book on the suffragettes.<sup>57</sup> Just one week after she had first noted the idea in her diary, she signed a contract with her editor and committed herself to finish the work by the end of August the same year.<sup>58</sup> The work on the manuscript is documented in her diary over four weeks in June and July 1912.<sup>59</sup> Before and during her work on the book, she published several shorter pieces on the issue.<sup>60</sup>

The book's stated goal was to explain to contemporaries why the suffragettes, whom Schirmacher described as 'educated women of a leading civilised country', used violence to demand their rights. Schirmacher had submitted to the task, she said, because of the total failure of the press to do so. Linking the liberal concept of the self-empowerment of the political individual with nationalism, she used a quote from Lord Byron's famous stanza on the Greek struggle for independence when she held that 'who would be free, themselves must strike the blow'. She declared that women had to be seen as sovereign individuals and demanded that the suffragettes, like the Greek nationalists, should be viewed as fighters for their freedom.<sup>61</sup> With this quote, Schirmacher also implicitly referred to the African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass (1817–1895), who had brought Byron's lines into the fight against slavery.<sup>62</sup> Whether she knew of this connection is difficult to say, but given her close ties to the abolitionist movement against prostitution,

it is imaginable that she was also familiar with the political language of abolitionism against slavery. However, she made explicit reference to the German literary canon by choosing a line by Goethe on the courage to change the world to be the motto for her book.

The 160-page volume is constructed as a useful handbook, giving short but well-documented answers to the major questions: Who are the suffragettes, what do they want, and how is this connected to the political institutions of constitution and parliament? After introducing the main protagonists and their cause, Schirmacher provides an overview of events since 1905 and then adds a number of short chapters describing the movement's relationship to groups and institutions such as the law courts, the church, the press, but also 'men' and 'women' as well as 'money'. In so doing, she also provides an introduction to the complex political system in the UK and to the main political groups, their goals, constituencies, and strategies. And she explains why the suffragettes had committed themselves to neutrality *vis-à-vis* political parties, making enfranchisement their only political aim. It allowed them to cooperate with whoever supported them and helped them sever ties with the Liberals, who the suffragists had long hoped would grant them the right to vote on the basis of their principles.<sup>63</sup>

A strong focus was on the legal and social situation of women, from the working class in particular. Like the suffragettes, Schirmacher argued that the legal situation of women was comparable to slavery. Many aspects of the social question such as poverty, overwork and extremely low wages for women, unhealthy living conditions, prostitution, women's exposure to domestic violence, and their lack of a say in raising their children, all had to do with their lack of rights and the lack of understanding for the situation of women in the legislature. It was for the sake of the most exposed and exploited women that women needed to become legislators, the suffragettes held. This connection was expressed both in the participation of many working-class women in the struggle and the good relations of the WSPU with labour organisations.<sup>64</sup> Thus a major legitimization of the struggle for the vote was the fight against social injustice, rather than an abstract concept of equality. Schirmacher made this clear by providing extensive details

both of the social situation of working women and of examples of cooperation in activism between middle-class and working-class women.<sup>65</sup> The suffragettes claimed that for working women, the suffrage movement was the equivalent of socialism for working men.<sup>66</sup> Only if women were included in the process of law-making on equal terms could the situation of the people be improved and a more just society be created.

Another argument where Schirmacher followed the suffragettes concerned militancy. Referring to the history of constitutionalism and the democratisation of politics, she noted that at no time had those in power yielded to popular demands without some use of force from below.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, the suffragettes not only made use of constitutional rights (such as demanding answers to questions posed to politicians publicly or submitting petitions to UK Parliament), but through the use of violent tactics also demonstrated their determination to claim these rights when they were not granted.<sup>68</sup> Like the suffragettes, Schirmacher was convinced that only those who had the right to vote were taken seriously by the political establishment and that women would only gain equal rights if they showed their readiness to go to prison or even die for their cause.<sup>69</sup> She connected this with hints regarding statements by liberal politicians who had on the one hand claimed that all progress had been won by the use of some force and on the other refused to engage in women's suffrage as they did not see the will of the people behind it. With their militancy, Schirmacher said, the suffragettes showed that there was indeed popular demand for the women's vote.<sup>70</sup>

Schirmacher underlined her explanations of the main political arguments of the British suffragists and suffragettes with a concise narrative of their common struggle to bring a women's suffrage bill into parliament and get it passed. She highlighted how broad the movement was, militant or not, and pointed to the many respected representatives of society who contributed to the militant fight with money and moral support.<sup>71</sup> However, Schirmacher did not go into any detail about internal conflicts in the movement, either between constitutionalists and militants or between different militant factions. Rather, she presented the image of a common cause where only minor strategical differences occurred.<sup>72</sup> She thus created a harmonious picture of the suffrage movement in the UK for her German audience. This was helped by the

fact that she published her book shortly before the break between the Pethick-Lawrence and Emmeline Pankhurst over differences regarding the escalation of the violent strategy.<sup>73</sup> Neither the growing distance from the labour movement nor the undemocratic internal structure of the WSPU, which would soon lead to the split between Sylvia Pankhurst (who aligned with the Communists) and her mother, were an issue in Schirmacher's book.<sup>74</sup>

## Excerpt, Transfer, and Transformation

For her concise narratives and explanations in *Die Suffragettes*, Schirmacher used two major sources: Sylvia Pankhurst's comprehensive history of the movement up to the autumn of 1910, and the weekly journal *Votes for Women* with its broad coverage and support of the movement. Pankhurst's book came out shortly after a second reading of the Conciliation Bill (which would have brought at least restricted voting rights for women) was postponed in parliament and the 'truce' between the suffragettes and the government was broken.<sup>75</sup> Her detailed chronology of the campaigns since 1905 was written in a period of optimism and meant as a model and reminder for activists 'in other lands' and 'future days'.<sup>76</sup> However, in the light of this setback, it also became a source of knowledge for the next and more radical campaign.

Schirmacher used this book extensively. Her seventy-page chapter about the events from 1905 to 1910 closely followed Pankhurst's narrative. To shorten the text, she summarised what was explained in much more detail in her source. She occasionally added explanations for a German audience unfamiliar with British political institutions.<sup>77</sup> But apart from a brief reference to two earlier accounts, she quoted exclusively from Pankhurst in her description of the first five years of the movement.<sup>78</sup> At no point did she question the descriptions and explanations given in the English volume. For the period from the end of 1910 up to June 1912, where her account of the movement ended, Schirmacher mostly used the fairly detailed reports on activist and government activities that *Votes for Women* provided. Here she often only referred to the journal issue number, not to specific authors or articles, thus giving

the impression that *Votes for Women* actually spoke with one voice. As with Pankhurst, she adopted what served her historical account, but did not critically engage with any of the texts printed in the journal.

It is noticeable that Pankhurst hardly cited any sources. Quoting political actors and the press without precise references, she presented her book as a record of the struggle in which everything was to be taken at face value. Whereas Pankhurst relied on her prominent role in the movement to create the authenticity of her account, Schirmacher aimed to do the same for her own book through adding an abundance of footnotes. Hence, her book, which was narrated from the same activist perspective as the English volume, often has the appearance of an academic text.

This method of excerpting had the advantage of producing a concise summary of Pankhurst's long treatise and allowing targeted insights into the arguments presented in *Votes for Women*. The result was a concentrated text with a wealth of factual information on dates of events, numbers of participants in demonstrations, workers' wages, statistical data on the social situation, election results, membership figures, amounts of money collected, etc. The excerpts also included incisive quotes from politicians and activists, along with a reference to the source.<sup>79</sup> In this way, Schirmacher provided the material that journalists, whom she had so often accused of misrepresenting the suffragettes, could use in their articles. Photographs of major activists and drawings from *Votes for Women* added to the wealth of this material. That said, Schirmacher's text should not be read as an analysis of the different factions of the movement in the UK nor as a debate on the cause. Rather, it was a retelling of the WSPU's self-historicisation, which transferred a certain part of the knowledge publicly available in the UK to the German Reich.

Schirmacher proceeded in a similar way in the shorter explanatory chapters that follow the long chronological chapter. However, her excerpts also transform the English source texts in characteristic ways. For example, where Schirmacher gives information about money that had been collected or spent by the WSPU, she usually adds a conversion into German marks, thus translating the amounts into values of a German economy with all problems this entailed.<sup>80</sup> She often does not bother to do so when talking about workers' wages or fines for offences.<sup>81</sup>

However, in the short chapter on the suffragettes and money, the enormous sums that the activists were able to raise in their various campaigns are *only* given in marks.<sup>82</sup> Obviously, it was particularly important to her to make clear to her readers how well the militant movement was equipped with financial resources provided by committed supporters, while the women's movements in other parts of the world were generally rather poor. To emphasise her argument against those who held that 'militancy does not pay' she says in English: 'Oh, it pays splendidly'. She adds in German that financial support had always increased when persecution became more severe.<sup>83</sup> Here we can see her developing an argument that was certainly in line with what she learned from her UK informants, but was specifically addressed at an audience interested in the German women's movement. Thus, it was also particularly important for her to convey the economic dimension of the support by 'translating' the currency.

A peculiarity of Schirmacher's writing is the occasional use of the German grammatical masculine form for women. That this was a deliberate decision becomes clear at the very outset of the book, when in the first sentence of the first chapter she introduces the protagonists as 'Freiheitskämpfer' (freedom fighters) in the masculine form of the noun.<sup>84</sup> The symbolic relevance of this masculine term to describe women is also expressed in the formulation 'weibliche Wähler' (female voters) instead of 'Wählerinnen', which would have been the more correct use of the German grammatical form used for women, in the further course of the book.<sup>85</sup> I argue that in this way Schirmacher marks the political relevance of the concept of the voter and stresses the equality between male and female citizens. To do so, she imitates the more gender-neutral English language in a German context, a strategy she had already successfully promoted when translating the IWSA principles from English into German in 1904 (see Chapter 8). The meaning of this becomes clear in the chapter on the constitution, where she draws on the research of Charlotte Carmichael Stopes (1840–1929) and Helen Blackburn (1842–1903), who had pointed to the legal tradition of using of the word 'man' for both women and men.<sup>86</sup>



Another characteristic of *Die Suffragettes* is the repeated use of English words and phrases to document statements by activists and politicians. Sometimes Schirmacher does so to clarify a double meaning, for example when she explains the expression 'to rush Parliament'.<sup>87</sup> Sometimes she inserts the English words in brackets into the German text to emphasise the importance of a slogan or to illustrate the hostility or audacity of certain statements.<sup>88</sup> However, often she does not take pains to translate phrases or sentences she finds particularly significant.<sup>89</sup> She probably identified so strongly with certain slogans that it was important to her to convey them in their original form. It is also likely that she hoped to paint a more vivid picture by adding some original tones. It should be noted, though, that she wrote the book in just one month and probably forgot to add the translation in some cases. Obviously, however, she did not think that her readers would have problems understanding these occasional English sentences.

It becomes quite clear that she was in complete agreement with a pompous slogan Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence had used in *Votes for Women* to call women to action: 'Acquiescence is criminal. Patience is cowardly. Consent is contemptible'. Schirmacher quotes it twice. The first mention, together with a translation, is in the course of an argument about the necessity of transcending the ideals of femininity.<sup>90</sup> The second mention, without a translation, comes in the last sentences of the book, in which she refers to a book she had written the year before, entitled *Das Rätsel Weib* (Woman, the Riddle). She holds that while this earlier book had been the expression of her life experience, *Die Suffragettes* factually proved the ideas laid out in the earlier book. She then repeats the three sentences as if they were her own words, thus identifying herself with the 'freedom fighters' she had presented at the beginning of the book.<sup>91</sup>

Schirmacher transferred the suffragettes' uncompromising attitude towards the government into another struggle. She 'translated' the strategies they used in their fight for the single political issue of suffrage into a response to conflicts over the new definition of women's position in the society.

## 'Suffragettes' in the German Women's Movements

In the UK, *Die Suffragettes* was noticed immediately and reviewed in *Votes for Women*.<sup>92</sup> The anonymous reviewer particularly commended Schirmacher's thorough use of Sylvia Pankhurst's book and *Votes for Women* and praised her effort to 'bring about a stronger feeling of comradeship and solidarity among all women fighting for their emancipation'.<sup>93</sup> Only one other reviewer, the Austrian Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein noted the close connection between Sylvia Pankhurst's and Käthe Schirmacher's book, which she discussed in a collective review together with an overview of the suffrage movement by Millicent Fawcett. The socialist Schlesinger-Eckstein criticised all three authors for identifying suffrage with the liberation of women in a broader sense and neglecting economic background.<sup>94</sup> She appreciated Schirmacher's effort to continue where Pankhurst's book left off, but as with Fawcett's book missed a thorough explanation of the suffragette phenomenon.

In other parts of the German-speaking press, the response was far less positive and sometimes openly hostile and derogatory. The daily press even called on the movement to distance itself from the British suffragettes.<sup>95</sup> Several critics chided Schirmacher for her declared sympathy with the latter, calling them hysterical women and invoking the nobility and sanctity of true womanhood.<sup>96</sup> Her open sympathy for the women she wrote about often led not to greater understanding but to disparaging remarks about the suffragettes, who were accused of having whipped the British public into a frenzy.<sup>97</sup> Most of the critics, whose main concern was the loss of the gender order they wanted to uphold, did not address the political arguments of Schirmacher's book but confined themselves to reaffirming their ideas of femininity.<sup>98</sup> A more neutral review in the Vienna liberal newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* acknowledged the volume's informative value and the excellent style but also made clear that it did not agree with its arguments.<sup>99</sup> In the women's movement, more positive reviews appeared.<sup>100</sup> However, in the spring of 1913, against a background of arson attacks and the bombing campaign launched by the WSPU, Sophie von Harbou (1865–1921) in the radical journal *Die Frauenbewegung* doubted that Schirmacher would

still support the suffragettes and hinted at the possible negative impact of these deeds on the wider women's movement.<sup>101</sup>

Harbou expressed her criticism of the suffragettes only in the form of a question, but more openly negative attitudes towards the suffragettes were widespread among the moderate majority of the movement in the German Reich, with Helene Lange the most influential voice. These attitudes came to a head in early 1913. In March, Lange wrote an extensive article in her journal *Die Frau* characterising the suffragettes' activism as dangerous, useless, and inappropriate. It could easily escalate in uncontrollable ways, she said, and would estrange potential supporters, as the violence contradicted the goal of positive participation in public life. She emphasised the importance of 'dignity' (Würde), especially for women, and called it a mistake to risk 'the spectacle of powerlessness', as she believed the suffragettes were doing. More, she explicitly declared that the suffragettes damaged the cause of women's suffrage in other countries. Therefore, solidarity with them should have limits.<sup>102</sup> This uncompromising criticism appeared in orchestrated unison with a statement by the BDF board in April condemning any use of violence as incompatible with the nature and aims of the women's movement.<sup>103</sup> Helene Lange's article, legitimising this official distancing from the suffragettes, was republished as a pamphlet and also reprinted in a journal in Switzerland.<sup>104</sup>

The BDF's public statement prompted a harsh critique from the radicals. Lida-Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg published an open letter accusing the BDF board members of stabbing the suffragettes in the back on behalf of the German women's movement.<sup>105</sup> In many other countries, the members of women's movements reacted in more differentiated ways (or less publicly).<sup>106</sup> In the German Reich, the issue showed the deep rift in the movement. And here Schirmacher found herself on the same side with Heymann and Augspurg, with whom she disagreed about universal suffrage and German nationalism. The common minority position led to solidarity between them, which was expressed, for example, in the fact that Augspurg continued to give Schirmacher publishing space in her journal despite their disagreement on other topics.<sup>107</sup> Shortly after the publication of the BDF statement on

violent strategies, Schirmacher once more tried to make clear her unconditional support for the suffragettes in the daily press. But as evidenced by a letter from an editor who rejected her article, she had difficulty making herself heard to a wider German public.<sup>108</sup> However, she was also embroiled in other conflicts at the time, besides being seriously ill.<sup>109</sup> She probably did not try as hard to counter Lange's assessment and the BDF statement as she might have done under other circumstances.

If the aim of Schirmacher's book had been to enhance understanding for the British suffragettes in Germany, or even to encourage the German movement to adopt more militant methods, it was not a very successful endeavour. But her writing on the suffragettes helped to improve her disturbed relationship with the left wing of the radicals. And it brought her considerable attention from a German audience, although marginalising her in the press as somebody with rather extremist views. She received encouragement from personal letters as well as a positive international response.<sup>110</sup> It should be noted, however, that her book had a second aim, namely to fight against the paragraph on universal suffrage in the official programme of the German federation for women's suffrage, the DVF. More than once she made it very clear that the suffragettes did not demand universal suffrage, implying that German women would do well to follow their example. Although this did not become the prevailing opinion in Germany, her intervention certainly contributed to the further division of the organised German suffrage movement.<sup>111</sup>

## Sufrazetki and the New Type of Woman—Reception Across Time and Borders

In the years before the First World War, Schirmacher was among the very few authors from the German-speaking women's movements whose works were translated into other languages. Her 1911 book *Das Rätsel Weib* (Woman, the Riddle) was rendered into Swedish and Serbian.<sup>112</sup> Translations of this book into English and Polish were discussed but did not materialise.<sup>113</sup> However, a translation of *Die Suffragettes* into Polish

was successfully realised in 1913.<sup>114</sup> Schirmacher and the Polish translator, Melania Bersonowa (also referred to as Melanie Berson, life dates unknown), knew each other from the IWSA,<sup>115</sup> where Schirmacher had been a member of the admissions committee since 1909. In 1911, a Galician women's suffrage committee led by Melania Bersonowa applied for affiliation to the IWSA; it was Schirmacher's remit to inform her that their application had been successful.<sup>116</sup> We do not, however, have any correspondence between the two women regarding the translation project. The newly founded Galician committee obviously wanted information on the suffrage cause abroad and publicity material in Polish. But the choice of Schirmacher's book on the suffragettes is still remarkable. It provided comprehensive information, but it was also obvious that the author openly sided with the militant activists in the UK, whose strategies were controversial among IWSA activists. The Galician suffrage committee, in sharp contrast to the German moderates, obviously opted for a publicity strategy that included the threat of militancy. It must also be assumed that Bersonowa herself was among the supporters of the suffragettes abroad.

Even more surprising is Bersonowa's decision to translate an author who was known as a committed and vocal anti-Polish activist in Prussia. Schirmacher's anti-Polish propaganda and her collaboration with the German Eastern Marches Society had been discussed in the Polish exile press since 1906.<sup>117</sup> In 1911, several of Schirmacher's lectures on the German-Polish question had been published as pamphlets.<sup>118</sup> It is difficult to imagine that Bersonowa, who obviously read German well, knew nothing about them. It must, therefore, be assumed that she did not see it as a hindrance to the publication of Schirmacher's book on the suffragettes in Polish. Whether she felt that Schirmacher's activism in Prussia did not affect the Polish cause in the Habsburg Empire, or whether she was so convinced of the single-issue approach of the IWSA that she considered other political commitments of fellow activists irrelevant for the common cause of suffrage, we do not know. Similar to the ongoing cooperation between Augspurg, Heymann, and Schirmacher despite their serious disagreements over universal suffrage, one can assume from Bersonowa's decision that support of the suffragettes, who

polarised the public in many areas, was able to build bridges even across deep political and other divides.

As early as 1913, the Polish translation *Sufrażetki* was published in Lwów (Lviv/Lemberg) by the publishing house *Kultura i Sztuka* (Culture and Art).<sup>119</sup> In her close rendering Melania Bersonowa followed Schirmacher's linguistic peculiarities and also kept the English terms and phrases Schirmacher had scattered throughout the text, sometimes adding explanations, sometimes leaving a term untranslated. However, she did not emulate Schirmacher's strategy of masculinisation/neutralisation, which was probably less acceptable in Polish than in German. Where Schirmacher, for example, named the suffragettes 'freedom fighters' in the masculine form of the German word, Bersonowa used the feminine Polish form.<sup>120</sup> Some small omissions may have had economic reasons. The Polish translation had fewer illustrations and Bersonowa also omitted the abridged version of the WSPU anthem, the 'Women's Marseillaise', which Schirmacher had put on the very last page of her book. Some less precise or even erroneous footnotes probably indicate that the translation was done in a hurry.

Two changes, however, are significant. They both pertain to the framing of the book and reorient the narrative in a certain way. First, the unsigned Polish preface, which replaced the original, is a mixture of Schirmacher's translated words and Bersonowa's engagement with their content. Bersonowa adopted Schirmacher's remarks on the unprecedented character of the suffragettes' struggle quite literally and, like her, stressed the necessity of explaining the suffragettes' deeds to a broader public. However, she mitigated the harsh judgement on the press. While Schirmacher saw a complete failure in the coverage of the militants, Bersonowa only remarked that sensational reports contributed to obscuring rather than explaining their struggle.

Adding her own view to Schirmacher's account, Bersonowa also connected women's suffragism with the American struggle for independence, which in her view had given birth to the fight for women's equality in the USA. She thus linked the suffragettes to a movement in another country and opened up a broader historical perspective. More, she also said that women were oppressed all over the world and could only succeed in their fight through international solidarity, which already

existed. In this way, she not only located Schirmacher's rather isolated narrative about the British suffragettes in a historical context but also emphasised the importance of transnational reflections and relations which, given the attention outside the UK and the debates on militancy in the IWSA and elsewhere, was a notable omission in *Die Suffragettes*.

While these additions can still be read as differentiations of Schirmacher's viewpoint, another, bolder intervention had a different character. Bersonowa not only cut the Goethe quote that Schirmacher had chosen as a motto for the book but also replaced the lines from Lord Byron's freedom poem for Greece with a quotation by the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855). By substituting the references to the English and the German literary canons with a reference to the most venerated figure in Polish literature, she nationalised the book's message in a very specific way. By inserting a well-known line in which Mickiewicz had demanded that women, as the companions of men, should have the same rights in the society, Bersonowa said (or rather, made readers believe that Schirmacher had said) that militant suffrage activism only existed because people had not heeded Mickiewicz's words.<sup>121</sup> In so doing, she no doubt intended to make militant suffrage activism acceptable for a Polish audience. But she thereby also Polonised an author—Schirmacher—who was known as an anti-Polish German nationalist. This was possible because Schirmacher and Bersonowa not only shared a support for the British suffragettes, they also both connected the fight for women's suffrage with the idea of national freedom. The astonishing substitution of one national poet's words with those of another thus points to the conceptual link many suffrage activists made between women's equal political participation and the idea of the nation and nationalism.

The second, more significant intervention was the omission of Schirmacher's one-page concluding chapter referring to her earlier book *Das Rätsel Weib* as a theoretical background to the book on the suffragettes.<sup>122</sup> Although the cut was probably motivated by the pragmatic thought that it was unnecessary to introduce an untranslated German book to a Polish audience, the decision to not translate the short page also removed the only place in the entire book where Schirmacher had spoken in the first person singular. By omitting these last sentences,

Bersonowa depersonalised the book and thus distanced it from an author who was certainly controversial among the Polish-speaking public and other readers.

A similar consideration may have been behind the decision to mention the publisher of the book but not the author or the translator in a review of *Sufrażetki* in the women's literary magazine *Bluszcz* (Ivy). The detailed article first appeared in the 'readers' voices' section of *Bluszcz* and was soon republished in an abridged version in the Chicago-based weekly newspaper *Zgoda*.<sup>123</sup> It summarised the book's main arguments approvingly but spoke of Schirmacher only as 'the author' (in the masculine form of the word). The reviewer J.P. praised the book's author for not expressing her opinion but quoting only the facts, which J.P. felt spoke vividly for themselves. The review ended with a personal statement in support of active political struggles, saying that rights are not given, but earned, which, interestingly, echoes Lord Byron's statement in the German book which the translator had edited out.

Although some obviously thought it wiser not to mention Schirmacher's name, another reviewer, E. Wielowieyska (life dates unknown) praised her openly in a comprehensive review in the women's magazine *Nasz Dom* (Our House). She reproduced many details from the book, focusing mainly on social issues and reinforcing the suffragettes' claim that only women's suffrage could improve the dire situation of the working class. Wielowieyska concluded by saying that she found Schirmacher's book moving and hoped that everybody would read it and thereby understand that the suffragettes were fighting for an ethical culture.<sup>124</sup>

Bersonowa's translation and the favourable reviews show that Schirmacher's book met a demand for information about the suffragettes among the Polish public. In contrast to the German women's movement, the question of militancy did not cause the same heated debate among Polish women. Since the Poles, lacking their own state, lived in parts of the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian empires, the attack on institutions of the state probably did not have the same meaning as it did in Germany. However, the translator's interventions and the partial concealment of the author's name show that the decision to translate the book must still have been a delicate one. Obviously, there were different ways of dealing with



people with opinions like Schirmacher in the different Polish communities. Most certainly, however, the publication of the translation was only conceivable because Schirmacher had exclusively focused on suffrage in her account and had not included her political opinions about other matters. The project thus demonstrates both the extent to which feminist networks were able to overcome political and national differences and the advantages of a single-issue approach that made it possible, at least in certain circumstances, to neutralise or ignore such differences for the sake of the cause.

It is likely that it was precisely this exclusive focus on one topic—the militant struggle for suffrage—which made the book both interesting and readable for feminist activists of the 1970s, too. In 1976, a bootleg copy of Schirmacher's *Die Suffragettes* was published in West Berlin.<sup>125</sup> The small volume, presumably the only book ever put out by the movement-based publisher ClitVerlag, was a printed copy of the original. Apart from the deletion of the Goethe quote that Schirmacher had used as a motto and the omission of photographs of the historical activists (which, like the motto, were on separate pages in the original), the text was a facsimile reproduction of the historical text. While the pictures (as in the 1913 Polish edition) were probably left out for reasons of cost, it can be assumed that the omission of a reference to the bourgeois educational canon had a different objective. It had been important for Schirmacher to stress the compatibility between the middle-class tradition of liberal values and the violent strategies of the suffragettes. The 1970s activists, however, were emphatically convinced that a break with that tradition was a necessary precondition of women's liberation. Quoting Goethe obviously did not fit this approach.

What Schirmacher and the feminists of the late twentieth century probably had in common, however, was their interest in the concept of militancy as a means to fight a stifling consensus that could not be overcome by mere argument. The editors of the new edition remained invisible, they did not take responsibility by name, nor did they explain their approach to the subject in an introduction. We can, however, draw some assumptions from the cover of the new edition. It shows a suffragette being arrested by two policemen, emphasising thus the militant struggle, not suffrage, as the main theme. The back cover of the book

features a quotation taken from the text proclaiming the need to create a new type of woman who is willing to break with norms of femininity—thus again stressing cultural, not legal issues. It is quite conceivable that the activists of the 1970s who wanted to free themselves from bourgeois conventions of femininity were intrigued by this assertion by a prominent protagonist of an earlier movement. A further edition published in 1988 by the publisher Jassmann indicates also some commercial success. It bears witness to the fact that Schirmacher's militant approach resonated with the attitude of many women in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>126</sup> Neither the author's stance against universal suffrage, which is barely veiled in the text, nor her nationalistic commitment, which was certainly unknown to the majority of her readers in the 1970s and 1980s, were an issue at this time.

## Notes

1. Käthe Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes* (Weimar: Alexander Duncker Verlag, 1912).
2. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette. The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement 1905–1910* (New York: Sturgis & Walton Co., 1911).
3. *Report: Second and Third Conferences of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Berlin, Germany, June 3, 4, 1904, Copenhagen, Denmark, Aug. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 1906* (Copenhagen, Capital Region: Bianco Luno, 1906), 26–27.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 20.
6. NI Sch 180/049, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Ergebnisse des Frauen-Kongresses' [newspaper clipping, 1906].
7. Krista Cowman, 'Female Suffrage in Great Britain', in *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe. Voting to Become Citizens*, eds. Blanca Rodriguez-Ruiz and Ruth Rubio-Marín (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 274.
8. Cowman, 'Female Suffrage', 276–77.

9. There is broad literature on the suffrage movement. See, e.g., Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland* (London: Routledge, 2006); June Purvis and June Hannam, eds., *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign: National and International Perspectives* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).
10. Cowman, 'Female Suffrage', 277.
11. Jana Günther, *Die politische Inszenierung der Suffragetten in Großbritannien. Formen des Protests, der Gewalt und symbolische Politik einer Frauenbewegung* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Fwfpf, 2006), 115.
12. Ibid., 34, 116. On spectacle and media attention see also Myriam Boussahba-Bravard, 'Vision et visibilité: la rhétorique visuelle des suffragistes et des suffragettes britanniques de 1907 à 1914', *LISA. E-Journal* 1, no. 1 (2003), 42–53, <https://doi.org/10.4000/lisa.3116>; Ute Gerhard, 'Skandalöse Bilder – Momentaufnahmen der englischen Suffragettenbewegung', *Feministische Studien* 2017, no. 1 (2017), 52–60; Johanna Gehmacher, 'Covering the Suffragettes. Austrian Newspapers Reporting on Militant Women's Rights Activism in the United Kingdom', in *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign. National and International Perspectives*, eds. June Purvis and June Hannam (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 199–221.
13. Cowman, 'Female Suffrage', 278.
14. Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women. Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907–14* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Birgitta Bader-Zaar, 'With Banners Flying': A Comparative View of Women's Suffrage Demonstrations 1906–1914', in *The Street as Stage. Protest Marches and Public Rallies Since the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Matthias Reiss (Oxford et al.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007).
15. Günther, *Die politische Inszenierung*, 37, 117.
16. *The International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of Fifth Conference and First Quinquennial, London, England, April 26, 27, 28,*

- 29, 30, May 1, 1909 (London: Samuel Sidders and Company, 1909), 46–48, 59.
17. Ibid., 68–71.
  18. Ibid., 46–48.
  19. E.g. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die englische Geistlichkeit und das Frauenstimmrecht. (Frauen-Rundschau)', *Berliner Tagblatt*, 13 August 1909.
  20. E.g. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Women's Work and Training. Germany (Foreign News)', *The Common Cause*, 29 May 1909; e.g. K. D. S. [Katherine Douglas Smith], 'Modern Youth', *Votes for Women*, 18 November 1910; K. Douglas Smith, 'Woman: The Riddle', *Votes for Women*, 5 January 1912; K. D. S. [Katherine Douglas Smith], 'An Irresistible Force', *Votes for Women*, 19 April 1912.
  21. NI Sch 693/004, Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Frauenwacht' [printed poem, 1911?]; She sent the same poem for possible use for publicity to the IWSA conference 1913 which she did not attend in person. NI Sch Rosika Schwimmer to KS, 19 May 1913.
  22. Käthe Schirmacher, 'A Message from Germany (Die Frauenwacht/The Advance Guard)', *Votes for Women*, 3 February 1911.
  23. On connections Schirmacher made between physically fighting women and militancy see also Johanna Gehmacher, Elisa Heinrich, and Corinna Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik* (Vienna et al.: Böhlau, 2018), 383 (Oesch).
  24. Schirmacher, 'A Message from Germany (Die Frauenwacht/The Advance Guard)'. It is likely that Katherine Douglas Smith (1878–??), who reviewed several of Schirmacher's German works very positively, translated the poem.
  25. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Augen links!', *Centralblatt*, August 1909.
  26. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die englische Geistlichkeit und das Frauenstimmrecht. (Frauen-Rundschau)', *Berliner Tagblatt*, 13 August 1909.
  27. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Augen links!', *Centralblatt*, August 1909.

28. E.g. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die englische Geistlichkeit und das Frauenstimmrecht. (Frauen-Rundschau)', *Berliner Tagblatt*, 13 August 1909.
29. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Hungerstreik', *Centralblatt*, September 1909.
30. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Suffragettes [Sprechsaal]', *Rostocker Zeitung*, 21 July 1912.
31. E.g. *ibid.*
32. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Vierzig Jahre friedlicher Arbeit', *Femina*, 4 January 1911.
33. Schirmacher, 'Vierzig Jahre friedlicher Arbeit'; Frederick W. Pethick Lawrence, 'Women's Fight for the Vote', *Votes for Women*, 8 April 1910; see also Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence, *Women's Fight for the Vote* (London: Woman's Press, 1910).  
Schirmacher's text was printed in a press-correspondence and became reprinted in the same month, interestingly by a housewives' journal: Käthe Schirmacher, 'Vierzig Jahre friedlicher Arbeit', *Wiener Hausfrauen-Zeitung*, 15 January 1911.
34. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Sind das noch Damen? Sonderabdruck aus [Special print from] Frauenstimmrecht!', ed. Anita Augspurg', *Frauenstimmrecht! Monatshefte des deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht*, April/May 1912.
35. *Ibid.*, 8.
36. See for the reputational damage Schirmacher's fellow activist Anita Augspurg experienced because of her support or the suffragettes Anne-Laure Briatte, *Bevormundete Staatsbürgerinnen: die 'radikale' Frauenbewegung im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt/M. and New York: Campus Verlag, 2020).
37. Gisela Bock, 'Das politische Denken des Suffragismus: Deutschland um 1900 im internationalen Vergleich', in Gisela Bock, *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 178–79.
38. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 351 (Oesch); Briatte, *Bevormundete Staatsbürgerinnen*, 209, 258–59.

39. On differentiated voting rights in the German Reich in international comparison: Gisela Bock, 'Wege zur demokratischen Bürgerschaft: transnationale Perspektiven', in Gisela Bock, *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 204–40, at 225.
40. Briatte, *Bevormundete Staatsbürgerinnen*, 205.
41. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik*, 354–55 (Oesch); Briatte, *Bevormundete Staatsbürgerinnen*, 344–54.
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45. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 324 (Oesch); Johanna Gehmacher, 'Reisekostenabrechnung. Praktiken und Ökonomien des Unterwegsseins in Frauenbewegungen um 1900', *Feministische Studien* 35, no. 1 (2017), 76–92, at 85–88.
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  49. Käthe Schirmacher, 'La question polonaise', *L'Européen*, 24 December 1904; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Polonais et Ruthènes (Galicie)', *L'Européen*, July 1905; Käthe Schirmacher, 'L'oeuvre de la commission de colonisation en Posnanie', *L'Européen*, 27 May 1905; Käthe Schirmacher, 'Allemands et Polonais en Posnanie', *Le Courrier Européen*, 4 May 1906; see for the context of these publications Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 388–89 (Oesch).
  50. NI Sch 992/023, Anita Augspurg to KS, 29 May 1908.
  51. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 405 (Oesch).
  52. NI Sch 476/002, Adelheid von Welzeck to KS, 29 October 1909; see also Gehmacher, 'Reisekostenabrechnung', 88.
  53. Hugo Otto Zimmer, 'Offener Brief an Fräulein Dr. Kathe Schirmacher', *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmrecht*, 1 August 1908; 'Le Courrier Européen avait publié le 4 mai dernier...', *Bulletin Polonais*, 15 June 1906.
  54. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die gerechten Polen (Polnische Nachrichten)', *Posener Tageblatt*, 21 March 1909; Utis [Pseud.], 'Korespondencya "Nowej Reformy"', *Nowa Reforma*, 14 January 1909.
  55. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 402 (Oesch).
  56. E.g. NI Sch 922/018 diary, 7, 8, 13 March, 23 and 29 June 1912.
  57. NI Sch 922/018 diary, 14 February 1912.
  58. NI Sch 699/004, Käthe Schirmacher and Alexander Duncker, publisher, 26 February 1912 [book contract].
  59. NI Sch 922/018 diary, 17 June–19 July 1912.

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63. Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes*, 22–23, 37.
64. *Ibid.*, 19, 32.
65. E.g. *ibid.*, 8–10.
66. *Ibid.*, 19.
67. *Ibid.*, 32.
68. *Ibid.*, 36.
69. *Ibid.*, 82, 145.
70. *Ibid.*, 40, 42, 71.
71. *Ibid.*, 108–14.
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73. Günther, *Die politische Inszenierung*, 70–71; Schirmacher noted the split in her diary on 20 October 1912. NI Sch 922/018, diary 1912.
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76. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette* (Preface).
77. E.g. a footnote on parliamentary rules in the UK or the position of a mentioned politician Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes*, 21, 25, 36, 52, 54.
78. Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes*, 23; references to: Pethick-Lawrence, *Women's Fight*; Helen Blackburn, *Women's Suffrage. A Record of the Women's Suffrage movement in the British Isles*,



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79. E.g. Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes*, 43, 45, 49, 60, 68, 87–89.
80. E.g. *Ibid.*, 41, 77.
81. E.g. *Ibid.*, 14, 16, 27.
82. *Ibid.*, 113–14.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*, 1.
85. *Ibid.*, 20.
86. *Ibid.*, 91; Blackburn, *Women's Suffrage*; Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, *British Freewomen: Their Historical Privilege* (1907, republication Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
87. Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes*, 44.
88. *Ibid.*, 74, 78.
89. *Ibid.*, 60, 82, 98, 100, 102, 108, 116, 125–26, 133, 137, 138, 143.
90. *Ibid.*, 144.
91. *Ibid.*, 148.
92. Anonymous, '[Books Received]', *Votes for Women*, 29 November 1912.
93. Anonymous, 'As Germany Sees Us', *Votes for Women*, 21 February 1913.
94. Therese Schlesinger-Eckstein, 'E. Sylvia Pankhurst...' [review essay], *Die neue Zeit* 31, no. 44 (1913).
95. Anonymous, 'Die Frauenfrage', *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 8 May 1913.
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97. Alexander Salkind, 'Frauen?', *Fremden-Blatt*, 6 June 1913.
98. E. g. Anonymous, 'Eine deutsche Verteidigung der englischen Stimmrechtsweiber', *Neueste Nachrichten*, 14 December 1912.
99. Anonym, 'Käthe Schirmacher: Die Suffragettes', *Neue Freie Presse*, 8 December 1912; on the coverage of the suffragettes in the *Neue Freie Presse* see Gehmacher, 'Covering the Suffragettes', 205–6.

100. M. W., 'Mrs. Pankhurst', *Die Frau der Gegenwart: Deutsche Zeitschrift für moderne Frauenbestrebungen*, 15 December 1912; Agnes Harder, 'Die Stimmrechtlerinnen', *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 9 January 1913; Johanna Karsdorf, 'Die Suffragettes, von Käthe Schirmacher', *Frauenstimmrecht. Monatshefte des deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht* 1, no. 10 (1913); Anonym, 'Bücherschau. Käthe Schirmacher. Die Suffragettes', *Frauenwohl*, 4 October 1913.
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102. Helene Lange, 'Die Taktik der Suffragettes', *Die Frau* 20, no. 3 (1913), 366–67.
103. Gerhard, 'Im Schnittpunkt', 416.
104. Helene Lange, *Die Taktik der Suffragettes* (Düsseldorf: Frauenstimmrechtsverband für Westdeutschland. Ortsgruppe Düsseldorf, 1913); Helene Lange, 'Die Taktik der Suffragettes', *Frauenbestrebungen. Organ der deutsch-schweizerischen Frauenbewegung*, no. 4 (1913).
105. Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg, 'Offener Brief an den Gesamtvorstand des Bundes deutscher Frauenvereine', *Die Frauenbewegung*, 1 June 1913.
106. See, e. g., for Austria Anonymous, 'Zur Frauenstimmrechtsbewegung in England', *Der Bund. Zentralblatt des Bundes österr. Frauenvereine* 7, no. 8 (Oktober 1912); Leopoldine Kulka, 'Die Verurteilung der Suffragettes', *Neues Frauenleben* 14, no. 6 (Juni 1912). Schirmacher pointed out the differentiated reaction in the USA: Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Suffragettes', *Vossische Zeitung*, 22 February 1914.
107. Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Frauen und der Krieg. I.', *Frauenstimmrecht. Monatshefte des deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht* 2, no. 1 (April 1913); Käthe Schirmacher, 'Die Frauen und der Krieg. II.', *Frauenstimmrecht. Monatshefte des deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht* 2, no. 4 (Juli 1913); Käthe Schirmacher, 'Der Mann ist objektiv', *Frauenstimmrecht. Monatshefte des deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht* 2, no. 6 (September

- 1913); see also Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 383 (Oesch).
108. NI Sch 485/031, Frankfurter Zeitung (Hörth) to KS, 31 May 1913. Schirmacher's intention had been to counter a front-page story disparaging the suffragettes. See Anonym, 'Frankfurt, 21. Mai', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 21 May 1913.
109. Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 377 (Oesch).
110. Carrie Chapman Catt promised to write a review in the *Woman's Journal*. NI Sch 608/043, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 17 December 1912; see also A.B., "Suffragetter". En Bog om de engelske Kvinders Kamp af Dr. Käthe Schirmacher', *Kvindestemmerets-Bladet* ([1913]); N.K., 'Käthe Schirmacher: Die Suffragettes', *Rösträtt för Kvinnor*, no. 7 (1913).
111. For a contemporary overview of the various splits: Kirchhoff, *Zur Entwicklung*.
112. Käthe Schirmacher, *Gatan Kvinnan: en uppgörelse. Bemynd. öfvers. från tyskan af E. T.* (Stockholm: Geber, 1912); for the report on the Serbian translation: NI Sch 344/006, Katherine Holec to KS, 8 March 1912.
113. On a possible English translation: NI Sch 1003/135, Constance Maud to KS, 25 February 1912; NI Sch 034/005, Harriet C. Newcomb to KS, 8 November 1913; on the plan to translate it into Polish: NI Sch 719/002, KS to Clara Schirmacher, 12 January 1912.
114. Käthe Schirmacher, *Sufražetki*, trans. Melania przeł. Bersonowa (Lwów [Lviv]: Wydaw. Kultura i Sztuka, 1913).
115. They were both present at the 1911 IWSA conference in Stockholm where Melanie Berson gave a report on Galicia. *International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of the Sixth Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, Stockholm Sweden, June 12–17, 1911* (London: Women's Printing Society, 1911), 99–100.
116. NI Sch 155/010, Martina G. Kramers to KS, 26 December 1911.

117. 'Le Courrier Européen avait publié le 4 mai dernier...', *Bulletin Polonais*, 15 June 1906; Anonymous, 'Dzien Hakatystyczny [Wiesci z Ojczyzny]', *Dziennik Chicagowski*, 3 September 1907; Anonymous, 'Zjazd Kobiet Niemieckich W Lesznie', *Głos polek*, 24 November 1910.
118. E.g. Käthe Schirmacher, *Die östliche Gefahr. Vortrag, gehalten auf dem 3. Ostdeutschen Frauentage in Allenstein O. P.* (Eulitz: Lissa, 1908); Käthe Schirmacher, *Was ist national? Vortrag, gehalten auf dem 5. Ostdeutschen Frauentage in Culm* (Eulitz: Lissa 1911).
119. Schirmacher and Bersonowa, *Sufrażetki*.
120. Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes*, 1; Schirmacher and Bersonowa, *Sufrażetki*, 1.
121. Schirmacher, *Sufrażetki*, 1.
122. Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes*, 148.
123. J. P., 'Sufrażetki [Głosy czytelniczek]', *Bluszcz*, no. 5 (1914), <https://bcul.lib.uni.lodz.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=659>, p. 59; Anonymous, 'Sufrażetki', *Zgoda*, 5 March 1914.
124. E. Wielowieyska, 'Sufrażetki', *Nasz Dom*, no. 44 (1913).
125. Kaethe Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes* (Berlin: Frauen-Clit Verlag, 1976); on the movement practice of bootleg copying: Cristina Perincioli, *Berlin wird feministisch. das Beste, was von der 68er Bewegung blieb* (Berlin: Querverlag, 2015), 27, 29; Johanna Gehmacher, 'Macht/Lust – Übersetzung und fragmentierte Traditionsbildung als Strategien zur Mobilisierung eines radikalen Feminismus', in *Erinnern, vergessen, umdeuten? Europäische Frauenbewegungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Angelika Schaser, Sylvia Schraut, and Petra Steymans-Kurz (Frankfurt/M.: Campus Verlag, 2019), 95–123; Johanna Gehmacher, 'The Production of Historical Feminisms, Part One: Historical Awareness and Political Activism; Part Two: Transnational Strategies and the Feminist "We"', *German Historical Institute London Blog*, <https://ghil.hypotheses.org/445> (27/05/2021) <https://ghil.hypotheses.org/477#more-477> (17/06/2021).
126. Käthe Schirmacher, *Die Suffragettes* (Frankfurt/M.: R. Jassmann Verlag, 1988).

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# 10

## Conclusion: Inside and Outside the Contact Zones of Transnational Women's Movements of the West

In May 1914, on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), its journal *Jus Suffragii* published a jubilee issue with reminiscences of founder members. Hungarian suffrage activist Rosika Schwimmer (1877–1948) recalled the 1904 conference in Berlin:

I remember how we were sitting the whole day and disturbing each other by asking continually: 'What did she say?' when the highly envied few linguists among us showed by signs of appreciation or opposition that they knew what was going on.<sup>1</sup>

Her recollection, written in English, conveys both the excitement about the beginnings of transnational suffrage activism and the challenges of negotiating a common issue without a common language. Among the contributions to the jubilee issue, it stands out for its reflective perspective on the issue of transnational communication. However, while Schwimmer points to the importance of translation at the founding meeting, she does not mention the conference's officially appointed interpreter Käthe Schirmacher (Fig. 10.1).



**Fig. 10.1** The International Women's Congress in Berlin 1904. Käthe Schirmacher in the second row on the far right, with hat (University Library Rostock, Käthe Schirmacher Papers)

Written in a time of crisis, Schwimmer's article, entitled 'Our Alliance as a Teacher of Languages', reflects the language difficulties at the first official IWSA meeting and intriguingly highlights the various forms in which an understanding across national and language borders was, nonetheless, created. A closer look at this text offers several starting points to revisit the practices of translation and transfer between women's movements discussed in this book, but also gives some clues as to how and why Käthe Schirmacher cut all ties with the transnational women's movement around the same time. In this closing chapter, I first outline the ideas and contexts of Schwimmer's article and how it relates to the way Schirmacher ended her work as a translator and transnational mediator, and then recapitulate some of the arguments and theoretical and methodological considerations developed in this book.

## 'Our Alliance as a Teacher of Languages'

In her article, Rosika Schwimmer recalls a warm embrace by senior American suffrage activist Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), who had travelled across the Atlantic to attend the 1904 founding meeting. She thus emphasises the building of emotional bonds that can only take place in the contact zones of personal encounters. Although she claims that she did not understand anything Anthony said to her apart from the words 'young girl', Schwimmer calls the experience of that cherished hug the 'foundation-stone' of her 'knowledge of English'.<sup>2</sup> More, by emphasising the way Anthony addressed her, she asserts that the highly respected leader of the movement recognised her as a torchbearer for the younger generation and thus added significance to her only seemingly straightforward narrative of the event.<sup>3</sup>

The dedicated peace activist Schwimmer draws attention to the importance and the limitations of translation and cultural mediation in a time of rising nationalism, when in the same text she also describes the paradox that delegates who are perfectly capable of participating in complicated debates in several languages at a conference still make silly mistakes in everyday communication. She thus emphasises the various levels at which translation takes place and also points to the need for translation and mediation between different social contexts. Jokingly, she concludes by saying that she hopes members will soon win the vote 'all round the world', as they will then finally have time to perfect their language skills. She thus implicitly characterises learning languages not just as a tool, but also as a goal in its own right that can unite a community of multilingual personalities.<sup>4</sup>

Schwimmer's contribution to the anniversary edition of *Jus Suffragii* in May 1914 is anything but a naïve reminiscence. Growing up in a Hungarian-Jewish middle-class family, she had already learned German and French as a child and later also published in these languages. If her English was not yet up to her own high standards in 1904, this had certainly changed by 1914, when she worked as a press correspondent in London and would soon afterwards go on lecture tours to campaign for peace in the USA.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1906, Schwimmer had translated Charlotte Perkins Gilman's influential book *Women and Economics* (1898)



from English into Hungarian.<sup>6</sup> Still, in her description of those founding days in Berlin, multilingual Schwimmer places herself in the group of those who needed the help of translators. What could have been behind this modesty?

Among other things, this particular choice of self-positioning serves to substantiate Schwimmer's claim that since then, many members of the IWSA had willingly and successfully learned the official languages of the Alliance as well as the languages of the various hosting countries, thus supporting understanding across language borders. She even mentions that some delegates to the IWSA International Congress in Budapest in 1913 had made an effort to learn Hungarian.<sup>7</sup> At the dawn of the First World War, when nationalist sentiments were on the rise in many countries, this was not an arbitrary statement. Rather, Schwimmer charges the question of translation with strong political meaning by connecting growing multilingualism and transnational understanding. At the same time, her account of the events of 1904 confirms the power of European and North American countries and the priority of their most influential languages, which were also the official languages of the IWSA: English, French, and German. To learn Hungarian, a rather difficult language spoken only in one country with a relatively small number of inhabitants appears in Schwimmer's jubilee text as an example of exceptional commitment rather than as a requirement for all members.

Schwimmer also reflects on the position of the translator and on different forms and levels of cultural mediation. Contrary to the published minutes, which mention the appointment of an official interpreter at the very beginning of the 1904 Berlin conference, her recollection suggests that at this meeting, multilingual members of the Alliance informally helped with the much-needed translations. Considering the dual role of delegate and interpreter, her remark on the envy these 'linguists' encountered gains particular significance. It points to the power of mediators and translators but also to the precarious situation they often find themselves in. Their intermediary position of the go-between involves leverage, but also the risk of becoming embroiled in one of the various conflicts so often faced by a transnational movement mediating between different national cultures.

The question remains why in 1914 Rosika Schwimmer avoids mentioning that an interpreter was appointed in Berlin in 1904, and thus refers by name to the person whose words she could not understand, Susan B. Anthony, and conceals the name of the person who translated between the languages, namely, Schirmacher. Does she only want to emphasise the emotional understanding without words between fellow activists, does the silence follow a convention to leave the interpreters anonymous, or does it also reflect Schirmacher's conflictual relationship with the IWSA at the time of the Alliance's tenth anniversary? Could it even be seen as an attempt to erase the memory of a member who had disturbed the positive self-image of the association? Schwimmer's ambivalent strategy of reminding her fellow activists of Schirmacher's important role at the founding conference, on the one hand, while hiding her behind a vague allusion to a group of 'linguists', on the other, requires further investigation and analysis.

## 'Unfair Translations'? Enquiries About a Travelling Slander

Less than a year before Schwimmer's jubilee article was published, in the summer of 1913, the once close relationship between Schirmacher and IWSA President Carrie Chapman Catt experienced growing cracks and eventually ended. Through her partner Klara Schleker, Schirmacher had learned of a slander against her person: she had been accused of tainting her translations with her personal views. Schleker had come across this rumour when it was being circulated at the 1913 IWSA congress in Budapest by German delegate Anna Lindemann (life dates unknown). Schirmacher, who because of her ill health had not been in Budapest herself, had stood for re-election as a member of the Committee of Admissions and had also applied for the editorship of *Jus Suffragii*, but was not elected to either post. Schleker and Schirmacher both blamed this failure on the gossip about her translations at the various suffrage conferences and congresses.<sup>8</sup> More, after she discovered that negative comments on her interpretations had already circulated at the London conference in 1909, she thought that this had also been the cause for

her non-re-election to the board there.<sup>9</sup> Lindemann, who had translated together with Schirmacher in London, had succeeded her as secretary to the IWSA board in 1909 and on the Committee for Admissions in 1913.<sup>10</sup>

In the months after the Budapest congress, Schirmacher wrote to many fellow activists and to President Catt to find out why she had not been re-elected. Other differences and accusations also came to the surface in the context of these disputes. Among them, Schirmacher's support of the British militants, her position vis-à-vis the Polish question, her stance on universal suffrage, the way her contributions were printed in *Jus Suffragii*, as well as also her personal life, were debated.<sup>11</sup> However, due in part to the way Schirmacher handled the issue, the focus soon lay on her interpretations at the IWSA conferences. This became evident when at the annual meeting of the German Federation for Women's Suffrage (DVF) in Eisenach in October 1913 she demanded that the DVF board protect her against Lindemann's accusations. Lindemann, she held, had claimed that as an official interpreter to the IWSA, Schirmacher had deliberately changed translations to underline her own political position. When the board failed to take action on her behalf and nobody came to her aid, she not only resigned from the DVF board in protest but also had a statement printed describing the conflict. Including the English wording of the accusations—'several people did charge Dr. Schirmacher with making unfair translations'/when she was interested in the question under discussion she colored the translation with her own point-of-view—the statement aimed at a multilingual audience.<sup>12</sup>

After the defeat in Eisenach, Schirmacher demanded an investigation should be carried out by the IWSA board as to whether the accusations were true.<sup>13</sup> She even considered taking Lindemann to court.<sup>14</sup> In the course of her correspondence with Catt on the issue, Schirmacher not only learned that the IWSA president had heard talk about Schirmacher's style of interpretation years before, but that Catt had never taken the pains to tell her that such rumours were circulating. This was allegedly because as the speaker translated by Schirmacher, Catt did not believe there had been any wrongdoing directly against herself. Concerning the investigation demanded by Schirmacher, Catt made an interesting distinction between 'professional' and 'honorary' translator

work, stating that an official investigation would have been possible if Schirmacher had served as a professional interpreter rather than as a board member. Catt argued that even if the accusations *were* behind Schirmacher's failed election, this could and should not be investigated, as in a secret ballot everybody was free to base their decision on whatever reason they thought relevant.<sup>15</sup> The distinction made by Catt echoed, *avant la lettre*, the differentiation between thin (professional) and thick (personal) trust.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the distinction thus also implicitly justified the IWSA's decision to use members of the board as interpreters and the consequences of this decision; clearly, in Catt's view, the fact that the opinions of board members played a role in their translations had to be accepted.

Despite Catt's advice and request, Schirmacher insisted on an official investigation, as in her view this was a 'moral question, not a technical one'—in terms of both her own, and the IWSA's reputation.<sup>17</sup> Catt, for her part, still refused to hold an official investigation; but since she only spoke English and wanted the dispute settled, in March 1914 she sent copies of Schirmacher's request to other senior IWSA members for their opinion.<sup>18</sup> One of them was Rosika Schwimmer. In a letter to Schirmacher early in April 1914, Catt summarised the replies she had received. As Catt saw it, her enquiries had ascertained that at the 1909 London conference, 'the election was not taken on account of the translations'. She, therefore, urged Schirmacher to finally 'drop' the idea of an official investigation.<sup>19</sup> Not satisfied with this answer and also infuriated by the fact that Catt had forwarded one of her letters to Anna Lindemann, Schirmacher resigned from the IWSA, together with Schleker, in April 1914. Catt deeply deplored this decision, as she wrote to both Schleker and Schirmacher in May 1914.<sup>20</sup>

Schwimmer's statement on the question, described as an attachment in one of Catt's letters on the dispute, is missing in the Schirmacher papers—a marginal hand-written note on the letter suggests that it had never been included. However, in the light of the date of the dispute and Schwimmer's involvement, we can read the latter's contribution to the jubilee issue of *Jus Suffragii* that May as a public version of her view on the conflict. However, by writing about 1904 instead of 1909, she could not only avoid what was at the heart of the recent conflict (the

alleged link between the election of officers and the translations) but also claim with some honesty that at that time her English had not been good enough to decide whether the translations had been correct. Yet, although she did not accuse the 'linguists' of acting incorrectly (instead merely pointing to their influence), neither did she defend Schirmacher, either by name or anonymously. Her intervention can thus be interpreted as a precarious act of intra-organisational diplomacy mediating between the different factions: while expressing her general view on the conflicts that can so easily arise when communication takes place in more than one language, she avoids taking sides in the ongoing conflict. Thus, her general consideration on translating also remains somewhat ambivalent; while pointing out the necessity of translators, she simultaneously pleads for finding a way to get along without them.

## Ends of Translation and the Case of the Translator

Käthe Schirmacher ended her work both as an honorary and as a professional translator during her 1913/1914 dispute with the IWSA. The reasons for this were many, but her German nationalism, which had grown considerably since 1904, played an important role.<sup>21</sup> This is apparent, for example, in her anger that a report she had written for *Jus Suffragii* was not only shortened but also translated into English, despite her wish that it be published in German in accordance with her earlier demand that the journal should be tri-lingual.<sup>22</sup>

But even after her split from the international women's movement, Schirmacher continued to earn money from her language abilities, since her journalism of that time consisted in large part of articles on politics, everyday life, and literature in France in the German press. When the First World War started in the summer of 1914, she lost this market, too, since newspaper editors told her that nobody was interested in reports from France anymore.<sup>23</sup> By the spring of 1915, Schirmacher had not only stopped writing her diary in French to continue it in German, she had also published a memorandum to the German Minister for Culture and Education demanding a reduction of foreign language

teaching for the German youth. To stress her point, however, she referenced a French model and again relied on translation, summarising from official papers of the Alliance Française, a society promoting the French language worldwide. Praising the success of the organisation, she called for the creation of a similar 'world league for German culture'.<sup>24</sup> Schirmacher thus proposed the complete opposite to Schwimmer (who by then was on her campaign for peace in the USA mentioned earlier): not to support multilingualism but to further the dominance of one language.

In this period Schirmacher, who supported the war not only by personally caring for a group of soldiers, but was also involved in right-wing circles debating maximalist war aims, finally cut her links not only to women's internationalism, but also to German radical activists Anita Augspurg and Lida-Gustava Heymann, with whom despite all their differences she had collaborated for more than two decades. When in 1915 she received their request to attend the peace conference organised by a group of pacifists at The Hague and to serve as an interpreter at the event, she declined the invitation, stating that she was busy with patriotic duties.<sup>25</sup> The deep division between those who supported their country in wartime and those who fought for peace in an international arena, so evident in this exchange, was a defining moment for many movements of the period and a basic condition that should be given much greater attention in research on post-war women's movements.

In Schirmacher's life, the decision to leave the IWSA in 1914 ended a long and productive period during which she was involved in many projects of transnational transfer, mediation and translation. Since the 1880s she had campaigned for women's rights in many countries, had given hundreds of talks and lectures in German, French, and English, she had served as an interpreter at a number of large conferences, and translated articles, short stories, and books between French, English, and German. She had written hundreds of journal articles in the context of her transnational French and German journalism, drawing on newspapers and books in various languages. In all, she had lived and worked as a transnational personality for more than three decades, although she was a

German nationalist at least for the last decade of that period. Her multilingualism had been essential in both her professional and her political work.

At the end of the First World War, Schirmacher returned to her hometown of Danzig and campaigned for it to remain part of the German Reich, which, however, was separated from the Reich by the Treaty of Versailles in 1920. Schirmacher, who had sat for the German Nationalist Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei, DNVP) as a deputy for Danzig in the constitutional assembly of the German Reichstag, continued her political involvement in this right-wing anti-Semitic party even after losing her parliamentary mandate. Despite her increasingly racist and antidemocratic positions, she saw herself as a fighter for women's rights until her early death in 1930, and in her last years, became a venerated figure among a group of right-wing women who combined nationalistic views with the struggle for women's political participation.

This study has taken the phase of transnational activism in Käthe Schirmacher's life as a case with which to illustrate practices of transnational mediation in a transnational civil society of female activists. Drawing on the rich sources Schirmacher left behind, I have explored practices of transfer that helped transnational women's movements to thrive around 1900, namely travel, translation, and transnational journalism. In the remaining pages, I would like to recapitulate some points that I think can be learned from this case, which provides insights into the dynamics, practices, and internal logics of women's transnational activism. Rosika Schwimmer's short article of remembrance, which takes such a contrasting position to how Schirmacher responded to the challenges of transnational communication, is a good backdrop for this. Published shortly before a global war ended nearly all efforts for peaceful transnational exchange, Rosika Schwimmer's call for language learning can be read as an impassioned plea for the continuation and advancement of communication and cooperation across borders despite the threat of war. The content and context of this article, as well as its ambiguities and silences, remind us of the relevance and of the limits of transnational practices of mediation for social and political movements.

## Strategical and Methodological Nationalism

With this book and the mediation practices it discusses, I want to argue that research on women's movements, and on social and political movements in general, should always consider and analyse the role of transnational mediation and transfer, regardless of the geographical scope of a particular study. As I have shown, many forms of transfer across national and language borders remain invisible or well-hidden due to a widespread stance I would like to call strategical nationalism. Since social and political movements have long had to address themselves primarily to national political arenas, where political decisions (as the inclusion of women into the electorate) are actually fought for and made, they have often tended to tell their own stories within a national framework. However, we should not add to this bias by giving in to the methodological nationalism driven by national research agendas, national source repositories, and limited language skills. Rather, I argue that systematic examination of the mobility of actors and of texts (and the ways in which their travels between languages and countries are interconnected) will not only differentiate and enrich our research on women's movements around 1900 but can also serve as an exemplary case that opens up new theoretical and methodological perspectives on other social and political movements.

## The *Persona* of the Modern Woman

Rosika Schwimmer's reflections on multilingual communication allow a glimpse into the cultural milieu of an emerging society of female activists, who had carved out not only new ways of living and learning for themselves but also ways of claiming participation in the sphere of politics. Taking the case of Käthe Schirmacher I have shown in this book that the creation of this milieu was closely linked to the development of a new female *persona* in which transnational practices as well as learning languages played an important role. The *persona* of the modern woman shaped a growing transnational civil society and was itself shaped by the cultures, practices, and economies relevant in this sphere. However, I



also argue that the various *personae* of the learned woman created in the women's movement could not easily overcome the double standard of male and female learnedness that informed middle-class ideas of femininity. Gendered concepts of male knowledge *production* and female *reproduction* became particularly visible in the figure of the female translator. Therefore, it is not only rewarding for the history of knowledge to explore the gendered figure of the supporting scholar. For the study of social and political movements, too, it can bring valuable new insights to look for the often hidden figures of mediation, the translators, interpreters, and travelling activists who communicate concepts, ideas, and strategies between places, movements, and discourses.

## Mediations and Differences in a Transnational Civil Society of Female Activists

The account of the IWSA conferences and the exchanges they facilitated that Schwimmer gives in her article also points to the importance of travel and transnational lives for the emergence of a culture of communication across national borders and language differences. Exploring the contact zones created by these practices and discussing both travel and travel writing, I posit that travel was an essential practice for the development of social and political movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, we should not overlook the hierarchies and inequalities of class, race, and culture that shaped these travel practices. The women who came to Berlin in 1904 were white middle- or upper-class women from the West. Still, there were also differences among them as well: some were able to pay for their own travel (and sometime the travel of companions), while others had to earn their living by travelling as lecturers, journalists, and translators. Through an examination of Schirmacher's various forms of travel, her lecture tours, and the way she organised them, I have shown the close entanglement of political practice and economic strategy, arguing for a methodological approach that includes both aspects.

## Trust and the Continuum of Activist Translation

Sometimes, as the cases of Schirmacher and Schwimmer show, professional translation and translation in political activism are closely entwined. However, both the goals related to translation and the ways trust is created differ significantly depending on the context. As shown earlier in this chapter, IWSA activists differentiated between trust created through political alliances and cooperation and trust shown to a professional translator. As becomes clear in the contexts of the conflicts about translation that lead to Schirmacher's split from the IWSA, the board members consciously relied on the thick trust of shared political convictions. The extent to which this was also common in other movements, or whether it was related to the particular way in which women, who were excluded from most institutions of higher education and therefore often lacked formal training, acquired their translation skills, remains to be investigated. The case of Käthe Schirmacher shows that this practice provides translators with trust, even if their translations are questioned. But as can also be seen in this case, this means that if political consensus is lost, their translations can also be devalued regardless of their quality.

In this study, the first novel Schirmacher translated into German—*Men, Women, and Progress* by Emma Hosken Woodward—forms the basis for an exploration of literary translation as a part of feminist activism. Drawing on Maria Tymoczko's concept of activist translation I show that, in contrast to professional translation, changing the structure, content, and argumentation of a text is considered legitimate as long as the goal associated with a particular translation is approved.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, it seems acceptable in an activist context to use a text published in another language quite freely to inspire one's own writing, as can be seen in Schirmacher's first literary German book, which draws on ideas from the book she had previously translated from English.

Authenticity also is valued differently in an activist context. Schirmacher's last transnational monograph on feminist issues, *Die Suffragettes*, consisted in large part of translated and referenced excerpts from Sylvia Pankhurst's book *The Suffragette*. Nevertheless, for decades it remained the only German book about the suffragettes; it was translated into

Polish and republished twice in German. Combining the analysis of these two books by Schirmacher—*Männer, Frauen und Fortschritt* (1893) and *Die Suffragetten* (1912)—and the texts they refer to, I argue that when engaging with activist translation, it is important to take both intertextuality and practical and political contexts especially seriously. I claim that in the process we will often find what I would like to call the continuum of activist translation: a dense network of translated, self-translated, and excerpted texts, that sometimes reference each other and sometimes adopt ideas without a reference. To also look into other, accompanying forms of transfer can help to better understand what strategies and what forms of trust constitute and stabilise such a network.

## Transnational Journalism and the Travel of Concepts

One such other type of transfer was transnational journalism. New public spaces for women around 1900 were not only created by conferences and travelling activists, but also by the founding of newspapers and journals. The very place of publication of Schwimmer's jubilee article for the IWSA, *Jus Suffragii*, is an important example of the burgeoning feminist media of the time. Schirmacher's career as a transnational and multilingual journalist allows us to explore the possibilities and challenges that this position between languages and cultures entailed and to analyse particular practices of transnational journalism. I argue that her experience both in translating and in her personal practice of letter-writing were important resources for her activity as a transnational correspondent.

Schirmacher's contributions to transnational communication included not only the transfer of ideas and information in her extensive reporting. She also provided and defended a stable translation of the French neologism 'féminisme', which helped spread the concept in France and contributed to the continuity of the political meaning of the German term 'Frauenbewegung'. Against the background of these findings, I have revisited the conceptual history of the terms 'féminisme', 'feminism', and Feminismus (which appears the latest in history). Tying in with recent

initiatives to combine global and conceptual history I advocate a more systematic consideration of how the travel of concepts and their transformations are also related to translation and non-translation.<sup>27</sup> To do so I analyse strategies of transfer, self-translation, and translation between Schirmacher's book *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, its French precursors and its English translation. I trace the translations of 'féminisme' in German and English and of the German term 'Frauenbewegung' in English and French and discuss them in the broader context of the uses of these terms for different political goals. Building on Nancy F. Cott's historical analysis of the term 'feminism' I aim at further complicating its history by arguing that it changed its meaning more than once between languages and over time before becoming a clearly defined and established concept only in the late twentieth century.<sup>28</sup>

## Hierarchies and Divisions

Both translating and not translating can be a strategy to better understand each other in multilingual groups. Rosika Schwimmer's memoir illustrates both the communication in a political jargon that enables understanding across language boundaries without translation and the extent to which translation was a central *modus operandi* of the IWSA and other transnational feminist organisations in working towards their aims. In so doing, however, her article also points to the power struggles that translation and interpretation always face. In this study, I not only examine practices of mediation that contribute to the creation of a transnational civil society, but also discuss the divisions and hierarchies of languages and cultures which a Western-dominated transnational body like the IWSA and similar associations were based on and perpetuated. More particularly, I discuss how orientalising discourses inform the practices and concepts of women's movements of the West. Taking Schirmacher's book *Die moderne Frauenbewegung*, which aims to take a global look at women's movements, as a case study, I analyse the orientalising effects of the concept of civilisation, which she uses prominently but which can also be found in many other texts on women's issues around 1900.

This brings us, finally, back to the different answers Rosika Schwimmer and Käthe Schirmacher gave to the crisis of rising nationalism in the years before the First World War. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the different national, nationalist, antinationalist, and international orientations in women's movements of the time and to analyse what nurtured both national engagements and indifferences vis-à-vis national communities. However, the cases of Schirmacher and Schwimmer show that it is neither self-evident that participation in the transnational arena of women's activism produced international personalities committed to a political community beyond national borders, nor that the conflicts fought there necessarily exacerbated national differences between the protagonists. Rather, both developments are possible, and both can also be linked to processes of transfer and translation. Further research on transnational activism should, therefore, focus not only on the transnational communities it fostered, but also in the divisions it brought about.

## Silences

I started this book by drawing attention to what I called 'peripheral noises', arguing that it can be rewarding to analyse what seems to be marginal: circumstances, problematic praises, and the practices of mediation by which actors in transnational spaces try to contain them. I want to end my study by emphasising the importance of also noticing silences. One such symptomatic silence is Rosika Schwimmer's omission of Käthe Schirmacher's name in her article on the use of languages in the IWSA. It points to the massive conflicts about translation with which Schirmacher ended her civil engagement not only in the IWSA but in the entire transnational women's movement of her time. In the course of her final conflict with the IWSA president, carried out in a succession of ever more infuriated letters, Schirmacher among other things deplored that her most important book, *Die moderne Frauenbewegung* (1904, 1909), translated into English in 1912 (*The Modern Woman's Rights Movement. A Historical Survey*), which had once been characterised as one of the IWSA's unofficial handbooks, was not even mentioned in the tri-lingual

IWSA handbook *Woman Suffrage in Practice* which was published in 1913.<sup>29</sup> Much more than the omission of her name in Schwimmer's article, this can indeed be read as a form of *damnatio memoriae*. I, therefore, argue that while it is extremely valuable to work with the accounts that the activists of former times created about their movements, for a differentiated history of women's activism we should also critically deconstruct these self-historicisations.

Along with the certainty that Käthe Schirmacher thought she had found in her writings on 'féminisme', 'Frauenbewegung', and the 'women's rights movement', some glaring silence also grew. However, finding and interpreting the silences in the stories historical protagonists provide us with is probably the most challenging task for the historian, and I am sure I missed more than one of them. That said, I still believe that the systematic exploration of where our sources remain silent in spite of what they could tell us, should be part of any serious source analysis.

## The Language of Translation

In her first French book on 'féminisme' in various countries, published in 1898 and setting off a chain of writing, translation, self-translating, and being translated, Schirmacher begged her readers to forgive the possible clumsiness of her language:

Finally, the author of this little work is a foreigner. She has no doubt that it will appear in her style. She has tried to express herself in French as well as possible and she asks the reader to judge her attempt with indulgence. (Enfin, l'auteur de ce petit travail est étrangère. Elle ne doute point qu'il n'y paraisse à son style. Elle a essayé de s'exprimer en français le moins mal qu'il lui est possible et elle prie le lecteur de juger sa tentative avec indulgence.)<sup>30</sup>

As I myself do not write in my mother tongue, I must make a similar request for indulgence at the end of this book. However, working on this study, both the need for and the advantages of translation not only as a

practice but also as an approach to history became increasingly clear to me.

First, to explore transnational practices of civil movements around 1900 (and in other periods) in a way that transcends organisational structure, and to understand the cultures that make them thrive and the limitations they have to deal with, it is necessary not only to read and analyse sources in more than one language, but also to understand what it meant for the historical protagonists to live in a multilingual environment. Trying to communicate my own thoughts in another language can be challenging but is also an extremely instructive way to get a grasp of what it means to live in more than one language. Although we should never draw simple analogies between our present experiences and those of historical actors and must accept the foreignness of any historical culture, we have no other starting point for our analysis than our own experience of multilingualism.

Second, as I have argued in this book, to discuss transnational practices it is necessary to define the subject with particular care since it is not predefined by an established (often national) framing. Here, I decided to use a biographical case: a personality who lived in several European countries and travelled even further, a writer who not only translated but was translated into several languages. Whatever the language of analysis chosen, the interpretation of some of the sources must, therefore, at least partly consist of translation, which, however, only reminds us that the past will always remain a foreign country and that any language of an earlier period must therefore be translated by the historian.<sup>31</sup>

Third, to examine case studies of transnational individuals also means to accept that not all sources are in languages the researcher can read and understand. If we do not want to limit ourselves to the few languages we were able to learn to some extent, we have to rely on and deal with the translations of others. The attempt to avoid methodological nationalism therefore also means that translation can never just be a subject of a research but must also be seen as part of its methodology. A transnational history that takes itself seriously can, therefore, only take place in the language so eloquently defended by the Indian writer and activist Arundhati Roy, one hundred years after Rosika Schwimmer's call for learning languages: in the Language of Translation.<sup>32</sup>

## Notes

1. Rosika Schwimmer, 'Our Alliance as Teacher of Languages', *Jus Suffragii*, 1 May 1914.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Rose Rauther, 'Rosika Schwimmer. Stationen auf dem Lebensweg einer Pazifistin', *Feministische Studien* 3, no. 1 (1984), 63–75, at 67; cf. also Dóra Fedeles-Czeferner, 'International Women's Movements, Peace Activism, and the World of Politics: The Rosika Schwimmer Archive in New York', *Hungarian Studies Review* 49, no. 2 (2022), 258–65.
6. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *A nő gazdasági helyzete: tanulmány a férfi és nő közötti gazdasági viszonyról, mint a társadalmi evolúció tényezőjéről* [The Economic Situation of Women: Study of the Economic Relationship Between Male and Female as a Factor of Social Evolution] (Budapest: Politzer-Fele Könyvkiadóvállalat, 1906); see also Mineke Bosch and Annemarie Kloosterman, eds., *Politics and Friendship. Letters from the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, 1902–1942* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), 33.
7. Schwimmer, 'Our Alliance'. Schwimmer did not mention what the readers of *Jus Suffragii* most certainly knew—that she herself had been instrumental in organising the Budapest congress. Susan Zimmermann, 'Schwimmer, Róza (Bédy-Schwimmer, Bédi-Schwimmer, Rózsa, Rosika) (1877–1948)', in *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Haan Francisca De, Loutfi Anna, and Daskalova Krassimira (2006), 485.
8. Johanna Gehmacher, Elisa Heinrich, and Corinna Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher: Agitation und autobiografische Praxis zwischen radikaler Frauenbewegung und völkischer Politik* (Vienna et al.: Böhlau, 2018), 359–60 (Oesch).
9. NI Sch 618/006, Käthe Schirmacher: Why I was defeated in London [manuscript].



10. *The International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of Fifth Conference and First Quinquennial, London, England, April 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, May 1, 1909* (London, England: Samuel Sidders and Company, 1909), 3; *The International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Report of Seventh Congress, Budapest, Hungary, June 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 1913* (Manchester, England: Percy Brothers, 1913), 4.
11. NI Sch 618/002, Johanna Münter to KS, 18 August 1913; NI Sch 608/047, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 31 October 1913.
12. NI Sch 005/009, Dr. K. Schirmacher, Generalversammlung des Deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht, Eisenach, 5.-9. Oktober 1913.
13. NI Sch 005/001, KS to Carrie Chapman Catt, 15 October 1913.
14. NI Sch 5/005, Verband für Frauenstimmrecht Rostock, 27 November 1913 [general meeting, minutes]; NI Sch 059/007, KS to Klara Schleker, 21 March 1914.
15. NI Sch 608/047, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 31 October 1913; NI Sch 608/048, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 8 January 1914.
16. On that difference cf. Andrea Rizzi, Birgit Lang, and Anthony Pym, *What Is Translation History? A Trust-Based Approach* (London: Palgrave Pivot, 2019), 115.
17. NI Sch 005/003, KS to Charrie Chapman Catt, 17 December 1913 [concept].
18. NI Sch 001/001, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 28 March 1914.
19. NI Sch 001/002, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 7 April 1914.
20. NI Sch 005/006, Klara Schleker to Carrie Chapman Catt, 15 April 1914; NI Sch 001/004, Carrie Chapman Catt to Klara Schleker, 11 May 1914.
21. On Schirmacher as a German nationalist activist cf. e.g. Gehmacher, 'Der andere Ort der Welt', Gehmacher, 'De/Platzierungen', and Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*.
22. NI Sch 001/0026, KS to Carrie Chapman Catt, 12 September 1913; NI Sch 001/024, Carrie Chapman Catt to KS, 6 October 1913.
23. NI Sch 872/013, Der Tag/Krüger to KS, 17 September 1914.

24. Käthe Schirmacher, *Deutsche Erziehung und feindliches Ausland. Denkschrift dem Herren Staatsminister der geistlichen u. Unterrichtsangelegenheiten von Trott zu Solz übermittelt* (Lissa i.P., 1915), 20, 24, 39; cf. also Gehmacher, Heinrich, and Oesch, *Käthe Schirmacher*, 435–39.
25. NL 618/004, Anita Augspurg to KS, 14 March 1915 [Schirmacher's reply is noted on the letter].
26. Maria Tymoczko, 'The Space and Time of Activist Translation', in *Translation, Resistance, Activism*, ed. Maria Tymoczko (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 227–54.
27. Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier, 'History of Concepts and Global History', in *Global Conceptual History: A Reader*, eds. Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic,) 2016, 1–27.
28. Cott, *The Grounding*.
29. NL Sch 005/001, KS to Carrie Chapman Catt, 15 October 1913.
30. Käthe Schirmacher, *Le féminisme aux États-Unis, en France, dans la Grande-Bretagne, en Suède, et en Russie* (Paris: A. Colin, 1898), 2.
31. Reinhart Koselleck, 'Social History and Conceptual History', in *Global Conceptual History: A Reader*, eds. Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic), 2016 [first published 1989], 55–73, at 56.
32. Arundhati Roy, 'In What Language Does Rain Fall Over Tormented Cities? The Weather Underground in The Ministry of Utmost Happiness', in Arundhati Roy, *Azadi. Freedom, Fascism, Fiction* (London et al.: Penguin, 2020), 7–52.

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