

**ADELE STEINWENDER:  
OBSERVATIONS OF A GERMAN WOMAN LIVING  
ON A BERLIN MISSION STATION AS RECORDED IN HER DIARY**

by

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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Foreword	i
I. Introduction	1
1. Aims	1
2. Definition of concepts	3
3. Justification	5
4. Methodology	7
5. Literature review	8
a. Auto/biography	8
b. Gender, colonialism, nationalism	13
c. Missions in South Africa and relationships their missionaries developed	22
II. The South African and German context	30
1. Information on Adele Steinwender and her diary	30
2. Germany and South Africa	34
a. Germany	34
i. Steinwender's Germany	34
ii. Berlin in the nineteenth century	37
iii. Background of the Berlin Mission Society	39
b. South Africa	42
i. General overview of South Africa in the nineteenth century	42
ii. The mission station at Bethanie, Orange Free State	44
iii. The missionaries in Bethanie	47
iv. The school	50
III. Gender and the Bethanie Missionary Community	53
1. Role as a single woman	54
2. Steinwender's relationship with the women in Bethanie	59
3. Heinrich Grützner	64
4. Concluding remarks	68
IV. Nationalism within the Mission in Bethanie	69

1. Racial superiority	70
2. Germany in South Africa	74
3. Acclimatisation to a <i>colonial lifestyle</i>	79
4. Concluding Remarks	80
V. Conclusion	82
VI. Sources	86
1. Archival Sources	86
2. Journals	86
3. Literature	89
4. Personal information (Oral)	94
VII. Summary and key words	95

<b>ILLUSTRATIONS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Figure 1:</b> Current location of Bethanie	45
<b>Figure 2:</b> The first Berlin missionaries posted to South Africa between the years 1834 and 1837	47
<b>Figure 3:</b> Sketch of Bethanie	48
<b>Figure 4:</b> Church in Bethanie	49
<b>Figure 5:</b> Entrance to the school building	50
<b>Figure 6:</b> Inside the school building	50
<b>Figure 7:</b> Adele Kuschke neé Steinwender and Hermann Kuschke	59
<b>Figure 8:</b> Marie Friederika Juliane Grützner and Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner	60
<b>Figure 9:</b> Johanna Heese neé Grützner and Carl August Daniel Heese	63
<b>Figure 10:</b> Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner	65

## Summary

In 1885 Adele Steinwender arrived in South Africa from Germany. Her vocation was that of a teacher, but unlike the majority of white women who moved to the colonies to teach, Steinwender taught the children of the missionaries, as opposed to the local children. During her five years in Bethanie, a Berlin Mission Station in the Orange Free State, she kept a diary recording her observations of day-to-day life.

Steinwender's diary reveals certain aspects that were often neglected in the diary of the male missionaries, namely the domestic side of life. Her commentaries provide one with a unique perspective on missionary activities, not only because she is writing as a woman, but because although she is in the employ of the Berlin Mission Society, she herself, was not a missionary. Thus her reflections are that of an "outsider". She was an outsider in more senses than one, considering she was an unmarried woman, who was financially independent, and this set her apart from the other woman who lived within this community at the time.

Another aspect that made her unique was that she was the most recent arrival from Germany. Although the white residents of Bethanie did attempt to uphold their *germanness* during their time spent abroad, they had somewhat adapted to a more "colonial lifestyle". Throughout her diary, Steinwender cites examples of such cultural adaptations amongst the people living there. That having been said, however, the missionaries and their families still held a feeling of superiority over the local population and there was a deeper sense of German nationalism that was prevalent at all times.

This study examines the diary alongside nationalism and gender and provides one with an image of what a community was perceived like through the eyes of Steinwender. She proved to be the exception more than the rule, yet there is a perpetual undertone of her wanting to fit within the confines of what was considered to be normal.

## Key Words

Adele Steinwender

Auto/biography

Berlin Mission Society

Bethanie

Carl Heinrich Grützner

Colonialism

Diary

Domesticity

Education

*Germanness*

Gender

Marie Julie Grützner neé Nachtigal

Missionary

Nationalism

Patriarchy

Paternalism

Public/Private

Race

Social Hierarchy

## Foreword

This study is based upon the diary of Adele Bertha Christine Steinwender, a German woman who was appointed by the Berlin Mission Society to educate the children of the missionaries in Bethanie, Orange Free State. Steinwender's diary covers the time period 1885 to 1889, when she was living within a Berlin Missionary Society community in Bethanie. As the title suggests, for the purposes of this study, the diary will remain the main focus. This document will be analysed with a special focus on issues related to gender and nationalism.

In **Chapter I**, I set out the Historiographical and Methodological context. I explain the aims with the study, define the most significant concepts, justify my chosen approach and explain my methodology at the hand of the current state of the historiography in the fields related to my topic.

**Chapter II** will provide the **South African and German contexts** needed to understand the diary of Steinwender in a proper context. I begin with information on the biographical Steinwender and her autobiographical text, her diary. It was donated to the Heese Collection of the University of South Africa (UNISA) archives, where I consulted it. I provide information on the frequency and the nature of the diary entries, up until the final entry, dated 19 December 1889, in which Steinwender took a surprising turn and dedicated the entire document to her husband. Considering the tone of the entries until very close to this final entry, I believe that her keeping a diary had not been for the purpose of donating it to a future husband up until the very final entries. I then proceed to contextualise Steinwender's 'Germanness'. I provide background on the Germany Steinwender grew up in and the Berlin in which the mission station employing her, had their headquarters. I then give a brief background on conditions in South Africa, particularly the Boer Republics, by the time Steinwender arrived there in 1885. The mission station on which Steinwender went to work, Bethanie in the Orange Free State, receives specific attention. I provide background on the station itself, the missionaries who developed it and the school which Steinwender had to take over.

In **Chapter III, Gender and the Bethanie Missionary Community**, I illustrate the gendered structures that in turn created the social hierarchy which the station inhabitants abided by. I illustrate how Steinwender challenged this hierarchy upon her arrival, but later also succumbed

to a desperate desire to ‘fit in’. Included in this chapter are sections on the relationships she developed, even when these relationships were not always on friendly terms. The reason for my including this socialisation aspect, is because it shows the agency, however limited, of a woman who, as I mentioned previously, did not have a clear cut social place within this community. Through her social relations, she attempted to carve out this place.

In **Chapter IV**, I develop the theme of **German Nationalism** as it was expressed **within the Mission in Bethanie**. The German missionaries in Bethanie chose to create an environment that would enable them to preserve their ‘Germanness’. Steinwender’s diary will be scrutinised for her expressions of nationalism in the colonial environment. Included are the relations Steinwender had with the black people living in and around Bethanie, and the superior attitude she held towards them. There are also aspects of her diary that suggest that she was not alone when it came to these sentiments. The other missionaries present, were also very likely to have held a racist attitude towards the local population. The final section of this chapter uncovers how, although the missionaries tried to create a ‘little Germany’ in Bethanie, they nevertheless had become acclimatised to their new home. By the time Steinwender arrived in Bethanie, the missionary families were already well-established in South Africa. Dealing with the local population, a brand new environment and therefore different practices, all contributed to the missionaries losing their strict German principles to a more hybrid form of colonial lifestyle.

In **Chapter V**, the **Conclusion**, an overview will be taken of Steinwender’s work on Bethanie Station and the significance of the way she recorded her experiences in her diary. Steinwender was a German woman who lived in an independent Boer Republic, at a time when British colonialism prevailed in Southern Africa. All of these factors illustrate what complexities shaped her environment on a broader scale. Looking more closely at her, she was a woman who was strongly influenced by nationalism, which was dominant in Germany at the time. Not for one moment during her stay in Bethanie did she forget her heritage. Her sense of adaptability was possibly further infringed by her reluctance to adjust to a new environment while living in a community who had opted to create a ‘little Germany’ in Bethanie and had brought Steinwender there for the very purpose of making it even *more* that way.

This research would not have been possible had it not been for several people. First of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Lize Kriel, for not losing hope in me and providing me with encouragement throughout. Thank you for all of your guidance and the



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## **I. Introduction**

Adele Bertha Christine Steinwender's diary offers one a perspective of a woman's perception of day-to-day living within a Berlin Mission Station. Her diary will be scrutinised alongside gender and nationalism. Within this chapter the aims of this research will be outlined and certain concepts, relevant to this study, will be identified and defined. The methodology employed, as well as a literature review will also be included. Although the primary focus will remain on gender and nationalism, there are other aspects that cannot be overlooked when reading her diary. Henceforth the final section of this chapter is a literature study, not only of those aforementioned concepts, but also includes a discussion on publications revolving around auto/biography, colonialism and mission studies.

### **1. Aims**

Steinwender's diary will be analysed according to her experiences as a woman within a particular nineteenth-century patriarchal social context. This includes how she viewed herself, and how she believed others observed her. Steinwender's diary offers one unique access to a more emotional perspective on life within a Berlin Mission Station community. Her entries were fairly regular and include domestic aspects that were generally neglected in male missionaries' diaries. Steinwender often alluded to how lonely she felt, considering she could not relate to any of the other residents. She was too old to bond with the unmarried girls. Being single and childless, she was not able to connect with the married women closer to her age either. Thus, several of her entries reveal that her diary could possibly have served as that confidante she so desperately sought.

The mission community had a rigid hierarchical structure, and Steinwender, being an older, unmarried woman, struggled to fit into the scheme of things. It will be illustrated how her living conditions and her profession created a somewhat complex social standing for her, one which she intimately reported on in her diary. Steinwender resided with the Grützner family. Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner was

the superintendent of the mission station in Bethanie and was her host father.<sup>1</sup> He assumed various roles in her life. Not only was he her employer, but he also adopted the role of her father and even her friend. She sought his approval in all ways, and would gladly ask for and follow his advice. Steinwender did not hold Grützner's wife, Marie Frederika Juliane neé Nachtigal, in the same regard. These two women would not always see eye-to-eye, and they chose the domestic front as the arena in which they could compete with one another. Although Steinwender did not always get along with Mrs. Grützner, she developed a friendship with one of the Grützners' daughters, Johanna. Johanna was a pupil of Steinwender's and their relationship will be investigated according to the various roles in which it had played itself out: teacher and pupil, friends and sisters. Steinwender seemed to have been very fond of this girl, who was so much her junior. It is an indication of Steinwender's (lack of) place within the community. It appeared as if she was closer to Johanna than the other women closer to her age. The possible meanings of these complex and ambiguous relationships will be fleshed out from the pages of the diary in conjunction with relevant historical and theoretical contextualising literature.

At the time that Steinwender moved from Germany, her home country was swept up in a wave of nationalism. Upon her arrival in Bethanie, Steinwender was now living in a Boer Republic (the Orange Free State) within a broader British colonial setup. The immediate community she resided in was very strict about maintaining German pietistic values. The Berlin Missionaries were Lutherans and advocated a conservative and religious lifestyle. Steinwender endorsed these principles. She was very proud of her German roots and she encouraged the children whom she taught never to lose sight of their 'Germanness'. Considering that Steinwender was the newest arrival from Germany, she held onto her German culture more strongly than most of the missionaries, who had become more assimilated to colonial living. Her diary will be scrutinised for the light it sheds on the way this fairly secluded community continued to construct and reconstruct their German identity.

German culture comprises various aspects that include German traditions and customs. "A 'cultural context' is a set of quite varied phenomena (cognitions, words,

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this dissertation mention will be made of Steinwender's host parents, host mother and host father. In one entry she referred to Mr. and Mr. Grützner as her 'huisouers', which is where I derived the term host parents from.

discourses, practices, behaviours, material objects, even institutions) that are conceived of belonging together in what is held, by convention and presupposition, to be a meaningful way”.<sup>2</sup> Both in Steinwender’s case and the mission community at large, German culture would include the German literature that was read at night, the upholding of the German language, teaching their children German history, German geography, etc. All of these facets reveal to what extent the missionaries maintained their ‘Germanness’. In the same breath, however, although efforts were made to maintain this in the missionary environment, those who had lived there longer, did start to become accustomed to a colonial lifestyle, one which allowed the women to have a reduced amount of household chores, as they could employ servants. Steinwender made comments about how lazy she considered some of the women to have become. They would stand around and *chat* as opposed to doing the gardening, for example. A prominent aim of this study will be to indicate, through Steinwender’s diary, how assumptions about gender, nationalism and colonialism cannot be considered loosely from one another when analysing the operation of this particular Free State mission station. Furthermore, it will be illustrated to what extent a document intended for introspective and private consumption actually revealed the ways notions about masculinity, femininity, national pride and colonial respectability continually pervaded the presumed ‘private/public’ threshold.

## 2. Definition of concepts

For the purposes of this study, the term ‘**gender**’ refers to the socially constructed differences between men and women.<sup>3</sup> The concepts ‘**private**’ and ‘**public**’ will be understood and utilised in the light of Mary P. Ryan’s article in the *Journal of women’s history* of 2003, in which she responded to, amongst others, historians Leonore Davidoff and Elizabeth Thompson’s application of these slippery, yet useful, divides:

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<sup>2</sup> W.D. Smith, Colonialism and the culture of respectability, in E. Ames *et al.* (eds.), *Germany and colonial pasts*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> J. Alberti, *Gender and the historian*, p. 1; E.B. Freedman, *No turning back: the history of feminism and the future of women*, p. 5.

Each denotes things too often denied women, something still to be strived for, such as public authority, or requiring protection, such as reproductive rights. Like the four historians who preceded me in this discussion, I conclude that it is the gender bias lodged at the border between public and private, not the terms themselves, that is objectionable to feminists and troublesome to historians.

Ryan continues: “ ... it would seem that private and public sometimes collapse into one another, and at other times public authority emphatically overrules private preference. In either case, women’s freedom may hang in the balance.”<sup>4</sup> Ryan’s explanation of the Victorian ‘separation of the spheres’ is also worthy of an extensive quotation:

At that historical moment when Western social systems made the transition to modernity, these antimonies present a particularly vivid gender contrast. ... men and women seemingly parted along a whole set of borders between household economy and capitalist market, between mother love and wage labour, from domestic subservience to public citizenship, from the intimacy of kinship to the anonymity of the urban crowd ... In the modern period, if at no other historical moment, this multi-dimensional segmentation of gender roles demands a capacious terminology. ‘**Public/private**’ incorporates the complex but consistent gender assignments far more effectively than the geographical shapes of a separate spheres.<sup>5</sup>

Ryan concludes that: “both women and men can be found exercising power and influence anywhere along the continuum between public and private life and space.”<sup>6</sup>

‘**Nationalism**’ is viewed as “[t]he endeavour for national self-determination and independence”.<sup>7</sup> ‘**Nation**’ is defined as a group of people imagining themselves to be a part of the national community.<sup>8</sup> The ‘**German nation**’ was one in which “populations were being reshaped within old territorial states in a new and distinctly

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<sup>4</sup> M.P. Ryan, The public and the private good. Across the great divide in women’s history, *Journal of women’s history* 15(1), 2003, pp. 11-12.

<sup>5</sup> M.P. Ryan, The public and the private good. Across the great divide in women’s history, *Journal of women’s history* 15(1), 2003, p. 14. My emphasis.

<sup>6</sup> M.P. Ryan, The public and the private good. Across the great divide in women’s history, *Journal of women’s history* 15(1), 2003, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> W. Siemann, The revolutions of 1848-1849 and the persistence of the old regime in Germany (1848-1850), in J. Breuilly (eds.) *Nineteenth-Century Germany: politics, culture and society 1780-1918*, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> I. Blom, “Gender and nation in international comparison, in I. Blom et al. (eds.), *Gendered nations: Nationalisms and gender order in the long nineteenth century*, p. 4.

‘national’ manner”.<sup>9</sup> Nationalism began to feature strongly in Western thought during the nineteenth century and it gained more prominence as the century progressed.

For an understanding of ‘**colonialism**’ and ‘**imperialism**’ I turn to the by now fairly dated, but for the purposes of understanding the culture thereof, still very useful explanation of Edward Said:

As I shall be using the term, ‘imperialism’ means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; ‘colonialism’, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. ... Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination ... Out of the imperial experiences, notions about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticized or rejected.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Justification

The study of middle class day-to-day life has gained popularity in recent cultural-historical research.<sup>11</sup> Steinwender was by no means a famous historical character. She was in an out of the ordinary role, yet yearning to be a part of an ordinary one. On the surface it might appear that this woman defied societal conventions by opting not to get married at a younger age and by her being a professional, thus making her financially independent. When one scratches the surface, it becomes apparent that although she took great pride in her career as a teacher, she still wanted to fit into the community and the roles they had set out. It appears that life had swept her into the role of single professional that she was forced to perform and she did not have more than a diary to live out her secret desires of also being considered as ‘one of’ (thus, equal to) the white married women (wives and mothers) on the mission station. In her last entry she wrote that she had given her diary to Hermann Kuschke, the man she

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<sup>9</sup> G. Eley, Culture, nation, gender, in I. Blom *et al.* (eds.), *Gendered nations: Nationalisms and gender order in the long nineteenth century*, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> E. Said, *Culture and imperialism*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>11</sup> T. Dolan, Book review on Middle-class culture in the nineteenth century: America, Australia and Britain, by Linda Young, *Victorian Studies*, Summer 2006, p. 744

eventually married in 1889. Could that have signified her replacing her diary for the life partner she sought?

At its broadest level, this study resorts under the rubric of femininity in the nineteenth century. The diary, as the selected text for the historical close reading that will comprise this study, is a 'private' document which nevertheless also reports on the writer's perception of the roles she and others performed in 'public'. The study thus also taps into the current discourse on the meaning of 'private/public' in women's history.

In order to contextualise Steinwender's diary, three spheres of existing scholarly literature seem of particular relevance. The first deals with 'auto/biography' (see explanation under the next section below), because Steinwender's diary is being consulted in order to analyse her way of thinking and the observations she made. The second deals with gender which, over the past few years, has been coupled in research with the concepts of nationalism and colonialism. The third section focuses on the literature that has been produced on the Berlin Mission Society and their mission stations.

While these three spheres of existing literature inform our understanding of Steinwender's diary, the current corpus of research results does not contain studies on Steinwender herself, or studies on other women in positions similar to that of Steinwender. Virtually nothing has thus far been published on Steinwender herself. In fact, the most fruitful source is the unpublished diary that has been selected for this study. Her remaining relatives do not remember much of Steinwender, and therefore interviews would not provide a viable option further to open up a study on this individual's textual legacy.

Although the combination of the concepts of gender and nationalism and colonialism is not new, in this research the focus is on a small community through the eyes of an individual. Furthermore, in this study a German woman finds herself in a Boer Republic, an independent state that nevertheless placed the indigenous population in a state of colonial subjugation. Gender and mission studies have also been coupled together before, yet most of the examples in South African historiography pertain to

the insights of British missionary women. Although I have come across sources dealing specifically with women within the mission, they still are different to Steinwender in the sense that they were actively involved in missionary affairs. Steinwender, although in the employ of a mission society, was not a missionary herself, she was a teacher. This unique viewpoint provided in Steinwender's diary, compared to the somewhat different currents in the existing literature, justifies this study, in which a careful content analysis of the diary will be undertaken.

#### 4. Methodology

The manner in which Mary Ryan employed the concept 'private/public' (as discussed above) will be very useful for the purposes of this study. Primarily, my approach will be guided by the methods feminist scholars Liz Stanley and Jo-Burr Margadant applied in their analyses of women's diaries.

Liz Stanley<sup>12</sup> pioneered the term 'auto/biography'. Its focus is on the ever-changing boundaries between "self and other, past and present, writing and reading".<sup>13</sup> This definition extends beyond the ordinary published autobiography and includes everything from written texts, to oral and visual sources.<sup>14</sup> She maintained that the 'self' writing about itself (autobiography), and a 'self' writing of someone else (biography), still fall under the broad category of 'life writing'. Although Stanley does not deny that there are differences between the two, she is of the opinion that these differences are not generic.<sup>15</sup> The term 'auto/biography' is of major importance for the purposes of this study, because Adele Steinwender's diary (autobiography)<sup>16</sup> will be the main source utilised, and it will be represented in a biographical manner.

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<sup>12</sup> Liz Stanley is a professor of sociology and director of women's studies at the University of Manchester.

<sup>13</sup> L. Stanley, From 'self-made women' to 'women's made-selves'? Audit selves, simulation and surveillance in the rise of public, in T. Cosslet *et al.* (eds.), *Feminism and autobiography: texts, theories, methods*, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> L. Stanley, From 'self-made women' to 'women's made-selves'? Audit selves, simulation and surveillance in the rise of public, in T. Cosslet *et al.* (eds.), *Feminism and autobiography: texts, theories, methods*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>15</sup> T. Broughton, Auto/biography and the actual course of things, in T. Cosslet *et al.* (eds.), *Feminism and autobiography: texts, theories, methods*, p. 242.

<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this study autobiography will be defined as an account written by a person of his or her life.



In the introductory chapter of *The new biography: Performing femininity in nineteenth century France*, Jo-Burr Margadant (who edited this collection of essays) mentioned that there has been a resurgence in biographical writing. Margadant explained that over the past four decades (this book was published in 2000), there has been a severe lack of biographies in women's history. She suggested a fresh approach to biographies, where one does not write about people's lives from either a psychological or a craftsman stance. Six authors contributed essays to *The new biography* and all used the 'new biographer's approach'. In order to uncover the "feminine presence in public life", the authors submitted biographies of six French women who were part of the nineteenth century French elitist society. Margadant stated that: "to understand how people assume the identity that situates and motivates them in relation to others, it is necessary to grasp the symbolic world from which they construct meaning in their lives".<sup>17</sup> This is an approach which will work particularly well in order to shed light on the possible meanings of the representations in Steinwender's diary.

## 5. Literature review

### a. Auto/biography

Biographies emerged, within the English-speaking world, in the late eighteenth century with James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*. Initially, biographies were written about male subjects. The authors of biographies were also primarily men. When two American women, Lydia Maria Child and Elizabeth Ellet, in the 1830s and 1850s, respectively, wrote biographical pieces, their work was not very well received. Women's lives did not feature to be as important as a man's. Usually biographies were written of prominent figures, but more recently, the lives and works of ordinary individuals also became the topic of biographical writing. With my study, I intend to link up with this trend. Steinwender was not a prominent public figure – in fact, there is very little written documentation, aside from her diary, that confirms her existence.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> J.B. Margadant, Introduction: Constructing selves in historical perspective, in J.B. Margadant (eds.), *The new biography: performing femininity in nineteenth century France*, pp. 1 and 4.

<sup>18</sup> L. Wagner-Martin, *Telling women's lives: the new biography*, p. 2

Carolyn Steedman<sup>19</sup> mentioned in her essay, *Enforced narratives: stories of another self*, that since the 1980s it has become increasingly popular to write of working-class men and women, as opposed to the white male elite. Steedman suggests that it is not altogether a new phenomenon. From the seventeenth century onwards there have been accounts written by and of the working class in England. Women's narratives of seduction and betrayal have been in existence from the early nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> By the time Steinwender was keeping her diary in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, women 'writing themselves' had no longer been such an exceptional phenomenon. Steedman's essay appears in *Feminism and autobiography: texts, theories, methods*. It is an assemblage of essays, contributed by feminist academics from various disciplines that asked whether autobiography is a result of internal or external pressures. The essays depict the progress autobiography has made from a genre to a cultural practice. *Feminism and autobiography* is divided into three sections. The first is entitled 'Genre', which is a problematic term, considering that autobiography links several fields of study together. In the second part, 'Intersubjectivity', the authors reveal that one cannot view a self in isolation. Two relationships are uncovered, the first being between the narrator and the reader, and the second being between the personal and the public stories that exist at the time. The last section, entitled 'Memory', deals with the different types of memory that exist<sup>21</sup> and is less applicable to my intended study.

Turning back to biography (the genre which my study of Steinwender's autobiographical text will resemble more strongly), one has to keep in mind that many biographers become sympathetic to their subjects, and their views are expressed with much bias. Certain things could be overlooked, particularly if it would tarnish the reputation of a highly esteemed subject chosen for closer scrutiny. It was only in the 1920s, when Lytton Strachey, a British biographer, included his subjects' humanness, their flaws, their lust and their inclination to flattery into his narratives. At about the same time an American biographer, Gamaliel Bradford,

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<sup>19</sup> Carolyn Steedman is a history professor at the University of Warwick.

<sup>20</sup> C. Steedman, *Enforced narratives: Stories of another self*, in T. Cosslet *et al.* (eds.), *Feminism and autobiography: texts, theories, methods*, pp. 25 and 28.

<sup>21</sup> T. Cosslet *et al.* (eds.), *Feminism and autobiography: texts, theories, methods*, pp. 2-5.

used the term ‘psychograph’ to describe the method he employed when it came to the analysis of a character. This implied that he followed a similar strategy to that of Strachey by analysing the subject with his/her flaws. Some of Bradford’s works also included biographies on women. This tendency, combined with Sigmund Freud’s theories of character being largely associated with repressed sexuality, sparked off a new dawn in biographical writing. Women biographers, using other women as subjects, came to the fore. This is a tradition which I shall follow with my intended study, although there had also been subsequent developments in research approaches, which I shall also take cognisance of.

P.R. Backschreider is the author of *Daniel Defoe: His life*, which won the British Council Prize and was one of Choice’s 10 Outstanding Academic Books for 1990. Nine years later, her book *Reflections on Biography* was published. She noticed that amongst literary genres ‘biography’ is the least studied and understood. In an attempt to rectify this, Backschreider studied various biographies. Her main focus lay on those that won esteemed prizes and the examples that she cited throughout the book are of prominent American or British figures. As one of her themes, she chose to examine gender differences. Men, she stated, are not always competent biographers of women subjects. There are certain aspects of women’s lives that men do not always notice. Intelligence, she mentioned, is considered to be “more of a mixed blessing than beauty”.<sup>22</sup> She does not offer a critique of female biographers writing of male subjects, though.

An important point that Backschreider mentioned is that the biographer must take *Events* and *events* into consideration. A drastic *event* (she used Pearl Harbour as an example), may be overshadowed by a personal *Event*. To bring it back to gender, women’s *Events* are at times “harder to recognise and less acceptable to readers”. These *Events* have often been overlooked, because some women’s writings have been lost or concealed. Backschreider also made mention of the unmarried subject. Considering that Steinwender only married at the age of thirty two (which was very late for a woman to be wed in the nineteenth century) and the majority of her diary was written at a time when she was a single woman, the insights that Backschreider have to offer are very beneficial. She remarked that an unmarried woman is a very

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<sup>22</sup> P.R. Backschreider, *Reflections on biography*, p. 131.

interesting subject to pursue, especially if it was her choice to remain single. It is often thought that an unmarried woman was a failure, that she was unable to get a husband, as opposed to her having consciously made that choice. However, according to Backschreider, it was a show of individual strength if a woman chose to remain unmarried.<sup>23</sup> It will have to be seen from Steinwender's diary whether she had interpreted her own single status as a failure or a strength, or intermittently, as both.

Sidonie Smith, who has been actively involved in women's research from 1974, mentioned that women rectified the lack of autobiographies by the writing of letters and keeping diaries and journals.<sup>24</sup> When it comes to researching a diary, there are several specific aspects one must take into consideration. In Maria Hugo's article, *Die dagboek as historiese bron – met verwysing na die dagboek van H.C. Bredell*,<sup>25</sup> she observed that one must ask why the author chose to keep a diary. What were his or her motivations? Hugo also provided possible explanations for maintaining a diary including, amongst others, egotism, escapism, the need to preserve life. Jennifer A. Moon in *Learning Journals: A handbook for academics, students and professional development* included several statements made by diarists as to why they keep records of their lives. Explanations included that a diary can reveal growth of a person, evidence that change has taken place, proof that we exist and self-discovery. Moon's book focuses on the learning journal and not the descriptive diary, the latter being defined as one that describes events, yet there are several points of commonality between these learning journals and diaries.<sup>26</sup> Although both Hugo and Moon offer several insights into diaries, for this study one must also view it from a gender perspective. The content of a woman's diary (like Steinwender's for example) was, in general, different to that of a man.

The diary, Elizabeth van Heyningen wrote, is *the* source that historians of the private sphere can consult. The most apparent example, she continued, is women's history. Of particular relevance to my study is the following statement made by

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<sup>23</sup> P.R. Backschreider, *Reflections on biography*, pp. 133 and 144.

<sup>24</sup> S. Smith, *A poetics of women's autobiography: marginality and the fictions of self representation*, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> M. Hugo, *Die dagboek as historiese bron – met verwysing na die dagboek van H.C. Bredell*, *Historia* 34(2), November 1989, pp. 109-118.

<sup>26</sup> J.A. Moon, *Learning journals: a handbook for academics, students and professional development*, p. 6.

Van Heyningen: “The pervasive impact of colonial conquest, the functioning of Boer society, and the character of missionary enterprise cannot be fully understood without taking the role of women into account”.<sup>27</sup> Van Heyningen quoted J.E. Cooper, who stated that women kept diaries to reflect upon the daily occurrences that shaped their lives. It was also a means to bring order to disorder. Both the former and latter statements ring true with Steinwender’s diary.

Although van Heyningen remarked in a more general tone that diaries fill us in on the private context, this was more the case with women than with men. There was a larger emphasis on the domestic side of life in women’s diaries as opposed to men’s.<sup>28</sup> Steinwender included several domestic aspects in her diary, from servants’ chores to her own domestic pursuits.

*Missiology: an international review* is a journal that contains several articles that are relevant to gender and mission studies. This journal is published in California, and although there may be a few articles on gender, I did not find one that is relevant to the South African context. One article that appeared in January 1999 was by Ruth Tucker<sup>29</sup> and was about utilising biography as a means of analysing missiology. Tucker mentioned that *per capita* there have been more biographies and autobiographies in mission studies than any other profession. The reason for this, she wrote, is because the story of a missionary encompassed both adventure and also was an inspiration for a Christian way of life. There is also a danger to this, in the sense that missionaries were often depicted uncritically, as was the case of women becoming hero-worshipped and romanticised because of their long absence from history.<sup>30</sup> Another reason for the large amount of literature on missionaries is the fact that they were literate. The missionaries were encouraged to keep diaries, which proved to be very beneficial for contemporary researchers of missions. Although there is a lot of information pertaining to the missionaries and their exploits, very little exists about the women on the mission stations.

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<sup>27</sup> E. van Heyningen, The diary as a historical source: A response, *Historia* 38(1) May 1993, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> S. Smith, *A poetics of women’s autobiography: marginality and the fictions of selfrepresentation*, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup> Ruth Tucker taught at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, and also at Calvin College in Michigan. She is the author of several books pertaining to mission studies and biography.

<sup>30</sup> R. Tucker, Biography as missiology: mining the lives of missionaries for cross-cultural effectiveness, *Missiology: an international review* 27(1), January 1999, pp.429-440.

In Tucker's article she briefly examined the lives of three missionaries, namely Sherwood Eddy, Amy Carmichael, and Stephan Neill, who were all stationed in south India. For the purposes of this study, I will only discuss what was written about Amy Carmichael. Two biographies had been written about Carmichael. Tucker stated that these two accounts put her up on a pedestal and make her appear almost saintly. Tucker attempts to remedy this, by mentioning the criticisms that were launched against Carmichael. Carmichael lived from 1867 to 1951, and one wonders whether she did not experience some form of prejudice on account of being a woman, in a predominantly male occupation. In my study on Steinwender, I intend not only to look into the criticisms launched against Steinwender, but also to consider the relationship between criticism and possible male (and female) prejudice against the atypical role she assumed on the mission station.

#### **b. Gender, colonialism, nationalism**

Over the past twenty odd years, there has been an increasing amount of writing specifically dedicated to gender, colonialism and nationalism. There were also allegations of the missionaries having furthered imperialistic or, at least in the case of the German missionaries in South Africa, colonialist causes. Even though Germany might not have been a colonial power in South Africa, Germany was an Empire during the latter half of the nineteenth century and did have colonies elsewhere. In this section, texts concerning the gendered take on colonialism and nationalism will be discussed, as well as gender within the missionary context. The reason for my having included gender and mission studies is to examine the gendered life that was led within the missionary communities. Although Steinwender was a teacher, she still was a part of the broader missionary community. A second reason why missionaries are included in this section is because Steinwender was employed by the Berlin Mission Society, thus indicating that she must have had some allegiance towards them.

Frederick Cooper<sup>31</sup> and Ann Laura Stoler<sup>32</sup> edited a collection of essays entitled *Tensions of empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*. It provides useful insights on how colonialism influenced private life.<sup>33</sup> Gender in colonies is discussed from both the colonist's standpoint as well as the colonised's. In an essay by Lora Wildenthal, *Race, gender, and citizenship in the German colonial empire*, the German law dealing with 'mixed marriages'<sup>34</sup> is examined. In Germany the citizenship law of 1870 stated that when a German man married a woman, her citizenship was replaced with a German one. The children of this marriage would also be granted German citizenship. German women did not have these same rights. Only in the case of an unrecognised father, could the mother pass on German citizenship to her children. German law did not include racial definitions, which did not meet the approval of the colonial officers. In the colonies, the administrators wished to ban 'mixed marriages', which did not comply with German Law. Between 1905 and 1912 three German colonies instituted these bans, which many jurists believed to be illegal. From this, one can gather that the colony had developed its own set of rules and regulations that were more specific to the area's needs, and ignored those of their home country. Although South Africa was not a German colony, one must still question how far the Germans here would have gone to uphold their country's value systems. Did they also disregard certain factors when they felt it to be inapplicable to their colonial situation?<sup>35</sup> To what extent were German missionaries supportive of Boer racial prejudices and how far did these go along with German colonial ideology?

*Gender and imperialism* is a compilation of essays edited by Clare Midgely.<sup>36</sup> It concentrates on marrying the concepts of women and gender with imperialism and colonialism. Although these works examine British colonialism throughout a very wide geographic area (from Africa to India) they still bear a certain relevance to the attitude that women held in a foreign country. In Steinwender's diary, for example, it became evident that she considered herself to be superior to the local population.

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<sup>31</sup> Cooper is a professor of History at Yale University.

<sup>32</sup> Stoler is a professor of anthropology and history.

<sup>33</sup> The book was published several years before the above-mentioned *Journal of women's history* discourse led by Davidoff, Ryan and others on the convergence of the two 'spheres'.

<sup>34</sup> Marriages that take place between two people of different races.

<sup>35</sup> L. Wildenthal, *Race, gender, and citizenship in the German colonial empire*, in F. Cooper & A.L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*, pp. 265, 266 and 267.

<sup>36</sup> Midgely is from the London Guildhall University.

In this collection, an essay by Jane Haggis<sup>37</sup> focuses on British Christian missionary women in India. She explored it from both the missionary women's perspective and the Indian women's perspective. What makes her essay of particular interest is the first section in which she described her views on gender and imperialism. She challenged the former notion of white male colonists, who held white women accountable for the segregationist attitudes held by the white colonisers. Haggis also mentioned potential dangers of remedying the absence of women in history. Very often the female figures that are written about become hero-worshipped and a romantic image is portrayed. To prevent this, Haggis stated that one must view them in their context as opposed to "re-writ[ing] history to conform more closely to current received notions".<sup>38</sup> In the case of Steinwender, she was an unwed professional but was by no means a feminist. Haggis also mentioned that when it comes to studying the subjection of women by a patriarchal<sup>39</sup> society, one must not forget about race and class. White middle class women enjoyed more privileges than black women in Africa. This point has been stressed to a large degree by several other historians who focus on gender and imperialism and colonialism.<sup>40</sup>

Since the 1980s, feminist historians have played a vital role in shedding light on gender and imperialism. Midgely identified various areas of scholarship in which this research took place and she also mentioned the approaches utilised. Both will be applicable to my study: The recovery mode is an attempt to uncover women's involvement in history. It aimed to prove that women were not always silent figures in the background, and that they did have some form of involvement in the public sphere. The recuperative mode focuses on disproving certain myths that revolved around women's activities. The example that Midgely mentioned is the fictitious belief that it was the woman who strained the relationships between colonial officials and the indigenous communities. She goes on to emphasise that these approaches should not at any time rule out the racial privileges that white women had.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Jane Haggis is a senior lecturer in the department of sociology at Flinders University (Australia).

<sup>38</sup> C. Midgely (eds.), *Gender and imperialism*, p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> For the purposes of this assignment patriarchy means a fatherly/ masculine system of society.

<sup>40</sup> C. Midgely (eds.), *Gender and imperialism*, p. 46.

<sup>41</sup> C. Midgely (eds.), *Gender and imperialism*, p. 7



The book *Deep histories*<sup>42</sup> is a compilation of articles focussing on gender and colonialism in Southern Africa. In the introduction it is illustrated that white women in British colonies were more privileged than women of other ethnic groups. She was awarded superior treatment to women of a different race. White women were considered to be the moral fibre of society, whereas black and coloured women were still seen as being part of an inferior race. While the purpose of my study is not to do a comparison between the treatment of white and black women, the privileges German women had on account of their “whiteness” should remain foremost in one’s mind throughout this research.

During the nineteenth century, nationalism came to the fore in Germany. *Gendered Nations: nationalisms and gender order in the long nineteenth century* is a collaboration between several authors in which they each contributed essays pertaining to gender and nationalism. Formerly, the concepts of nationalism and gender were viewed as separate and distinct. Angelika Schaser stated that there is a lack of research that has been conducted on German nationalism and gender. She stated that it was only during the 1980s that German scholars started identifying this link and because of this relatively recent discovery, the field is in need of further research and study.<sup>43</sup> In *Gendered nations* the authors engaged in the study of gender and nationalism. Karen Hagemann<sup>44</sup> wrote the essay “A valorous Volk family: The nation, the military, and the gender order in Prussia in the time of anti-Napoleonic wars, 1800-1815”. Although the dates do not correspond with the time Steinwender came to South Africa, some relevant details exist with regard to the gendered nature of German nationalism. Patriotism (which was considered masculine) and emotion (which was a feminine quality) were both important aspects when it came to building and entrenching nationalistic principles in the German culture. Both men and women were important in the building up of a strong national identity. Hagemann argued that the country required of the men to defend her, and of the women to support and love the men for their bravery and love of the country. Women, such as Steinwender, were also encouraged to marry and to bear

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<sup>42</sup> W. Woodward *et al.* (eds.), *Deep histories: gender and colonialism in southern Africa*. New York, 2002.

<sup>43</sup> A. Schaser, Women in a nation of men: the politics of the League of German Women’s Associations (BDF) in imperial Germany, 1894-1914, in I. Blom *et al.* (eds.), *Gendered nations: nationalisms and gendered order in the long nineteenth century*, pp. 249 and 253.

<sup>44</sup> Hagemann is from the department of history at the Technical University of Berlin.

children and to educate these children in German customs and to nurture German culture by means of their language and dress.

*Women and mission: past and present anthropological and historical perceptions*<sup>45</sup> is a collection of essays edited by Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener.<sup>46</sup> This was one of the first attempts at a collection of essays pertaining specifically to the involvement of women in a missionary colonial setting. The first part focused on the women that were involved in the Christian mission societies in the nineteenth century. The second part focused on the impact that missions had on women. The three editors have revealed a long-standing interest in the topic of women and missions in Africa. Unfortunately, their research is on British and American missionaries, as opposed to German ones and their focus is more on the converts than on the missionary women themselves. Despite this, one can examine, by using the British and American examples, what life could have been like for the women who were living on the mission stations. Mention is made of the stereotypes that women were faced with, especially when it came to the sending of women, both single and married, overseas to convert *heathen* cultures. In Victorian England, the woman was seen as both frail and weaker than the man. She was faced with prejudice when it came to her abilities with regard to missionary work. Steinwender was recruited by the Berlin Missionary Society as a teacher, and it is very possible that the men held similar preconceived notions regarding her abilities. Despite this, Bowie mentions that women were actively involved in the mission movement, and that it would be erroneous to merely consider it as a masculine occupation.

Deborah Gaitskell<sup>47</sup> has done considerable research on gender and missions. She was the guest editor of a special issue of the journal *Le Fait Missionnaire* in July 2005.<sup>48</sup> Included, were two articles about Scandinavian missions in Japan and Madagascar. The focus of the mission in Madagascar is on the late nineteenth

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<sup>45</sup> F. Bowie *et al.* (eds.), *Women and mission: past and present: anthropological and historical perceptions*. Providence, 1993.

<sup>46</sup> Fiona Bowie is a lecturer at The Open University and at University College North Wales at Bangor. She is also a freelance writer. Deborah Kirkwood is an independent researcher and Shirley Ardener is Director of the Queen Elizabeth House.

<sup>47</sup> Deborah Gaitskell is from the University of London.

<sup>48</sup> D. Gaitskell, Introduction, *Le fait missionnaire: Missions et sciences sociales. Femmes et missions* 16(1), July 2005, pp. 11-42.

century, whereas the Japanese one is after 1900. The advantage of analysing the Scandinavian missions is because, like the German missions, they too had no link with the colonial administration in the country of their employment. On the other hand, in the subsequent articles, about the French mission in Belgian-run Rwanda and the British mission in Zambia, these missions enjoyed the privileges of being the dominant colonial force. They could therefore receive some form of funding to promote their evangelical work. This edition focused on women in missions and set about to contest certain stereotypes usually equated with these women. It therefore offers a new perspective on colonial women and mission activities, yet it neglects the experience of the colonised women. While my own study will duplicate this bias, I believe that the articles in this journal had proven that a critical assessment of colonial women can be done in ways that also better reflect the ingenuity – and the limitations – of the agency of indigenous women.

Deborah Gaitskell's research on women and missionary societies not only focused on the white missionary women, but also on the local female converts. Some of her published articles include: "Beyond 'devout domesticity': five female mission strategies in South Africa, 1907-1960",<sup>49</sup> "Whose heartland and which periphery? Christian women crossing South Africa's racial divide in the twentieth century"<sup>50</sup> and "Female faith and the politics of the personal: Five mission encounters in twentieth-century South Africa".<sup>51</sup> Most of her research is based upon missionary activities after 1900 and she wrote mainly of the British and American missionaries in South Africa. Gaitskell also completed her doctorate thesis, entitled *Female mission initiatives: black and white women in three Witwatersrand churches, 1903-1939*, on a similar topic. Although her focus is on the twentieth century (as opposed to the nineteenth) and does not feature German missionaries, her material is useful as it deals with the South African context.

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<sup>49</sup> D. Gaitskell, Beyond 'devout domesticity': five female mission strategies in South Africa, 1907-1960, *Transformation* 16(4), 1999, pp. 127 – 135.

<sup>50</sup> D. Gaitskell, Whose heartland and which periphery? Christian women crossing South Africa's racial divide in the twentieth century, *Women's history review* 11(3), 2002, pp. 375 – 394.

<sup>51</sup> D. Gaitskell, Female faith and the politics of the personal: Five mission encounters in twentieth-century South Africa, *Feminist review* 65(1), June 2000, pp. 68-91.

In another collection of essays entitled *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse and practise*, the two editors, Mary Taylor Huber<sup>52</sup> and Nancy C. Lutkehaus,<sup>53</sup> observed the role that women played within the missions. They stressed that because of the missionaries wanting to engage with the local communities on a more domestic front (illuminated by their concerns for local women, children and the family); women were seen as assets to the mission. Within this work, essays contain research concerning English Anglicans, the Dutch Reformed Church of the Netherlands, Swiss Pietists, Norwegian Lutherans, and a German Roman Catholic mission. The reader is reminded that although women experienced the missionary existence differently to men, caution should be taken when it comes to generalising the ‘female experience’. Geographically the focus is on East and West Africa, New Guinea and Sumatra.<sup>54</sup>

Lutkehaus’ essay “Missionary maternalism: gendered images of the Holy Spirit Sisters in Colonial New Guinea”<sup>55</sup> described the role of the German Roman Catholic missionary women in New Guinea. She mentioned that missionary work could be considered to be maternal. Women are supposedly more emotional, sympathetic, loving and religious; whereas men are more dominant, more violent, and rougher. Taking what was implied by being a missionary; her conclusion is not unrealistic to maintain that missionary work was a maternal<sup>56</sup> institution. During the late 1880s in Germany, feminists were stressing the importance of *Mütterlichkeit* (“motherliness”) as a solution to the characteristics of modern technology and industry, which were considered responsible for problems such as lack of housing, families being broken up, alcoholism and prostitution. Lutkehaus’ findings in this essay articulate the importance of an existing femininity within the mission stations.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Mary Taylor Huber directs the [Integrative Learning Project](#) and works closely with the [Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#)

<sup>53</sup> Nancy Lutkehaus is the associate professor of Anthropology, University of Southern California and part of the associated faculty, program for the study of women and men in society. She is also the co-director of the center for Visual Anthropology at the University of Southern California.

<sup>54</sup> T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus, *Gendered Missions: women and men in missionary discourse and practice*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>55</sup> N.C. Lutkehaus, Missionary maternalism: Gendered images of the Holy Spirit Sisters in Colonial New Guinea, in T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus, *Gendered Missions: women and men in missionary discourse and practice*. Michigan, 2002.

<sup>56</sup> Meaning of, or like, a mother.

<sup>57</sup> T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus, *Gendered Missions: women and men in missionary discourse and practice*, pp. 210 and 213.

Although preconceived notions existed about women, some historians argue that women were seen as beneficial to the missionary society. Kirsten Rüter<sup>58</sup> mentioned in *The power beyond* that there are limited biographies of missionaries, and that there is even less information pertaining to the woman's role.<sup>59</sup> Rüter also stated that missionaries were encouraged to have wives in order to preserve the 'high European culture' and avoid 'contamination' from the 'heathen' civilisations. The wives would prevent the missionary men from being 'seduced' by the local black women in South Africa, and uphold the supposedly high moral fibre of the white race. Steinwender's eventual succumbing to marriage (to a Berlin Missionary) snugly fits into this mould.

Anne Firor Scott<sup>60</sup> is of the same opinion as Rüter in this regard in her book *Making the invisible woman visible*. Male missionaries might have been hesitant to send a woman to do missionary work, but the idea of sending a woman as the spouse of a missionary was favourable. Scott stated that the missionaries believed that by setting a Christian homely example, the local populations would be more likely to convert to the European ways.<sup>61</sup> Scott also mentioned that with the establishment of mission societies there came an increase in education for women. By justifying the need to be able to study the Bible to teach their children, the onset of a missionary lifestyle gave women an impetus to gain an education of some sort. Scott went further to say that this development helped open up a professional career path for women – namely to become missionaries themselves. Eventually women were sent out to mission stations to pursue a career path making them no longer economically dependent on their husbands or fathers.

I consulted several editions of *Missionalia* and discovered that from the early 1980s, gender became a common topic. *Missionalia* is the journal of the South African Missiological Society. The articles that appear in it are collected worldwide, and include topics of both an historical and contemporary nature. An article by Joan

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<sup>58</sup> Rüter is from the University of Hamburg.

<sup>59</sup> K. Rüter, *The power beyond: mission strategies, African conversion and the development of a Christian culture in the Transvaal*, p. 69.

<sup>60</sup> Scott is a former history lecturer at Duke University.

<sup>61</sup> A.F. Scott, *Making the invisible woman visible*, pp. 269-270.

Millard appeared in the April 2003 edition of *Missionalia*.<sup>62</sup> Millard provided evidence to suggest that marriage was more of a partnership than a romantic affair amongst missionaries. She based this upon a diary of a British Methodist missionary, Reverend William Shaw, where he wrote a few questions pertaining to his potential spouse. The questions held no romantic ideas; instead they revolved around faith, and her disposition. The wives of missionaries, according to Millard, not only had to support her missionary husband in his work and manage the station when he was away, she also had to take care of household matters. Millard, however, mainly speaks of British and American missionaries. As with so many other aspects, the apparent over-representation also in this regard, of research output on English-speaking missions and missionaries in Southern Africa, emphasises the need also to investigate more German case studies, as I intend to do with my study.

### **c. Missions in South Africa and relationships their missionaries developed**

Several secondary sources, theses and journal articles give a description of the Berlin Mission Society in South Africa in the nineteenth century. The *Berliner Missionsberichte* is a periodical that was published by the Berlin Mission Society and contains the reports that the missionaries sent through to the Headquarters in Berlin. What makes this source beneficial is that it we can consider it to be written ‘from the horse’s mouth’. For the purposes of this research I have consulted the journals between the years 1885 and 1890. In the 1885 journal, there is a sketch of the scenery at Bethanie Mission Station. Unfortunately it does not include what the settlement (by settlement I mean the housing, the school, the farm lands, etc.) itself looked like. There is also a map of South Africa available, which provides one with the location of Bethanie. Although the map is not entirely accurate, as far as scale is concerned, it still aids the reader in getting an idea as to where the station was. Of particular interest are the articles focusing on environmental patterns that prevailed within the area. Mention was made of a year with high temperatures and drought. From this, one can examine the climate that Steinwender lived in. In 1886

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<sup>62</sup> J. Millard, Nineteenth and early twentieth century missionary wives in South Africa: Equal partners or historical non-entities?, *Missionalia* 31(3), April 2003, pp. 59 – 72.

a description by the Missionary Grützner is offered. It is dated 26 April 1885. This reveals that the articles that were published did not necessarily contain the information of the year of its publication, but those of the previous years. The reason was that each contribution first had to be examined by the local superintendents, after which it was sent to Berlin, where the final selections were made as to what would comprise that periodical.<sup>63</sup> The first mention of Steinwender was in the 1886 edition where it is stated that a teacher arrived in Bethanie to educate the missionary children under the supervision of missionary Sandrock.<sup>64</sup> Strangely, Steinwender very seldom referred to her having asked Sandrock for his opinion on school affairs. Instead, she sought advice from her host father, Superintendent Grützner.

Professor D. Julius Richter<sup>65</sup> wrote *Geschichte der Berliner Missionsgesellschaft 1824-1924*, which gives a very broad description of the Berlin missionaries and their stations. Richter wrote very positively of the Berlin Mission Society. His style of writing was very poetic, and he created a somewhat romantic image of the society, the missionaries and their achievements. This is not surprising, considering that he was a member of the committee of the Berlin Mission Society. Despite Richter's bias that came across in his writing, he does give a very well-rounded explanation of the Berlin Mission Society. He mentioned certain missionaries who lived in Bethanie at the time when Steinwender taught there, namely Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner, Christoph Sandrock and Christian Heinrich Johannes Mülke; and he also included some information on Hermann Kuschke, the man Steinwender eventually married. Some details of the mission station in Bethanie exist within this source and brief mention is made of the Koranna and the Boers, who were occupants of the Orange Free State. Although his perspective is pro-missionary and pro-German, from this one can gather what viewpoint Steinwender and the missionaries of the area had.

In Hellmut Lehmann's *150 Jahre Berliner Mission*<sup>66</sup> he described the Berlin

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<sup>63</sup> L. Kriel, *ń Vergelyking tussen Colin Rae en Christoph Sonntag se weergawes van die Boer-Hananwa-Oorlog van 1894*, D.Phil. thesis, U.P., 2002, p. 188.

<sup>64</sup> Anonym., Jahresbericht: Synode Oranje=Freistaat, *Berliner Missions Berichte no. 13 & 14, 1886*, p. 205.

<sup>65</sup> Julius Richter was a former lecturer at the University of Berlin.

<sup>66</sup> Hellmut Lehmann, *150 Jahre Berliner Mission*. Berlin, 1974.

Mission Society from a less biased point of view than Richter; yet his viewpoint still reflected that of an insider. He mentioned the origin of Bethanie and the relationships they had with the *Betschuanen* (Batswana) and the Korannas. Sadly, he did not go into extensive detail with regard to the relationship between the missionaries and the local black population and he did not write of their interactions from 1837 onwards. Lehmann included the mission activity that took place in Berlin as well. This provides one with some insight as to the goings-on at the headquarters in Berlin. In the last few pages of the book, there are a few maps that depict where Bethanie was situated. Other maps show where the railway lines were, but unfortunately they only focus on the former Transvaal region.

Another source that can be considered to be an insider's perspective is Winfried Wickert's<sup>67</sup> *Und die Vögel des Himmels wohnen unter seinen Zweigen*. Although not a member of the Berlin Mission Society, he still provided valuable information when it came to German missionaries in South Africa. He included a detailed account of what the journey was like to South Africa. This can, to some extent, provide one with an indication of what Steinwender experienced during her voyage to South Africa. Wickert also praised the role of women within the mission community. He respected the duties of the women, even though he maintained that when it came to missionary work, they remained in the background.<sup>68</sup> From this text one can examine how women were perceived from a man's perspective. It provided a clear indication of the gendered society the missionaries worked and lived in.

Alan Kirkaldy<sup>69</sup> wrote a doctoral thesis entitled *Capturing the soul: encounters between Berlin Missionaries and the Thsivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*. His focus is on the interaction between the VhaVenda and the Berlin missionaries in the area of the present Limpopo Province with one chapter dedicated to the origin of the Berlin Mission Society. He spent seven months at the Institute for Asian and African Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin, where

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<sup>67</sup> Winfred Wickert was the Hermannsburg mission director in 1949.

<sup>68</sup> W. Wickert, *Und die Vögel des Himmels wohnen unter seinem Zweigen: Eine Denkschrift zur Hundertjahrfeier zu Hermannsburg*, p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> Alan Kirkaldy has until 2005 been the head of the Department of Development Studies at the University of Venda. He has recently joined the History Department at Rhodes University, Grahamstown.



he conducted research in the archives and the library of the Berlin Mission Society. He utilised the “station files of the Berlin Mission Society stations in Vendaland, the personnel files of the missionaries who served in the area, tractates produced about the local missionaries and African people, published reports appearing in the Mission Society publications *Bawenda-Freund* and the *Berliner Missionsberichte* [BMB], and illustrations, maps and photographs, all of which are held by the archives and library”.<sup>70</sup> Kirkaldy believed that the missionaries considered themselves to be superior to the black people, and that they held a racist attitude toward the Venda. Ryan Dunch<sup>71</sup> pointed out that Missionaries are often considered to have been tools of imperialism: “[They] are ... portrayed as narrow-minded chauvinists whose presence and preaching destroyed indigenous cultures and opened the way for the extension of colonial rule”.<sup>72</sup> Yet the German missionaries held no imperial authority within present day South Africa. The strong nationalistic influence of the Germans was a more powerful force, and one that Gunther Pakendorf<sup>73</sup> observed, created a strange duality in German missionary policy. On the one hand, they wanted to convert all the *heathens*, but at the same time, they went to great lengths to ensure that the local population maintain their culture and avoid becoming too influenced by white people.<sup>74</sup>

When it came to the examination of day-to day missionary activity, J. du Plessis in *A history of Christian missions in South Africa*,<sup>75</sup> stands out. His account revealed bias in the sense that he wrote from the perspective of white superiority over the black converts in South Africa. *A history of Christian missions* is an all time classic though, when it comes to the study of missionaries in South Africa. Unfortunately this source only discussed the beginnings of the mission station in Bethanie. There is another chapter dedicated to the latter half of the century and the Berlin Mission Society, and although there is mention made of Grützner, the information is not

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<sup>70</sup> A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: encounters between Berlin missionaries and the Tshivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*, D Phil thesis, University of Cape Town, 2002, pp. 37-38. This thesis has recently been published: A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the soul. The Vhavenda and the missionaries, 1870-1900* (Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2005).

<sup>71</sup> Ryan Dunch is an Australian historian who at the time of publishing this article was employed at the University of Alberta in Canada.

<sup>72</sup> R. Dunch, Beyond cultural imperialism: cultural theory. Christian missions, and global modernity, *History and Theory* 41(2), p. 7 and 9.

<sup>73</sup> Gunther Pakendorf is a professor in the German department at the University of Cape Town.

<sup>74</sup> G. Pakendorf, “For there is no power but of God”: The Berlin Mission and the challenges of colonial South Africa, *Missionalia* 25(3) November 1997, p. 264.

<sup>75</sup> J. Du Plessis, *A history of Christian missions in South Africa*. Cape Town, 1965.

directly relevant to the station at Bethanie. Instead, the focus is more on other stations that were established throughout South Africa. In the chapter on the beginnings of the Berlin Mission Society in Bethanie, du Plessis mentioned some of the factors that had caused the first missionaries to fail. These include dereliction of duty and also poor leadership. He explained that the mission only became a success after the arrival of Carl Friedrich Wuras, who became the superintendent of the station.

A fresh approach to missionary studies was launched by Jean and John Comaroff. They investigated the link between, yet again, English-speaking missionaries and colonialism/imperialism from an anthropological perspective. In *Of revelation and revolution*, the Comaroffs studied the “colonisation of the consciousness and the consciousness of colonisation”<sup>76</sup> between 1820 and 1920. They mentioned that although their primary focus was on the Southern Batswana, it is applicable to the entire black South African population. They revealed that the cultures living within a certain geographic location affect one another, and that one should not view them as islands. The European missionaries were influenced by the local cultures and the local cultures by the Europeans. The Comaroffs dispelled the notion that upon arrival in South Africa, the Europeans had fixed beliefs and ideologies, which they intended to bestow upon foreign ‘heathen’ lands. By using architecture as an example, they reveal the symbiotic relationship between the cultures. Although the Berlin missionaries did not wish to let go of their ‘Germanness’, there is evidence to suggest that their time in a foreign country did affect their outlook. When Steinwender came to the mission station in Bethanie, the children of the missionaries, who had been born in South Africa, displayed characteristics that reveal the merging of the German and the South African culture. For example: (much to the disapproval of their parents) the missionary children would play with the local black children.<sup>77</sup>

The relationship between the missionaries and the local black population, as well as with the Boers, is one aspect of life that is missing from Steinwender’s diary. Yet,

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<sup>76</sup> J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff, *Of revolution of revelation: Christianity, colonialism and consciousness in South Africa I*, p. xi.

<sup>77</sup> P. Geschiere, Historical anthropology: Questions of time, method and scale, *Interventions: international journal of post-colonial studies* 3(1) 2001, p. 37.

her silence speaks just as much as had she written of an interaction. In order to introduce relationships that existed between, broadly speaking, black and white, a few names come to mind.

Gerhard Johannes Jooste wrote his doctoral thesis on the Berlin Mission Society and their interactions with the people residing in South Africa at the time.<sup>78</sup> He wrote how, initially, the missionaries were supporters of the colonial regime, and how slowly they swapped to the Boer side. Jooste also mentioned the interaction between the first missionaries in Bethanie and their relations with the Korannas and the Griquas. His focus does not remain on this geographic location; instead it is a broader overview of the Berlin Mission Society. What is of interest is his analysis of the alliance the Berlin Mission Society had with the Boers from 1884 onwards. He explained the developments towards this alliance, and the subsequent support the Berlin Mission Society had towards the Afrikaans government.<sup>79</sup> Werner van der Merwe elaborated in more detail on the alliances the missionaries had in his article entitled *Die Berlynse sendelinge van Bethanie (Oranje Vrystaat) en die Kora, 1834-1856*. He revealed how the Berlin missionaries swapped allegiance between the Koranna and the Griquas until they eventually ended up supporting the Boer government of the Orange Free State. His observation was that the missionaries were acting purely out of self-interest. They did not necessarily appear to care for the wellbeing of either the Koranna or the Griqua; they just wanted their property to be under the protection of the most influential polity.<sup>80</sup>

Van der Merwe also conducted research on the Berlin Mission Society and the local black community in the Orange Free State. His research not only focused on the society itself, but he included the interaction the Berlin missionaries had with other population groups within South Africa. With this information one can bring to the fore the information that Steinwender omitted from her diary. Although one cannot gather what exactly her sentiments were with regard to the other communities, one

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<sup>78</sup>G.J. Jooste, *Ras, volk en politiek in die Berlynse Sendinggenootskap in Suid-Afrika tot 1961*. Pretoria, 1996.

<sup>79</sup> G.J. Jooste, *Ras, volk en politiek in die Berlynse Sendinggenootskap in Suid-Afrika tot 1961*, pp. 77, 208-209 and 48-50.

<sup>80</sup> W. van der Merwe, *Die Berlynse sendelinge van Bethanie (Oranje Vrystaat) en die Kora, 1834-1856*, *South African historical journal* 17, November 1985. p. 40. Van der Merwe also wrote extensively on the Berlin Mission Society in the Transvaal. Both his MA and doctoral study were published in the *Archives Year Book Series* during the course of the 1980s.

can at least gain some insight as to the relationships that existed between the missionaries she lived with and the local inhabitants. In another article by Van der Merwe, he wrote of the interaction that the Berlin Mission Society had with the Koranna, the Griquas, the Boers and the British government. Van der Merwe maintained that the missionaries were not particularly concerned with the fate of the Koranna and therefore they could indirectly be held responsible for their eventual migration from the Orange Free State.

H.J. van Aswegen's thesis, entitled *Die verhouding tussen blank en nie-blank in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1854-1902*,<sup>81</sup> provides an interesting perspective on black-white relations in the Orange Free State. He explained how the issue of land caused problems for the Griquas in the Bethanie area. Van Aswegen wrote in detail of the political inner workings of the Griquas. He did not go into particular detail when it came to the interactions between the missionaries and the Griquas, but he did reveal historical aspects of their society. In this source too, mention is made of the good relations between the Orange Free State government and the missionaries. There was a certain element of trust between the two, despite the scepticism of the Boers towards the missionaries' attempts to educate black people. Some Boers were of the opinion that black people had no right to attend sermons, let alone be educated. Van Aswegen did not mention the possibility of the missionaries' selfish intentions; as a matter of fact, he discussed them in a somewhat superficial light. This source is more useful in terms of analyzing the relationship between black and white in the Orange Free State.

Karel Schoeman has done considerable research on the Orange Free State. His training was in languages at the University of the Orange Free State, after which he was ordained as a pastor. Although he had no historical training, his series of books on the Orange Free State are very beneficial to those who want to conduct research on the area. The book that is of particular use for the purposes of this study is *Die Huis van die armes: die Berlynse sendinggenootskap in die Oranje Vrystaat 1833-1869*.<sup>82</sup> He described the establishment of the Bethanie Mission Station and goes

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<sup>81</sup> H.J. van Aswegen, *Die verhouding tussen blank en nie-blank in die Oranje Vrystaat, 1854-1902*. Pretoria, 1977.

<sup>82</sup> K. Schoeman, *Die huis van die armes: die Berlynse sendinggenootskap in die Oranje Vrystaat 1833-1869*. Cape Town, 1985.

into detail with regards to the ordeals the first Berlin Missionary inhabitants came face-to-face with. Schoeman included extracts from the diaries, which have been translated into Afrikaans, of the first two white settlers who explained the rough weather conditions, the shortage of food, and the negotiations that took place with the Koranna in order to secure a water fountain. Schoeman, in short, provides the reader with several aspects of the life that was led by the missionaries from their perspective. Schoeman also included information of the Korannas, Batswana, Boers and British whom the local German settlers came into contact with. Unfortunately, this source only explains the events that occurred in Bethanie from its establishment in 1834 to 1869. It creates a background in order to understand the more day-to-day matters of this station and the surrounding area, but it does not explain how the station developed by the time Steinwender arrived.

The historiographical and methodological context for this mini-dissertation as provided in this chapter and the particular Bethanie space in which Steinwender's diary took shape, will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

## **II. The South African and German contexts**

At the age of twenty eight, Adele Bertha Christine Steinwender arrived in South Africa from Berlin in Germany. She was born in Liebewalde, Prussia, prior to the unification of Germany in 1871, yet during the time that she lived there, events shaping a new Germany took place around her. Slowly but surely a new nationalism took over, and by the time she turned fourteen, Germany was a unified state, with Prussia in charge of the rest of the newly acquired German territories. It was a good time to be German and living in Germany during the end of the nineteenth century, yet people like Steinwender still abandoned their homes to work abroad. Steinwender chose to join the Berlin Mission Society as an educator for the children of the missionaries in Bethanie (Orange Free State).

One year before the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, Steinwender made her way to what would be her country of residence up until her death in 1945. She lived within a small missionary community in the Orange Free State, in a place called Bethanie. She only resided there for four years, yet this new and strange environment made an impact on her.

Her reminiscences of this time period were recorded in her diary. In the first part of this chapter, the diary itself will be discussed. Possible motivating factors for her having kept her diary, aspects she included, and those which were notably absent in her writing, as well as the possible audience it was intended for, are all discussed in this section. The second part of this chapter focuses more on the background of the environment from which she came and the one she moved to. In both the section on Germany and the Orange Free State aspects of the missionary lifestyle and the origins of the Berlin Mission Society will be discussed. These settings are important to keep in the back of one's mind, yet it should not be forgotten, that despite the fact that she lived within a missionary setting, she was not fully a missionary herself. She arrived as a teacher, who had not been formally trained by the Berlin Mission Society, or otherwise.

### **1. Information on Adele Steinwender and her diary**

The most fruitful source I have consulted for the purposes of the research on Adele Steinwender was her diary spanning from 1885 to 1890. She arrived in South Africa to teach

the children of the missionaries in Bethanie, in the former Orange Free State. The diary itself has been re-typed and translated, into Afrikaans, by her son Georg Adolf Karl Kuschke and is located in the Hesse Collection of the University of South Africa (UNISA) archives. The Hesse family was a prominent German missionary family in South Africa, and the collection includes sources ranging from diaries, bibles, photographs and letters, of some German speaking individuals (whose families donated the material to the UNISA archives) who moved to South Africa. Steinwender's husband, Hermann Kuschke, also was a Berlin missionary. He had arrived in South Africa in 1877 with the purpose to focus on education. He was only ordained as a missionary in 1884, yet he continued with aiding the improvement of education. It was Hermann Kuschke who was the founder of the German School in Johannesburg. Steinwender was Kuschke's second wife; his first wife, Virginië neé Zabler had died during the birth of their first child.<sup>1</sup> Similar to Steinwender, Kuschke also kept a diary, but he had discontinued his diary prior to even having met her.

Steinwender's entries are fairly regular and what is of particular interest is that the material within the diary covers household matters, a factor often neglected in the diaries of men. She wrote in great detail about her emotions, her teaching, her social life and she provided a self-analysis, but she neglected to provide such a detailed account on her travels within South Africa, or even the relationship with the local black population<sup>2</sup> as well as with the Boers. Elizabeth van Heyningen, who has dedicated a lot of her research on diaries, mentions that certain matters that the diarist remains silent about, speaks mounds about him/her.<sup>3</sup> It could very possibly have been her choice to create a cultural divide between herself and the local population. Certain entries depict that she, and other missionaries in Bethanie, felt superior to the local black population.<sup>4</sup> Other entries contained some self-reflection on her part, which provides one with a perspective of how she saw herself. Some inconsistencies are prevalent throughout her diary, in the sense that she would contradict herself, by writing about the short-comings of others, when she clearly displayed the same faults. For example, when she and her host mother had a disagreement, her host mother told her that they should only discuss the matter at a more convenient time. Steinwender was of the opinion that one was always able to make time to deal with the problem immediately.<sup>5</sup> At a later stage,

<sup>1</sup> L. Zöllner (eds.), *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents*, pp. 227-8. It appears as if the child did not survive either. In Zöllner's genealogy the first child of Kuschke's that was mentioned was born eight years after Virginië went into labour.

<sup>2</sup> Steinwender never mentions which black people resided in the Bethanie area, however it is likely that they were South Sotho or Basotho.

<sup>3</sup> E. Van Heyningen, The diary as historical source: A response, *Historia* 38 (1) May 1993, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 46: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-05-11.

<sup>5</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 7-8: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-06-13.

Steinwender contradicted herself by writing that she wished to confront her host mother on another disagreement they had had, but she did not find the right opportunity.<sup>6</sup>

Diaries are a very useful source when it comes to understanding a person. The entries are written shortly after the event occurs, which, to a large extent, eliminates possible lapse of memory, or even corrections that might take place after more thought has been devoted to the entry. In some entries one can tell that she wrote the events of the day, in others she wrote about a summary of the events of the past few days. However, the content of a diary is highly subjective. Steinwender, even when she criticized herself, appears to have done so in a complimentary fashion. When she criticized herself for her having played the piano badly, it is almost as if she writes this with a sense of pride, because she is a big enough person to identify her flaws and, therefore, to rectify them.

In her final entry, dated 19 December 1889, Steinwender gave her diary to her husband. I believe that she did not write the diary for the purposes of it being read by her husband up until the final entries. This one can realise from her having initially written about her doubts about their union. Just under one month after the marriage proposal, her writing took on another form. She started revealing more emotion toward him. It is possible that it was during this time that she had thoughts of presenting Kuschke with her diary. Bearing this in mind, it is possible that this more emotional shift in her writing could have been a conscious act considering he would be reading these thoughts that she recorded. Her diary could at this point have had a definitive audience, namely Kuschke.<sup>7</sup> Prior to these entries it is not clear who her intended audience might have been. She wrote with a lot of admiration about Mr. Grützner, yet whether she wrote it for him is not clear. It is also a possibility that her audience might have been one of her friends or a family member in Germany. She would often write of reading and re-reading letters she had received from home. She also wrote regularly to these people. She had a fond connection with her social circle in Germany, and it became clear that she missed them immensely.

Steinwender and Hermann Kuschke moved to Johannesburg, where she lived until her death on 6 July 1945, three days before her eighty eighth birthday.<sup>8</sup> Two of her grandchildren, Erika Grobler neé Kuschke and Albert Kuschke, remember her as being a very stern woman.

<sup>6</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 15: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-11-04.

<sup>7</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 51-52: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-10-23, 1889-10-24, 1889-10-28, 1889-10-31, 1889-11-06, 1889-11-09, 1889-11-10 and 1889-12-19.

<sup>8</sup> National Archives South Africa, Pretoria, MHG 2873/45.



Some of the words they used to describe her are “stately”, “stubborn” “strict” and “*kwaai*”, yet they also remember her being very graceful. In another account Martha Mathilde Wehrmann, who was one of the contributors to the collection of memoirs *Unsere Frauen erzählen*, confirmed these opinions by stating that Steinwender was her “own person”, whom one had to get to know well in order to understand her ways. Wehrmann also remembered Steinwender often suffering from homesickness.<sup>9</sup> As will be discussed in the following chapters, Steinwender often made mention of her longing for Germany, and it seems as if the homesickness never left her.<sup>10</sup>

The “conduct literature” in the nineteenth century indicated that diaries were mainly kept by the middle and upper classes of society. Diary manufacturers aimed at selling their product to the educated market. From the mid-nineteenth century, diary sales increased among both men and women.<sup>11</sup> Yet, one must also bear in mind that women utilised the activity of keeping diaries as a means to fashion themselves as the family historians.<sup>12</sup> In Steinwender’s case, the reason for having kept a diary seems to have been to combat the loneliness she felt. She would write that it was very difficult to communicate with the people there. The children, whom she taught, were too young to hold an adult conversation, and the missionaries and their wives within the area, did not always understand her strict, disciplinarian ways. Steinwender also seemed to have suffered from a form of depression.<sup>13</sup> In our more recent past writing has been recommended by psychologists to combat the effects of depression, and considering the large amount of information pertaining to her feeling upset, it is very possible that ‘getting it off her chest’ might have been another possibility for her having kept a diary.

## 2. Germany and South Africa

### a. Germany

#### i. Steinwender’s Germany

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<sup>9</sup> She refers to Steinwender as Tante Kuschke. It is most probably Steinwender she is referring to, as this Tante Kuschke lived in Johannesburg after peace had been declared in 1902.

<sup>10</sup> M. Wehrmann neé Wicht, Klein und verwaist nach Südafrika in (ed. J. Hesse, *Unsere Frauen erzählen*), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> M. McCarthy, A pocketful of days: Pocket diaries and daily record keeping among nineteenth century New England women, *New England Quarterly* 73(2), June 2000, pp. 275 and 284.

<sup>12</sup> S.L. Bunkers & C.A. Huff, Issues in studying women’s diaries: A theoretical and critical introduction, in S.L. Bunkers & C.H. Huff, *Inscribing the daily: Critical essays on women’s diaries*, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that in that period psychology was not a fully developed field and the assessment of Steinwender having been in a depression is a retrospective opinion.

A decade before Steinwender's birth, Europe was shaken by revolutions. In 1848 the February Revolution in France deposed King Louis Philippe. This event ignited revolutions across the German territories. The revolutionary forces comprised the liberals, artisans and peasants. Yet there was an inconsistency as far the motive for the revolution was concerned. On the one hand the peasants and artisans rose up on account of poor wages and inadequate working conditions. The liberals used the revolution as a platform to insist upon liberal reforms, such as demand for a constitution, economic freedoms and the unification of Germany. Despite the two inconsistent viewpoints, the insurrections caused the rulers across Germany to make certain concessions. The liberals did not maintain the upper hand though, and slowly but surely the conservatives were regaining their power. They had achieved this by buying out the peasants, who formed the backbone of the army. The revolution ended with the conservatives having reclaimed their power. The revolution was not a complete failure on the liberal's part though. The feudal social relations had been dismantled and a more liberal economic policy was implemented.<sup>14</sup>

The new liberal economic policy allowed for the swift economic development that took place in the 1850s. Apart from the brief economic crash in the year of her birth, Steinwender lived in a time when Prussia was prosperous, especially in comparison to other German states, such as Austria. This was also the time of the German industrial revolution. From the mid-nineteenth century there was a steady increase in coal, iron and steel industries. Prussia was the forerunner as far as industrialisation was concerned, especially regarding railway development.<sup>15</sup>

Steinwender was only five years old when Otto von Bismarck was appointed Prime Minister. It was his aim to expand the Prussian borders and create a secure state. It took three wars for Bismarck to obtain this goal. The first war was in 1864 against Denmark to secure the territory of Schleswig-Holstein. The result was bleak for Denmark as Austria and Prussia were awarded joint administration of Schleswig and Holstein in the terms of a treaty. Prussia, however, was in a more convenient geographical location to exercise control over the newly acquired land, and it was not long before tensions between the two

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<sup>14</sup> M. Fulbrook, *A concise history of Germany*, pp. 117, 119, and 122.

<sup>15</sup> J. Breuilly, Revolution to unification, in J. Breuilly (eds.), *Nineteenth century Germany: Politics, culture and society 1780-1918*, p. 140; H.M. Müller (eds.), *Schlaglichter der deutschen Geschichte*, p. 166.

administrations arose, culminating in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. The rapid progress Prussia had made with the onset of the industrial revolution tipped the scale in favour of Bismarck. Prussia had superior weaponry and was in a much stronger economic position than Austria. In July 1866 Prussia emerged victorious at Königgrätz. Bismarck had managed to create a new North German Confederation, which was a federal state (*Bundesstaat*). Having united the north, Bismarck now looked south. He wanted Prussian control over the southern German states. This was achieved by the third war, namely the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. France had become isolated internationally, due to her own aggressive actions and partly as a result of Bismarck having succeeded in revealing to the rest of the world France's expansionist ambitions. Therefore Prussia won the sympathy of the rest of the European states. The event that triggered the conflict was the acquisition of the Spanish throne. Spanish leaders had chosen a Hohenzollern prince, Prince Leopold, a choice that the French did not approve of. They maintained that it was a Prussian scheme and that Leopold should withdraw. This incident was an excuse to declare war. Yet again Prussian military superiority aided to ensure a Prussian victory. During the war, the southern German states joined the military campaign. Once the conflict was over, the southern German states came to the realisation that they could not afford to remain separate from the north, militarily and politically. Bismarck had achieved his goal. On 18 January 1871 a ceremony was held at Versailles where the German Empire was proclaimed and King Wilhelm I of Prussia was offered the German crown.<sup>16</sup>

At the age of fourteen Steinwender was now part of a unified Germany. Yet this Germany was considered to be “artificial and unnatural... [and] could only be sustained in a hothouse of patriotism and war”.<sup>17</sup> The German national identity was authoritarian in nature, and allowed for prejudicial attitudes towards religious and ethnic minorities. The second Reich had been created as a result of three wars, yet Bismarck did not wish to engage in warfare when it came to securing Germany's position in Europe. He formed several alliances with other European states. Up until 1888, when Kaiser Wilhelm died, Bismarck continued to rule over Germany's foreign policy. The foreign policy he implemented was strongly influenced by nationalist pressure. Bismarck supported

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<sup>16</sup> M. Fulbrook, *A concise history of Germany*, pp. 152-154; H.M. Müller (eds), *Schlaglichter der deutschen Geschichte*, p. 182.

<sup>17</sup> K.A. Lerman, Bismarckian Germany and the structure of the German Empire, in J. Breuilly (eds.), *Nineteenth century Germany: Politics, culture and society 1780-1918*, p. 164.

colonial expansion on account of this pressure.<sup>18</sup> The death of the Kaiser brought his son, Friedrich into power. But Friedrich's reign was short-lived as he too died a few months after his father. As a result, Wilhelm II, the younger brother of Friedrich assumed the throne. The new Kaiser did not have the same faith in Bismarck as his father had had, and in March 1890 Bismarck was dismissed from his political positions, thereby ending his career.<sup>19</sup> Steinwender had left for South Africa in 1885, but she still bore an attachment to her home country. Upon hearing of Kaiser Friedrich's death she mourned.<sup>20</sup>

It is unclear when Steinwender left Liebewalde to go to Berlin. She wrote her first entry on her way to South Africa and did not include details regarding her move to Berlin, the training she received (if any), nor what motivated her to work for the Berlin Mission Society. Before the Berlin missionaries were posted overseas, they had to endure six years of extensive training. In Steinwender's case, she was described as having been unqualified, so it is unclear as to her having received any form of training before having been sent to South Africa. Steinwender's case was different to those of the missionaries in the sense that she was only recruited to teach the white missionary children, and not the local black children. Education in Germany, especially in Prussia, was a serious matter from early on in the nineteenth century. During this century there was increased state support for the provision of education. By the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a sixty percent school attendance and primary schooling (*Volksschule*) was compulsory. Within these elementary schools, there was a strong focus on religion.<sup>21</sup>

During Steinwender's time spent in Germany, the educational system was of a conservative nature. After the 1848 revolution and the liberal's defeat, Frederick Wilhelm IV blamed the liberal educators for having caused the unrest in Germany at a conference of teacher's representatives of teacher's seminaries in 1849. He stated:

You and you alone are to blame for all the misery which the last year brought upon Prussia. The irreligious pseudo-educated masses are to be blamed for it, which you have been spreading under the name of true wisdom, and by which you have eradicated religious belief and loyalty from the hearts of my subjects and alienated their affection for my person.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> A. Perras, Colonial agitation and the Bismarckian state: The case of Carl Peters, in G. Eley & J. Retallack (eds.), *Wilhelminism and its legacies: German modernities, imperialism and the meaning of reform, 1890-1930*, p. 160.

<sup>19</sup> H.M. Müller (eds), *Schlaglichter der deutschen Geschichte*, p. 173; M. Fulbrook, *A concise history of Germany*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>20</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 21: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1888-03-11.

<sup>21</sup> R. Lee, 'Relative backwardness' and long-run development: economic, demographic and social changes, in J. Breuilly (eds.), *Nineteenth century Germany: Politics, culture and society 1780-1918*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>22</sup> A.E. Meyer, *The development of education in the twentieth century*, p. 235.

Frederick Wilhelm IV managed to suppress liberal education throughout his reign. Only in 1872, after Wilhelm I came to the throne, and a new unified Germany was in existence, did the liberals re-emerge with their educational practices once more. They arrived on the arena with a greater amount of caution, however, and made allowance for religious instruction and they stated that “the state is the sole and sovereign authority of education”.<sup>23</sup> There was one more aspect of education in Germany that possibly influenced Steinwender, namely the nationalistic principles. Bismarck was convinced of the opinion to encourage education that would unite the social classes, further patriotism and provide training for specific occupations.<sup>24</sup>

## ii. Berlin in the nineteenth century

Ach Berlin... how far you are from being a real capital of the German Reich. It is the machinations of politics that have turned you into one overnight, not your own efforts... The great city makes us energetic, nimble and smart, but it also makes us shallow. The great city has no time for thought, and what is much worse, it has no time for happiness. What it initiates a hundred times over is only the desperate search for happiness, and this is the same thing as unhappiness...<sup>25</sup>

In 1871 Berlin became the capital of Germany, mainly due to Bismarck. He had encouraged developers and speculators to invest in the city. Industries, such as the locomotive and electrical, grew. There was an increase in transport. Railway lines and stations were constructed across Berlin. The city saw a dramatic increase in population after 1871. From 1865 to 1875, the population had increased by fifty per cent. Berlin consisted of many young people, in 1871 one third of the residents were under the age of twenty-two. With its increased status, more aristocratic families came to settle in the *Weltstadt* (World City), as it became known, thus giving rise to a distinct ‘Berlin Society’. Another reason for the drastic increase in population was on account of some wanting to escape from the feudal conditions in the rural areas. Several of these new arrivals were unemployed, and those who were not, had to walk long distances to get to their place of work. This left one with a city full of the very rich and the very poor.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately it is not clear exactly when Steinwender came to Berlin. However, it is most likely that she

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<sup>23</sup> A.E. Meyer, *An educational history of the western world. Second Edition*, p. 277.

<sup>24</sup> C.J. Lucas, *Our western education heritage*, pp. 415-416.

<sup>25</sup> Quote by Theodore Fontane, a novelist, in M. Simmons, *Berlin: The dispossessed city*, p. ix.

<sup>26</sup> M. Simmons, *Berlin: The dispossessed city*, pp. 1 and 5.

arrived there after the unification of Germany. She thus would have encountered a city that was on its way to developing into a vibrant, cosmopolitan environment. It is also unclear as to why she decided to leave her home town. It could very likely have been her search for employment in the city, where jobs were said to be readily available.

Berlin's architecture describes the city's social and economic position in the late nineteenth century aptly. On the one hand there were flamboyant palaces occupied by the wealthy aristocrats, and on the other you had poor quarters, which were overcrowded and often disease-ridden. These two types of establishments were, in some instances, only walking distance apart. The situation was worsened when the local farmers increased the price of their produce in Berlin. Women and children became labourers in order to survive. The high levels of poverty within Berlin lead to an increase in prostitution, alcoholism and crime. The harsh winters resulted in the death of many people. It was not uncommon to find corpses on the street, which had died of the cold overnight. Thus at that stage, Berlin was the ideal setting for 'do-gooders'.<sup>27</sup>

Preachers were amongst those who aimed at improving the social conditions. Their disadvantage was that they were representative of the upper-classes, who did not necessarily want to advocate social change. The working class in Berlin were largely a-religious. Only a fourth of the Protestant marriages were held in church and one in two children were baptised. Despite the city leaning towards atheistic or agnostic beliefs, several parishes were constructed.<sup>28</sup> Having said that, one gains an understanding for one of the possible motivating factors for Steinwender to have left Germany for South Africa. The daughter of a pastor, Steinwender had grown up within a religious environment. She might not have been a missionary herself, yet she was a strong believer in the Lutheran way of life.

### **iii. Background of the Berlin Mission Society**

In the first decade after the Napoleonic wars, Germany was a poverty stricken country. The price of the war waged against Napoleon had struck a mighty blow at German trade and industry. Although Germany experienced economic problems, there was a new

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<sup>27</sup> M. Simmons, *Berlin: The dispossessed city*, pp. 4, 5-6 and 9.

<sup>28</sup> M. Simmons, *Berlin: The dispossessed city*, pp. 9-10.

spiritual awakening. The re-examining of Classical German Literature spurred on the decision to establish the Berlin University. The increase in popularity of philosophy, literature, theatre and sociology during the 1820s, resulted in a decreasing attendance of the church sermons, which were considered to be out-dated, conservative and orthodox.<sup>29</sup> The Berlin Mission Society came into existence against this background.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 1824, a group of men met Moritz August von Hollweg, a Professor of Law, in his office across from the University of Berlin and established the *Gesellschaft zur Berföderung der Evangelischen Mission unter den Heiden*<sup>30</sup> (this is what the Berlin Mission Society was named up until 1908). This society was not officially linked to the church. It was an independent body that was run by a committee consisting initially of nine members. In later years this number increased to between twenty and twenty-five. There were some very prominent members of this committee including Kaiser Wilhelm II. Considering that the committee members were civil servants and army officers, there was a loyalty to the Prussian King and a motivation to further the nationalistic cause.<sup>31</sup>

The mission society had decided to appoint at least one permanent committee member, considering that the members were likely to be transferred on account of their occupations. The first post as Mission Inspector was held by J.C. Wallmann from 1857 to 1863. H.T. Wangemann took over from Wallmann in 1865, on the condition that the position encompassed greater power. The new title awarded to him was Mission Director. The society had, at this stage, abandoned its disassociation with the church, and instead tied itself to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brandenburg. This meant that the missionaries' status was now equal to that of the pastors in Prussia.<sup>32</sup>

With elitist affiliation and links to the church, the society insisted on providing some form of training for the missionaries. Initially the society sent their missionaries to a seminary run by Pastor Johannes Jänicke and in 1829 the society established its own seminary. The minimum educational requirement for missionary status was a primary school one. This was not the case with all of the German mission societies, for example a tertiary education

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<sup>29</sup> H. Lehmann, *150 Jahre Berliner Mission*, pp. 9 and 10.

<sup>30</sup> Society to promote the evangelical mission amongst the heathens.

<sup>31</sup> H. Lehmann, *150 Jahre Berliner Mission*, p. 9; A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: encounters between Berlin missionaries and the Tshivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*, pp. 166-7.

<sup>32</sup> A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: encounters between Berlin missionaries and the Tshivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*, p. 167.

in theology was mandatory to join the Leipzig Mission Society. Because of the low educational prerequisites, the Berlin missionaries were drawn from the lower middle class.<sup>33</sup>

The training that was provided lasted from eight in the morning to ten in the evening over a period between four and a half and six years. Some of the subjects included history, geography and accounting. Students were taught different languages, including English, Latin, Hebrew, Dutch and Greek. To a lesser extent they were educated in some African languages. They were also provided with some training on medicine and surgery, in order to combat the tropical diseases they might be confronted with. To help aide them in creating a settlement, they were supplied with some facts pertaining to practical applications, such as farming, building, carpentry, etc. Finally the students also were given training in music.<sup>34</sup> One wonders why this society, being so focussed on education and training, would be willing to send an untrained teacher into the field.

The Seminary was to a large extent paternalistic.<sup>35</sup> The authorities in Berlin were superior to the Superintendent in the field, the Superintendents were superior to the rest of the missionaries at the mission station, and the missionaries were superior to their converts.<sup>36</sup> With the arrival of women at the mission stations, the men practiced authority over them as well. The missionaries were strongly influenced by Pietism. “Theologically, it revolved around concepts of sin, redemption and salvation, economically, it expressed itself in terms of the work ethic, that is, high productivity based on an internalised self-discipline, and ideologically it consisted of values such as orderliness, diligence, cleanliness, frugality”.<sup>37</sup> Pietism was the deeply spiritual movement which countered the rationality brought about by the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Pietism implied that there was a spiritual awakening after some form of penitence. The link between pietism and the missionary societies is clear when considering that from a pietistic perspective it was the duty of Christians to convert the non-believers. They lived by and believed in a

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<sup>33</sup> A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: encounters between Berlin missionaries and the Tshivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*, pp. 171 and 172.

<sup>34</sup> A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: encounters between Berlin missionaries and the Tshivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*, pp. 189; G. Pakendorf, “For there is no power but of God”: The Berlin mission and the challenges of colonial South Africa, *Missionalia* 25(3), November 1997, p. 269.

<sup>35</sup> For the purposes of this assignment, paternalism is the policy of governing or controlling people in a *fatherly* way, providing for their needs but giving them no responsibility.

<sup>36</sup> A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: encounters between Berlin missionaries and the Tshivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*, p. 190.

<sup>37</sup> G. Pakendorf, “For there is no power but of God”: The Berlin mission and the challenges of colonial South Africa, *Missionalia* 25(3), November 1997, pp. 256-257.



strict way of life, one free from sin combined with a stern work ethic. Being idle was inexcusable and self-discipline was essential.<sup>38</sup> Whilst reading Steinwender's diary, one observes her pietistic nature. She believed strongly in order and hard work, and held a disdainful attitude towards those who did not abide by this.

Besides Pietism, there were two other intellectual trends that influenced the missionaries, namely nationalism and Lutheranism. The nationalistic aspect was prevalent in Steinwender's writing. There was to be no severing of ties with her home country's culture or language. This principle was echoed throughout all the mission stations. It symbolises a strange dichotomy. On the one hand they were aiming at converting all of the 'heathens', yet on the other hand, emphasis was placed on maintaining one's culture. That was one of the differences between the German missionaries and the British ones. The Germans were insistent thereupon that the local population were educated in their own language. The third ideology was Lutheranism. Martin Luther in the seventeenth century had rebelled against the Catholic Church and started a religious movement of his own. The Berlin Mission Society was one of many German missions that were embedded in Lutheran principles. The teachings of Martin Luther, the founding father of Lutheranism, included "obedience towards secular powers and a national self-dominated church".<sup>39</sup>

Coming from "a world of strict controls within clearly defined bounds, privately, socially and politically"<sup>40</sup> Steinwender embarked on an arduous journey to South Africa just before her twenty-eighth birthday. She was confronted with an unfamiliar environment, foreign languages and a culture that did not resemble that of Germany's.

## **b. South Africa**

### **i. General overview of South Africa in the nineteenth century**

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<sup>38</sup> A. Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: encounters between Berlin missionaries and the Tshivenda-speakers in the late nineteenth century*, pp. 186-9, 190-1.

<sup>39</sup> K. Friedrich, "Cultural and intellectual trends" in J. Breuilly (eds.), *Nineteenth century Germany: Politics, culture and society 1780-1918*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>40</sup> G. Pakendorf, "For there is no power but of God": The Berlin mission and the challenges of colonial South Africa, *Missionalia* 25(3), November 1997, p. 269.

At the time of Steinwender's arrival, South Africa was divided into Boer republics, British colonies and areas where black polities still claimed independence regardless of the colonial onslaught.

Among the black communities were the Tswana, northern Sotho, southern Sotho, southern Nguni, northern Nguni, Venda and Shangaan/Tsonga. Some of these polities were larger than others; but all of them were ruled by an entity that became known in colonial literature as a chief. "He was the distributor of the land and the controller of its use... the judge of the most serious misdemeanours... the law giver... the war leader".<sup>41</sup> The Mfecane (a time of turmoil, in which the "chiefdoms" were at war with one another in the beginning of the nineteenth century), the Great Trek (the migration of Boers from the British controlled Cape colony to the interior) and white settlements within the Natal and Highveld area all played a hand at altering the political power struggle amongst the black polities at the time of Steinwender's arrival.<sup>42</sup>

The Boer Republics, one of which Steinwender eventually resided in, were shaped as a result of the Great Trek. From 1834 onwards various parties under different leadership headed into the interior. Although Rodney Davenport (an author of an authoritative history of South Africa) argued that one cannot for certain ascertain why this exodus took place, it was generally suspected to have been spurred on by the dissatisfaction amongst the Boers of the British colonial administration in the Cape. There were clashes between the Boers and the indigenous communities during the Great Trek, in which both parties suffered. The Boers settled in Natal, and areas north of the Vaal River, where they established their own laws and their own forms of governing the settlers.<sup>43</sup>

Initially, the British colonial administration had little desire to become involved in the inland affairs, since Cape Town still held the primary interests of the British. With the discovery of diamonds in 1868 near the confluence of the Vaal and the Harts Rivers, and later in the Kimberley area, a hearing was held in October 1871 to determine whom the territory belonged to. The Boers did not offer an adequate presentation and, therefore, a western border was drawn out along side the Makwassiespruit to the benefit of the

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<sup>41</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern History*, p. 63.

<sup>42</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern History*, pp. 12, 44, 51 and 66.

<sup>43</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern History*, pp. 44-47, 68 -70.

Griquas and the Tlhaping. At the same time, the British annexed Griqualand West, and coupled with the annexation was the increase in white settlement in the area.<sup>44</sup>

In 1874 Lord Carnarvon assumed the office of Foreign Secretary and it was his intention to federate the British and Boer colonies. In April 1877, the British annexation proclamation was read out in Church Square, Pretoria. This was met with resistance from the Boers in the Transvaal and in December 1880, war erupted between the Boers and the British. The Anglo-Transvaal War lasted until March 1881 when the Boers were successful in a few battles and the British decided not to continue with the war. Their success was not long lived, as a new discovery compromised their independence.<sup>45</sup>

One year after Steinwender's arrival, in 1886, gold was discovered on the Rand, and by the 1890s the majority of the white inhabitants were British prospectors. Thomas Pakenham<sup>46</sup> stated that the question of who really controlled this area was posed and the Jameson Raid was an attempt to answer this question. The raid, which comprised six hundred men under the command of Dr. L.S. Jameson, was a dismal failure. This event only further aggravated the already existing tensions between the Boers and the *Uitlanders*.<sup>47</sup>

Steinwender therefore arrived from a country, which was enjoying political stability to one where imminent conflict was simmering. Although the German missionaries opted for silence when it came to controversial political matters, they still recognised political authority. This could be tied in with the strong influence of Lutheranism. They respected the dominant authority of the area they lived in (which, in the case of the community that Steinwender lived in, was the Boer authorities) and submitted to their laws and practices.<sup>48</sup>

## **ii. The mission station at Bethanie, Orange Free State**

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<sup>44</sup> D.H. Heydenrych, The Boer republics, 1852-1881, in T. Cameron & S.B. Spies, *Illustrated history of South Africa*, pp. 154-5.

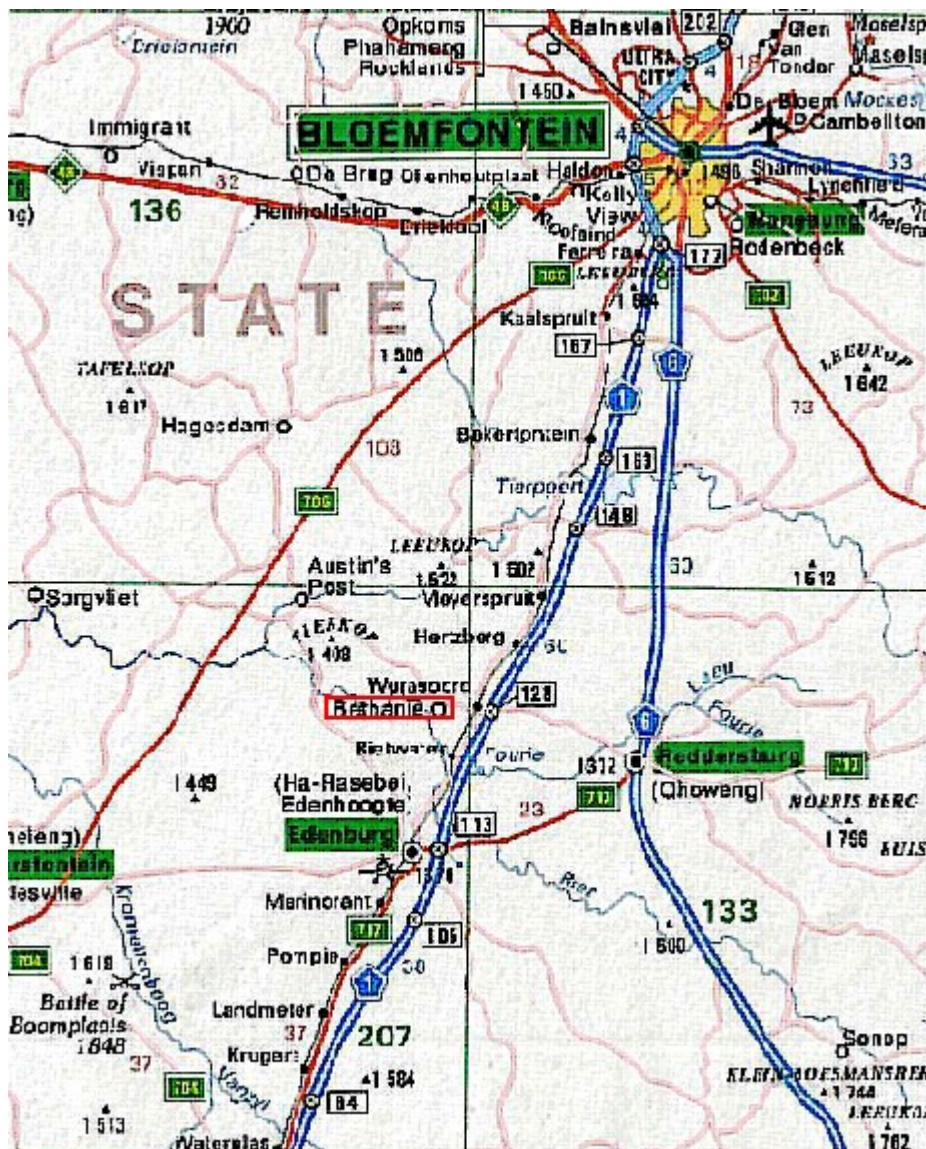
<sup>45</sup> D.H. Heydenrych, The Boer republics, 1852-1881, in T. Cameron & S.B. Spies, *Illustrated history of South Africa*, pp. 157, 159 and 160.

<sup>46</sup> Recipient of both the Alan Paton Award and the W.H. Smith's Annual Literary Award and has conducted extensive studies on British colonialism and South Africa.

<sup>47</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern History*, pp. 83 – 84; T. Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pp. 2 and 21.

<sup>48</sup> G. Pakendorf, "For there is no power but of God": The Berlin mission and the challenges of colonial South Africa, *Missionalia* 25(3), November 1997, p. 258.

When Steinwender reached the Orange Free State it was an independent Boer Republic already since the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854. Bethanie, the town where she settled for four years, is located in the current Free State Province, south west of Bloemfontein. It is situated next to a provincial route running parallel to a national highway. Next to the provincial route is a railway line that led north from the Cape. On this line is a railway station called Wurasoord. It was named after the true founder of the Bethanie mission station, Carl Friedrich Wuras. Bethanie is situated a few kilometres to the west of Wurasoord (see Figure 1).<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 1:** Current location of Bethanie  
 From: Leroux, V (eds.), *New southern African book of the road*, p. 183. Johannesburg, 1995.

<sup>49</sup> V. Leroux (eds.) , *New southern African book of the road*, p. 183; P.E. Raper, *Dictionary of southern African place names*, p. 52.

The area in and surrounding Bethanie was subject to harsh weather conditions and it was very different from what Steinwender was used to in Germany. The Berlin missionaries from 1834 to the end of the century often wrote of droughts that they experienced. When it rained, they wrote, it rained hard and continuously. The streams would overflow, but soon afterwards they would dry up and leave nothing but a small trickle of water.<sup>50</sup> Christopher Sandrock, a missionary who lived in Bethanie at the same time as Steinwender, would regularly record the weather patterns. He confirmed the reports of the earlier missionaries when it came to the harsh rainfalls and the ongoing droughts they experienced at the time.<sup>51</sup>

The type of vegetation that existed in the area was sweet grassveld and the soil was alkaline. This made the area ideal for grazing, but not for the cultivation of crops. In Bethanie itself, the missionaries did farm with pumpkins, beans, “mielies” (maize) and potatoes, but it was purely for the benefit of the community and not for commercial purposes. The missionaries also had sheep and cattle, which were also solely for the community’s use.<sup>52</sup> The temperature readings, taken in 1919, ranged from 0°C to about 15°C in the coolest months and from about 15°C to just below 30°C in the warmer months. In the entire region of the Orange Free State in 1918 under two and a half per cent was cultivated. In one account it was recorded that at the beginning of the spring season the temperature was 24°C in the morning and it rose to 25°C in the afternoon. The warmer months saw more rainfall, on average there was approximately between 701mm to 800mm rainfall annually. However, this was not always the case. In 1885, for example, it was written that in Bethanie there was a long drought, and the first rains they saw only came in March. It is unclear as to when the drought started though. Very little land was cultivated in the area, on account of the low annual rainfall, exacerbated by the strong seasonal distribution of precipitation.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> K. Schoeman, *Die huis van die armes: die Berlynse sendinggenootskap in die Oranje Vrystaat 1833-1869*, p. 18.

<sup>51</sup> Christoph Sandrock (1845-1930) *Berliner Mission* 29/8/1875 – 6/3/1892 Vol.1. UNISA archives ADA 266.4168092 SAND SAND Tagebuch (Transcription).

<sup>52</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p.4 : Adele Steinwender’s diary, 1886-11-05-07 and 1886-05-08.

<sup>53</sup> K. Schoeman, *Die huis van die armes: die Berlynse sendinggenootskap in die Oranje Vrystaat 1833-1869*, p. 17. Anonym “Nachrichten aus unserer Synode Oranje=Freistaat (Bethanien, Adamshoop, Blumfontein, Pniel, Kimberley)” in *Berliner Missions Berichte nr. 9 & 10 1885*, p. 141; A.M. Talbot & W.S. Talbot, *Atlas of the Union of South Africa*. Cape Town, 1960.

### iii. The missionaries in Bethanie

Many years prior to Steinwender's arrival, on 10 June 1834, the first Berlin missionaries for southern Africa were ordained. They were August Gebel (26), Riehold Theodor Gregowski (26), Gustav Adolf Kraut (27), August Ferdinand Lange (24) and Johann Schmidt (29) (see Figure 2). Schmidt was selected to be the leader of the group on account of him being the eldest. His role as leader did not last long, because shortly after being ordained, it was discovered that he had had a love affair whilst in training. Schmidt was forced to resign his position as a missionary, and became a carpenter. Gebel was appointed as the new leader, on the basis that he was the only trained theologian.<sup>54</sup> The criterion used for the selection of a leader used by the Berlin Mission Society is interesting in itself. Based on this example age was more of a priority than a qualification.

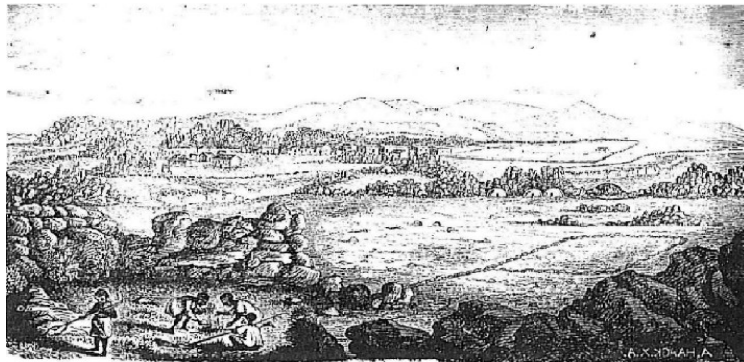


**Figure 2:** The first Berlin missionaries posted to South Africa between the years 1834 and 1837. Back: R.T. Gregowski, A.F. Lange, Johann Schmidt. Middle: G.A. Kraut, A.A. Ortlepp, C.L.T. Radloff, J.A.L. Zerwick, Adolf Gebel. Front: C.F. Wuras, C.R. Lange, J.L. Döhne. From Huis van die armes: Die Berlynse Sendinggenootskap in die Oranje Vrystaat 1833-1869(Capetown, 1985), facing page 80.

In April 1834 these five men arrived in Cape Town. Once in South Africa, Gregowski, Lange and Gebel's wife settled in Beaufort West, in the Cape, while the rest went inland, eventually settling in Bethanie in the Orange Free State (see Figure 3). The missionaries

<sup>54</sup> K. Schoeman, *Die huis van die armes: die Berlynse sendinggenootskap in die Oranje Vrystaat 1833-1869*, p. 11; J. Du Plessis, *A history of Christian missions in South Africa*, p. 212.

called the place Bethanie, because they wanted it to become a place of comfort and refuge for the “sinners amongst the Koranna”. The name could also be translated to mean “Elendshausen”<sup>55</sup> or “Haus der Armen oder Elenden”.<sup>56</sup> Initially the Berlin Mission Society did not intend on conducting missionary work amongst the Koranna in Bethanie. The Koranna were considered to be thieves, especially after they had fallen under the leadership of the escaped convicts Jan Bloem (Blum) and the brothers Jakob and Frans (or Karel) Kruger, who introduced them to guns. In order to combat their thievery, the missionaries saw it as beneficial to place them under Griqua supervision.<sup>57</sup> The missionaries would often report on their experiences at Bethanie in the *Berliner Missionsberichte*, a journal dedicated to the Berlin Mission Societies’ activities abroad.<sup>58</sup>



**Figure 3:** Sketch of Bethanie.

From: J. Du Plessis, *A history of Christian missions in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1965), p. 132.

Carl Friedrich Wuras, who was Steinwender’s host father’s predecessor, arrived in South Africa in 1836. He was part of the second group of Berlin missionaries. Wuras was considered to be the true founder of Bethanie, as it was he who advanced the missionary agenda of conversion in the area. Wuras preached amongst the Koranna in the area, and by 1841 he was fluent in the Koranna language. Although the Berlin Mission Society initially fell under the protection of the Griquas, their allegiance shifted to the Koranna in 1842 after the Griquas were unsuccessful in securing the area from Boer encroachment. The missionaries now recognised Bethanie as Koranna territory. However, when the British refused to acknowledge the Koranna’s claim to the area, and with the steady decrease of the Koranna population within Bethanie, the missionaries feared that they might lose their property rights. As a result, they once again turned to the Griquas. In

<sup>55</sup> Hovel of misery.

<sup>56</sup> House of the poor or miserable.

<sup>57</sup> W. van der Merwe, Die Berlynse sendelinge van Bethanie (Oranje Vrystaat) en die Kora, 1834-1856, *South African historical journal* 17, November 1985, pp. 40 and 43.

<sup>58</sup> Anonym., Jahresbericht: Synode Oranje=Freistaat, *Berliner Missions Berichte no. 5 & 6, 1886*, p. 72.

return, the mission was asked to open the station to all Griqua subjects. The decrease in the Koranna population was met with an increase of the southern Sotho moving in the area.<sup>59</sup>

Wuras was responsible for making Bethanie the centre point of the German missionary work in the Orange Free State. He built suitable living quarters and outhouses. He also constructed a school (1860) and he erected a church (Figure 4), the largest church in the area at the time. Before Wuras arrived in 1836, he had been appointed the Superintendent of the Orange Free State. Wuras left an economically strong mission station for his successor, Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner.<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 4:** Church in Bethanie  
Photograph: B. Brammer 2006-11-27

Grützner arrived in Durban in 1859 as a missionary from Berlin, Germany. Prior to having joined the mission, he was a locksmith. His first posting was in Swaziland. Before having settled in Bethanie in 1878, which is where Steinwender got to know him, he was stationed in Lydenburg and Botshabelo. The latter station was where Grützner and another missionary, Alexander Merensky, made their mark in missionary circles. The Botshabelo mission station was established in 1860 by these two missionaries, and became the benchmark for all the other Berlin Mission stations in South Africa. When Grützner was stationed in Lydenburg, in 1862, he married Marie Friederika Juliane Nachtigal, the daughter of a member of the Berlin Mission Society.<sup>61</sup> Two years after his

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<sup>59</sup> L. Zöllner (eds.), *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents*, pp. 476-7; W. van der Merwe, *Die Berlynse sendelinge van Bethanie (Oranje Vrystaat) en die Kora, 1834-1856*, *South African historical journal* 17, November 1985, p. 40.

<sup>60</sup> L. Zöllner (eds.), *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents*, pp. 476-7; J. Du Plessis, *A history of Christian missions in South Africa*, p. 213.

<sup>61</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.41682092 GRUT GRUT, p. 26: *Lebenserinnerungen von Heinrich Grützner 1834-1910*, 1958.



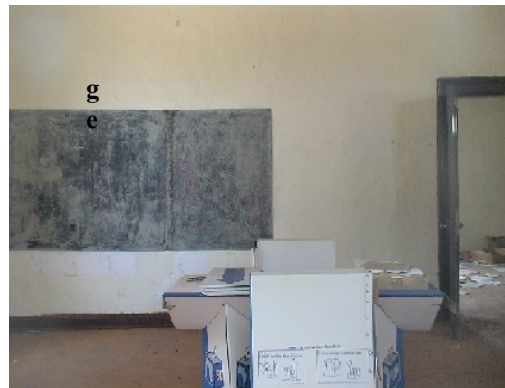
arrival in Bethanie, in 1880, Grützner became the superintendent for the Berlin Mission Society in the Orange Free State and in 1908 he was promoted to superintendent of the Berlin Mission in the entire South Africa.<sup>62</sup> Both Grützner and his wife had a great impact on Steinwender. Of all the people she came into contact with, she wrote most frequently of those two. It was a love-hate relationship in the sense that she would express incredible gratitude for them both, but on other occasions, her entries were marked with bitterness. This was especially the case with her host mother, who Steinwender spent most of her time with.

#### iv. The school

A school was established in Bethanie to see to the education of the missionary children. This building is still located next to the church to this day (see Figures 5 and 6). The first missionary to have taught at this institution was Richters Stelle in 1872. By 1875 the school had its third teacher, namely the missionary Sandrock, who was Steinwender's predecessor. One year later when the missionary Menfarth left Bethanie, Sandrock took over some of his duties. Apart from his missionary duties, he was also appointed justice of peace, which meant he could not devote all of his efforts to the school. From 1886, Steinwender took over from Sandrock. She had been appointed without having been formally qualified, yet she proved to be very efficient as a teacher.<sup>63</sup>



Entrance to the school building  
 Photograph: B. Brammer 2006-11-27



**Figure 6:** Inside the school building  
 Photograph: B. Brammer 2006-11-27

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In 1885 the Berlin Mission Society hired Miss Adele Bertha Christine Steinwender to teach the children of the missionaries. She resided with the Grützners up until 1899, when she got married and resigned from her teaching post. She taught all the missionary

<sup>62</sup> L. Zöllner (eds.), *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents*, pp. 118-119; W. Schmidt-Pretoria, *Deutsche Wanderung nach Südafrika im 19. Jahrhundert*, pp. 222 and 261.

<sup>63</sup> D.E. Kratzenstein, *Kurze Geschichte der Berliner Mission in Süd- und Ostafrika*, pp. 13-14; L. Zöllner (eds.), *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents*, p. 402.

children in the area from grade one to twelve. Some of the subjects she taught were English, Catechism, History, Mathematics and Geography.

During the time that Steinwender taught at the school in Bethanie, Dr. J. Brebner was the inspector of education in the white schools. He had been appointed in 1873 in order to monitor the education standards across the Orange Free State. Prior to Steinwender's arrival, the Orange Free State authorities set out to improve the education. Especially within the rural areas, the standard was considered to be of a 'primitive' nature. There were limited financial resources and several teachers were unqualified. Brebner started implementing reforms, through the creation of teacher's training courses. The standard of education was slowly on the rise at the time of Steinwender's arrival. Despite her not having been formally qualified, she came from a country which perceived education to be a priority. It must have been fairly strange to her to come to a country where the education was of a lower standard, and in the midst of an educational reform period. When Brebner came to Steinwender's school (he inspected the school once a year) he would spend four hours monitoring the teacher and the pupils' performance. The conclusions he drew from the school in Bethanie, was that in general, it was up to standard. He usually found that mathematics was the one subject that required a bit of improvement though.<sup>64</sup> The reason for this could possibly have been Steinwender's lack of training.

Nationalism was a feature that was very prominent amongst the German missionaries. They not only implemented nationalistic ideals when it came to their immediate German community, but also when it came to the education of the local population. Language and culture formed the cornerstone of nationalism. Should one lose that, they believed, one would lose one's own cultural identity. The missionaries thus insisted that one's own language needs to be preserved. Steinwender saw to that when she educated the missionary children. First and foremost they were to remember that they were German. A popular idiom that underpinned the German educational drive was the saying: *Pflegt die deutsche Sprache, wahrt das deutsche Wort, denn der Geist der Väter lebt in ihnen fort.*<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> H.J. van Aswegen, *Die verhouding tussen blank en nie-blank in die Oranje Vrystaat, 1854-1902*, pp. 224-225.  
A.L. Linde, *Die geskiedenis van die Oranje Vrystaat se onderwysvereniging*, MA dissertation, UNISA., 1929, pp. 1 and 3.

<sup>65</sup> Nurture the German language, treasure the German word, because the spirit of the forebears is perpetuated by these.

The nationalism that was present within the Bethanie missionary community will be discussed in chapter four. In the next chapter, however, focus will be placed on Steinwender's observations, as recorded in her diary, on the role of gender within this community.

### III. Gender and the Bethanie Missionary Community

The missionary community in Bethanie abided by certain gendered structures that in turn created a hierarchy: a social status assumed by the inhabitants. Steinwender challenged this hierarchy with her arrival. She could not be placed in the same category as the other adult women who were married and were mothers, yet one could not group her with the unmarried girls, who were considerably younger than what Steinwender was. One can see how her not being able to fit in anywhere affected her on a personal level and also what means she employed to become a part of the community. Steinwender's role as a teacher, although it did fit into the parameters of what was considered to be a decent female occupation at the time, brought her to another level. Her earning her own salary, even though it was only half of what the male missionaries earned,<sup>1</sup> put her on a more equal platform to the other male wage earners within the community. This event could possibly have spurred on jealousy by the wives of the missionaries who, although they laboured just as hard, did not earn their own salary, and also barely got recognition for their work. Even though education held domestic aspects, as will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs, her being in a financially independent position and being an employee alludes to her involvement in the public sphere. This is an indication of the interchangeability of the public and private spheres.

This chapter is mainly aimed at using Steinwender's diary to highlight the gendered roles that existed within the community in Bethanie. Included in this are sections on the relationships she developed, even when these relationships were not always on friendly terms. The reason for my including this socialisation aspect is because it is an attempt of a woman who, as I mentioned previously, did not have a clear cut social place within this community. Through her social relations she attempted to carve out this place. She was a professional worker within this community, and she often tried to compensate for her lack of feeling of belonging by focussing on her role as a teacher. She took great pride in her teaching and was often very pedantic in her methods to strive after her idea of what a perfect school would be.

The first section will deal specifically with the *genderedness* of the community, and then it follows with her relationships she developed with the other women at the mission station. Lastly Carl Heinrich Theodore Gützner is discussed. Steinwender was very fond of her host

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<sup>1</sup> L.N. Predelli & J. Miller, Piety and patriarchy: Contested gender regimes in nineteenth century evangelical missions, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 91.

father, and one cannot leave out the impact this man had on her life and the choices she was going to make.

## 1. Role as a single woman

In Europe after the industrial revolution new economic forces came into existence that would not allow for middle class families to support an adult daughter financially anymore. These women were now faced with the prospect of earning their own income, which could have been the possible motivating factor for Steinwender to accept the teaching post in Bethanie.<sup>2</sup> She took her position as an educator very seriously and not only demanded excellence from her students, but she also placed incredible pressure on herself to be a first-rate teacher. In the nineteenth century women were considered to have been the principle agents in ensuring a child's morality and cultural grooming.<sup>3</sup> As the century progressed, an increasing number of women were sent out by mission stations to teach the local children. However, education that was provided for girls aimed at preparing them for domestic duties, as opposed to a more academic syllabus for boys.<sup>4</sup> Although Steinwender did not teach the black children in Bethanie, she did provide education to the missionaries' children. Education in Bethanie also had elements of domesticity. Not only was Steinwender responsible for the education of the white children, but also their appearance. In some of her diary entries she would record whose hair and clothes were unkempt. Should a child arrive in sub-standard attire, the clothes were to be mended immediately.<sup>5</sup>

Physical appearance not only mattered at a school level, but also within the larger community. One evening Grützner commented that Steinwender's clothes suited her very well, with the exception of those that she wore every Sunday, which she did not look good in. Commenting on her style of dress could indicate Grützner having wanted her to look better. And if that is the case, one wonders why that is, and for whom she was supposed to be dressing? Her diary does not suggest what type of clothes she wore on Sundays, whether they were too shabby, or whether they did not fit her well anymore (taking into consideration that he had commented

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<sup>2</sup> M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus, Introduction: Gendered missions at home and abroad, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> M. Gomersall, Education for domesticity? A nineteenth century perspective on girls' schooling and education, in *Gender and education*, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> B.N. Ramusack, Cultural missionaries, maternal imperialists, feminist allies: British women activists in India, 1865-1945, in N. Chaudhuri & M. Strobel (eds.), *Western women and imperialism: Complicity and resistance*, 121.

<sup>5</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 42: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-03-04, 1889-03-06 and 1889-03-07.

on her being too thin the previous day).<sup>6</sup> Clothing itself is symbolic of the public and private spheres merging. The cloth that covers one's body is the personal choice of the individual (private), yet it is also the physical representation to the external world (public). Your clothes, although a personal choice, are still influenced by external conventions.<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to note that British nurses that were sent out to the colonies were scrutinised, not necessarily on their practical abilities, but rather on their 'feminine' talents. These talents include a cheerful disposition and an attractive physical appearance. Although this was the case with nurses, it is not unlikely that other female professionals were hired along similar lines.<sup>8</sup> Towards the end of her stay Steinwender attended a wedding in which Carl Wuras, Grützner's predecessor,<sup>9</sup> was the pastor that married the couple. He chose Steinwender to be his partner for the wedding. She wrote in her diary how strange she found this and in the same breath what an honour it was.<sup>10</sup> Was it another example of physical appearance, in the sense that she was pleasing to the eye and was thus chosen to be the "belle of the ball"? Could this have caused envy amongst the wives at the mission station? On the other hand, was this not a strange occurrence in the least, considering there were a limited number of attractive single women living in Bethanie at the time? "Merkwürdig, daß die Frauen in Deutschland durchaus wie Kinder bleiben müssen, wenn sie den Männern gefallen sollen"<sup>11</sup> [Strange that the women in Germany must remain childlike, if they want to appeal to the men.]

What were the differences between married and single women? There was a definite hierarchical structure that existed within the mission station. The adult men were at the top of this hierarchy and on the female side married women with children were held in higher regard than single women. This is where Steinwender was in a unique predicament. She was unmarried without children, yet she was an adult and did not fit in with the younger unmarried girls. Although she developed relations across the board, she had no one whom

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<sup>6</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 17: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1887-12-01.

<sup>7</sup> M.P. Ryan, The public and the private good: Across the great divide in women's history, *Women's history in the new millennium* 15(1), Spring, 2003, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> D. Birkett, The 'White woman's burden' in the 'white man's grave': The introduction of British nurses in colonial West Africa, in N. Chaudhuri & M. Strobel (eds.), *Western women and imperialism: Complicity and resistance*, p. 178. In the case of the Norwegian Mission Society in Madagascar, clothing was seen to draw the distinction between the European moral forms of dress, as opposed to the more revealing traditional Malagasy clothing. European styles were believed to represent Christian morals and behaviour. (L.N. Predelli, Sexual control and the re-making of gender: The attempt of nineteenth century Protestant Norwegian women to export western domesticity to Madagascar, *Journal of women's history* 12(2), Summer 2000, p. 87).

<sup>9</sup> L. Zöllner, eds., *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendants*, pp. 476-477.

<sup>10</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 45: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-04-23.

<sup>11</sup> Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach in C. Woodford, Suffering and domesticity: the subversion of sentimentalism in three stories by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, *German life and letters*, 59(1), January 2006, p. 50.

she could identify with. There are several entries in her diary that attest to this hierarchical structure. Whenever visitors arrived, Steinwender would either end up sharing her room with someone else, or she would have to give up her room. When two brides from the Hermannsburg Mission arrived in Bethanie, Steinwender had to give up her room and sleep on the floor in the living room. Yet again, it revealed her rank in society.<sup>12</sup> As guests certain concessions had to be made to these visitors, yet it appeared as if Steinwender was the one who had to sacrifice her comforts more regularly than others within the household.

Steinwender was stuck in between two worlds, neither a married woman, nor a child. This contributed to her having felt depressed several days. Steinwender often wrote about her being miserable. On one occasion, when she felt lonely and estranged, Lenchen, one of the Grützner's daughters, came to her and asked her whether she was ill, because she had dark circles under her eyes. Steinwender stated that the family would often ask her if she was ill, when in actual fact she was depressed,<sup>13</sup> which to her was a worse fate. Depression<sup>14</sup> during the nineteenth century was associated with women and was considered a 'feminine disorder'. It was believed that a woman was not mentally as well equipped as a man, which would therefore make her more susceptible to nervous breakdowns. Another reasoning provided by medical practitioners of that time, was that menstruation, menopause, pregnancy, childbirth, etc. caused the mind to focus on those bodily functions and thus exhausting the female brain, making her more prone to nervous disorders.<sup>15</sup> Yet despite these medical opinions, it did not seem as if the missionary community of Bethanie, especially the Grützners, even contemplated depression as a possible ailment. Thus it was highly probable that the Grützners would not have deemed Steinwender's condition as an actual illness. On those days when Steinwender experienced the pangs of depression, she wrote of she felt unloved and like a stranger. The diary itself could have possibly served as a form of escapism.<sup>16</sup> Her position as a teacher only aggravated her feeling of exclusion. As a teacher, she wrote, one is not presented with the opportunity to speak to anyone about everything that is on one's mind. She often felt that she did not fit in well with the family, because all they cared about is seeing a happy face, whilst being ignorant of the turmoil inside.<sup>17</sup> Steinwender very possibly

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<sup>12</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 3, 27-28: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-04-02, 1888-06-24 and 1888-06-25.

<sup>13</sup> In the diary the words that were used to Steinwender's feeling depressed are: *verdriet* and *hartseer*.

<sup>14</sup> As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, the concept of depression was not a common term at that time. Psychology, as a field, was still in the developmental process.

<sup>15</sup> J. Oppenheim, „*Shattered nerves*“: *Doctors, patients, and depression in Victorian England*, pp. 182, 187-188.

<sup>16</sup> Personal information: Prof J.B. Schoeman, Professor of Psychology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 2007-05-10.

had a dysthemic disorder. This is the type of depression that is caused by one's environment.<sup>18</sup> Her loss of appetite, her feeling low/down for periods lasting more than two weeks, are all symptoms of depression.<sup>19</sup> Another aspect that contributed to her depression was the fact that she did not have a life partner. This is a possibility considering the society she lived in at the time, where it was the norm to have a spouse. Although she displayed symptoms of a depression, diagnosis of such an ailment, so long after the fact, remains somewhat inconclusive.<sup>20</sup>

In an entry marked 8 April 1888, Steinwender wrote how she lived and breathed for the school, but was still searching for the person with whom she could share everything. She was haunted with feelings of being alone for the rest of her life.<sup>21</sup> On 19 April 1886, Mr. Fischer,<sup>22</sup> a music director in the greater area of Bethanie, asked for Steinwender's hand in marriage. She sought advice from her host parents on how to deal with this situation. Steinwender explained that, much to her appreciation, both her host parents "carried the matter in their hearts". Two days later Steinwender had made up her mind about the proposal and asked the Grütznerns to read her letter to Mr. Fischer before sending it. Her host parents spent the next few hours discussing her options with her. They made it clear to Steinwender how she should view her position as teacher and the marriage proposal. It is possible that the Grütznerns might have discouraged this union, as the Mission Society had made an investment in Steinwender as a teacher, and it could amount to have been an unnecessary expense should she get married. This was the reason why the Dutch Mission Societies were hesitant to send single women into the field.<sup>23</sup> In Germany, it was the norm for a female teacher to resign once she was married.<sup>24</sup> After Steinwender discussed the matter with her host parents, she decided to only send the letter in eight days time. It is not clear why she chose that exact time frame though. On 29 April she sent the letter to Mr. Fischer, declining his offer. Steinwender wrote

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<sup>17</sup> UNISA Archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 19 and 30: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1887-12-24 and 1888-08-16.

<sup>18</sup> Personal information: Prof J.B. Schoeman, Professor of Psychology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 2007-05-10.

<sup>19</sup> J. Mendina, *Depression: How it happens, how it's healed*, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> A. Perras, Colonial agitation and the Bismarckian state: The case of Carl Peters, in G. Eley & J. Retallack (eds.), *Wilhelminism and its legacies: German modernities, imperialism and the meaning of reform, 1890-1930*, p.158.

<sup>21</sup> UNISA Archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 23-24: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1887-12-24 and 1888-04-08.

<sup>22</sup> There was no mention made as to what Mr. Fischer's first name was. At one point in her diary she referred to Mr. Fischer as Mr. Fleischer, however for the purposes of this study the music director will henceforth be referred to as Fischer.

<sup>23</sup> R. Smith Kipp, Why can't a woman be more like a man? Bureaucratic contradictions in the Dutch Missionary Society, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.) *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 155.

<sup>24</sup> As commented by Dr. U. Linder from Universität Bunderwehr.



that Grützner described the letter she had written as having been very kind and she added that she was thankful for the help he provided her in writing it.<sup>25</sup>

A few years later on 23 October 1889, Steinwender received a letter from Hermann Kuschke. The content of this letter was a marriage proposal. Steinwender wrote in her diary that she felt no attraction to this man, and that she did not want to be married. Before making up her mind, however, she yet again, decided to consult her host parents. She disclosed her feelings to Grützner, saying that she did not feel love for this man. Grützner's advice was that had Steinwender been his daughter, he would advise the marriage.<sup>26</sup> Steinwender always valued her host father's opinion. For the missionaries marriage was a partnership in which duties were divided equally. Each party had certain roles to fulfil. Marriage was considered to be necessary, and, in general, was not romanticised. Therefore, despite Steinwender barely knowing the man who proposed to her, the marriage would serve as a lucrative partnership for both him and her.<sup>27</sup> Another possible reasoning for Grützner having encouraged the marriage between Steinwender and Kuschke, as opposed to Fischer, was that Kuschke was himself a Berlin Missionary. Fischer, being a music director, fell outside of the confines of the mission society. Steinwender would not be less of a loss to the mission society should she become the wife of a Berlin missionary.

After some thought, Steinwender asked Kuschke whether they could postpone the proposal, and thus give them an opportunity to get to know each other, but Kuschke told her that this was not possible. Steinwender did not write what the reasoning for such an abrupt response was, or if there was any. That evening she and Kuschke announced to the Grützners that they in fact were now engaged.<sup>28</sup>

The new couple and the Grützners went to relate the happy news to their friends – the Mülkes and Sandrocks. When they got home, Mr. Gützner read the *Ehstandslied*, “*Voller Weisheit, voller Kraft, voller Wunder, voller Kunst*”. Johanna slept with Steinwender in her room that evening. However, Steinwender barely got any sleep that night.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 3-4: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-04-19, 1886-04-21 and 1886-04-29.

<sup>26</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 51: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-10-23.

<sup>27</sup> K. Rütger, *The power beyond: Mission strategies, African conversion and the development of a Christian culture in the Transvaal*, p. 62.

<sup>28</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 51: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-10-24.

<sup>29</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 51: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-10-24.

The events of the next months rolled past fairly quickly. On 2 November, a letter arrived from Steinwender's fiancé with her engagement ring. In the letter he raised his concern that she had not written him yet. Steinwender responded promptly to his request. While she was busy with the letter, her host father walked in and suggested that she deliver the letter personally. She, yet again, obeyed her host father and went to see her fiancé in Bloemfontein.

The diary ended shortly after her return to Bethanie. Her last entry goes as such: "I have, in the mean time given my diary to Hermann [Kuschke]. I am very lucky with my love for him, and his love for me". It ends with a prayer to God.<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 7:** Adele Kuschke neé Steinwender and Hermann Kuschke. Taken in 1915.  
From: From: L. Zöllner, *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents* (Pretoria, 1984), p. 549.

## 2. Steinwender's relationship with the women in Bethanie

When Steinwender arrived in Bethanie, she initially sought to please Mrs. Grützner (see figure 8). When her host parents went away and left the house under Steinwender's care, she went to extreme lengths to ensure that her host mother would not be disappointed upon her return.<sup>31</sup> As the years wore on, tension between these two women ensued and their battleground was mainly on the domestic front, as will be explained in following paragraphs. Yet, considering the community Steinwender found herself in was very small, it was only natural that emotions would run high after a while, purely on account of the confines of this

<sup>30</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 52: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1899-12-19.

<sup>31</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 4-5: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-05-05 – 1886-05-19.

community. Steinwender also encountered tension with some of the other women that were living there at the time, especially when it came to Mrs. Sandrock.

The first encounter Steinwender had with these women was in June 1886, when she was informed by Grützner that the women were speaking about her. The topic under discussion was how abnormal it was of Steinwender to be re-reading all of her letters she had received from her family and friends in Germany. Although she took the matter up with her host mother, it still bothered her endlessly that people gossiped.<sup>32</sup> Throughout her diary Steinwender made several references to the sordidness of gossiping, a habit of Mrs. Grützner that only further aggravated their relationship.



**Figure 8:** Marie Friederika Juliane Grützner and Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner.  
From: L. Zöllner, *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents* (Pretoria, 1984), p. 530.

Steinwender and Mrs. Grützner's feuds were played out on the domestic front and it mainly was over household matters, be it over there being too little salt in the soup, the ringing of the dinner bell too early, the size of a teapot being used, the food for the workers etc. The gendered perception was that the household was the female domain. Although in recent studies it has shown that women living in colonies had more power to move from the private sphere,<sup>33</sup> it still remained the one area where a woman could exercise almost complete

<sup>32</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 7: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-06-22 and 1886-06-23.

<sup>33</sup> D.J. Walther, Gender construction and settler colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894-1914, *The Historian* 66(1), March 2004, p. 15 and 17.

control. In the case of the Grützner's household, there existed two adult women who found themselves competing over this space.

There are several possible reasons for the animosity that sometimes prevailed between these two women. One can argue that it simply was a case of two people living in a confined area that needed to release some stress, or one can take it from a deeper level. Steinwender admired Grützner. In her eyes he very rarely did anything wrong, and any advice he had to impart, she accepted. It could, therefore, have been the case of a mild jealousy that caused her to be stand-offish to his wife. Grützner respected his wife, and considered her to be a very courageous woman. He mentioned this in an account that detailed Swazi warriors approaching them, and Mrs. Grützner's bravery that she showed in the face of danger.<sup>34</sup> Grützner's praise for his wife could have affected Steinwender, in the sense that it only increased the possible competition she felt she had with her host mother. This competition was unlikely to have been for Grützner's affection. Instead it was most probably for his approval (him being the dominant male in the household).<sup>35</sup> Steinwender could possibly have been of the opinion that Grützner's approval could have earned her more respect within the community. It could also have helped her gain more acceptance amongst the other residents of Bethanie. Mrs. Grützner, in turn, could have been apprehensive towards a younger woman in the house that held her husband up on a pedestal. This was similar to an argument used by a Dutch missionary against sending single women into the field.<sup>36</sup> Although his point was contested, considering it is a much generalised statement, one wonders whether it might not have been the case in this particular situation.

Along a different line, there could also have been jealousy on Mrs. Grützner's part in that Steinwender was now in charge of her daughter's education. Mrs. Grützner was the former teacher of her daughters, and it was not made clear why she ceased to do so.<sup>37</sup> It could possibly have been on account of her duties as a mother and aiding in her husband's missionary work took up too much of her time. Steinwender was recruited at a time when

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<sup>34</sup> H. Tscheusner, Heinrich Grützner, 1834-1910, *Die Brücke* 30(1), February 1961 30, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> At a missionary conference held in Grahamstown in June 2007, D. Gaitskell, commented that C. Brontë's Jane Eyre bears resemblance to Steinwender's situation. At the same conference Gunther Pakendorf mentioned Khäte Kühne, who, like Steinwender was a teacher. Kühne elevated her status by marrying a prominent Berlin Missionary. Another reference to a woman who was in a similar position to Steinwender was the wife of Klaas Koen, a black Missionary. Their daughter published an account of her mother's life.

<sup>36</sup> R. Smith Kipp, Why can't a woman be more like a man? Bureaucratic contradictions in the Dutch Missionary Society, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.) *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 156.

<sup>37</sup> H. Tscheusner, Heinrich Grützner, 1834-1910, *Die Brücke* 30(1), February 1961, p. 10

mission societies started realising that the wives needed help in performing all of their duties. Although under duress, it was finally decided to send single women to the mission stations to assist the wives.<sup>38</sup> This responsibility could have been taken away from her against her will. Steinwender's independence could also have affected Mrs. Grützner. Steinwender earned her own salary and had more freedom of movement than what Mrs. Grützner had. The missionary wife was perceived to be an 'appendage' to the missionary, the teacher, on the other hand, was the 'professional worker'.<sup>39</sup> The irony is that Steinwender wanted to be accepted on the domestic front, despite the pride she held for her position as a teacher.

When it came to the arguments between Steinwender and Mrs. Sandrock, it was on a different level to those Steinwender had with Mrs. Grützner. These arguments surrounded Steinwender's disapproval of Mrs. Sandrock's methods of raising her children. The latter appeared to have considered herself to outrank the former, purely on the basis that she was a mother. When her son, Theodor Sandrock, did not want to go to a nearby fountain, because there was an ostrich, which he was afraid of, Mrs. Sandrock yelled at him for being afraid of the animal. Steinwender took Theodor's side by reminding Mrs. Sandrock that she had caused the fear in her child. To this she did not take kindly and told Steinwender: "You always consider other people to be dumb, you also are over-sensitive. From now on I will place no worth on your opinions that is until you have children of your own."<sup>40</sup> When one considers the first statement made by Mrs. Sandrock ("you always consider other people to be dumb") it could imply somewhat of an inferiority complex that Mrs. Sandrock held towards Steinwender. Could it be the case that Mrs. Sandrock could have envied Steinwender being a professional worker?

Not all the relations Steinwender had were filled with tension though. Despite there having been a clear division between Mrs. Sandrock and Steinwender, based on marital status, the two did get along more often than not. However, the one individual that came closest to a friend to Steinwender was Johanna Grützner. Practically from the word go, these two got along very well. Although many years her junior, and also her pupil, the two developed a strong relationship. Even though she gained a confidante in Bethanie, the age gap did at times come into play. One evening Steinwender, desperate to speak to someone, confessed

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<sup>38</sup> M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus, Introduction: Gendered missions at home and abroad, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> J. Haggis, Ironies of emancipation: Changing configurations of 'women's work' in the 'mission sisterhood' to Indian women, *Feminist review*, p. 108.

<sup>40</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 28: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1888-06-27.

things to Johanna that she herself said was too much for a child to understand.<sup>41</sup> This example provides one with an understanding of the frustration Steinwender must have felt living in between these ‘two worlds’. As the years wore on, the friendship faced many challenges. Johanna on one occasion also broke Steinwender’s trust in her. The girl, out of curiosity, read Steinwender’s diary on several occasions. Although she showed maturity by confessing this to Steinwender, this event placed a blemish on their relationship.



**Figure 9:** Johanna Heese née Grützner and Carl August Daniel Heese.  
 From: L. Zöllner, *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendents* (Pretoria, 1984), p. 530

Johanna being Steinwender’s pupil also hampered their friendship. As her teacher, Steinwender took on the responsibility to educate and discipline Johanna. Being friends and equals one minute, and then being on two different power levels added certain complexities to their relationship. Johanna, at least on one occasion, would be disrespectful towards Steinwender in the classroom. When she overheard Johanna referring to Steinwender as “she”, Steinwender was not impressed. She asked Johanna to repeat the sentence, but this time in a respectful manner. Johanna kept silent. Steinwender scolded her, by telling her that either she repeated the sentence, or she would have to leave the classroom. Johanna did

neither. Eventually Johanna burst into tears, but she still did not speak, nor did she leave the classroom. Steinwender would not stand for this and ended up dragging Johanna to her (Steinwender’s) room and locking the door. When she went to fetch Johanna later that day, she gave her a speech. Johanna was told that to cry is pointless, and that she was now old enough to know that she (Steinwender) demanded excellence and obedience from her students. She continued that the school system was “holy”. As a friend, she could not have demanded it of Johanna, but as a teacher she would have. Steinwender asked her kindly to return to the class and to repeat the sentence and then all would be forgotten. She could also

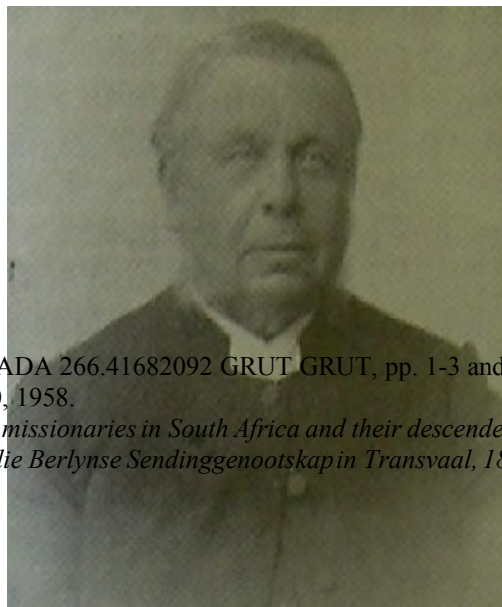
<sup>41</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 19: Adele Steinwender’s diary, 1887-12-16.

redeem herself in front of her peers. At first Johanna was hesitant, but eventually she submitted to her teacher's request.

Despite these complications, the two remained friends. On the eve of her engagement to Hermann Kuschke, Johanna slept over in Steinwender's room. This signifies the bond the two had up until the very last days in Bethanie.

### 3. Heinrich Grützner

The individual who made the largest impact on Steinwender during her stay in Bethanie was the superintendent of the Berlin Mission Society of the Orange Free State, Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner (see figure 10). On 20 March 1834, Grützner was born in Strehlen in Germany. He was the first son born to his mother's second husband. In her first marriage she had had five children. Although his father wanted Grützner to follow in his footsteps as a rope-maker, Grützner was not over enthused and opted to become a locksmith instead. Grützner arrived in Durban in 1859 as a missionary from Berlin, Germany. He continued in this trade for seven and a half years, at which point he joined the Berlin Mission Society.<sup>42</sup> Before having settled in Bethanie in 1878, which is where Steinwender got to know him, he was stationed in Lydenburg and Botshabelo. It was in Lydenburg, in 1862, when Grützner married Marie Nachtigal, who was one of the first two missionary women in Transvaal. Two years after his arrival in Bethanie, in 1880, Grützner became the superintendent for the Berlin Mission Society in the Orange Free State and in 1908 he was promoted to superintendent of the Berlin Mission in the entire South Africa. The superintendent was the person who formed the link between the Committee in Germany who issued the orders, and the missionary station. He was also responsible for the behaviour of each missionary under his jurisdiction.<sup>43</sup>



<sup>42</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.41682092 GRUT GRUT, pp. 1-3 and 21: Lebenserinnerungen von Heinrich Grützner 1834-1910, 1958.

<sup>43</sup> L. Zöllner, eds., *The Berlin missionaries in South Africa and their descendants*. pp. 118-119; D.W. van der Merwe, *Die geskiedenis van die Berlynse Sendinggenootskap in Transvaal, 1860-1900*, p. 18.

**Figure 10:** Carl Heinrich Theodore Grützner  
From: *Die Brücke* 30 (1), February 1961, p. 4.

After one year of having lived in Bethanie, Steinwender's diary entries started to contain more information on the social relations she developed within the community. During this time, her diary entries alluded to her relationship with Grützner being of a paternalistic nature. On more than one occasion, when Grützner sent a letter to his children he would address it to all four his children, which therefore included Steinwender.<sup>44</sup> Being a single woman in Bethanie, it is very likely that Grützner considered her to have fallen under his care. He therefore had to treat her like he would any of his other daughters. As the years progressed, this relationship became more complicated, as will be discussed throughout this section.

Although there were definite instances of a paternalistic relationship ensuing between Grützner and Steinwender, it was still the early years, and there is evidence to suggest that he viewed her as an adult. As the years wore on this relationship changed, and she became more and more like a daughter of his. However, in 1886, he would welcome her opinion on his sermons, followed by discussions on teaching, the school syllabus and even on his daughter, Johanna. On one occasion he came to the school while Steinwender was teaching and reprimanded the children for not pulling their weight with scholarly matters, despite the good quality education they were receiving from Steinwender. These examples indicate that Grützner had trust in Steinwender when it came to school matters. Yet again this was the beginning of her stay, and things did not remain as simple.<sup>45</sup>

The following year, 1887, Steinwender started writing more prominently of her connection with the Grützners. It appeared, from an entry marked 18 September 1887, that she considered herself to have become part of the family. Grützner, on that day, had informed Steinwender that he would be taking his daughter, Johanna, with him to Kimberley for four weeks. She wrote that she was very upset that she had not been asked. It is not clear whether she was upset, because she was not invited to join them, or because her permission had not been asked to remove Johanna from the school for that time. What makes one more inclined to believe the former, is her next sentence, in which she told herself that she must in future

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<sup>44</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 9 and 10: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-07-17 and 1886-07-27.

<sup>45</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 14 and 16: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-09-26 and 1886-11-09.



only regard the Grützner children as students. Could the possible alternative have been siblings? At that stage she had been living and working closely with this family. The Grützners were her host parents and it is not unlikely that she formed a familial bond with them.<sup>46</sup>

Steinwender looked up to Grützner, and as the years progressed one notices what an impact Grützner's opinions had on Steinwender. In December 1887 she wrote that Grützner had remarked on her character. He stated that although she has many wonderful qualities, such as honesty and compassion, they become paralysed by her impatience and he included other "hurtful" characteristics.<sup>47</sup> Steinwender included some instances when Grützner hurt her feelings through both words and actions. When she gave him a pair of gloves for his birthday and he did not thank her for it, she was dismayed. She returned to her room and prayed until she felt better.<sup>48</sup> In February 1889, after Steinwender discussed school matters with Grützner, she went into her room very upset. Grützner came into her room and wanted to apologise for having upset her by not showing interest in school matters. He took her hand and asked for her forgiveness not only for that evening, but also for the cases in the past. She was delighted by this.<sup>49</sup>

Steinwender assumed various roles in her relationship with Grützner. She was his colleague, his friend, and was often categorised as his daughter. One evening, the day before New Year's Eve 1888, Steinwender went with her host parents to the Sandrocks. Grützner was wearing a hat that Steinwender had made for him. The hat had become old and did not look very nice anymore. Steinwender told him, that he should wear the new one that he got for Christmas instead. She did not take kindly to him having replied, "Now both women are playing boss over me". He apologised to her on several occasions afterwards, ensuring her that he only meant it in jest.<sup>50</sup> On another occasion in February 1889, when she was in a very good mood around the dinner table and was laughing merrily, Grützner remarked that it did him good that Steinwender laughed so heartily. He added that maybe they should have half-burned food more often if it would allow her to laugh so readily. In a concluding note in this entry, Steinwender wrote how humiliated she felt about this remark. Whenever he complimented her, had a heart-to-heart with her, any form of physical contact – be it a hand

<sup>46</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 17: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1887-09-18.

<sup>47</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 17: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1887-12-01.

<sup>48</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 43: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-03-20.

<sup>49</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 14 and 17: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-09-26 and 1887-09-18.

<sup>50</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 37: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1888-12-30.

shake, or a parting kiss, every time he took her side, etc. she described the feeling of joy she felt. His negative remarks seemed to affect her greater than any one else's, yet she was very forgiving towards him should he criticise her. The one example was when he wanted to discuss Steinwender having slapped one of the children of the Mülke's<sup>51</sup> for being disobedient in school. Mr. Grützner, after having confirmed with Steinwender that this was indeed the case, told her this was a very inappropriate thing to do. He added that it was this aspect of her character that made her very "one-sided". She wrote that despite him having been judgemental with regards to the event, he did so in a very kind and loveable manner. In her diary she wrote how much she would miss him, and made no reference to a potential feeling of longing to any other member of the family. In September 1889, he asked her opinion on his sermon. She told him that "when it comes to him, she practises a consideration that he will only understand once he is in heaven". He understood her and replied "You mean because I am a father of a household, or the husband of my wife, or because I have obligations in other aspects". Steinwender was delighted that he understood.<sup>52</sup>

#### 4. Concluding remarks

"Often the unconventional is a collage of familiar notions merged in unfamiliar ways".<sup>53</sup> Steinwender was exactly that. She was an ordinary woman who desired what was considered to be the norm in the nineteenth century. She wanted to find her place within the domestic side of life, but the events that took place in her life led her onto a different path. Instead of being financially dependent on a husband, Steinwender found herself in the employ of a male dominated industry. There is no clear cut evidence that suggests that she chose this route, or if it was forced upon her. However, considering that she turned down the first marriage proposal, there is a chance that she chose the career path. This appears somewhat contradictory to those entries in which she stipulated that she wanted to find that life partner. Yet it could have been the case that at that point in her life her affections lay elsewhere at the time of the proposal.

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<sup>51</sup> The Mülkes were another missionary family in Bethanie. Steinwender was also the Mülkes' children's teacher.

<sup>52</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 41, 46, 49 and 50: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-02-18, 1889-05-24, 1889-08-31 and 1889-09-30.

<sup>53</sup> J.B. Margadant, Introduction: Constructing selves in historical perspective, in J.B. Margadant (eds.), *The new biography: performing femininity in nineteenth century France*, p. 2.

These reflections in Steinwender's diary reveal the perception of an individual within a small missionary community. The prevalence of a patriarchal system and the place of woman within the community are all highlighted within her description of day-to-day events. It is a representation of an internal struggle that a woman endured who did not fit within the confines of what was considered to be a woman's role. Her being the outsider, in the sense that she was the only woman of the community who was employed affected the relationships she developed. These relationships were somewhat ambiguous. Grützner considered her as a colleague, yet she was also treated as a child. Johanna Grützner and Steinwender were friends one minute, and then found themselves on different power levels (teacher and pupil) the next. Finally, her relationship with Mrs. Grützner, although riddled with tension, also had elements of friendship. It was after all Mrs. Grützner who was the first person to address Steinwender by her name, as will be discussed in the following chapter, on nationalism.

#### IV. Nationalism within the Mission in Bethanie

Missionary activity can be viewed as more a feminine, as opposed to, a colonial agenda, which involved more military and administrative functions. Missionaries opted for a peaceful lifestyle, and were associated with a more gentle nature.<sup>1</sup> Another aspect that was prevalent within the German Mission Societies was nationalism. The German missionaries in Bethanie chose to create an environment that would enable them to preserve their *Germanness*. The German culture was not only entrenched through education and social practices, although these are the two aspects represented most clearly in Steinwender's diary. Steinwender left Germany during a time when nationalism was very predominant in this recently confirmed nation-state. This combined with her patriotism is the reason why one cannot ignore the notion of nationalism when analysing her diary.

Although South Africa was not a German colony, the missionaries adopted a colonial lifestyle throughout their stay. German colonisation was not devoid of nationalistic principles. Recent research has revealed how the act of obtaining foreign territories under the German flag was more as a result of nationalistic sentiments, than the former economic reasoning that was provided. Otto von Bismarck's foreign policy was largely influenced by nationalism, hence his support of German colonial conquests that took place between 1885 and 1887.<sup>2</sup>

In the following sections Steinwender's diary is scrutinised in conjunction with nationalism. Included are the relations Steinwender had with the black people living in and around Bethanie, and the superior attitude she held towards them. There are also aspects of her diary that suggest that she was not alone when it came to these sentiments. The other missionaries present were also very likely to have held a racist attitude to the local population.

The final section uncovers how, although the missionaries tried to create a 'little Germany' in Bethanie, they nevertheless had become acclimatised to their new home. By the time

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<sup>1</sup> R. Smith Kipp, Why can't a woman be more like a man? Bureaucratic contradictions in the Dutch Missionary Society, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> A. Perras, Colonial agitation and the Bismarckian state: The case of Carl Peters, in G. Eley & J. Retallack (eds.), *Wilhelminism and its legacies: German modernities, imperialism and the meaning of reform, 1890-1930*, pp. 155-157, 160 and 165.

Steinwender arrived, the missionary families were already well-established in South Africa. Dealing with the local population, a brand new environment and therefore different practices, all contributed to the missionaries losing a small part of their strict German principles.

## 1. Racial superiority

Steinwender wrote very little of the black community that lived within Bethanie at the time. Save one example, each time that a reference was made to the local black population, she would make very brief mention of it. There is a noticeable lack of description in her writing of black people, as opposed to the white people she came into contact with during her time in Bethanie.

During Steinwender's first year in Bethanie, she listed the activities that the servants completed, or did not complete. This was at the same time that the Grützner's entrusted her to manage the household, as they were travelling to Beaconsfield in the Orange Free State.<sup>3</sup> Steinwender's entries would list the tasks performed by the servants. She also indicated what type of punishment was exercised should a servant not adhere to their duties. For example, in May 1886, she wrote that Salomo, a servant of the Grützners, was denied meat for his meal as a result of him not having scrubbed the buckets.<sup>4</sup>

There were also a few entries where she mentioned the religious involvement of black people, whether it was the sermon they attended or about their contributions to the music during the service. Steinwender played the piano in the 'black' church and also, it seemed, gave music instruction to the church choir. Whether this was a permanent duty of hers, or whether she only did so on occasion is not clear. She mentioned three people, Simon Tau, Simon Sekuje and Johannes Segolodi who all formed part of the church choir. This became evident when Steinwender wrote of having written out the music notes for the tenors for them.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The reason for their having traveled is not mentioned within the diary.

<sup>4</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 5: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-05-08.

<sup>5</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 42: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-03-17.

Steinwender was involved with the black people and church activity. There was a church specifically designed for black people in Kimberley. Even though she would play the accompanying instrument at some of these church sermons, it did not change her views of European superiority. For example, in one entry she reflected on a church service held for black people. She wrote that since she struggled a bit to understand what the sermon was about, the black people must have been left entirely confused. There was nothing to suggest that her having had trouble to grasp the sermon had anything to do with a language barrier of sorts. It appeared that the message that the pastor tried to preach was very complicated. The remark that she made in her diary pertaining to this event indicates that she viewed herself to have been of a higher intellect than what the black people were. In another entry of Steinwender's the same view point, yet from an opposing perspective took shape. Grützner had asked her whether his sermon he had delivered was not too simple for the white people. This is another indication of the different perception of the aptitude of people based on their race.<sup>6</sup>

Steinwender, on other occasions, made brief remarks of her having ridden home with a Koranna and having received a Koranna broach as a gift. Her silence on the racial matter suggests that she did not become involved with the indigenous community. It is also possible that she distanced herself from them purposefully. There was an element of superiority that prevailed in the mindset of the missionaries when they compared themselves to the local black population. Mrs Grützner still remarked to Steinwender that it upsets her that she puts in so much effort whilst making the food for the servants.<sup>7</sup> Steinwender, therefore, was not the only one who believed herself to be superior to the black people. Other accounts attest to this mentality. In a collection of memoirs of German women living in South Africa during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries entitled *Unsere Frauen Erzählen*,<sup>8</sup> the subjects also tended to neglect the local black communities that they encountered. In a description of the remoteness of the area she grew up in, Martha Wehrmann, made specific mention of how far removed the next white people were.<sup>9</sup> This signifies that the local population did not serve as possible companions to Wehrmann. "German women had to be racists, and in so doing support German colonialism and nationalism".<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 14: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-09-26.

<sup>7</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 15: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-11-01.

<sup>8</sup> J. Hesse (ed.), *Unsere Frauen Erzählen*. Kroondal, 1980.

<sup>9</sup> M. Wehrmann, *Klein und verwaist nach Südafrika* (ed. J. Hesse, *Unsere Frauen erzählen*), p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> D.J. Walther, Gender construction and settler colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894-1914, *The Historian* 66(1), March 2004, p. 16.

The missionaries were often accused of having been colonial agents. In the case of the German missions in South Africa, they were not situated within a German colony, but a British one. It should also be borne in mind that Germany only became a colonial empire in 1884,<sup>11</sup> one year before Steinwender set foot on South African soil. Despite this, the missionaries were still white and European, and therefore were not viewed to be separate from the colonial effort.<sup>12</sup> The missionaries also tended to side with the Boer powers. In the case of Bethanie, the missionary C.F. Wuras had requested that the Mission Station fall under the Orange Free State.<sup>13</sup> With their having chosen sides, so to speak, they were very possibly viewed with some form of scepticism by the indigenous black people. In November 1888 this became evident when Steinwender brought some left over food to some of the black residents of Bethanie. The response was “We aren’t pigs”, thus depicting their view that the food they were being served is of the same quality as what would be fed to pigs. This reaction could indicate how the black people considered to have been perceived by the white missionaries in the area. When Steinwender returned, she and the Grütznern ate the left-over food. Grützner went into the kitchen and said to the black people, who had refused the food, that the “white pigs” have eaten it all. The closing remarks of that entry reveals how Grützner explained that no one would blame them had they explained, in a gracious manner, that they were not accustomed to eating left-over food that had all been placed in the same pot. However, he does not approve of their mode of speech.

This entry exposes a cultural barrier that existed. The black people refused the food, as it served as an insult to them, whereas the Grütznern and Steinwender considered them to have been rude and ungrateful. Grützner’s remark of him disapproving of their manner of talking could also indicate his perception of white superiority over black. He does not mind the rebuffing of the food, provided it was done in a courteous manner. Yet, he did not respond to the matter at hand in a courteous manner, by stating that the white pigs have eaten the food. It is a somewhat aggressive statement that was made. Another factor that comes to the fore is with regards to the entry itself. Steinwender seemed in this instance to have abandoned her somewhat superficial accounts of her interaction with the

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<sup>11</sup> G. Pakendorf, “For there is no power but of God”: The Berlin mission and the challenges of colonial South Africa, *Missionalia* 25(3), November 1997, p. 257.

<sup>12</sup> L.N. Predelli, Sexual control and the re-making of gender: The attempt of nineteenth century Protestant Norwegian women to export western domesticity to Madagascar, *Journal of women’s history* 12(2), Summer 2000, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> H.J. van Aswegen, *Die verhouding tussen blank en nie-blank in die Oranje Vrystaat, 1854-1902*, p. 49.

local black culture. Could this observation of hers purely have been on account that Grützner had defended her, as opposed to cultural observations?

The missionaries at the Bethanie mission station did set themselves apart from the local inhabitants. Towards the end of Steinwender's stay, Mrs. Grützner asked her to keep an eye on Johanna when she and her husband were not present. Mrs. Grützner added that she did not want Johanna to become friends with the *volgies*<sup>14</sup> and that she trusted Steinwender with this responsibility on account of her being older and more responsible. With Mrs. Grützner's statement, one can assume that Johanna was mingling with the local black children. Johanna was born in South Africa and having only known the South African environment, she might have been more acclimatised to it. Yet, the adults responsible obviously did not see white and black children playing together as a constructive pastime.<sup>15</sup> In the accounts of the women in *Unsere Frauen erzählen*, the majority of the authors referred to other white missionary children as their playmates and not the local black children.

Steinwender observed and identified with the spirit of paternalism that existed between the missionaries and the local population. She wrote of black twins being named Grützner and Sandrock, after the two missionary families that resided in Bethanie. After Grützner returned from a trip to Kimberley, he pointed out some observations he had made to Steinwender. Grützner had had an encounter with a black man named Titus. Titus explained to Grützner that that he found white people to be strange. White people, he stated, would go to the goldfields in order to find gold. Black people would not do that. Instead they want cattle. After Grützner reiterated Titus' comments to Steinwender, he continued by explaining black peoples' "habits and customs". Steinwender did not elaborate on what Grützner discussed. Instead she wrote a few sentences in point format that do not really offer much of an insight as to the black peoples "habits and customs".<sup>16</sup> One wonders why she included such an entry. It appears as if she did not display a particular interest in learning of cultural aspects other than her own, yet she chose to include this. It is possible that it was written in almost a key-phrase format for a future reminder to herself, or was it simply because Grützner imparted knowledge that she wanted to record?

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<sup>14</sup> Local black children.

<sup>15</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 46: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-05-11.

<sup>16</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 14-15: Adele Steinwender's diary, 0886-10-13 and 1886-10-17.



For the British colonists who settled in Africa, black people were considered to be on the same level as lower class servants and the poor in Britain. Instead of being treated like adults who were capable of making their own judgments, they were viewed as children who required constant supervision, correction and teaching.<sup>17</sup> The missionaries, also to a large extent, considered their converts to be more like children than adults.

## 2. Germany in South Africa

Steinwender never let go of Germany when she moved to Bethanie. She kept up her correspondence with friends and family in Germany. This communication was incredibly important to her, as she would record in her diary from whom she received letters and to whom she sent letters. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Steinwender was reprimanded for her having re-read her letters by the wives of the missionaries. A possible reasoning for having studied these letters was to overcome a feeling of homesickness.<sup>18</sup>

Although the community might have been opposed to her reading letters repetitively, they too played a part in creating a German environment in South Africa. The importance of nationalism amongst the German population should not be overlooked. J.S. Smith, an assistant professor in the department of German at Bowdoin College in Maine, argued that German women “saw themselves first as German then as females”.<sup>19</sup> As was quoted in an article on gender in German South West Africa appearing in *The Historian*, an historical journal, the president of the Women’s League in Germany, commented on the importance of the nationalistic role of women at the turn of the previous century:

Strengthening the feeling of home, strengthening the racial consciousness, protection of the physical and moral entirety, preservation of a healthy German progeny, those are the great national and cultural tasks of the German women in Southwest Africa.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> T.O. Beidelman, Altruism and domesticity: Images of missionary women among the Church Missionary Society, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 127.

<sup>18</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 7: Adele Steinwender’s diary, 1886-06-22 and 1886-06-23.

<sup>19</sup> J.S. Smith, A female old shatterhand? Colonial heroes and heroines in Lydia Höpker’s tales of Southwest Africa, *Women in German Yearbook* 19, 2003, p. 142.

Although these quotes refer to Southwest Africa, it applied to the missionary community in Bethanie as well. The missionaries maintained their German culture through various avenues, one being entertainment. After supper, they would read German literature out loud to one another, jokes relevant to Germany were told and at times German songs were sung. Germany was not only a subject matter for entertainment purposes, but also a serious topic of discussion that the missionaries lead.<sup>21</sup> The maintaining of one's culture was also prevalent amongst the European colonial settlers. These societies went to great lengths to cultivate their differences with the local populations.<sup>22</sup> The *auslandsdeutsche*, or Germans abroad, formed a category of people who had migrated to a foreign country. These people, although living outside of Germany still kept its connection with their country of origin by maintaining the bonds of ethnicity, language and racial heritage.<sup>23</sup>

The missionary community went to some effort in order to uphold the German language. They spoke German at home, their children were taught in German and whenever they conversed with one another it was in German. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is nothing that Steinwender wanted more than to be accepted by the Grütznern as part of their family, yet there was one aspect of the German language that actually contributed to her feeling of estrangement. In German one can address someone either with the formal *Sie* or the informal *du*. The children could address an adult that they were familiar with as *Tante*, whereas the more formal reference to an adult would be *Frau* if she was married or *Fräulein* if she is unmarried. Steinwender was strongly in favour of the children referring to her as *Tante*, and she wanted to be addressed by the Grütznern's as *du*. Despite Steinwender's wishes, Grütznern was not so eager for her to fall into the 'informal' category. He felt that the children needed to learn to speak German; otherwise they "will get all sorts of ideas". Thus to maintain the strict boundaries of the German language, Steinwender was reminded in the form of speech that she was the outsider.<sup>24</sup> What exacerbated her feeling of being alienated was when she heard Grütznern refer to Frieda Heese (a family friend who was also part of the Berlin Mission Community) as "du", while Steinwender was still referred to as "Sie".<sup>25</sup> This event took place in

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<sup>20</sup> D.J. Walther, Gender construction and settler colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894-1914, *The Historian* 66(1), March 2004, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 4, 12, 38 and 47: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-04-25, 1886-09-15, 1889-01-06 and 1889-06-20.

<sup>22</sup> W. Woodward *et al.* (eds.), *Deep histories: Gender and colonialism in southern Africa*, p. xxxii.

<sup>23</sup> B.D. Naranche, Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*: Emigration, colonial fantasy and German national identity 1848-1871, in E. Ames *et al.* (eds.), *Germany's colonial pasts*, p.23.

<sup>24</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 6: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-06-01.

<sup>25</sup> *Du* is the informal word for 'you', whereas *Sie* is the formal form.

December 1887, after Steinwender had been a part of the Bethanie community for over two years. She wrote how these formal references made her feel lonely and that she was permanently being held at arm's length. She added how much she missed being called by her name, as opposed to *Sie* or *Fräulein*. "I called you by your name; you are mine" is written as her closing remarks of the day taken from Isaiah 43: 1.<sup>26</sup> Ironically it was Mrs. Grützner, the person whom Steinwender experienced the most friction with, that was the first to address her by her first name, Adele. This was after Steinwender had been living in the community for four years.<sup>27</sup> This is an example of Steinwender having somewhat abandoned her strong sense of appropriate German conduct in exchange for acceptance. It is a reminder of how highly the correct language usage was entrenched within this re-created German community.

Although Steinwender longed for a more informal relationship at home, she insisted upon a formal relationship between her and her pupils. Her pupils could not adopt a more familiar language; they had to refer to her as *Fräulein*. When it came to the German language, Steinwender was very strict about it being spoken correctly. It annoyed her endlessly when her host mother received a letter from one of her daughters which was riddled with grammatical errors. At school she also did not take poor language usage lightly. Not only did the German language receive attention, but also the entire syllabus seemed to revolve around German. In one entry she wrote that her pupils got the task to revise Otto the Great and three poems of Scheffler. A task they had to perform within school hours was the drawing of the Alps.<sup>28</sup> They were not asked to draw the scenery of the environment they were living in. Even with art and creative drawing, their *Europeanness* was entrenched. On another occasion when one of the pupils was being disobedient, Steinwender chose to reprimand him in a way that reveals the strong German influence of the education she had to offer these children. After being unable to do the multiplication that Steinwender had given him, the boy was showing an "insulted expression". Steinwender addressed the class and stated "You have to know that Johannes Baumbach [the boy in question] is high and mighty and everyone else is inferior to him. He comes first, then the Kaiser and then the rest of the nation" [BB].<sup>29</sup> By wanting to entrench, very sarcastically, the supposed self-importance Johannes displayed,

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<sup>26</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 17 and 19: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1887-12-01 and 1887-12-24.

<sup>27</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 20: Adele Steinwender's, 1888-01-05.

<sup>28</sup> UNISA archives, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 14: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1886-10-08.

<sup>29</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 18: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1887-12-16.

Steinwender used German examples as her point of reference. Many, if not most, of the children had never even set foot in Germany, yet their schooling would not allow them to consider themselves as anything other than pure blooded Germans.

When nationalism was in full swing in Europe, education and upbringing became the base from which patriotic feelings were taught. It was established that these sentiments emerged through education as opposed to being inherent.<sup>30</sup> Steinwender's actions upon hearing the news of Kaiser Wilhelm's death on 9 March 1888, reveals how she enforced German patriotism within the school. She placed a portrait of the former German leader in a prominent place in the classroom. She wrote that there were church bells ringing across the land. The older children understood the importance of the moment a ruler passed away, but not the younger ones. Steinwender reminded the children that they were of German heritage and that it did not matter where they settled one day, they would always be first and foremost German. Steinwender gave the children a lesson on the Kaiser, and during their history lessons they had an opportunity to learn about men like the Kaiser. She spoke of him very poetically. Her lesson continues by informing her pupils that Wilhelm's successor, Friedrich III, was dangerously ill and that should God call him soon, they must pray that Prince Wilhelm II will have the wisdom to lead them.<sup>31</sup> She also told the children to pray for their fatherland. Her lesson closed with her leading them in song: "*Rühre Du die heiligen Flammen, die das Herz des Volks erneut.*"<sup>32</sup> The death of the Kaiser not only shook Steinwender, but also the rest of the community. A memorial service was held in Bloemfontein, which the Grütznern went to.<sup>33</sup>

A Dutch doctor once commented of the dangers of Europeans living in colonies. From his observation in the Indies, he concluded that by living abroad, Europeans ran the risk of losing their *pure* qualities as a result of the new environment they found themselves in. Nationalism was based on *ius sanguinis* (blood descent) and *ius soli* (place of birth) and it was widely believed that living in the colonies could compromise the effects of these concepts. The fear of losing one's national identity ignited a sense of paranoia. The Europeans would keep 'a closer eye' on their *native* servants and they narrowed their

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<sup>30</sup> A.L. Stoler, Sexual affronts and racial frontiers: European identities and the cultural politics of exclusion in colonial Southeast Asia, in F. Cooper & A.L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of empire: Colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*, pp. 200 and 213.

<sup>31</sup> Kaiser Wilhelm was succeeded by Friedrich III, but his reign was short-lived as he died in June of the same year. Wilhelm II was the next successor.

<sup>32</sup> Stoke the sacred flames that revitalise the heart of the people.

<sup>33</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 21 - 22: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1888-03-11.

social environments to prevent their children from playing with the local children and from the indigenous people to raise their children ‘incorrectly’.<sup>34</sup> In many of the missionary communities the children of the missionaries were sent back to their home countries to receive an education at home as opposed to within the colony so as not to corrupt their national identity. This was not the case with the children that Steinwender taught, though.

The community might have gone to great lengths to uphold their German culture, yet it became inevitable that certain adaptations would take place. Having lived in a different environment for such long periods of time would cause the missionaries to integrate themselves with the country of residence. Whether it was intentional or not, this became the case with the missionaries in Bethanie, as will be explained in the following section.

### **3. Acclimatisation to a *colonial lifestyle***

It became apparent in the way that Steinwender wrote in her diary that she was far less accustomed to a colonial lifestyle than what the other missionary families were. Although they all sought to uphold their *Germanness*, Steinwender, in certain instances, appeared to be more *German* than the rest.

The missionary families, like the colonialist families, had help from servants in their household. These servants were recruited from the local population and they were in charge of fetching both the water and firewood, as well as cooking and cleaning.<sup>35</sup> This allowed the women more free time to perform other household duties. In Germany this was a luxury, whereas in the colonies it was commonplace. Steinwender often accused the wives of the missionaries of being idle. In one entry Mrs. Grützner suggested that she let one maid go (at the time it appeared that the Grützners had at least five servants). Her reasoning was that she had two grown daughters in the house that could help out with

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<sup>34</sup> A.L. Stoler, Sexual affronts and racial frontiers: European identities and the cultural politics of exclusion in colonial Southeast Asia, in F. Cooper & A.L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of empire: Colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*, pp. 213, 215 and 216.

<sup>35</sup> T.O. Beidelman, Altruism and domesticity: Images of missionary women among the Church Missionary Society, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p.125.

certain tasks. Steinwender found this very amusing. She did not consider either the daughters, or the mothers, hard working enough.<sup>36</sup>

In another entry Steinwender mentioned something that Mrs. Grützner had said that alluded to her host mother having become more acclimatised to another country. It was on the day that Mrs. Grützner told Steinwender that she had a dream in which she called Steinwender by her first name. Mrs. Grützner said that before she would speak to Steinwender about her dream, she would test out whether her using the more familiar term was correct by means of a game. She told herself that should her daughter name the number four in this game, she would speak to Steinwender.<sup>37</sup> This signified a certain amount of superstition on Mrs. Grützner's part, which could not have been considered appropriate with the missionary way of life. It is also doubtful that her husband would have approved of it. Despite this, Mrs. Grützner chose to abandon the *formal* German greeting for Steinwender, regardless of her husband's opinion on the matter.

Of the residents of Bethanie, most of the white population fell into three different phases of acclimatisation. Firstly, there was Steinwender, who was a new arrival from Germany and was still firmly German in all of her ways. Mr. and Mrs. Grützner on the other hand, showed signs of having become more comfortable with a more colonial way of living. They enjoyed certain luxuries and even made certain concessions. Then there was the case of Johanna, and possibly the other children at the mission station. She, as was mentioned in the section *Racial supremacy*, had made friends with the local black population, despite her parents' misgivings. It must have been easier for the children to adapt to their new environment, as many of them did not know Germany first hand; they only knew what they were taught in school and at home.

#### **4. Concluding Remarks**

When the missionaries were sent out into the field, they did so with the aim of converting the local cultures. They believed themselves to be superior to the local inhabitants, and that these inhabitants had to be taught the correct ways. It is for this reason, one would

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<sup>36</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, pp. 45 - 46: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1889-05-10.

<sup>37</sup> UNISA, Pretoria, ADA 266.4198092 KUSC, p. 20: Adele Steinwender's diary, 1888-01-05.

imagine, that the missionary community in Bethanie enforced their German belief systems not only onto the local black people, but also onto their own children.

Many of the children of the missionaries that were posted in Bethanie could only understand their German roots through theory. They drew the Alps, as opposed to the scenery of Bethanie, they learnt German history and literature. Despite living abroad, they had to show allegiance to the German Kaiser. Education was used as a means to entrench this, and Steinwender played her part in this.

Nationalism was clearly a prevalent feature within the missionary community of Bethanie, as attested by Steinwender's observations. Although gender and nationalism was separated for the purposes of this thesis, one can still observe that these two concepts are very interrelated. Apart from nationalism being responsible for defining gender roles within Bethanie itself, certain social events confirm the connection between gender and nationalism.

Mrs. Grützner on at least two occasions displayed a racist attitude. The one being when she asked Steinwender to ensure that Johanna does not play with the *volkies*, and the other when she reprimanded Steinwender for putting too much effort into the preparing of the meal for the black workers. On a separate occasion, however, Mrs. Grützner sided with a female servant against Steinwender. Steinwender had requested that Mrs. Grützner ask a servant to wash her windows for her. When the servant stated that she had indeed done so, Mrs. Grützner told Steinwender that that was the case. Mrs. Grützner stated that she remembered having personally requested this of the servant. Mrs. Grützner was the head of the domestic arena thus making her superior to Steinwender as well as the servant. Her word is law within that sector and therefore any command she gave must have been executed. With Steinwender questioning this, she upset this hierarchy.

## V. Conclusion

Steinwender was a German woman who lived in an independent Boer republic, at a time when British colonialism prevailed in South Africa. All of these factors illustrate what complexities shaped her environment on a broader scale. Looking more closely at her, she was a woman who was strongly influenced by nationalism which was dominant in Germany at the time. Not for one moment during her stay in Bethanie did she forget her heritage. Her sense of adaptability was possibly infringed by her reluctance to adjust to a new environment and also the community she lived in opted to create a 'little Germany' in Bethanie.

What makes her an interesting character was that she remained unmarried until what was considered, during those times, to be very late in her life. She did mention wanting to find a life partner, and it is possible that she felt ostracized because of her marital status. Another aspect that made her different from the rest of the people within her small community was that she was not formally trained as a teacher. She was confident in her teaching skills, yet she would at times have to battle with the parents in order to justify her teaching methods. It is probable that the families of the children she taught were critical, if not sceptical, of her lack of training. Considering the lengths the Berlin Mission Society went to train their missionaries, it is quite strange that they did not require the same from her.

The Berlin Mission Society was highly patriarchal. Women, like Steinwender, earned less than what their male compatriots did, while the wives of missionaries, who worked just as hard as the missionaries themselves, did not earn a salary at all. Some women who were employed in the field assumed more masculine qualities in order to get by. The men on the mission station also demanded subordination from the women which increased the stress levels of these female employees. This in turn caused illnesses and even premature departures.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that it was these demands that could have contributed to Steinwender's possible depression.

Steinwender was the only woman within the Bethanie missionary community to have been employed and earned a salary. This set her apart from the other women, which on the surface it appears to be quite an esteemed position, one to be proud of. Yet, Steinwender

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<sup>1</sup> M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus, Introduction: Gendered missions at home and abroad, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 15.



did not always feel that way. Although she placed her occupation very high on her priority scale, she would often use it as a means to overcome the loneliness she felt on the social side of life. In some of her entries she seemed to write about how important her career was to her on days when she felt hurt or upset. Although she appeared to be a strong woman for having ventured to a foreign country, all by herself, to teach within a masculine community, she still found herself yearning to fit in somewhere in the hierarchical scheme created by the community.

One point of commonality between Steinwender and the Berlin Mission residents of Bethanie was the sense of nationalism that was imbued in their way of life. Steinwender depicts this in her diary. She was proud to be German and was intent on inculcating a strong German cultural identity in her students. The subject material provided to these children gives one a good indication of this. Was this the reason why these children were not sent abroad to receive their education? Could it possibly have been a covert prerequisite by the Berlin Mission Society authorities to prescribe a German-based curriculum in the mission's schooling system? One of nationalism's building blocks is education. Children are not born with a nationalistic spirit. They are taught this, and that is exactly what Steinwender did. The pupils were constantly reminded of the fact that they were German. They had mourned the loss of a Kaiser that was so far removed from their surroundings, which was basically completely irrelevant to their political environment. By entrenching such a firm sense of belonging to a country that most of these children did not end up settling in, could have caused a confused identity in some of these children.

Steinwender was not the only one that was guilty of this. The rest of the missionaries did the same. They condoned Steinwender's teaching, they wanted to uphold the German language and for entertainment purposes they stuck to German literature. The reason the missionaries were there was to convert another culture to Christianity. It was therefore their belief that, at least religiously, they were superior to their converts. Even though Germany did not have a colonial agenda in South Africa, the missionaries still conducted their lives with a sense of German nationalism.

There is a strong link between gender and nationalism, in the sense that nationalism can be viewed from a highly gendered perspective. The role of the woman in nationalism should not be over-looked. Mothers were used as icons to nationalistic movements.<sup>2</sup> These

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<sup>2</sup> A. Woollacott, *Gender and empire*, p. 112.

women, it was believed, were the ones that taught their children their national language, their culture and spurred on a patriotic feeling towards the national culture.<sup>3</sup>

Although the role of the mother was held in high regard, nationalism did not necessarily elevate the woman's position. In Prussia during the nineteenth century, the 'feminine' was still associated with weakness. The woman helped the national cause by having children and educating them in national ways. Therefore it did not remove her from the domestic sphere. On the contrary, it confined her to it even more so.<sup>4</sup> Thus, taking Steinwender into account, from a nationalistic standpoint, she could possibly have been considered to have neglected her feminine, nationalist duties.

The missionaries approached different cultures with the intent of converting them to a different spiritual belief system. In the case of the German missionaries it was slightly different to the British or American missionaries. The Germans wanted to convert the locals to Christianity, but they were not in favour of removing them from their cultural roots. (This could be interpreted as highly ambiguous, considering spirituality does form a rather significant part of culture). These missionaries wanted their converts to be taught in their own language, and not to become alienated from their traditions. Considering that nationalism formed an influential part of German culture, the missionaries felt to a certain extent that these nationalistic principles needed to be taught to the local population.<sup>5</sup>

The role of the missionary was considered to be similar to that of a mother. The mother played a crucial role in family development and was also considered to be a fundamental contributor to the inculcation of allegiance to the nation-state. Although both missionaries and mothers fulfilled a subordinate position, their value to a colonial authority was not overlooked.<sup>6</sup> The ideal missionary, according to one report by the governor of New Guinea (a German colony), was someone who would spread the German language and culture.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I. Blom, Gender and nation in international comparison, in I. Blom *et al.* (eds.), *Gendered nations: Nationalisms and gender order in the long nineteenth century*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> I. Blom, Gender and nation in international comparison, in I. Blom *et al.* (eds.), *Gendered nations: Nationalisms and gender order in the long nineteenth century*, p. 15, 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> P. Chatterjee, *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and post-colonial histories*, p. 119; G. Pakendorf, "For there is no power but of God": The Berlin mission and the challenges of colonial South Africa, *Missionalia* 25(3), November 1997, p. 264.

<sup>6</sup> N.T. Lutkehaus, Missionary maternalism: Gendered images of the Holy Spirit Sisters in colonial New Guinea, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 209.

<sup>7</sup> N.T. Lutkehaus, Missionary maternalism: Gendered images of the Holy Spirit Sisters in colonial New Guinea, in M.T. Huber & N.C. Lutkehaus (eds.), *Gendered missions: women and men in missionary discourse*, p. 209 and 211.

Therefore missionaries themselves held nationalistic responsibilities. They were considered to be in a strategic position to further these ideals, as they were in direct contact with local peoples elsewhere. Yet again, this was more the case with German colonies and less with the South African situation. However, despite these differences in political aspirations, one should keep that in the back of one's mind in the discussion of missionaries. They might not have purposefully been recruited to spread German nationalism, yet their colleagues posted in German colonies might have been encouraged to do just this. The German men and women who moved to different countries were also citizens of a country that was highly nationalistic. It is, therefore, also possible that purely on account of being German at that time one could have promoted nationalistic sentiments.

Steinwender was not a prominent or famous figure. On the contrary, she was an ordinary woman who found herself in an unusual position. Studying people like her reminds one how little society has in fact changed. The need to fit in somewhere and be acknowledged by society is a basic need in most human beings. Steinwender is not different in this way, although her life in Bethanie presents one with a unique case of a sole female employee in a male-dominated environment. Although she displayed strong characteristics by moving to South Africa as an unmarried woman in an era where women were perceived to have a predominantly domestic (family) role, she still had elements of weakness in her. She was not a super human being and it is precisely this humanness of her that makes her story an interesting one.

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