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**FEELINGS OF HOMESICKNESS.
WRITING PRACTICES OF YOUNG BOURGEOIS MEN
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
AND THE ROLE OF GENDER AND EMOTIONS
IN YOUTH DIARY-WRITING CULTURES**

Abstract

This article explores the diaries of young bourgeois men from the nineteenth century. It focuses on homesickness as an emotional experience shaped by gender and social expectations. Diaries have long been linked to femininity, but many boys and young men also kept diaries, especially when leaving home for school or university. The selected diaries of four boys reveal close ties to family, reflections on masculinity, and emotional struggles related to separation. Their writings often depict homesickness as a test of character, framing their emotions within cultural ideals of male strength, courage, and religious devotion. The diaries also functioned as tools for self-regulation, memory, and emotional agency, allowing the authors to manage feelings through writing. The study shows how diary-keeping shaped emotional and gender identity. It proves that nineteenth-century masculinity was not only about duty and purpose, but also deeply intertwined with love, longing and personal transformation.

Keywords: youth diaries, gender roles, masculinity, history of emotions, homesickness, emotional agency, bourgeois education

Diaries can be regarded as a socially diverse and historically mutable medium that takes very different forms and gives itself to various modes of use.¹ This is especially the case for historical diaries written

¹ Concerning the history of (youth) diaries in Germany, Europe, and the USA, and the archival situation in German-speaking areas, see e.g.: Li Gerhalter, *Tagebücher als Quellen. Forschungsfelder und Sammlungen seit 1800*, Series: L'homme Schriften, vol. 27

by children and youth. This article explores boyhood diaries from the second half of the nineteenth century concerning the phenomenon of homesickness. Within this thematic field, it focuses on the connection between gender and the emotions of homesickness, a connection that is illuminating for the genesis of bourgeois diaries. In the history of emotions and in diaristic research, the interweaving of these categories is seen as highly productive because “a history of gender relations ... could not be written at all without the inclusion of emotions”.² In this sense, the diary can be understood not only as a bourgeois emotional medium but also, according to Christa Hämmerle, as “a strongly gendered medium”.³ Rebecca Steinitz even proposes that “the popular imagination has persistently identified the genre as feminine”.⁴ This is one reason why diary studies mainly focus on women’s diaries when investigating gender. However, contrary to widespread assumptions, many diaries of boys and men have been preserved, and not only from the nineteenth century, as German-language archival collections of youth diaries show.⁵

(Göttingen, 2021); Batsheva Ben-Amos and Dan Ben-Amos (eds), *The Diary. The Epic of Everyday Life* (Indiana, 2020); Philippe Lejeune, “*Liebes Tagebuch*”. *Zur Theorie und Praxis des Journals*, trans. Jens Hagestedt (München, 2014); Arianne Baggerman and Rudolf M. Dekker, *Child of Enlightenment. Revolutionary Europe, Reflected in a Boyhood Diary* (Leiden, 2009).

² Charlotte Trepp, ‘Gefühl oder kulturelle Konstruktion? Überlegungen zur Geschichte der Emotionen’, in *Querelles. Jahrbuch für Frauenforschung*, 7 (2002), 86.

³ Christa Hämmerle, ‘Diaries’, in Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (eds), *Reading Primary Sources. The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century History* (London – New York, 2020), 175.

⁴ Rebecca Steinitz, *Time, Space, and Gender in the Nineteenth Century British Diary* (New York, 2011), 82–3.

⁵ Among German archives that hold diaries of children and youths are Deutsches Tagebucharchiv e.V. (Emmendingen) (hereinafter: DTA), Walter-Kempowsky-Archiv/Akademie der Künste (Berlin), Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung (Burg Ludwigstein). It is uncertain whether men’s or women’s diaries were archived more and whether gender disparities in the collections also apply to children and adolescents. On collection practices related to gender in German-language archives, see Gerhalter, *Tagebücher als Quellen*, 2021. Diaries that do not correspond to the hegemonic cis-heteronorm are very rarely found. This is especially the case for queer youth diaries from the nineteenth century. One of the rarer and better-known examples in this context is the Englishwoman Anne Lister (1791–1840), who left behind a multitude of diary writings that she began at the age of fifteen (in 1806). In her writings, she described – mostly in coded language – her lesbian life, among

Recent research inspired by cultural studies demonstrates that the practices of bourgeois feelings and the forms of bourgeois gender relations were learned and negotiated in diaries since the seventeenth century – inspired by Enlightenment aspirations to work on the self and supported by religious claims.⁶ This is a context that prompts us to understand diaries of children and adolescents not only as gender-differentiated emotional media, but also as pedagogical means of bourgeois culture. Particularly within the Pietist movement, diary writing became accepted as part of the exploration of conscience, self-examination, as well as daily introspection and confession,⁷ and could thus be used by parents and educators as a means of upbringing and education. Since at least the eighteenth century, the late Enlightenment educational movement placed even more emphasis on shaping the child's inwardness. Here, the "pedagogical potential" of diaries was increasingly exploited, according to Alfred Messerli, as a didactic tool for language and perception training, as well as an opportunity for guided self-observation by the child under the control of an educator.⁸

Against this background, given the use of the diary as a medium linked to emotional and gender socialisation and as a pedagogical tool, it seems fair to suggest that children and youth form "emotional communities" that share a common set of feelings, emotional states,

other things. The diaries have been transcribed and published: *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister*, i: *I Know My Own Heart*, Series: Virago Modern Classics, vol. 770 (London, 2010) and *The secret diaries of Miss Anne Lister, 1791–1840*, ii: *No Priest but Love* (London, 2020), both edited by Helena Whitbread.

⁶ Angelika Linke, 'Sprache, Gefühl und Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Zur Rolle der Sprache im Spannungsfeld von individuellem Erleben und überindividueller Gefühlsprogrammatik einer Sozialformation', in Volker Hertel, Irmhild Barz, Regine Metzler, and Brigitte Uhlig (eds), *Sprache und Kommunikation im Kulturkontext* (Bern, 1996), 85–103.

⁷ Concerning pietistic diary writing in more detail, see Ulrike Gleixner, *Pietismus und Bürgertum. Eine historische Anthropologie der Frömmigkeit. Württemberg 17.–19. Jahrhundert*, Series: Bürgertum Neue Folge. Studien zur Zivilgesellschaft, vol. 2 (Göttingen, 2005), 124–44.

⁸ Alfred Messerli, 'Der papierene Freund. Literarische Anregungen und Modelle für das Tagebuchführen', in Kaspar von Greyerz, Hans Medick, and Patrice Velt (eds), *Von der dargestellten Person zum erinnerten Ich. Europäische Selbstzeugnisse als historische Quellen (1500–1850)*, Series: Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit, vol. 9 (Köln–Weimar–Wien, 2001), 299–320 (at 312).

and expressions, even if they are historically variable.⁹ The coding of the medium of diary-keeping as feminine offered adolescent girls in particular the opportunity to express and negotiate their feelings.¹⁰ This is also confirmed by the fact that although diary writing was considered a useful tool in bourgeois education for both sexes,¹¹ girls were more frequently encouraged to keep diaries.¹² The pedagogical demands and interventions of parents and educators sometimes persist in historical artefacts; often, for example, messages to children or instructions on keeping diaries are preserved within them. It is also not uncommon to find an adult's comments about particular entries or reflections from the children or youth diarists on the educational contexts and circumstances in their writing. However, more detailed studies of these historical documents are still lacking, especially studies that, as Arianne Baggerman notes, discuss the historical use of adolescents' diaries based on the "educational function of the diary itself".¹³

The influence of gender in the pedagogical practices of diary writing can also be seen in the age at which diarists began writing. In the nineteenth century, Christian bourgeois girls usually started keeping diaries at the time of their communion or confirmation, often receiving a diary as a gift for the occasion.¹⁴ These diaries were mainly written

⁹ See Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600–1700* (Cambridge, 2016); *ead.*, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca–London, 2006).

¹⁰ Ulrike Gleixner, 'Gelenkte Selbsterziehung. Das Tagebuch eines zehnjährigen Mädchens aus dem pietistischen Bürgertum', in Monika Mommertz and Claudia Opitz-Belakhal (eds), *Das Geschlecht des Glaubens. Religiöse Kulturen Europas zwischen Mittelalter und Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main, 2008), 283–302.

¹¹ Sylvia Wehren, 'Historische Kinder- und Jugendtagebücher im Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung', in Wolfgang Braungart, Gabriele Guerra, and Justus H. Ulbricht (eds), *Jugend ohne Sinn? Eine Spurensuche zu Sinnfragen der jungen Generation 1945–1949*, Series: Jugendbewegung und Jugendkulturen – JB Jugendgeschichte, vol. 17 (Göttingen, 2022), 321–28.

¹² Philippe Lejeune, 'Datierte Spuren in Serie. Tagebücher und ihre Autoren', in Janosch Steuwer and Rüdiger Graf (eds), *Selbstreflexionen und Weltdeutungen. Tagebücher in der Geschichte und der Geschichtsschreibung des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 2015), 37–46.

¹³ Arianne Baggerman, 'Modern pedagogy and the spread of diary writing around 1800', *History of Education & Children's Literature*, vii, 1 (2012), 141–64 (at 161).

¹⁴ See Li Gerhalter, '"Einmal ein ganz ordentliches Tagebuch". Formen, Inhalte und Materialität diaristischer Aufzeichnungen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts', in Janosch Steuwer and Rüdiger Graf (eds), *Selbstreflexionen und Weltdeutungen*.

under the supervision of their parents. Boys from the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, usually started much later, often when they left their parents' homes to go to school or study far away from home. Age differences are reflected in distinct practices of diary-keeping, not only because the pedagogical influence varies according to the developmental stage of the child, but also because the expression and processing of feelings and emotional states, as well as the contours of gender-specific components, vary according to age. While this has very different developmental-psychological and social reasons, it also means that the category of gender proves to be highly relevant for research into the diaries of children and youth. For example, since middle-class girls began to write in diaries earlier than boys, i.e. they wrote at a younger age, they were more likely to be given specific pedagogically-motivated tasks by their parents, e.g. instructions on how to organise the contents of the diary, which has gender-differentiated effects on the discourse on feelings present in the diaries. However, as the writing occasions and writing situations are different for boys and girls, the writers are diverse, and other categories of social difference also retain relevance. Thus, despite the higher educational pressure, middle-class girls show both reluctance and resistance to, as well as desire and pride in keeping diaries. Meanwhile, even in the diaries of middle-class boys that have been preserved, one can observe very different motifs and emotional states, just as children's and young people's diaries tend to differ significantly in terms of content, design, and length. This opens them to an exploration from a wide range of perspectives, which makes the medium particularly interesting for research on children and youth.

Because girls' diaries have been the object of systematic study in recent decades, this analysis foregrounds the diaries of boys. The topic of homesickness¹⁵ is particularly suitable for examining the connections between feelings and gender due to its prevalence

Tagebücher in der Geschichte und der Geschichtsschreibung des 20. Jahrhunderts (Göttingen, 2015), 63–84.

¹⁵ In German, the word *Heimweh* (homesickness) was first recorded in Switzerland. The "Schweizerisches Idiotikon. Wörterbuch der schweizerdeutschen Sprache" (1st vol. 1881) lists a reference from 1651 as the earliest mention. The term subsequently entered the medical vocabulary, as homesickness was understood for a time as an illness with severe somatic and mental consequences. It became known as the "Swiss disease" (Latin: *morbus helveticus*). The use of the word was

in the diaries of boys. Because boys, as already mentioned, often started keeping diaries in the period in which they (temporarily) left the parental home, they experienced an emotional change, frequently stating that they miss their familiar family environment. Homesickness has already been the subject of cultural, medical, and literary study on several occasions (also in German-language contexts). In educational contexts, discourses on homesickness have also been the subject of works in history and cultural studies.¹⁶ Sociologically, as well as psychologically, homesickness is the longing for a lost community. It is linked to social loneliness, which causes psychological and physiological crises because the loss of familiar surroundings is often experienced as pain. The feelings of homesickness and the longing associated with it are examined below because the entries in boys' diaries that refer to it are well-suited to the analysis of masculinely-coded orders of feeling.¹⁷ This applies particularly to middle-class boys, because when they left their parental homes, they were assigned the task of maturing in their feelings and character to become men. This also meant that feelings of homesickness were considered childish and inappropriate, which is why they offer such a valuable means of showcasing the bourgeois development of gender. This analysis is conducted with an interest in the intergenerational and social positioning of the writing self and with particular attention to the historicity of feelings.¹⁸

initially limited to Switzerland, but in the Romantic era, during the nineteenth century, it spread to other German-speaking areas.

¹⁶ See Simon Bunke, *Heimweh. Studien zur Kultur- und Literaturgeschichte einer tödlichen Krankheit* (Freiburg, 2009); Rudolf Bernet, 'Heimweh und Nostalgie', in "Pathos". *Konturen eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffes* (Bielefeld, 2007), 103–18; Karl Jaspers, *Heimweh und Verbrechen* (Leipzig, 1909).

¹⁷ In the modern era, the place of emotions in masculinity has been a much-discussed topic of German-language historical research for a number of years, see e.g. Toni Tholen and Jennifer Clare (eds), *Literarische Männlichkeiten und Emotionen* (Heidelberg, 2013); Manuel Borutta and Nina Verheyen (eds), *Die Präsenz der Gefühle. Männlichkeit und Emotion in der Moderne* (Bielefeld, 2010). Initially focused especially on deficient and pathological masculinity, the research now covers a broad field and considers feelings as a constitutive component of masculinity, which is to be understood in its plurality, diversity, and ambivalence.

¹⁸ Ute Frevert, *Vergängliche Gefühle* (Göttingen, 2013).

THE AUTHORS:

OSKAR AND JULIUS M., CARL EMIL W., AND WILHELM S.

For the following explorations of the connection between homesickness, gender, and emotion, four boys' diaries were selected from a corpus I researched, which includes approximately 350 German-language diaries from the years spanning 1830 to 1930. These diaries will serve as examples, while providing an opportunity to reflect on the insights that emerge from the entire corpus. They were selected according to three aspects: first, male-coded diaries were selected because girls' diaries were already the focus of many systematic analyses; second, only diaries with entries about the longing for home were considered; and third, only those whose authors wrote about their feelings were taken into account, which meant that diaries that recorded everyday events in bullet points or used pictures to express feelings were not considered. Finally, the diaries also needed to be historically comparable, which is why writers whose dates are closer together were selected. Based on these requirements, the diaries of the brothers Oskar and Julius M. were chosen, along with those of Carl Emil W. and Wilhelm S. These diaries are kept in the German Diary Archive (Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, DTA) in Emmendingen. Diary entries from the days of their youth have been preserved, all of which were written in the second half of the nineteenth century and, for the present analysis, entries written between 1845 and 1898 are considered. The boys were all born into middle-class families, the sons of pastors, civil servants, and merchants, and at the time of their first diary entries, were either at school or had moved on to the university. All of them came from a Protestant background, where keeping a diary was more common.

The first author under consideration is *Oskar M.* (1836–1915), the youngest of the four. Several of his diaries have been preserved, which is not unusual because one person often wrote various diaries, and these were subsequently preserved together. His first entries date back to 1850, when he was fourteen years old; he kept his diary in Görlitz, a town in Germany where he attended grammar school, and in his hometown of Bunzlau (today Bolesławiec in Poland). Oskar was the first of seven children; as a pastor, his father had risen to the position of superintendent. In his diary, Oskar reports on his everyday life as a pupil far away from his parental home, living in a boarding house for pupils. He kept the diary as a learning diary and as a record of the

daily occurrences. His writings – and this also applies to those of the other boys – testify to an extraordinary sense of duty and striving; character traits that can be said to represent a typical self-presentation of bourgeois adolescents who, as Carola Groppe notes, waver between “willingness to make an effort and efficiency”.¹⁹

The M. family has also preserved the diaries of his brother *Julius M.* (1847–1919). Two of them date back to 1865, when he was seventeen years old. Julius started writing in his hometown of Bunzlau, at which time he was taking his final school exams. In contrast to his brother, he attended school in the family’s place of residence. Later, he wrote from Erlangen, where he studied theology. At the beginning of his studies, he joined the Wingolf League – an interdenominational, colour-bearing student fraternity [*farbentragende Studentenverbindung*], which is considered the oldest student corporation in Germany (founded in 1844). In his notes, Julius first reports on his efforts and the contents of his exam, and then about his studies, but devotes most of his entries to general accounts of everyday life and leisure activities. The focus of his writing is on student fraternity life, which also includes travel and wandering. It is striking that Julius described how he uses his knowledge of the humanities to behave in a bizarre or humorous manner towards other people. This is also typical of all the boys’ diaries; in this respect, too, the social and habitual positioning of the bourgeois subject, who defines himself through achievement and education, is evident.

The third author is *Carl Emil W.* (1880–1946), who kept a diary in Freiburg from the age of seventeen, beginning in 1897. Like Julius, Carl Emil started his diary in the year he finished school, although he focuses on his infatuation with a particular girl rather than his exams. During the time covered by the narrative in his diary, he travels to Geneva, where, according to his father’s wishes, he begins a commercial apprenticeship – the plan was that he would later take over his father’s business. There are longer notes from Geneva, for example, which reveal many aspects of his social and professional life and feelings. Carl Emil W. had a peculiar family situation, which he also reflected on in detail. At the time of writing, his family consisted only of him, his father, and his sister. His mother and his other sister

¹⁹ Carola Groppe, *Im deutschen Kaiserreich. Eine Bildungsgeschichte des Bürgertums 1871–1918* (Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2018), 195.

died some time before, and the grief experienced by the remaining members of the family also weighs heavily on Carl Emil W., which he reflects on again and again in his diary. In this context, it is important to note that the subject of death is not uncommon in the diaries of children and young people from the nineteenth century, as acquaintances or even family members frequently died while the authors were still young.

The last person I would like to introduce is *Wilhelm S.* (b. 1826), about whom only some information has been found to date. What remains is a diary from the years 1845–1846, which he began shortly before leaving his parents' home in Luxembourg. At the time of writing, Wilhelm was eighteen years old, and he probably began writing at the instigation of his parents. Much of his writing was done in Bonn, where he studied at the behest of his parents. Wilhelm's entries are the least detailed, although they contain the typical triad of topics that are generally found in boys' diaries from his time, namely reports on his studies and education, descriptions of everyday life and leisure, and reflections on his feelings.

ASPECTS OF DIARY WRITING IN THE CONTEXT OF HOMESICKNESS, EMOTIONS, AND GENDER

Turning to themes of separation and homesickness, the first striking feature of the boys' diaries is that they mostly begin at a time when they are about to leave home and that the prospect of leaving triggers feelings of melancholy and longing for home. Oskar's entries begin with his journey to Görlitz; the first entry is about the arrival of the train at the place where he will now go to school. His brother Julius writes 15 years later – while finishing his school exams – a few months before leaving for Erlangen. Wilhelm S. also spends his last weeks in Luxembourg. His school days have just ended, and he is now preparing for his studies in Bonn. This is also the case with the diary of Carl Emil W., who travels to Geneva shortly after commencing the writing. It is clear that the boys are already preoccupied with leaving home before they leave; they also reflect on their feelings. On the day of his departure from Luxembourg, Wilhelm S., for example, openly expresses his pain at leaving, but also his hopes for the future, which he experiences as a clear break from the past:

Today is the heavy, heavy day that draws such a sharp, important line in my life. May it be the beginning of, I do not say, an entirely joyful, but a beautiful, good, and blessed future! I left my dear parents at 6 o'clock in Cologne at Mrs Hasenklever's house. It was a farewell for a long time and a difficult farewell, because not only did I say goodbye for the first time to [my] father, mother and brother all at once, but to those who had been my guardian angels up to this point, who with a faithful hand kept every distant danger from me and deflected it, who spread their protective arms around me so that I would not fall.²⁰

Wilhelm describes the relationships within the family as very affectionate and protective; he faces the pain of parting and the associated fears with an acceptance of responsibility, which is accompanied by a readiness for the challenge, for from this point onward "it's up to me alone to foresee the dangers and avoid them, or at least to overcome them with firm courage".²¹ In German, the word for courage (*Mut*) has two meanings – on the one hand, as an individual mood, and on the other hand, as the willpower of a person.²² Hence, those who show courage show the strength of their will: they strive to overcome a situation that seems dangerous to them. At the same time, the effort of will is accompanied by a sensation of desire, and etymologically, this is caused by a heroic state of mind. As an emotion, it has a masculine connotation, and the history of the word "courage" can be traced back to the noble knights of medieval times.²³ However, courage alone is not enough for Wilhelm, so he asks that "God, who stood by me, lifting and helping me, may He not withdraw His hand from me, may He grant that I not fall, but give me strength to resist every seduction, whatever form it may take steadfastly!"²⁴

However, Wilhelm does not rely only on God's help because he remembers the pedagogical influence of his parents:

²⁰ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1133, Wilhelm S., *Mein Tagebuch, März 1845 bis März 1846*, 22 Oct. 1845. The diaries in their entirety, and thus the quotations included here, were written in Old German. To better translate them into English, I implemented linguistic changes, mainly concerning spelling and grammar.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Gerhard Wahrig, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Gütersloh, 1970), column 2500.

²³ Benno von Wiese (ed.), 'Dichter des Minnesangs', in *Die Deutsche Lyrik* (Düsseldorf, 1956), 27.

²⁴ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1133, Wilhelm S., *Mein Tagebuch, März 1845 bis März 1846*, 22 Oct. 1845.

But above all, I will strive not to forget the teachings given to me by my good parents. As long as they are still firmly in my memory, and as long as my parents stand next to God before my eyes, so they have not been in vain, and so I will follow them, as much as it is in my power, so will I not become bad.²⁵

What concerns him here is obviously morality, and he musters his masculine courage, calling upon God and his own education to “not become bad” far from his parental home – that is, to not let his character be spoiled.

Not only Wilhelm S., but also Oskar M. invokes a masculine perspective, illustrating how strongly the feeling of homesickness was linked to the demands of becoming a man. Oskar reflects on them at the dawn of the new school year, which, after the summer break, once again means parting from home. Much like Wilhelm, he calls upon God, courage, and his parents; however, in contrast to Wilhelm, he is far more bellicose. The first (very long) entry is thus a mustering of strength for what is to come: “With God! A year lies before me, perhaps more serious than all the previous ones; I have begun my struggle, weakly now, but hopefully, I will become stronger and prevail. – Will all my wishes come true, will all my hopes be realised?”²⁶

Oskar, too, like Wilhelm, wants to “only courageously go forward” and does not want to shy away from “the fight” because “only by fighting does one triumph and gain the prize of victory!”, and he, too, relies on his parents, “moral strength”, and a “firm trust in God”.²⁷ Oskar clearly develops male-connoted life plans because by leaving, by taking a step into the unknown, the “boy moves closer to his profession”,²⁸ – as he says to himself. He understands the situation that accompanies the departure from the parental home as a transition, for “the time is drawing nearer and nearer when he [the boy] is partly to give account, partly to move on into a new life”, and reasons that this “life is a struggle; beginning early, it soon pulls the boy to the Herculean crossroads, demands a quick decision which,

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1166/III, 1–3, Oskar M., *Tagebuch 1850–1852*, 1 Jan. 1853.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

once made, defines his whole life”.²⁹ If the boy fails, the whole world will perish because the “cowards”, those who do not pass this test, “bear the guilt for all that will happen to the world”, while the brave will be rewarded. For Oskar, the reward consists of the bourgeois ideal of patriarchy, because in the end, the brave one can “perhaps be surrounded by hopeful children and grandchildren borne by a faithful wife and look back on the course of an eventful life”. Apart from courage, his devotion to God and his “faithful parents’ love” support him in this endeavour.³⁰ In this way, his life struggle follows a path of male-connoted feelings, founded on his courageous emotional attitude, the love of God, and the love of his parents, leading at best to marriage and procreation.

The writings of Carl Emil W. seem more ambivalent in this respect, and, in his diary, he deals not so much with the feelings he wants to have, but with the feelings he has during the parting. He writes that he “wants to go to a foreign country”, but actually he “can’t say for himself whether he wants to go or not”.³¹ On the one hand, he is glad to leave Freiburg, because he feels that staying put would make him “dull”, but on the other hand, he still “feels uncomfortable about what it will be like outside, taking care of himself for the first time”.³² Because of this, his farewell is less heroic, although Carl Emil is also preoccupied by a feeling that relates to the expectations toward a male bourgeois youth, namely that he will take responsibility for shaping his own life. The parting is made easier for him by an unrequited love for a local girl and also by his family situation, because first his younger sister, and shortly afterwards his mother, dies, which leads to a lack of “togetherness” [*Beisammensein*].³³ As a result, Carl Emil W. leaves home “full of contradictory feelings” concerning his new permanent place of residence. His father accompanies him for a short time, but eventually says goodbye to him too, and does so with love: “At 3 o’clock, we were told to part in earnest, and we were both soft. I must say I felt joy when I saw in Papa’s watery eyes how much he loves me”. Their farewell is very tender, a “last goodbye

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ DTA Sign. 1798, 1–4, Carl Emil W., *Tagebücher 1897–1908*, 3 March 1897.

³² *Ibid.*, 21 July 1897.

³³ *Ibid.*

kiss”, then the father leaves, and Carl Emil is initially filled with a “feeling of insecurity and lack of independence”.³⁴ Oskar M. also finds it difficult to say goodbye to his mother; he speaks of a feeling of sadness, as he “could not be present at the departure of my dear mother because of the ‘enrolment’ [*Einschreibung*]”.³⁵ Even three years later, this feeling is present when he leaves again – for example, Oskar deplores the “sad business of packing up” when leaving home again after holidays.³⁶ He asks himself: “What is it, then, that binds us to our father’s house with such peculiar charm? Every spot is dear and valuable, every object reminds us of many a cherished past event, every word is an expression of love and tenderness”.³⁷ Continuing, he reflects:

As long as one is in one’s parental home, one has no worries, no sorrow; a loving father, a faithful mother is constantly at hand with advice and assistance, with loving forbearance punishing our mistakes, directing the mind to the higher, nobler, divine, and protecting the tender plant from every poisonous breath of polluting corruption. And what a difference in a foreign land! That is why it is so hard to say goodbye; one would so gladly stay, and yet it is not possible.³⁸

All the boys show deep ties to their families, which they portray as loving, protective, and supportive in their diaries. At the same time, the family’s influence extends in many ways to their new homes. Not only do the boys often take it upon themselves to follow their parents’ instructions, but they may also ask their permission to acquaint themselves and become friends with this or that person in the new place. In this way, the parental home remains present in their new location, even though the distance from the parental home reshapes emotional states and everyday routines. For example, on the first day after the Christmas holidays, back at school in Görlitz, Oskar writes: “In the usual way, school started again; things will be unpacked and everything put in order on the desks; I also write to my dear parents”;³⁹ and the next day: “I was quite anxious; and

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1166/III, 1–3, Oskar M., *Tagebuch 1850–1852*, 7 Oct. 1850.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 Jan. 1853.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3 Jan. 1853.

I would have wished so much to still be at home, if only I could”.⁴⁰ The habits of keeping in touch and the mood of anxiousness persist for a long time; in the autumn of the year, he recalls:

With melancholy, I woke up on this day. One year ago, my dear mother brought me to Görlitz, deeply saddened; one year ago, I had to separate from my beloved home for the first time in a long time; one year ago, I had to leave my loving parents for a foreign city, for the cold, harsh world. I was no longer allowed to come to my home.⁴¹

Despite the great responsibility placed on the boys, the feeling of homesickness is also caused by the firm, loving bond with one's own family and home. The family and the home are closely connected. That is why places and locations are also associated with feelings of homesickness. Oskar states on the same day: “At 2.00, Hermann and I accompanied the Rector to the station; I had a heavy heart, how I would have loved to exchange places with him!”⁴² Time and again, his homesickness is evident, and this is also the case with Wilhelm. In his experience, too, the longing for his family is closely connected to places: “Today I felt so Sunday-like and at the same time so wistful and yet calm. I thought I saw Luxembourg everywhere again: even my study seemed like the one in my parents' house”.⁴³ Thus, the perception of the new place of residence mixes with homesickness and memory, partly the memory of another phase of life:

The paved path leading up from Poppelsdorf made the same impression on me as the stairs leading to the chapel at Ansenburg. Yes, the past arouses painful feelings precisely because it never returns, because all our longing does not call it back once it has rolled away from the present. I thought of my childhood in the same way; I wished to be a child again and to live the years of innocence, the beautiful years, once more in guiltless unconsciousness. Alas, they are gone, no longing calls them back!⁴⁴

In this respect, the longing for his family is revealed as a permanent mood, which at the same time represents the mourning for the loss

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3 Oct. 1851.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 25 Oct. 1850.

⁴³ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1133, Wilhelm S., *Mein Tagebuch, März 1845 bis März 1846*, 24 Feb. 1846.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 9 Nov. 1845.

of childhood. In this sense, the path to adult masculinity is associated with loss, pain, and longing. Homesickness combines all these feelings.

Julius M. is the only one of the boys who does not clearly express feelings of sadness and longing in his diary. He is also the only one who, with his arrival in Erlangen and the beginning of his studies, is immediately integrated into a student-organised, male community with rituals, events, and functions that take up a lot of his time. For Julius, the integration into the new community involves moments of anxiety, which are connected to the question of whether his transition into the community will be successful, to the extent that it can be assumed that he also knows the fears and anxieties of social loneliness and the longing for home:

So we drove on and suddenly we heard the word: **Erlangen!** We went out and immediately into the Wingolfite pub, which I saw first in the 'Gasthaus zur Goldenen Schleie'. As I entered, I was filled with many emotions, and I was especially pleased by the cordiality, as someone immediately took my Havelock. Then we went to our pretty spacious flat, accompanied by Stolzenberg, who spoke to me the most on the first evening.⁴⁵

The most important aspect of his arrival is therefore that they "received me very kindly".⁴⁶ Days of visits, excursions, hikes, singing together, and pub crawls follow. All this leads to a "[j]oyful awakening in Erlangen".⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Julius is not free of feelings of concern for his family, and he constantly worries when the [new] habits of keeping in touch fail him or when his expectations are not fulfilled. This happens, for example, when letters fail to arrive, as, apart from news conveyed through travellers, letters are usually the only means of regular contact with the family. Therefore, a constant refrain of waiting for letters runs through all the diaries, even for Julius, who otherwise does not express homesickness. For example, on the "wedding day of my dear parents", he writes that he has "not received any news from them ... for quite a long time".⁴⁸ He wonders if something important was going on in the family, and he is very anxious for the following letter to arrive. Four days later, another

⁴⁵ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1166/I, 1, Julius M., *Tagebuch 1865–1868*, 2 May 1865.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 15 Jun. 1865.

entry: "I wrote to the parents. The long silence from home is quite worrying to me; it would be wonderful if the reason lay in what was said on the 15th of the month".⁴⁹

A similar increase in concern can be seen in the diary of Wilhelm S., who is so consumed by the feelings inspired by the absence of letters that this affects his entire everyday life. He notes: "Up at 5 1/2. – Math. 8 – 10 Coll. – 10 – 1 – Still no letter from home! – This made me very sad and disgruntled, so I did not really feel like doing anything. The flute did not speak well, which increased my listlessness. I played some piano and looked for some things about Math". One day later, he wrote: "Still no letter, for which I wait with the most painful impatience. Why haven't they written to me yet, since there are three hands at home to write with? And yet I wrote, asking so urgently for an answer!"⁵⁰

The urgency and longing are evident in the texts. Despite the demands it imposes, masculinity apparently still allows the youths to indulge in these feelings in their diaries. When the letters arrive, they also trigger certain feelings; for example, Carl Emil W. is delighted to receive letters from all his relatives and those familiar to him on his birthday, because the "warmth of their lines and of every word breathes love".⁵¹ The importance of letters – also in relation to current emotional states – is also evident from the diary of Oskar M., who very meticulously records each letter sent to his parents and each reply received, occasionally also recording his feelings – presumably those that were particularly noticeable to him: "To my great joy, I received a letter with a package and with the felt shoes and forgotten diary; oh, how I cried there; oh mother, if only you had been with me when I was writing these lines, what I would have given for it!"⁵²

Feelings of homesickness can also feed fantasies about the future. In this process, the diary serves not only an imaginative function but also a mimetic one, as Ulrike Gleixner had already indicated.⁵³ This means that the diary is directly used for working through, modelling,

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 19 Jun. 1865.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 Nov. 1845.

⁵¹ DTA Sign. 1798, 1–4, Carl Emil W., *Tagebücher 1897–1908*, see p. 77, 13 Nov. 1897.

⁵² DTA Reg.-Nr. 1166/III, 1–3, Oskar M., *Tagebuch 1850–1852*, 6 Jan. 1851.

⁵³ See Gleixner, 'Gelenkte Selbsterziehung', fn. 11.

and reliving feelings. In this respect, the medium appears as a space of re-experienced memory and prospective fantasy. Furthermore, one can also see here the regulation of feelings, which can also be interpreted as emotional agency. For example, in Erlangen, Julius M. repeatedly writes about his love for a girl he met at home. In doing so, he immerses himself in fantasies that he seems to experience *in actu*:

Oh, if I could be there myself today, I would see her youthful joy, delight in her loving nature, and joke with her again as if in melancholy. But far from her, I faithfully remember her, the little rose with fresh cheeks, in good health, hardy ..., devoted only to me. ... Therefore, she alone shall be my own.⁵⁴

While he initially imagines a situation, he subsequently moves on to the qualities of a good (married) woman, which then culminate in a male-connoted determination to possess the girl now and forever. He also imagines how he would meet his love:

I imagined how beautiful it would be if I hurried down the Witzener Pfarrberg in the evening, singing *A hunter blew his horn*, then looked into the friendly parlour, brightly lit by the warm light of the lamp, and saw Witzener priest's family sitting around the table; and if I went to the door and sang standing at the window, looking at them. Then the door opens, and out flies jubilantly to my neck and kisses me, my B., the most beautiful of all the girls.⁵⁵

Julius switches tenses during this entry and the reader is now no longer part of a past memory but instead of an event in the present – and future. Something similar can be seen in the diary of Oskar, who often writes in retrospect, but in an entry dated December 1850, he expresses joy or relives it while writing. The entry states: “very much looking forward to Christmas”.⁵⁶ The significance of this statement becomes clearer a few days later, when another entry proclaims: “Great joy at Christmas, to my great pleasure received a letter from my dear mother”⁵⁷; and again, a few days later: “Very excited for Christmas; Superintendent Bürger preached in St Peter’s Church

⁵⁴ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1166/I, 1, Julius M., *Tagebuch 1865–1868*, 12 Sept. 1865.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1166/III, 1–3, Oskar M., *Tagebuch 1850–1852*, 28 Nov. 1850.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 11 Dec. 1850.

about the just hope for a better future; did not understand much”.⁵⁸ Finally, at Christmas, at home, he writes in his diary: “How good it felt to experience love again after a quarter of a year, finally, and to be surrounded by love after so long a time of loneliness and sadness”.⁵⁹ Thus, the diary also has a psycho-hygienic function when it is necessary to endure certain negative feelings or to put oneself in a better mood. Carl Emil W., for example, writes on one occasion: “Tonight I wanted to read, but as I sit there all alone in the dining room studying the *Kladderadatsch* weekly, I hear a piano playing above me, which makes me feel so at home that I have to chat a little with my diary”.⁶⁰ He writes this because “Christmas is approaching with its German familiarity; how I would like to spend this day at home with my loved ones and give Papa and Ida a really heartfelt hug”.⁶¹ The mimetic and psycho-hygienic function of diaries can also express itself in the form of sighs and exclamations; for example, Julius repeatedly writes entries such as: “B! B! B!”,⁶² where the letter B stands for the name of the girl he longs for. The boys also find other ways of dealing with their feelings, often choosing distraction and spending time with new acquaintances and friends to overcome sad or negative feelings. They mention these mechanisms in their diaries. Wilhelm S., for example, writes: “After dinner, a stroll until 2 1/2, then drawing until 4 1/2, during which I felt so melancholy that I longed for it to end. But when I come home and work (maths – analysis), this mood usually disappears”.⁶³

Although the longing for home often remains with the boys as a permanent mood over the years, the development of coping strategies can also be observed, which frequently consist of distraction through various tasks and, increasingly, making new contacts and friendships. Along the way, educational and transformational processes occur that lead to a greater emotional distance from the parental home. Thus, Wilhelm, who suffered from homesickness the most of all, writes shortly before leaving for home, after almost half a year’s absence: “Packing. – When everything was taken care of in the evening, I was

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 15 Dec. 1850.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23 Dec. 1850.

⁶⁰ DTA Sign. 1798, 1–4, Carl Emil W., *Tagebücher 1897–1908*, 14 Dec. 1897.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² DTA Reg.-Nr. 1166/I, 1, Julius M., *Tagebuch 1865–1868*, 11 Nov. 1865.

⁶³ DTA Reg.-Nr. 1133, Wilhelm S., *Tagebuch 1845–1846*, 15 Nov. 1845.

very sad to leave these rooms, these objects; I would almost have preferred to stay here. – Today, it is just five months since I last saw my parents and brother”.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

To have feelings and to be moved by them was considered appropriate in bourgeois society,⁶⁵ and it is therefore not surprising that male subjects also provide intensive descriptions of their feelings in their diaries, among which feelings of homesickness and longing, which express themselves in sadness, fear, and insecurity, are a recurring theme. These manifest themselves in highly diverse forms, ranging from acting out unpleasant feelings to creating pleasant ones. Yet, other social practices, such as waiting for messages or writing letters, are also part of it. From this, it is evident that, although the boys orient themselves towards the expectations and demands of the bourgeois idea of masculinity, it differs from their actual feelings and is mediated by the striving for adulthood, religiosity, and adherence to parental guidelines. There is no resistance or rebelliousness in the diaries. On the one hand, this may be because the medium was bound up in pedagogical considerations; on the other hand, social acceptability certainly played a role in the passing on and publication of the diaries. The compliance of the boys also enabled affectionate bonds. The texts also bear witness to emotional work, on which a lot of time is spent. Homesickness as a feeling of suffering highlights the emotional difficulties of bourgeois male life. However, the medium of the diary does not serve only as a means of mental hygiene. Since the diaries were often read aloud within the family or privately by the parents, they also served as an instrument of communicative interaction. In this respect, too, writing a diary can be understood as a shared social practice that simultaneously integrates cultural and social narratives. Based on the diaries examined here, it can be said that the discourses on feelings related to masculinity served as a guide in situations of upheaval and that in everyday life, the young authors discussed here referred to them

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22 May 1846.

⁶⁵ Ute Frevert, ‘Gefühle definieren: Begriffe und Debatten aus drei Jahrhunderten’, in ead., *Gefühlswissen. Eine lexikalische Spurensuche der Moderne* (Frankfurt – New York, 2011), 9–40, see esp. 23, 33.

mostly affirmatively in their diaries. Thus, young bourgeois masculinity presents itself in the tension between “purpose-oriented action and emotional attachment”⁶⁶ and heroic masculinity as intertwined with the worlds of love and suffering.

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⁶⁶ Walter Erhart, ‘Das zweite Geschlecht. Männlichkeit, interdisziplinär. Ein Forschungsbericht’, *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 30 (2005), 156–232 (at 186).

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