

Revisiting journalism as a profession in the 19th century: Empirical findings on women journalists in Central Europe

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Abstract

This contribution raises the question whether journalism at its beginnings was indeed a profession only for men, as much of the research literature suggests. However, the assumption of a “gendered profession” may also be due to gendered research patterns that produce and reproduce a gendered academic discourse on journalism. The study presented here puts these questions to test and investigates the cultural, social and work-related position of female writers in German-speaking countries at the end of the 19th century. The data is based on a complete census collected between 1896 and 1898. In a second step, the occupation and opus of female writers who worked for periodicals will be analyzed along established concepts of journalism in order to illustrate how women are systematically excluded by dominant concepts of what journalism is and journalists actually do.

Keywords: journalism, journalism history, journalism as a profession, women journalists, Imperial Germany and Austria

Introduction

“It’s a man’s world!” – this might be the first conclusion after an introductory reading of journalism history in the 19th century. It seems that the rise of Western journalism developed without any significant contributions by women journalists and women, rather invisibly, flocked into city newsrooms at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (Djerf-Pierre 2007: 81; Ichenhäuser, 1905; Lutes, 2006: 2).

In this study, I raise the question of whether journalism, especially at its beginning, was indeed a profession only for men. It might be our concept of journalism that causes us to focus exclusively on male journalists. The research question, therefore, can be surmised as: Is historical journalism a gendered profession? Or do we approach journalism with

gendered research patterns, so that we produce and reproduce a gendered academic discourse on journalism? In order to give some answers to these questions, I will first present the results of a research project dealing with the cultural, social and work-related positioning of women writers in German-speaking countries at the end of the 19th century, which is based on a complete census collected between 1896 and 1898¹. In a second step, the occupation and opus of those women writers who worked for periodicals will be analysed along established, but sometimes implicit, concepts of journalism in order to illustrate how elements of these concepts excluded (and still exclude) women from the dominant concept of what journalism is and journalists actually do.

Data from the 20th century onwards suggests a continual increase in the percentage of female journalists in Western countries (Fröhlich and Laftky, 2008: 1–3). Today, more than a third of all journalists are women, i. e., 33% in the United States of America, 37% in Germany and even 42% in Austria (Weaver, Beam, Bronwnlee, Voakes, and Wilhot, 2007; Weischenberg, Malik, and Scholl, 2006; Kaltenbrunner, Karmasin, Kraus, and Zimmermann, 2007). Journalism is no longer viewed as a career exclusively for men.

Looking at figures for the second half of the 19th century, however, when journalism gradually became institutionalized, one may conclude that hardly any female journalists participated in this process. According to US census figures, only 2% of the journalists in 1880 were women (Steiner, 1997: 4). The percentage of female journalists in Imperial Germany during the same period seems to have been even smaller. Since comprehensive census figures are not available, we have to rely on the sample that Requate (1995) draws. His study is based on 484 biographies of newspaper journalists in Imperial Germany (1870–1900) – 481 men and three women. One may conclude that less than 1% of all journalists were female during the last third of the 19th century.

These results are quite astonishing with respect to some findings from literature studies. The innumerable number of female writers in the 19th century (e. g., Brinker-Gabler, 1988; Tebben, 1998; Bland and Müller-Adams, 2007), the enormous number of women's magazines that were produced by women to a great extent (e. g., Bittermann-Wille and Hofmann-Weinberger, 2001; Ising, 1943; Kinnebrock, 2009; Trampler-Steiner, 1937) and finally the number of articles in periodicals that were signed by women, all this indicates that women must have contributed not only to literature but also to (literary) journalism at that time. Additionally, some findings from Scandinavia (e. g., Djerf-Pierre 2007; Ney, 2001) and the United States (e. g., Beasley and Gibbons, 1993; Lutes, 2006; Marzolf, 1977; Whitt, 2008) show that women have been working as journalists for as long as journalism has existed. As Henry (1993: 341)

puts it: “Women’s participation in American journalism is as old as the field itself.” Nevertheless, standard works on the history of journalism in German speaking countries still ignore women journalists as a “quantité négligeable” (Kinnebrock, 2005: 103).

Assumptions of the study

These rather contradictory findings lead to the assumption that, possibly due to our categories of analysis, the work of women in early journalism has not become visible yet.

Beasley (2001: 208) concluded, with respect to US-American journalism history, that “a wider definition of journalism itself is needed than the traditional one that involves reporting and commenting on conflicts and controversies mainly of interest to a male-run world. A broader definition, more appropriate to women’s experience, has to include the presentation of informative material that has wide popular appeal.” (see also Blanchard, 1999: 109). News from societal fields other than politics, service information or “news to use”, and entertainment (also including literary articles) could also be conceptualized as journalism, although standard works on journalism history usually do not focus on these kinds of observations and contributions to the public discourse (e. g., Wilke, 2008; Collins and Palmegiano, 2007). Since this “other news”, however, is important for involving media users in political as well as social discourse (e. g., Dörner, 2006), its potential to support the main functions of communication in society – like surveillance of the environment, correlation with other parts of society, transmission of cultural heritage, entertainment and mobilization (McQuail, 2001: 79–80) should not be underestimated. By neglecting these “other” contributions to periodical media, however, we also lose sight of the people who produce this form of journalism – among them a large number of women.

Furthermore, historical data shows that a woman’s career in journalism substantially differed from her male counterpart’s. For example, life-long full-time employment was rather untypical for female journalists – as it was for working women in general (e. g., Frevert, 2001: 80–128, Norton 1986: 536–559). They often worked occasionally, part-time and as freelancers. Consequently, if our concept of a professional journalist relies on gainful, full-time employment with a fixed and binding labor contract, it will fail to include the many women journalists of the period.

As a consequence, a wider definition of the term “journalist” is needed – one that focuses a) on the observation of the environment, b) the transformation of these observations into a media reality and c) the production of content for the discussions in the public sphere. In order to illustrate the effects of a wider definition of journalism, the results

of a research project dealing with the cultural, social and work-related positioning of female journalists in German-speaking countries at the end of the 19th century are presented.

Empirical study

Nowadays, standardized surveys are a common method to find out more about the cultural, social and work-related positioning of certain groups within a society. Since standardized surveys were rarely conducted in the 19th century, other sources must be used to reconstruct the characteristics of persons working in a certain occupational field on the one hand and how this field was perceived by its professionals on the other. The evaluation of (rather) representative biographies is one way of approaching occupational fields like journalism and of identifying collectively held attitudes, motivations and professional routines. Collective biographies again usually rely on certain collections of biographies. Requate (1995), for example, based his standard work on German journalists in the 19th century mainly on biographical notes in newspaper histories published in the context of jubilee celebrations. Moreover, he evaluated special jubilee editions and brochures for only the important liberal newspapers. Consequently, biographies of journalists working for little local newspapers, for newspapers of the labor movement or for magazines were not considered (see also the critical remarks by Raabe and Behmer, 2003: 262). With respect to gender, Requate could only identify three women journalists in his sample.

Source

The study presented here is based on a rather unique source: the biographical encyclopedia of women writers called “Ladies of the Pen”. This encyclopedia differs from others because it reflects the results of a *complete* census among German speaking women writers collected between 1896 and 1898. The author of this encyclopedia, Sophie Pataky², wrote in the introduction of her encyclopedia that it was the first international women’s congress ever held in Germany (in Berlin 1896) that motivated her to make women’s contributions to the cultural production more visible (Pataky, 1898: V–VI). As a consequence she started collecting data on women writers and their publications. First she listed all the works by women writers by evaluating established bibliographies (thereby registering German speaking publications by women from 1840 onwards). Then she registered the names of all the women writers she had identified in the bibliographies and moreover evaluated biographic

encyclopedias (Pataky, 1898: VII–X). And finally she contacted editors of other encyclopedias on writers as well as representatives of writer's and women's organizations (Janka, n. d. [1999], online). As a result of this enormous work Pataky could list the names and publications of 4,547 women writers (Sitter, 1998: 112) most of them working in the second half of the 19th century. Based on this list, Pataky wrote letters to those women writers who were still alive asking them for biographical information. Thus, the portraits in the encyclopedia mainly reflect the answers of 2,048 women writers.

Pataky's biographical portraits are arranged quite differently depending on the answers that Pataky received from the women writers. The biographical notes are either very short (including only some basic information such as the date of birth, the current address and the preferred genres) or they stretch out over a few pages containing a lot of biographical information. Since parts of Pataky's literary remains are accessible³, it was possible to reconstruct how Pataky worked the letters over to fit them as biographical portraits into her encyclopedia. A systematic comparison between the letters Pataky received and the portraits she published was drawn as a first step in this study. It revealed that Pataky only slightly adapted the diction of the letters. Therefore, the portraits can be regarded as rather authentic documents giving reliable insights into the life and work of early women journalists in German speaking countries⁴.

Of the 2,048 active writers who were portrayed in the encyclopedia, 1,133 women had been writing for periodicals. These 1,133 women are the sample for my further analysis. In order to include all forms of journalistic writing, all these women are defined as 'journalists', even if they only worked part time, were freelancers, did journalism as a second job, worked voluntarily or primarily wrote essays, features or even fiction instead of hard news. Since professional as well as occasional writers were considered as journalists in this study, the results give an overview of how numerous female journalists were and – most of all – of how multifaceted their writings were.

Contemporary critics, however, bashed the encyclopedia for not selecting only 'professional' and 'important' writers and gathering up "every woman that once had written or botched an article." (*Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 1898: 82, quoted in Jacob, 2003: 142). This misogynous remark, however, points to the outstanding quality of the encyclopedia – the portrayal of all these "hidden" women writers who worked occasionally, without an employment contract or often even completely unpaid.

Method

A quantitative content analysis was conducted⁵. The dimensions of the analysis were demographics, social positioning (including milieu, the education and the family background), the occupation (including characteristics of the employment and the motivations of the writers), the opus (in order to find out the preferred topics, genres and types of media), the organized networks of the journalists (like the churches, social movements or political parties) and, finally, references to gender stereotypes (to find out whether traditional or emancipated gender roles were explicitly mentioned).

Results

Demographics. Most of the early German speaking journalists lived in Germany (70%), with 22% in Austria (although Austria encompassed large parts of Central Europe at that time including Hungary and parts of Poland, Bohemia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia) and – quite astonishingly with respect to the total population – only 3% of the German speaking journalists lived in Switzerland⁶. Within these countries women journalists tended to live in metropolises (32%) or large regional centers (29%), mainly in Berlin and Vienna. Therefore, we can assume that early female journalists were “city slickers” at a time when the majority still lived in the countryside or in little villages. In 1900, only 14% of the German population lived in metropolises and large cities (Wehler, 1995: 37). A comparison of the places of birth and the actual residences also underlines the tendency among women journalists to move to large cities. While the majority (62%) was born in the countryside and small towns, only a minority stayed there (39%) while working as a journalist.

Furthermore, female journalists tended to be *older women*, half of them singles and widows, who did not have to look after children. The average age was 47, which was old age in terms of life expectancy at that time (48 years in Germany in 1901; Wehler, 1995: 38). Only 9% of the women journalists had not yet reached the age of 30, 23% were in their thirties, and about half of them (51%) in their forties and fifties. An explanation for this comparatively high average age might be the typical phases of a bourgeoisie woman’s life. After marriage, these women usually stopped working and devoted the following decades to house keeping and child care (Frevert, 2001: 106–108). As a result, reproductive and professional work did not really conflict and this might also explain why *children* were rarely mentioned: Only 9% of the biographies contained (subtle) references to children. Presumably the lives of women were not dominated (any more) by child care when they worked as jour-

nalists. Another explanation could have been that the journalists handed in professional curricula instead of private biographies and therefore did not mention children. However, since the vast majority of these biographies contained a lot of other personal information – and thereby reflected a typical pattern of female identity construction at that time (Febel, 2005: 139; specifically for women writers: Hacker, 2007: 24), this explanation seems rather implausible.

Social positioning. Like their male counterparts, female journalists anno 1900 came from rather *educated bourgeoisie families* – at least 79% of them. The professions of fathers and husbands were taken as indicators of milieu. Within the group of bourgeoisie journalists, civil servants (20%), pastors (16%), merchants (13%) and teachers (13%) formed the families' occupational backgrounds. Moreover, 19% of the journalists had an aristocratic background, whereas only 2% had grown up in working class families. The small number of journalists with a lower class background might be astonishing, but can be explained by a lack of educational requirement. Individual autobiographies, such as the one by the Austrian Socialist Adelheid Popp, illustrate the difficulties working class women had to face when they started their writing while being nearly illiterate (Popp, 1983). Compared to their male colleagues' milieus (Requate, 1995: 139–142) German speaking women journalists came from even more socially advanced families – a phenomenon also known in Sweden (Djerf-Pierre, 2007: 98). Possibly it was the upper class background that allowed private teaching and compensated for the inadequacies of women's education in Imperial Germany and Austria (Evans, 1976: 17–21).

Milieus in Central Europe were also determined by religious affiliations. However, since there were only *few references to the religious background* of women journalists, reliable results cannot be presented.

Occupational role. Regarding the occupational role, it is remarkable that more than two thirds of the journalists were, primarily, litterateurs, although they also wrote for periodicals regularly. Nevertheless, *journalism* was a *secondary occupation* for them. This implies already that most of the women worked as *freelancers*. Only 13% (or 149 of the female journalists) were regularly employed by newspapers and magazines – half of them, however, in leading positions. The majority of women in leading positions worked for magazines primarily dedicated to women. Moreover, 264 women journalists (23%) mentioned that they worked as regular freelancers, which implies that journalism seems to have been the main occupation for at least one third of the women journalists at that time.

Table 1. *Genres used by women journalists.*

Genre	Percentage
<i>Fictional</i>	
Short stories	62%
Poetry	31%
Fiction	30%
Features	19%
Children's literature	14%
Drama	13%
Humoresque	6%
<i>Mixed</i>	
Translation	14%
Biography	9%
<i>Factual</i>	
Factual articles	34%

Note: Multiple codings, n = 1.133

It is remarkable that many of the journalists explicitly denied that they were writing to make a living. Considering, however, how many articles and books they wrote, it seems that the denial of the necessity of gainful employment stems mainly from having a bourgeois background. Gainful employment simply was not the done thing for a Central European bourgeoisie woman at that time (Bock 2000: 132–153).

Opus. Looking at the key activities, it becomes evident that early women journalists covered a *wide range of topics*, used *many genres* and wrote for *very different types of media* (see Table 1). That said, early women journalists clearly preferred literary and fictional genres.

The affinity for literary genres might not be surprising with respect to the impressive tradition of “Frauenliteratur” in the 19th century (Bland and Müller-Adams, 2007) and the access women writers had gradually gained to magazines (Kinnebrock, 2007: 161–165). Moreover findings from other Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries imply that early women journalists in particular contributed fictional content to periodicals (i. e., Djerf-Pierre, 2007: 84, Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming, 2004: 20–22).

Concerning the type of media, it seems that German speaking women journalists were primarily writing for *popular magazines* or magazines devoted to those *fields that were femalely connoted* (i. e., education, family, beaux arts). Only a third, 34% to be more precise, (also) wrote for newspapers (see Table 2).

It is remarkable that almost half of the journalists (43%) published books in addition to their articles, whereby literary books prevailed. The

Table 2. *Type of publications women journalists were writing for.*

Type of publication	Percentage
<i>Magazines</i>	
Cultural magazines	15%
Women magazines	13%
Family magazines	12%
Children's magazines	10%
News magazines	10%
Professional journals	8%
Illustrated magazines	7%
Fashion magazines	5%
Feminist periodicals	3%
Catholic magazines	2%
Protestant magazines	2%
Magazines in general	50%
<i>Supplements</i>	
Supplements	1%
<i>Newspapers</i>	
Newspapers	34%

Note: Multiple codings, n = 1.133

closeness to literature also becomes evident regarding the topics of factual articles. The preferred topics, among the 34% of female journalists who wrote factual stories, were critique, tourism, and education. Contrary to the cliché (Groth, 1930: 73; Dovifat, 1931: 117–118; Dresler, 1936: 8), current affairs (politics 8% and economics 8%) were covered, but rather infrequently (*see Table 3*).

Considering the opus of early women journalists, it becomes evident that they were permanently crossing the borders between literature and journalism. Based on all the information given in the biographical portraits, we tried to decide where the journalists laid the main focus of their work: on literature or on journalism. Among all the biographies that could be reliably evaluated on this question (n = 1,009 instead of 1,133), 69% of the 'journalists' indicated that they mainly produced fictional writings, 15% were exclusively involved in producing descriptions of the factual, and 16% were producing fictional and factual texts to the same extent. This reflects findings on the history of women in American journalism. At that time in the US, many female journalists could be found in the *borderland of journalism and fiction* (e.g., Whitt, 2008; Lutes, 2006).

Organizational networks. Although the late 19th century was the age of corporatism in Central Europe, women journalists at that time seem to

Table 3. *Topics of factual articles.*

Topics mentioned in factual articles	Percentage
Tourism/foreign countries	25%
Education	23%
Feminism/women's movement	19%
Art criticism	14%
Literary criticism	13%
History	13%
Household	13%
Fashion	9%
Politics	8%
Economics	8%
Religion	7%
Science	5%
Psychology	4%
Medicine	4%
Marriage/family	2%
(Women's) international movement	1%
Social welfare	0.5%
Others	10%

Note: Multiple coding, n = 382

have been scarcely embedded in organizational networks. Political parties, the churches and the labor movement do not seem to have been an important embedding network for them. One exception, however, is the feminist movement, which was mentioned as a point of reference in 5% of the biographies.

Reference to gender stereotypes. The burgeoning feminist movement of the time did not necessarily provoke emancipated self-descriptions. With respect to the whole sample, emancipated ways of living were rarely mentioned by the journalists. Their self constructions did not focus on divorces, full-time employment or other indicators of a self-determined life. On the contrary, 11% articulated their *respect for traditional gender roles* by emphasizing that they were women of virtue, devoted wives and perfect housekeepers.

It is possible, however, that these traditional self-descriptions were a means to legitimizing the rather unusual and new role of a working woman. At least for the 18th century Weckel (1998) and Brandes (1988) worked out a variety of similar strategies that female editors used to counterbalance the unfamiliar role of a working woman entering the public sphere. As already mentioned, neither gainful employment nor self-display in public were the done thing for bourgeoisie women in Imperial Germany and Austria.

Conclusions and discussion

In contrast to other studies (i. e., Requate, 1995; Enke, 1988; Engelsing 1966), it became evident that, also in the 19th century, numerous women observed their surroundings, transformed their socially relevant impressions into texts, published them in periodicals and thereby produced content for discussions in the public sphere. If this process is regarded as journalism (Schudson, 2000: 56), then many a woman worked as journalists in the 19th century.

From a (conventional) compensatory or contributory perspective on history that tries to add women's contributions to a male-orientated historiography (Lerner, 1989, for a critical review see Scott, 1993: 41; Rosenberger, 1995: 193), the results of this study could be interpreted as being complementary to findings of Requate (1995): While the professionalization of journalism (including full-time employment, the implementation of rules how to write and the development of shared self-perceptions as professional journalist) took place without remarkable influence by women, the field of 'unprofessional' and literary journalism was open to women writers. This rationale, however, tends to perpetuate male-orientated, dichotomous, and hierarchical perspectives on journalism history. By opposing a socially relevant and 'professional' political journalism on the one hand, to a less relevant, 'unprofessional' literary journalism on the other, a (gendered) hierarchy of journalisms is constructed and the borderland between these two types of journalism is out of sight. In order to avoid hierarchical and gendered conceptions of journalism, I propose to use the findings of this study on women journalists for a critical reflection of the way how journalism is commonly defined.

It seems that early female journalists were all-round writers and border crossers between literature and journalism. A dichotomous conception of journalism vs. literature (including the dualisms fact vs. fiction, information vs. entertainment, up-to-dateness vs. timelessness) causes a restricted conception of journalism that excludes many facets of journalistic work – and obstructs our view of women in journalism. Dooly's observation about the history of American journalism can be transferred to the history of German-language journalism as well: "Political information, rather another category of information, such as cultural or society news became the foundation on which journalists would seek to build their occupation's legitimacy." (Dooly, 1997: 129). It might be true that women were rarely employed by large city newspapers, so that the core of journalism, current affairs and political commentary, indeed seems to have been "a man's world" (e. g., Marzolf, 1977 for the US; Requate, 1995 for Germany; Dierf-Pierre, 2007 for Sweden). At the same time, however, observations and discussions about the education system and

social welfare, the description of foreign countries, cultural and feminist critique and, last but not least, entertaining reflections of everyday life are also important contributions to public discourse that should not be ignored (Blanchard, 1999: 109; Lünenborg, 2009: 14–15). A concept of journalism that firstly does not focus only on political information, but also acknowledges the entertainment value of news (Klaus, 2008: 62), that secondly does not value decisions of the political administration higher than societal or cultural concerns (Dörner and Vogt, 1994: 165), and that finally moves the notion of serving the public from a primary top-down meaning (“telling people what’s relevant and what they need to know”) to an increasingly bottom-up application (“facilitating conversations within a society”) (Deuze, 2005: 455), such a concept would also consider the work of journalists situated at the periphery as important – many women among them.

There is a remarkable continuity between the placement of early and current women journalists in the field of professional journalism. Even today, a disproportionately large number of women work as freelancers, for magazines and in a part-time capacity. Conversely, a disproportionately small number of women fill leading positions. Another trend which has not changed is that female journalists today still tend to work in entertainment. They describe themselves as entertainers, prefer literary genres and work for rather entertaining media types and editorial departments (i. e., Weischenberg et al., 2006: 194, 259–261, 264; Kaltenbrunner, Karmasin, Kraus, and Zimmermann, 2008: 158–163).

Surprisingly, however, methodological deficits and narrow perspectives which are responsible for the invisibility of female journalists in the early stages of journalism do not seem to have completely disappeared. Even today, problematic research patterns that exclude women are still applied. The latest representative study on journalists in Germany (published in 2006 by Weischenberg et al. and methodologically based on Weaver’s et al. study published in 2007), only counts the number of journalists whose main occupation and primary source of income is journalism. Thus, journalism is defined as a gainful and main occupation, yet this definition does not incorporate the voluntary aspect or it being a secondary occupation for some people.

The latest Austrian study by Kaltenbrunner et al. (2007) is even more explicit in this respect. It excluded all journalists from the sample who earned less than 1,000 a month. As a result, the study might say a lot about journalists who are working full-time in regular occupations, but says little about freelancers, or journalists working part-time or even only occasionally. It is also very logical to expect that bloggers, who only partly earn money with their work, but definitely contribute to a lively public sphere, are excluded from these studies as well.

It is, however, important to find out more about this excluded group – for two reasons. Firstly, it is evident that a lot of content production is done by badly paid freelancers. Nowadays, full-time employed journalists often work as content managers in media organizations, whereas the production of content is left to freelancers. This makes the situation even more paradoxical: The managers are counted as journalists, the real producers of journalistic content, who observe, construct media reality and contribute to our public sphere in a substantial way, run the risk of being excluded from our research. Secondly, we should focus on badly paid freelancers, because there is an above-average number of women in this group.

Presumably these currently applied research patterns are still rooted in *male curriculum vitas*, which presume *lifelong full-time employment*. However, as the combination of ‘professional’ and reproductive work is still difficult for female journalists, a lot of them are working part-time or as freelancers. As a result of male-orientated research methods, they are still made invisible in current research, even though we know that media companies could not function without their work.

A further problematic research pattern should be mentioned: the concentration on *paid labor*. It neglects an extensive number of contributors to the public sphere (like bloggers, for example). As the number of contributors to the public sphere is increasing with the emergence of new media, an adaptation of research patterns is necessary to grasp the multi-faceted ways in which people, many of whom are women, are producing content today for the public discourse.

The findings of this study show that already at the end of the 19th century, women journalists’ contributions to the public discourse were manifold and numerous. We do not only need new research patterns to discover women’s participation in journalism, but we also need them to question our assumptions concerning male journalists and their history. The myth of the autonomous journalist (Henry, 1993: 347–348) for example, could be regarded as an un-reflected academic reproduction of contemporary curricula that tried to be ‘professional’ by excluding influences of family, friends, and professional networks. At least the comparison of Pataky’s (1898) portraits with those in other contemporary biographical encyclopedias reveals very different patterns of self construction among male and female writers – even if their jobs were comparable (Hacker, 2007: 24). The question should also be raised whether social positioning and, as a consequence, personal networks were influential on male journalists’ work to a greater extent than is usually presumed.

Accepted precepts of journalism history have to be challenged and sometimes revisited so long as they are not applicable to women.

Bionote

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Notes

1. This research project was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the German Council for Social and Economic Data on the occasion of the “Year of Humanities”.
2. There is almost no biographical information on Sophie Pataky. Pataky was born in 1860 in Podiebrad/Bohemia as Sophie Caroline Stipek and married the bookseller and publisher Carl Pataky (*1844). The couple lived in Berlin and it was the publishing house of her husband that published her encyclopedia in 1898. In 1907 Carl and Sophie Pataky seem to have moved to Meran/Southern Tirol. Carl Pataky died in 1914 in Reichenhall/Bavaria. Sophie Pataky’s place and date of death is not known, and there is also no information how parts of her remains were transferred to the Archives of the German Feminist Movement in Kassel (Jank, n. d. [1999], online).
3. Parts of Sophie Pataky’s remains are housed by the Archives of the German Feminist Movement in Kassel (Stiftung Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung, Kassel).
4. The exactness of Pataky’s search for women writers as well as the accuracy of the information in the Pataky’s portraits can be backed by a comparison with the samples and the portraits in other biographical encyclopedias: Nigg (1893), for example, who published a collection of biographies on Austrian women writers five years before Pataky, draw a nearly identical sample (however only with reference to women writers living in Austria). Moreover, Nigg’s biographical and bibliographical core information hardly differs from Pataky’s, although Nigg’s portraits are much shorter and therefore give less insight into the motivations and self-perceptions of women writers at that time. This results from a systematic evaluation of Nigg’s (1893) biographical encyclopedia which was completed in a graduate seminar at the Communication Department of the University of Vienna in 2008. For further critical comparisons of biographical encyclopedias see Hacker (2007).
5. The content analysis was conducted by a gender historian specializing in the 19th century in order to capture meanings conveyed by contemporary diction. I have to thank Helke Dreier of the University of Hagen for coding the portraits very carefully.
6. At first sight the small percentage of Swiss women journalists in Pataky’s encyclopedia might be irritating. But regarding all the bibliographical work Pataky did as well as her intensive contact to representatives of Swiss writers’ and women’s organizations (Jank, n. d. [1999], online), a voluntary and systematic exclusion of Swiss women journalists is not probable.

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