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IMPERIAL MOTHERHOOD: THE GERMAN CIVILIZING MISSION IN
BÜLOW'S IM LANDE DER VERHEIBUNG

by

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ABSTRACT

IMPERIAL MOTHERHOOD: THE GERMAN CIVILIZING MISSION IN BÜLOW'S IM LANDE DER VERHEIßUNG

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This thesis explores Frieda von Bülow's last and most popular colonial novel, Im Lande der Verheißung, which she wrote in 1899 after she had returned to Germany from her second journey to the German colony of East Africa. In her novel, Bülow manifests her nationalistic ideology and her support for female participation in the colonies in the character of Maleen Dietlas, who believes in and supports the German colonial ambitions. Bülow provides her female protagonist with a role and purpose in the colony. Maleen serves as an imperial mother who sees it as her duty to "civilize" the German men of the colony. Her true sense of purpose is shown, however, in her guidance of a motherless, wayward, and dark-skinned girl, Maria, who Maleen feels needs to be brought into womanhood and "civilization". This thesis views Im Lande der Verheißung

and Maleen's "civilizing mission" as a metaphor for Germany's nationalistic objective to "civilize" its overseas empire.

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