‘When Men Are Weak’: The Imperial Feminism of Frieda von Bülow

Lora Wildenthal

Frieda von Bülow (1857–1909) was one of the most influential colonialist women in Imperial Germany. She also forged connections between colonialism and feminism in her life and in her writings. Bülow’s life as a traveller to Africa, a tropical nurse, an author of fiction and non-fiction, and an activist on behalf of German colonialism in Africa and German women’s employment, offers scholars of gender, European feminism, and colonialism new insights into the political world of feminist colonialists at the turn of the century.¹

Bülow was probably the best-known woman in the German colonial movement before the First World War. The themes of her fiction and nonfiction included the German colonies, the industrialisation of Germany, the material and emotional difficulties facing women of the impoverished Prussian nobility and of the bourgeoisie, and racial conflict in the colonies and in Germany. As her writings show, her colonial, national, and sexual politics, as well as her personal relations, were based on a profound and explicit racial paranoia. To appreciate how prominently racial paranoia and hatred, on the one hand, and feminist concerns, on the other, inform her writing is to see how the histories of white racism and Euro-American feminism at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries cannot be written in isolation from each other. Bülow’s life and writings demonstrate the intertwining of those histories, both at the practical level of political activism and at the abstract level of the conceptualization of female emancipation.

The ‘imperial feminism’ of my title echoes the usage of Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, as well as Antoinette Burton’s more recent work on British ‘imperial feminists’.² Frieda von Bülow resembles in some ways the colonialist women that Burton and others have written about, yet Bülow’s political location among radical nationalists in Imperial Germany and the longer-term reception of her writings during the Nazi period raise questions specific to her and to German colonialism. ‘Imperial feminism’ was not just a British phenomenon, but rather took a variety of forms across Europe. **[End Page 53]**

Colonialist women faced a particular predicament as they tried to act on behalf of their race and nation: they had constantly to justify their importance to the imperial enterprise, even to

convinced colonialists. A German or other European man's right to be in the colonies was self-evident to Europeans across the political spectrum, even as debates raged over methods of colonisation and incidents of brutality. German and other European women had to give reasons for their presence in the colonies, and indeed in the colonial movement. They had to justify their presence by reference to a specifically (European) female contribution to colonialism. Over the thirty years of German colonial rule, German women colonialists (and some male colonialists) offered a number of such justifications, from colonial soldiers' and settlers' need for the selfless care of female nurses (a campaign that Bülow led in the 1880s) to the need for white women as potential mothers who could alleviate the purported dangers of race-mixing (a cause that Bülow supported in her last years).

Bülow's writing concerned itself with carving out a place for German women in the German colonial enterprise. As she recognised, the sexual order of Imperial Germany meant that women had fewer possibilities of representing their race or nation directly. Rather, they had to situate themselves in relation to German men and to work through the mediating figure of the German man as they sought to promote imperial and racial policies and to assume personal authority over indigenous persons in the colonies. In order to explain their connection to the German colonial empire, colonialist women had to explain their connection to German men first. Frieda von Bülow's writings are an extended commentary on the relations between (racially superior) German women; racial inferiors of both sexes; and men who were potential racial equals.

Rereading the history of European feminism with attention to imperialism has already done much to show that women known mostly for their feminist activities often also had an interest in colonialism. Likewise, women such as Frieda von Bülow who have come to scholarly attention through their colonialist activities in fact evinced feminist interests as well. Yet Bülow was reluctant to call herself a feminist.³ She is best seen in the context of those writing about the *Frauenfrage* (Woman Question). The nineteenth-century term 'Woman Question' was an intentionally depoliticised designation for issues facing European women that were, in fact, highly controversial. Indeed, even fierce anti-feminists in Germany believed that Germany had a Woman Question. The term blurred exactly the distinctions that feminist scholars look for today, such as the question of whether women's unfair treatment or Woman's supposedly problematic nature lay at the heart of women's social problems. What is important for the present argument is that Frieda von Bülow's contemporaries in the feminist press, including two leaders of the moderate bourgeois women's movement, Gertrud Bäumer and Helene Lange, read her as an authority on the Woman Question and shared her concerns about women's dilemmas.⁴ While it is problematic to **[End Page 54]** categorise Frieda von Bülow as a feminist of Imperial Germany, it would also be problematic to argue that she was absent from that history.

Some of Bülow's writings criticised the unequal and devalued treatment of women in society, law, and aesthetic works, and called for female emancipation in personal life, education, and careers. Other pieces she wrote, however, mocked feminist women through caricatures and denied the possibility of egalitarian bonds among women or emancipated relations between men and women. The apparent contradiction between these two perspectives found its resolution in the figure of racial hierarchy. Bülow made feminist goals contingent upon the establishment of racial hierarchies. Taken as a whole, Bülow's writings – whether fiction or non-fiction and whether set in Germany or in the colonies – suggest that German women could not and should

not be free unless the subordination of a range of racialised male and female ‘others’, from Jews to Africans, was ensured. Bülow repeatedly depicted the importance of a strong racially superior German man to social and sexual harmony. However, her fiction provides few successful examples of such a figure. Race is even more prominent than male domination as a principle of order in Bülow’s writings. For Bülow, race was real and ubiquitous. Social class and masculine and feminine virtue, by contrast, were not always what they seemed. German women’s freedom and self-development would be disastrous, Bülow implicitly claims, outside of a strong racial hierarchy. The imposition of sexual and colonial hierarchies in Germany as well as in Germany’s new colonies overseas was key to her woman-centred and colonialist politics.

Frieda von Bülow initiated a number of undertakings that were important to the development of German colonialism and especially to German women’s colonialist activism. In 1886 she cofounded the first secular colonialist organisation for women, the *Deutschnationale Frauenbund* (German National Women’s League).⁵ The League promoted female nursing on the model of the Red Cross in the new German colonies, raising money with teas, balls, and other events in order to send nurses and medical equipment to the colonies. In 1887, Bülow herself was one of the first two nurses to be dispatched, and she travelled to German East Africa (mainland Tanzania). After a disagreement with the League’s board and her departure from the organisation, Bülow returned to German East Africa in 1893 and became probably the first never-married German woman to own and run her own colonial plantation.

Bülow’s colonialist activism created a public image that in turn fuelled her writing career. She started her writing career with a published account of her 1887–8 journey as a nurse to German East Africa, which included her encounters with Carl Peters, Germany’s best-known colonial ‘hero’. During the 1890s, Bülow wrote fiction set in German East Africa, becoming the ‘founder of the German colonial novel’.⁶ Two colonial novels, *Tropical Rage* and *In the Promised Land*, contained thinly veiled portraits of Carl Peters and were especially successful.⁷ In the latter half of the 1890s, she [End Page 55] wrote the first of several novels and short stories dealing with women in modern, industrial Germany. She also wrote short non-fiction pieces about colonial policy and the Woman Question in such publications as Maximilian Harden’s political journal *Die Zukunft*, the liberal daily *Neue Freie Presse*, and the moderate bourgeois feminist periodical *Die Frau*. She was a successful author, and much of her fiction ran to multiple editions. Bülow’s friendships with the lay psychoanalyst and Nietzschean scholar Lou Andreas-Salomé, the lesbian feminist and photographer Sophia Goudstikker, and the poet Rainer Maria Rilke have given her a small place in current scholarship on German artists and writers. Bülow may yet figure in scholarship on lesbian literary milieux of pre-First World War Germany. Her friend and biographer Sophie Hoechstetter, as well as another friend, Toni Schwabe, were lesbian writers and early members of the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee*, an organisation defending gay and lesbian rights founded in 1897.⁸

Frieda von Bülow was also connected with political developments in Imperial Germany that cemented the annexation of colonies and that even foreshadowed the crisis of the Weimar Republic. Between 1884 and 1914, Germany controlled an overseas colonial empire in Africa, the Pacific Ocean, and China. German rule and Germans’ attempts to retain influence in the former colonies after 1914 left a lasting impact in those places. German colonialism also affected the shape of politics within Germany, primarily through the colonial movement, which existed

from just before the first annexations in 1884 until 1945. The historiography of German colonialism has focused on its links to the rise of Nazi fascism, for example through the works of radical nationalists of Imperial Germany.⁹ Bülow had personal ties to several leading radical nationalist politicians, such as Friedrich Lange and Carl Peters. Indeed, her love affair with Peters (1856–1918) has remained the best-known aspect of her life. In 1884 Peters founded one of the earliest colonialist organisations, the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation* (Society for German Colonisation). In 1885 he presented Bismarck with a collection of coerced and deceptive treaties that led to the annexation of German East Africa. He also helped found the Pan-German League in 1891, which historians have studied in light of its ideological similarities to Nazism. Like Peters, Bülow foreshadowed later Nazi thought in her writings and, like Peters, her colonial writings saw a posthumous rehabilitation under the Nazis.¹⁰

Like many of her fictional heroines, Bülow was long on pedigree but short on cash. The Bülows were one of Germany's oldest and largest noble clans. Her father, Baron Hugo von Bülow, was a Prussian consul in Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey) and died when Frieda, the oldest of five children, was twelve. Thereafter the family had to maintain appearances with little money, a situation that two of Bülow's novels describe.¹¹ Her mother Clotilde, née von Münchhausen, immersed herself in the Herrnhuter pietist community in Neudietendorf, Thuringia. Frieda and her sister Margarete, who were inseparable, read a great deal, wrote, and declared themselves atheists. As [End Page 56] adults, the sisters were gainfully employed as writers, nurses, governesses and teachers; indeed, the family finances obliged them to find paid employment. Frieda trained as a teacher in Berlin and taught for a short time at a girls' school in the early 1880s. None of the five Bülow children married.

Three of Bülow's siblings died young. Margarete, who was a protégée of the philosopher of language Fritz Mauthner and who had already enjoyed critical success as a fiction writer, drowned in 1884 at the age of twenty-four.¹² Bülow's mother died in 1891. In 1892 her brother Albrecht, an officer in German East Africa, died in a battle near Mount Kilimanjaro at the age of twenty-eight. Her younger brother Kuno committed suicide in 1893 at the age of twenty-five, immediately before he was to depart for German Southwest Africa. Only one sister, Sophie, lived longer than Frieda, who herself died at fifty-one of a long and painful illness.

Bülow stated that Margarete's deadly accident remained the most important event in her life, apart from her love affair with Carl Peters. Margarete died attempting to rescue a boy who had fallen through the ice while skating—playing the role of a heroine without any assistance from men who were among the bystanders. Frieda lost Margarete through Margarete's own bravery and through the men's cowardice. In novels such as *When Men Are Weak*, Frieda drew both upon Margarete's death and on her own experiences with Carl Peters as she treated the theme of disappointment and disillusionment with men.¹³

After Margarete's death, Bülow sought an outlet for her energies and a way to overcome her sorrow.¹⁴ She refused offers of marriage and travelled to Italy. Then, in 1885, she met Carl Peters. Suddenly she had found a purpose to which she could devote herself. According to her friend and biographer, Sophie Hoechstetter,

She could do the work to which her strong national sensibility obliged her in those circumstances which make a person happiest: at the same time, she was working for the cause of the man she

loved and who loved her. Both were filled with a great and ideal desire; for both, the conquest of East Africa had become a matter of the heart.¹⁵

She asked Peters if she could accompany him to East Africa and set up nursing stations for German soldiers and employees of his German East Africa Company.¹⁶ The same year, Bülow helped found the German National Women's League. She was poised to take an active role in the German colonisation of Africa.

Bülow's travel account of her first stay as a nurse sponsored by the League in East Africa tells of a busy round of social engagements and expeditions in the company of Peters to locations where he wanted to establish outposts for the German East Africa Company.¹⁷ She meant to represent the German community in a worthy manner to other Europeans in Zanzibar. **[End Page 57]** Both Bülow and Peters met opposition from Berlin to their respective activities. Peters angered the Colonial Division of the Foreign Office by causing diplomatic tensions with Britain over disputed territory. Meanwhile, the League's board of directors disliked the fact that Bülow neglected her nursing duties to accompany Peters on his travels and to his negotiations with the Sultan of Zanzibar and with diplomats. A cofounder of the League, Eva von Pfeil, complained: 'She became very close friends with the gentlemen and constantly demanded money from the little Women's League in order to spend it there with the gentlemen on her pleasure'.¹⁸

Carl Peters and his colleagues were indeed Bülow's close companions. They were also notorious, even among colonialists, for their cruelty. Friedrich Schröder, Peters's friend and Bülow's regular companion on day trips, was sentenced in the 1890s to five years' imprisonment. For years, he had carried out rapes, torture, and murders of Africans on his plantation. Carl Peters was judged by his contemporaries as well as later historians to be psychologically disturbed and sadistic. Peters himself described his random shootings and the burning of villages upon the slightest provocation in his memoirs, which were published in the 1890s. Heinrich Schnee, a later governor of German East Africa, recounted in his own memoirs several examples of Peters's obsessive racism.¹⁹

By late 1887, Bülow's patriotic and romantic project was starting to crumble. Bülow contracted malaria, and some time around December 1887 her love affair with Peters was broken off. Bülow's biographer mentions as the cause of the break only 'things beyond the knowledge of third parties'. Events in Bülow's novel *In the Promised Land* suggest that Peters's infidelity was an issue. In that novel, the colonial conqueror Ralf Krome seduces Maria Beta, the daughter of a German missionary father and an Abyssinian mother, driving the novel's heroine, Maleen Dietlas, mad with jealousy. In December 1887, the Foreign Office recalled Peters, and he returned to Germany without Bülow. Meanwhile, Bülow gave her board of directors an ultimatum that she be allowed to set up nursing stations as she chose, or be fired. She was fired.²⁰ When she left Zanzibar for Germany in April 1888, she was at the end of her activism for the German National Women's League, but at the beginning of her writing career.

After publishing a travel account of her trip as well as a few novels and articles, Bülow travelled to German East Africa for a second time in 1893. Meanwhile, much had happened in Peters's life. Assigned a new position as Imperial Commissar in the Kilimanjaro district in 1891, Peters had once again been recalled by the Colonial Division in 1893. His successor was Bülow's brother Albrecht, who was soon killed in battle with a Chagga force that Peters had provoked

with his cruelty. After Albrecht's death, Bülow went to German East Africa to run a plantation that she and Albrecht had bought together.²¹

During her second stay in German East Africa, Bülow pursued a new colonialist task: not nursing, but the 'man's job' of agricultural business. **[End Page 58]** She had little support in her endeavour. Her earlier social circle had moved away or had turned against her as the scorned lover of Peters, himself no longer an unblemished hero. She felt her social isolation sharply but, if we are to believe her biographer and her novel *In the Promised Land*, she worked all the harder and eventually won the respect of some colonists. Her biographer praised this episode as

the greatest success by power of personal character of [Bülow's] life ... She came, and was received with suspicion by Germans who mistrusted a woman simply for having the courage to undertake settlement alone. When she left, she had people behind her ... whose respect and admiration her courage and character demanded.²²

Bülow (or at least Maleen Dietlas, her fictionalised self in *In the Promised Land*) played the role of the virtuous pioneer and coloniser, without any man. However, Bülow had trouble establishing her legal title to the plantation and her health was faltering. These problems induced her to return to Europe in 1894, though she was not eager to do so.²³

On her return to Europe, she joined Lou Andreas-Salomé, her 'dearest friend', and 'a circle of literati, all kinds of important, stimulating personalities'.²⁴ Andreas-Salomé, along with friends such as Rilke, the *Jugendstil* (art nouveau) architect August Endell, the playwrights Gerhart and Karl Hauptmann, and the radical feminists Sophia Goudstikker and Ika Freudenberg, who owned their own photography studio, the Atelier 'Elvira' in Munich, belonged to her milieu. Andreas-Salomé considered Bülow in turn to be her closest female friend. They travelled to Russia, lived together at various times, and remained in contact throughout Bülow's final illness.²⁵ Andreas-Salomé said of Bülow:

Frieda tended by nature to melancholy, in spite of a masculine strong will and drive for life ... She herself liked to call this mixture of energy and listlessness her share of an old, exhausted noble line, a line that might finally end in desire for subordination and forgetfulness of self.²⁶

Bülow's profound pessimism about herself, which Andreas-Salomé reports in Bülow's characteristic racial terms here, pervaded Bülow's fiction.

Bülow remained in contact with Peters after her second African stay, and continued to address him as a close friend in her letters. She seems to have attempted to maintain her dignity by interpreting their personal sexual relationship and conflict on a national and imperial scale. Rather than discuss Peters's sexual betrayal or at least rejection of her in German East Africa, she wrote about his repudiation of Germany after experiencing his own betrayal of his colonialist ambitions at the hands of a supposedly ungrateful Germany.

Peters moved to England in the late 1890s, after his sexual and violent behaviour became a 'national' matter through a well-publicised scandal. **[End Page 59]** The facts of the Peters Case reveal little that was not already known about him, namely that he was criminally violent. When he was recalled in 1893 for abuse of his office, few Germans knew any details of his wrongdoing. The case only came to public attention in 1895 and 1896, when the Social

Democratic *Reichstag* deputies Georg von Vollmar and August Bebel mentioned Peters's actions several times during parliamentary proceedings.²⁷ By 1897, the political scandal had grown so much that the Colonial Division put Peters on trial.

In 1891 and 1892, Peters had ordered the execution of two Africans at his station for petty offences. The victims were Mabruk, a servant, executed for breaking and entering and theft; and Jagodjo, Peters's unwilling concubine. Jagodjo had attempted to flee Peters's station, and was forcibly brought back and punished with whipping. When she tried once more to flee, Peters had her executed for 'treason'.²⁸ Peters did not deny ordering the executions.

Peters did deny, at least in the courtroom, a further accusation made by August Bebel: that Peters had executed Mabruk out of jealousy after discovering that Mabruk and Jagodjo had had sexual relations. According to Bebel and others, including Bülow's brother Albrecht, Peters publicly stated that he had married Jagodjo according to 'African custom', and that according to 'African marriage law', he had the right to execute the two as adulterers. When Peters was observed at a Berlin dinner party bellowing that he had executed Jagodjo and Mabruk because he refused to be a *Lochbruder* (literally, hole-fellow) with Mabruk, the scandal was too great to be ignored.²⁹ The court found Peters guilty of the abuse of his office and of submitting false reports, and he was discharged from the civil service in 1897. At that point, he moved to London and openly sided with British colonial aims. (Less than ten years later, he regained his civil service pension. When the First World War began, he returned to Germany.)

The court called Bülow as a witness, but she refused to appear. One lawyer demanded that she state before the court whether she had ever been Peters's lover.³⁰ Her humiliation must have been considerable. Nevertheless, Bülow defended Peters publicly with an editorial in *Die Zukunft*. In true radical nationalist style, she blamed the German public for shortsighted moralising that cost Germany its most gifted colonial politician. She insisted that 'freedom of decision' must be granted to a great coloniser. That was, she claimed, little enough reward for the dangers he had faced; as she asserted, 'the great attraction of work among savages consists solely of the free scope for movement that it allows to individuality'.³¹

Bülow defended him privately as well. When she heard the trial decision, she wrote to Peters:

You know that I am not stupid, and that I know you too well to idealize you. I know that you can be brutal, and I certainly don't love brutality. But I also know that this brutality is almost inseparable from certain qualities that are rare and of the highest value, and that it is necessary in some situations.³² **[End Page 60]**

Bülow accepted the fact of his brutality privately and publicly, then. She also did not doubt that he made the notorious remark about being Mabruk's *Lochbruder*.³³ However, she insisted on interpreting his brutality positively. The theme of the racially superior German man's brutality played an important role in two novels published during and just after the Peters Case: *Tropical Rage* (1896) and *In the Promised Land* (1899). The heroine of *In the Promised Land*, Maleen Dietlas, after many disappointments with Ralf Krome, eventually becomes a friend who listens to his problems and respects his abilities as coloniser, but who has finally learned to suppress her passion for him. Indeed, the desexualised female caregiver to flawed men became a fixture in Bülow's fiction.³⁴ At the conclusion of *In the Promised Land*, Krome goes over to the side of the

British, who are disputing territory to the north of the colony. Maleen Dietlas makes the difficult but clear choice of her nation over Krome. Though she meets with Krome before his departure for the British colony and still cares for him, she urges the German commander who will lead a campaign against Krome to do his job thoroughly. She accepts Krome with his flaws, but in the end her ultimate loyalty is to her nation.

As letters that Bülow wrote to Peters after 1896 indicate, she tried to refashion her own life along the lines of a caregiver to a flawed man – to become the real-life counterpart of her fictional heroines. In the letters, she presents herself as an asexual, caring, and passive presence in Peters's life. She insists to him that she remains his loyal friend. Responding to Peters's news that he was suffering from nervous exhaustion, she wrote to him:

Recently ... I would love to have gone to you, and if I could work miracles, I surely would have. Back then in Zanzibar [in 1887–8] I myself was suffering so much, emotionally and physically; now I have strength and peace for two. And when I know you are suffering, I feel today something almost motherly for you.³⁵

She gave Peters strategic advice and offered her services as a political sleuth for his many colonialist schemes.³⁶

In a letter Bülow wrote to Peters in 1902, she impatiently responded to his constant complaints about money to finance his schemes. Her outburst suggests that her new role of a quietly supportive woman was a struggle to maintain. It also demonstrates that, besides male brutality and desexualized female care, yet another theme in Bülow's fiction had a real-life counterpart: her intense anti-Jewish racism. The letter opens abruptly as follows:

My honest opinion is this: if you seriously want to get to the position of power that moneyed wealth provides, you would do best to declare brotherhood with Israel. You could marry a Jew-daughter blessed with millions and go openly and 'for good' over to the camp of Mammonism. The Jews are clever enough to pay dearly for your strength and genius. Also, all of them stand poor treatment excellently. So you would get along well together on a lasting basis. **[End Page 61]**

That this ghostly vampire-people manages again and again to refresh its senile and rotten blood by unions with strong Teutons capable of outstanding achievement is dreadful to be sure; it proves, however, their unslayable tenacity and cleverness in life.³⁷

In goading Peters to make a financially advantageous marriage, Bülow echoes her own romantic disappointment with him and his 'poor treatment' of her. She suggests that he betray himself, and implicitly also her, racially. And finally, she reveals a lasting anger at her own genteel poverty that prevented her from being Peters's financial patron. As the above passage shows, Bülow's racial paranoia was at once and inseparably personal and sexual as well as political and national. As the following will show, she connected the emancipation of racially superior German women to the need to respond to constant threats of racial contamination.

In Bülow's writings, fiction draws so blatantly upon events and predicaments in her own life that the colonial novels in particular may be considered *romans à clef*.³⁸ Yet, as much as Bülow blurred the already complex boundary between fiction and non-fiction, she was fairly consistent in assigning a distinct political outlook to each. Her non-fiction is usually feminist, sometimes as

explicitly so as that of the best-known German feminists of her day. Her fiction, by contrast, contains anti-feminist story lines as well as outright criticism of typical feminist goals. In both kinds of writing, women face obstacles. In the non-fiction, the obstacle is social injustice; in the fiction, it is racialised 'others'. Reading these two kinds of her writing together offers a way to think about Bülow's (racist) feminism and (racist) antifeminism as one configuration.

Bülow's non-fiction depicts women as strong and talented people limited by inadequate possibilities for development. She restates the central aim of Imperial Germany's bourgeois women's movement, as well as its basic concepts of difference and gender complementarity:

We want to be coworkers with man, loyal and free companions. We do not want to achieve the same things as him, but rather we want to complement him in all areas of life, as his other human half. In order to do that, we must above all else be allowed to develop freely.³⁹

At least with respect to middle-class women, Bülow called for free individual development and an active role in society. She also supported the bourgeois feminists' demands for reform of family law, and for increased educational and career opportunities. In the aesthetic realm, Bülow claimed that women faced unfair criticism from conventional male critics for writing in a manner or on topics that were too *frauenhaft* (womanish).⁴⁰ Finally, Bülow's non-fiction political writings reveal a feminist perspective on the *Sozialfrage* (Social Question), i.e. the social hardships and class conflict caused by industrialisation. In her view, middle-class women ought to be **[End Page 62]** free to engage such issues, especially on behalf of poor and working-class women. Responding to the Munich publisher Georg Hirth, who doubted feminists' patriotism, Bülow defended feminists' 'love of fatherland' as it manifested itself in their efforts for labour and other social reforms. Through their own social, professional, intellectual, and aesthetic emancipation, women would strengthen the nation, complement men better, and help exemplify a high degree of civilisation (of which pronounced gender differences were, she claimed, a mark).⁴¹ In Bülow's non-fiction, the obstacles to women's progress were tradition and male inflexibility.

Bülow's fiction offers a very different interpretation of the Woman Question. Rather than finding gender complementarity with men and ever more pronounced femininity, Bülow's fictional heroines almost always end up alone and desexualised. In place of changeable social conventions and institutions, unchangeable racialised qualities of the people surrounding the heroine block her way toward emancipation. And finally, it is not male inflexibility that interferes with her specifically feminine self-expression, but rather German men's weakness and especially their failure to dominate her. That too she casts in racial terms.

Race, in a number of forms, is the main obstacle in these heroines' lives. Most pieces of her fiction offer a range of racialised caricatures, whether the setting is Africa or Germany.⁴² Apart from Jews, her most common negative stereotypes are directed at Africans, Poles and other Slavs, Catholics in general, and 'degenerate' nobility. Characters from each of these groups appear as one-dimensional exemplars of an inherently flawed group (Africans, Slavs), or as individuals displaying in concentrated form some aspect of racial decline threatening an entire group (Catholics, the German nobility).

African characters appear almost exclusively in Bülow's colonial novels, while in several of the novels set in Germany they are evoked indirectly through a male character who once lived in the colonies. In all her fiction, the African characters are minimally developed. They appear either as inscrutable masses, or as childish or submissive individual servants. Indeed, given the importance Bülow places on colonial settings, it is surprising how shallow and brief such characterisations are. Bülow apparently conceived of Africans as so fundamentally different from Germans that they did not pose a threat, sexual or otherwise, to German female or male integrity. On a few occasions, Bülow depicts young African women as sexually attractive to German men.⁴³ In general, Africans are instrumentalised in her fiction as a sort of proving ground: if German men can dominate African men and women 'properly', then they are suitable partners for the racially superior heroines of Bülow's colonial fiction.

Jews and Slavic characters such as Poles and Czechs appear in both the colonial and domestic fiction. Bülow depicts the men as threats to German heroines, insulting and even assaulting them, and she depicts the women as threats to German men, whom they entrap romantically. Bülow [End Page 63] describes Jews and Slavs as living closely among Germans, seducing them, confusing them with rationalisations, and insinuating themselves into indispensable positions. The reader is given to understand that they pose a danger to Germandom precisely because they seem deceptively similar to 'real' Germans. The German-Abyssinian character of Maria Beta in *In the Promised Land* is also situated as a deceptively German figure. Maria Beta protests Krome's romantic rejection of her after a few rendezvous by exclaiming that one doesn't trifle with German girls like that. Krome's disregard for Maria Beta's female honour causes some social awkwardness between him and the other colonists, who maintain her position as a European through their concern for her reputation. A French female character thinks Krome should marry her, while Maleen Dietlas suggests (with some self-interest) that she be sent away. Yet Bülow has ensured that the reader does not see Maria Beta as a real German by placing a scene early in the novel in which Maleen and her brother Rainer Waltron reject Maria Beta as a possible wife for him because of her 'Negro blood' – in spite of Rainer Waltron's strong attraction to her. Maria Beta's ambiguous racial and sexual position is resolved by eventual marriage to an Italian colonist.⁴⁴

Bülow's racism toward Jews and Slavs displayed a certain aristocratically patronising component, in that hierarchy, rather than the eradication of racial inferiors, seemed to be her goal. The novel *The Consul*, for example, shows how a racially superior German man, Max von Sylffa, forges a harmonious and patriotic community out of contentious German settlers in East Africa. At the margins of that community but still participating in key events are Josefa, a dissolute Czech Catholic, and Lindenlaub, a moneylending Jewish tavern owner who keeps Josefa as his mistress. The success of Sylffa's approach is shown, not by Josefa and Lindenlaub leaving, but rather by their new feeling of shame at themselves under the gentle influence of the 'real' lady and heroine of the novel, Nelly Donglar.⁴⁵ Bülow saw problems only when racial inferiors stepped out of place on the social and racial hierarchy, or when their supposed superiors unadvisedly elevated them out of it.

Not only did Bülow make distinctions between Germans and 'others', but also among 'real' Germans. She depicted the weakness of her German male characters as a racial flaw. This aspect of her racial thought was connected to the brand of radical nationalism that she and her political

allies embraced. Bülow claimed that a deeply felt patriotism led one to face difficult questions and to offer strong criticism of things German where necessary. She criticised the empty-headed 'beery speeches and hooraypatriotism' that, in her view, emanated from the *deutschnationale* (German-national) movement.⁴⁶ Her brand of patriotism, which did not spare her fellow 'real' Germans, found a lasting echo in the colonial movement. Some colonialists both before and after the First World War went so far as to reject European Germany as too decadent, and to insist that the best Germany was in the colonies. For Bülow, even 'real' Germans [End Page 64] had to prove their racial virtue. In her colonial fiction, German characters had to work their way into the position of coloniser. Not every German was capable of doing so. In her novels of the nobility in Germany, heroines had to overcome advocates of an urbanised, industrial capitalist Germany as well as decadent elements of the nobility itself, elements that needed 'freshening' through 'new blood'.⁴⁷

Like other social critics, Bülow believed that unsuitable social circumstances were derailing the moral and economic potential of many persons. Some women and men were unjustly held down, while others unjustly prospered. In her fiction, Bülow produced a racial version of that critique. First, individuals had certain inherent, unchangeable qualities. Second, these qualities, positive or negative, inevitably manifested themselves over time, in certain social circumstances. Third, once everyone had inevitably revealed his or her 'true' nature, they were rearranged according to a social hierarchy that cleaved more closely to their now-public racial statuses. Such was the denouement of most of her fiction.

The revelations of racial 'truth' almost never mean happy or emancipatory endings for the supposedly superior female main characters. In Bülow's novels and short stories, racial 'truths' are an obstacle to German women's emancipation. Indeed, Bülow's preoccupation with race reworks her notion of women's emancipation into almost unrecognisable forms. In her fiction, woman's 'free development' is not the solution to female predicaments. Instead, what drives the story is the passionate and strong-willed heroine's quest for an even stronger man who can control her. At the beginning of the novel *In the Promised Land*, for example, the heroine Maleen Dietlas is dissatisfied with her husband's mildness:

She imagined herself at the side of another, who was not tender and kind and did not spoil her, but instead dealt with her harshly and coolly and demanded ever more proofs of her devotion, ever more sacrifices ...⁴⁸

She finds such a man in Ralf Krome, but he ultimately deserts her. In the short story 'Christine', Bülow has a wise aunt express what she, Bülow, seems to see as the key to sexual relationships between men and women: 'One must conquer and enslave the other'.⁴⁹

Bülow's fiction leaves no doubt that the man ought to win the upper hand in that struggle. Yet he almost never manages to do so. In most of her novels and short stories, the heroines' romantic encounters end with disappointment over weak German men. The heroines spend the rest of their lives as 'lonely women', as Bülow entitled one short story collection. The heroine knows too much about men's frailty to fall again into the subordinated role of the woman in love. However, she is also too passionate and strong-minded simply to withdraw from society, leaving no mark. At this point, she undergoes an education of her national sentiments, and places her idle emotional and intellectual powers in the service of her nation. [End Page 65] Usually she turns

to social and nursing work on a small, local scale. Dedicating her energies to the mere physical needs of ill and poor people allows her spiritual hardships to appear all the more exalted. She is sexually and socially isolated among these objects of her abstract patriotic devotion, who are unbridgeably distant from her own social status and inherent qualities. As for German men, she accepts permanent separation from them in the sense of sexual love. She offers men only asexual kindness and loyalty, which Bülow often likens to that of a nurse toward her patient.

For example, the novel *Woman's Loyalty* narrates how a Polish countess seduces the husband of the older heroine, Wilhelma Brückner. The betrayed Wilhelma moves to a remote village to devote herself to social work and later the care of the new couple's child. Her emotional life is marked by resignation. At the novel's end, Wilhelma's former husband asks to marry her again and she accepts, but this is no happy ending. Rather, Wilhelma braces herself with the reflection that one must answer when life calls, even if doing so brings only pain and disappointment.⁵⁰ Wilhelma's dignity and worth are determined by how much forgiveness and asexual love she can summon up for her flawed husband, whom she can never admire unquestioningly again. Throughout the story, two caricatured female figures highlight Wilhelma's virtues: the immoral Polish countess Marie Smolenska and the bossy and relentlessly modernising feminist Alida Studt. Studt is depicted as a well-meaning woman who, however, has no understanding of human nature and the value of tradition.

Anti-feminist and racial determinism appear especially clearly in a late novel, *When Men Are Weak*. Lest the reader miss the title's significance, Bülow places a motto at the head of the text: 'Where men are weaklings, their women become either men or female demons'.⁵¹ The story is of an older, widowed count, who one day sees an athletically beautiful, nineteen-year-old woman as she runs and plays with children. It is Marion, the favourite daughter of a non-noble preparatory school principal. In spite of the difference in social status, the count decides on the spot to marry her. Marion agrees to his proposal out of ambition and vanity. She reasons that 'the female only becomes powerful, even infinitely powerful, by way of a man who is blindly devoted'.⁵² The reader is given to understand that Marion is not a bad person; indeed, according to another character in the novel, she is of 'magnificent race'.⁵³ She is merely undisciplined.

However, the count is not the one who can discipline her. He spoils her and she loses respect for him. She gradually becomes a selfish and rude monster. Both Marion and the count utter feminist remarks in certain contexts. Coming from the count, these feminist sentiments signify weakness: rather than confront Marion about her behaviour, he tiredly says that she needs her freedom, and that people only criticise her because she has an 'independent character'.⁵⁴ Coming from Marion, the feminist phrases are intended to ring hollow and selfish. She responds to long-overdue criticism of her behaviour by screaming that she will not be treated like a 'harem [End Page 66] slave' or a Chinese woman with bound feet – references to orientalist female oppression that occur in Bülow's non-fiction as well.⁵⁵

A neurologist, to whom Bülow gives the greatest authority in the novel, diagnoses the racial mistake of the count's marriage to Marion:

[Dr] Rosmeyer regarded the aging count from the side. These thin shoulders and excessively slender hands, the sickly pale face with the heavy eyelids, the tired glance, the long, hardly distinguished nose and the weak form of the jawbone and chin: this was certainly the degenerate

aristocratic type; all fine culture, but no strength! 'And this imperious, impetuous young female over there in the house', he thought, 'must feel the hand of a strong master over her, or else she will go astray. She is one of those for whom Nietzsche's brutal 'Don't forget the whip!' was coined'.⁵⁶

Marion believes that no one can dominate her, but ends up dominated by a social inferior. Lacking a better way to channel her intelligence and energy, she immerses herself in plans to exploit her husband's ancestral estate for short-term gain. The gamekeeper, Max Wagner, assists her. He is a physically beautiful, intensely jealous, and ambitious man, whom she elevates to steward of the estate. She becomes dependent on him for her schemes, and he blackmails her. It is his plan to compromise her sexually, then force her to marry him and hand over her share of the count's property. When he demands to kiss her, she 'experienced what it was to be in the power of a love-crazed, violent man driven to extremes'.⁵⁷ He later breaks into her bedroom and demands sexual intercourse. When she resists him in one climactic scene, he loses all restraint and beats her with a riding whip, then rapes her.⁵⁸ After that, she no longer resists his sexual advances.

These occasions of sexual violence cause increasing misery to Marion, but they also bring a new awareness of her own desire to be dominated: 'Did not something giddy within her rush to meet his demand, something hot and involuntary?' she asks herself after the first forced kisses.⁵⁹ She also sees clearly her husband's irreversible failure to prevent her from getting herself into the entire situation. She becomes mentally ill and her husband finally must confine her to Dr Rosmeyer's mental institution as an incurable case of persecution mania.

Bülow makes clear that it is the count's weakness that is responsible for Marion's fate, not social obstacles to her free self-development. Because her husband failed to establish authority over her, she was unable to develop as a superior woman. At one point in the story, after Marion thinks miserably about the gamekeeper's power over her, and her husband's passivity, she gains insight into her predicament while listening to a passage from Friedrich Hebbel's *Judith*. Judith says: 'Each female has the right to demand from each man that he be a hero ... One man can forgive another man's cowardice, but a female never can.'⁶⁰ The absence of male strength dooms Marion, in spite of her qualities of beauty, energy, and intelligence. Racial [End Page 67] mismatches create chaos in which a countess is repeatedly raped, a noble estate is despoiled, and a mere gamekeeper holds power over his superiors. The underlying logic of the story is that racial and class order requires a clear hierarchy of male power and female subordination between a superior, racially matched couple. Only then, Bülow implies, might feminist goals of women's free self-development have any place. The most fundamental need of a woman was not freedom, but domination.

Bülow wrote only fictional seduction with a romantic happy ending: *Tropical Rage*. Yet even in that novel, Bülow ascribes a fundamental desire and need for domination to her fictional heroine, Eva Biron. The mode of Biron's domination is different from the abuse suffered by female characters in Bülow's other stories, and perhaps that is why Bülow permits herself to append the happy ending of the couple's passionate union. Rather than the hero revealing inferiority through maltreatment of the heroine, in *Tropical Rage* the hero is sadistic to African men and women, under the gaze of the heroine.

In *Tropical Rage*, Eva Biron travels to East Africa to join her brother. He falls ill with fever, and she acts as nurse for him and for other afflicted German men. Nursing allows Eva to express her own strength and willpower. Neither the climate nor the protests of lesser men stand in her way. Although one of the patients prefers to suffer alone,

Eva did not consider this possibility, and had she known of it, she would not have paid it any mind. 'Sick people may not be left to themselves', she pronounced, 'whether they want to be or not. The sick do not have any say at all, they must follow that which has been ordered for their good'. Eva Biron had at the bottom of her heart a drive to rule and to ordain.⁶¹

Indeed, almost all of Bülow's fictional heroines are driven by a desire for power. 'I want to rule! I want to hold power!' the main female character cries out in another story, 'Christine', that is set in Germany and was published one year after *Tropical Rage*.⁶² Eva Biron's initiative and her attitude toward nursing are a fascinating gloss on Bülow's own organisational leadership and nursing work.

In *Tropical Rage*, Bülow uses nursing work and male illness as metaphors for the out-of-joint relations between strong women and weak men. Bülow shows nurses exercising authority over vulnerable men, nurses whose motivations are not necessarily charity and self-sacrifice.⁶³ As for men's illness, Bülow passes over the epidemiologically traceable diseases affecting German colonists, such as malaria and tropical fever, to focus on a nervous disease medically recognised but also controversial in her own day, tropical rage. In the novel, tropical rage serves as the manifestation of a racial and class hierarchy gone awry in the colony. Tropical rage seizes German men (German women were spared, at least in Bülow's writings), causing them to lose all self-control as they beat African men and women in blind [End Page 68] anger. Tropical rage was a breakdown in what Bülow saw as the otherwise smoothly functioning – because in her view natural – domination of Africans by Germans. It signalled disarray in the class ranks of the Germans; it was 'a pernicious form of parvenudom'.⁶⁴ The average German arriving in East Africa, whom Bülow sketched as politically immature and lacking confidence in social situations, experienced a rapid increase in his status as a white coloniser. It was simply too much for all but the most superior German men. Even Biron's brother suffers from it and dies sooner because of it. Faced with recalcitrant colonial subjects, the inferior German men let loose with the boundless brutality of a Magner. Bülow thereby emphasizes that the fate of a woman, even a strong-willed one such as Biron, depends on the qualities that racially superior men are able to display and the maintenance of class hierarchy. Precisely her class interpretation of tropical rage elicited praise from Bülow's reviewers.⁶⁵

Eva Biron meets her match in Ludwig von Rosen, a man who never falls ill (and is therefore never vulnerable to Biron the nurse), and never loses control (and therefore proves that he is racially superior). He has an inherent talent for domination: he punishes purposefully and in a supposedly strict but fair manner. He avoids long deliberations, deciding quickly and calmly to use force. One exemplary scene appears both in *Tropical Rage* and in Bülow's memoir of her first trip to German East Africa, *Travel Sketches*. Africans celebrate a festival late into the night, and the noise disturbs Biron and her patient. The local colonial official is 'weak' enough to refrain from stopping the festival, since the Africans had obtained his permission for it beforehand. Ludwig von Rosen hears of Biron's difficulty and threatens to shoot into the festival crowd. The Africans flee and 'peace' prevails.⁶⁶ Biron admires such behaviour, and assumes that

Africans do too. She says of Rosen: 'He was surely a kind superior, yet at the same time strict, and his people [African soldiers] surely loved him fanatically!'⁶⁷ Rosen himself claims that whip strokes are 'healthy' and that Africans preferred beating to any other form of punishment.⁶⁸ The fact of brutality was not the issue in these passages, but rather how Rosen, as opposed to the others, exercised his brutality. In the novel's final scene, Biron and Rosen passionately embrace over her brother's grave, then Rosen carries a completely submissive Biron away.

In *Tropical Rage*, Africans are drawn into the sadistic and masochistic relations between white men and women that Bülow elaborates in all her fiction. The novel's happy ending depends on those relations. The strong heroine's domination by an even stronger hero remains the key to sealing their sexual relationship. In addition, elements of a racially superior pairing are tied to the larger ideological enterprise of colonialism. According to Bülow's model of successful colonisation, the racially superior German man converts his lust for a German woman into the domination of colonial subjects. Rosen had led a dissolute life long ago in Berlin, a slave of his passion for a 'beautiful, immoral woman'.⁶⁹ As a morally reformed and nationally minded coloniser, [End Page 69] Rosen falls in love with Biron, but he is never vulnerable to her as he was to his old lover. Africans, as feminised masochists, are made to play the role of needing and wanting to be dominated by brute force. Domination over racialised 'others' is revealed as part of establishing a superior partnership between a German man and woman. The colonies are the testing ground on which the 'right' man can properly express his sadism and thereby his suitability to the 'right' woman. In Bülow's thinking, then, the colonies were prerequisite to the development of the German woman as, in her own words, a 'loyal and free companion' of German men.

Frieda von Bülow saw Carl Peters and herself not as typical Germans, but as the archetype of a racially superior pair. Yet, insofar as *Tropical Rage* was autobiographical, its happy ending was short-lived. The subject of most of Bülow's fiction was how to live with dignity and racial pride after the loss of a superior German man. German women were to substitute the fatherland for individual German men, but only after subordinating themselves to passion, and then enduring disappointment and heartbreak. Only then, after rejection and loss, could they devote themselves selflessly to their nation. The nation made infinite demands, and nurses and social workers (the examples of service that Bülow usually chose) were to serve it to the point of exhaustion. Bülow was not the only one to argue that the secular female nurse (who was unmarried or widowed, never married) supposedly provided better nursing care than did male nurses because of women's willingness to work out of devotion to others rather than merely for pay.⁷⁰ The racially superior woman perfected her self-subordination to the nation, just as she had previously subordinated herself to a man. The secular female nurse, whose cause Bülow advanced through the German National Women's League, her own much-publicised stint at nursing work, and her published appeals to improve nurses' working conditions, appeared now as the practical and ideological solution to her version of the Woman Question.

The Peters Case suggests that Bülow was struggling with an even more difficult issue than personal sexual betrayal: German colonialist men's betrayal of 'civilised' norms regarding the treatment of racially superior women. This could be construed as a national and racial betrayal of all German women. Peters's unofficial defence of his behaviour was that he acted according to 'African marriage custom'. The falsity of his statements about supposed African marriage

customs need not detain us; it is clear that Peters was capable of saying anything if he thought it would further his purposes. It is also clear that just such possibilities of sexual exploitation enlivened the fantasies of German colonialist men. For a German woman observer such as Bülow, Peters's convenient excuse for his murders had a troubling implication: German men who claimed that they were spreading their culture and their rule among Africans (as Peters and his supporters would benignly summarise their activities) were also taking up aspects of African 'culture', however fabricated. German colonisation and German [End Page 70] sexual hierarchy allowed the men to choose whether they would behave according to German morals and customs or to 'African' ones. The Peters Case and other colonial scandals involving German men's sexual violence against African women showed colonialist women that some of their male political allies wanted to and did cross boundaries of 'civilised' treatment of women.

Read in the context of the Peters Case, Bülow's straightforwardly feminist essays offer a rebuttal to the narratives of Peters and other colonialist men who argued that 'African' rules sometimes 'had' to be followed.⁷¹ Bülow's non-fiction feminist pieces portray Germans as becoming ever more civilised, and German women as playing a key role in that teleological vision. In 1897, Bülow responded to a lecture by an anti-feminist gynaecologist, Dr Max Runge, with such a narrative:

Because the female is weak and in need of protection, Dr Runge teaches, and because the male is brutal, in the interest of the female we must oppose women's emancipation with all our energy. That amounts to little more than the conscious, intentional upholding of the female's weakness and the male's brutality. Unfortunately this conception of justice is no longer in the spirit of the age. Today's culture opposes brutality with all its energy and will thereby protect the female much more securely than has been accomplished by the erection of unnatural walls and barriers. What does the female have to fear from male brutality in America, for example? And even we are past club-law.⁷²

Progress, then, gave the best assurance of protection for (white, German) women. How are we to understand this passage in the context of her other writings about male brutality? The United States would have been recognized by German women of her day as a place of relative freedom for white women. It was also a place where sexual-racial hierarchy was reinforced by systematic brutality, which Bülow, if she were to discuss it explicitly, probably admired: the lynching of African-American men and degradation of African-American women. In her fiction, the scenario of a happy ending between a German man and German woman was only played out in *Tropical Rage*, in a setting of the German man's brutal and regularised domination of African 'others'. This, in Bülow's view, makes it possible to avoid both white male brutality against white women and the sexual substitution of German women by African women.

Like bourgeois feminists of her day, Bülow demanded political change in a feminist sense. For example, she was concerned about the need of 'excess' unmarried bourgeois women who were present in all 'Kulturländer' (civilised lands) to earn a living appropriate to their social status, and about protecting working-class women from extreme exploitation.⁷³ For Bülow, her imperial feminism was a set of positively held convictions that offered solutions to white women's oppression. It also offered solutions to other issues that a reader must look more closely to find: the upholding of racial hierarchy and a way to overcome gender conflicts among racially superior [End Page 71] men and women. Her imperial feminism also offered solutions to German and European women searching for an important public mission after and apart from

such conflicts with men of their own colour and class. Bülow's feminist non-fiction may seem to be silent about race, and her resigned, disappointed heroines may not seem very feminist. Yet those apparent inconsistencies are different facets of Bülow's own racialised female subjectivity. If so much of her writing emphasises male domination and racial dangers, that is because her racial paranoia informed all of her feminist, national, and social critique.

'If she had been allowed to become a full female, like he became a full man – what a union [*Gemeinschaft*]! That is modern woman's yearning: to become the equal-born [*ebenbürtig*] companion of man.'⁷⁴ This passage, also drawn from the 1897 response to Max Runge, appears to be a universal protest against unfair restrictions placed on women. Yet it can also be interpreted as a statement referring to racial and sexual hierarchy and domination. Elsewhere, Bülow placed pessimistic statements about relationships between men and women in those very contexts. The passage above leads the reader to ask: Who or what was to blame for the failure of Woman to become Man's equal companion? Bülow's own experience confirmed that even the supposedly most superior German men rejected such *Gemeinschaft*. Bülow had found her temperamental match in Peters and had played the role of a proper heroine, but everything came to a painful and humiliating end. Nationalism and colonialism, to which Bülow and other German women had no simple, direct relationship, nevertheless provided a path of supposed progress to women who approached it after disillusionment with individual men. Taking apart the strands of teleological feminism ('whites are becoming ever more civilised') and racist contrasts ('Africans/ Jews/ Slavs can never be civilised') that Bülow and many other German and European turn-of-the-century feminists wove so consciously and closely together remains a task for European and Euro- American feminists, and for their historians. That interweaving was no accident, but rather took place in historical and hardly distant contexts of colonial domination of racialised 'others', men's domination of women, and self-consciously racist feminist movements.

Notes

1. I am indebted to Marcia Klotz for information and insights about Bülow's work. See her 'White Women and the Dark Continent: Sexuality and Gender in German Colonial Discourse' (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1995). See also Livia Z. Wittmann, 'Zwischen "femme fatale" und "femme fragile" – die neue Frau? Kritische Bemerkungen zum Frauenbild des literarischen Jugendstiles', *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik*, 17 (1985), pp. 74–110 and Joachim Warmbold, 'Germania in Afrika: Frieda Freiin von Bülow: "Schöpferin des Deutschen Kolonialromans"', *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte*, 15 (1986), pp. 309–36. Both focus only on her fiction. Sabina Streiter has edited a collection of Bülow's short stories with the kind of naïve decontextualisation of Bülow's feminism that this article is seeking to counteract: Sabina Streiter (ed.), *Die schönsten Novellen der Frieda von Bülow über Lou Andreas-Salomé und andere Frauen* (Ullstein, Frankfurt a.M., 1990).

2. Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, 'Challenging Imperial Feminism', *Feminist Review*, 17 (1984), pp. 3–19; Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1994).

3. Sophie Hoechstetter, *Frieda Freiin von Bülow: Ein Lebensbild* (Carl Reissner, Dresden, 1910), p. 200.

4. Gertrud Bäumer, 'Frieda von Bülow', *Die Frau*, 16 (1909), pp. 407–12; Dorothea Frandsen, Helene Lange: *Ein Leben für das volle Bürgerrecht der Frau* (Herder, Freiburg, 1980), pp. 134–5. See also the endpapers of Bülow's novels *Hüter der Schwelle* (Carl Reissner, Dresden, 1907) and *Allein ich will* (Dresden, Carl Reissner, 1911), which contain reviews by the feminists Eliza Ichenhäuser and Ellen Key, as well as by an anonymous reviewer for Minna Cauer's radical bourgeois feminist periodical *Die Frauenbewegung*.

5. It was renamed *Deutscher Frauenverein für Krankenpflege in den Kolonien* in 1888 and linked itself to the *Vaterländischen Frauenvereine* (Patriotic Women's Leagues). It remained the only secular colonial women's organisation until 1907, when the *Deutschkoloniale Frauenbund* (German Colonial Women's League) was founded. Bülow belonged to the latter organisation's founding committee, which soon also changed names, to the *Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft* (Women's League of the German Colonial Society). It promoted the settlement of German women in the colonies and the banning of marriage across the colour line.

6. Bernhard Lange, 'Die Begründerin des deutschen Kolonialromans: Zum 75. Geburtstage von Frieda Frein v. Bülow', *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 44 (1932), pp. 272–3.

7. The editions used here are *Tropenkoller: Episode aus dem deutschen Kolonialleben* (F. Fontane, Berlin, 1896) and *Im Lande der Verheissung: Ein deutscher Kolonialroman* (Carl Reissner, Dresden, 1899).

8. Biddy Martin, *Woman and Modernity: The Life(Styles) of Lou Andreas-Salomé* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1991); Ralph Freedman, *Life of a Poet: Rainer Maria Rilke* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 1996); Irit Rogoff, 'Tiny Anguishes: Reflections on Nagging, Scholastic Embarrassment, and Feminist Art History', *Differences*, 4 (1992), pp. 38–65; and Sabina Streiter, 'Nachwort', in Streiter (ed.), *Die schönsten Novellen der Frieda von Bülow*, pp. 242–5. Information about Hoechstetter and Schwabe appeared in an exhibition in summer 1997 at the *Akademie der Künste* (Academy of the Arts), Berlin, entitled *100 Jahre Schwulenbewegung*. However, the exhibition catalogue did not include this information. Streiter's 'Nachwort' mentions that Bülow herself was romantically involved with Goudstikker, but supplies no source.

9. On the German colonial empire, see Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1978) and Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 3rd ed. (Schöningh, Paderborn, 1996). On the politics surrounding annexation, see Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, 'Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Expansion under Bismarck', *Past and Present*, 42 (1969), pp. 140–59. On the relationships between German colonial ideology and Nazism, see Woodruff Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1986). On radical nationalism, see Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck*, 2nd ed. (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1991); Friedrich Lange is discussed on pp. 186–7.

10. On the Pan-German League, see Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886–1914* (Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1984). Examples of renewed attention to Bülow under the Nazis include Lange, 'Die Begründerin' and Eva MacLean, 'Frieda von Bülow: Eine Pionierin der kolonialen Frauenarbeit', *Die Frau und die Kolonien*, 8 (1937), pp. 122–3. A new version of Bülow's novel *In the Promised Land* was prepared during the Nazi era and ran to three editions by 1943. The Nazi historian Walter Frank prepared an edition of Carl Peters's writings as part of a comprehensive popularisation of Peters: Carl Peters, *Gesammelte Schriften* (C. H. Beck, Munich, 1943). A 1941 film, *Carl Peters*, glorified his East African exploits.

11. *Hüter der Schwelle*, 2nd ed. (Carl Reissner, Dresden, 1907), which originally appeared in 1902; and *Die Schwestern: Geschichte einer Mädchenjugend* (Carl Reissner, Dresden, 1909).

12. Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, pp. 46, 78, 90. On Margarete von Bülow, see Elisabeth Friedrichs, *Die deutschsprachigen Schriftstellerinnen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts: Ein Lexikon* (J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart, 1981), p. 44. On Fritz Mauthner, see William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848–1938* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1972), pp. 196–9.

13. Bülow to Elly Peters, 30 October 1890, Carl Peters papers, *Bundesarchiv* (Federal Archive), Berlin, Folder 91, pp. 30–31; Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, pp. 113 and 71; Lou Andreas-Salomé, *Lebensrückblick*, 2nd ed. (Insel, Frankfurt, 1968), p. 260. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind: Roman* (Alfred Schall, Berlin, 1908).

14. Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, pp. 110–11, 113, 118–19.

15. Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, p. 156. Hoechstetter befriended Bülow late in Bülow's life and her biography, which appeared soon after Bülow's death, is hagiographic. Stretches of the text appear to have been taken down almost verbatim from Bülow herself, and therefore reflect more than anything else how Bülow wished to interpret her own past. For the present article, however, that is not a weakness, but rather a source of the text's interest.

16. Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, p. 117; Carl Peters, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1: *Die Gründung von Deutsch-Ostafrika*, p. 218; Bülow, *Reiseskizzen: Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Walther & Apolant, Berlin, 1889), pp. 27–8, 79–80, 170, 194–5.

17. Bülow, *Reiseskizzen*, pp. 27–8, 30, 68, 81, 84, 98, 171; Peters, *Die Gründung*, p. 218; Henry Martin Bair, Jr, 'Carl Peters and German Colonialism: A Study in the Ideas and Actions of Imperialism' (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1968), pp. 152, 160–61.

18. Eva von Pfeil und Klein-Ellguth, *Ein reiches Leben: Lebenserinnerungen und meine Arbeit für das Rote Kreuz in den Kolonien* (Eduard H. de Rot [D. Schwalbe], Dessau, 1914), p. 69.
19. Franz Giesebrecht, *Ein deutscher Kolonialheld: Der Fall 'Peters' in psychologischer Beleuchtung* (Caesar Schmidt, Zurich, 1897), pp. 15–16; Fritz Bley, 'Die Versumpfung unserer Kolonialpolitik', *Die Zukunft* (1896), p. 469; Bair, 'Carl Peters', p. 158; Heinrich Schnee memoirs, Folder 22a, pp. 75, 77, Heinrich Schnee papers, *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (Privy State Archive of the Prussian Cultural Heritage), Berlin. Schnee noted the following about Peters's reputation, apparently in relation to European women: 'Stories of women played a very great role in Peters's life. Some of the stories about him that are told in wide circles would indeed, if true, cast his character in an extremely poor light. It is beyond doubt that Peters pursued his goals relating to women with the brutal recklessness inherent in him, and that he often exercised a strong power of attraction over females'. Schnee memoirs, p. 76.
20. Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, pp. 157–8; Bülow, *Im Lande der Verheissung*, pp. 157–70, 183–91. (Krome's lust for Maria Beta was purged from the Nazi-era edition of *In the Promised Land*.) Peters, *Die Gründung*, p. 242; Bülow, *Reisescizzen*, pp. 194–5.
21. Bülow, 'Allerhand Alltägliches aus Deutsch-Ostafrika', *Die Frau*, 2 (1894–5), pp. 25–30 and pp.93–8; Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, pp. 167–70.
22. Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, pp. 169–70. See also Bülow, *Im Lande der Verheissung*, pp. 347–9, 361, 374–7, 441–3.
23. Bülow to Elly Peters, 22 February 1894, Carl Peters papers, Folder 91, pp. 58–61.
24. Bülow to Elly Peters, 22 February 1894, p. 61.
25. Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, pp. 163–4, 175, 191. Bülow also met Friedrich Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, who invited her to go to South America, where Förster-Nietzsche and her husband were setting up a German colony devoted to racial purity. See Ben Macintyre, *Forgotten Fatherland: The Search for Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Macmillan, London, 1992). Bülow did not care to pursue this friendship, however. Andreas-Salomé, *Lebensrückblick*, pp. 104–5, 110, 260.
26. Andreas-Salomé, *Lebensrückblick*, p. 105.
27. Martin Reuss, 'The Disgrace and Fall of Carl Peters: Morality, Politics and Staatsräson in the Time of Wilhelm II', *Central European History*, 14 (1981), pp. 110–41. *Verhandlungen des Reichstages*, vol. 144, 13 March 1896, p. 1434.
28. Reuss, 'The Disgrace and Fall', p. 125.
29. Reuss, 'The Disgrace and Fall', pp. 122, 125. Carl Peters papers, Folder 54, p. 14. Folders 51 and 52 contain press references to the remark.
30. Warmbold, 'Germania in Afrika', p. 322.
31. Bülow, 'Ein Mann über Bord', *Die Zukunft* (1897), pp. 551–4; the quotations are from p. 554.
32. Bülow to Carl Peters, 17 November 1897. Carl Peters papers, Folder 4, p. 4.
33. Bülow to Carl Peters, 17 November 1897, p. 3.
34. *In the Promised Land* contains the first full-fledged example of such a female character. However, an earlier version is the character Sophie Landolf in the short story 'Mlinga Goni', in Bülow, *Deutsch-ostafrikanische Novellen* (F. Fontane, Berlin, 1891), pp. 123–256.
35. Bülow to Carl Peters, undated [after 1902], Carl Peters papers, Folder 4, p. 16.
36. One letter refers to her efforts to sound out the political situation in Berlin and, if necessary, contact her distant cousin the Imperial Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow. Bülow to Carl Peters, 10 September 1901, Carl Peters papers, Folder 4, pp. 6–7.
37. Bülow to Carl Peters, 10 March 1902, Carl Peters papers, Folder 4, pp. 10–11. 'For good' appears in English in the original. See also the 1901 letter on pp. 8–9. Even Bülow's otherwise admiring biographer was startled by the vehemence of Bülow's anti-Semitism, and noted that 'race mixtures were an abomination to her, Aryandom nearly a confession of faith' (Hoechstetter, *Frieda*, p. 21).

38. Carl Peters, the only one who could confirm some details in the novels, stated that the colonial novels were 'very much founded on fact' (Peters, *Die Gründung*, p. 226).
39. Bülow, 'Das Weib in seiner Geschlechtsindividualität', *Die Zukunft* (1897), p. 601.
40. Bülow, 'Männerurtheil über Frauendichtung', *Die Zukunft* (1899), pp. 26–9.
41. Bülow, 'Lear-Patriotismus', *Die Zukunft* (1900), p. 569; Bülow, 'Männerurtheil', p. 28.
42. The collection of four novellas published under the title *Lonely Women* is an exception, and is her most readable treatment of the Woman Question. Bülow, *Einsame Frauen* (F. Fontane, Berlin, 1897).
43. Bülow, *Im Lande der Verheissung*, p. 14; Bülow, *Tropenkoller*, pp. 16–17. Bülow's ironic humour and relative lack of prudishness in recording German men's sexual attraction for African women became rare within a few years, at least among colonialist women writers. At the same time, many German colonialist women, including Bülow (see note 5 above) mobilised around the issue of African women's sexual relationships to German men as threats to a posited German racial purity. See Lora Wildenthal, 'Race, Gender and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire', in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997), pp. 263–83.
44. Bülow, *Im Lande der Verheissung*, pp. 122–3, 160, 183, 187, 239–41.
45. Bülow, *Der Konsul: Vaterländischer Roman aus unsern Tagen* (F. Fontane, Berlin, 1891).
46. Bülow, 'Lear-Patriotismus', p. 570.
47. The most marked example of this theme is Bülow, *Die stilisierte Frau* (Ullstein, Berlin, 1921), originally published in 1902.
48. Bülow, *Im Lande der Verheissung*, p. 27.
49. Bülow, 'Christine', in *Einsame Frauen*, p. 24.
50. Bülow, *Frauentreue: Roman* (Carl Reissner, Dresden, 1910), pp. 190, 276.
51. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, p. 3.
52. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, p. 16.
53. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, p. 144.
54. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, p. 263.
55. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, pp. 109 and 160. For example, see the mentions of polygamy and the harem in Bülow, 'Das Weib', p. 600.
56. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, p. 144.
57. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, p. 221.
58. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, pp. 272–4.
59. Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, p. 223.
60. Cited in Bülow, *Wenn Männer schwach sind*, pp. 103–4.
61. Bülow, *Tropenkoller*, p. 127.
62. Bülow, 'Christine', p. 3.
63. Bülow's presentation of female nursing as a realm of female power over men is suggestive of the tensions surrounding the expansion of female nursing in nineteenth-century Germany. Proponents of female nursing offered contrasting images of self-sacrificing work done by submissive women under male doctors' authority. However, Mary Poovey's work on Florence Nightingale suggests that Bülow's description of female power in nursing was not anomalous (Mary Poovey, 'A Housewifely

Woman: The Social Construction of Florence Nightingale', in *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988), pp. 164–98).

64. Bülow, *Tropenkoller*, p. 64.

65. See the reviews from the *Allgemeine Konservative Monatsschrift*, *Breslauer Zeitung*, *Leipziger Tageblatt*, and *Hamburgischer Correspondent* after the text of the 1897 edition of Bülow's *Einsame Frauen*.

66. Bülow, *Tropenkoller*, p. 73. Bülow, *Reiseskizzen*, pp. 123–4, relates the scene on which the passage is based.

67. Bülow, *Tropenkoller*, p. 154.

68. Bülow, *Tropenkoller*, pp. 151, 152.

69. Bülow, *Tropenkoller*, p. 145. Bülow details Rosen's affair and recovery through colonisation in the novel *Ludwig von Rosen: Eine Erzählung aus zwei Welten* (F. Fontane, Berlin, 1892).

70. Eva Brinkschulte and Beate Vogt, "Nicht um des Lohnes willen, sondern aus Liebe zum Herrn". Die Diakonissinnen des Elisabeth-Krankenhauses: Zur Entwicklung des "typisch weiblichen" Berufs der Krankenschwester (1833–1865)', in *Ich bin meine eigene Frauenbewegung': Frauen-Ansichten aus der Geschichte einer Grossstadt* (Edition Hentrich, Berlin, 1991), pp. 155–64; Claudia Bischoff, *Frauen in der Krankenpflege: Zur Entwicklung von Frauenrolle und Frauenberufstätigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Campus, Frankfurt a.M., 2nd ed. 1992); and Poovey, 'A Housewifely Woman'.

71. That was the excuse in, for example, a concurrent colonial scandal that involved a German colonial official's organisation of forced prostitution of African women. See Helmuth Stoecker (ed.), *Drang nach Afrika: Die deutsche koloniale Expansionspolitik und Herrschaft in Afrika von den Anfängen bis zum Verlust der Kolonien*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, Akademie, 1991), p. 60, and Heinrich Leist, 'Der Fall Leist', *Die Zukunft* (1896), pp. 259–71.

72. Bülow, 'Das Weib', p. 601. See Runge's contribution in *Die akademische Frau: Gutachten hervorragender Universitätsprofessoren, Frauenlehrer und Schriftsteller über die Befähigung der Frau zum wissenschaftlichen Studium und Berufe*, ed. Arthur Kirchhoff (Hugo Steinitz, Berlin, 1897), pp. 122–3. Bülow was responding to a longer version of this essay.

73. Bülow, 'Das Weib', p. 601. See also Bülow, 'Lear-Patriotismus', pp. 569 and 571.

74. Bülow, 'Das Weib', p. 601.