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Nature and Environment in Nineteenth-Century Austrian Literature

by

Bartell Michael Berg

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
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partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Introduction

Fifty years ago in May 1959, C.P. Snow delivered his famed lecture “The Two Cultures” that has since then become a staple of academic discourse. Snow’s lecture, which lamented a rift between the sciences and humanities, has inspired countless books, articles, conferences, and lecture series. His ideas about the chasm between the two “cultures” have informed the work of generations of academics, and in the half century since the lecture, literary scholars have increasingly contemplated the connection between science and literature.

One of those scholars, Paul Youngman, in his recent monograph on the train in nineteenth-century German culture, acknowledges his indebtedness to Snow and Snow’s notion of a “third culture,” that is, “study of the point at which the humanities and the sciences merge.”¹ Youngman shows “that there were “third-culturalists,” namely, the realist authors included in his study, who lived and worked before Snow coined the term.”² Youngman’s work shows that notions of both a rift between scientific and literary culture as well as the importance of the seam between the two were present in German culture in the nineteenth century. In Germany and Austria, as Youngman demonstrates, the development of a “scientifically and technologically oriented worldview” did not displace earlier mythological narratives of religion and the arts, as many had feared.³ The nexus of science and the humanities—broadly conceived to include religion as well—instead resulted in what Adorno and Horkheimer in their

¹ Paul Youngmann, Black Devil and Iron Angel : the Railway in Nineteenth-Century German Realism (Washington D.C.: Catholic U of America P 2005) X.

² Youngmann, Black Devil, X

³ I use myth here as Youngmann does, to refer to “narratives composed of basic patterns of images, events, or situations already known to us in our cultural tradition that provide a nonscientific explanation of the world.” Youngmann 2

Dialektik der Aufklärung explained as a dialectical relationship whereby technology contributed to the growth of myth and poetry, i.e., critical elements of the humanities, and vice versa.

Around the same time that Snow observed a rift between the “two cultures,” writers and scientists began to observe with increasing uneasiness the destruction of the environment. While earlier intellectuals such as Aldo Leopold wrote about nature conservation and the ethics thereof, an important shift began in the mid-twentieth century, as authors began to express concern about what they perceived as a looming environmental crisis. In 1962, Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring documented the disastrous ecological effects of the use of the pesticide DDT.⁴ The book, generally considered to have provided an impetus for the environmental movement in the United States, is a prime example of this “third culture” as Carson combines science and historical analysis to compose her narrative of ecological crisis due to the widespread use of DDT. Carson’s book was convincing by any measure as the Kennedy administration began to look into the effects of DDT, and the pesticide’s ban in the United States came soon thereafter.

From the 1960s until the present, the modern environmental movement has grown and expanded worldwide. In Germany, authors from Günter Grass to Hans Magnus Enzensberger have taken up environmental themes in their literature.⁵ This growing awareness of ecological issues and the representation of these ideas in literature led to the growth of a new area of literary studies called ecocriticism; in this approach, the scholar seeks to understand and transcend a perceived gap between nature and culture by interpreting literature with particular regard to nature and ecology.

⁴ Rachel Carson, Silent Spring (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

⁵ See the volume Literatur und Ökologie ed. Axel Goodbody, (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1998).

In the introduction to The Ecocriticism Reader, a collection of influential essays that helped to define ecocriticism and its uses, Cheryl Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.”⁶ She continues, “Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies.”⁷ In a further explanation, Glotfelty asserts, “all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnection between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature.”⁸ Although Glotfelty does not mention “third culture studies,” it is evident that ecocriticism has a similar goal in the study of the connection between nature and culture as expressed in language and literature. In examining the relationship between human culture and the physical world, ecocriticism contributes to the development of a “third culture” that uses both science and the humanities as modes of understanding. I aim with this dissertation to contribute to ecocriticism and its use in interpreting German literature.

While ecocriticism has flourished in English literature with the first panel on ecocriticism at the MLA in 1991 and the founding of the ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment) in 1992, ecocriticism in German studies has not had the same impact. Notable exceptions are a volume by Axel Goodbody titled Nature, Technology and Cultural Change in Twentieth-Century German Literature: The

⁶ Cheryl Glotfelty, “Introduction,” The Ecocriticism Reader (Athens, GA; UofGeorgia Press, 1996) xviii.

⁷ Glotfelty, “Introduction,” The Ecocriticism Reader, xviii.

⁸ Glotfelty, “Introduction,” The Ecocriticism Reader, xix.

Challenge of Ecocriticism (2007) in which the author explores ecological writing in literature of the twentieth century and another volume edited by Goodbody, Literatur und Ökologie (1998), wherein the contributing scholars addressed ecocritical topics in relation to German literature mainly from the twentieth century but also with a brief analysis of nineteenth century texts and authors. In the introduction to the more recent book on twentieth-century German literature and ecocriticism, Goodbody laments, “The growing interest in and acceptance of ecocriticism in the United States and Britain over the past decade has not been matched in Germany, where it tends to be dismissed by *Literaturwissenschaftler*, or literary scholars, as mere ‘Motivforschung’ (research into literary themes and motifs).”⁹ Peter Morris-Keitel and Michael Niedermeier’s studies of ecology and German literature, especially Morris-Keitel’s Literatur der deutschen Jugendbewegung. Bürgerliche Ökologiekonzepte zwischen 1900 und 1918, have also contributed to the growth of ecocriticism in German studies. Like work by Goodbody, Keitel, and Niedermeier, this dissertation aims at exploring this regrettable lacuna in German literary studies.

In their introduction to Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism, Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace argue,

If ecocriticism is to have a significant impact as a literary methodology beyond the study of nature writing, we believe ecocritics must demonstrate the relevance of our approach to these other scholars. In our experience, the most common question such scholars have about ecocriticism is whether it can usefully be applied to texts outside of nature

⁹ Axel Goodbody, Introduction to Nature, Technology and Cultural Change in Twentieth-Century German Literature: The Challenge of Ecocriticism, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) ix.

writing—to the novels of, say, Henry James or other authors who seem less concerned with nature than with culture.¹⁰

Ecocriticism, the authors maintain, must be applied to texts beyond nature writing in order to remain relevant to literary and culture studies on a broader basis. From an historical perspective, ecocriticism must also be used to interpret and understand texts older than the mid-twentieth century to the present.

The word ecology is generally accepted to have been coined by the German Ernst Haeckel in the second half of the nineteenth century, and it is thus evident that ideas about ecology existed long before Carson's Silent Spring. From a literary and historical perspective, looking at earlier writing enables us to ascertain how ecological thought developed in a socio-cultural context. This dissertation looks at four prominent authors in nineteenth-century Austrian literature and explores how issues regarding nature and culture, science and technology, humans and the physical world around them are portrayed and understood.

As I show in this dissertation, literary theorists, long before C. P. Snow, had considered the seam between science and literature as an important site for new modes of communication. Wilhelm Bölsche and Emile Zola, whose work I will discuss in chapter two, were just two of the more prominent voices in European literature who called for an increasing adaptation of literature to the scientific methods in the second half of the nineteenth century. Scientific language, approaches, and innovations permeated European literature at the time, and German literature was no exception. Post-romantic nineteenth-century German literature offers numerous examples where authors have

¹⁰ Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace, Introduction to Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism, Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2002 3.

incorporated science into their work. In this dissertation, I examine Adalbert Stifter and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach as examples of authors who have included scientific discourse and technological advances in their literature. In both cases, as I will show, science informs selected works from their oeuvre from the discussion of nature in Stifter's writing to the introduction of technology into a Moravian village in Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld.

The century saw the belated industrial revolution in Germany and Austria, which brought with it a host of issues concerning the environment and culture, including the increasing impact of science and technology upon literature. Paul Youngmann, in the aforementioned book on the train and realist literature, makes clear that he selects realist authors of the nineteenth century in Germany and Austria precisely due to their attempts to depict "reality" in their literature, which necessitated an "objective" and thereby scientific/technological point of view. He points out,

But this [realist] version of reality is just one version, a version that was necessarily aestheticized and therefore inseparable from the mythical. . . . Realist authors could no more transcend myth than could scientists or anyone else. They relate the narrative, . . . and thus they provide a rich body of work in which to analyze the rather complicated relationship between myth and technology.¹¹

Realist authors, according to Youngmann, rely on science, technology, *and* myth for their understanding and portrayal of the world.

Although not all authors considered in this dissertation are commonly characterized as realists, they all reflect upon the connection between nature, science, technology, and myth at various moments in their writings. From the importance of "myth" in Stifter's Hochwald to the impact of technology upon the village in Ebner-

¹¹ Youngmann, Black Devil, 4.

Eschenbach's Das Gemeindekind and from Rosegger's portrayals of the conflict between nature and culture to Salten's tales of anthropomorphized animals that call on the reader to consider the importance of animals for our understanding of ourselves as humans, this dissertation explores the nexus between nature and culture as an important site of ecological awareness.

In the first chapter, I focus on Adalbert Stifter and two of his novellas, Der Hochwald and Brigitta. Beginning with a short summary and interpretation of Stifter's famous "Sanftes Gesetz," a literary manifesto by Stifter about nature and its importance for literature, my analysis focuses then on nature as a totalizing system within Stifter's oeuvre. In interpreting the two novellas, I show how their narrative structures reflect the hermeneutics expressed in the "*Sanftes Gesetz*," especially with regard to symbolism and the speed of narration. By employing ecocriticism in the analysis and interpretation of the texts, this chapter also emphasizes the interweaving of nature and culture in these two works.

Next, I turn to Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and her novel about village life in Moravia. Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindekind may not seem at first like an ideal candidate for an ecocritical interpretation. However, as my interpretation will show through the analysis of anti-pastoral themes and the incorporation of science and technology in the novel, Ebner-Eschenbach's village tale highlights the connection between nature and culture. Furthermore, as I will demonstrate, nineteenth-century philosophical and ethical movements inform the text and point to the development of a post-mythic society with science and rational thought at its basis.

Shifting from Ebner-Eschenbach's novel about life in a rural Moravian village to Peter Rosegger's vivid descriptions of social decline in his Styrian homeland, the next chapter focuses on nature and environment in the works of Peter Rosegger. Rosegger's Jakob der Letzte chronicles the loss of *Heimat* while Erdsegen and Weltgift reveal the author's views on the dichotomies of industrialization vs. agrarian lifestyle and the city vs. the countryside. Rosegger, in his writing, expresses skepticism in regard to technology and industrialization, but he also conveys hope for the advancement of society through limited culture transfer between the city and the countryside. Once again, I will focus on the development of the relationship between nature and culture and the portrayal thereof in the texts. By incorporating select readings from articles that Rosegger wrote for the journal Heimgarten, which he also edited, I will shed light on the dialogue that Rosegger continued with his readers regarding burgeoning urban development and rural decline. With the portrayal of the positive aspects of life in the *Heimat* and the negative effects of abandoning this "natural" lifestyle, Rosegger's works do not, however, necessarily advocate regressive notions of a "*heile Welt*." To be sure, there are regressive elements in Rosegger's writing, but the main thrust of his works, as I will show, is to document the positive aspects of rural life and the connection to nature while expressing regret at its elision in the drive to urbanization and industrialization in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Finally, the last chapter addresses the Hungarian born author Felix Salten and, primarily, his literary works. While the Disney movie "Bambi" is famous worldwide, Felix Salten, the author of the animal novel that inspired Disney's film version, is less known. Besides Bambi: eine Lebensgeschichte aus dem Walde, other works by Salten

also feature vivid portrayals of animals that illustrate Salten's concern for nature and the environment. Additionally, as my inclusion of ecocritical theory from Paul Shepard as well as close readings of Salten's texts make clear, the author's works, especially in their portrayals of animals and humans and the relationship between the two, allow the reader to consider that which makes us human. Thus, the novels are not only about animals or nature for nature's sake; they also concern the relationship between humans and animals, the interconnection of nature and culture, and the treatment of animals and wild nature.

In using ecocriticism to interpret German literary texts by four prominent Austrian authors from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this dissertation answers the call of Armbruster and Wallace to apply ecocritical methods to texts outside ecocriticism's traditional purview of nature writing. Additionally, it builds upon previous work by Goodbody and others whose studies of environment and ecology in German literature have almost exclusively focused on twentieth-century German literature. Like Youngman who discovered that there were "third culturalists" long before Snow coined the term, I show in this dissertation that there were "environmentalists" in Austrian literature long before Carson's influential work gave rise to the modern environmental movement.

Chapter One

Adalbert Stifter

I. Introduction

In this chapter, I will turn my attention from the broader theoretical background for this dissertation to the first author that I have chosen to exemplify the development of nature and environment in Austrian literature. Adalbert Stifter's works, long considered some of the most influential Austrian literature, represent prime examples of a discussion of nature in literature during the nineteenth century. Unlike the works of other authors of the time period such as Friedrich Hebbel who focused upon important social and political events that, on account of their singularity, were particularly suited to literary expression, Stifter's works attend to seemingly mundane natural events and processes.

The unique character of Stifter's texts becomes apparent as soon as one begins to read them because the deep structure of the texts, the message that Stifter portrays through symbolism and narrative development, manifests itself also on the surface. . Stifter's narrative emphasizes that which is constant and unchanging as well as the universal processes and systems that exist in the world. This emphasis has a significant effect upon his portrayal of nature; Stifter often uses images of nature or natural symbolism in order to illustrate the events in his texts as part of a larger system. Heinrich Mettler explains this facet of Stifter's oeuvre as follows: "In der Ordnung der Natur ist also auch die 'Natur' der menschlichen Dinge der Kulturobjekte, begründet. Darum steht die Naturwissenschaft im Zentrum, eine empirische, beschreibende Naturwissenschaft

allerdings.”¹² Extensive portrayals of natural scenery with detailed descriptions of specific natural phenomena disturbed many readers, such as Hebbel, who famously offered the non-existent crown of Poland to anyone who finished reading Stifter’s Der Nachsommer. What those readers perceived as a lack of ability on Stifter’s part to capture the reader through such literary techniques as movement, symbolic language, and thematic development, is, in fact, the author’s intentional literary style that calls on the reader to pause and reflect on the connection between human and non-human nature.

As I will show in this chapter, Stifter examines nature as a totalizing system, one that encompasses human beings as well as the environment in which they exist. I have chosen to examine two works from his “Studien” – prose pieces that use literature to “study” objects or concepts in the manner of an artist. These two works, Der Hochwald and Brigitta, illustrate two contrasting views on nature and wilderness. The contrast between these works shows how Stifter’s understanding of nature and its place in literature developed into a symbolic system where nature shifted from a subject to be understood on its own terms to a marker in a semiotic system that pointed to another subject. In other words, nature begins to point to the unseeable inside of the humans in the novel instead of performing as a subject – in a positive sense – outside of the human. By employing the techniques of literary ecocriticism, I will show how such readings can contribute to an understanding of nature and the environment in the context of Stifter’s writing and of nineteenth-century Austrian literature.

¹² Heinrich Mettler, Natur in Stifters Frühen "Studien"; Zu Stifters Gegenständlichem Stil, Zürcher Beiträge Zur Deutschen Literatur- Und Geistesgeschichte ; 31. (Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1968) 26.

II. The “Sanftes Gesetz” as an Introduction to Stifter’s Philosophy of Nature

Adalbert Stifter’s literary manifesto, known as the “Sanftes Gesetz,” provides an excellent summary of his nature philosophy that guides and pervades his works, and it serves as a point of departure for the examination of nature and environment in his texts. It is the preface to his short story collection Bunte Steine (1853), and no literary analysis of Stifter’s work can avoid its significance. Stifter introduces his manifesto as follows:

Es ist einmal gegen mich bemerkt worden, daß ich nur das Kleine bilde, und daß meine Menschen stets gewöhnliche Menschen seien. Wenn das wahr ist, bin ich heute in der Lage, den Lesern ein noch Kleineres und Unbedeutenderes an zu bieten, nämlich allerlei Spielereien für junge Herzen. Es soll sogar in denselben nicht einmal Tugend und Sitte gepredigt werden, wie es gebräuchlich ist, sondern sie sollen nur durch das wirken, was sie sind.¹³

Stifter feels no need for an apology for his artistic program; the preface is more an explanation rather than a passionate defense against Hebbel’s criticisms, which Stifter alludes to in the first sentence. As numerous critics concur, the popular impression of the Biedermaier period as characterized by disengagement – a naive or despairing retreat from the outer world into a comfortable and romantic inner world – is often misplaced. While the draconian censorship measures applied in Metternich Austria drove political debate (especially dissent) largely out of the literary sphere, they did not quell all discussion of morals and values in the abstract, as any reading of Stifter or Grillparzer would attest. Stifter’s response represents a reevaluation of virtue and morals in and of themselves, not as tools or means to an end. Additionally, the writer also depicts nature as it is, not merely in an idealized or exaggerated state as was the case in earlier literature from romanticism.

¹³ Adalbert Stifter, “Sanftes Gesetz,” Foreword. Bunte Steine (Stuttgart; Reclam, 2003) 7.

Stifter describes his view of nature poignantly in the following description:

Das Wehen der Luft und das Rieseln des Wassers das Wachsen der Getreide das Wogen des Meeres das Grünen der Erde das Glänzen des Himmels das Schimmern der Gestirne halte ich für groß: das prächtig einherziehende Gewitter, den Blitz, welcher Häuser spaltet, den Sturm, der die Bandung treibt, den feuerspeienden Berg, das Erdbeben, welches Länder verschüttet, halte ich nicht für größer als obige Erscheinungen, ja ich halte sie für kleiner, weil sie nur Wirkungen viel höherer Gesetze sind. Sie kommen auf einzelnen Stellen vor, und sind die Ergebnisse einseitiger Ursachen.¹⁴

In this passage, the author places the emphasis upon the elemental forces of nature that remain constant or change slowly through time. Although great forces of nature like the earthquake in Chile shattered humanist ideals and inspired authors of romantic literature, especially Kleist, Stifter explains that his inspiration comes from the constant elemental forces of nature. Stifter suggests a further paradigmatic shift from the focus on supernatural or extraordinary natural events to a recognition of every-day natural events as great forces, whose true nature is incomprehensible but nevertheless important. This sense of nature also contributes to the author's examination of nature as a totalizing system rather than conceiving of humans as separate or outside of nature. Stifter adumbrates a scientific and literary shift from asking the question "what happened" to asking "why it exists in its particular form," a question that – in Stifter's application – attempts to link both scientific and literary discourses. The absence of a driving of plot in Stifter's writing cannot be attributed to a lack of imagination or expression; it is instead the intentional result of his literary program, and it forces the reader to attend consciously and subconsciously to nature in and of itself as it exists in the novel, as well as nature as metaphor, scenery, or symbol.

¹⁴ Stifter, "Sanftes Gesetz," Foreword, Bunte Steine, 8.

As we will later see in the chapter on Rosegger, one of the archetypal notions of Austrian literature, which Stifter was acutely aware of, is the idea of maintaining proper proportions (Maß halten) in relation to the whole. Hermann Bahr's praise of Stifter's writing and recognition of "Maß halten" as a central poetic principle in Austrian writing from Grillparzer to Stifter to Feuchtersleben underlines this point. In the introduction to an edition of Bahr's essays, Heinz Kindermann notes,

Was Bahr an Grillparzer und Stifter, beide wieder an Mozart messend, bewundert und was er als typisch österreichisch an ihnen erkennt, dieses: "Und alles Wirkliche gehorcht dem Maß" (Grillparzer über Mozart), dieses schöpferische Abwehren alles Übermaßes und alles Unorganisch-Erzwungenen oder Brutalen, entdeckt er auch im Urteil, in der medizinisch-psychologischen Diagnose und im stillen Dichtertum Feuchterslebens.¹⁵

It is particularly interesting that Bahr, one of the initiators of the Jung-Wien movement and an early voice in support of Literary Expressionism, a movement that challenges the objectivity of such notions of proportion, recognizes the contribution of Stifter to the development of Austrian literature, despite a seemingly opposite literary program. It is thus likely that recognition lies in the ability of Stifter to express an "Innerlichkeit," which was of particular interest to the Expressionists, in particular to Bahr. Kindermann explains this common trait as follows:

Denn was er zunächst in seinen Essaybüchern: "Zur Kritik der Moderne" (1890), "Die Überwindung des Naturalismus" (1891) und "Studien zur Kritik der Moderne" (1894) verfocht, war sein Versuch, von einem Erkennen der Grenzen des Naturalismus, der Grenzen auch Ibsens, zur "Überwindung" dieser Grenzen, zum neuen Aufleuchten einer Symbolkraft "der inneren Wahrheit" (anstelle der bloß äußeren) vorzudringen.¹⁶

¹⁵ Heinz Kindermann, "Introduction" Hermann Bahr: Kulturprofil der Jahrhundertwende : Essays, ed. Heinz Kindermann (Wien: H. Bauer-Verlag, 1962) 13.

¹⁶ Kindermann, "Introduction" Hermann Bahr: Kulturprofil der Jahrhundertwende : Essays, 14.

The language of an inner truth, which Kindermann highlights here, binds Expressionism to Stifter and points to a stark contrast between Stifter's writing and his contemporaries like Hebbel who were less interested in examining the inner workings of the human subject or of nature and more interested in strong dialogue and driving plots that grip the reader. Stifter's writing therefore demands a certain reader, one able to forgo movement and action in favor of examining and experimenting with nature and humans and the relationship between the two.

III. Der Hochwald (1844): Stifter's idealization of Wilderness and the Retreat into Nature

Many of Stifter's works discuss a common trait of a great deal of literature that many ecocritics have criticized as one of the most detrimental concepts to the ecological system, namely anthropocentricity. According to Max Oelschlaeger, anthropocentrists "see the human species as the most significant fact of existence, and accordingly evaluate all else from a human standpoint."¹⁷ As a hermeneutical standpoint, anthropocentricity therefore posits the human subject as the center of discourse and affords it a special place at once within and above the natural world that surrounds humans. The problem that ecocritics observe with this notion is that it separates the human subject from nature, devalues the natural world, and sets up the preconditions for an ecological disaster due to a lack of understanding of the relationship between humans and the world around us.

Indeed, bifurcating ourselves and nature from a preceding unified existence is problematic for our understanding of humans in many areas. Ecocritics of the twentieth century were not the first to recognize the benefits of understanding the human subject

¹⁷ Max Oelschlaeger, The Idea of Wilderness, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991) 293.

within its environment; Goethe's Die Wahlverwandtschaften and Italienische Reise as well as his Naturwissenschaftlichen Studien all express an intimate connection between the human subject and nature. It is no coincidence that Stifter drew heavily upon Goethe's writings, as I will show later in this chapter. In addition to Goethe, the entire movement of Storm and Stress looked to nature for inspiration and reflection upon the human subject. But in Storm and Stress literature, humans remain the central facet, and nature itself is rarely described except in relation to the human. Goethe's Wahlverwandtschaften, while it portrays the magnetic nature of romantic relationships using the symbol of chemical reactions, maintains its focus upon the human subjects in the novel. Nature provides a backdrop and a metaphor for the expression of love, but the novel does not explore the relationships within nature or the relationship of the human subject to nature at length.

Stifter's Der Hochwald picks up where Goethe left off and noticeably shifts the focus of the narration from the humans in the novel and the plot that drives the novel to nature, the relationship of the characters to nature, and the place of humans in nature. To begin with, the title itself alludes to the importance of nature for the author. Instead of titling the book after its main human characters, the Thirty Years War in the novel, or the castle Wittingshausen that plays an important role in the story, Stifter chooses to title the book according to the serene natural setting to which the girls retreat in order to escape the battle. The title guides the reader to look at the natural surroundings and consider their constancy in comparison to the fleeting moments of action that take place there during the war. Mettler points out, "Angesichts der Tatsache, daß unter den Menschen

Krieg herrscht, wird jede Spur, welche der Mensch hinterläßt, fragwürdig.”¹⁸ The narrator thus turns his attention towards nature.

The novel begins as follows:

An der Mitternachtseite des Ländchens Österreich zieht ein Wald an die dreißig Meilen lang seinen Dämmerstreifen westwärts, beginnend an den Quellen des Flusses Thaia, und fortstrebend bis zu jenem Grenzknoten, wo das bömische Land mit Österreich und Baiern zusammenstößt. Dort, wie oft die Nadeln bei Kristallbildungen, schoß ein Gewimmel mächtiger Joche und Rücken gegen einander, und schob einen derben Gebirgsstock empor, der nun von drei Landen weithin sein Waldesblau zeigt und ihnen allerseits wogiges Hügelland und strömende Bäche absendet. Er beugt, wie seinesgleichen öfter, den Lauf der Bergeslinie ab, und sie geht dann mitternachtwärts viele Tagereisen weiter.¹⁹

The reader notices already in this first paragraph the importance of nature in the story, as well as Stifter's unique description of the landscape. With verbs like “ziehen,” “fortstrebend,” “zusammenstößt,” “schoß,” “schob,” “zeigen,” “absendet,” “abbeugen,” and “weitergehen,” Stifter chooses active verbs to describe nature. Instead of describing the scenery as something that is perceived, the author shows the reader how nature presents itself. The narrator at once sets nature at the center of the narration and imbues it with life, expressing its geological action as opposed to its stasis as a mere setting or inspiration for the narrative.

The connection of the human characters to the environment around them comes in the next paragraph. While linking the characters and the plot of the story to their setting, the narrator describes a sublime moment:

¹⁸ Mettler, Natur in Stifters frühen Studien, 112.

¹⁹ Adalbert Doppler Alfred Hettche Walter Dittmann Ulrich Frühwald Wolfgang Gottwald Herwig John Johannes Stifter, "Der Hochwald," Werke und Briefe : Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe 1,4 Studien, Buchfassungen : Erster Band, ed. Walter Hettche Alfred Doppler, Ulrich Dittmann, Wolfgang Frühwald, Herwig Gottwald, Johannes John, vol. 1.4 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980) 211.

Vorerst wollen wir es kurz versuchen, die zwei Punkte jener düsterprächtigen Waldesbogen dem geneigten Leser vor die Augen zu führen, wo die Personen dieser Geschichte lebten und handelten, ehe wir ihn zu ihnen selber geleiten. Möchte es uns gelingen, nur zum tausendsten Teile jenes schwermütig schöne Bild dieser Waldtale wieder zu geben, wie wir es selbst im Herzen tragen, seit der Zeit, als es uns gegönnt war, dort zu wandeln und einen Teil jenes Doppeltraumes dort zu träumen, den der Himmel jedem Menschen einmal und gewöhnlich vereint gibt, den Traum der Jugend und den der ersten Liebe. Er ist es, der eines Tages aus den tausend Herzen eines hervorhebt und es als unser Eigentum für alle Zukunft als einzigstes und schönstes in unsere Seele prägt, und dazu die Fluren, wo es wandelte, als ewig schwebende Gärten in die dunkle, warme Zauberphantasie hängt!²⁰

One cannot overlook the parallels to romantic imagery in the novel with its sweeping vistas and the narrative perspective that gazes into the distance.

Margaret Gump, in her work on Stifter, writes,

Der Hochwald is, no doubt, in many respects still indebted to Romantic tradition, especially in the way nature is pictured: as a living being, listening, seeing, feeling, and marveling at the first sight of human beings. Romantic are the fairy-tale prince Ronald, the exalted Clarissa, the melancholy knight Bruno, and the almost mythical character of Gregor. Equally Romantic are the mysterious *Wildschütz* and his bullet, the use of folklore and folksong. But everything mysterious and seemingly supernatural has its rational explanation and is not an integral part of the story as it is, for example, in Tieck's *Der blonde Eckbert*. Besides, the descriptions of the grandeur, beauty, and peace of the forest are more forceful and realistic than any written by a Romantic writer. They are written by a man who had lived and intimately communed with nature, seen it with the keenly observant eye of a painter, an interplay of lights, shadows and colors. There is a rapport between nature and man, a mystical union, probably never reached before or after Stifter.²¹

Gump makes many sharp observations here, especially when she highlights the fairy-tale aspect of the story. To the similarities between Stifter's text and texts of Romanticism, one may add the general trajectory of the story with its disheartening ending; Romantic writers most often did not portray the fulfillment of their characters' desires. Gump also

²⁰ Stifter, *Hochwald*, 211-12.

²¹ Margaret Gump, *Adalbert Stifter* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974) 33.

does not mention a few important differences between Der Hochwald and works of the German Romantic writers. For instance, one can observe stark contrasts in the relationship of the literary subject to his surroundings as well as the fantasy that one often associates with Romantic images of nature (for example in Eichendorff's Das Marmorbild). Such images are not present in Stifter's sensuous descriptions of the natural setting for the novel. Although the setting at the lake high in the mountains is certainly removed from the rest of society like the romantic love scene in Das Marmorbild, the girls' voyage into the wilderness does not carry with it the same sense of magical enchantment that Eichendorff's novel portrays. At the end of the second chapter of the novella, Stifter compares the girls' situation to a fairy tale. The narrator comments, "Also ist es wahr, die Heimat das gute Vaterhaus ist preisgegeben und verloren, all ihr früher Leben ist abgeschnitten, sie selbst wie Mitspieler in ein buntes Märchen gezogen, alles neu, alles fremd, alles seltsam und dräuend – in dem dräuenden Wirrsal kein Halt . . ."²² If their lives have become a fairy tale, it can only be considered one in the sense that everything that they once held dear and true is now lost or threatened by forces beyond their control. However, the magical enchantment of a fairy tale with supernatural forces is nowhere to be found in Der Hochwald. Instead, it is replaced by the captivating beauty of the real forest, which Stifter shows his reader in the following image of nature around the house in the forest:

Aber als bei den Mädchen Tränen und Kosen in Ruhe übergegangen, traten sie auf den hölzernen Söller, der vor ihren Fenstern lief, heraus, und blickten noch, ehe sie schlafen gingen, in die kühle beruhigende Nacht. Der See lag zu ihren Füßen, Stücke schwarzer Schatten und glänzenden Himmels unbeweglich haltend, wie erstarrte Schlacken – der Wald dehnte seine Glieder weithin im Nachtschlummer, die feuchten Mondesstrahlen

²² Stifter, Der Hochwald, 249-50.

spannen von Berg zu Berg, und im Tale, woher die Wanderer gekommen sein mochten, blickte ruhender Nebel auf.²³

Like nature in a fairy tale, the natural elements in this scene are infused with life and action – even the lake that “lies” at their feet is “keeping” itself motionless, an act of inaction. However the enchantment does not extend beyond their natural aesthetic qualities; nature does not take on human form, and although the girls experience estrangement in their loss of place in the world, they do not take refuge in another world but retreat into a natural refuge.

The magical fantasy and dreams of youth and love at the beginning the novel further the romantic feeling; Novalis’ Heinrich von Ofterdingen and Heinrich’s dream of the blue flower is merely one example of a prominent work of German Romanticism that exhibits similarities to the youthful dreaming of love in the Stifter text. In the second part of Novalis’ novel fragment titled “Die Erfüllung,” Sylvester reiterates and summarizes the relationship of the human subject to nature. He imparts the following to Heinrich:

und nun wird es Euch wohl begreiflich sein, daß die ganze Natur nur durch den Geist der Tugend besteht, und immer beständiger werden soll. Er ist das allzündende allbelebende Licht innerhalb der irdischen Umfassung. Vom Sternhimmel, diesem erhabenen Dom des Steinreichs, bis zu dem krausen Teppich einer bunten Wiese, wird alles durch ihn erhalten, durch ihn mit uns verknüpft, und uns verständlich gemacht, und durch ihn die unbekannte Bahn der unendlichen Naturgeschichte bis zur Verklärung fortgeleitet.²⁴

Nature therefore symbolizes the nexus of thought and feeling, for, according to the above passage, it is the basis for both spheres. For Sylvester and Heinrich, there exists in the “Geist der Tugend” – a god construction – a connection between the spheres of the “mathematical” *ratio* and the “feeling” (Gefühl). This reconstruction of a harmonious

²³ Stifter, Der Hochwald, 250.

²⁴ Novalis, Heinrich Von Ofterdingen, Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, Revidierte Ausg. ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1991) 174.

existence where the two spheres are not split but exist in one is one of the goals of Romanticism, and it is thus fitting that Novalis' second part of the novel where this conversation takes place is titled "Die Erfüllung." Sylvester later explains that, whereas Heinrich has come to this realization through "Lust und Begeisterung der Sprache," Sylvester has realized this connection via his relationship to nature. The connection between language, and thus the literary subject, and nature is therefore established. Heinrich comes to nature through language, and Sylvester comes to language through nature.

If we return to Stifter's Der Hochwald and compare it to Novalis' text, we note that mostly superficial elements evoke a sense of Romanticism within Hochwald; the literary program, however, resists Romanticism. Additionally, whereas Novalis' text theorizes a re-connection between these separate spheres in order to reestablish the relationship between the subject and the transcendental, Stifter's text presupposes such a union and depicts the human subject as already existing in this state.

Wolfgang Matz notes,

Der Unterschied zu den vorangegangenen *Feldblumen* konnte nicht markanter sein. Dort die sprunghafte, an romantischen Vorbildern orientierte Liebesgeschichte mit glücklichem Ausgang, die sich allen formalen Schwierigkeiten dadurch entzieht, daß sie vorgibt, nichts als die Wiedergabe der tatsächlichen Briefe zu sein; hier ein dichtgewebter Stoff, eine monumentale Darstellung, in der alles Gelingen von der sprachlichen Gestaltung abhängt, ein Landschaftsfresko, in das ein Geschichtsdrama von abgründigem Pessimismus eingebettet ist.²⁵

The sense of longing that pervades so much of Romantic texts is not to be found in Der Hochwald, albeit with the exception of the love story between Ronald and Clarissa. No

²⁵ Wolfgang Matz, Adalbert Stifter, oder, diese fürchterliche Wendung der Dinge : Biographie (München: Hanser, 1995) 151-52.

“*Weltschmerz*” ensues when the love-relationship is quashed by Ronald’s untimely death; Clarissa’s pain is a personal loss.

A further aspect of the text points the reader to an interpretation that cannot coincide with a principal tenet of Romanticism, namely the literary subject (the Ich) and its relationship to nature. Whereas protagonists in Romanticism often imbue nature with their soul, projecting onto nature their own desires and dreams, the characters in Der Hochwald are influenced by their natural surroundings. There are certainly exceptions to this schema, and Novalis’ novel, as I have explained above, may prove to be such an exception. However, Romanticism is also rife with texts such as Eichendorff’s Das Marmorbild as well as the visual works of Caspar David Friedrich that often portray the subject’s longing using a nature scene. While exploring this notion of the literary subject as the focal point of Romantic literature, in specific of Romantic fairy tales, one critic has noted,

Ein weiteres Merkmal des romantischen Märchens und der gesamten romantischen Dichtung, das wir vor allem bei Tieck finden, ist, dass das innere Erlebnis des Helden ganz im Vordergrund steht. Hier ist der Mittelpunkt, um den sich alles dreht; selbst die Natur, so wichtig und so notwendig sie dem romantischen Dichter ist, wird doch nur in Verbindung mit dem Helden gesehen, nicht für sich selbst geschildert. Sie ist ein Spiegel, der seine eigenen Freuden und Leiden getreu reflektiert. Ich möchte noch einmal darauf hinweisen, dass die Natur weder bei Tieck noch bei E.T.A. Hoffmann eine wirkliche ist; es ist eine mehr oder weniger künstliche, gedachte.²⁶

Nature is the recipient of the literary subject’s *Geist* in Romantic texts, but in Stifter’s novel, the narrator allows for nature to remain its own subject, not merely the object of Romantic longing. Part of this major difference in literary focus also derives from

²⁶ Mimi Ida Jehle, Das deutsche Kunstmärchen von der Romantik zum Naturalismus, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature ; V. 19, No. 1-2. ([Urbana]: The University of Illinois, 1935) 19.

Stifter's portrayal of actual landscape, albeit in a literary and therefore artistically imagined sense. However, nature is not conceived of in Stifter's texts merely as a mirror or a means to reflect the literary subject's inner self; rather, the characters exist within this environment or system of nature. Both humans and non-human nature reflect and affect each other. As already noted, Der Hochwald was published as part of Stifter's "Studien" and functions therefore much the same as an artistic study of an object or aesthetic perspective.

Past critics have examined Stifter's use of nature to point to the human subject's perception and inner development. Wolfgang Preisendanz notes in his study of the function of nature in Stifter's texts,

Es geht mir nicht um die Interpretation dieser einen Erzählung. Ich möchte nur darauf aufmerksam machen, daß es sich für Stifter nicht um die Darstellung der Natur als solcher handelt, sondern daß seine Naturdarstellung bezogen ist auf menschliche Wahrnehmung und daß sie dadurch ein wesentliches Moment des erzählbaren Geschehens werden kann.²⁷

Preisendanz's interpretation of Stifter's texts elucidates the role of nature in Stifter's oeuvre as a symbol for human cognition and sentiment. His reading combats the traditional criticism of Stifter's texts leveled by, among others, Keller and Hebbel, that Stifter's narratives represent nothing more than landscape descriptions or inventories of objects and that those narratives therefore lack literary value. In his article, Preisendanz astutely counters these criticisms. However, he does not observe the uniqueness of Stifter's tendency to portray nature as a subject in his texts via the lengthy descriptions of nature and the focus upon natural elements in detailed narration. Indeed, Preisendanz

²⁷ Wolfgang Preisendanz, "Die Erzählfunktion der Naturdarstellung bei Stifter," Landschaft und Raum in der Erzählkunst, ed. Alexander Ritter (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, [Abt. Verl.], 1975) 377.

argues that Stifter essentially accomplishes the same narrative goals as Keller and others merely by using nature as a symbol rather than simply narrating the events in the texts and the feelings that the characters associate with them. However, as this chapter will show, Stifter merges sentient nature (humans) and non-sentient nature (nature that exists outside of the human being) together and also examines nature using the human characters as symbols for aspects of nature in his works.²⁸

Stifter refers to this merging of the two “natures” in his “Sanftes Gesetz” when he writes, “Nur augenfälliger sind diese Erscheinungen, und reißen den Blick des Unkundigen und Unaufmerksamen mehr an sich, während der Geisteszug des Forschers vorzüglich auf das Ganze und Allgemeine geht, und nur in ihm allein Großartigkeit zu erkennen vermag, weil es allein das Welterhaltende ist.”²⁹ The eye of the poet as a nature researcher focuses, therefore, less on specific occurrences of natural phenomena (i.e., the human subject alone or one particular character and his development within the text); the poet’s eye diverges from the common uneducated person in the poetic emphasis

²⁸ Hee-Ju Kim’s analysis of nature in *Der Hochwald* draws a similar conclusion. Kim writes, “Die Natur stellt also keineswegs eine deskriptive Seelenlandschaft dar, die nur “Stimmungen und Bewußtseinsvorgänge” reflektiert. Vielmehr ist es die als Projektions- und Introjektionsfläche benutzte Natur selbst, welche Stimmungen und Bewusstseinsvorgänge der Figuren initiiert und damit gerade zum strukturbildenden Moment der Handlung wird.” in “Natur als Seelengleichnis: Zur Dekonstruktion des Natur-Kultur-Dualismus in Adalbert Stifters *Hochwald*,” *Ordnung-Raum-Ritual: Adalbert Stifters artifizieller Realismus*, ed. Sabina Becker and Katharina Grätz, (Heidelberg: Winter, 2007) 100. While I certainly agree with Kim’s idea that nature is not merely a space, onto which the psychological drama of the characters in the text can be projected, I highlight a reciprocity in the text whereby both nature and culture are part of an interwoven system. This is perhaps, as this chapter explains, more in line with Stifter’s broader literary program. Kim’s research essentially accomplishes an interpretation to which Wünsch had already hinted in her work. See footnote on Wünsch.

²⁹ Stifter, “Das sanfte Gesetz,” Foreword *Bunte Steine*, 8.

on elemental natural phenomena and larger natural systems that pervade both human and non-human nature and connect the two to one another.

When one examines Der Hochwald and Stifter's portrayal of the virginal forest, one is tempted to interpret it as a fairy tale space removed from reality. Wolbrandt explains the forest space along those lines when he notes,

Es bleibe dahingestellt, ob solche Sätze, die von der Gottesnähe und der heilen Welt sprechen, nicht eine Leichtfertigkeit sind, wenn sie in dieser Weise ausgesagt werden. In ihrer phantasievollen Unverbindlichkeit jedoch bestätigen sie gerade den von Stifter erfahrenen Zwiespalt. Die menschliche Welt bleibt nämlich vom Heilsbereich geschieden, und nur im traumhaften Märchenbezirk ist der Gegensatz von Unendlichem und Endlichem, Gott und Welt gelöst; die menschlichen Kämpfe reichen nicht hierher und sind in die Versöhnung nicht mit eingeschlossen.³⁰

In this passage, the critic brings up a recurring debate among critics – the significance of the fairy tale for the novel. He suggests that the forest – a sacrosanct space separated from the rest of the world – corresponds to a fairy tale space where the finite and the infinite, God and the world, are joined together. Although, by now, Wolbrandt's research (1967) is dated, much of his scholarship is nevertheless remarkable for his ability to see past traditional interpretations of Stifter as a poet of the miniscule and unimportant. In this case, the discussion of the relationship of Stifter's writing to fairy tales brings up an important point in the author's writing. However, Wolbrandt's suggestion that the forest is a fairy tale world or another related claim that "Nur von eingeweihten kann der versteckte Pfad in den Wald gefunden werden, und nur sie können hier leben"³¹ obscures the meaning of the fairy tale aspect of the story. Rather than adopting the form of a fairy

³⁰ Christine Wolbrandt, Der Raum in Der Dichtung Adalbert Stifiers, Züricher Beiträge Zur Deutschen Literatur- Und Geistesgeschichte,; Nr. 29; (Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1967) 24.

³¹ Wolbrandt, Der Raum in der Dichtung Adalbert Stifiers, 24.

tale for the novella, Stifter incorporates specific aspects of the fairy tale into the text; to adopt it wholesale would present a predicament for his nature poetics.

Traditional fairy tales (Volksmärchen or Kunstmärchen) take place in a setting that is separate from the rest of society and from the “real” world. Whether in the forest of Tieck’s Der Blonde Eckbert or in the fairy-tale world in the “Atlantismärchen” in Novalis’ Heinrich von Ofterdingen, the fairy tale space occupies an island-like space. To some extent, Stifter’s description of the forest as a fairy-tale space maintains similar aspects of isolation. However, Ronald’s ability to find Clarissa in the forest and the girls’ insistence on being appraised of the events at Wittingshausen through use of a telescope remind the reader that the outside world finds its way into this seemingly impenetrable space. The telescope, an instrument of technology, allows the girls to see their home (Wittingshausen) and the events unfolding around it. However, it also limits their experience of and relationship to their home. It does not allow them to see outside of the aim of the lens, and communication with their father is impossible. Thus, the telescope, while it challenges the notion of the forest home as a fairy tale space, also highlights this fairy tale aspect, since the girls cannot penetrate the barrier outside of this island-like space but can only see beyond. Still, the connection between the text and the real world remains; the reader is reminded that the story takes place in the actual landscape around the Blockensteinersee. Furthermore, as in Stifter’s later novella, Brigitta, which is discussed later in this chapter, the telescope as a means of narration has important implications. Instead of traveling to the castle, the girls must remain in place in order to make use of this technology. By its nature, therefore, the telescope also emphasizes stasis, i.e., that which is unchanging.

In spite of the telescope and its implications for connection to the outside world, the forest home remains a secluded space. Heinrich describes this seclusion of the forest home at length,

rückwärts ist die unzugängliche Seewand, links des Hauses stürzt der Blockenstein mit einem vorspringenden Pfeiler senkrecht in das Wasser, und rechts, wo der See umgangen werden könne, ist der Paß durch eine künstliche Seebucht abgegraben und noch durch einen Verhau der größten Tannen geschützt, so daß der Zugang nur über den See möglich ist.³²

Fairy tales most often take place in a secluded, isolated space, and the forest home would fit that description. However, this isolation usually means to produce a sense of adventure and exploration by the protagonist, whereas the remoteness of the forest home protects the girls from the ensuing battles of the Thirty Years' War.

Although, as has already been noted, the novella displays many characteristics of Romanticism's use of fairy tales, another of which includes the description of the girls as pure and virginal "angels," a short look at an important passage illustrates that Stifter was well aware of the problems with the formal aspects of fairy tales as well as the image of nature which they communicate.³³ Gregor takes pains to point out two explanations for an aspen's shaking. In providing space for both explanations, Stifter avoids reverting to Romanticism's use of fairy tales and projection of the wishes and dreams of the literary subject onto nature. As Gregor explains, stories that explain nature or portray it without referencing actual nature in a non-idealized literary state serve merely to demonize nature and not to promote the understanding of it that is a general aim of Stifter's writing. When

³² Stifter, *Der Hochwald*, 251.

³³ Certainly there are numerous images of females in fairy tales. Two important images are the pure virginal female and her opposite, the bad female who can have a host of negative qualities, including laziness.

Clarissa asks Gregor, whose knowledge of the “language” of the forest seems inexhaustible, why the Aspen shakes while other trees remain still, Gregor responds,

Es sind da zwei Meinungen . . . Meine Großmutter, als ich noch ein kleiner Knabe war, erzählte mir, daß, als noch der Herr auf Erden wandelte, sich alle Bäume vor ihm beugten, nur die Espe nicht, darum wurde sie gestraft mit ewiger Unruhe, daß sie bei jedem Windhauche erschrickt und zittert, wie jener ewige Jude, der nie rasten kann, so daß die Enkel und Urenkel jenes übermütigen Baumes in alle Welt gestreut sind, ein zaghaft Geschlecht, ewig bebend und flüsternd in der übrigen Ruhe und Einsamkeit der Wälder. Darum schaute ich als Knabe jenen straffen Baum immer mit einer Art Scheu an, und seine ewige Unruhe war mir wie ein Pein. Aber einmal, es war Pfingstsonntags nachmittag vor einem Gewitter, sah ich (ich war schon ein erwachsener Mann) einen ungemein großen Baum dieser Art auf einer sonnigen Waldblöße stehen, und alle seine Blätter standen stille; sie waren so ruhig, so grauenhaft unbeweglich, als wären sie in die Luft eingemauert,, und sie selber zu festem Glase erstarrt – es war auch im ganzen Walde kein Lüftchen zu spüren und keine Vogelstimme zu hören, nur das Gsumme der Waldfliegen ging um die sonnenheißen Baumstämme herum. Da sah ich mir denn verwundert den Baum an, und wie er mir seine Blätter, wie Herzen, entgegenstreckte, auf den dünnen, langen, schlanken Stielen, so kam mir mit eins ein anderer Gedanke: wenn all Bäume, dacht ich, sich vor dem Herrn geneigt haben, so tat es gewiß auch dieser, und seine Brüder; denn alle sind seine Geschöpfe, und in den Gewächsen der Erde ist kein Trotz und Laster, wie in den Menschen, sondern sie folgen einfältig den Gesetzen des Herrn, und gedeihen nach ihnen zu Blüte und Frucht – darum ist nicht Strafe und Lohn für sie, sondern sie sind von ihm alle geliebt – und das Zittern der Espe kommt gewiß nur von den gar langen und feinen Stielen, auf die sie ihre Blätter, wie Täfelchen, stellt, daß sie jeder Hauch lüftet und wendet, worauf sie ausweichen und sich drehen, um die alte Stellung wieder zu gewinnen. Und so ist es auch; denn oft habe ich nachher noch ganz ruhige Espen an windstillen Tagen angetroffen, und darum an andern, wo sie zitterten, ihrem Geplauder mit Vorliebe zugehört, weil ich es gut zu machen hatte, daß ich einstens so schlecht von ihnen gedacht. Darum ist es aber auch ein sehr feierlicher Augenblick, wenn selbst sie, die so leichtfertige, schweigt; es geschieht meistens vor einem Gewitter, wenn der Wald schon harret auf die Stimme Gottes, welche kommen und ihnen Nahrung herabschütten wird. – Sehet nur, liebe Jungfrauen, wie schmal der Fuß ist, womit der Stiel am Holze und das Blatt am Stiele steht, und wie zäh und drehbar dieser ist – – sonst ist es ein sehr schönes Blatt.³⁴

³⁴ Stifter, Hochwald, 245-47.

This short story embedded in the text highlights for the reader the difference between Der Hochwald and a traditional fairy tale. Whereas a fairy tale would correspond to the first explanation of the shaking Aspen, Stifter's novella correlates more closely to the second explanation of the shaking as a natural occurrence due to the physical makeup of the tree. Gregor's eye as a researcher comes to the fore when we read of the two explanations for the shaking aspen tree. Rather than accepting the tales of his grandmother and their emphasis on mythological characterizations of nature, Gregor literally focuses his eyes upon the aspen tree and seeks to understand its beauty as a unique expression in nature. However, neither Gregor nor the narrator rejects the fairy tale. Although Gregor feels guilty for falling prey to society's use of myth in respect to nature, he poeticizes about nature continually and even uses elements of the fairy tale, albeit in a subverted form.

Indeed, fairy tales have their place and their positive aspects in Stifter's narration, which one notes in the narrator's description of the relationship between Gregor and the forest. The narrator explains,

Seinen ganzen Lebenslauf, seine ganze Seele hatte er dem Walde nachgedichtet, und paßte umgekehrt auch wieder so zu ihm, daß man sich ihn auf einem andern Schauplatze gar nicht denken konnte. Daher dichtete er auch seinen Schutzbefohlenen sich und ihre Einöde in solch wunderlicher, zauberhafter Art und Gestalt vor, daß sie auch ihnen zu reden begann und sie sich immer wie inmitten eines Märchens zu schweben schienen. Aber vielmehr *sie* waren ein Märchen für die ringsum staunende Wildnis.³⁵

Communicative nature and the "wunderlicher, zauberhafter Art und Gestalt" correspond to fairy-tale ideas of nature; the magical and mystical elements of the fairy-tale pervade nature in the novella. However, whereas the magical events in a fairy-tale take place in another world or in a natural setting that is separate from any real existing environment,

³⁵ Stifter, Hochwald, 259. (emphasis mine)

Stifter's text imbues the real existing forest around the forest home with these mystical elements. The text also gives nature, the "Wildnis" the ability to see and interpret; it sees the girls as fairy tales for nature. This ability of nature shows the symbiotic relationship between certain humans and nature in the text, for humans and non-sentient nature both speak and listen, both see and are seen. It would seem then, that Stifter has included another feature of fairy tales, namely the anthropomorphizing element that gives animals or plants human qualities such as human speech. However, the text refrains from what could be seen as trite anthropomorphism by not placing words in the proverbial mouth of nature. While the narrator repeatedly mentions active nature and nature speaking to the humans, no words or messages in human speech are to be found; the "language" of the forest remains symbolic.

The last sentence in the passage above that describes the girls as fairy tales for the wilderness around them calls special attention to itself and demands interpretation. People are not usually described as fairy tales; Stifter has subverted the traditional paradigm and turned the relationship between the human subject and nature on its head. The girls become the object of the wilderness' gaze instead of the conventional interpretation of the human relationship with nature where the latter is almost never a subject in and of itself.

The subverted relationship between humans and nature (nature as subject rather than object) is a recurring theme during the girls' stay in their forest home. In the scene where Johanna encounters a deer in the forest and the two gaze at each other, the author revisits this theme. The narrator sets up the scene as follows:

Seltsam und beklemmend mußte es ihnen freilich sein, wenn sie die ersten Tage aufwachten, und die Morgenröte ihre frühesten Lichtströme

hereingoß, über lauter Wald und lauter Wald – erbrausend von der Musik des Morgens, darunter nicht ein Ton, wie wir sie von Kindheit an gewohnt sind unter Menschenwohnungen zu hören, sondern ein Getue und Gepränge, ein Rufen, ein Heischen, ein Erzählen und Jauchzen – und darein so oft plötzlich von dem nächsten Tannenaste wie ein gesprochen Wort herabfallend, daß man erschrocken hinsah, aber nur ein fremdartiger Vogel schritt auf seinem Aste mit dem Kopfe blödsinnig nickend wie zum Einverständnisse mit dem Hinaufschauenden.³⁶

The unfamiliarity of the girls' new home becomes apparent in this passage, which is also remarkable again for the use of active and communicative verbs to describe the "actions" of nature. During their time in the forest, Johanna and Clarissa become more attuned to their environment, and nature, as we read in this passage, begins to speak to them. At this point, one expects, given the multiple references to fairy tales, that the narrator will begin to anthropomorphize nature or that nature will transform into a supernatural state. However, the author treads differently and cautiously and refrains from imbuing nature with mystical attributes that would distract from the sense of wonder at the natural grandeur experienced by the girls in their new home. Whereas earlier in the text, the girls are described as typical fairy tale princess who spend their days within the confines of their room afraid of the world outside of the castle (as evidenced in the story that Johanna relates about the "Wildschütz"), their journey into the forest is also a journey of discovery of nature and the grandness thereof. The narrator describes one such discovery as follows:

Etwas seltsames geschah Johannem schon am ersten Tage nach ihrer Ankunft: – sie erwachte nämlich schon bei dem frühesten Tagesgrauen, und – neugierig, den See auch bei Tage zu betrachten, schlich sie sich bei dem Lager der noch tief schlummernden Schwester leise vorbei und ging auf die hölzerne Brüstung des Hauses hinaus – da zum Erschrecken nahe stand ein Hirsch am Fichtensaume in dem seichten Wasser, ein schöner, großer Hirsch, ihr gerade gegenüber am Ufer, wo der Verhau war. Verwundert, betroffen und wohlgefällig sah sie auf das edle Tier, das

³⁶ Stifter, Hochwald, 254.

seinerseits auch mit den unbeweglichen, neugierigen Augen herüberglotzte auf das neue Wunderwerk der Wildnis, auf die weiße in der Morgenluft schwebende Gestalt und ihre bannenden Augen – das Haus mochte ihn weniger beirrt haben. – Mehrere Augenblicke dauerte die Szene, bis Johanna sich regte, worauf er den Kopf leicht erschrocken zurückwarf, sich langsam wendete und zurück in die Gebüsche schritt, die Tautropfen von ihnen in den See schüttelnd.³⁷

Here, we read of an encounter between Johanna, the same child that had told the story and expressed her fears of the forest, and a deer. The description is significant for many reasons, notably Johanna's transformation as expressed in the passage, the description of the deer and its reaction, and the eye-contact between the animal and Johanna. The apprehensive girl who lived in the castle has been replaced by a curious "Gestalt," a "Wunderwerk" that continues with the fairy-tale theme even though she is not really transformed and no alternate world develops, as would normally be the case. Although the narrator tells us that the deer was "zum Erschrecken nahe," Johanna's reaction is bewilderment and fascination, not fear as one would expect. The eye-contact between Johanna and the deer symbolizes an understanding between the two and a similarity between them; they are both watching and being watched. Preisendanz asserts, "daß es sich für Stifter nicht um die Darstellung der Natur als solcher handelt, sondern daß seine Naturdarstellung bezogen ist auf menschliche Wahrnehmung und daß sie dadurch ein wesentliches Moment des erzählbaren Geschehens werden kann."³⁸ This assertion is spot on, as the above passage illustrates; however, one must also add to this observation that the descriptions of nature not only reflect the perceptions and feelings of humans. There is also reciprocity, since the narrator relates the perceptions of the deer through the description of the deer peering at Johanna, the "Wunderwerk der Wildnis."

³⁷ Stifter, Hochwald, 254.

³⁸ Preisendanz, Die Erzählfunktion der Naturdarstellung, 377.

In the pseudo-fairy-tale world in the forest, the relationship between humans and nature may be described as a symbiotic relationship – that is, a relationship where the two grow together organically. Clarissa’s beloved Ronald highlights the isolation of this space (an element that points to its fairy-tale qualities): “mir ist, als wär ich ein anderer, als wäre draußen nicht der Sturm und die Verwüstung, sondern, wie hier die stille, warme Herbstsonne. . . . mir ist, als gäbe es gar kein Draußen, gar keine Menschen als die hier, die sich lieben und Unschuld lernen von der Unschuld des Waldes.”³⁹ The seclusion and the isolation of the space seem, at least to Ronald, complete. Although the reader may be tempted to adopt Ronald’s views on the natural space, a look at another passage in the text makes clear that Stifter was well aware of the pitfalls of such a naive perception of that relationship between humans and the world around them. We read,

Man stand einen Augenblick stumm, die Herzen der Menschen schienen die Feier und Ruhe mitzufühlen; denn es liegt ein Anstand, ich möchte sagen ein Ausdruck von Tugend in dem von Menschenhänden noch nicht berührten Antlitze der Natur, dem sich die Seele beugen muß, als etwas Keuschem und Göttlichem, – – und doch ist es zuletzt wieder die Seele allein, die all ihre innere Größe hinaus in das Gleichnis der Natur legt.⁴⁰

Here, Stifter makes his reader aware of the phenomenological problem that faces the poet concerned with an accurate description of nature. The narrator and the subject demonstrate awareness of the separation between themselves and nature, but simultaneously the narrator also questions the notion of “nature” existing without the human subject. It is as if the narrator asks, what is nature without the human subject to interpret it?⁴¹

³⁹ Stifter, Hochwald, 292.

⁴⁰ Stifter, Hochwald, 241.

⁴¹ Marianne Wünsch interprets this scene as a confirmation of the equivalence of God and nature in the text. I am not convinced that Stifter intended such pantheism in the text. Nevertheless, the rest of Wünsch’s thesis – the connection

Although Johanna and Clarissa cannot retain their symbiotic relationship with the forest and return to the ruins of their castle, one character in the novel, Gregor, continues to cultivate this relationship from beginning to end. Gregor meets and accompanies the girls on their journey into the forest, he builds their home next to the lake, and he tells them tales about the local surroundings but also explains the natural phenomena to them. In the end, Gregor is the model of an ecological relationship with the environment around him, as we shall see. Although his grandmother and his father had told him countless tales about the forest, Gregor decides on his own initiative to go on a journey of discovery into the forest – the discovery during which he finds the place where he has built the forest home for the girls. As he is relating the tales and his experiences to the girls, they ask him, “Und hat es euch nicht geängstet und gegraut?”⁴² The old man replies,

“Geängstet?” entgegnete der Alte, “geängstet?” – Gefreut habe ich mich der schönen Stelle; denn ich wußte dazumal schon sehr gut, daß der Wald keine frevel Wunder wirke, wie es gehässige und gallige Menschen gern täten, hätten sie Allmacht, sondern lauter stille und unscheinbare, aber darum doch viel ungeheurere, als die Menschen begreifen, die ihm deshalb ihre ungeschlachten andichten. Er wirkt sie mit ein wenig Wasser und Erde und mit Luft und Sonnenschein. Sonst ist kein anderes da, noch je dagewesen, glaubet es mir nur. Auch auf dem Berge der drei Sessel war ich oben – nie saß ein König dort, so wenig als hier jemand gefischt hat. Wohl stehen die drei steinernen Stühle, aber nicht etwa einfältig eben und geglättet, wie die hölzernen in eurem Hause, sondern riesengroß und gefurcht und geklüftet, die leichten Finger des Regens haben daran

between nature and culture is certainly relevant. Wunsch writes, “was am Menschen nicht dargestellt wird und Nullposition bleibt, so etwa Körper und Sexualität, wird auf die Natur verschoben und an ihr dargestellt.” See Marianne Wunsch, “Normenkonflikt zwischen “Natur” und “Kultur””: zur Interpretation von Stifters Erzählung ‘Der Hochwald’,” Adalbert Stifter. Dichter und Maler, Denkmalpfleger und Schulmann. Neue Zugänge zu seinem Werk, ed. Hartmut Laufhütte and Karl Möseneder (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996) 324.

⁴² Stifter, Hochwald, 267.

gearbeitet, und das weiche, aber unablässige Schreinerzug der Luft und der Sonne haben sie gezimmert.⁴³

Gregor's reply is a mixture of a reply to Romantic fairy-tale depictions of nature, a statement of Stifter's nature philosophy, and a counter to anthropocentrism. He points to human desire to demonize nature or imbue nature with supernatural acts (frevel Wunder), i.e., fairy-tale events such as the lake that takes revenge on the fishermen in the tale that Gregor's grandmother had told him (the tale he had just told the girls). Gregor likens this desire to impart human actions to nature to making war; it is no coincidence then that the Thirty Years' War plays a more limited role in the novel than the natural environment in the area – Gregor's statement recapitulates a general trend in Stifter's writing, the focus upon general, broad, and diachronic events and processes as opposed to singular historical events of note. Gregor here expresses the desire not to ask what may have happened but rather to look at nature as it is and inquire as to why it exists in that particular form.

Gregor's monologue also highlights one of the most striking features of the novella, namely its resistance to anthropocentricity. The old man of the forest tells the girls,

Ich saß darauf und schaute wohl stundenlang in die Länder der Menschen hinaus – und wie ich öfter hier und dort war, erkannte ich gar wohl, daß dies alles nur Gottes Werk sein und nicht der Menschen, zu denen sich nur die Sage davon verlor. Sie können nichts bewundern, als was sie selber gemacht haben, und nichts betrachten, als in der Meinung, es sei für sie gebildet. Hat Gott der Herr dem Menschen größere Gaben gegeben, so fordert er auch mehr von ihm – aber darum liebt er doch auch nicht minder dessen andere Geschwister, die Tiere und Gewächse; er hat ihnen Wohnungen gegeben, die dem Menschen versagt sind, die Höhen der Gebirge, die Größe der Wälder, das ungeheure Meer und die weiten Wüsten – dort, ob auch nie ein Auge hinkomme, hängt er ob ihnen seine Sterne auf, gibt ihnen die Pracht ihrer Gewänder, deckt ihren Tisch,

⁴³ Stifter, Hochwald, 268.

schmückt sie mit allerlei Gaben, und kommt und wandelt hinter ihnen, gerade wie er es hier und unter den Menschen macht, die er auch liebt, obwohl sie ihm, wie es mir oft gedreht hat, seine Tiere und Pflanzen mißbrauchen, weil sie im Hochmut sich die einzigen wähnen, und in ihrer Einfalt nie hinausgehen in die Reiche und Wohnungen derselben, um ihre Sprache und Wesenheit zu lernen.⁴⁴

Lest one interpret Gregor's previous or later statements as pantheism or animism, we read here of Gregor's faith in a creator-God who benevolently takes care of all creation. While Stifter does not challenge faith in the Christian God, he does challenge the notion that the rest of creation was made for humans. Gregor explains that people whose vision cannot comprehend a world outside of themselves fall prey to arrogance in thinking that they are the only ones present. The elixir for this ailment of arrogance, Gregor suggests, is to go out into the wilderness and learn of the language and life of nature. Like Thoreau who retreated to Walden's Pond, Gregor maintains this life in the woods away from all people in order to live in better communion with nature and thereby better understand its essence and his place within it.

Like Thoreau, who became legendary for his own escape from society into nature, Gregor becomes a true legend in the area. It is ironic that Gregor becomes for the surrounding communities a legend similar to those he has worked to debunk. We read of Gregor speaking to the girls,

“Sehet schöne Jungfrauen,” fuhr er nach einer Weile fort, “dies alles rieselte mir damals gar sonderbar durch die Gebeine, und mit Grauen und mit Begierde sah ich immer seitdem auf den blauen Wald hinauf, wie er geheimnisvoll und unabsehlich längs dem schönen lichten Himmel dahinzog. Ich nahm mir vor, sobald ich ein Mann sein würde, den schönen zauberhaften See und die Heidenwand aufzusuchen. Mein Vater und die Leute lachten mich aus und meinten, das sei eitel Fabel und Narrheit mit dem Wasser; – aber sehet, da ich den Wald nach und nach kennen lernte und einsah, wie wunderbar er sei, ohne daß die Menschen erst nötig hätten, ihre Fabeln hinein zu weben – und da mir viele klare

⁴⁴ Stifter, Hochwald, 268-9.

Wässerlein auf meinen Wanderungen begegneten, alle von einem Punkt der Höhen herabfließend und deutlich mit kindlichen Rieseln und Schwätzen von ihrem Vater erzählend, – so stieg ich herauf, und sehet, an dem Platze wo wir eben sitzen, kam ich heraus und fand mit eins das schöne, liebliche Wasser.”⁴⁵

Gregor speaks in the beginning of the effect upon him of the tales that his grandmother had told. He turns his attention to the relationship with nature that he established as an adult and sets it apart from the fairy-tale relationship he had with nature as a child, as related through the mouth of his grandmother. The tradition of oral narration is common to fairy tales, especially the Volksmärchen, but it also found its way into the Romantic period’s Kunstmärchen as well as later works and movements, i.e., Gotthelf’s Die schwarze Spinne or Storm’s Der Schimmelreiter. Gregor’s resistance to the tales due to their portrayal of nature is unique and warrants a second look. Scrutinizing the text closely, we read that the fairy tales his grandmother told him pique Gregor’s interest and spur him to explore the environment that she had described as enchanted. Once Gregor actually enters the forest, however, the fairy-tale enchantment is replaced by an authentic personal experience of nature that is more in tune with the natural wonders of nature rather than the supernatural wonders that tales and legends impose upon nature. The enchantment and the fairy-tale are not portrayed merely in negative terms, but they are superseded by Gregor’s stories that poeticize nature in a less magical and more mystical manner.

Although Gregor himself resists these tales, we read that he becomes the stuff of a fairy tale himself. The last lines of the novel tell us, “Einen alten Mann, wie einen Schemen, sah man noch öfter durch den Wald gehen, aber kein Mensch kann eine Zeit

⁴⁵ Stifter, Hochwald, 267.

sagen, wo er noch ging, und eine, wo er nicht mehr ging.’’⁴⁶ In this passage, the reader can recognize a resignation of Stifter to a human inclination towards tales that explain extraordinary events (in this case, natural phenomena) in supernatural terms. In the end, the narrator leaves us with a mythical character that wanders about the forest; the locals seek not to understand Gregor or his interest in the forest but to explain his actions within their own paradigm. The narrator implies that the locals tell stories about Gregor and mythicize him just as Gregor’s own grandmother had mythicized the mountains and lakes.

The dichotomy in the novel between those who seek to understand nature and those who seek to impose their own conceptions of the world upon nature corresponds to the dichotomy Stifter explains in his “Sanftes Gesetz.” In the literary manifesto, Stifter refers to the difference between singular events in nature (conceived of in a broad general sense here) that are often portrayed in literature and nature itself. That is, Stifter argues that the educated researcher, a word he uses to describe the poet, focuses less on specific occurrences of natural phenomena and more on elemental natural phenomena, e.g., gravity or condensation or even the human condition. Stifter’s lofty literary ideals therefore aim to understand the essence of nature in the most general sense. He writes,

Nur augenfälliger sind diese Erscheinungen, und reißen den Blick des Unkundigen und Unaufmerksamen mehr an sich, während der Geisteszug des Forschers vorzüglich auf das Ganze und Allgemeine geht, und nur in ihm allein Großartigkeit zu erkennen vermag, weil es allein das Welterhaltende ist.⁴⁷

Thus, the poet’s eye diverges from the common uneducated person in the poetic emphasis on elemental natural phenomena.

⁴⁶ Stifter, Hochwald, 318.

⁴⁷ Adalbert Stifter, “Das sanfte Gesetz” Preface. Bunte Steine, 8.

In Der Hochwald, Gregor represents this ideal poet/researcher that focuses upon nature as it exists.⁴⁸ This is not to say that Stifter portrayed nature as it existed around him, merely describing an inventory of the world in which he lived.⁴⁹ Rather, Stifter was able to use natural phenomena that appear as real as possible in order to express the ideas in his works. The narratological perspective shifts from the grand vistas of landscape to specific objects, and the description shifts from viewing the landscape from afar to carefully examining the aspen leaf in the manner of the researcher aiming to understand why it behaves as it does.

Although the girls cannot remain in the “enchanted” pseudo-fairy-tale world of the forest, Gregor remains. The ability of nature to overcome human circumstances, or what one may interpret as the supremacy of nature, becomes apparent in the scene where the girls view Wittingshausen in ruins through the telescope, in the girls’ return to Wittingshausen, and in the events that unfold thereafter. The reader learns already in the beginning of the novel that Wittingshausen has been reduced to ruins over time; the rest of the story serves to tell us how the castle deteriorates to this state. In the beginning of the chapter “Waldruine,” we read as the girls experience their destroyed castle for the first time,

Auf grünem Weidegrunde stand ein gewaltiger viereckiger Turm, von zerfallendem Außenwerke umgeben. Er hatte kein Dach, und seine Ringmauern hatten keine Tore, gerade, wie er noch heutzutage steht – aber

⁴⁸ Roy Pascal writes of the scientifically influenced description of nature in Der Hochwald, “Die Schilderung ist also nicht bloß visuell genau, nicht impressionistisch oder naturalistisch; sie fußt auf geologischen und geographischen Kenntnissen. Wir sollen wissen, wie alles entstanden und eigentlich ist. . .” in Roy Pascal, “Die Landschaftsschilderung im Hochwald,” Adalbert Stifter: Studien und Interpretationen: Gedenkschrift zum 100. Todestage, ed. Lothar Stiehm (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1968) 59.

⁴⁹ This claim was made by notable critics and writers of the day including Hebbel and Keller

er trug noch nicht die verwitterte graue Farbe seiner bloßgelegten Steinmauern, wie heute; sondern war noch bekleidet mit Anwurf und Tünche, nur war deren Reinheit beschmutzt mit häßlichen Brandflecken, aus den Fenstern ausgehend und wie Kometenfahnen aufwärts zielend. Auch war in dem äußeren Meuerwerke manch tiefe Verwundung ersichtlich. Der Rasen umher war verschwunden, und glich einer gestampften Tenne, von tiefen Räderspuren durchfurcht, und hie und da mit einem verkohlten Baume oder Trümmern unbekannter Geräte bedeckt. Die größte Stille und ein reiner Himmel mit freundlicher Novembersonne schaute auf diese Todesstelle nieder. Kein Gedanke eines Feindes war ringsum zu erschauen, aber auch kein einzig anderes lebendes Wesen stundenweit in die Runde; die Hütten waren verbrannt, und der Ort Friedberg lag in Trümmern. Gleichwohl stieg ein dünner blauer Rauchfaden aus der Ruine zu dem dunklen Himmel hinauf, als wäre sie von irgend einem menschlichen Wesen bewohnt. Ja man sah sogar über den Weideboden, der zwar noch nicht beschneit, aber fest gefroren war, einen Reiter eilig dem Trümmerwerke zureiten.⁵⁰

From the narrator's omniscient perspective, we view the ruins both in their present state and immediately after the war. In its state immediately after the battle, the castle is also reflected in the nature that lies in ruins about the scene of the battle. However, the friendly November sun illustrates nature's supremacy for the reader; nature as a whole cannot be ruined and will continue despite human involvement. As Gregor railed against the human tendency to see one's self or humans in general as centrally important to the rest of the world, this scene shows us that humans are but one part of nature, and the ability of humans to destroy, even to destroy nature around them, cannot defeat nature's ability to regenerate. As the narrative suggests, nature will eventually supersede humans and will thrive long after humans have disappeared.

At the end of the novel, Gregor plants seeds and shows us nature's supremacy and its ability to regenerate. The narrator describes the forest,

Westlich liegen und schweigen die unermeßlichen Wälder, lieblich wild wie ehemals. Gregor hatte das Waldhaus angezündet, und Waldsamen auf die Stelle gestreut; die Ahornen, die Buchen, die Fichten und andere, die

⁵⁰ Stifter, Hochwald, 309-10.

auf der Waldwiese standen, hatten zahlreiche Nachkommenschaft und überwuchsen die ganze Stelle, so daß wieder die tiefe jungfräuliche Wildnis entstand, wie sonst, und wie sie noch heute ist.⁵¹

It is significant that, as we have learned two paragraphs earlier, neither Johanna nor Clarissa ever marries; thus, they will bear no offspring. The story ends mournfully for all of the characters in the novel. One may argue that Gregor is the only person in the novel who has any measure of success and any hope for happiness. We contrast the general gloom of the girls' situation at the end with the description of the place where their forest home stood. There is no evidence that their home ever even existed; however, nature has regenerated itself. The trees are described as having a multitude of offspring, and the forest has once again become a "virginal wilderness." Thus in Der Hochwald, nature rules supreme as Stifter illustrates the hubris associated with anthropocentrism.

IV. Brigitta (1844): Performing the Hungarian Puszta

In his "Theoretischen Schriften" on philosophy and ethics, Friedrich Schiller includes a section titled "Vom Erhabenen (Zur weiteren Ausführung einiger Kantischen Ideen)." Schiller's ideas on the sublime in nature and in art heavily influenced German literature in later epochs, and Stifter's works are no exception. Schiller writes of the sublime:

Erhaben nennen wir ein Objekt, bei dessen Vorstellung unsre sinnliche Natur ihre Schranken, unsre vernünftige Natur aber ihre Überlegenheit, ihre Freiheit von Schranken fühlt; gegen das wir also *physisch* den kürzern ziehen, über welches wir uns aber *moralisch*, d.i. durch Ideen erheben. Nur als Sinnenwesen sind wir abhängig, als Vernunftwesen sind wir frei. Der erhabene Gegenstand gibt uns *erstlich*: als Naturwesen unsre Abhängigkeit zu empfinden, indem er uns *zweitens*: mit der Unabhängigkeit bekannt macht, die wir als Vernunftwesen über die Natur sowohl *in* uns als *außer* uns, behaupten ... Solange die Natur außer uns

⁵¹ Stifter, Hochwald, 318.

den Bedingungen konform ist, unter welchen in uns etwas möglich wird, solange können wir unsre Abhängigkeit nicht fühlen. Sollen wir uns derselben bewußt werden, so muß die Natur mit dem, was uns *Bedürfnis* und doch nur durch ihre Mitwirkung möglich ist, als streitend vorgestellt werden, oder, was ebensoviel sagt, sie muß sich mit unsern Trieben im Widerspruch befinden.⁵²

Schiller postulates, along Kantian lines, that the sublime in nature is an object that makes us aware of our physical limitations while concomitantly allowing us to sense our rational (Vernunft) ability to overcome nature's limitations by imagining something greater than what is present in nature. He goes on to identify two essential human instincts or impulses connected to this "Abhängigkeit/Unabhängigkeit," namely the impulse to comprehend and the impulse to preserve one's self. Schiller explains,

Wir stehen also durch diese zweierlei Triebe in zweifacher *Abhängigkeit* von der Natur. Die erste wird uns fühlbar, wenn es die Natur an den Bedingungen fehlen läßt, unter welchen wir zu Erkenntnissen gelangen; die zweite wird uns fühlbar, wenn sie den Bedingungen widerspricht, unter welchen es möglich ist, unsre Existenz fortzusetzen.⁵³

We become aware of our human instinct to comprehend (erkennen), according to Schiller, only when natural conditions contradict this instinct, that is when a phenomenon is incomprehensible to us. By the same token, our instinct to preserve our self becomes known to us when the physical conditions for our survival are threatened. Schiller then postulates the idea of the "Erhabenes" or the sublime in two categories, the "Praktisch" (Practical) and the "Theoretisch" (Theoretical) sublime – categories that correspond to the two contingencies and instincts outlined above. "Bei dem Theoretischerhabenen," writes Schiller, "steht die Natur als *Objekt der Erkenntnis* im Widerspruch mit dem Vorstellungstrieb. Bei dem Praktischerhabenen steht sie als *Objekt der Empfindung* im

⁵² Friedrich Schiller, "Vom Erhabenen," Schiller: Erzählungen, Theoretischen Schriften, ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert, vol. 5, Friedrich Schiller: Sämtliche Werke (Munich: Hanser, 1960) 489.

⁵³ Schiller, "Vom Erhabenen," 489-90.

Widerspruch mit dem Erhaltungstrieb.”⁵⁴ The practical sublime in nature is therefore felt by the individual, whereas the theoretical sublime is comprehensible, or to be more exact, incomprehensible to the individual. This becomes clearer when Schiller writes,

Eben deswegen aber, weil der *furchtbare* Gegenstand unsere sinnliche Natur gewaltsamer angreift als der *unendliche*, so wird auch der Abstand zwischen dem sinnlichen und übersinnlichen Vermögen dabei um so lebhafter gefühlt, so wird die Überlegenheit der Vernunft und die innere Freiheit des Gemüts desto hervorstechender.⁵⁵

Stifter is concerned with the idea of the sublime feeling of nature as well as the sublime concept of something greater than nature, as the introduction to *Brigitta* shows. The sense of the “beautiful” as something that must be both felt and conceived of in a rational sense certainly informs Stifter’s novella.

Before I elaborate upon the portrayal of the Hungarian landscape in the novella and its connection to nature and ecological thought, I first need to examine this central and related theme in the book, namely the notion of the “beautiful.” In connection with this dissertation, one might well ask: what in nature is considered beautiful and is wilderness considered beautiful in this text? To understand how Stifter’s text reads the “beautiful,” I will explore the introductory passage of the novella and then return to the brief synopsis of Friedrich Schiller’s notion of beauty, since it bears such strong parallels to Stifter’s text that it likely influenced the Austrian writer. In particular, the first few paragraphs of Stifter’s *Brigitta* show a likely influence of Schiller’s aesthetic principles.

At the outset of the novella, Stifter writes,

Es gibt oft Dinge und Beziehungen in dem menschlichen Leben, die uns nicht sogleich klar sind, und deren Grund wir nicht in Schnelligkeit hervor zu ziehen vermögen. Sie wirken dan meistens mit einem gewissen schönen und sanften Reize des Geheimnisvollen auf unsere Seele. In dem

⁵⁴ Schiller, “Vom Erhabenen,” 490.

⁵⁵ Schiller, “Vom Erhabenen,” 492.

Angesichte des Häßlichen ist für uns oft eine innere Schönheit, die wir nicht auf der Stelle von seinem Werte herzuleiten vermögen, während uns oft die Züge eines andern kalt und leer sind, von denen alle sagen, daß sie die größte Schönheit besitzen. Eben so fühlen wir uns manchmal zu einem hingezogen, den wir eigentlich gar nicht kennen, es gefallen uns seine Bewegungen, es gefällt uns seine Art, wir trauern, wenn er uns verlassen hat, und haben eine gewisse Sehnsucht, ja eine Liebe zu ihm, wenn wir oft noch in späteren Jahren seiner gedenken: während wir mit einem andern, dessen Wert in vielen Taten vor uns liegt, nicht ins Reine kommen können, wenn wir auch Jahre lang mit ihm umgegangen sind. Daß zuletzt sittliche Gründe vorhanden sind, die das Herz heraus fühlt, ist kein Zweifel, allein wir können sie nicht immer mit der Wage des Bewußtseins und der Rechnung hervor heben und anschauen. Die Seelenkunde hat manches beleuchtet und erklärt, aber vieles ist ihr dunkel und in großer Entfernung geblieben.⁵⁶

From this passage the reader is introduced to the aesthetic principles that guide and pervade the text. Beauty, according to the narrator, is not merely a feeling or a superficial quality that merely pleases the eye. The narrator refers to an “inner beauty” that is not apparent at first glance but that we can nonetheless sense. A moral basis for this sense of beauty, according to the narrator, is felt by the heart; the individual is thus attracted to the beauty of a virtuous person. This novella, which like Der Hochwald belongs to Stifter’s “Studien,” examines the aesthetics of beauty. And, in this case, Stifter’s narrator shows us that beauty is not only related to exterior appearance; beauty is also in the mind of the beholder. The “beautiful” exists also as something we may call inner beauty. Since, as the narrator later states, neither science nor “Seelenkunde” – something akin to psychology – have been able to ascertain a rational or logical basis for this aesthetic sixth sense, Brigitta offers the reader a case study of both superficial and inner (moral) beauty. Whereas Der Hochwald focused on the beauty and the pristineness of nature as it exists outside of and around the human subject, Brigitta is an exploration

⁵⁶ Adalbert Stifter, “Brigitta,” Adalbert Stifter: Werke und Briefe ed. Alfred Doppler and Wolfgang Frühwald, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe ed., vol. 1,5 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982) 411.

of aesthetic ideals and their presence in nature and in culture, with the human subject understood as an extension of nature.⁵⁷

The parallels to Schiller's aesthetic principles are evident. In Über Anmut und Würde, Schiller writes, "Nichtsdestoweniger ist es ebenso ausgemacht, daß das Schöne *der Vernunft gefällt*, als es entschieden ist, daß es auf keiner solchen Eigenschaft des Objektes beruht, die nur durch Vernunft zu entdecken wäre."⁵⁸ Thus, the "beautiful," according to Schiller, pleases the mind and possesses a rational aspect. However, it is not merely a rational category that appeals only to the mind; according to this passage, our logical reasoning abilities alone cannot ascertain the aesthetic beauty of an object or a person. The combination of the two is an inner beauty, or what Schiller elsewhere refers to as the "schöne Seele," an inner (moral) beauty that is felt or sensed by the individual beyond a logical or rational sense, i.e., qualities that can be observed or quantifiably examined in a scientific sense. Schiller's principles certainly rely upon Kantian aesthetics and philosophy, and an exploration of Kant's works and their connection to Stifter's novella could yield further background for an interpretation of both Schiller's and Stifter's texts. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, it suffices to examine aesthetic principles from Schiller that certainly influenced the depiction of the "beautiful" as an aesthetic ideal in Stifter's novella.

⁵⁷ Previous authors, among them Carl Schorske, have pointed to this connection between nature and culture, which is one of the main themes of this dissertation, in particular the section on Stifter. Carl E. Schorske, Fin-De-Siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf : distributed by Random House, 1979). For a further discussion of gardening and landscape in Stifter's works, especially in the Mappe meines Urgroßvaters, see Herwig Gottwald, "Beobachtungen zum Motiv des Landschaftsgartens bei Stifter," Stifter Studien: ein Festgeschenk für Wolfgang Frühwald zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Walter Hettche (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000).

⁵⁸ Schiller, "Vom Erhabenen," 441.

In Stifter's novella, the depiction of the "beautiful" and the problem of phenomenology – that is the problem of how humans perceive beauty becomes most clearly manifest both in the depiction of the Hungarian landscape and in the description of Brigitta. As I will demonstrate, it is no coincidence that the two (the landscape and the feminine subject) subvert and challenge traditional notions of beauty. While Stifter's portrayal of feminine beauty and natural beauty offer an alternative conception of femininity, Brigitta reverts to a more traditional literary depiction of nature as a symbolic space. Rather than challenging the anthropocentric notion that nature in literature must function as a symbol of human emotions or desires etc., as he did in Der Hochwald, he depicts the landscape in Brigitta precisely and principally as a symbolic space.

In Stifter's Brigitta, therefore, we are offered a drastically different view of nature and landscape from that in Der Hochwald, where considerations of the "beautiful" and aesthetic ideals do not figure largely. This change in landscape also accompanies a shift in the role of nature within the novel from a position where nature figures almost as a hero in Der Hochwald (see the discussion in the previous section of the naming of the chapters as well as the focus of narration) to nature as a symbolic space in Brigitta – that is, one that carries, accompanies, or complements the narrative. Once again, the form of the novella, also part of Stifter's series of "Studien," is important for the interpretation of the story. As I have already shown and will continue to show, the narrative exploration of a nature study informs and affects Stifter's text. An additional aspect of that "study" is the travel aspect of the novella. As I will demonstrate later, Stifter drew from the writings of Carl Ritter, whose text about landscape improvements in Hungary draws upon the latter's experiences traveling through the English countryside. In contrast to

scholarship on Der Hochwald that has examined the role of specific landscapes in Stifter's work and the imprint thereof on the form of the text, critics have not often attended to the significance of travel literature in connection with Brigitta. I will argue that the reader is guided by the perspective of the traveler, and his reading of nature in the novella is constructed through the lens of the traveler's perspective.

On its surface, the plot of the novella is straight-forward. The traveler, the first-person narrator of the story whose name the reader never learns, has set out on a journey to visit a friend, "Der Major," – whom the narrator had met during previous travel to Italy. We learn the background story of the major and his neighbor, Brigitta, who have lived next to one another since the major returned from traveling and service in the military in Spain. The narrator tells us the story of Brigitta, the neighbor whose "manly" dress and figure strike him as somehow beautiful. We learn that she had been married long ago but that her husband left her after she accused him of having an affair with a local nobleman's physically beautiful daughter. In the next scene, the traveler and the major visit Brigitta at her home, and the traveler notes that the major and Brigitta have an especially close relationship, one that seems overly affectionate but never crosses the lines from neighborliness towards a romantic relationship. One night, late in the fall, shots are heard as Gustav, Brigitta's son, is defending himself from a pack of wolves that are attacking him. The major and the traveler rush to his rescue and arrive just in time. While Brigitta's son is convalescing from wounds he suffered in the attack, the major cries to Brigitta that he does not have a son. Brigitta turns to him and speaks only his first name, "Stephan," indicating that he is the husband who had left her. The reader then also learns that Gustav, the handsome young man, is also Stephan's, the major's, son.

The story ends as the traveler takes leave of Hungary and heads back towards his German homeland.

Beyond the surface, Brigitta weaves together discursive elements of landscape, gender, nature, the perception of nature, and aesthetics, specifically the “beautiful.” In travel literature, – understood in this context as writing about travel – fictional or non-fictional travel –, the reader is continually confronted with the narrative of the story as well as the narrator – that is, the narrator and his perceptions become an object of narration in travel literature, and this is certainly the case with the German traveler in Stifter’s Brigitta. In the novella, lengthy portions of the narration are devoted to the aesthetic experiences of the traveler.

This description in travel literature of travel as principally an aesthetic experience is a development of the latter eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, and it can be traced primarily to Goethe’s Italienische Reise. In Goethe’s text, the depiction of Italy is primarily from an aesthetic perspective as opposed to a seemingly objective accounting of the landscape and sights of the destination as found in earlier travel literature, e.g., in Volkmann’s Historisch-kritischen Nachrichten von Italien (1770-1771).⁵⁹ The connections between Goethe and the Stifter text are manifold and deep. The influence of Goethe’s Wahlverwandtschaften as well as his Italienische Reise are felt in the description of nature, the Italian theme, and the reference to the Major’s use of magnetism. The short reference to the Major’s magnetic qualities in Brigitta recalls Goethe’s Wahlverwandtschaften and the use of magnetism to test Otilie. Stifter writes,

⁵⁹ One could perhaps look to Winckelmann’s works and letters as precursors to Goethe’s travel writings. For more on this, see Horst Rüdiger, “Zum Verständnis von Goethes Tagebuch der italienischen Reise, der römischen Elegien und der venetianischen Epigramme,” Goethe und Europa : Essays und Aufsätze 1944-1983, ed. Willy R. and Koppen Berger, Erwin (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990).

Der Major sei anfangs, da er sich in Uwar niedergelassen hatte, mehrere Jahre nicht zu [Brigitta] hinüber gekommen. Dann sei sie einmal todkrank geworden: da sein er zu ihr über die Haide geritten und habe sie gesund gemacht. Von der Zeit an kam er dann immer zu ihr. Die Leute sagten damals, er habe die Heilkräfte des Magnetismus angewendet, deren er teilhaftig sei, aber niemand weiß eigentlich in der Sache etwas Rechtes zu sagen.⁶⁰

The popular idea of the powers of magnetism, which Goethe explored, finds its way into Stifter's text. Goethe explores magnetism in a scene with Otilie in Die Wahlverwandtschaften where a traveler tests Otilie's magnetic qualities after she complains about headaches, and the passage above from Stifter's text refers to the Major's magnetic healing qualities. Additionally, the Major is described earlier in the text as possessing what one may describe as poetic/magnetic attractiveness. The main premise of Goethe's Wahlverwandtschaften, an equation from chemistry whereby certain elements exert a stronger attraction upon other elements and are able to draw them away from their original partners, is not repeated here. Thus, the connection between the two remains tenuous. Instead, the narrator in Brigitta merely highlights the major's superficial attractiveness when he explains,

Er war damals in allen Gesellschaften gefeiert und, obwohl schon fast fünfzig Jahre alt, doch noch das Ziel von manchen schönen Augen; denn nie hat man einen Mann gesehen, dessen Bau und Antlitz schöner genannt werden konnte, noch einen, der dieses Äußere edler zu tragen verstand. Ich möchte sagen, es war eine sanfte Hoheit, die um alle seine Bewegungen floß, so einfach und so siegend, daß er mehr als einmal auch Männer betörte. Auf Frauenherzen aber, ging die Sage, soll er einst wahrhaft sinnverwirrend gewirkt haben ... Aber ein Fehler, sagte man, hänge ihm an, der ihn erst recht gefährlich mache; nämlich, es sei niemanden, selbst der größten Schönheit, die diese Erde trage, gelungen, ihn länger zu fesseln, als es ihm eben beliebte.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Stifter, Brigitta, 444.

⁶¹ Stifter, Brigitta, 413-14.

Indeed, the Major seems to have such enchanting powers of seduction that women lose their senses (er wirkte sinnverwirrend) and, according to the narrator, even men are enthralled by him. The narrator goes on to explain the qualities that make the Major so attractive:

Dabei erkannte ich, als ich länger mit ihm umging, daß diese Seele das Glühendste und Dichterischste sei, was mir bis dahin vorgekommen ist, daher es auch kommen mochte, daß sie das Kindliche, Unbewußte, Einfache, Einsame, ja oft Einfältige an sich hatte. Er war sich dieser Gaben nicht bewußt, und sagte in Natürlichkeit die schönsten Worte, die ich je aus einem munde gehört habe, und nie in meinem Leben, selbst später nicht, als ich Gelegenheit hatte, mit Dichtern und Künstlern umzugehen, habe ich einen so empfindlichen Schönheitssinn angetroffen, der durch Ungestalt und Rohheit bis zur Ungeduld gereizt werden konnte, als an ihm. Diese unbewußten Gaben mochten es auch sein, die ihm alle Herzen des andern Geschlechts zufliegen machten, weil dieses Spielen und Glänzen an Männern in vorgerückten Jahren gar so selten ist. Eben daher mochte es auch kommen, daß er mit mir als einem ganz jungen Menschen so gerne umging.⁶²

According to the traveler/narrator then, the Major's aesthetic sensibility coupled with his raw natural affectation to his aesthetic ideals, i.e., his response when something pleases him or displeases him, makes him particularly attractive, especially since this quality is, according to the narrator, so seldom found in men of advanced age. The Major's attractiveness, therefore, can be traced both to his aesthetic sense and his ability thereby to remain youthful.

Thus we come to one of the main topoi of Brigitta, namely the study of aesthetics. Like the discussion of magnetism, the study of aesthetics in travel literature can be traced to Goethe, specifically to his Italienische Reise, but also to Schiller's notion of the beautiful. In a possible intertextual reference to Goethe's text, we read that the traveler first encountered the Major on a journey through Italy. The reader also learns that the

⁶² Stifter, Brigitta, 415.

psychological insight that the narrator wishes to elucidate results from the narrator's/traveler's experiences on a trip to Hungary to visit the Major who invited him to his home after they had become friends and traveling companions in Italy. Especially in the beginning of the novel, there are numerous references to his trip through Italy. The narrator compares his journey to the Major's Hungarian estate with his trip through Italy when he recounts, "In Unteritalien, beinahe in einer eben so feierlichen Oede, wie die war, durch die ich heute wandelte, hatte ich ihn zum ersten Male gesehen."⁶³ And he describes his first meeting with the Major as follows:

Ich hatte schon sehr viel von ihm gehört, und erkannte ihn augenblicklich, als ich ihn einmal auf dem Vesuve Steine herab schlagen und dann zu dem neuen Krater hinzu gehen und freundlich auf das blaue Ringeln des Rauches schauen sah, der noch sparsam aus der Öffnung und aus den Ritzen quoll.⁶⁴

As the reader learns, the life of the Major intrigues the traveler, and his narrative follows his reconstruction of the Major's life narrative, which is often spoken of in the novella as a journey. Indeed, the final reason for the traveler's trip to Hungary was a letter that he had received from the major, from which we read,

Allein ich hielt dies für eine bloße Redeformel und Artigkeit, wie Reisende wohl oft zu wechseln pflegen, und hätte der Sache wahrscheinlich keine weitere Folge gegeben, wenn nicht im zweiten Jahre unserer Trennung ein Brief von ihm gekommen wäre, in welchem er sich angelegentlich um mein Befinden erkundigte und zuletzt wieder die alte Bitte hinzu fügte, doch einmal zu ihm zu kommen und einen Sommer, ein Jahr oder fünf oder zehn Jahre bei ihm zuzubringen, wie es mir gefällig wäre; denn er sei jetzt endlich gesonnen, auf einem einzigen winzigen Punkte dieser Erdkugel kleben zu bleiben und kein anderes Stäubchen mehr auf seinen Fuß gelangen zu lassen als das der Heimat, in welcher er nunmehr ein Ziel gefunden habe, das er sonst vergeblich auf der ganzen Welt gesucht hatte.⁶⁵

⁶³ Stifter, Brigitta, 413.

⁶⁴ Stifter, Brigitta, 414.

⁶⁵ Stifter, Brigitta, 412.

This destination, as the narrator and the Major call it, is the “beautiful,” and the journey towards the destination is the discovery thereof. The narrator himself is on the same journey to discover the “beautiful,” although he does not recognize his journey as such. We read, “Da es eben Frühling war, da ich neugierig war, sein Ziel kennen zu lernen, da ich eben nicht wußte, wo ich hin reisen sollte, beschloß ich, seiner Bitte nachzugeben und seiner Einladung zu folgen.”⁶⁶ One may surmise that the traveler simply does not know what his next travel destination should be, but the narrator’s introduction in the first paragraphs of the story makes it clear that describing an aesthetic of the “beautiful” is the purpose of the narrative. The trip thus takes on a metaphorical meaning as a “life’s journey,” of which the destination – the purpose or goal in life – becomes the discovery of the “beautiful” as an aesthetic and moral quality. This shows clear parallels to Friedrich Schiller’s notion of the “beautiful,” which he understood not only as an aesthetic quality but rather as a moral quality as well.

The narrator tells of his travel towards the Major’s estate,

Ich malte mir sein Bild in Gedanken immer mehr aus und senkte mich so hinein, daß ich oft Mühe hatte, nicht zu glauben, ich sei in Italien; denn so heiß, so schweigsam war es auf der Ebene, auf der ich wandelte, wie dort, und die blaue Dunstschichte der Ferne spiegelte sich mir zum Trugbilde der pomptinischen Sümpfe.⁶⁷

The narrator/traveler displays this weaving of travel experiences to his reader; it is important to note the aesthetic experience of the Hungarian landscape as similar to that in Italy.

⁶⁶ Stifter, Brigitta, 412.

⁶⁷ Stifter, Brigitta, 416.

This aesthetic experience, as I have already noted shows similarities to Goethe's Italienische Reise. Goethe himself characterized his own descriptions of his travel in his

“Tagebuch der Italienischen Reise,” written to Frau von Stein:

Ich eilte fort damit mich nicht irgend einer erkennte, und hatte ohne dies nichts da zu thun – Zwar wenn ich es recht gestehe; so ist es der Trieb und die Unruhe, die hinter mir ist; denn ich hätte gern mich ein wenig umgesehen und alle die Producte beleuchtet die sie hierher zusammenschleppen. Doch ist das mein Trost, alles das ist gewiß schon gedruckt. In unsern statistischen Zeiten braucht man sich um diese Dinge wenig zu bekümmern ein anderer hat schon die Sorge übernommen, mir ist nur jetzt um die sinnlichen Eindrücke zu thun, die mir kein Buch und kein Bild geben kann, daß ich wieder Interesse an der Welt nehme und daß ich meinen Beobachtungsgeist versuche, und auch sehe wie weit es mit meinen Wissenschaften und Kenntnissen geht, ob und wie mein Auge licht, rein und hell ist, was ich in der Geschwindigkeit fassen kann und ob die Falten, die sich in mein Gemüth geschlagen und gedruckt haben, wieder auszuliegen sind.⁶⁸

This note from Goethe to Frau von Stein explains to her and to the reader the purpose of Goethe's journey and his descriptions. Instead of meticulously cataloging every detail of his experience in the manner of other “Reiseberichte” of the “statistical days” as he calls them, Goethe sets his sights on the aesthetic experiences that no book or painting could offer him. These aesthetic experiences are not meant to be benign encounters – that is, a simple taking in of the sights – rather, they serve to inform and form Goethe's perceptions of himself as a writer and observer of nature. This is what Horst Rüdiger refers to when he writes, “So ist die *“Italienische Reise”* die literarische Stilisierung des Aktes der Selbstbildung an den Gegenständen der Natur, der klassischen Kunst und des

⁶⁸ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Tagebuch der italienischen Reise," Johann Wolfgang Goethe: Italienische Reise Teil 1, ed. Christoph Michel and Hans-Georg Dewitz, vol. 15,1, Johann Wolfgang Goethe: Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher Und Gespräche (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker, 1993) 626.

fremden Volkstums, geschrieben aus dem Rückblick des Greises auf die Erfahrungen im Mannesalter⁶⁹

Although Goethe's travel writing influenced Stifter's Brigitta, neither Goethe's Italienische Reise nor the narrator's travels in Italy ultimately determine the perception of and the description of the Hungarian landscape in Stifter's novella. Instead, Hungary is portrayed as as the object of aesthetic interest, not merely a pretense or recapitulation of Roman art and architecture. The narrator notes, "Ich ging aber doch nicht in gerader Richtung auf das mir in dem Briefe bezeichnete Gut des Majors los, sondern ich machte mehrere Kreuz- und Querzüge, um mir das Land zu besehen. So wie mir das Bild desselben früher immer meines Freundes wegen mit Italien zusammen geflossen war, so webte es sich nun immer mehr und immer eigentümlicher als Selbstständiges und Ganzes heraus."⁷⁰ Hungary, its landscape and people, become their own image separate but related to their Italian counterpart.

Nevertheless, the importance of Italy for the novella is evident from the numerous references to Mount Vesuvius, Pompey, and the Romans. The narrator tells us of his restless sleep the first night at Uwar (the Major's estate), "Wie lange ich geschlafen habe, weiß ich nicht, aber daß es nicht fest und gut war, das wußte ich. . . . Die ganze Nacht ging ich auf dem Vesuve herum, und sah den Major bald in einem Pilgeranzuge in Pompeji sitzen, bald im Fracke zwischen den Schlacken stehen und Steine suchen."⁷¹ Later, he compares the Hungarians and the Major to Roman farmers. "Die Einsamkeit und Kraft dieser Beschäftigungen erinnerte mich häufig an die alten starken Römer, die

⁶⁹ Rüdiger, "Zum Verständnis von Goethes Tagebuch der italienischen Reise, der römischen Elegien und der venetianischen Epigramme," 50.

⁷⁰ Stifter, Brigitta, 416.

⁷¹ Stifter, Brigitta, 426.

den Landbau auch so sehr geliebt hatten, und die wenigstens in ihrer früheren Zeit auch gerne einsam und kräftig waren.”⁷² Other researchers have elucidated the meaning of these references, and their assertions have certainly contributed to a more thorough understand of Stifter’s work.⁷³ However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I am less interested in their specific meaning and more interested in their indication of aesthetic experience as a principle element of travel and travel literature. Indeed, as I noted above on aesthetics in Goethe’s Italienische Reise and the correlation between Goethe’s work and Stifter’s Brigitta, the aesthetic experience of the Hungarian Puszta becomes the primary theme of Stifter’s novella.

I will now focus my attention on that description and experience of Hungary in Stifter’s text, especially in its portrayal of landscape and nature. In Brigitta, the fusion of nature to the human subject as an exterior symbol of the human’s interior – that is emotions, thoughts, feelings etc. – becomes evident from the narrator’s description of the Hungarian landscape, which he experiences on his journey towards the Major’s estate. We read, “So wie mir das Bild desselben früher immer meines Freundes wegen mit Italien zusammen geflossen war, so webte es sich nun immer mehr und immer eigentümlicher als Selbstständiges und Ganzes heraus.”⁷⁴ The reader understands that the narrator has begun to imagine the Major separate from the landscape in which he

⁷² Stifter, Brigitta, 437.

⁷³ See, among others, Konrad Steffen, Adalbert Stifter : Deutungen (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1955) 106. Steffen writes, “...die Lava, die er, innerlich noch an das Weib gebunden, sammelt, ist die genaue Entsprechung zu jener Öde, nur daß die Frau sich früher ansiedelt und in der Steinwüste schließlich tätig wird, während er noch Jahre lang der spielerischen Lava- und Altertümersammler bleibt.” Also Walter Weiss, “Ungarn (und die Ungarn) bei Grillparzer, Lenau, Stifter und Musil.,” Neohelicon: Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum 23.1 (1996).

⁷⁴ Stifter Brigitta, 416.

encountered him and may expect a description of the Major to ensue. However, the traveler describes his journey through the Hungarian countryside complete with shaggy dogs and red and blue moors. The traveler then reflects,

oft dachte ich mir, wie denn mein Freund in diesem Lande aussehen würde; denn ich hatte ihn nur in Gesellschaft gesehen und in dem Getriebe, wo sich alle Menschen wie die Bachkiesel gleichen. Dort war er im Äußern der glatte, feine Mann gewesen – hier aber war alles anders, und oft, wenn ich ganze Tage nichts sah als das ferne, rötlich blaue Dämmern der Steppe und die tausend kleinen weißen Punkte darinnen, die Rinder des Landes, wenn zu meinen Füßen die tiefschwarze Erde war, und so viel Wildheit, so viel Üppigkeit, trotz der uralten Geschichte so viel Anfang und Ursprünglichkeit, dachte ich, wie wird er sich denn hier benehmen. Ich ging in dem Lande herum, ich lebte mich immer in seine Art und Weise und in seine Eigentümlichkeiten hinein, und es war mir, als hörte ich den Hammer schallen, womit die Zukunft dieses Volkes geschmiedet wird. Jedes in dem Lande zeigt auf kommende Zeiten, alles Vergehende ist müde, alles werdende feurig, darum sah ich recht gerne seine endlosen Dörfer, sah seine Weinhügel aufstreben, sah seine Sümpfe und Röhrichte, und weit draußen seine sanftblauen Berge ziehen.⁷⁵

Instead of introducing the Major and describing his attributes, the narrator recounts his journey and the impression of Hungary that he gained through his travels. The opulence and wildness, adjectives used to highlight the exotic aspect of the landscape, is transferred to the inhabitants. In addition, the sense of transformation and revolution, adjectives usually used to describe human activities, are projected onto the Hungarian landscape. Thus, the landscape presents itself less as a subject of its own and more as a symbolic space, upon which the attributes of its human inhabitants can be imposed.

If landscape in the novel is portrayed in a more traditional manner, i.e., as a symbolic space instead of as a subject itself, the depiction of Brigitta, the female character in the story from whom the novella derives its title, by contrast, subverts traditional gender norms and posits a notion of beauty in line with Schiller's aesthetic

⁷⁵ Stifter Brigitta, 416-17.

ideals as well as those set out by Stifter in the opening paragraphs of the novella. The reader first encounters Brigitta when the traveler/narrator meets her on his journey to Uwar, the Major's estate. The traveler recounts,

Ueber die Ebene aber sah ich eine Gestalt herüber sprengen, gerade auf jene Felder zu, auf denen die Leute arbeiteten. Auch sammelten sich alle Arbeiter um die Gestalt, da sie bei ihnen angekommen war, wie um einen Herrn – aber meinem Major sah das Wesen ganz und gar nicht ähnlich. Ich ging langsam gegen die Erdlehne empor, die auch weiter entfernt war, als ich dachte, und kam eben an, als bereits die ganze Glut der Abendröte um die dunkeln, wogenden Maisfelder und die Gruppen bärtiger Knechte und im den Reiter loderte. Dieser war aber nichts anderes als ein Weib, etwa vierzig Jahre alt, welches sonderbar genug die weiten landesmäßigen Beinkleider an hatte und auch wie ein Mann zu Pferde saß.⁷⁶

Brigitta, the woman on the horse, displays a number of unusual characteristics. First of all, she wears pants in the style of the men of her area and rides her horse like a man. Indeed, the work that she undertakes, overseeing a farm, is not the traditional work of a woman. This non-traditional figure is foreign to the traveler, and he remarks specifically upon the manliness of Brigitta. After this meeting, Brigitta accompanies the traveler to her estate where she asks one of her workers, Milosch, by first name to escort the traveler on his way to the Major's estate. Given the familiar exchange between Milosch and the woman on the horse, the traveler is unsure what to make of the manly woman and thinks she must be a servant of some sort. Certainly a lady would not engage in such work or address her servants by first name. The traveler offers Brigitta a small payment for her services, whereupon we read,

Ich hielt sie für eine Art Schaffnerin und wollte ihr ein namhaftes Geldstück für den Dienst geben, den sie mir so eben geleistet hatte. Sie aber lachte und zeigte hiebei eine Reihe sehr schöner Zähne. Durch den Weinberg ritt sie langsam hinab, dann hörten wir aber bald darauf die schnellen Hufschläge ihres Pferdes, wie sie über die Ebene flog.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Stifter Brigitta, 418.

⁷⁷ Stifter Brigitta, 420.

The woman's row of beautiful white teeth makes it clear to the traveler and the reader that Brigitta is not a servant but is in fact the master of the property. In next substantial passage about Brigitta, the narrator relates the information he has gained from Gömör, a member of the agriculture group to which Brigitta and the Major also belong. The traveler/narrator recounts the conversation with Gömör as follows:

Damals waren nur erst zwei Glieder des Bundes: er, Gömör, selber und Brigitta Maroshley. Eigentlich war es kein Bund; denn die Zusammenkünfte und die Gesetze kamen erst später auf, sondern die zwei Nachbarn, er und Brigitta, haben einstimmig die bessere Bewirtschaftung ihrer Güter in dieser öden Gegend begonnen. Im Grunde sei es Brigitta gewesen, welche den Anfang gemacht habe. Weil sie eher unschön als angenehm zu nennen sei, so habe sie ihr Gatte, ein junger, leichtsinniger Mensch, dem sie in ihren jüngeren Jahren angetraut worden war, verlassen und sei nicht wieder gekommen. Damals erschien sie mit ihrem Kinde auf ihrem Sitze Maroshley, habe wie ein Mann umzuändern und zu wirtschaften begonnen, und sei bis jetzt noch gekleidet und reite wie ein Mann. Sie halte ihre Dienerschaft zusammen, sei tätig und wirtschaftete vom Morgen bis in die Nacht. Man könne hier sehen, was unausgesetzte Arbeit vermöge; denn sie habe auf dem Steinfeld fast Wunder gewirkt. Er sei, als er sie kennen gelernt habe, ihr Nachahmer geworden und habe ihre Art und Weise auf seiner Besetzung eingeführt. Bis jetzt habe er es nicht bereut.⁷⁸

Again we read that Brigitta behaves like a man. In fact, her management practices are so successful that she influences her neighbor to adopt similar agricultural practices, which, according to the neighbor Gömör, bring great success.

In the next chapter, the reader learns of Brigitta's childhood, her upbringing, and her marriage to Stephan Murai, the man who we later learn has become the Major. When Brigitta was a child, her features could not be described as beautiful, and her mother failed to pay attention to the girl who grew accustomed to being left alone and did not search for fulfillment in social interaction. Brigitta is described as having spent her days

⁷⁸ Stifter Brigitta, 443.

playing alone in the corner, doing such things as rolling her eyes “wie Knaben thun, die innerlich bereits dunkle Taten spielen.”⁷⁹ Indeed, Brigitta’s masculine features are not the effect of her situation after being abandoned by her husband; being a single mother did not force her to become more manly in order to survive. Instead, as the narrator relates, Brigitta had always performed – in the Butlerian sense of gender performance – the masculine.⁸⁰ Her unwillingness and inability to perform the feminine is exemplified in the following passage where the narrator compares Brigitta to her sisters:

Als die Mädchen in das Jungfrauenalter getreten waren, stand sie wie eine fremde Pflanze unter ihnen. Die Schwestern waren weich und schön geworden, sie bloß schlank und stark. In ihrem Körper war fast Manneskraft, was sich dadurch erwies, daß sie eine Schwester, wenn sie ihr Tändeleien sagen oder sie liebkosen wollte, mit dem schlanken Arme bloß ruhig weg bog, oder daß sie, wie sie gerne tat, Hand an knechtliche Arbeit legte, bis ihr die Tropfen auf der Stirne standen. Musik machen lernte sie nicht, aber sie ritt gut und kühn, wie ein Mann, lag oft mit dem schönsten Kleide auf dem Rasen des Gartens und tat halbe Reden und Ausrufungen in das Laub der Büsche.⁸¹

Whereas her sisters perform their traditional gender roles and attempt to attract a husband, as was custom, Brigitta spends her time quietly and alone. She has the strength of a man, as opposed to the soft beauty of a woman, and she works like a boy until she even sweats. Instead of paying attention in school or learning music like the other girls, Brigitta rides horses like a man and even soils her fine clothing by lying in the grass.

Unlike her sisters and any other women, however, Brigitta is able to attract the attention of the physically attractive and seemingly unattainable Stephan Murai. The scene where Brigitta first encounters Stephan also includes multiple markers that point to Brigitta’s “otherness,” that is, her eschewing of gender norms. Brigitta’s uncle invites

⁷⁹ Stifter Brigitta, 447.

⁸⁰ See Judith Butler, Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁸¹ Stifter, Brigitta, 448.

her to an evening gathering at his home. Although she generally avoids such social gatherings, Brigitta attends this gathering because she generally enjoys her uncle's home.

The narrator describes Brigitta and her first encounter as follows:

An jenem Abende saß sie in ihrem gewöhnlichen schwarzseidenen Kleide da. Um das Haupt hatte sie einen Kopfputz, den sie selber gemacht hatte, und den ihre Schwestern häßlich nannten. Wenigstens war es in der ganzen Stadt nicht Sitte, einen solchen zu tragen, aber er stand zu ihrer dunklen Farbe sehr gut. Es waren viele Menschen zugegen, und da sie einmal durch eine Gruppe derselben hindurch blickte, sah sie zwei dunkle, sanfte Jünglingsaugen auf sie geheftet. Sie blickte gleich wieder weg. Da sie später noch einmal hinschaute, sah sie, daß die Augen wieder gegen sie gerichtet gewesen seien. Es war Stephan Murai, der sie angeblickt hatte.⁸²

Brigitta's "otherness" becomes the object of her sister's ridicule, especially when she wears a head dressing that she has made herself. The head dressing, as the narrator comments, is abnormal and marks Brigitta's "otherness," but it also accentuates her dark skin tone, another marker that Brigitta does not perform the gender role of the typical feminine figure in the nineteenth century; the nineteenth century gender norm for an aristocratic woman would have been porcelain-like fair skin that highlighted her softness and leisure.

Brigitta's divergance from typical gender norms remains a complication even after her marriage to Murai. After the two marry, Murai meets and flirts with a younger local beauty named Gabriele, a woman whose physical beauty is known throughout the countryside. At another social event, Murai encounters Gabriele again and blushes at the sight of her. The symbol betrays his attraction to Gabriele to those at the gathering, including Brigitta. Although no actual affair took place, Brigitta assumes that Murai has been unfaithful and asks for a divorce. In the juxtaposition of the two characters, Brigitta and Gabriele, the reader observes the narrator's contemplation of beauty in symbolic

⁸² Stifter, Brigitta, 450-51.

fashion; we are left to contemplate whether or not physical/external attractiveness constitutes beauty. Earlier in the chapter, the narrator reiterates the central aesthetic principle of the text, namely the search for an understanding of beauty and the beautiful.

We read,

Es liegt im menschlichen Geschlechte das wundervolle Ding der Schönheit. Wir alle sind gezogen von der Süßigkeit der Erscheinung, und können nicht immer sagen, wo das Holde liegt. Es ist im Weltall, es ist in einem Auge, dann ist es wieder nicht in Zügen, die nach jeder Regel der Verständigen gebildet sind. Oft wird die Schönheit nicht gesehen, weil sie in der Wüste ist, oder weil das rechte Auge nicht gekommen ist – oft wird sie angebetet und vergöttert, und ist nicht da: aber fehlen darf sie nirgends, wo ein Herz in Inbrunst und Entzücken schlägt, oder wo zwei Seelen an einander glühen; denn sonst steht das Herz stille, und die Liebe der Seelen ist tot. Aus welchem Boden aber diese Blume bricht, ist in tausend Fällen tausendmal anders; wenn sie aber da ist, darf man ihr jede Stelle des Keimens nehmen, und sie bricht doch an einer andern hervor, wo man es gar nicht geahnet hatte. Es ist nur dem Menschen eigen, und adelt nur den Menschen, daß er vor ihr kniet – und alles, was sich in dem Leben lohnt und preiset, gießt sie allein in das zitternde, beseligte Herz. Es ist traurig für einen, der sie nicht hat oder nicht kennt, oder an dem sie kein fremdes Auge finden kann. Selbst das Herz der Mutter wendet sich von dem Kinde ab, wenn sie nicht mehr, ob auch nur einen einzigen Schimmer dieses Strahles an ihm zu entdecken vermag.⁸³

The figurative language of this passage is clear within the context of the narrative; Brigitta's beauty is always present, but it takes the right eye to discern it. According to the logic of the narrator, one cannot underestimate the importance of beauty and the beautiful; everything worthwhile in life is a product of the beautiful.

At this point, it is necessary to show the connection between the aesthetics in Stifter's writing, the notion of gender in Brigitta, and the development of ecological/environmental perspectives in nineteenth century Austrian literature. The discussion of gender is not as far removed from the discourse of ecology as one might at

⁸³ Stifter, Brigitta, 445-46.

first believe. Ecofeminists have long pointed to the connection between gender and nature. In particular, the treatment of nature in literature often mirrors and coincides with the treatment of the feminine in these texts. Nature becomes a feminized space onto which the masculine author can project wishes, desires, political notions, philosophical ideas, and aesthetic principles.

Andrea Blair's chapter on ecocriticism and feminism in Wide Horizons: The Greening of Literary Scholarship brilliantly and clearly illustrates the connection between ecocriticism and gender studies. She points to subversive landscape depictions as analogous to Butler's subversive gender theory in the following:

Paradoxically, the reclaimed metaphor land-as-woman, so often used to control and dominate women and the natural environment, offers a space where an alternative feminine identity can be attempted. By creating their own landscape fantasies, women can create new ways to imagine themselves and the natural environment. This practice of subversive landscape gendering is analogous to Butler's drag theory. Texts (whether by writers or visual artists) that undermine traditional landscape representations by failing to repeat loyally accepted cultural norms in effect create a landscape-in-drag. In such a representation, landscape performs the feminine, but there is always the possibility of a failure of the performative that challenges the structure of gendered representation. Thus landscape that is gendered feminine but is constructed as active rather than passive, as dialogical rather than monological, as subversive rather than hegemonic, and as the site of feminine rather than masculine fantasies, might disrupt restrictive gender codings for women and environments alike.⁸⁴

Although I do not ascribe to Blair's notion that women must create new ways to imagine themselves and the natural environment through creation of their own landscape fantasies, the notion of feminine visions of nature and subversive depictions of nature as landscape-in-drag is particularly applicable to the Stifter text where subversion of gender

⁸⁴ Andrea Blair, "Landscape in Drag : The Paradox of Feminine Space in Susan Warner's the Wide, Wide World " The Greening of Literary Scholarship : Literature, Theory, and the Environment, ed. Steven Rosendale (University of Iowa Press, 2002) 116-17.

norms is apparent within the text. As I will show in the following section, the depiction of nature in Stifter's novella subverts traditional landscape representations and allows a space where a feminine conception of the Hungarian landscape can challenge traditional depictions of that natural environment as well as traditional social structures that limit both men and women alike. Indeed, my uneasiness with the notion that women must create such narrative spaces stems precisely from a gender studies perspective. If one aims to understand, challenge, and subvert traditional gender norms, it cannot be helpful to reiterate binary gender codings in a manner that conceives of texts written by men as masculine, ergo not feminist. In Stifter's text, as I have shown and will continue to show in the discussion of landscape, women's conceptions of nature as well as men's conceptions of nature challenge traditional depictions of the Hungarian landscape and offer a narrative where both can emerge as subversive spaces that undermine hegemonic notions of both gender and landscape.

In order to allow Butler's theory of gender performance to inform my reading of Stifter as it does Blair's work on Susan Warner's fiction, I will need to establish the connection between the feminine and the environment in Stifter's writing. This connection is to be found in passages in the novella where Brigitta is seen in her natural surroundings – her environment.

Brigitta is often described in the novella using metaphors from nature and landscape. The narrator specifically describes Brigitta's reaction to her mother's belated displays of affection when Brigitta was a child in terms of the landscape:

so zeigte [Brigitta] keineswegs Freude, sondern weinte und wand sich aus den umfassenden Händen. Die Mutter aber wurde dadurch noch mehr zugleich liebend und erbittert, weil sie nicht wußte, daß die kleinen Würzlein, als sie einst den warmen Boden der Mutterliebe suchten und

nicht fanden, in den Fels des eigenen Herzens schlagen mußten und da trotzen.⁸⁵

Brigitta's heart, according to the narrator, is a rock – the German word connotes not a small rock but a large cliff that would shape the landscape. In the same chapter, Brigitta is described again using language more familiar to traditional descriptions of femininity: “Als die Mädchen in das Jungfrauenalter getreten waren, stand sie wie eine fremde Pflanze unter ihnen. Die Schwestern waren weich und schön geworden, sie bloß schlank und stark.”⁸⁶ In this passage, Brigitta is a “foreign” or “strange” plant in comparison to her sisters, whose soft beauty fits the norms of the feminine in the nineteenth century. One is also reminded of Brigitta's pastime as a child; she lay in the garden and talked to the bushes. In fact, much of Brigitta's later occupation as the manager of her estate is foregrounded in her study of nature and agriculture in her home environment. The narrator's portrayal of Brigitta's beginnings in agriculture after she was separated from Murai complete the image of the Hungarian land in the area as a space shaped and molded by Brigitta; it thus becomes a subversive land.⁸⁷ Coded as masculine, the Pusztas thus offers Brigitta a space where she can subvert the traditional female gender role and

⁸⁵ Stifter, Brigitta, 447.

⁸⁶ Stifter, Brigitta, 448.

⁸⁷ Konrad Steffen also referred to the affinity between Brigitta and the land. He writes, “Dies Land, sich selbst überlassen, ist genau wie die junge Brigitta: einsam, groß und ursprünglich, seine innere Schönheit nur dem offenbarend, der den Sinn dafür hat.” in Konrad Steffen, Adalbert Stifter, 105. Steffen's work also references Brigitta as “ugly,” which belies a problematic reading of the text and gender norms therein. This, unfortunately, has not necessarily changed in the nearly six decades since Steffen's criticism, as critics such as Mayer also refer to her as “ugly” instead of considering that she merely does not fit the norm of superficial beauty. This is, of course, due to the fact that the narrator explicitly calls her “ugly.” In interpreting the novella, however, modern critics ought to also question the basis for Stifter's language, which would yield a different usage that in Steffen's and Mayer's work.

reinvent femininity, for all of the other estate-owners in the novella are men. We read of this development:

Wie [Brigittas Sohn] größer wurde und sein kleines Auge und sein Herz sich erweiterte, tat es auch das ihre mit; sie begann die Haide um sich zu sehen, und ihr Geist fing an, die Öde rings um sich zu bearbeiten. Sie nahm Männerkleider, stieg wieder, wie einst in ihrer Jugend, zu Pferde und erschien unter ihrem Gesinde. Wie der Knabe sich nur auf einem Pferde halten konnte, war er überall mit, und die tätige, schaffende Seele seiner Mutter floß allgemach in ihn. Diese Seele griff immer weiter um sich, der Himmel des Erschaffens senkte sich in sie; grüne Hügel schwellten sich, Quellen rannen, Reben flüsterten, und in das öde Steinfeld war ein kraftvoll weiterschreitend Heldenlied gedichtet. Und die Dichtung trug, wie sie tut, auch ihren Segen. Manche ahmten nach, es erhob sich der Verein, Entfentere wurden begeistert, und hie und da auf der öden, blinden Haide schlug sich ein menschlich freies Walten wie ein schönes Auge auf. Nach fünfzehn Jahren, während welchen Brigitta auf Maroshley hauste, kam der Major, indem er seinen Landsitz Uwar, wo er sonst nie gewesen war, bezog. Von diesem Weibe lernte er, wie er mir selber sagte, Tätigkeit und Wirken – und zu diesem Weibe faßte er jene tiefe und verspätete Neigung⁸⁸

In her relationship with nature and the land, Brigitta thus takes possession of the masculine space. The metaphor of land-as-woman, to which Blair referred, that has been used to dominate and control both women and nature is upheld here insofar as the land does not take on an active dialogical role. However the notion of the feminine is subverted, as Brigitta's activities resist any hegemonic notions of female gender performance. During her marriage to Murai, she confined herself to the household and mothering her newborn son, but her separation from Murai allows her to regain the connection to non-human nature that she had before her marriage, as she takes on the management of her estate. Brigitta again assumes the masculinity that she had had as a girl and begins to work the land. Remarkably, it is Brigitta who teaches the other estate owners in the area – presumably all men – through her successful management of her

⁸⁸ Stifter, Brigitta, 461.

land. Indeed, even the Major learns his agricultural methods from this unique woman who does not remain confined to the inner spaces of the home but penetrates the border into the external, traditionally male arena. Thus, Brigitta teaches her male counterparts how to “be a man” more successfully.

The template for this agricultural development – a community of estate owners that attempt to manage their land better through knowledge of the particulars of the land such as soil type, sunlight on the land, and hydrological management, – is Brigitta’s knowledge, apparently gained from her secret readings of her father’s books as a child. One may thus claim that it is masculine knowledge that Brigitta has gained which enables her to transform the land. However, one can also point to Brigitta’s vision and land ethics – to borrow a phrase from Leopold – as the impetus for the agricultural development in the novella, at least from a homodiegetic perspective – that is from the perspective of one of the characters within the story. In the description of Brigitta’s as well as of the land’s transformation, it becomes clear that Brigitta’s efforts transform the land from an “öde Steinfeld” into flowing green hills with whispering vines and running streams. The narrator specifically describes this transformation using literary language; the expansion of Brigitta’s soul to envelop her natural environment – an idea that harkens back to idealist philosophy, the role of nature in Goethe’s writing (specifically in Wahlverwandschaften), and romanticist depictions of nature is called “poetry.” However, it is not only Brigitta and her creative soul that effect this transformation; she cooperates with the “poetry” – the language – of the land and the “heavens of creation”; nature is thus not merely an object, a space upon which the human monologue can be projected; it becomes what Blair referred to as a dialogical space. The landscape, with

help from the subversive female subject, challenges the masculine interpretation of the land as a wild and stony wasteland and disrupts traditional gendered notions of space and land through her refusal to perform the traditional feminine role of passivity.

There is reason to believe also that Stifter's depiction of nature and the Hungarian landscape in the novella represents a subversive space in terms of its political, social, and aesthetic message, especially considering the inspiration for the description of the estates. Ulrich Dittmann and Richard Block both read political messages in the text, and Dittmann especially points to Hungary as an allusion to revolution, since Metternich had pronounced Hungary the "Vorhölle der Revolution."⁸⁹ Richard Block's reading of politics in the text addresses the nexus between law, fate, and Hungarian nationalism in the text.⁹⁰ It is worthwhile to examine briefly Block's interpretation because it specifically attends to the role of nature as well as the connotations of nature symbolism in the text.

In his examination of law in the novella and natural law in Stifter's oeuvre, Block analyzes the role of Lajos Kossuth and his influence upon the revolutions of 1848 and upon Stifter's text. Associating a revolutionary platform with the text is not as implausible as it may seem at first sight. When seen in the light of Metternich's comments on Hungary, the narrator/traveler's first impressions of the land and its inhabitants garner special attention. The traveler remarks,

oft, wenn ich ganze Tage nichts sah als das ferne rötliche blaue Dämmern
der Steppe und die tausend kleinen weißen Punkte darinnen, die Rinder
des Landes, wenn zu meinen Füßen die tiefschwarze Erde war, und so viel

⁸⁹ Mathias Mayer, Adalbert Stifter : Erzählen als Erkennen, Universal-Bibliothek (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001) 64.

⁹⁰ Richard Block, "Stone Deaf: The Gentleness of Law in Stifter's Brigitta," Monatshefte für Deutschen Unterricht, Deutsche Sprache und Literatur 90.1 (1998): 33-47.

Wildheit, so viel Üppigkeit, trotz der uralten Geschichte so viel Anfang und Ursprünglichkeit ... Ich ging in dem Lande herum, ich lebte mich immer mehr in seine Art und Weise hinein, und es war mir, als hörte ich den Hammer schallen, womit die Zukunft dieses Volkes geschmiedet wird. Jedes in dem Lande zeigt auf kommende Zeiten, alles Vergehende ist müde, alles Werdende feurig, darum sah ich recht gerne seine endlosen Dörfer, sah seine Weinhügel aufstreben, sah seine Sümpfe und Röhrichte, und weit draußen seine sanftblauen Berge ziehen.⁹¹

The narrator clearly recognizes a revolutionary atmosphere in Hungary. From the mountains and growing grapevines, that atmosphere of change and growth is directly connected to this “wild” and lush landscape. The natural environment thus symbolizes the political and social environment of revolution. Block therefore points to two likely influences upon the text, Kossuth and Stefan Szechenyi, both revolutionary figures in nineteenth-century Hungary. Beyond the common first names of Stephan Murai and Stefan Szechenyi, the agricultural reforms in the novel mark a strong affinity to Szechenyi. Block notes that Stifter himself applauded the efforts of Szechenyi, and he notes of the latter, “During the first part of the century Szechenyi traveled extensively throughout Europe and was instrumental in introducing agrarian and shipping reforms to Hungary. Among his many accomplishments were the opening of the Danube for trade and initiating steamboat traffic along the Theiss.”⁹² According to Block, Szechenyi is a clear inspiration for the figure of the Major in the text, whose initiation of agricultural reforms mirrors those of the historical Hungarian revolutionary figure.

The impetus for Stifter’s reading of the Hungarian environment may thus be traced to the driving forces behind the reforms that Szechenyi began. In order to understand how Szechenyi “read” the natural environment of the Hungarian Puszta and “worked” the land, it is helpful therefore to look at a text that informed his understanding of nature and

⁹¹ Stifter, *Brigitta*, 417.

⁹² Block, “Stone Deaf,” 24.

agriculture, especially since the descriptions of the land in this text also bear striking similarities to Uwar and Maroshley in Stifter's text. Block notes of the similarities:

The very lay of the land, the appearance of the parks, and the modern practices for cultivating the fields and orchards are almost direct citations from a book by Carl Ritter, *Anleitung zur Verschönerung der Landgüter und Landschaften nebst der Bepflanzungsmethode der Felder, Acker und Wiesen nach Englischer Art*. In 1832 Ritter arrived in Hungary to work alongside Szechenyi in the renewal of the nation. A sampling of the narrator's description of the estates he visits in *Brigitta* confirms the influence of Ritter. The allocation of particular places for the pear trees as well as the vineyards is consistent with Ritter's proposal for areas strictly designated for each crop. That notion is particularly apparent in the special arrangement of the greenhouses, which, as the narrator remarks, were unusual, in that contrary to custom they were not near the living quarters, but rather on a specially designated place. The narrator is also careful to describe the drainage of superfluous water, rather than the erection of dams, just as Ritter proposed. And the English model so predominant in Ritter's work is evident in the story as well. The narrator in fact draws the comparison himself, citing England as the only place in which he had ever seen fields equal to those at Uwar. Finally, the careful preparation of the soil, brought in from distant pine forests and burnt in special places, was not a practice common in Hungary at the time; once again, it was imported by Ritter from England.⁹³

Block makes the effort to illustrate in some detail the similarities between Stifter's literary text and Ritter's work on agriculture. I will return to these similarities shortly, but the topic of Graf Szechenyi's political aspirations and the manner in which those are born out in the text remains important for our understanding of Stifter's novella and its "reading" of nature. In order to show how paternalistic law is imposed on Stifter's text, Block explains Szechenyi's political aspirations as follows:

Against the violent agitation of Kossuth and his followers, Szechenyi championed, as he called it, "systematic reform under proper guidance." A key element toward that end was education and the establishment of casinos, the latter providing a forum among the ruling classes for an exchange of ideas designed to promote national reform. In *Brigitta*, the federation serves an equivalent function. Four estates come together to improve the level of agriculture and the use of natural resources, thereby

⁹³ Block, "Stone Deaf," 25.

providing others with an example of achievable prosperity. The great flowering of Hungary was to be pursued, Szechenyi argues, through patriarchal means, through smaller farmers acquiescing to the directive of larger ones. As he himself urged, the people should learn to "trust the paternalism of the government," echoing, not coincidentally, Stifter's own depiction of the law as paternal. The mute shadow that haunts every attempt at self-expression now assumes a political body to which it conforms or a body which structures its contours. That it is named "paternal" is already suggested by the very nature of a quest for self-sameness and the supplementarity that frustrates such efforts, thereby handing the self over to an order other than its own. In this instance, it is equally apparent in how the feminine, Brigitta, is linked to the land, Hungary, and subjected to those reforms designed to enunciate Hungary's expression of its national character. Under this light, the relationship of the story's events to the image of the volcano has a revealing new twist. It foreshadows the indissoluble connection between personal and national fate, helping to wed the two. Murai, who passes his time in Italy studying rock formations, is not only seeking ways to de-petrify the obstinacy that characterizes his marriage to Brigitta, but is also, like Szechenyi, searching for ways to make productive the neglected stone plains of his homeland. To do so, he must, as Szechenyi argued, de-petrify the remains of a feudal system that is obstructing the nation's progress. Essential to those plans was granting the peasants the right to own property and a voice in the government. The nobility's resistance to those ideas frustrated Szechenyi's efforts.⁹⁴

While Block's reading of the text enlightens us in terms of the political background, a few of his assertions seem problematic and overshadow his interpretation of the text. To begin with, the peasants in the text, while treated in a paternal manner by Murai, Brigitta, and Gömör, and smaller land owners in the area are not expected to acquiesce to the will of the agricultural federation. On the contrary, they are allowed to take part in the discussions and meetings of the federation as listeners – there is no imposition of will upon them. More problematic is Block's assertion that Brigitta is a symbol of Hungarian identity subjected to the reforms that Szechenyi initiated. As I have shown earlier in this interpretation, Brigitta's subversion of gender norms is a marker of her assertion of a more masculine gender role; she, in fact, is one of the founders of the federation and

⁹⁴ Block, "Stone Deaf," 25-26.

cannot therefore be seen as the passive receptor of a paternally imposed reform from that same federation.

I would argue that “paternal” must therefore be seen in a different light; it may be conceived of better as a “taking care of” in the same sense that one takes care of the land or a garden. This interpretation is consistent with the relationship between the human subject and nature in Stifter’s oeuvre, specifically in Nachsommer where Risach cultivates the rose garden and in Der Hochwald where Gregor benevolently takes care of landscape around the lake. There is no imposition of the “law”; rather, the subjects act with and within the natural law – *das sanfte Gesetz* – in order to cultivate both nature and human relationships.

Through the influence of Ritter’s Anleitung zur Verschönerung der Landgüter und Landschaften nebst der Bepflanzungsmethode der Felder, Acker und Wiesen nach Englischer Art, the reader is presented in Brigitta with a clear image of such cultivation. By reflecting upon Ritter’s reading of the Hungarian landscape and of nature in general as well as upon the incorporation of Ritter’s ideas into Stifter’s novella, I will show how those “readings” point to specific notions of cultivation and thus to specific understandings of nature and environment.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Konrad Feilchenfeldt has also written about the idea of cultivation in Brigitta. See Konrad Feilchenfeldt, "Brigitta und andere Chiffren des Lebens bei Adalbert Stifter," Stifter Studien: ein Festgeschenk für Wolfgang Frühwald zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Walter Hettche (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000) 46-53. In contrast to my and others’ interpretations, Feilchenfeldt points to the development of Brigittenau on the outskirts of Vienna as an inspiration for the depiction of nature in Stifter’s text. This interpretation, however, is based loosely on Stifter’s reading of Grillparzer and the use of the name Brigitta. Few, if any, textual references or similarities to the setting outside Vienna can be found within the text. On the whole, Feilchenfeldt delivers an interesting view of the novella, which seems nonetheless unconvincing. In contrast, it seems clear from the textual parallels that Stifter drew upon Ritter’s text as an inspiration for the setting for the novella.

In Ritter's foreword to the text on beautification of the landscape, the author writes of himself, "Indem er die schönen Parks und Gärten aufsuchte, durchreiste er [England], dessen durch Cultur gehobene Naturschönheit ihn bezauberte."⁹⁶ According to this statement, Ritter "read" the English landscape parks and gardens as being enhanced via the introduction of "culture" into the natural landscape. Ritter then mentions the plantings of trees and bushes around the fields and meadows in England as particularly beneficial to such enhancement as opposed to the customary stone walls and earthen embankments that surround Hungarian estates. Such plantings, as Ritter explains, have the benefit of being less costly than stone walls and have numerous aesthetic and economic functions. In the following, the author offers his reading of the English landscape:

In England sind alle Felder, Wiesen, und Äcker mit Bäumen und Gesträuchen eingefäßt, was der Landschaft einen eigenen Reiz verleiht, und den Fremdling bezaubert. Diese Pflanzungen verbinden sich mit den Wäldern, welche die Anhöhen beherrschen, indem sich theils Wieseneinbrüche bis in das schattige Dunkel des Waldes zurückziehen, oder sich Blößen bilden, die nicht allein jenen malerischen Anblick gewähren, sondern auch durch Vereinigung der Ökonomie mit der Forstcultur den höchsten Ertrag liefern. Es sind nicht etwa hohe steife Wände von Pappeln oder Acacien, die nach der Schnur gepflanzt, eine Landschaft ganz entstellen, den Boden aussaugen und zu viel Schatten machen; nein! es sind dichte Massen von Gebüsch, über die sich Boskette schlanker schöner Bäume erheben, deren leichter Ästeschwung sich in den Lüften wiegt, natürliche Anpflanzungen kaum die Menschenhand verrathend. – Ich will es versuchen, ein schwaches Bild solch einer englischen Landschaft zu entwerfen. Kaum hat man die Hauptstadt verlassen, als man sich von der üppigsten Vegetation umgeben sieht, ringsum Gärten, Wiesen, Felder, durch die sich in weiten Bogenlinien herrlich breite und fest wie in Kitt gegossene Straßen schlingen. Man wähnt auf ihnen in dem reizendsten Naturparke zu fahren, zu dem all' die ausgedehnten Landschaften gleichsam mit einander verwebt sind. ... Zwischen blühenden Gärten und reich besäeten Feldern

⁹⁶ Carl Ritter, Anleitung zur Verschönerung der Landgüter und Landschaften : nebst der Bepflanzungsmethode der Felder, Äcker und Wiesen nach englischer Art (Wien: Tendler & Schaefer, 1839) V.

sieht man fette Wiesen mit allen Gattungen schönen weidenden Viehes belebt, ohne Aufsicht, in abgesonderten Räumen. – Die weitere Perspektive hüllt ein leichter in England gewöhnlicher Nebel in ein ätherisches Blau und im Glanze des Sonnenlichtes stehen nahe und ferne Gegenstände im zauberischsten Farbenspiel. – Zum wahrhaft paradisischen Aufenthalte hat menschlicher Fleiß diese Fluren geschaffen, durch Cultur allein ist ihre Pracht und ihr Reichthum entstanden; denn ehemals boten auch hier nackte Hügel, welchen jetzt der schönste Schmuck angehört, wenig Reizendes dar.⁹⁷

Ritter's experience of the English landscape is therefore primarily an aesthetic experience rather than the rational experience of an economist or a scientist. Furthermore, he presents us with a particular notion of nature as an ideal image, namely the nature park or landscape park, which suggests an ideal of the cultivating human hand that imposes upon nature an aesthetically pleasing image. Variety and the appearance of the pseudo-natural, that is, the unnatural man-made landscape ought to appear as close to nature as possible; this landscape gardening, Ritter argues, ought to be emulated in Hungary. The English garden stands in stark opposition to other forms of landscape and garden architecture such as the French garden with its strict lines and forced symmetry that made no attempt to hide the influence of the gardener's hand. As he does the Italian countryside, which he calls too plain and uniform due to its repetitive character, Ritter rejects the French model.⁹⁸ However, the variety of images in the landscape of the English countryside draws the eye ever further into the landscape and avoids aesthetic monotony; it also, therefore, functions as Ritter's aesthetic ideal for the enhancement of the Hungarian countryside.

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the planting of trees is said to have various economic and agricultural functions that range from holding back sandstorms to providing food for

⁹⁷ Ritter, Anleitung, 1-2.

⁹⁸ Ritter, Anleitung, 4.

animals in drought years to supplying the farmers and estate owners with wood for burning and building. Ritter even suspects that such plantings of greenery would improve the psychological wellbeing of the area's inhabitants as well as their physical health. He writes,

Was würden nur einige schmale Streifen grüner lebendiger Massen gleich für einen Effect in der monotonen Landschaft hervorbringen, und wie angenehm den Aufenthalt in derselben machen. Wollen wir noch nicht einsehen lernen, daß das frische Grün dasjenige ist, was das Auge so angenehm erquickt, und die Bewegungen in der freien Natur zur Gesundheit des Menschen so nöthig sind?⁹⁹

That Ritter had other motives such as providing a more economical and ecologically sound (in nineteenth-century terms) landscape, goes without question.¹⁰⁰ However, when we read his text, it becomes clear that one of his primary goals was the cultivation of an aesthetic sensibility when it comes to gardening and landscape design. Ritter explains, “Für Culturbäume ist solch eine Pflanzmethode¹⁰¹ freilich nicht, aber dagegen für aesthetische malerische Formen nichts erfolgreicher, als sie. Wir können uns in der Natur selbst überzeugen, wenn wir die in Ungarn mitunter herrlichen malerischen Eigenwaldungen betrachten.”¹⁰² In other sections, Ritter uses language such as “ästhetische Bestimmung,” “jedes Auge entzücken,” and “einen Totaleindruck hervorzubringen.” Behind the aesthetic aims rests also an overt nationalism whereby Ritter clearly expresses his disdain for the French landscape, whose rigidity and monotony displeases him. Of his ambitions for the Hungarian countryside he writes, “so

⁹⁹ Ritter, *Anleitung*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Nota bene: This is not to be perceived of in a modern ecological sense, for Ritter did not carry out any studies of the effect of such plantings on local flora and fauna but rather assumed a positive effect. It is rather to be thought of in a less scientific ecological sense that seeks merely to understand nature as an interacting system rather than a mere object or backdrop for human actions.

¹⁰¹ planting trees in groups as opposed to singular plantings.

¹⁰² Ritter, *Anleitung*, 12-13.

sollte man doch, wenigstens in der Nähe von Städten, und in den Gegenden, wo ohnedieß schon herrliche Naturreize vorhanden sind, solche nicht durch steife Alleen zu entstellen suchen, sondern die hier genannte englische Bepflanzungsart allgemein in Aufnahme bringend, die Franzosen ihre Erfindung als eine Reliquie aus dem Alterthume ungestört aufbewahren lassen.”¹⁰³ The French landscape is thus relegated to the annals of history; Ritter sees the English model as oriented towards the future – toward a future where aesthetic ideals of gardening and landscape orient themselves in relation to the natural world or at least to an imitation thereof. At the end of this section on Ritter, I will return to the notion of imitation of natural landscape, for it carries with it a paradox that demonstrates the nineteenth-century understanding of nature and the wild.

Ritter devotes a whole chapter and sections of other chapters to explaining which plants and trees should be chosen for landscape plantings. He is careful to choose plants that are native to Hungary and does not advocate the mass introduction of exotic species. He tells us,

Ungarn besitzt jene Bäume und Gesträuche in großen Massen wildwachsend, ja vielleicht mehr Gattungen als England. In manchen Herrschaftswaldungen wäre es eine wahre Wohlthat, wenn man den Bauern erlauben würde unter Aufsicht der Forstbeamten, dieselben von den Millionen wilden und unnützen Gesträuchen zu befreien, welche sie verunreinigen, den Boden aussaugen, den Wachsthum der Waldstämme hemmen, und niemals ein Holz liefern, besonders wäre dieses in jenen Eichenwaldungen wünschenswerth, wo die häßlichen Wacholderstauden zu Tausenden überhand genommen haben, als z.B. im Ödenburger und Trenchiner Comitatz.¹⁰⁴

Planting trees and allowing nature to take its own course is not the aim of Ritter’s reforms; preservation of wilderness is, furthermore, not an ideal to which he aspires. Indeed, “clearing” the forest of “unuseful” plants and moving them to other locations

¹⁰³ Ritter, Anleitung, 50.

¹⁰⁴ Ritter, Anleitung, 51-52.

better serves his aesthetic and agricultural goals. Ritter continually speaks of connecting the “Nützliche mit dem Schönen, und das Angenehme mit dem höchsten Ertrag.”¹⁰⁵

Ritter’s experiences of landscape and nature do not derive solely from his travel in England; it is clear from many passages that his aesthetic notions stem also from his reception of landscape painting. He thus advocates modeling the Hungarian countryside after landscape painting, which emphasizes a play of shadow and light, contrasts of vast empty spaces with heavily planted areas, and a host of colors that please the eye; variety is therefore central to his painterly ideals. Ritter presents the influence of painting upon landscape gardening as follows: “Diese Einbrüche oder Einschnitte, wo der Wald in sein schattiges Dunkel zurücktritt, sind sowohl in der Landschaftsmalerei als in der Gartenkunst von gleich großer und äußerst angenehmer Wirkung.”¹⁰⁶ The connection between nature and painting becomes even more clear when we read, “Ist es nun etwas anderes, was wir in unserem Walde machen wollten, als Natur und Malerei in denselben zu bringen, nachdem er hier durch seine gerade Außenlinie den Formen der Natur durch Menschenhände entrissen worden ist?”¹⁰⁷

Ritter is careful, however, to mention often that the enhancement of the estates through landscape planning and planting need not imply ceasing agricultural pursuits such as keeping sheep or cattle or even grain farming. Instead, he advocates masking these economic enterprises with trees, hedges, and plantings in the English manner so as to make the whole a more aesthetically pleasing landscape. In addition, the text also makes note of the dismal state of some Hungarian lands and suggests that better management of these lands is possible. Ritter writes,

¹⁰⁵ Ritter, Anleitung, 57.

¹⁰⁶ Ritter, Anleitung, 60-61.

¹⁰⁷ Ritter, Anleitung, 61.

Es gibt Gegenden in Ungarn, wo man die Wälder gänzlich ausgehauen, und nicht mehr nachgepflanzt hat, und welche nun entweder eine Wildniß bilden, oder, nachdem sie eine Zeitlang als Feld benützt, und der Boden ausgesaugt worden ist, da bei dem überschwenglichen Reichthume von Grund und Boden der Dünger nicht ausreicht, oder, da es zu beschwerlich wäre, denselben hinauf zu schaffen, unbenützt liegen gelassen wird. Durch die Entblößung von den Waldungen haben die Regengüsse Wasserrisse gebildet, die sich nun so wüst und wild darstellen, daß man sich kaum einen Begriff davon machen kann.¹⁰⁸

Ritter is thus aware of the economic and aesthetic damage that such agricultural practices carry with them. One might even call his awareness of the fragility of the ecological system prescient, but I hesitate to use the word ecological since it seems that his primary goal is an aesthetic one and his secondary goal an economic one where nature in and of itself has little value. Indeed, one of the most striking features of Ritter's text is the assumption that humans must cultivate the land in order for it to be of value. To that end, the appearance of such words as "kultivieren" and "emporbringen" is of little surprise, and the frequent references to the "Einöde" and "Wildniß" evince an antipathetic tone vis-à-vis the natural world sans human intervention. This antipathy is particularly interesting, given that the author advocates a landscape design, which, he argues, ought to imitate natural forms and provide variety as one would see in nature. The ideal landscape and nature experience is thus not nature on its own; rather, it is a mediated aesthetic experience that ought to appear as though it is unplanned, though, in reality, it has been designed and arranged in order to evoke a specific notion of the way nature ought to appear from a visual aesthetic perspective.

When one reads Stifter's Brigitta with knowledge of Ritter's work on landscape design in Hungary as the inspiration for Stifter's portrayal of Hungary, a complex notion of narrated nature comes to the fore. Block has already accounted for the similarities in

¹⁰⁸ Ritter, Anleitung, 62.

the description of landscape in Ritter's work and the depiction of the Hungarian countryside and Uwar and Maroshley in Stifter's novella. Instead of rehashing this familiar ground, this discussion of Brigitta will show how Ritter's specific readings of the natural world are reread, reinterpreted, and in some cases repeated within Stifter's text. The similarity to the aesthetic experience in Stifter's novella of both the traveler/narrator and of the reader to Ritter's text is evident as both attempt to interpret the landscape and nature in visual aesthetic and economical categories. I will return to this idea in the conclusion of this chapter because it portends a development in Stifter's writing away from the description of nature found in Der Hochwald towards an experience of nature that takes place not in the description of an actual place or actual nature but rather in the mind's eye.

Another important aspect of Ritter's work and the similarities between his text and Stifter's novella that merits some attention before I draw broader conclusions about nature in Stifter's texts is the relationship between humans and wilderness. As already stated in the section on Ritter's depiction of wilderness, an explicitly antipathetic tone towards wilderness, that is, nature untended by the human, pervades the text. In Stifter's Brigitta, similar notions of wilderness or wild nature can be found; I will select a few examples of instances in the novella where this hostility towards the wild and the importance of humans in tending nature becomes most evident.

When the narrator describes his travel towards Uwar, he is initially amazed at the vastness of the landscape, but his amazement turns to bored weariness over time. He recounts,

Anfangs war meine ganze Seele von der Größe des Bildes gefaßt: wie die endlose Luft um mich schmeichelte, wie die Steppe duftete, und ein Glanz

der Einsamkeit überall und allüberall hinaus webte: – aber wie das morgen wieder so wurde, übermorgen wieder – immer gar nichts, als der feine Ring, in dem sich Himmel und Erde küßten, gewöhnte sich der Geist daran, das Auge begann zu erliegen und von dem Nichts so übersättigt zu werden, als hätte es Massen von Stoff auf sich geladen – es kehrte in sich zurück, . . . und in der Öde hatte ich Zeit genug¹⁰⁹

In contrast to Stifter’s famous lengthy descriptions of nature, which often illuminate even the smallest minutiae, the narrator in this passage specifically notes that he sees nothing other than wasteland and nothingness. When one compares this depiction of the Hungarian landscape with the portrayal of the virginal wilderness in Der Hochwald, the contrast between the two is striking, and the reader becomes aware of the narrator’s specific presentation of this wild landscape as a vast empty space lacking aesthetic value.

An additional example from Brigitta establishes again the enmity between the characters in the novella and unruly nature, i.e., nature that has not been cultivated or tamed by the human hand. The narrator describes the scene as late in the fall as he rides with Major along the poplar lane that had just been planted when they hear two muted shots. The scene unfolds as follows:

Ehe ich etwas begreifen konnte, spengte er schon die Allee entlang, so furchtbar, wie ich nie ein Pferd habe laufen gesehen, ich folgte ihm nach, weil ich ein Unglück ahnete, und als ich wieder zu ihm kam, traf ich auf ein Schauspiel, so gräßlich und so herrlich, daß noch jetzt meine Seele schaudert und jauchzt: an der Stelle, wo der Galgen steht und der Binsbach schillert, hatte der Major den Knaben Gustav [Brigittas Sohn] gefunden, der sich nur noch matt gegen ein Rudel Wölfe wehrte.¹¹⁰

The Major fights off the remaining wolves, and he and the traveler quickly make their way along with Gustav back to the castle. When they arrive at the castle, the Major orders:

“Sitzt alle auf,” rief der Major den entgegen eilenden Knechten zu, “laßt

¹⁰⁹ Stifter, Brigitta, 413.

¹¹⁰ Stifter, Brigitta, 468.

alle Wolfshunde los, das meinen armen Doggen nichts leiden. Bietet die Nachbarn auf und jagt so viel Tage ihr wollt. Ich gebe für jeden toten Wolf das doppelte Schußgeld, die ausgenommen, die an der Galgeneiche liegen; denn die haben wir selbst getötet. An der Eiche liegt vielleicht auch eine der Pistolen, die ich voriges Jahr an Gustav geschenkt habe. . .
„¹¹¹

The Major then explains to the traveler,

“Seit fünf Jahren,” sagte er zu mir gewendet, da wir im Parke weiter ritten, “hat sich kein Wolf so nahe zu uns gewagt, und es war sonst ganz sicher hier. Es muß einen harten Winter gegeben, und er muß in den nördlichen Ländern schon begonnen haben, daß sie sich bereits so weit herab drücken.”¹¹²

This scene is loaded with imagery, as Gustav’s struggle with the wolves takes place at the “Galgeneiche.” The hanging tree represents the seam between culture and nature, whereby the gallows are the symbol of human culture and the tree a metonymic symbol for nature writ large. There is also an important message here about the relationship between humans and wild nature. Christian Begemann points to this seam of nature and culture and interprets it as a highly problematic aspect of Stifter’s oeuvre. “Die Natur ist ambivalent, sie ist einerseits unhintergehbare Norm, andererseits bedrohlich, in sich selbst in irgendeiner Weise defizient, jedenfalls der Bearbeitung und ‘Verbesserung bedürftig,” writes Begemann.¹¹³ This seam, which Begemann sees as ambivalence, comes to the fore especially when one compares the wolves, i.e., wild nature, to other animals and elements of nature in the text. Brigitta has cattle and deer on her estate, and the Major has a herd of sheep, which shows the reader that they positively value cultivated nature. This is consistent with other Stifter texts, such as Der Nachsommer,

¹¹¹ Stifter, Brigitta, 469.

¹¹² Stifter, Brigitta, 470.

¹¹³ Christian Begemann, "Natur Und Kultur. Überlegungen Zu Einem Durchkreuzten Gegensatz Im Werk Adalbert Stifters," Adalbert Stifters schrecklich schöne Welt. Beiträge des internationalen Kolloquiums Antwerpen (Acta Austriaca-Belgica.) Germanistische Mitteilungen 40 (1994): 47.

where Risach has a home surrounded by roses, a highly cultivated species of flower. However, the wild animals, the wolves, are killed, and the Major makes it clear that his aim is to exterminate them in this area. The symbolism is thus unmistakable; nature, whether human or non-human nature, remains valuable as long as it is cultivated and controlled. But, wild nature is not to be trusted and must be rooted out.¹¹⁴

In Brigitta, we are presented with an image of nature vastly different from that in Der Hochwald. The inspiration for the text as well as the portrayal of agricultural reforms within the novella show how Stifter turns towards a view of nature that does not see wild nature or wilderness, that is, raw nature that is not controlled by humans, as an aesthetically pleasing object. The text does not, however, suggest that nature ought to be kept within rigid forms that only serve to create monotony and thereby tire the onlooker. On the contrary, the novella adopts a position between the two where landscape and agriculture work with nature to form an aesthetically pleasing object that, while it appears “natural” – i.e., not created by human intervention – is not natural in that sense precisely because it must be designed and created to appear aesthetically pleasing according to the ideals of the gardener or farmer. The landscape in the novella is thus a doubly imagined space, for Stifter imagines the landscape that Ritter had imagined. Neither of the landscapes, which the authors described, is tied to an actual landscape, although Ritter’s comes closest in its descriptions of the English countryside. If one considers Butler’s notion of crossdressing as subverting traditional gender performance, thus providing a space where the reader becomes aware of gender codes without imposing particular

¹¹⁴ Mathias Mayer points out the connection between cultivation and Brigitta as follows: “Brigittas verborgene Schönheit rechtfertigt schließlich die breite Thematik der Kultivierung in diesem Text.” in Mayer, Adalbert Stifter : Erzählen als Erkennen 71.

sexed/gendered codes upon the subject, a parallel to the depiction of nature in Brigitta becomes apparent. Although the landscape does not “perform” and cannot therefore crossdress in a traditional sense, its portrayal in the novella makes us aware that it is indeed constructed instead of masking that construction in symbolism. Butler’s notion of crossdressing is particularly applicable to gender in the novella, since Brigitta subverts traditional notions of the female through her masculine performance. In Brigitta, the landscape, like Brigitta herself, is thus narrated as “natural,” and its overt narrative construction allows the reader to question and understand our basis for evaluating the text and its depiction of the environment or natural world. This construction thus reveals to the reader the understanding of wild nature, cultivated nature, and aesthetics that is, in the sense of a cultural narrative of nature, imposed upon the text.

V. Conclusion:

This chapter has considered Stifter’s Der Hochwald and Brigitta as co-existent exemplars of the author’s presentation of nature and environment that account for the role of nature, the relationship of humans to nature, and the place of humans within nature.

Beginning with a short interpretation of Stifter’s “Sanftes Gesetz,” this chapter shows how this literary manifesto reflects his nature hermeneutics, specifically the notion of nature as a totalizing system that includes human nature within the larger system. Additionally, it explained the effect that this manifesto has on Stifter’s narration, in particular upon the employment of symbolism and upon the speed of narration which in turn has a specific effect upon the reader, namely, Stifter’s texts demand a reader who can forgo fast and dramatic movement in the narration in order to concentrate upon

details that are often markers of a larger, more encompassing narrative within the text, i.e., the interwovenness of nature and culture. This is particularly true with Brigitta, for instance, where cultural ideas and aesthetics are intermingled with symbolic language that is used to describe nature and landscape.

In the interpretation of Stifter's Der Hochwald, I highlighted the central role of nature in the text from its place as the "hero" of the narrative to Gregor's retreat into nature and the phenomenological aspects of perception as described in the text. The reading focused on a formal aspect of the text as well, namely the role of the fairy tale in the story. I have shown how Stifter's use of the fairy tale as well as the criticisms of such tales in this text nevertheless allows space for them as a literary device, albeit in a subverted form that leaves behind such markers of Romanticism as the absolute focus on the literary subject. Stifter's use of the fairy tale in Der Hochwald retains the portrayal of nature in the "enchanted" space as an active, live organism that both speaks and listens as do the human subjects in the text. Sentient and non-sentient thus merge to form a larger system where nature can also assume the role of the subject in the phenomenological relationship, as my reading illustrates in the scene with Johanna and the deer. From an ecocritical perspective, the most intriguing aspect of this work is the criticism of anthropocentrism and the role of Gregor as the model of an ecological relationship with nature. Gregor refers to a dichotomy in human society between those who seek to understand nature and those who wish to impose upon it their own conceptions of the world. The latter, a position that assumes that human understanding and cognition is above all else – what some have called anthropocentrism – is rejected in the text as Gregor seeks to understand the poetic language of nature. As an Austrian Thoreau,

Gregor retreats into nature and suggests that the cure for the disease of anthropocentrism is to go out into nature and learn its “language.” His final act is to return the forest home to its “natural” state, which is how the narrator, who recounts the story from the perspective of a contemporary retelling local history, finds the natural environment. This act also points again to some of the central tenets of Stifter’s literary work, namely that humans exist within a larger natural system, that the forces of nature are constant but not static, and that “nature” conceived of in a broad sense is larger and more far-reaching than a single event and therefore ought to be the focus of literary exploration.

The next section of this chapter focused on what is arguably Stifter’s most widely read novella, Brigitta, and the role of nature therein. By examining works by authors that inspired or influenced Stifter’s novella, I showed that the discussion of the “beautiful” is inextricably linked to the function of nature in the text, as humans and non-human nature are examined according to the same paradigm. A further influence upon Stifter’s travel novella is certainly Goethe, whose Italienische Reise offers the reader an aesthetic travel experience of Italy similar in many facets of Stifter’s depiction of the Hungarian countryside. Central to both texts is the portrayal of travel as an aesthetic experience that is meant to please the eye or rather the mind’s eye. Brigitta is a stylized piece of travel literature that forms and shapes the reader’s experience of the landscape according to an aesthetic ideal.

In this novella, the role of narration also plays a significant role, as the mode of travel allows for a certain kind of narration. It is significant that the traveler/narrator of the text travels from Germany to Hungary by postal coach and then on foot, wandering through the Hungarian countryside. It is a generally accepted fact in the secondary

literature that Stifter never actually visited the Hungarian region about which he writes.¹¹⁵ His travel into Hungary, limited as it was, took place on the Danube with the Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft. The author, however, chooses slower foot travel for his traveler in the novella – despite the fact that train travel had already become a fast means of transportation with which to travel cross-country. The choice of this mode of transportation reflects Stifter’s style of narration, namely the emphasis on slower narration with great attention to details. This allows Stifter to highlight aspects of nature – broadly conceived of – that are constant but also constantly changing in slow motion; travel by train or by steam ship would have inhibited the ability of the traveler to perceive details and to immerse himself slowly into the Hungarian countryside.. Thus, Stifter can be said to have avoided the representation of technology in his literature in order to offer the reader a specific image of nature. I will return to this notion of technology in the next three chapters on Ebner-Eschenbach, Rosegger, and Salten, as the use of technology in literature is central to this dissertation.

This chapter has also explored gender and nature as imagined codes that have in turn been subverted in the text. In contrast to previous readings, especially Block’s, that highlight the patriarchal order in the text, my interpretation shows how Brigitta and her particular connection to nature – i.e., her working of the land – serve to subvert both gender norms as well as the norms of aesthetics in the depiction of the Hungarian Puszta. By including a short analysis of the aesthetic ideals in Carl Ritter’s Anleitung zur Verschönerung der Landgüter und Landschaften nebst der Bepflanzungsmethode der Felder, Acker und Wiesen nach Englischer Art—a text that undoubtedly served Stifter as

¹¹⁵ See, among others, Moriz Enzinger, Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Adalbert Stifter (Vienna Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1967).

an inspiration for the novella—my interpretation has moreover emphasized the melding of social/political discourse with notions of aesthetics and nature in both Ritter’s and Stifter’s texts. My reading of Stifter’s text thus points to the novella as a reading of a reading (Stifter reading Ritter reading English and Hungarian landscapes), and shows how this thoroughly mediated experience (from the reader’s perspective) allows the landscape in the novel to masquerade as nature. In its idealized and symbolic state, the countryside becomes what Blair calls “landscape in drag,” which is a landscape that – through its performance or lack thereof – calls specific attention to itself and problematizes the typical phenomenological relationship between the subject (the human) and the object (nature). This text is not an instance where land/nature takes on the role of the subject and thereby exchanges roles with the human subject – challenging the notion of nature as an object at the disposal of the human. Indeed, there are many points in the text, the treatment of wild vs. cultivated nature for instance, where nature plays the familiar role of subjugation to the traditional “hegemonic” will of the humans in the text, i.e., it is an object that submits to domination by the human. However, in its use of English landscape design as well as its representation of the Hungarian Puszta as a transformed space, that is, one that has been transformed from nothingness and desert into an agriculturally productive and aesthetically pleasing space, the text calls upon the ecocritical reader to consider the contrasting categories of wilderness and cultivated nature as well as the phenomenological paradox of unnatural nature in a landscape that is designed according to an aesthetic ideal of what nature ought to look like as opposed to its present state.

In the next chapters of this dissertation, I will show how the increasing role of

technology and science as well as their representation in literature influenced the reading of nature and of the environment in literary texts. Whereas Stifter, in order to realize a particular literary form and style of narration, overtly avoids the introduction of technology into his works or employs technology that implies stasis, Ebner-Eschenbach and Rosegger draw on technology from different perspectives and employ it in their works to communicate varying messages, including both movement and social decay. Salten, however, presents a skeptical view of technology as a demonic and destructive force that has forever changed the modern world. As my reading of Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld in the next chapter shows, the intersection of ethics, science, technology, and nature offers an image of a changing society and a paradigm shift in literature in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter Two

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

“Nicht teilnehmen an dem geistigen Fortschreiten einer Zeit heißt, moralisch im Rückschritt sein.”¹¹⁶ – Marie von Ebner Eschenbach

I. Introduction

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach ist eine der grossen, zu Unrecht weitgehend vergessenen Erzählerinnen und Prosa-Autorinnen des 19. Jahrhunderts, deren Werk sowohl grössere wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung damit wie auch überhaupt eine grössere Wirkung verdiente. Die grosse kritische Ausgabe ihrer Werke, die Karl Konrad Polheim in Bonn begonnen hat, änderte bis jetzt daran leider nur wenig.¹¹⁷

Thus Joseph Strelka introduces his subject in the volume Des Mitleids tiefe Liebesfähigkeit, lamenting what scholars of German literature have confronted ever since the Austrian author's death in 1916. Without a doubt, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the end of World War I and the subsequent turbulence in Europe as well as a paradigmatic shift in literary trends around the fin de siècle contributed to Ebner-Eschenbach's loss of popularity. Additionally, a host of factors contributed to the author's lack of status within literary scholarship. Ebner-Eschenbach refused to toe the literary line of the ultramontane Catholic cultural establishment in Austria, but she also did not ally herself squarely with the liberals on the left. The author lived as an aristocrat in Austria at a time marked by great social turbulence and relative political stability. However, her humanism as well as her career in literature made her an atypical aristocrat. Lastly, her gender makes her a particularly complicated subject, as women in Austria in

¹¹⁶ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, "Aphorismen," Das Gemeindegeld. Novellen. Aphorismen [Von] Marie Von Ebner-Eschenbach, ed. Johannes Klein (Munich: Winkler, 1956) 900.

¹¹⁷ Joseph Strelka, Des Mitleids Tiefe Liebesfähigkeit : Zum Werk Der Marie Von Ebner-Eschenbach, New Yorker Beiträge Zur Österreichischen Literaturgeschichte (Bern: Lang, 1997) 7.

the nineteenth century certainly lived in a world dominated by male figures in almost every sphere, especially intellectual spheres. This can best be illustrated by the fact that Ebner-Eschenbach's close friend, Helene von Druskowitz, had to resort to extraordinary means in order to study philosophy at the university and eventually had to move to Switzerland in order to earn her PhD in philosophy.

One can ascertain a clear attempt in nineteenth-century Austria to prohibit women from academic and scholarly discourse, and it comes as no surprise then that there remains a significant dearth of female authors in the traditional canon of nineteenth century Austrian literature. With regard to the portrayal of women and aristocracy, it is a striking feature of Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld that it was written by a woman, particularly by a member of the aristocratic society in the nineteenth century, a society that certainly looked upon female pursuits in intellectual spheres pejoratively.¹¹⁸ Ebner-Eschenbach was not one to acquiesce to the demands of her peers and aristocratic society who viewed her with scorn due to her literary pursuits. Instead, as her aphorism at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, she believed it her moral duty to take part in the intellectual (*geistig*) advances of her time.

Of those advances, several find their way into the author's oeuvre. This chapter focuses specifically on two themes that offer the reader insight into the atmosphere and discourse on nature and technology that influenced Ebner-Eschenbach's writing in Das Gemeindegeld. It will explore the influence of science and technology as well as select socio-economic/historical changes that occur in Austria and throughout the world from the 1860s onward. This chapter by necessity focuses on a selection of important themes

¹¹⁸ Ebner-Eschenbach herself was targeted by such criticism. An example of such is the term "blue-stocking" that was used to pejoratively describe the author.

and events, and there are certainly more events that influence the text. However, as will become evident throughout the chapter, these themes are interconnected by the importance of “science” and technology, and they contribute to the larger discourse on technology and nature in nineteenth-century Austria. .

From the middle to the end of the nineteenth century, a spirit of confidence in the advance of humans through scientific positivism dominated German and Austrian culture. Belief that technology could become the panacea for the ills of society pervaded culture—from a solution to poverty to a solution to wars. It is no coincidence that Alfred Nobel, who acquired extreme wealth due to his invention of dynamite, founded the peace prize named after him. Nobel was convinced that the raw destruction that could be wreaked by newer weapons would serve as a deterrent to countries going to war; technology, he was convinced, would bring peace. It is also significant that Nobel carried on a life-long friendship with the Austrian author Barbara von Suttner, who argues in her book Das Leben im Technischen Zeitalter that humankind can only survive if it stops going to war. This message became the basis for the peace movement, and Suttner also received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905.

Theodor Herzl, one of the first organizers of Zionists and a contemporary of Ebner-Eschenbach and Suttner, writes, furthermore, of technology in Der Judenstaat, “Wir haben Arbeitssklaven von unerhörter Kraft, deren Erscheinungen in der Kulturwelt eine tödliche Konkurrenz für die Handarbeit war: das sind die Maschinen.”¹¹⁹ Instead of hunting in order to rid the new Jewish state of bears and other predatory creatures, Herzl suggests corralling them into a small space and tossing a melanite bomb amongst them;

¹¹⁹ Theodor Herzl, ed., Der Judenstaat : Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage : Texte und Materialien 1896 bis heute (Berlin: Philo, 2004) 15.

technology has radically altered the way that humans attend to the exigencies of life.

Herzl expresses an almost euphoric faith that machines will save Jewish society.

Although not a central part of his argument in support of a Jewish state, Herzl's faith in machines reflects an optimistic belief in human progress through technological advance.

Machines, he argues, make traditional agriculture (still common on Austrian farms at the time with conventional plows, horses, and hand-sown grain) an anachronism for modern society; the new culture will no longer be centered on agriculture; rather, machines will allow for the new society to free its culture from such obsolete modes of production and social organization.

One of the principal changes that occurred in nineteenth-century technology is the introduction and growth of the railway system, which changed the way that individuals experienced their environment as well as their perception of their own culture. The railroad as a central nineteenth-century cultural and technological institution has been the subject of a number of studies, which have explored the railroad as a vehicle of change in German culture. In a recent study, Paul Youngmann expounds upon theories offered by Mahr and Rademacher, who constructed a continuum to analyze the reception of the railroad in German culture. Mahr and Rademacher posited four categories along a continuum of responses to the introduction of the train in literature. The first category is in the early to mid-nineteenth century and expresses a fear of the train as an instigator of spiritual and social chaos. The second category of responses comes later and conveys a guarded optimism, regarding the train as a promoter of economic and social progress. The third category towards the end of the century views the train as a guarantor of political unity and social integration. And, the final category at the end of the century

fully accepts the railway; it figures in the literature as a given part of everyday life. As Youngmann points out, however, this continuum is problematic; many authors did not follow this progression, and it is inaccurate to portray a linear progression from scepticism to acceptance.¹²⁰ His final criticism of the continuum – Youngmann’s most important assertion for this dissertation – states that the train often functioned as a metaphor or symbol in the ongoing debate on the nature of technology and its reception.¹²¹ He thus recognizes the relationship between technology and literature as a more general theme, within which the train has a symbolic function.

Like the train, machines were not met with unanimous enthusiasm from everyone. As we shall see in the chapters on Rosegger and Salten, Austrian literature and culture also include examples of thinkers and writers who were either skeptical of technology’s influence on culture or opposed to industrialization and urbanization due to their effects on Austrian culture. For German literature and culture in the nineteenth century, the impact of technology as a harbinger of social change was enormous. Camphausen suggests that the narrative of obedience to the institutions of church and state that had transcended German culture for centuries was about to be subverted.¹²² Similar to most of Western civilization, German civilization, and especially Austrian culture, had remained inside this narrative defined by religion and politics, or myth and the application of power by the state. In Austria, the link between religion and the state could not have been more pronounced with the Concordat between the Austrian emperor and the pope (1855-1870). The intimate relationship between the two was, of course, a much older tradition; many believed that science and technology would make this

¹²⁰ Youngmann, Black Devil, 14-15.

¹²¹ Youngmann, Black Devil, 15.

¹²² Youngmann, Black Devil, 17.

relationship an anachronism; technology was about to supersede mythology. This notion held sway among supporters of technology like Camphausen and also among technology's detractors. Technological advance, in other words, is inevitable, built into human nature, and easily incorporated into the larger narratives humans construct in order to make sense of their existence.¹²³

As already stated, the relationship between technology and literature lies at the core of this chapter. I will explore how technology enters into and informs the scenery and the literary mechanisms in Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld, i.e., the employing of aspects of literary realism that grew, in part, out of an interest in marrying literary and scientific discourses in the nineteenth century. Beginning with the relationship between the novel and one of the important literary movements of the time – Realism – I will briefly look at how science impacted perception within literature and how literature incorporated science in order to remain relevant and portray the transformation of culture at the pivotal point when society began to question long-standing ontological notions based on myth. This chapter does not claim, as others have, that science and technology impact literature disproportionately or uni-directionally. For the purpose of this inquiry, it is much more fruitful to conceive of the relationship between the two as reciprocal, as illustrated by Goethe's forays into scientific phenomenology illustrate. Goethe's foreword to Wahlverwandtschaften and his Schriften zur Farbenlehre serve as prominent examples of this bi-directional relationship. Science and technology have a direct impact upon the events within Das Gemeindegeld, particularly, as we shall see, on Pavel's curious technological affinity to the locomobile. In the novel, Pavel's knowledge of technology and his conversion from village pariah to

¹²³ Youngmann, Black Devil, 12.

outstanding citizen go hand in hand with socio-economic changes within the novel. These changes reflect important developments in society at the time, which thinkers such as William Mackintire Salter accurately perceived as an impetus for economic, sociological, and ethical transformations. The author of Das Gemeindegkind, Ebner-Eschenbach, was well aware of these developments and appreciated Salter's writings on ethics. And, as I will show, her novel fits into the ethics that Salter suggested and also draws upon this ethic in order to illuminate social mechanisms that affect village life in Soleschau, the imagined village in her novel. The final section of the chapter will examine the influence of Salter's series of lectures to the Society for Ethical Culture in Chicago in the latter half of the nineteenth century, translated and disseminated in German by Gregor von Gizycki as Die Religion der Moral. Ultimately, this chapter will show that previous work on Ebner-Eschenbach has, to a fault, downplayed, neglected, or misinterpreted the impact of science and technology upon the author's works, especially Das Gemeindegkind. By taking these aspects into account, I will offer a more differentiated interpretation of the text that demonstrates Ebner-Eschenbach's keen ability to depict within the back-woods Moravian village culture social, scientific, technological, and moral issues at the heart of the nineteenth century.

II. Das Gemeindegkind and literary Realism

“Tout est l'histoire.” This is the motto that Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach places at the beginning of her novel Das Gemeindegkind. The often-overlooked motto offers the reader familiar with nineteenth century literature a strong conception of what is to come throughout the novel. In quoting George Sand, Ebner-Eschenbach sets the tone for the

novel and invokes the social realism of Sand. Rainer Baasner recognizes this as one of the important facets of the book and associates the motto with Habrecht's statement in the book, "Ihr Geringen, Ihr seid die Wichtigen, ohne Eure Mitwirkung kann nichts Großes sich mehr vollziehen – von euch geht aus, was Fluch oder Segen der Zukunft sein wird"¹²⁴ Baasner interprets the epigraph to mean that Ebner-Eschenbach aimed to assert the importance of the common villager's experience for history.¹²⁵ In other words, like the writers of the *Dorfgeschichten* in the early to mid nineteenth century, Ebner-Eschenbach turns her view consciously from lofty historical events, neo-classical literary style, or romantic emphasis on the subjective and phantastic towards the experience of the common villager in order to understand history from a different perspective. Indeed, history in the realist period ceased to be conceived of as a series of zeniths and nadirs or grand events such as wars of unification. History, for the realists of the nineteenth century was imagined in their literature as a history of humankind. Each individual's history and social position contributed to the whole; thus, the life of the villager became a subject equally as interesting as the life of the emperor. Ebner-Eschenbach's focus on the life of Pavel Holub and his village follows this program. Furthermore, as Karlheinz Rossbacher explains, "Sie entlastet sich [mit dem Motto] von der Aufgabe, das Geschehen in diesem Teil Mährens ständig auf eine geschichtlich mitspielende Wirklichkeit zu beziehen."¹²⁶ Ebner-Eschenbach leaves it to the reader to supply the historical background to the story, thereby elevating Pavel's life as the central subject of

¹²⁴ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, ed. Rainer Baasner (Bonn: Bouvier, 1983) 5.

¹²⁵ Rainer Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," Das Gemeindekind, ed. Rainer Baasner (Bonn: Bouvier, 1983) 349.

¹²⁶ Karlheinz Rossbacher, "Nachwort," Das Gemeindekind, ed. Karlheinz Rossbacher (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1985) 218.

the novel. As part of this chapter, therefore, it is important to offer some of the socio-historical context that likely informed the author and her text.

Das Gemeindegeld offers the reader a picture of life in the fictive village of Soleschau. The novel begins in 1860 and chronicles ten years of Pavel's life, the duration of his mother's prison sentence. Over the course of the novel, Pavel Holub grows from adolescence into early adulthood; the plot principally follows his struggle to survive and mature after his father is put to death for murdering the village priest and his mother is imprisoned for her role in the crime. Ebner-Eschenbach begins the novel with a short sentence that simply states the facts surrounding the crime and the Holub trial. In contrast to the rest of the novel, the first chapter contains no dialogue; it simply and clearly states the background. The story, which the narrator relates to the readers, is therefore not only plausible, it is depicted as a sober account of actual historical events.

However, the narrator does not carry this distanced matter-of-fact style throughout the novel. The first chapter, therefore, asks the reader to view the novel from an objective view, while the rest of the novel induces the reader to delve into Pavel's life, in order to understand his life as well as the community as part of the greater human existence in the same vein that the Sand quotation at the beginning suggests.

Although seemingly objective depictions of events and settings along with logical developments of time and space within the novel all characterize literary realism, *Verklärung*, a further characteristic of that same literary movement, offers the reader and scholar an important point of literary expression. Hugo Aust explains *Verklärung* as follows;

. . . Verklärung kann die Art der Konfliktlösung, die Präsentation von Alternativmöglichkeiten und die Rationalität des Geschehnisablaufs bezeichnen; die funktionale Bestimmung liegt in der aufklärerischen, kritischen, antizipatorischen oder utopischen Funktion (Aust 1974). Zugleich läßt sich eine ideologische Funktion ausmachen, auf die besonders Kreuzer (1975) hinweist: “Das ästhetische Postulat des Verklärungsrealismus war ein nationaldidaktisches Programm.”¹²⁷

Verklärung, translated as transfiguration, therefore, as one of the central poetological components of realism, must be considered as a feature of Ebner-Eschenbach’s text as well. Unlike Goethe, Schiller and others whose concepts of nature resided largely inside the poetical *Genie*, writers of realism turn outward and explore nature in the world around them. Whereas Goethe could write his poetry and novels in his study, creating images of nature from impressions gathered in his youth, realist writers conducted research in the world around them in order to provide a realistic image of the world, i.e., an image that depicts subjects and objects as they exist without embellishment. However, as the quotation above explains, transfiguration of this reality marks the difference between literature and other forms of discourse. This transfiguration remains particularly important for the literary historian who wishes to understand the nexus between nature, environment, machines, and literature, since the didactic nature of the texts is crucial to building a sense of nature and the environment on a national level.

When one reads Ebner-Eschenbach’s Das Gemeindegeld, it is clear that educational aspects of the text, e.g., the moral upbringing of the individual (Pavel) in an amoral setting, are prominent themes. As part of this moral aspect of the novel, the text invites the reader to consider humans and human nature in regard to the physical and moral conditions surrounding their existence. For the educated reader, this invokes a discourse that had become common to naturalist writing, namely the determination of the

¹²⁷ Hugo Aust, Literatur Des Realismus, 1 ed. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977) 34.

individual due to the conditions under which he exists. In Ebner-Eschenbach's novel, which does not tread as far as naturalist literature in its depiction of the "ugly" sides of life and society, the individual is left with at least some means to alter his position in life and is therefore not determined by his environment. Thus, as I will show, although Ebner-Eschenbach invokes aspects of naturalist discourse, she avoids adopting the content and style of literary naturalism. Her novel may fit best into the didactic paradigm of realist literature. For this chapter and the dissertation as a whole, the distinction between realism and naturalism is not central, but the influence of scientific discourse and philosophical thought concerning science upon the text is significant because it opens a space for a narrative concerning nature and environment in literature.

Georg Lukacs points to this philosophical background of realist literature in the following passage,

Die beschreibende Methode ist unmenschlich. Daß sie sich, wie gezeigt wurde, in der Verwandlung des Menschen in ein Stilleben äußert, ist nur das künstlerische Anzeichen der Unmenschlichkeit. Diese zeigt sich aber in den weltanschaulich-künstlerischen Absichten der bedeutenden Vertreter der Richtung. So erzählt Zolas Tochter in ihrer Lebensbeschreibung folgende Äußerung ihres Vaters über "Germinal": "Zola akzeptiert Lemaître's Definition "eine pessimistische Epopöe des Animalischen im Menschen," unter der Bedingung, daß man den Begriff ""Animalisch" genau festlege;" "Ihrer Ansicht nach ist es das Gehirn, das den Menschen ausmacht," schrieb er dem Kritiker, "ich finde, daß auch die anderen Organe eine wesentliche Rolle spielen."¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Georg Lukacs, "*Erzählen Oder Beschreiben? Zur Diskussion Über Naturalismus Und Formalismus*," Begriffsbestimmung Des Literarischen Realismus, ed. Richard Brinkmann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1948) 67. Lukacs is not alone in this view, indeed other non-Marxist critics such as Erich Auerbach express similar ideas. See, Erich Auerbach, Erich Auerbach, Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in Der Abendländischen Literatur (Bern,: A. Francke, 1946). I recognize the inherent problems with reference to Lukacs and the interpretation of nature from an ecological standpoint. I am less interested here in Lukacs and his interpretation of the relationship between humans and nature. His interest in Zola and the

Criticisms on realism's descriptive method aside, Lukacs's quotation of Zola's dialogue with Lemaître points to one of the central tenets of naturalism: the study of the human subject as a physical being. Zola's comment to Lemaître underscores the ways that nineteenth-century literature began to question strict Cartesian thought that separated the human mind from the body. Zola and others pointed to the animalistic nature of humans, that is, the fact that the body is what makes one human just as much as the mind.

As is clear from the above, one of the programmatic aims of realism is to shift literature's emphasis from aesthetic symbolism to a more objective view of reality; this aim coincides with scientific, social, and philosophical movements of the time. Lukacs explains,

Die Methode der Beobachtung und der Beschreibung entsteht mit der Absicht, die Literatur wissenschaftlich zu machen, die Literatur in eine angewandte Naturwissenschaft, in eine Soziologie zu verwandeln. . . . Diese Erbschaft haben dann die verschiedenen naturalistischen und formalistischen Richtungen der imperialistischen Periode den Begründern des Naturalismus übernommen.¹²⁹

Realism, therefore, rides the tide of scientific advancements during the nineteenth century and attempts to apply a scientific method to literature as well. In his essay *The Experimental Novel*, Émile Zola argues, "The return to nature, the naturalistic evolution which marks the century, drives little by little all the manifestation of human intelligence into the same scientific path. Only the idea of a literature governed by science is doubtless a surprise, until explained with precision and understood."¹³⁰ In contrast to the fantasy of the romantics, the author, according to Zola, ought to adopt the scientific

depiction of the animalistic nature of humans as well as the seam between scientific and literary discourses is, however, pertinent to this chapter.

¹²⁹ Lukacs, "Erzählen oder Beschreiben," 67.

¹³⁰ Emile Zola, *The Experimental Novel, and Other Essays*, trans. Belle M. Sherman (New York: Haskell House, 1964) 1.

method and become equally an “observer and an experimentalist.”¹³¹ “The observer in [the novelist],” Zola points out, “gives the facts as he has observed them, suggests the point of departure, displays the solid earth on which his characters are to tread and the phenomena to develop.”¹³² The realist tendency to provide settings that are realized in detail for the novel conforms with this statement. “Then the experimentalist,” Zola explains further, “appears and introduces an experiment, that is to say, sets his characters going in a certain story so as to show that the succession of facts will be such as the requirements of the determinism of the phenomena under examination call for.”¹³³ Zola’s ideal novelist, therefore, does not remain content merely to capture images or record events; the ideal novelist explores, like a scientist in search of truth, and investigates the individual and social nature of humans via literature. In respect to these aspects, Ebner-Eschenbach’s novel may be understood as conforming to Zola’s naturalist notions, but Zola’s reference to determinism would have doubtlessly presented a problem for Ebner-Eschenbach, who does not depict the individuals and events in her oeuvre as determined by the phenomena around them, i.e., their environment.

It is clear that Ebner-Eschenbach was acquainted with Zola’s writing, since she read Zola’s Germinal while she was writing Das Gemeindekind. She writes in her diary on March 27, 1886, “Abends allein wir lasen Zola’s *Germinal* zu Ende Der allerletzte Schluß sehr schön anderthalb Kapitel vorher unerlaubt, weil überflüßig grauenhaft.”¹³⁴ Ebner-Eschenbach’s commentary that part of Zola’s novel was “überflüßig grauenhaft” underscores an important point of distinction between the literature of naturalism and that

¹³¹ Zola, The Experimental Novel, 8.

¹³² Zola, The Experimental Novel, 8.

¹³³ Zola, The Experimental Novel, 8.

¹³⁴ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Tagebücher, ed. Karl Konrad Polheim, vol. 3, 6 vols. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989) 568.

of realism, namely naturalism's "Überbetonung der exakten Wirklichkeitskopie, bevorzugte Darstellung des Häßlichen . . . an denen der Realismus nur in maßvoller Weise teilhat."¹³⁵ The emphasis upon the ugly elements as well as upon the exact depiction of the real world within naturalism, thus contrasts with the importance of expressing plausible reality within realism.

Zola's influence upon German literature is traditionally seen in correspondence with naturalism in the late nineteenth century, however, Ebner-Eschenbach's (an author associated with literary realism) reading of Zola is important because the materialist emphasis in the character development of Pavel Holub in Das Gemeindegeld may reflect certain parallels to naturalist discourse in the style of Zola. While the narration in Das Gemeindegeld does not follow the manner of naturalism in amplifying squalor, the novel can be understood as an inquiry into the operation of and effects of the social environment in Soleschau.

Previous criticism on Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld has not attended to the influence of nineteenth-century scientific and philosophical discourse upon the novel, while the topic of moral philosophy in the text as well as the novel's relationship to other works of literary realism have been given much attention. Baasner, the editor of the critical edition of Das Gemeindegeld, interprets the novel largely according to a static understanding of realism and the *Dorfgeschichte*. His reliance on conventions of literary interpretation of the time (1983) leads him astray at numerous junctures, especially when he interprets the novel according to specific notions of literary realism. At one point, he attempts to explain the conclusion of the novel as a utopian solution to the character's conflict with the village. However, a close reading of the novel does not support that

¹³⁵ Aust, Literatur des Realismus, 20.

interpretation. At the end of the novel when Pavel's mother returns from prison, the reader is left with the sense that Pavel's struggles will continue. His sister is dead, the community has not openly accepted him, and his one close friend in the village, Habrecht, has left. Indeed, there is a decidedly subdued tone to the novel which does not allow for Pavel to rise victoriously.

Karlheinz Roszbacher's *Nachwort* in the Reclam edition of Das Gemeindekind offers a more cautious and sober interpretation of the novel. Like Baasner, Roszbacher is concerned with the relationship between realism as a literary movement and Ebner-Eschenbach's text. Roszbacher, however, examines more closely the national didactic ideological element of *Verklärungsrealismus* within the novel, i.e., the educational aspect of the text that reflects an ideology of enlightenment through education, specifically via literature. Most notably, Roszbacher explains, "Ohne im entferntesten an sprachthematisierende Literatur zu erinnern, enthält *Das Gemeindekind* doch ein Muster, persönliche Entwicklung durch Sprachentwicklung darzustellen."¹³⁶ This is a notion, to which I will return when I look at Pavel's development of ethical and rational abilities later in this chapter.

III. Science, Technology, and Literature

The connection between science, technology, and literature has not gone unnoticed by scholars; the topic has been the subject of much academic scholarship in the last thirty years. Along with the push to study *Mentalitätsgeschichte* scholars and historians began also to look at the influence of technology upon literature. Harro Segeberg, most notably, has devoted many pages to this topic, especially the volume Literatur im technischen Zeitalter. Like Zola's, Segeberg's aim for his undertaking lies

¹³⁶ Roszbacher, "Nachwort," 216.

in the wish to make literature relevant to modern society; Segeberg decries the “unheilbare[s] Auseinanderbrechen der Bildungskultur in eine technisch-naturwissenschaftliche und eine literarisch-humanistische Richtung. . . .”¹³⁷ But this division of cultures has only become prominent only in the twentieth century, although the twentieth-century discussion of these “two cultures” certainly expresses pessimism vis-a-vis the break between scientific and literary cultures that earlier authors, among them Zola and Goethe, would have opposed. As I have already discussed, Emile Zola proposed a symbiosis of literature and the scientific method in the nineteenth century, and Goethe had already explored this to an extent in his Wahlverwandtschaften. Another German scholar of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm Bölsche suggested in 1887 that modern literature, in order to remain relevant, must strive to incorporate scientific advances into literary inquiry.

Bölsche argues,

Welche besondern Zwecke [die Poesie] auch immer verfolgen mag und wie sehr sie in ihrem innersten Wesen sich von den exacten Naturwissenschaften unterscheiden mag, - eine Sonderung, die wir so wenig, wie die Sonderstellung einer vernünftigen Religion, antasten, - ganz unbezweifelbar hat sie unausgesetzt, um zu ihren besondern Zielen zu gelangen, mit Menschen und Naturerscheinungen zu thun und zwar, so fern sie im Geringsten gewissenhafte Poesie, also Poesie im echten und edeln Sinne und nicht ein Fabuliren für Kinder sein will, mit eben denselben Menschen und Naturerscheinungen, von denen die Wissenschaft uns gegenwärtig jenen Schatz sicherer Erkenntnisse darbietet. Nothwendig muss sie auch von letzteren Notiz nehmen und frühere irrige Grundanschauungen fahren lassen. Es kann ihr, was Jedermann einsieht, von dem Punkte ab, wo das Dasein von Gespenstern wissenschaftlich

¹³⁷ Harro Segeberg, Literatur im technischen Zeitalter : von der Frühzeit der deutschen Aufklärung bis zum Beginn des ersten Weltkriegs (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997) 1. This is also undoubtedly a reference to C.P. Snow and his “The Two Cultures,” (1959) in which Snow expresses similar ideas about a gulf between scientists and humanists. Of note, Snow is also directly interested in literary realism. See Snow’s The Realists (1978).

widerlegt ist, nicht mehr gestattet werden, dass sie zum Zwecke irgend welcher Aufklärung einen Geist aus dem Jenseits erscheinen lässt, weil sie sich sonst durchaus lächerlich und verächtlich machen würde.¹³⁸

Bölsche makes essentially the same argument as Zola, but whereas Zola emphasizes the experimental method of the writer, Bölsche stresses themes and the interrelationship of science and literature. The distinction between the two lies in the fact that Bölsche is concerned with the topics about which authors may write – for instance, ghosts cannot be seriously considered as literary topics according to Bölsche because science has denied their existence – whereas Zola is concerned with a scientific method of inquiry that aims, for example, to elucidate the inner being of humans. The main thrust of Bölsche’s argument rests on the idea that literature should not conjure up a world completely contrary to the natural world which science had begun to describe and influence through principled exploration and exact description. Especially in the area of psychology, Bölsche argues that writers must take note of recent work in the area and integrate this into the construction of characters in their fiction. Bölsche writes, “Der Dichter . . . ist in seiner Weise ein Experimentator, wie der Chemiker, der allerlei Stoffe mischt, in gewisse Temperaturgrade bringt und den Erfolg beobachtet. Natürlich: der Dichter hat Menschen vor sich, keine Chemikalien.”¹³⁹ Bölsche appears to have taken a page from Goethe’s Wahlverwandtschaften, although he claims a few pages earlier that Goethe’s correct methodology nonetheless produced incorrect results that were no longer scientifically tenable.¹⁴⁰ Working the metaphor further, Bölsche writes,

. . . auch diese Menschen fallen in’s Gebiet der Naturwissenschaften. Ihre Leidenschaften, ihr Reagieren gegen äussere Umstände, das ganze Spiel

¹³⁸ Wilhelm Bölsche, Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen der Poesie. Prolegomena einer realistischen Aesthetik (Leipzig: C. Reissner, 1887) 4.

¹³⁹ Bölsche, Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen, 8.

¹⁴⁰ Bölsche, Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen, 6.

ihrer Gedanken folgen gewissen Gesetzen, die der Forscher ergründet hat und die der Dichter bei dem freien Experimente so gut zu beachten hat, wie der Chemiker, wenn er etwas Vernünftiges und keinen werthlosen Mischmasch herstellen will, die Kräfte und Wirkungen vorher berechnen muss, ehe er an's Werk geht und Stoffe combinirt.¹⁴¹

Whereas Zola argued that the writer must make use of an experimental method and use literature as a scientific means to understand human behavior, Bölsche argues that writers must also take into account the specific scientific knowledge of human behavior already gleaned from psychology and other scientific disciplines and must then incorporate these into the descriptions of characters and events within the novel. Bölsche displays a remarkable trust in the new emerging field of psychology, a confidence that seems astoundingly misplaced if one views his comments through the lens of the twentieth century. However, the positivist culture of the time that believed in the advance of humankind through technology and science explains why Bölsche would make such daring assertions of truth.

Rather than testing Ebner-Eschenbach's novel against science as would have her contemporaries, it proves fruitful to set the novel in dialogue with science and technology. This chapter will therefore show how Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindekind provides room for a discussion of the relationship between science, technology, and literature. Within the framework of the broader discussion contained in this dissertation, this chapter will thus illustrate how the author and her oeuvre fit into a development of nature and its representation in literature as well as the transformation of literature via the use of a reconsidered nature, that is, one that exists not only outside but also within the subject. Several instances within the novel point the reader to the importance of science and technology as important components of the changing

¹⁴¹ Bölsche, Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen, 8.

environment in nineteenth-century Austria, and more specifically in Moravia – the larger geographical setting for Ebner-Eschenbach’s story.

Of the depictions of technology and science in the story, one important machine stands out as representative of the changing material culture in the Moravian society in the novel, namely the “Locomobil” – the steam engine. The introduction of the “Locomobil” into the village represents a central moment in the protagonist’s development as well as the development of the community. Underneath the heading of *Locomotiv* in the 1866 *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Enzyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände*, one finds the following definition of the “Locomobile:”

Dagegen unterscheidet sich die Locomobile sehr wesentlich dadurch, daß sie zwar ebenfalls eine auf einem Wagen befindliche Dampfmaschine ist, jedoch nicht den Zweck hat, sich selbst oder gar noch fremde Lasten fortzubewegen. Vielmehr wird die Locomobile durch Pferde gezogen und ist nichts weiter als eine transportable Dampfmaschine, welche man dort hinbringt, wo durch ihre Kraft Arbeitsmaschinen (gewöhnlich landwirtschaftliche, wie Dreschmaschinen u.s.w.; ferner Hebewerke, Pumpwerke u. dgl.) in Betrieb gesetzt werden sollen. Hierzu gehört auch die Dampffeuerspritze, eine Locomobile, welche die von ihr zu betreibende Spritze auf demselben Wagen mitführt.¹⁴²

The fundamental essence of the steam engine and its introduction into the Moravian village in the novel demarks an important point in Austrian society when mechanization began to displace the horse as a central means of production. To be sure, the steam engine in the novel does not do the work of threshing; it is merely attached to the threshing machine that had previously been powered by horses. However, this mechanization points to a larger development in the social context of nineteenth-century Austria, namely the shift in society that accompanied mechanization from a largely rural populace centered in an agrarian lifestyle to a less rural populace that had begun to work

¹⁴² F. A. Brockhaus, Allgemeine deutsche Real-Enzyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände: (Konversations-Lexikon) (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1866) 524.

in the growing industrial centers in the Austrian empire. There are certainly many aspects of agrarian life present in Ebner-Eschenbach's novel, i.e., the farmers in the village and the organization of society according to land ownership. The vestiges of feudalism are also present in the baroness who still exerts a certain degree of control over the village but is losing her influence as well.¹⁴³ The new teacher in town does not even bother to pay a salutatory visit to the castle, whereas his predecessor, Habrecht, treats her with utmost respect and defers to her judgement.

The steam-engine and its entrance into the village are markers of many changes that are occurring in Soleschau but also in Austrian society in general. The narrator introduces the "Locomobil" as follows,

Zur Schnittzeit in dem selben Jahre begab sich etwas Außerordentliches. Die Gemeinde führte ein lang gehegtes Vorhaben aus; sie kaufte für ihr bisher von einem Pferdegöpel betriebene Dreschmaschine ein Locomobil. Auf der Eisenbahnstation wurde es abgeholt und zog sechsspännig, mit Blumen bekränzt, ins Dorf ein. Stolz schritten die Bauern neben ihm, es verdarb keinem die Freude an der werthvollen Erwerbung, daß man nur die erste der zehn Raten, in denen sie bezahlt werden sollte, erlegt hatte und vorläufig noch nicht wußte, woher das Geld nehmen für die übrigen neun.¹⁴⁴

As the passage itself suggests, the entrance of the "Locomobil" into the village is no ordinary event. The purchase of the machine represents a special moment in this rural community; the celebration and decoration of the machine, furthermore, indicates the importance of this momentous occasion. Like a prized horse, the machine is adorned with flowers and paraded in the village; this illustrates that the farmers relate to the new machine in a similar way to the way they related to their horses. They pride themselves

¹⁴³ The baroness and her waning influence depict the effects of the 1848 freeing of the serfs in Austria. The novel shows clearly that while they were no longer economically beholden to the local aristocracy, the villagers continue to look to the baroness for leadership and economic aid.

¹⁴⁴ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 96.

in having purchased such a valuable piece of equipment that will allow them to finish their work much quicker. However, as the above passage also suggests, they fail to grasp the meaning of this important technological development.

From an historical perspective, this passage is a commentary on agricultural developments at the time. The 1860s, the time period that forms the setting for the novel, was a decade of economic boom with exports of grain leading the way; the early 1870s brought about economic ruin and collapse. Whereas in the mid-1860s Austria's flour mills, exporting large sums of flour to Western Europe, flourished because of a bumper crop, the early 1870's brought problems with exports: transportation problems, meager harvests, and an overflow of American milled products into Europe. As Heinrich Benedikt explains, at the same time, Hungary, due to specific advantages in subsidized export by the Adria company from Fiume, began flooding the Austrian markets with high-grade milled flour, which eventually drove prices so low that millers in Austria could not even cover their costs.¹⁴⁵ As a result of market forces as well as a rise in population and the growth of industrialization Austria grew steadily from a net-exporter to a net importer of grain over the course of the nineteenth century. Moving away from exporting grains and milled grains, Austria became an exporter of processed potatoes, barley, and sugarbeets in the form of sugar, malt, beer, and spirits.¹⁴⁶

The greatest economic changes in Austria during this time were, however, not so much the increasing industrialization and the growth of the second sector of the economy. In terms of its short-term impact upon the "kulturelles Gedächtnis" of the nation, the ups and downs of the financial markets had the most long-lasting impact. As previously

¹⁴⁵ Heinrich Benedikt, Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in der Franz-Joseph-Zeit (Wien: Herold, 1958) 21-22.

¹⁴⁶ Benedikt, Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, 23.

noted, Austria flourished economically in the mid 1860's to 1870 with exports of grains and milled products driving up the value of the Austrian currency and steadily increasing the GDP. However, the economy could not keep up these gains, and 1873 brought disaster when the stock markets collapsed and investment ceased. While one might surmise that the repercussions of such a crash could have been confined mostly to the wealthy urban-dwelling capitalists and the industrial workers whose jobs depended upon increased consumption and investment, the effects of the crash cut a path across society. When the markets collapsed and the financial institutions recalled their loans, farmers were left scrambling, and their mostly small farms quickly came under the hammer. We can see the impact of this collapse on the writings and lives of writers across social strata from Hoffmannsthal to Saar to Rossegger. Both Saar and Hoffmannsthal's families lost large fortunes in the crash, and Rossegger's work eloquently portrays the effect of this crash upon the folk of the countryside.

Writing of the steam-powered threshing machine during the 1880s, Ebner-Eschenbach comments on the inability of the farmers in Soleschau to understand the economic developments and adapt to the changing world around them. The novel does not state the source of the money for the farmers' first payment for the steam engine; however, an important event has preceded the purchase of the steam engine, namely Pavel's purchase of his property. The reader is left to assume that the farmers have raised this money from the sale of the "Sandgrube" to Pavel. Not only do the farmers not know where they will find the money to pay the rest of the installments, the novel indicates that they have extracted an extraordinary sum from Pavel for a meager plot of infertile land. The narrator relates, "Pavel wurde für mündig gesprochen und erwarb die Sandgrube zu

hohem Preis, nachdem man ihm begreiflich gemacht hatte, daß die Gemeinde, der er ohnehin seit sieben Jahren im Beutel lag, am wenigsten ihm etwas schenken könne.”¹⁴⁷

Pavel’s angry retort later in the novel, when Peter has called him ungrateful, identifies the fraudulence of the farmers’ dealings with him:

Undankbar? Und was verdank’ ich euch? Für den Bettel, den Ihr zu meinem Unterhalt hergegeben, hab’ ich mit meiner Arbeit tausendfach bezahlt. Den Unterricht in der Schul’ hat mir der Lehrer umsonst erteilt. Keine Host, kein Hemd, keinen Schuh hab’ ich von Euch bekommen. Den Grund, auf dem mein Haus steht, habt Ihr mir doppelt so theuer verkauft, als er werth ist.¹⁴⁸

Far from an idyllic village of bucolic farmers living peacefully side-by-side, Soleschau represents the anti-idyll where the farmers behave dishonestly and show no care for the poor. The pub becomes the *locus delicti* – the place of indictment.

At this point, it is necessary to explore a central theme in the novel that provides particular insight for an ecocritical interpretation of Das Gemeindekind. Through her choice of the rural setting as well as use of the names Virgil and Virgilova for important characters, Ebner-Eschenbach’s novel suggests that she draws on the tradition of the pastoral, albeit with an unconventional approach. One of the founders of the pastoral tradition is Virgil, the roman poet from whom the character in Ebner-Eschenbach’s novel derives his name. In the Virgilian tradition, a typical pastoral depicts idealized scenes from the countryside where a shepherd plays the central role. The shepherd is ordinarily not only a shepherd but also a bard who spends his time singing, dancing, and pursuing romantic relations. Ebner-Eschenbach’s Virgil is indeed a shepherd, but he is not the typical shepherd of the pastoral. He drinks excessively, does not sing or write poetry, and his treatment of Pavel in particular falls far short of ideal.

¹⁴⁷ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 79.

¹⁴⁸ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 110-111.

Beyond easily identifiable motifs, pastoralism also carries with it a system of values that can bifurcate nature into nature and culture and place cultivated civilization against nature or the rural. As Leo Marx explains, “Movement toward such a [natural] symbolic landscape also may be understood as movement away from an “artificial” world, a world identified with “art,” using this word in its broadest sense to mean the disciplined habits of mind or arts developed by organized communities.”¹⁴⁹ Yet, it would be incorrect to locate Ebner-Eschenbach within this nostalgic tradition – a tradition more strongly associated with the *Heimatliteratur* movement later in the century. Authors of *Heimatliteratur* appealed to the naive and often reactionary sentiments of their readers who longed for a simpler time and place than their “complicated” “urban” lives. They often posited in the prototypical village a “heile Welt” where cultural or social conflicts common in the urban arena are anathema. Ebner-Eschenbach’s novel, by contrast, portrays no “heile Welt;” Soleschau is a rural setting characterized by squabbles amongst the villagers and corruption. The naively functionalized pastoral in *Heimatliteratur* is not the pastoral to which Ebner-Eschenbach alludes. On the contrary, Das Gemeindegeld references a more nuanced pastoral tradition whose settings usually occupy a *locus amoenus* precisely between raw nature and the cultivated city. Leo Marx explains this location, “Hence the pastoral ideal is an embodiment of what Lovejoy calls “semi-primitivism”; it is located in a middle ground somewhere “between,” yet in transcendent relation to, the opposing forces of civilization and nature.”¹⁵⁰ Soleschau does occupy a place in this middle ground that is not dominated by either raw nature or absolute culture; however, it is not a location of harmony. The lack of any *locus amoenus* in Ebner-

¹⁴⁹ Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden : Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) 9.

¹⁵⁰ Marx, The Machine in the Garden, 23.

Eschenbach's reference to the pastoral therefore heightens the anti-pastoral aspect of the text.

In his interpretation of the American pastoral tradition Marx notes, "In 1844 Hawthorne assigns a similar function to the machine. Like Virgil's unfortunate herdsman, the sound of the locomotive 'brings the noisy world into the midst of ... slumbrous peace.'¹⁵¹ In other words, from antiquity onwards, a central element of the literary tradition of the pastoral is the entrance of the "real" world into the idyll. In the nineteenth century, this intrusion was often represented by the encroachment of technology into the rural landscape. Marx notes that the presence of Melibœus, the unfortunate herdsman to whom Marx refers, in Virgil's Eclogues "reveals the inadequacy of the Arcadian situation as an image of human experience. His lines convey the intervention of reality; they are a check against our susceptibility to idyllic fantasies."¹⁵²

In Ebner-Eschenbach's novel, the steam engine operates similarly. It enters the novel at a crossroads when Pavel has built his home and his standing in the community seems finally unimpered though not entirely safe. While no immediate threats to his successful integration into the community exist, his discussion with the priest about Habrecht's departure imparts to the reader that ultimate resolution has not yet arrived. Pavel complains about the villagers to the priest: "'Und die Alten", fuhr Pavel fort, "sind auch so. Dreimal hab' ich kleine Fichten gepflanzt auf meinen Grund, etwas Andres wächst ja dort nicht. Dreimal haben sie mir Alles ausgerissen. Sie sagen: Dein Haus muß frei stehen, man muß in dein Haus von allen Seiten hineinschauen können, man muß

¹⁵¹ Marx, The Machine in the Garden, 23.

¹⁵² Marx, The Machine in the Garden, 23.

wissen, was du treibst in deinem Haus.”¹⁵³ The scene reads as a direct indictment of the village, but it also makes clear to the reader that Pavel’s purchase of land as well as his building of his own home does not guarantee him security from the malice of the villagers who, at least from their perspective, have reason to doubt the depth of his conversion from a menacing child into an upstanding citizen.

The steam engine, as part of a larger narrative of scientific and technological advancement in the novel, also illustrates a shift towards objective perceptions of reality in the novel. The machine reminds the reader that we are no longer presented with a world where subjective perception eclipses objective reality. Scientific methods, technology, and machines have entered into the village and announce to the reader that the incidents in this novel took place at a time where technological innovation was rapidly changing the way that even villagers in a tiny Bohemian community lived and perceived their lives.

Following the interpretation of Das Gemeindekind as an anti-pastoral, we see that the “Locomobil” plays an additional role as the harbinger of technological progress and social decline. Whereas in a traditional pastoral, the element of counterforce (e.g., the unfortunate shepherd in Virgil’s Eclogues) would serve to remind the reader of a reality existing beyond the pastoral idyll, the machine in this anti-pastoral also serves to remind the reader that this village cannot be equated with bucolic harmony. Pavel’s relationship to the machine in the novel is unique and noteworthy. Each morning, before Pavel goes to work in the “Holzschlag,” he takes a short side-trip to visit what the narrator describes as a “schnaubenden Ungeheuers.” Again, unaware of Pavel’s inner transformation, the new mayor shoos him away, claiming that Pavel would steal the machine with just the

¹⁵³ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 83.

look of his eyes if he could. But it is the look of Pavel's eyes that gives us insight into Pavel's relationship to the machine. "Pavel ging, nahm aber die Erinnerung an die Bewunderte mit sich und hatte ein deutlicheres Bild von ihr im Kopfe als die Bauern, die in ihrer nächsten Nachbarschaft auf der Bank an der Scheune saßen und die Hantirung der Tagelöhner überwachten.," the narrator reports. Pavel, literally, has an eye for the machine. His innate ability to understand the machine contrasts with the farmers who do not understand the machine or its meaning within the community.

One of these farmers, Peter, Pavel's nemesis and antagonist throughout much of the novel, exemplifies the problematic relationship of the farmers to the "Locomobil." Peter takes great pride in his workhorses, but his unsuccessful attempts to garner admiration for these horses leaves him bitter as he must endure disparagement from the other farmers. Searching for a way to prove to the community that his horses are some of the strongest in the area, Peter sees his opportunity arrive with steam engine. The narrator details Peter's folly:

Wenn die Maschine am Getreide des Bürgermeisters und an dem der Umgebung ihre Schuldigkeit gethan haben würde, sollte sie im Hof Peters am untern Ende des Dorges aufgestellt werden, und er hatte die Zeit, sie abzuholen, kaum erwarten können. Am bestimmten Tage – das Locomobil war noch im Gange – erschien er schon mit einem Gesicht so aufgeblasen wie ein Luftballon, hinter ihm sein Knecht, der die angeschirrten Kohlfüchse am Zügel führte. 'Was willst mit den Pferden?' fragte der Bürgermeister, 'warum bringst nicht ein Paar tüchtige Ochsen? Die Pferde halten Dir die Maschine über den Berg nicht zurück.' Barosch und Anton, die eben da standen, einige jüngere Leute und alle Tagelöhner waren der selben Meinung, sogar Pavel, der mit einem Auftrag vom Förster an den Bürgermeister geschickt worden, erlaubte sich, in Gegenwart der Notabilitäten den Mund aufzuthun und sagte: 'Und der Maschine kann das größte Unglück geschehen.'¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 97.

Like the farmers' purchase of the "Locomobil," which carried a connotation of hubris since they neither understood the machine nor knew how they would pay for it, this event illustrates Peter's particular hubris. Peter's pride causes him to deny the efforts of the villagers to help him, in particular Pavel's attempt to apply the brake before the machine rolls down the hill. The scene ends in disaster for Peter as Pavel races in to rescue him from being crushed by the machine. As the local smith and the farmers examine the machine for damage after its crash, Anton the smith offers his opinion, "'die Maschin' sei, Gottlob! ohne Schaden davongekommen und könne gleich wieder in Gang gebracht.'"¹⁵⁵ However, Pavel sees immediately that a lever on the machine is bent and points out, "Wird schwerlich gehen. Seht Ihr nicht, daß das Stangel verbogen ist?"¹⁵⁶ As this passage illustrates, Pavel's innate knowledge of the "Locomobil" surpasses even that of Anton. After Pavel and Arnost have been drafted into the military, Pavel pays a visit to the mayor and then to Anton, who asks him to come with him and take a look at the machine. Pavel repeats, "Seht Ihr nicht, daß das Stangel verbogen ist?"¹⁵⁷ Anton claims that the bent lever could not cause the problems with the machine. But Pavel explains, "'Alles liegt dran,' ... 'Deswegen stoßt's ja so, deswegen geht der Schieber nicht ordentlich, und wie soll denn der Dampf richtig eintreten? Einmal kommt zu viel, einmal zu wenig.'"¹⁵⁸ After discussion, Anton and Pavel together repair the machine, but Pavel receives no credit when the farmers praise Anton for repairing the "Locomobil" because Pavel has left for military duty and Anton does not let the villagers in on the secret. Only after Pavel, Arnost, Anton, and Virgil have beaten Peter and his comrades in the brawl in

¹⁵⁵ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 100.

¹⁵⁶ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 100.

¹⁵⁷ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 107.

¹⁵⁸ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 107.

the pub does Anton exclaim, “Und die Maschin’ hat er auch reparirt.”¹⁵⁹ Just as the villagers could not see Pavel’s inner transformation from childhood thief into an upstanding young adult, they do not see his technological knowledge and ability.

An additional detail earlier in the novel indicates Pavel’s relationship to modern technology, namely his work in the factories, specifically in the sugar beet factory. The sugar factory was a prototypical nineteenth century industry, which also found expression in numerous literary works of the time. From Wilhelm Raabe’s Pfister’s Mühle to Gustav Freytag’s best-seller Soll und Haben, sugar factories constitute an important indicator of industrial development. As noted above, the time setting for Das Gemeindekind coincides with a transformation in agriculture and industry in Austria which brought about the emergence of sugarbeet, malt, and alcoholic spirit industries. Pavel’s work in the factory as well as his ability to fix the machine illustrate that he is well-suited to adapt to these technological and economic changes, whereas the other villagers, specifically the farmers, demonstrate that they will not be so successful in adapting to the changing world about them.

IV. Social and Economic Change: Science and socio-economic change: Bolzano or Salter – Ethics vs. the Enlightenment: Lucretius

Wilhelm Bölsche, in the spirit of nineteenth-century positivism, argues,

Erst indem wir uns dazu aufschwingen, im menschlichen Denken Gesetze zu ergründen, erst indem wir einsehen, dass eine menschliche Handlung, wie immer sie beschaffen sei, das restlose Ergebniss gewisser Factoren, einer äusseren Veranlassung und einer innern Disposition, sein müsse und dass auch diese Disposition sich aus gegebenen Grössen ableiten lasse, - erst so können wir hoffen, jemals zu einer wahren mathematischen Durchdringung der ganzen Handlungsweise eines Menschen zu gelangen

¹⁵⁹ Ebner Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 114.

und Gestalten vor unserm Auge aufwachsen zu lassen, die logisch sind,
wie die Natur.¹⁶⁰

In the above passage Bölsche makes the case for research into the basic laws of human behavior based upon the symbiosis of logic and nature. Since at least Descartes, scientific disciplines have traditionally assumed that the logical thinking part of humans must be separated from from the animalistic instinctual facet. A mere twenty years after Bölsche's text was published, modern literature, that is the avant-garde expressionists, would argue that Bölsche's position is impossible, since objective reality, as Bölsche posits it, does not exist. But, as Bölsche illustrates exquisitely, the positivist belief that one can scientifically understand not only the world surrounding us but also the inner workings of humankind leads humanists and writers to perceive literature as an experimental means to understand and accurately portray humankind; Bölsche goes so far as to call it mathematical.

Although the notion of experimentation and logical depiction of characters and plot through careful attention to the inner disposition and psychological state of the characters in the novel may have rung true to Ebner-Eschenbach's ears, Bölsche's programmatic stance certainly treads too far in arguing for the complete diffusion of mathematical concepts into psychology in order to explain human actions with precision. As Rossbacher explains, "[Ebner-Eschenbach] kann sich keiner Ideologie zuwenden, die nicht die direkte zwischenmenschliche Bindung in den Vordergrund stellt" ¹⁶¹ In other words, relationships between humans supersede ideology in Ebner-Eschenbach's oeuvre. Bölsche's theory does not explicitly negate human relationships in favor of a scientifically oriented ideology; it nevertheless does not allow for the importance that

¹⁶⁰ Bölsche, Die naturwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen, 34.

¹⁶¹ Rossbacher, "Nachwort," 220.

Ebner-Eschenbach bestows upon them. According to positivist thought, one may substitute one person for another (similar to a variable in a mathematic equation) in literary experimentation as long as their psychological background and education etc. are similar enough. For Ebner-Eschenbach, a champion of sorts of liberal humanism whose literature frequently expresses enlightenment principles, the emergence of the individual and the relationships that bind one person to another carry more significance. The individual cannot be perceived as merely a variable in an equation but must be understood as a unique expression of humanity.

Liberal ideology did not win Ebner-Eschenbach as a convert, however, especially where economic liberalism is concerned. Rossbacher explains, “Vollends skeptisch zeigt sich Ebner-Eschenbach, wie Ferdinand von Saar und Ludwig Anzengruber auch, wenn sie auf den ökonomischen Liberalismus blickt, den sie zunehmend als Worthülse für die Einladung zu schrankenloser Industrialisierung versteht. In seinem Zeichen lösten sich traditionelle Sozialformen auf, ohne daß seine Träger Lösungen für die neue soziale Frage anbieten konnten.”¹⁶² Indeed, scientific development need not, in Ebner-Eschenbach’s world-view, go hand in hand with unfettered capitalism, economic liberalism, or industrialization. The liberals, the leading political movement in nineteenth-century Austria who formed the secular opposition to the three-legged governing social structure held together by the Catholic church, the military, and the monarchy, had managed to secure the freeing of the peasant-farmers from service to the nobility known as *Villein*. Austrians, however, also witnessed, in the 1870s especially, the collapse of their economy due to liberal economic policies that allowed foreign markets, among them the United States and Hungary, to flood their market with cheap

¹⁶² Rossbacher, “Nachwort,” 221.

grain. Under the policies of economic liberalism, Austria also witnessed the growth of the proletariat, as the impoverished classes moved increasingly from the countryside into urban centers and sought employment in the growing industrial complex. As has already been discussed, the migration of the peasants into the urban centers coincided, at least in part, with their loss of their farms due to their inability in years of meager harvests to compete with foreign producers.

There is sufficient evidence to note that the Austrian socialists of the late nineteenth century received the novel well. As Rossbacher points out, Victor Adler, the undisputed leader of the Austrian Socialist movement, wrote a letter to Ebner-Eschenbach in 1890, asking the author for permission to reprint her novel in the proletarian *Arbeiterzeitung*.¹⁶³ One must ask oneself: what would have precipitated such a response from Adler? The answer to this question can only be speculative, but it also points to an important and often misinterpreted aspect of Das Gemeindekind, namely the impact of various nineteenth-century ethical and social movements upon characters and events in the novel. Rossbacher accounts for this: “Zwischen Arnost, Pavel, und schließlich auch noch Virgil ergibt sich gegen Ende eine Bindung, die in größerem Rahmen der Solidarität, wie die zeitgenössische Arbeiterbewegung sie verstand, ähneln könnte.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Rossbacher, “Nachwort,” 213.

¹⁶⁴ Rossbacher, “Nachwort,” 220. Perhaps an oversight; Rossbacher has omitted the local smith, Anton, who fights alongside Pavel. Notably, Anton’s role in the village is nebulous. He does not defend Pavel against the farmers, as Habrecht does, but he encourages the sale of land to Pavel. He does not give Pavel the credit when the farmers praise him for fixing the machine, but he later admits that Pavel repaired the machine. Finally, he initially takes a neutral stance in the pub but switches soon to Pavel’s side.

The positive reaction of those in the workers movement may be in part due to the ethical dimension of the novel that allows for a heightened sense of morality and concern for the poor in the novel. When one sets Das Gemeindegeld in dialogue with William Mackintire Salter's ethical movement, one sees numerous parallels between the two, as Ebner-Eschenbach's novel is infused with the concepts of ethics which she had encountered in Salter's Die Religion der Moral, translated into German by Georg von Gizycki in 1885 in Berlin. The volume contains a series of lectures that Salter gave before the Society for Ethical Culture of Chicago.¹⁶⁵ For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the German translation of Salter by Gizycki, since this is the version that Ebner-Eschenbach would have known. Salter saw the ethical movement, a forerunner of today's ethical societies, as a new religion that aimed to supplant theological ideology and belief in a sacral god completely removed from the world. Salter explains,

Ist es nicht seltsam, daß der Mensch nicht zufrieden ist mit dem, was er sieht, daß er dem Bekannten und Vertrauten den Rücken wendet, suchend nach etwas Besserem, dass er bisweilen sein Leben aufs Spiel setzt für eine Hoffnung oder einen Traum seines Geistes? Doch auch dies gehört zum Menschen: die idealen Zwecke des Menschenlebens sind es, die ihn anrufen, um ihre Verwirklichung zu finden; und er, schlicht und treu, ermangelt nicht, auf sie zu hören.

Eine Religion der Moral würde den Gedanken der Menschen diese Richtung geben. Sie würde zu neuem Vertrauen auf Ideen begeistern. Sie würde ihrem Wesen nach eine praktische Religion sein – nicht praktisch und ideal, sondern praktisch weil ideal.¹⁶⁶

In this short passage, Salter observes that human beings, by nature, are not content with what exists around them. The above assertion illustrates how Salter walks a line between idealist and materialist philosophy. He embraces the idealist position that there is more

¹⁶⁵ William Mackintire Salter, Die Religion der Moral. Vorträge, gehalten in der Gesellschaft für moralische Kultur in Chicago, trans. Georg von Gizycki (Leipzig: W. Friedrich, 1885) 11.

¹⁶⁶ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 3.

to life than the mere existence that surrounds a person, yet he also affirms the materialist position in so far as he asserts the practicality of his ethics. He explains that the new religion of morals will be practical precisely because it incorporates the desire of humans to believe in something beyond themselves. It is no coincidence that Habrecht in Ebner-Eschenbach's novel expresses just such a desire and eventually leaves the village to emigrate to America where he is to become a follower of Salter.

As Salter explains, this ethical religion thoroughly denies the existence of God, "daß der alleinige Ursprung alles religiösen Glaubens der Menschheit die Menschheit selbst gewesen ist, daß weder Gott noch Teufel ihn dem Menschen gab, und daß daher, sie in Bausch und Bogen zu verspotten, den Menscheng Geist selbst verspotten heißt."¹⁶⁷

According to Salter, just as religious beliefs were inventions of humans, the new ethical religion is a human invention.¹⁶⁸ Salter views his new religion as the heir to these earlier systems. What is more, he does not denigrate human religious history. Salter writes,

die Menschen haben vormals die unbekannte Weltmacht als eine Person vorgestellt, und sie haben einen so geringen Begriff von der Naturordnung und der Unveränderlichkeit der Naturgesetze gehabt, daß sie geglaubt haben, zu jener Macht beten und dieselbe bitten zu dürfen, für sie zu thun, was sie selbst nicht thun konnten. Wir dagegen werden, teils durch den Einfluß philosophischer Kritik, teils durch den positiver Wissenschaft, dazu gezwungen, die Persönlichkeit der Gottheit als eine offene Frage zu betrachten und das Gebet, so viel wir erkennen, als eine unnütze Verschwendung menschlicher Energie.¹⁶⁹

The ability to understand and manipulate the world according to science leads humans to reject traditional theistic beliefs in favor of agnostic scientific positivism, according to the ethicist. Salter is under no illusions, however, that the world could be completely

¹⁶⁷ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 300.

¹⁶⁸ A likeness to Ludwig Feuerbach's philosophy is unmistakable here. See Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christentums.

¹⁶⁹ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 300-301.

understood according to science alone and therefore suggests agnosticism. He proposes that humans ought not to impose the limits of personhood upon something like God that exists far beyond human understanding. Thus, he does not deny the existence of God per se, but he expressly denies the notion that humans can understand what he describes as a mystery. And, for Salter, that mystery cannot be the center of our longings; supplication to such a God as opposed to asking a friend or acquaintance is wrong because one shows by such actions distrust in the benevolent order of the world as well as distrust in one's own abilities to introduce change.¹⁷⁰

At this point, it is important to point out that previous research into the connection between Ebner-Eschenbach's writing and Salter's writings, especially that of Baasner, has been crippled by a misunderstanding of Salter's work. Baasner writes,

Zunächst sei festgestellt, daß Salter durchaus einen metaphysischen Bezug für seine Vorstellungen beibehält, was die Ebner – im Gegensatz zu ihren Rezensenten – erkannt hat und dem sie mit Habrechts "Anknüpfung mit dem Jenseits" im *Gemeindekind* Rechnung trägt. Salter wendet sich allein gegen die Art, wie in vielen Gemeinden der großen Industriestädte Nordamerikas Armenpflege betrieben, das ganze Problem überhaupt betrachtet wird.¹⁷¹

Salter's Religion der Moral cannot be characterized as a polemic against poverty and its causes in the United States, as Baasner suggests in the final sentence of the above passage. The section of the Salter's book on poverty takes numerous examples from Paris and London. Furthermore, the influence of Salter's work in general upon the various Ethical Societies, and his close relationship with Felix Adler are indicators that Salter addressed morality and ethics in connection with a multitude of issues.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 302.

¹⁷¹ Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," 339.

¹⁷² There is a definite dearth of scholarship on Salter, whose contributions to the ethical movement in the United States and abroad seem important, especially for

Furthermore, Salter explicitly clarifies that he is not concerned with metaphysics, “Denn, daß ich es klar lege, die Basis unsrer Bewegung ist nicht eine Theorie der Moral, sondern die Moral selbst. Ich stehe an erster Stelle nicht hier, um euch eine metaphysische Philosophie der Ethik vorzutragen, den Transcendentalismus oder den Utilitarismus auszubreiten . . . Ich stehe hier, um . . . die Idee des Guten selbst emporzuhalten.”¹⁷³ In other words, Salter’s ethical philosophy advocates what Nietzsche’s Zarathustra claims we have already done, namely removing God from the world. But, Salter’s ethics are not based on nihilism or on overcoming it, as Nietzsche’s were; Salter’s ethics are based upon the belief that morals, what he describes as the ultimate good, is the highest value for which one can strive.¹⁷⁴ Instead of a lack of values, i.e., nihilism, or the imposition of values from a deity, Salter claims that humans themselves can know good and can aspire to be that good. This is not a metaphysical standpoint, and it is a definite misunderstanding of Salter’s work to characterize it as such. In connection with Ebner-Eschenbach’s novel, one might note that Pavel also has an innate sense of the good just as he possesses an innate sense of the machine. This is most apparent when Pavel saves the bird, a scene that I will examine later in connection to his development of morals and agency.

this text and my reading thereof. Samuel Frederick Bacon offers a good explanation of Salter’s relationship to the ethical culture and Felix Adler in general. See Samuel Frederick Bacon, “Evaluation of the Philosophy and Pedagogy of Ethical Culture,” Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1933, 32-43. Additionally, Horace L. Friess’ book on Felix Adler offers some explanation on the general importance of Salter as a figure in the Ethical Culture in the United States. Horace L. Friess, Felix Adler and Ethical Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

¹⁷³ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 317.

¹⁷⁴ For a lengthier discussion of a parallel between Nietzsche’s notion of history and Ebner-Eschenbach’s use of history in Das Gemeindegeld, see Thomas Salumets, “Geschichte als Motto: Ebner-Eschenbachs Erzählung Das Gemeindegeld,” Sprachkunst (1984): 14-24.

We have already explored the influence of science and technological innovation on both the form, i.e., the structure of the narrative that aligns with notions literary realism, and the content of Ebner-Eschenbach's novel. As an indicator of the pervasiveness of this topic for nineteenth-century culture, we can also see the influence of science upon Salter's ethics. Salter writes, "Und thatsächlich wird die Moral des Intellekts, anstatt daß uns jetzt die Jünger Jesu darin ein Beispiel gäben, durch diejenigen am eindringlichsten zur Darstellung gebracht, welchen entgegenzutreten und welche zu tadeln die christlichen Lehrer in der Regel für ihre Pflicht gehalten haben: ich meine die Gelehrten und Forscher der Wissenschaft und Geschichte."¹⁷⁵ Like other movements of the time, Salter's ethical movement depends on wresting control of the moral sphere from the sacral authorities and placing it in the hands of the secular authority, in this case the intellectual community. Science, as Salter contends, has destroyed the *Weltanschauung* that provided the basis for religious beliefs.¹⁷⁶ The church could no longer censure scientific work by refusing its imprimatur; science had advanced the secular position and had successfully challenged the church for supreme authority in the intellectual community. First and foremost among the scientists of the nineteenth century to challenge the church was Charles Darwin, and it comes as no surprise that Salter holds him in high esteem. Salter extols Darwin, "Eine Lektion in der Moral, in idealer Gewissenhaftigkeit ist in jeder echten wissenschaftlichen Untersuchung enthalten, und in keiner in einer bemerkenswerteren Art, als in denen des Umwälters unsrer Naturansicht, der größten wissenschaftlichen Gestalt unsers Jahrhunderts, Charles Darwin."¹⁷⁷ The courage to challenge the doctrines of the Church and to stand up for the results of his

¹⁷⁵ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 170.

¹⁷⁶ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 170.

¹⁷⁷ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 171.

scientific research afford Darwin the status of the greatest scientific mind of the nineteenth century, according to Salter. Ironically, one of Salter's central theses in the book contrasts notably with Darwin's notion that humans evolved from a primate species. In arguing that human rational faculties mark the most important feature that distinguishes humans from other animals, Salter advances the separation of humans from the rest of nature, a split that Darwin's work opposes. Salter writes,

Ich kann mich zunächst nur an jene wenden, welche eine andere Schätzung von der menschlichen Natur haben, - welche dem Gedanken von Jesu Worten, wenn auch nicht dem Schlusse, den er aus ihnen folgert, entsprechen: "Wieviel seid ihr besser, denn die Vögel?" – welche glauben daß Halmlets Worte: "Wie edel durch Vernunft! Wie unbegrenzt an Fähigkeiten! In Gestalt und Bewegung wie bedeutend und bewunderungswürdig! Im handeln wie ähnlich einem Engel, im Begreifen wie ähnlich einem Gott!"¹⁷⁸

Salter expresses his belief here that humans are superior to all nature simply due to their rational abilities. By contrast, Darwin in his work on evolution, and especially in his work on the similarity between human and animal expressions, repeatedly stresses the similarity between humans and other animals and argues that human rational abilities are the product of evolution, not, as Salter argues, evidence of a god-like quality that distinguishes humans from animals. While it appears that Ebner-Eschenbach may draw upon popular notions of evolution and scientific determinism in her text, these ideas are not born out in Salter's work. Given that the influence of Salter's Religion der Moral on Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld can be directly perceived at the textual level, as I have shown and continue to demonstrate in this chapter, it is therefore more productive to consider Salter's work more closely in connection to the reading offered in this chapter.

¹⁷⁸ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 179.

Perhaps the strongest parallels between Salter's ethics and Ebner-Eschenbach's novel can be found in Salter's treatment of poverty and the "social ideal" and Ebner-Eschenbach's portrayal of poverty and the lack of social ideals in Soleschau. One can gather from the title of the book, Das Gemeindegeld, that Ebner-Eschenbach's novel portrays the relationship of Pavel to the village, Soleschau. As has already been noted in Rossbacher's research, Ebner-Eschenbach was intimately interested in social and philosophical thought that specifically took into account relationships between people. This interest marks a clear contrast with the liberal position that emphasized the development of the individual as the *sine qua non* of nineteenth century society. Salter's ethical movement, however, explicitly concerns the relationship of the individual to other members of society. "Aber was ist die Bedeutung der individuellen Seele, getrennt von der Gesellschaft? Ich frage, ob nicht alle Moral soziale Beziehungen voraussetzt, ob es in ausschließlicher Beziehung auf ein Einzelwesen ein moralisch Gutes geben kann," Salter asks.¹⁷⁹ In short, the morals of an individual are inconsequential unless the individual exists in direct relationship to the whole, to the society. Indeed, a society with ethics as its base is Salter's specific aim; individualism for Salter is the root of all evil and stands diametrically opposed to the movement. Salter writes, "ich will einfach zeigen, daß das soziale Ideal etwas ist, wofür wir in unsrer eigensten Natur als moralischer Wesen berufen sind. ... Solcher Individualismus ist die Ursünde. Falschheit, Unkeuschheit, jede Art von Unrecht sind nur eine Erhebung der persönlichen Willkür gegenüber dem Gesetz sozialer Wohlfahrt."¹⁸⁰ Looking back at Das Gemeindegeld, one can interpret the title in the traditional sense of the word as the child of the community, connoting that the

¹⁷⁹ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 244.

¹⁸⁰ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 246.

Pavel belongs to the community and that the community must take care of the child. However, a further meaning could indicate that Pavel's belonging to the community indicates his importance for the development of that community.¹⁸¹ This type of social contract is what Habrecht alludes to when he imparts to Pavel, "Kleiner Mensch, bleibe in Deinem kleinen Kreise und such still und verborgen zu wirken für das Wohl des Ganzen."¹⁸²

Rossbacher sees the social aspect of the novel expressed most effectively in the pub brawl where Pavel stands together at the end with his comrades; but the entire novel has overtones that evoke the emergence of socialist ideas. Habrecht, just before he departs for America, instructs Pavel, "In früheren Zeiten konnte Einer ruhig vor seinem vollen Teller sitzen und sich's schmecken lassen, ohne sich darum zu kümmern, daß der Teller seines Nachbarn leer war. Das geht jetzt nicht mehr, außer bei den geistig völlig Blinden."¹⁸³ Habrecht has just given Pavel his watch after telling him that he no longer needs it because his friend has one. One may be tempted to interpret these incidents as indicating socialist leanings in the text. However, the reader familiar with Ebner-Eschenbach and her disdain for ideology as well as her aristocratic status recognizes that the author would have not intended such a reading. Instead, Salter's ethics provide a clearer understanding of Habrecht within the novel. One can note marked similarities between Habrecht's statement to Pavel and Salter's portrayal of poverty,

So lange ein Mensch nur an Selbsterhaltung denkt, ist er kaum mehr als ein Tier; er beginnt menschlich zu sein, wenn der Gedanke an seine Familie ihn bestimmt, wenn er sich selbst als Teil derselben fühlt und für

¹⁸¹ Lynne Tatlock makes this point as well in the introduction to her translation of the novel. See Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and Lynne Tatlock, Their Pavel, 1st ed. (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996) xii.

¹⁸² Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 147.

¹⁸³ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 126.

sie thätig ist, sie zu erhalten und zu verteidigen; er wird noch menschlicher, wenn er Mitglied eines Gemeinwesens wird und die Wohlfahrt und die Ehre desselben als seine eigene empfindet; noch menschlicher ist er, wenn er zu dem Gedanken der Menschheit gelangt und keine persönlichen Interessen oder Handlungen seines Gemeinwesens duldet, welche darauf abzielen irgend jemanden, und sei es selbst dem niedrigsten Menschen, Schaden oder Unrecht zu thun.¹⁸⁴

The reader also notes Habrecht's affinity for Salter's ethical religion in the scene at the *Gasthaus* with Pavel. When Pavel greets his former teacher, "Herr Lehrer," Habrecht replies, "Aber sag mir nicht 'Herr Lehrer', – ich bin kein Lehrer mehr . . . das ist alles vorbei. Ich bin ein Jünger geworden . . ." ¹⁸⁵ One notes that Habrecht, like Ebner-Eschenbach herself, calls himself a disciple, and the narrator leaves no ambiguity as to whose disciple Habrecht has become. We read that Habrecht has joined up with an old school-friend, and the two have decided to emigrate to America and take up the "Fortsetzung des Lebenskampfes" there. The narrator relates, "Für die Mittel, sich auf das von ihnen gewählte Schlachtfeld zu begeben, sorgte der Freund, sorgten die Freunde des Freundes. Diese lebten in Amerika in Wohlhabenheit und Ansehen und gehörten zu den eifrigsten Aposteln einer 'ethischen Gesellschaft,' deren Zweck die Verbreitung moralischer Cultur war und die täglich an Anhang und Einfluß gewann," ¹⁸⁶ thus alluding to Salter's Society for Ethical Culture in Chicago. ¹⁸⁷ Habrecht explains that Salter's message came to him in a book, which he extols as a "Wunderbuch!" Habrecht's misanthropy and disillusionment with society transforms into hope; in his enthusiasm, the reader detects a great deal of idealism and hope in the ethical movement. In Salter's book, a similar hope is expressed in the following passage: "Ich glaube an eine "Stadt des

¹⁸⁴ Salter *Die Religion der Moral*, 246.

¹⁸⁵ Ebner-Eschenbach, *Das Gemeindeglied*, 122.

¹⁸⁶ Ebner-Eschenbach, *Das Gemeindeglied*, 124.

¹⁸⁷ In her translation of the novel, Lynne Tatlock has also pointed out the influence of Salter's text. Tatlock 151, note 24.

Lichts". Sie ist das soziale Ideal: und von dem Gedanken, von der Hingabe an dieses Ideal, von der Ordnung unsers Lebens gemäß seinen Forderungen erhoffe ich eine Wiedergeburt der Religion in der Welt.¹⁸⁸ This "city of light" is precisely what Habrecht refers to when he explains, "Ich folge der Botschaft; ich gehe hinüber, etwas zu suchen, das ich verloren und ewig vermißt habe: eine Anknüpfung mit dem Jenseits."¹⁸⁹ Although the reader may detect a hint of metaphysical belief in Habrecht's words, one must remember that this "Jenseits" is merely something that is beyond the tangible world that Habrecht sees around him; it is not a reference to religious metaphysics.

Habrecht is an idealist who seeks refuge in his ideas, not a transcendental metaphysicist. One can clearly observe this in his juxtaposition with the village priest. When the priest enters Habrecht's room, the teacher's awkward movements to cover up the book he has been reading pique the interest of the priest. A formal aspect of the exchange between the priest and Habrecht indicates to the reader that this passage has special import for the text, namely that the priest has no reason for visiting the teacher and that nothing happens in the exchange that furthers the plot line in any way. In a novel such as Das Gemeindegeld, where the narrator spends less time depicting the inner lives of the characters and more time portraying episodes that contribute to Pavel's development, such a peculiar passage stands out and signals to the reader that an important message lies therein. The narrator describes the scene, "Der Pfarrer trat heran, schlug, bevor Habrecht es hindern konnte, das Titelblatt auf, und las mit Schrecken, mit Abscheu, mit Gram: Titi Lucretii Cari: De rerum natura. Er zog die Hand zurück, rieb sie

¹⁸⁸ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 251.

¹⁸⁹ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 124.

heftig am Rocke ab und rief: “Lucrez ... O, Herr Lehrer – O! ...”¹⁹⁰ Habrecht tries to convince the priest that it is a mere coincidence that the book is on the table. Reassured, the priest responds, “Wünsche es, hoffe es, müßte Sie sonst bedauern.”¹⁹¹ Habrecht replies, “Und Sie hätten Recht, der Sie einen Himmel haben und ihn Jedem verheißen können, der da kommt, sich bei Ihnen Trost zu holen.”¹⁹² However, the reader learns a few lines later that Habrecht cherishes the book above all others, “Als der Priester ihn verlassen hatte, nahm er den zerlesenen Band, liebte ihn, wie etwas Lebendiges und barg ihn an seiner Brust – seinen mit stets erneuerter Wonne genossenen, stets verleugneten Freund.”¹⁹³

Although singular, the reference to Lucretius and Habrecht’s reading of him convey pointed and particular messages to the educated reader. Lucretius is known for his study of the Greek philosopher Epicurius and his theory of atoms (atomist philosophy), for his invective satires against religion, and for the survival of the entirety of his text despite the Church’s open disdain from antiquity onwards for its writer and its contents. Schuyler Dean Hoslett explains, “To dispel the superstitious fear of the gods and of the dreadful fear of death were his two great moral objectives.”¹⁹⁴ To this end, Lucretius employed biting satirical imagery. E. E. Sikes remarks, “We cannot miss his brilliant pictorial description of Religion visualised as a ghoulish demon lowering over morals with a terrible head, until Epicurus – a historical Perseus or St. George – who returns in triumph, like a Roman consul with his *spolia*, to bring news of victory – *nos*

¹⁹⁰ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 87.

¹⁹¹ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 88.

¹⁹² Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 88.

¹⁹³ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 88.

¹⁹⁴ Schuyler Dean Hoslett, Lucretius: His Genius and His Moral Philosophy (Kansas City: The Midland publishers, 1939) 24-25.

exaequat victoria caelo.”¹⁹⁵ Lucretius, an ancient pessimist in the philosophical sense, understood that religion arose when humans could not explain nature; storms and natural phenomena caused trepidation that the gods were exacting vengeance upon the world. Lucretius, like Epicurius, rejects this notion of religion as useless and argues that pleasure is the highest good to which we can aspire. Today, Epicureanism connotes simple pleasures especially associated with eating fine foods and enjoying first-rate wines. However, our modern interpretation of Epicurean thought does not accurately reflect the ancient philosophy, and instead further misperceptions about Epicureans. Epicurean philosophy, in its truest form, suggests pleasure as the removal of want and/or pain. Epicurus distinguishes between two different types of pleasure, kinetic and katastematic pleasures; the former denotes pleasure brought about by movement of sense organs, and the latter denotes pleasure brought about by achieving a state of equilibrium of not needing anything, the highest state in Epicurean philosophy.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, Epicurius differentiates between three types of kinetic pleasure: a) natural and necessary, b) natural but not necessary, and c) unnatural and unnecessary.¹⁹⁷ For Lucretius, the Epicurean philosophy of pleasure is most important in that it induces the public to seek the fulfillment of wants and needs in sensual reality as opposed to religion.

In his seminal work *De Rerum Natura*, “Of the Nature of Things,” Lucretius devotes large portions of the text to an exposition of Epicurean atomistic scientific philosophy, the belief that all things in the world, including humans, are composed of one element, atoms, and that these atoms are neither lost nor gained; they exist in equilibrium.

¹⁹⁵ E. E. Sikes, *Lucretius, Poet & Philosopher* (Cambridge [Eng.]: The University press, 1936) 12.

¹⁹⁶ John Godwin, *Lucretius, Ancients in Action*; (Bristol: Bristol Classical, 2004)

xi.

¹⁹⁷ Godwin, *Lucretius*, Xi.

One can observe the similarity to Newtonian science; however, it is important to note that Epicurean philosophy, in contrast to Newton's laws, was not based on scientific evidence. Nonetheless, Lucretius devoted himself to this "science." Godwin specifically criticizes the amount of scientific debate in Lucretius' work as imbalanced vis-à-vis the relative dearth of ethics in the text. But he explains that this imbalance is "neatly accounted for if we remember that for Lucretius pleasure is the highest good, and that the study of nature (what Greeks called *physiologia*) was for him a source of deep pleasure and the expression of this study in verse was also the source of his nights of serenity."¹⁹⁸ For Lucretius, this "scientific study" is the font of knowledge that will remove fear and misunderstanding, which he saw as the basis of religious belief. But for modern readers interested not so much in his philosophy or "science" as in his literary impact as a poet, Lucretius presents a particular challenge; Lucretius the poet often takes second seat to Lucretius the didactician.

The connotations of this reference for Ebner-Eschenbach's work are thus manifold. Habrecht clings to a philosophy that adamantly opposes metaphysical beliefs and maintains that reason and scientific knowledge lead to true pleasure. This stands in stark contrast to the village priest in Das Gemeindegeld, who reprimands those who come in search of worldly comfort, reminding them that there is a heaven. Thus, the reader observes the juxtaposition of Habrecht and the priest between religious and rational thought. One can also interpret a criticism of the priest and the Church if one considers Habrecht's position as the voice of reason and morals within the novel. *Nomen est omen*; Habrecht's name means "is right," which indicates for the reader the superiority of his

¹⁹⁸ Godwin, Lucretius, XV.

morals and beliefs.¹⁹⁹ One must be cautious, however, not to equate Habrecht's views with those of Ebner-Eschenbach. Habrecht is aloof from society and mentally cannot relate to those in the community around him; thus, he flees to a realm of ideas and eventually flees to an unknown America to find relief from the evils of Habsburg society. Certainly, the narrator does not portray Habrecht as an ideal character, and his philosophical progression within the novel diverges significantly from Ebner-Eschenbach's personal values and beliefs. Nonetheless, one can deduce with some certainty that Habrecht's reading of Lucretius is not a random reference; Ebner-Eschenbach read *De Rerum Natura* while writing *Das Gemeindegeld*. Her incorporation of the book into the novel is an exhortation to the reader to examine critically the use of religion in connection with fear. It is also a statement to the reader that "scientific" rational thought counters naive religious belief. Lastly, it is a further indicator of impact of scientific developments in the nineteenth century on Ebner-Eschenbach's writing.

In his analysis of Ebner-Eschenbach's writing, Baasner argues that the author's interest in rational thought and Catholicism correspond more closely to the Josephinian

¹⁹⁹ Baasner differentiates further. He insists that Habrecht's name is not necessarily an indication that he "is right" rather that he is a "know-it-all." Baasner cites Habrecht's name as evidence and points out that his name is not "Hat-recht." However, Hatrecht is not a common name, whereas Habrecht is a known name. Furthermore, when Habrecht says that one might just as well call him Mamprav if one does not like his German name, one has another opportunity to interpret his role in light of his name. The second half of this Slavic name, which undoubtedly comes from "pravda," meaning truth, is a translation of the second half of Habrecht's name. There is, in this translation, which further strengthens the metaphorical nature of his name, no indication of the German notion of a "*rechthaberisch*" personality. The general thrust of his argument is correct that one must be cautious not to equate Habrecht with ultimate moral authority, but there are other indicators that are far more telling than his name. Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," 271.

late enlightenment rationalism of the Bohemian philosopher Bernard Bolzano.²⁰⁰ The combination of rational thought and Catholicism that Baasner sees as a central theme in Das Gemeindegeld forms the basis for this argument: “[In Bolzanos Lehren] sind jene Kernpunkte enthalten, die Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach zur Grundlage der idealen Weltanschauung im *Gemeindegeld* macht. Sowohl Pavels erfahrungsbezogenes Widerlegen des klösterlichen Glaubenssatzes ‘Niemand muß ein Dieb sein, jeder Mensch kann sich sein Brot redlich verdienen’ (51,3) entspricht jener ‘Einsicht’ Bolzanos, als auch der Anknüpfungspunkt Habrechts mit dem Jenseits, den er als Frucht seiner lebenslangen Suche schließlich proklamiert.”²⁰¹ Baasner argues further, “Eine weitere Problematik des Gemeindegeldes, die Durchführbarkeit, der Umfang und das Ziel von Schulbildung, gehört ebenfalls zu den wichtigeren Bestandteilen josephinistischen Denkens. Auch auf diesem Gebiet hat Bolzano vielfach Äußerungen getan”²⁰² In particular, Bolzano’s philosophy that caring for neglected children is one of the highest forms of charity convinces Baasner that Ebner-Eschenbach was more influenced by the philosophical tradition involving Bolzano and his students than the ethical movement Salter and his European colleagues had begun.

Although the similarities seem unmistakable, these are not features that are necessarily unique to Bolzano’s philosophy; indeed, it seems likely that Ebner-Eschenbach’s text may exhibit the influence of Bolzano’s writing. However, Baasner reaches quite far in order to convince literary scholars that Ebner-Eschenbach’s novel displays more the influence of enlightenment philosophy than that of the late nineteenth century ethical movement. Indeed, it may well be fruitful to consider that both Salter’s

²⁰⁰ Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," 342.

²⁰¹ Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," 343.

²⁰² Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," 343.

and Bolzano's philosophical writings provide philosophical background for a reading of Ebner-Eschenbach's novel. His emphasis upon Catholic themes in the novel also seems overstated. Certainly, Milada's life in the convent, the role of the priest and the church in Soleschau, Catholic holidays, and Barbara Holub's strict adherence to her interpretation of the Bible as pertains to marital relations all indicate the pervasiveness of Catholicism in the novel. However, one can see these as nothing more than a realistic portrayal of Austrian society at the time rather than a basis for interpreting the novel along Catholic lines.

Furthermore, Ebner-Eschenbach's relationship to the Catholic Church must be seen as problematic at best. Carl Steiner explains, "Although raised a Catholic, Marie Ebner left this tradition gradually in an intellectual as well as in a spiritual sense in order to find a new and personal faith of her own in a sort of moral theism."²⁰³ Steiner notes in the same passage that Ebner-Eschenbach's novel Glaubenslos? depicts the struggle of a young priest to cope with a similar struggle between moral beliefs and strict adherence to Catholic theology. Most critics note Ebner-Eschenbach's problematic relationship to Catholicism. But, the most important indication that her Catholic faith may not be an appropriate basis for interpreting the novel is the reception of her novel by the official Church. Doris Klostermaier, for example, observes,

More annoying for Marie von Ebner was the criticism coming from authorities close to the Catholic Church. They objected to the fact that she had dared criticize priests and institutionalized religion in her work. They pointed out that she had propagated ideas that contradicted Christian dogma and morals, and they therefore tried to prevent her works from being placed in public libraries (Reinke 780). By describing narrow-minded, inexorable and hard-hearted nuns and by exposing the pettiness

²⁰³ Carl Steiner, Of Reason and Love : The Life and Works of Marie Von Ebner-Eschenbach (1830-1916), Studies in Austrian Literature, Culture, and Thought; (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1994) 173.

and opportunism of a priest in her latest story, she had deeply offended some Catholic readers.²⁰⁴

The official Catholic Church felt so deeply offended by Das Gemeindkind that it deemed it unsuitable for Catholic libraries! This shows that any attempt to interpret the novel on the basis of Catholic theology must be approached with caution. Once again, Ebner-Eschenbach's aversion to ideology makes her status as a Catholic writer tenuous at best. Just as the historical dates and background of the novel merely provide a backdrop for the events, what Rossbacher calls a "Geschichtskolorit," Catholic theology and the Catholic church do not present themselves as real agents of change and certainly not as vital for the positive didactic message of the novel.

A further conundrum for Baasner's argument that Bolzano's philosophy influenced Ebner-Eschenbach more than Salter's ethics is that there is no evidence that Ebner-Eschenbach ever read Bolzano. The writer never once mentions him in her diaries or letters! In contrast, Baasner himself notes the often-cited letter by Louise von Francois to Carl Ferdinand Meyer:

In der nämlichen Zeit schrieb mir meine Freundin Ebner, diese Seele von einer Frau, wiederholt mit höchster Bewunderung über das Werk eines Amerikaners, von dessen Wirkung sie geradezu eine neue Weltordnung zu erwarten schien; endlich schickte sie mir W.M. Salters "Religion der Moral" (...) Auf das erste Blatt hatte sie geschrieben: "Kein Philosoph, ein Prophet, dessen demütigste Jüngerin M.E."²⁰⁵

Ebner-Eschenbach, therefore, not only read Salter's writing on ethics, she gave a copy of the treatise to her friend Louise von Francois and inscribed it, calling herself his most humble apostle. Thus, I do not agree with Baasner's claim,

²⁰⁴ Doris M. Klostermaier, Marie Von Ebner-Eschenbach : The Victory of a Tenacious Will, Studies in Austrian Literature, Culture, and Thought; (Riverside, Calif.: Ariadne Press, 1997) 188.

²⁰⁵ Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," 338-39.

Schon weil die Dichterin die Sammlung der Vorträge Salters erst im fortgeschrittenen Alter zu Gesicht bekam, muß man voraussetzen, daß ihr Weltbild bereits so fest gefügt war, daß sie in Salters Schriften höchstens eine Bestätigung, nicht aber eine Lehre, die sie plötzlich in ihren Bann schlug, gefunden hat.²⁰⁶

Baasner further argues that the examples Salter used were so far from Ebner-Eschenbach's milieu that it is much more probable that the European enlightenment exerted more influence than earlier Ebner-Eschenbach research had shown. Since the author herself exercised such unrestrained praise at the time she read Salters' works, it seems more in line with her thinking to view Salter's work as particularly influential for her text. The argument that the baroness's advanced age (though fifty years old need not be seen as "advanced") means that she could not have learned from Salter seems also problematic. It is entirely possible that earlier scholars overlooked Bolzano and the Austrian Enlightenment as forces that shaped Ebner-Eschenbach's ethics, but the text itself does not bear the marks of that influence. Unfortunately, this fault in Baasner's interpretation also leads him to overstate the influence of Catholicism and Liberalism upon Ebner-Eschenbach's text, which leads to a misreading of the text.

In regard to the author's depiction of religion, morals, and ethics, Baasner is not the only modern critic who has overlooked or diminished the importance of Ebner-Eschenbach's reading of and inclusion of Salter's Die Religion der Moral in Das Gemeindegeld. In his article on history and similarities to Nietzsche in Ebner-Eschenbach's novel, Salumets mischaracterizes Habrecht's affinity for Salter's ethics. He writes,

Habrecht selbst kann trotz dieser Einsichten den "Gespenstern der toten Vergangenheit" (255), wie er sich selbst ausdrückt, nichts anderes entgehen, als die Flucht aus einer Umwelt, die ihn ständig an seine

²⁰⁶ Baasner, "Iv. Deutung," 339.

Vergangenheit erinnert. Aber schon bald fällt er seiner Vergangenheit wieder zum Opfer. Dementsprechend erscheint auch die Reise zu einer religiösen Gemeinschaft in Amerika von vornherein kaum erfolgsversprechend, insbesondere, wenn wir Miladas Schicksal in Betracht ziehen: Dort bleibt der Bereich des Religiösen als Lösung ihrer Problematik, die auch um Vergangenheitsbewältigung kreist, nicht nur verschlossen, sondern führt in eine Katastrophe, die selbst des Hoffnungsschimmers einer besseren Zukunft entbehren muß.²⁰⁷

Salter's ethics and the ethical society of which Habrecht becomes a follower are, however, not the same as religion, and the contrast to the Catholic Church could not be more marked. Salumets is certainly correct in pointing out the negative portrayal of the Catholic Church in the novel, especially in regard to Milada's death in the convent. However, Habrecht's journey to America and his engagement with the ethical society may actually represent a real possibility for the former teacher to escape his past and its baggage (including his problematic relationship to the villagers whose religious practices may be characterized as cultural Catholicism). Indeed, as I have shown in this section, there are numerous points of intersection between Das Gemeindegeld and Salter's Die Religion der Moral that indicate Ebner-Eschenbach's positive reception of Salter's ethics specifically in contrast to her portrayal of the Catholic Church as a problematic institution.

V. Ethics and Finding a Voice

When we explored literary realism at the beginning of this chapter, we noted what Aust had emphasized as a central characteristic of *Verklärungsrealismus*, namely the national didactic dimension of the texts. Although Ebner-Eschenbach's oeuvre leaves the reader with no ambiguity in terms of her disdain for ethnic nationalism, the moral, ethical, and educational aspects of her work stand out as central themes. In Das

²⁰⁷ Salumets, Geschichte als Motto, 18.

Gemeindekind, this theme is reflected in numerous aspects of Pavel's life as he matures into an upstanding member, perhaps the most virtuous member, of the village. In the last scene where Habrecht is present in the novel, he exhorts Pavel to continue improving his reputation. His words, like the aphorism that opens this chapter, also urge the reader to push forward with moral development, "wenn Du heute nicht besser bist, als Du gestern warst, bist Du gewiß etwas schlechter" ²⁰⁸ Habrecht recognizes the changing times and the changing roles in society when he advises Pavel

Wende mir nicht ein: das sind lauter zu hohe Grundsätze für Unseren, gehen Sie damit zu Denen, die ohnehin schon hoch stehen, wir sind geringe Leute, für uns ist auch eine geringere Moral gut genug ... Ich sage Dir, gerade die beste ist für Euch die rechte, Ihr Geringen Ihr seid die Wichtigen, ohne Eure Mitwirkung kann nichts Großes sich mehr vollziehen – von Euch geht aus, was Fluch oder Segen der Zukunft sein wird ... ²⁰⁹

In this last exchange between the two, Habrecht tells Pavel and the reader as well that the old order with the baroness as the highest moral authority in the village has passed; Pavel and others like him – formerly the poorest and least important in the village – have now eclipsed her. In this instance, the didactic nature of the text becomes visible: educating the broad public – just as Pavel is also educated – leads to the forming of a new leading social class. Just before Habrecht departs on the train, Pavel tells him that it is time, referring to the train departure, and the teacher responds, "Eure Zeit, ja wohl – und was Ihr aus derselben macht, das wird" ²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 127.

²⁰⁹ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 127.

²¹⁰ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 127. This scene is also noteworthy because Habrecht departs on a train, whereas the others in the novel travel on horses or on foot. This is another indication of Habrecht's connection with progress in social, ethical, and technological areas.

This didactic aspect of the text also informs in Pavel's development from the uneducated son of a murderer into a citizen capable of speaking and acting responsibly and rationally, especially in his linguistic development. One can scarcely overlook the similarities between the language the narrator uses to portray Pavel in the novel and the description of poverty in Salter's ethical discourse. "So lange ein Mensch nur an Selbsterhaltung denkt, ist er kaum mehr als ein Tier; er beginnt menschlich zu sein, wenn der Gedanke an seine Familie ihn bestimmt," explains Salter.²¹¹ The reader of Ebner-Eschenbach's novel notes the numerous times that Pavel is likened to an animal. On the first page, the narrator compares Pavel to "ein ungeleckter Bär, wie man ihn malt oder besser nicht malt."²¹² In another early scene when Pavel and Milada stand before the baroness, the narrator draws the reader's attention to Pavel's "struppiges Haar" which is unkempt.²¹³ And when the dog has drawn attention to Pavel's unwanted presence at the castle and people come to take Pavel away, we read, "Pavel wurde umringt und überwältigt, obwohl er raste und sich zur Wehr setzte wie ein wildes Thier."²¹⁴ But, as one would expect from a moralistic agenda based on Salter, Pavel's change in the novel is not merely a moral change from bad to good but also an edification through the acquisition of language. Just before his last visit with Milada, Pavel explains to the nun at the gates of the convent, "Ich möchte auch gern der Mutter schreiben, daß die Schwester sie grüßen läßt."²¹⁵ We learn over the course of the novel that Pavel masters reading and writing both print and handwriting, a challenge that he can not overcome earlier when he is forced to ask Habrecht to read the letter from Barbara. One can note

²¹¹ Salter, Die Religion der Moral, 248.

²¹² Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 5.

²¹³ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 9.

²¹⁴ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 14.

²¹⁵ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindegeld, 118.

that the mother's letter is replete with mistakes in orthography and sentence structure. But, Pavel, through education in language and morals overcomes this deficiency and learns to read and write "rationally." Yet, the same scene hints to the reader that Pavel was not purely bad even before his transformation; his non-conforming "immoral" behavior was his act of kindness to his sister. "War sie's, deren Geschrei "Hunger, Pavlicek, Hunger!" ihn zum Diebstahl verleitet hatte, wie oft, wie oft!," Pavel asks himself when he sees his sister for the last time and can hardly recognize her.²¹⁶ If one considers Salter's statement above about hunger, Pavel's "immoral" actions were moral, and moreover humane.

Another scene earlier in the novel when Pavel is contemplating suicide due to his miserable situation informs the reader that despite Pavel's mischievous behavior, he still possess an innate moral sense. We read,

wie er dabei den Kopf in die Erde wühlt, regt sich etwas in seiner Nähe, und er vernimmt ein leises Geräusch, wie es durch das Aufspreizen kleiner Flügel hervorgebracht wird. Er schaut... Wenige Schritte von ihm sitzt ein Rebhuhn auf dem Neste und hält die Augen in unaussprechlicher Angst auf einen Feind gerichtet, der sich schräg durch die jungen Halme anschleicht. Unhörbar, bedrohlich, grau - eine Katze ist's. Pavel sieht sie jetzt ganz nah dem Neste stehen; sie leckt den lippenlosen Mund, krümmt sich wie ein Bogen und schickt sich an zum Sprung auf ihre Beute. Ein Flügelschlag, und der Vogel wäre der Gefahr entrückt; aber er rührt sich nicht. Pavel hatte über der Besorgnis um das Dasein des kleinen Wesens alle seine Selbstmordgedanken vergessen: - So flieg, du dummes Tier! dachte er. Aber statt zu entfliehen, duckte sich das Rebhuhn, suchte sein Nest noch fester zu umschließen und verfolgte mit den dunklen Äuglein jede Bewegung der Angreiferin. Pavel hatte eine Scholle vom Boden gelöst, sprang plötzlich auf und schleuderte sie so wuchtig der Katze an den Kopf, daß sie sich um ihre eigene Achse drehte und geblendet und niesend davonsprang. Der Bursche sah ihr nach; ihm war weh und wohl zumute. - Er hatte einen großen Schmerz erfahren und eine gute Tat getan. Unmittelbar nachdem er sich elend, verlassen und reif zum Sterben gefühlt, dämmerte etwas wie das Bewußtsein einer Macht in ihm auf... einer anderen, einer höheren als derjenigen, die seine starken Arme und

²¹⁶ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 119.

sein finsterer Trotz ihm oft verliehen. Was war das für eine Macht? Unklar tauchte diese Frage aus der lichtlosen Welt seiner Vorstellungen²¹⁷

This moral conscience that dawns inside Pavel is thus present in him before his transformation from a shameless and wayward youth into an upstanding citizen of the community. This passage makes clear for the reader that Pavel's life, his surroundings, and his family (later, his lack thereof) had offered him neither positive influences nor images of positive behavior that he could imitate. Thus, Ebner-Eschenbach depicts the core of Pavel as inherently moral; continued moral conduct, however, is a learned behavior or acquired habit that Pavel masters only as a result of his friendship with Habrecht and his sister's imploring him to do good.²¹⁸

VI. Conclusion

When Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindekind was published in 1887, it was an immediate success and garnered positive reviews from readers as well as literary greats of the time, such as Gottfried Keller. From then on, her reputation preceded her and she

²¹⁷ Ebner-Eschenbach, Das Gemeindekind, 22.

²¹⁸ One may read into this a discussion of the recurring debate between nature and nurture in Ebner-Eschenbach's text, and such an interpretation is indeed tempting. One could even, as several authors have, interpret the text as a discussion of Darwin and social Darwinism; however, there is no direct indication in the text that Ebner-Eschenbach is employing Darwinian scientific theory. See Enno Lohmeyer, Marie Von Ebner-Eschenbach als Sozialreformerin, Helmer Wissenschaft (Königstein/Taunus: Helmer, 2002). That her *Weltanschauung* was certainly influenced by the scientific changes in the nineteenth century, of which Darwin's theory of evolution was a major component, is however not in question. The text also incorporates inheritance of traits as a major theme. However, there are no direct links to Darwin, as there are for Salter's ethical philosophy and a more general scientific revolution of the nineteenth century. Salter had read Darwin and appreciated him, as I have noted above in this chapter. Still, neither a direct influence of Darwin's writings on Ebner-Eschenbach nor evidence that she was versed in Darwinian theory could be found in her diaries.

became known as the author of Das Gemeindegeld. In her later years, her birthdays became moments of national celebration as she was embraced heartily by the Austrian public. In 1910, she became the first woman to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Vienna; she had acquired a reputation as the grande dame of German letters.

However, her popularity began to fade shortly after her death. One observes that the audience who remained interested in Ebner-Eschenbach's works for the longest time has not been a scholarly audience; rather a general reading public has formed her most faithful readership. When one asks why her works (of which several have significant literary value) have not found their way into the traditional literary canon of German literature, there are myriad answers. Among them, the culture that Ebner-Eschenbach so vividly portrays no longer exists, and there is no movement to resurrect the K.u.K. monarchy, save in the writings of Joseph Roth, whose affection for the monarchy may have been more a reaction against growing nationalist and anti-semitic tones in Austria. Another reason for Ebner-Eschenbach's lack of popularity in academic literary circles is that feminists have been reticent to embrace Ebner-Eschenbach. Her views of the fledgling feminist movement in nineteenth-century Austria are often disparaging, though one ought to note that she remained close friends with Helene von Druskowitz, one of the outstanding women at the forefront of the Austrian feminist movement. Additionally, the literary movement most often associated with Ebner-Eschenbach, realism, waned as expressionism, naturalism and a host of other movements supplanted it on the Austrian cultural scene. Finally and for this dissertation most importantly, scholarly research on Ebner-Eschenbach's works has tended to overlook significant features of the texts, which

are often at odds with pre-conceived notions of the author's persona as well as her contributions to literary realism.²¹⁹ I return to the quote at the beginning of the chapter where Strelka laments, "Die grosse kritische Ausgabe ihrer Werke, die Karl Konrad Polheim in Bonn begonnen hat, änderte bis jetzt daran leider nur wenig."²²⁰ Strelka is referring to the author's lack of popularity among literary scholars. One reason that the critical edition of Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindekind has not contributed to a renaissance of interest in the author and her works is that the editor's interpretation provided furthers pre-suppositions about the text and its author, such as her relationship to Catholicism and an ostensibly utopian ending in Das Gemeindekind.

This chapter has shown Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach as a perceptive interpreter of the social, ethical, scientific, technological, and literary changes that affected Austrian culture in the mid to late nineteenth century. The exploration of the novel in relation to literary realism as influenced by scientific developments of the nineteenth century has demonstrated how Ebner-Eschenbach fulfills the role of what one may term Zola's ideal novelist. With the development of Pavel within the novel, Ebner Eschenbach does not remain content merely to capture images or record events; she explores like a scientist in search of truth and investigates the individual and social nature of humans via literature.

This aspect of the text allows the reader to see the impact of science upon the text and

²¹⁹ Peter Pfeiffer highlights this point in his article on her reception or lack thereof within the literary canon. He adds that Ebner-Eschenbach is often brushed aside as a writer of animal stories for children and overly-sentimental novels. His article on her exclusion from the literary canon shows how attempts to classicize, among a host of other issues, have contributed to a general misunderstanding and misappreciation of her texts in German literary scholarship. See Peter Pfeiffer, "Im Kanon und um den Kanon herum: Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach," Akten des X. Internationalen Germanistenkongresses Wien 2000 Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik A.60 (2003): 113-18.

²²⁰ Strelka, "Vorwort," Des Mitleids tiefe Liebesfähigkeit, 7.

place it within the realist tradition that occupies an important literary-historical space between Romanticism and Naturalism. As Aust explains, “[Es] ist damit der literarhistorische Ort zwischen Romantik (Überbetonung des Subjektiven, Phantastischen) und Naturalismus (Überbetonung der exakten Wirklichkeitskopie, bevorzugte Darstellung des Häßlichen) angezeigt, an denen der Realismus nur in maßvoller Weise teilhat.”²²¹

The section of this chapter on science, technology, and literature demonstrated how the entrance of the steam engine into the novel marks an important turning point in the novel and sets up Pavel’s role within the village as the individual who is most capable of adapting to the socio-economic and historical changes that take place in the nineteenth century. As a literary device, the machine also functions within a metaphorical system to indicate an anti-pastoral element within the text. Instead of a traditional Virgillian pastoral that emphasizes the idyllic setting between raw nature on the one hand and pure culture on the other, Ebner-Eschenbach’s Das Gemeindekind as an anti-pastoral points to the symbiotic connection of nature to culture via science and technology. Science and technology as markers of culture do not disrupt any idyll in the text; they instead connect culture to nature as culture increasingly attempts to understand and instrumentalize nature via technology. Instead of entering a pastoral and disrupting the idyll, the steam engine enters into the anti-pastoral and indicates that scientific and technological advance is a necessary and eminent aspect of an emergent post-mythic Austrian culture.

An important aspect of such a post-mythic society is also the development of a surrogate for religion, whose role as the determiner of moral norms, has been called into question by an unmasking of its insistence upon non-rational methods in order to

²²¹ Aust, Literatur des Realismus, 20.

interpret the world. Human ability to explain natural phenomena without resorting to mythical notions of the world deprived religion of its capacity as an arbiter of nature interpretation; yet, the moral aspect of religion was still necessary to society as both a sociological and psychological force. This chapter has shown how Ebner-Eschenbach's incorporation of Lucretius as well as Salter's ethics combine to supplant the Catholic religion, a belief system that becomes increasingly suspect throughout the novel due to the cold, harsh, and destructive actions of the Catholic authorities, namely the nuns and the village priest. Rather than the Enlightenment philosophy of Bolzano, as Baasner claims, the text offers multiple clues and hints to the reader that important philosophical and ethical movements of the nineteenth century inform Ebner-Eschenbach's text. Ebner-Eschenbach's presentation, representation, and interpretation of Salter's ethics as well as Lucretius' anti-religious text calls upon the reader to examine critically the use of religion in connection with fear. It also signifies the superiority of "scientific" rational thought over naive religious belief. Lastly, it shows how scientific and technological developments in the nineteenth century influenced Ebner-Eschenbach's text.

The final section of this chapter examines the didactic nature of Ebner-Eschenbach's *Verklärungsrealismus*. We see clearly in Ebner-Eschenbach's text the connection between the development of morals, the improvement of linguistic and rational abilities, and the improvement of material means. In Pavel's development of agency and voice, we can also therefore read a didactic paradigm for the imagined reader and Austrian culture as a whole. "Verklärung" as a central aspect of the Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld distinguishes the events the narrator describes in Soleschau as literary expressions of "scientific" inquiry rather than mere images that have

been copied from actual occurrences. The novel explores the transformation of Pavel Holub from the village pariah into an extraordinary citizen. In doing so, it explores not only the advance of Pavel and but also the advance of Austrian culture in the nineteenth century.

In the next chapter, I shift the focus from Ebner-Eschenbach to another late-nineteenth-century Austrian author, Peter Rosegger. This shift also constitutes a shift in geography as Ebner-Eschenbach depicts village life in the Moravian region of the empire, and Rosegger focuses on rural life in Styria. In terms of their social status and backgrounds, Rosegger and Ebner-Eschenbach could not be more different as Rosegger grew up uneducated in a poor farming village in the mountains of Styria, whereas Ebner-Eschenbach enjoyed an aristocratic education. Despite their gender, class, and educational differences, the two authors exhibit some marked similarities. Both write about village life in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the Austrian empire and both depict the rapidly changing atmosphere due to technological and social change in the empire. The texts of the two authors evince tones of both pessimism and optimism, reflecting belief in the advance of society through social mobility and scientific/technological innovation but also in a breakdown of the traditional fabric that historically held communities in rural Austria together.

While I continue to look at the seam between nature and culture and to examine the development of ecological thought in literature during the nineteenth century, the chapter on Rosegger will show a shift from Ebner-Eschenbach's portrayal of social mobility within the Moravian village as well as the progress of that village through individual development and enlightenment. In my analysis of Rosegger's works, I will

highlight his presentation of social decline in rural Austria and the loss of *Heimat* as well as the dichotomies of industrialization vs. agrarian lifestyle and the city vs. the countryside. As I will show, Rosegger expresses both skepticism in regard to technology and industrialization as well as hope in the advancement of society through limited cultural transfer between the city and the countryside in terms of education and “genuineness.”

The shift from Ebner-Eschenbach to Rosegger also involves a shift in the intended reader. Whereas Ebner-Eschenbach wrote for a largely educated reading public that could grasp her nuanced discussion of morality and ethics in its historical, scientific, and literary contexts, Rosegger’s readership consisted largely of a newly urbanized public that understood well the loss of community about which Rosegger wrote. It is significant that, despite the drastic difference in their social milieus and education, the two contemporaries (Rosegger and Ebner-Eschenbach) carried on a letter exchange and knew each other’s works. One must also be careful not to categorize either author’s readership too narrowly, for there were undoubtedly many who read works by both. In light of the contemporaneousness of their writing, setting the two authors as well as their works in dialogue with each other will provide the dissertation with a larger understanding of the development of nature and ecology in the nineteenth century in Austria across social, geographical, gender, and educational borders.

Chapter Three

Peter Rosegger

I. Introduction

In a recent publication, Karlheinz Rossbacher notes that Peter Rosegger remains one of the most well known authors in Austria, especially in the countryside.²²² The Styrian bard's publications span a half-century and include articles in various journals (mostly Heimgarten, edited by the author), poetry in both dialect and High German, and an extensive collection of novels and short stories. Despite his popularity and name-recognition in German-speaking countries, the author remains a local phenomenon relatively unknown in the globalized world of belle lettres. This is perhaps due to the specificity of Rosegger's Styrian *Waldheimat*, an environment – and a word - so specific in its nature that it fails to translate into analogies in other languages and cultures. Other German-speaking regional cultures offer only diluted comparisons; Keller's fictional Seldwyla, Auerbach's Black Forest, Storm's Husum, and Raabe's Lower Saxony do not capture the meaning of Rosegger's *Waldheimat*. The strongest comparison comes perhaps with other Austrian writers and their environments like the Salzburg of Waggenerl and the borderlands (in twenty-first century geographical terms) of Stifter. This chapter, therefore, casts light upon one of Austria's most popular literary figures and the specifically Styrian and broader Austrian cultures that his writing both documents and shapes.

Despite the name recognition, most Austrians and Germans know Rosegger not due to his journalistic work or his literary productions of greater value, most notably

²²² Karlheinz Rossbacher, "Ich erzähle Träume und sage die Wahrheit." Peter Roseggers "Waldheimat"-Geschichte "Fremd Gemacht!" Rosegger in Kontext, ed. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler and Karl Wagner (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999) 119.

Jakob der Letzte. Wolfgang Schober notes this general tendency in Rosegger scholarship as well: “Derjenige Teil, der sich nicht mit volkskundlichen Themen befaßt, der sich nicht als heitere Erzählungen aus der Jugend und für die Jugend verstehen läßt, wird als problematisch – und daher nicht zum vorausgesetzten Wesen des Dichters passend – hintangestellt.”²²³ Instead, most know the author of Als ich noch der Waldbauernbub war, a collection of short stories written by Rosegger that depict the bucolic poverty of his childhood in the Styrian Alps. The simple and, by today’s standards, kitschy image conveyed in these short stories remains the strongest memory of the author in the minds of readers.²²⁴ Yet, Rosegger himself did not create this particular collection of short stories; the *Hamburger Jugendschriftenausschuß* published them for use as pedagogical reading in 1905 as excerpts from Rosegger’s larger oeuvre. It has certainly branded Rosegger’s reputation within the broader reading public that his most recognized work was specifically aimed at a school-aged audience, and it is little wonder, therefore, that many readers do not associate the author with the broader themes of *Heimat*, nature, liberalism, education for the masses, and the downfall of agricultural communities that paralleled the growth of urban industrial centers in Rosegger’s lifetime, to name a few. Schober notes, “Der tatsächliche Rosegger ist nicht aus dem Kult zu erfassen, der sich heute mit seiner Person und mit seinem unwahrscheinlichen Aufstieg identifiziert, aber auch nicht aus überzogener Kritik, die weder sein Gesamtwerk berücksichtigt noch die Umstände seiner Zeit als für seinen Horizont wesentlich gelten läßt.”²²⁵ This chapter on Rosegger and his literary and journalistic works will look at the nexus of such themes as

²²³ Wolfgang Schober, “Roseggerforschung und Roseggerkult,” Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur (mit Geographie) 25.3 (1981): 157.

²²⁴ For a good example of how the culture industry feeds this image, see the article “...und es ward Weihnachten” Kronenzeitung 25 December 2005.

²²⁵ Schober 165.

nature, heimat, the conflict between the city and the countryside, and rural development within Rosegger's works. While I aim to show a differentiated and complex image of the author that takes into account both his narrow but strong reputation and, in contrast, his broader but lesser known publications, I will also illustrate how Rosegger and his works contributed to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Austrian understandings of nature and the environment.

Rosegger's literary publications span a half-century and thousands of pages. As a result, a multitude of positions, themes, opinions, and artifacts find a place in his works; addressing this wealth of ideas becomes one of the specific challenges that this chapter addresses. Rather than clinging to one particular example of Rosegger's works to illustrate how he contributed to the discussion of nature and the environment, this chapter focuses upon a few specific themes in representative works by Rosegger. In keeping with the context of this dissertation, themes in the author's literary and journalistic production with respect to nature and literature come to the forefront, while religious facets, for example, remain secondary. Still, these secondary aspects guide the reader and offer a glimpse of how Rosegger addressed other topics and features of nineteenth-century discourse. Just as twentieth- and twenty-first-century environmental debates have a decidedly religious tone to them, as Lynn White Jr. has shown in "Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," nineteenth-century views on nature also existed within a matrix of discourses from garden culture to philosophy.

The chapter begins by briefly tracing a few significant literary influences upon Rosegger's writing with respect to nature. Through a cursory glance at such literary figures as Auerbach, Stifter, and Silberstein, the chapter will show that all exert

significant influence upon the Styrian writer and that their literary production often prefigures Rosegger's success as a *Heimat* writer. Upon this basis, the analysis will turn its attention to specific depictions of nature in Rosegger's oeuvre, specifically in the novel Jakob der Letzte and in various articles in the journal Heimgarten. Particular attention will be paid to moments when Rosegger's writing moves beyond the romantic scenery and formulaic images so familiar to any reader of nineteenth-century literature; the interpretation of Jakob der Letzte, in particular, will demonstrate a symbiosis between Rosegger's journalistic writing about nature and the role of natural elements in Rosegger's literary work. In addition, nineteenth-century political and philosophical movements as well as Rosegger's own beliefs regarding the close connection of humans with the earth, the so-called *Zurück zur Scholle* movement, will add a further level of nuance to the discussion.

In the next section, the chapter will explore the logical and literary counterparts of the *Heimat* (or community) and the city (or urban life) in Rosegger's works. Given the sheer volume of research symposia and scholarly publications that have addressed this theme in the past twenty years, *Heimat* and *Heimatliteratur* have been two of the most appealing subjects for German literary studies. Rather than focusing on *Heimat* alone, I will address this subject in relation to the conflict between the city and the countryside in Rosegger's works. *Heimat*, *Heimatkunst*, *Heimatliebe*, and *Heimatliteratur* have a particular importance in Austrian literature. Traditionally, methods that approach *Heimat* attend to what some may refer to as "low-brow" literature. This pejorative stance often leads researchers to the conclusion that *Heimatliteratur* is a conservative, often rural, nationalistic, and *völkisch* movement, whose currency rapidly appreciated near the end of

the nineteenth century and lost its value in the twentieth century. As Karlheinz Rossbacher observes, “Die sogenannte Heimatkunstbewegung ... erhält ihre Kontur durch das Radikalwerden des Konservatismus nach 1890; ihre ausgesprochene Absicht ist es, die gesamte Kultur auf eine landschaftsbedingte und stammesorientierte Grundlage zu stellen.”²²⁶ Rossbacher is quick to point out that the effects of *Heimatkunst* extend far beyond the temporal constraints that he assigns to the literary movement. Still, this caveat does not allow for the importance of *Heimat* in modern “high-brow” Austrian literature from Handke to Jelinek to Bernhard. This is not to say that Rossbacher’s observations have no truth; rather, it points to the need for both synchronic and diachronic differentiation between different expressions *Heimatkunst*. This notion is particularly important for the general trajectory of this dissertation that attempts to understand a series of paradigmatic shifts in Austrian literature and society. These shifts that occur during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrate a changing relationship to nature and technology. Early in the nineteenth century, faith in enlightenment ideals and in the ability of humans to work with technology to overcome or at least enhance nature characterized the relationship of authors and their readers to the environment around them. Later in the century and into the beginning of the twentieth century, Austrians like Rosegger and Salten express a distrust in the idea of progress through human intervention. At the same time, some themes such as the ability of man to perceive and portray nature - themes that inspired earlier authors such as Stifter - continued to influence later authors like Salten. The idyll as an ideal natural space is also a theme to which later authors return. While I cannot offer a diachronic interpretation of *Heimatliteratur*, I remain aware of the fact that this type of literature draws upon the

²²⁶ Rossbacher, Heimatkunstbewegung, 13.

influence of nature and the rural idyll and influences the way that we perceive the city, modernity, and nature as a whole. In keeping with the focus of this dissertation, this chapter will examine *Heimat* not in a larger theoretical sense but as it pertains to Rosegger's writing, in particular the novels Erdsegen and Weltgift.

For the purposes of the analysis in this chapter, a particularly important facet of *Heimatliteratur* is its readership, which Rossbacher evaluates in the words of Hermann Bahr as the "Primärempfänger einer deutschen 'Hauskunst,' ... 'jene Zwischenschichten,' die sich auf dem Weg vom Bauern in die Stadt befänden. Darunter versteht [Bahr] die ganze Mittelschicht in kleineren Provinzorten, dazu die erste und zweite nicht mehr bäuerliche Generation in Klein- und Mittelstädten."²²⁷ As I will show, an awareness of the readership of Rosegger's literary and journalistic works helps us to understand his works and the ambivalences within them more clearly, specifically the city vs. countryside dynamic.

Whereas previous research has almost always highlighted Rosegger's acerbic words on city life as an authoritative position from which to interpret the author's literary works, this chapter will attend also to the positive role of urban life in Rosegger's literary and journalistic work, specifically education as a instrument of progress that would also enhance the life of the rural poor. In all the novels that this chapter addresses, elements of urban life and education play important roles. The sections that focus on this pair reveal that the exclusively negative impression of the city, on which many critics have previously insisted, is neither present in Rosegger's life nor in his works. This is one important area where a myth surrounding the author has long overshadowed his actual literary production. While city life in Rosegger's writing remains burdened with the

²²⁷ Rossbacher, Heimatkunstbewegung, 96.

negative aspects of modern urbanity (dual desires for luxury and decadence coupled with environmental degradation), rural life for Rosegger is far from the bucolic idyll that so many critics have envisioned. Indeed, as numerous examples from Rosegger's literary production attest, rural life is difficult and full of challenges brought on by nature and society.

II. Influences upon Rosegger's Writing

That Rosegger drew upon the influence of literary luminaries of his time goes without saying. For the purposes of this dissertation, one may look to the understanding of nature in the writing of previous authors from Plato and Aristotle to the late enlightenment debate of Gottsched, Bodmer, and Breitinger to Goethe, Schiller, and Stifter as inspirations for Rosegger. Indeed, the relationship of literature to nature is one of the most ubiquitous themes in literature, and Rosegger's reading certainly brought him in contact with a number of well-known authors, publishers, and thinkers of his time. A brief analysis of important literary and social influences upon Rosegger's life and writings, therefore, will provide a basis for the subsequent reading of the author's works.

As previous researchers have noted, Stifter, Auerbach, and Silberstein all exerted great influence upon the young Rosegger. Berthold Auerbach's short stories depicting life in the rural Swabian village undoubtedly prefigure the portrayal of the Styrian *Waldheimat* in Rosegger's writing. For Rosegger, Auerbach's Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten and Barfüßle exemplify an important shift in German literature from writing about and for a primarily educated upper-class audience to vivid accounts of rural life. The use of the Swabian dialect as a literary device by the university-educated Auerbach portends a growing interest in the every-day life of the common folk and

anticipates Rosegger's use of Styrian dialect in his poetry and prose. While comparisons of Rosegger and Auerbach reveal a common interest in rural communities and the so-called third estate, their lives reveal stark differences. Whereas the German-Jewish Auerbach enjoyed a university education, Rosegger, who received little formal education, was born into a poor and staunchly Roman Catholic farming family in the Styrian Alps of Austria. Bucolic simplicity remains an aesthetic principal for both authors; however, Rosegger writes primarily from first-hand knowledge of farming life.

Although the reception of Auerbach's Swabian stories paved the way for Rosegger's early writing in Styrian dialect and for the positive reception of Rosegger's stories about the *Waldheimat*, Auerbach was not among the earliest authors that inspired the youthful Rosegger to read voraciously and write with compulsive passion.²²⁸ Despite lacking critical reading skills and any broad literary knowledge, Rosegger read the works of numerous authors, among them Schiller's, Gellert's, and Silberstein's, which he borrowed from a neighbor who was sympathetic to his appetite for reading. Latzke notes, "Dort fand er im Herbst 1857 den Illustrierten Volkskalender für das Jahr 1858 mit Silbersteins 'Ziertalerhof', der ihn entscheidend bestimmte, noch ehe er sich dieser Einwirkung völlig bewußt werden konnte."²²⁹ As Philippoff indicates, the Austrian Silberstein and his *Kalendergeschichten* left a deep impression upon the young Rosegger:

Schon im Februar 1866 hatte er es endlich gewagt, sich an sein bewundertes Vorbild aus dem *Volkskalender*, August Silberstein, zu wenden. Der österreichische Meister der Dorfgeschichte zeigte sich dem

²²⁸ Eva Philippoff notes that Rosegger began reading Auerbach in 1866 during his time as a tailor's apprentice. See Eva Philippoff, Peter Rosegger: Dichter Der Verlorenen Scholle (Graz: Styria, 1993) 55.

²²⁹ Rudolf Latzke, Peter Rosegger: sein Leben und sein Schaffen, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1943) 29.

jugen Verehrer gegenüber nicht unempfänglich. Im Sommer traf er mit ihm in Wien zusammen und schenkte ihm eine Ausgabe seiner Werke.²³⁰

As noted, Rosegger was already quite familiar with Silberstein's work, but the meeting must have been a boon for the aspiring author, and it likely encouraged him to pursue publication of his poetry in dialect and his stories with their distinctly Styrian themes of mountain farming.

Rosegger's admiration for various Austrian and German writers often culminated in meetings with some of the most influential cultural figures of the nineteenth century, including among others Auerbach, Anzengruber, and Stifter. While Auerbach and Silberstein served as important predecessors for Rosegger and his *Heimat* poetry, one can argue that Adalbert Stifter's concept of nature presents the philosophical foundation for Rosegger's literary depiction of nature, although Stifter's nature aesthetics carry with them a vastly different message from those of Rosegger. A year after his summer meeting with Silberstein, Rosegger paid a visit to the already quite ill Adalbert Stifter – a visit that heavily influenced Rosegger's writing.²³¹

If we look back to the earlier chapter on Adalbert Stifter, we note that Stifter's literary manifesto known as the "Sanftes Gesetz" provides an excellent summary of his nature philosophy. This stance, as it affects the portrayal of nature in his works and the aesthetic choices Stifter makes in order to accentuate details and the constancy of nature,

²³⁰ Philippoff, Peter Rosegger, 55.

²³¹ Almost all Rosegger scholarship mentions this visit at varying lengths and depths of description. Most surprising is Eva Philippoff's assertion that Rosegger had not read Stifter before his summer visit and that Rosegger was not aware of Stifter's import as a literary figure. Philippoff insists that Rosegger's later account of this visit is inaccurate when he claims that he held a lengthy discussion on art and nature with Stifter at this early date (pp. 57). Unfortunately, Philippoff leaves no footnote and acknowledges no information source, so the reader is left in the dark.

guides and pervades his works. Its influence upon Rosegger's writings cannot be directly traced, but examples of a similar understanding of nature in the Styrian writer's works can be noted.

Stifter advocates a paradigmatic shift from the focus on supernatural or extraordinary natural events to a recognition of every-day natural events as great forces, whose true nature is incomprehensible. Likewise, when one reads Heidepeters Gabriel, one notes that Rosegger's writing reflects a markedly similar position to Stifter's "*Sanftes Gesetz*." Rosegger's narrator encourages Gabriel,

Gabriel, wenn du unverstanden bist, so blättere im Buche der Natur. Alle Wesen sind Buchstaben, von Gott geschrieben, und die ganze Welt ist wie ein großes Lied. Siehe, dort hinter dem Waldhang ist ein dunkler Teich. Da ist kein Leben und Bewegen, er starrt hervor, wie das offene Auge eines Toten. Kann dieses Gewässer ein Spiegel der Welt sein? Eine lustige Fliege hatte im Gesträuche eben Hochzeit; glücklich, berauscht von diesem süßen, lichtvollen Leben, kommt sie dahergetanzt und setzt sich auf vollen Leben, kommt sie dahergetanzt und setzt sich auf die dunkle Fläche des Teiches. Da wird ein Kreis um das Tier, und größer und größer dehnt sich hin nach allen Seiten bis an das Ufer, und neue folgen ihm, als wollten sich hier Welten bilden. Und das ist der neunfache Kranz der Hochzeiterin, und das ist ihr Grab im schwarzen Grunde. Da fängt am Ufer ein Glöcklein zu läuten an, und jedes Kraut im Walde, das ein Blumenglöcklein hat, läutet den Sterbegesang.²³²

The narrator here revives the age-old theme of the book of nature, a common trope that has its origins in, among others, Aquinas' natural theology. This epistemological position mirrors Stifter's suggestion that true grandeur is to be found more in simple natural elements, for they are a metaphor for something greater. Rosegger's narrator merely makes one step further and asserts that these laws are "von Gott geschrieben"; the metaphor of all beings as letters, which Rosegger draws in the above quotation, points to

²³² Peter Rosegger, "Heidepeters Gabriel," Gesammelte Werke / Peter Rosegger. (Nach d. Text d. Ausg. Letzter Hand (1913-1916), ed. Jost Perfahl, vol. 1 Lebensbeschreibung des Verfassers, von ihm selbst. Die Schriften des Waldschulmeisters. Heidepeters Gabriel (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1989) 367.

God. Like Stifter's "*Sanftes Gesetz*," Heidepeters Gabriel indicates that human nature is directly reflected in non-human nature. With the symbolism of the fly in the water, the narrator suggests that nature also maintains its rituals of death and dying, which represents a pendant to the human rituals surrounding death. The flower bells toll for the fly just as the church bells toll at the death of a villager in Rosegger's Austrian *Heimat*.

One might argue that this is a naive or trite over-romanticized use of symbolism, but the metaphorical language gains another facet when one examines its microcosmic perspective. The circles begin small and grow larger; the narrator's focus also begins with the smallest magnitude and grows as all of nature mourns the death of the fly. In the narrator's metaphor, the natural world is a book; natural phenomena are words, and their manifestations are morphemes or phonemes etc. The narrator reads and portrays the concentric circles made by a fly, the fly's death on the pond, and the imaginary response of nature to the death of the fly. It is significant that the object at the center of this reflection is a fly – insignificant yet meaningful. The fly causes the concentric circles in the water, but they are also due to the properties of the water – the most common element on the planet. They are the effect of the insignificant upon the mundane. The narrator suggests that Gabriel turn his poetic attention to these microcosmic and seemingly insignificant elements in his search for understanding; nature therefore represents an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the poet. The narrator continues,

Wir sehen mit unserem stumpfen Auge nicht den zehntausendsten Teil des zehntausendsten Teiles dieser kleinen Welt, und wie unser Forscher erlahmt in der Unendlichkeit des Großen, so erlahmt es auch in der Unendlichkeit des Kleinen, und zuletzt wissen wir gar nicht, was groß oder klein, ob es überhaupt groß oder klein gibt, oder was hier das Maß ist, oder wie es kommt, daß sich gerade der Mensch angemaßt hat, das

Maß zu sein und zu bestimmen die Dinge, die er nicht kennt und nicht imstande ist zu fassen ...²³³

In another parallel to Stifter's poesy, the poetic eye of the "nature researcher" can fully comprehend neither the infinity of the smallest elements nor the entire magnitude of the world.

The influence of Adalbert Stifter upon Peter Rosegger is unmistakable; the analogies between the two in their understanding and portrayal of nature are evident, and Rosegger himself is well aware of similarities when he notes,

In dieser Zeit nun gegen Ende der Studien in der Handelsakademie – kam mir Adalbert Stifter zur Hand. Ich nahm die Werke dieses Poeten in mein Blut auf und sah die Natur im Stifterschen Geiste. Es ist mir später schwer geworden, Nachahmung meines Lieblingsdichters zu vermeiden und dürften Spuren davon in den älteren meiner Schriften wohl zu finden sein.²³⁴

Indeed, more than mere elements of Stifter's nature philosophy are present in Rosegger's writing. However, Stifter's literary program represents a conscious decision to slow down the narration and focus lengthy portions of his works on nature descriptions or the objective gaze of the narrator upon the setting or landscape. Whereas Stifter contradicted the prevailing literary movement of his time in order to introduce new discussions on nature, technology, science, and movement, Rosegger's writing does not indicate a similar participation in the development of a broader literary discourse. In the end, one can note the influence of Stifter upon Rosegger, but this limited influence did not inspire Rosegger to develop new literary modes of communication as Stifter himself had done.

²³³ Rosegger, Heidepeters Gabriel, 368.

²³⁴ Peter Rosegger, "Lebensbeschreibung des Verfassers von ihm Selbst," Gesammelte Werke / Peter Rosegger. (Nach d. Text d. Ausg. letzter Hand (1913-1916), ed. Jost Perfahl, vol. 1 Lebensbeschreibung des Verfassers, von ihm selbst. Die Schriften des Waldschulmeisters. Heidepeters Gabriel (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1989) 18.

III. Rosegger and Nature

As in Stifter's writings, nature and the environment figure prominently in Peter Rosegger's literary and journalistic works. One may attribute this simply to their setting in rural Styria or their portrayals of a bygone rural idyll. As we shall see later, however, nature is presented and represented in multiple contexts within Rosegger's works.

Additionally, it touches upon many different discourses throughout the author's writing.

One particularly striking aspect of nature in Rosegger's writing from early on is the author's concern for the negative effects of industrialization and the abuse of the environment. In 1873, Rosegger wrote a letter to his closest friend, Brunlechner, whom he knew from his hometown Alpl. In this letter, the author condemns the effects of industrialization as follows:

... ich hätte dich sicher besucht in Niklasdorf, solange die Luft noch rein und durch Hochofenruß nicht verfinstert ist. Ihr mit Euerem Wühlen u. Sengen u. Brennen richtet uns ohnehin die Welt zu Grunde; Ihr Maulwürfe, Ihr Borkenkäfer, Ihr Rosthammel, Ihr seid ja ärger wie der Türk! – Zuerst sandte der Herr die Sündflut; diese vermochte die schöne Erde nicht zu verderben, da sandte er die Industrie – alle Berge werden unterminiert, alle Wälder verbrannt; auf allen Wiesen u. Auen werden Fabriken gebaut, alle Flüsse werden mit Kohlenruß getrübt, u. die Luft wird verdunkelt durch Rauch u. Asche. Die Sündflut war schön u. erhaben in ihrer Gewalt; die Industrie aber ist der langsam u. sicher fressende Rost, welcher seiner Tage jenen Planeten verzehren wird, der bislang die Nächte im Monde beleuchtet mit den Reflexionsstrahlen der Sonne.

Ein Patent stelle ich auf, daß alle Industriellen Zinsen zahlen müssen, an alle Jene, die vom Wasser u. der Luft leben müssen; denn Wasser u. Luft ist Jedem zu eigen – wer erlaubt es Euch, sie zu verderben, mehr als Eueres persönlichen Bedarf ist!

Das ist wahrhaftig keine Faschingskapuzinade; mir geht es zu Herzen, u. so oft u. gern ich die Eisenbahn benütze, so sehne ich mich dennoch nach dem traditionellen Hirtenleben Arkadiens.²³⁵

Rosegger eventually closes the letter by blaming his “senseless” writing on the pollution of the factories in Graz, and he attaches a drawing that shows the pollution of the factories rising above the cities and the mountains in the area extending all the way to Leoben. In his criticism of industry as a destructive force, Rosegger likens the pollution and destruction to the great flood (punishment from God) but criticizes this new demolition as a slow but inevitable eroding rust that devours the planet. Rosegger even suggests that those industries that pollute the air ought to pay a special tax in order to offset the effects of their pollution of the air and water. Despite this rhetorically exaggerated diatribe, Rosegger evidences self-reflection and a realization that he also contributes to this pollution when he writes about his own train travel.

In the end, the author’s emotional reaction to his changing surroundings wins out, and the author idealizes Virgil’s idyllic Arcadian pastoral as the environmental counterpart to his present state in 1873. If we return to the values associated with pastoralism in literature, especially in the nineteenth century, we observe a significant difference between Rosegger and Ebner-Eschenbach. Whereas Ebner-Eschenbach in *Das Gemeindegeld* references a complicated notion of the pastoral, Rosegger imparts a more romantic wistfulness strongly associated with the *Heimatliteratur* movement in the late nineteenth century. In his letter, Rosegger expresses his own naive sentiments and longing for a simpler time and place than his polluted city life. He alludes to that simpler time and place as a “heile Welt” where cultural, social, economic, and environmental

²³⁵ Charlotte Anderle, ed., In ewiger Deinheit : Briefe von Peter Rosegger an einen Jugendfreund (Vienna: Österreichischer Agrarverlag, 1990) 168.

conflicts are anathema. Although, as we have already noted, a necessary aspect of pastoralism in the Virgillian sense is counterforce, an element that serves to remind the reader of the real world outside of the pastoral idyll, Rosegger's letter offers no such glimpse. As we have learned from Leo Marx's work on the subject, a traditional pastoral idyll would incorporate both elements of the rural or raw nature and elements of the urbane or unmitigated culture. The pastoral vision arises and is thus heightened by a dialectic conflict between nature and culture where the ideal pastoral space is an in-between space where both are present but neither fully outweighs the other. Rosegger presents industrial and technological development as cataclysmic events for his rural community; they do not serve to heighten the pastoral image. Quite the opposite, the longing for the Arcadian world serves only to emphasize the author's dismay at the destruction of his *Heimat*. Although the letter still evidences a conflict between Rosegger's own use of technology and his longing for a more pastoral idyll, his letter expresses more a world that is absent of culture – symbolized by industry and technology.

As one notes both in this letter and at numerous other junctures, one aspect of the “*heile Welt*” in Rosegger's writings is nature, which remains one of the central facets of his literary production. The theme of nature in his novels has been studied from various perspectives, in theology, psychoanalysis, and cultural studies. While Dean Garret Stroud's work illuminates the function of nature as a religious metaphor in Rosegger's writing, Philippoff's psychoanalytical approach attempts to explain the psychological conflicts within the author's work, especially in regard to land and the author's connection to the land. While these approaches offer important interpretations of

Rosegger's literature, they focus on nature as a symbol or metaphor for another topic. In a sense, nature has principally been studied as the signifier for another signified, while nature itself has not been studied. Rather than focusing on the function of nature within another symbolic system, this chapter explores nature and Rosegger's depiction of nature as central themes in the author's oeuvre. After a reading of nature in the novel Jakob der Letzte, the analysis will focus upon the presence and meaning of radical nature philosophies such as the *Zurück zur Scholle* movement and the importance of romanticized images of nature in Rosegger's writing. It is difficult and misleading to attempt to extract a single monolithic vision of nature from Rosegger's work, since the author's views on nature change throughout his life and writing. Therefore, the analysis will center on a few common themes in the novels, and select articles and examples from Heimgarten.

Rosegger's novel Jakob der Letzte (1888) chronicles the downfall of a rural farming community in the Austrian Alps during the late nineteenth century. The author places the novel in contemporary time and clearly intends it as a social critique, as he notes in the foreword: "Dieses Werk hat einen tieferen Zweck, als den, bloß zu unterhalten. Es soll eine auffallende und wichtige Erscheinung der Gegenwart schildern, es soll ein Bild geben von dem Untergange des Bauerntums in unseren Alpen."²³⁶ The foreword provides the reader therefore with a lens for interpreting the events in the novel: "Was heute vorgeht, da draußen in den Bergen, es vollzieht sich nicht so sehr von Naturwegen, es vollzieht sich durch die Schuld der Menschen."²³⁷ The reader is left with

²³⁶ Peter Rosegger, Jakob, Der Letzte. Eine Waldbauerngeschichte Aus Unseren Tagen, Peter Rosegger Ausgewählte Schriften, 15. Aufl. ed., 28 vols. (Leipzig: L. Staackmann, 1906) 7.

²³⁷ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 7.

a clear understanding that the downfall of farming in the Alps is not a natural development but a negative and possibly preventable change, for which humans are the culprits. It is important to note that the author's criticisms in the foreword also include farmers. The reader may feel tempted to interpret the novel as a diatribe against the external forces that cause the demise of the village Altenmoos in the novel, but this interpretation ignores the subtle and direct criticisms of the villagers including Jakob. Dean Garret Stroud's interpretation of profane and sacred space in the novel leads him to a reductive interpretation that creates black and white where the novel leaves room for ambiguities.²³⁸ Eva Philippoff's interpretation also remains problematic and far too simplistic when she also interprets Jakob as a "mutiger Kämpfer" and Ladislaus as "skrupellos."²³⁹ Philippoff's argument that Ladislaus drives Jakob to commit murder fails to account for Jakob's inability to adapt to new circumstances; the murder is more the result of a combination of forces than one single event.²⁴⁰ Since the author makes clear in the foreword that his criticism is directed at all humans, including the farmers and villagers in the novel, these interpretations misread Rosegger's novel. In order to avoid this tendency, the analysis in this chapter will focus particular attention on the use of perspective and symbolism within the novel.

Jakob der Letzte does not begin with the rural idyll that usually characterizes *Heimatliteratur*. In contrast to the custom of *Heimatliteratur*, the narrator begins with a dissonant nature and a snowstorm. Jakob sits in his warm home reading scripture and listening to the howling of the wind; a snowstorm disrupts the calm and informs the

²³⁸ Dean Garrett Stroud, The Sacred Journey: The Religious Function of Nature Motifs in Selected Works by Peter Rosegger (Stuttgart: Hans Dieter Heinz, 1986) 83-84.

²³⁹ Philippoff, Peter Rosegger, 142-143.

²⁴⁰ Philippoff, Peter Rosegger, 143.

reader that something has gone awry in the mountain village. The reader learns in the subsequent pages that Jakob's neighbor, Knatschel, has sold his farm and intends to move into the city, to the astonishment of the protagonist. "Gar im Ernst, Nachbar? ... und du hättest dein Haus verkauft?" asks Jakob dumbfounded.²⁴¹ The unusual snowstorm at Pentecost (an extremely late date, even by Alpine standards) symbolizes the disharmony in nature and in the community, and it cues the reader to interpret the neighbor's decision and departure as "unnatural."

The disrupted idyll in the opening chapter stands in stark contrast to the more commonplace mountain vistas in the second chapter, which typify so many works of *Heimat* literature. The second chapter appropriately titled "Das liebe Altenmoos" begins as follows:

Am Vorabend zu Fronleichnam – das war neun Tage nach dem Schneesturm – leuchtete über den Bergen von Altenmoos der helle glühende Sommertag. Die frischgrünen Lärchen, die drüben am Hange in jungen Beständen prangten oder eingesprengt waren in die dämmernden Fichtenwälder, hatten – wer sie näher besah – auf ihren Zweigen purpurrote Kätzchen.²⁴²

The anomalous snowstorm gives way to the familiar chirping birds and budding trees of a tranquil mountain environment. This novel suggests that the village high on the mountain is full of wholesome beauty. Nevertheless, it also brings to mind a fragile environment and an endangered community. Jakob's sons are wayward; Jackerl strays continually from home, and the inaptly named Friedel gives the father no peace. When Friedel asks about neighbor Knatschel's 1000 Gulden, the narrator relates,

Nun hob [Jakob] eine Erdscholle auf und betrachtete sie sinnend. "Was ist denn das?" fragte der Friedel. "Das ist *unser* Tausender, mein Kind", sagte der Vater. "Der kann nicht zerreißen und nicht verbrennen. Zu

²⁴¹ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 22.

²⁴² Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 26.

mehl kann ich ihn zerreiben, in die Luft kann ich ihn streuen und ist doch nicht umzubringen. Und wenn ihn der Mensch pflegt und Gott gibt Sonnenschein und Regen vom Himmel, so ist er ein wohlversichertes Gut und bringt alle Jahr' seine Zinsen, es mag im Land Krieg oder Frieden sein.²⁴³

Jackerl's wandering disrupts the ideal, and his disregard for the land contrasts with the father's connection to the earth. According to the perspective of the speaker, Jakob, Jackerl's detachment represents not only a break with the home and the patriarchal order but also a break with nature and God – a loss of the sense of place.

Most Rosegger scholars have noted the apparent dichotomy between city and countryside in Rosegger's writing, and most have also noted the negative connotations (e.g., sickness) that Rosegger ascribes to the city. While Jakob der Letzte does revisit this theme, it does not dwell only on common clichés present in other Rosegger works. In this "Waldbauerngeschichte aus unseren Tagen," Rosegger explores sickness as a universal phenomenon, applicable to both the city and the countryside. The modern "sickness" is just as present in the countryside as in the city; it merely presents itself in a different form.

Late in the novel, Jakob and Natz discuss the changing weather and the changing flora after all of the original inhabitants except Natz and Jakob have left Altenmoos.

Jakob complains,

Heute will sogar die Distel nicht mehr blühen. Überall zu viel Schatten. Draußen zu Krebsau und weiter herum klagen die Leute, sie hätten zu wenig Wald, weil die Fabriken allen gefressen haben; wir haben zu viel. Die Leute können nicht mehr Maß halten, das können sie nicht. Wie es der geschwindeste Gewinn verlangt, so treiben sie's, und nach anderem fragen sie nicht. Was unsere Nachkommen anfangen sollen, das ist ihnen gleichgültig.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 41.

²⁴⁴ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 338.

Nature, in this scene, both signifies something beyond itself as well as points back to itself. The thistles that do not grow stand for an unruly non-sentient nature that has resulted from a lack of concern for both sentient and non-sentient nature. The pernicious weeds' inability to grow also symbolizes a sick society – a concern common to many of Rosegger's novels, for example, Erdsegen and Weltgift. In addition, the protagonist emphasizes the environmental detriment caused by the villagers' flight from Altenmoos, society's drive for quick profits, the general lack of foresight, and a universal lack of moderation. It is tempting to read Jakob's grumblings as a stale tirade of a simple villager against modern cities and modern society. However, Jakob's criticisms apply to villager and city-dweller alike. Indeed, Jakob's own tragic flaw is his inability to adapt to the times, which eventually pushes him to murder and suicide; his fight against the death of Altenmoos is predicated upon his own personal loss of moderation, which parallels the increasingly extreme natural phenomena.

As Louis Palmer observes, "By way of [the Emersonian and Thoreauvian] model we have come to think of nature (usually with a capital N) as a pure, innocent, self-correcting, balanced system best preserved as wilderness with no contamination by culture, which is imagined as human-influenced, corrupt, polluting, destructive, and out of balance."²⁴⁵ Rosegger's depiction of nature in Jakob der Letzte contrasts sharply with this model of nature as an utopian "other" for culture. Rosegger's novel implies no bifurcation of nature from culture; nature coexists with culture in the novel. After the community finds no trace of Jackerl and assumes him dead, Jakob ruminates on the

²⁴⁵ Louis H. Palmer, III, "Articulating the Cyborg: An Impure Model for Environmental Revolution," The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment, ed. Steven Rosendale (Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 2002) 168.

cause: “Der rechte, echte, feste und treue Mensch muß irgendwo wurzeln, nicht anders wie ein Baum, ein Kornhalm.”²⁴⁶ Jackerl possesses an innate desire to see the world and to experience more than his simple home in Altenmoos. But, even the *Landstreicher* Jackerl cannot resist the natural desire to put down roots when he founds “Neu Altenmoos” in America. Jackerl’s inability to escape this natural drive illustrates how nature exists within culture (and vice versa) whether the individual desires it or not. The comparison that Jakob draws between humans, trees, and grain stalks illustrates the connection of non-sentient nature (nature) and sentient nature (culture). The bond of the Steinreuters, Jakob’s family, to the land further strengthens this connection between nature and culture; roots draw their nutrients from the soil just as the Steinreuters earn their living from the land. *Jakob der Letzte* is replete with such metaphors that illustrate the connection between the Steinreuters – representative of farmers in general – and the land and nature.

The increasingly brutal and extreme natural phenomena represent a further example of the connection between humans and non-sentient nature; as humans care less and less for nature, nature spins further out of control. This becomes evident when one compares the idyllic description in the chapter “Das liebe Altenmoos” with the following scene later in the novel: “Die Sandach wogte in hohen trüben Fluten und schoß zweimal so rasch dahin als sonst; an vielen Stellen trat sie über das Ufer und rann in den braunen See hinein und an anderen Stellen wieder hinaus.”²⁴⁷ While the citizens of Altenmoos flounder outside their mountain village, nature in and surrounding the village spins further and further out of control as its human caretakers flee into the city and new

²⁴⁶ Rosegger, *Jakob der Letzte*, 116.

²⁴⁷ Rosegger, *Jakob der Letzte*, 157.

caretakers attempt to administer the wilderness. As the novel implies, non-sentient nature needs humans just as the humans need nature; one can read this relationship as a further allegory for the universal lack of moderation in the novel. Without the complementary relationship between nature and the villagers, both lack the moderation necessary to thrive.

Other research has noted the unique connection of nature and culture in Rosegger's works. Stroud theorizes a general pattern in Rosegger's oeuvre when he suggests that Rosegger portrays the so-called "Naturmensch" as the inhabitant of a fictive Eden and the "Kulturmensch" as the inhabitant of the paradigmatic city.²⁴⁸ Stroud explains,

People who have sustained the original link to the world around them are called Naturmenschen, a term that emphasizes their unaffected manner in contrast to the Kulturmenschen who have experienced the break with Nature that produces conflict, arrogance, or despair. ... Language and actions, therefore, are direct revelations of the self; there is no conflict between being (Schein) and appearance (Sein) in the existence of the Naturmensch.²⁴⁹

One must overlook Stroud's typographical error; *Sein* and *Schein* have been mismatched. While he offers important insights into Rosegger's work via this model, the interpretation remains far too simplistic and problematic. One cannot apply the naïveté in the above model to the farmers in Jakob der Letzte, and one might attach conflict, arrogance, and despair to the figure in the novel that most resembles the "Naturmensch," Jakob. The utopian world that Stroud constructs is absent, since Altenmoos hardly represents Eden, except in a fallen and continually falling state. Furthermore, there are no real *Kulturmenschen* in Jakob der Letzte that could compare with the newspaper editor Hans

²⁴⁸ Stroud, The Sacred Journey, 72-73.

²⁴⁹ Stroud, The Sacred Journey, 72-73.

Trautendorffer in Erdsegen. If the forester and the “Kampelherr” (loosely translatable as the Lord of the Forest) in Jakob der Letzte represent Kulturmenschen, then one must ask if the terms “Kulturmensch” and “Naturmensch” could not be more aptly replaced by simpler black and white imagery. Indeed, that is the very nature of the two terms; Rosegger’s skepticism of higher culture and his high esteem for nature remain in a continual conflict that is not solved in his writing; there are many shades of gray in Rosegger’s writing.

One such unsolved conflict within this novel is the notion of caring for nature. One could argue that Ladislaus, the forester, aims to protect nature, an example of which would be his defense of animals and their habitat in the forest. After an intense argument with Jakob over the use of the mountain meadows and the damage to the animals and trees that Jakob’s oxen cause, Ladislaus exclaims to himself in frustration,

Ausgepeitscht müßt' es werden, das ganze Bauerngesindel, aus der Gegend, wenn's nicht freiwillig ginge! Bauernwirtschaften! Das könnt' mir einfallen! Wie soll da der Wildstand aufkommen! Kostet ohnehin genug. Anstatt Hirschen – Ochsen, anstatt Jäger – Wildschützen! Das wäre sauber! Glauben denn diese Poppel, der Herrgott hat die Welt für die Bauern erschaffen? Das wollen wir ihnen anders beweisen, Gott sei Dank!²⁵⁰

Readers concerned with environmental conservation would be tempted to interpret Ladislaus as one concerned for the well-being of the ecological system in the mountains. One could easily interpret the farmers here as a destructive force, whose effects upon nature seem similar to modern farming where water pollution, for example, wreaks havoc on local the ecosystem. However, the narrator in Jakob der Letzte suggests that this is not the case. The narrator suggests that Ladislaus’ intentions are not so pure:

²⁵⁰ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 87.

In Altenmoos begann sich sachte manches zu ändern. Früher hatten die Bauern im Sommer ihre Herden – für die auf den eigenen Grundstücken zu wenig Futter wuchs – gegen mäßiges Entgelt auf die Hochweiden der angrenzenden Großgrundbesitzer getrieben, besonders auf die Rabensteiner Almen. Es war altes Herkommen, das sowohl den Hochweidbesitzern, als auch deren Pächtern, den Bauern, zugute kam. Seit einiger Zeit war das abgestellt worden, der Waldkulturen wegen, wie es hieß. Der Oberförster, Oberjäger und Waldmeister Ladislaus war aber zu leidenschaftlich, um lange ein Hehl daraus zu machen, daß den Bauern die Viehweiden nicht der Waldkulturen, sondern der Wildhegung wegen versagt wurden.²⁵¹

The forester shows only concern for the wild game that provides his employer, the “Kampelherr”, with animals to hunt and kill. Indeed, another passage from the narrator indicates that the Lord of the Forest, Ladislaus, and the other unnamed gentleman hunters only feed their thirst for blood with hunting. The narrator explains,

So gab es wieder muntere Weisen, und zur Jagdzeit, da ging es hoch her in Altenmoos. Im Frühjahr die Hahnenbalz, die einzige Jahreszeit, da der “Herr” früher aufsteht als der Bauer. Da ist keine Stunde zu finster, kein Weg zu weit, kein Vogel zu hoch, es wird geschossen. Nicht der Hunger nach dem Fleisch, nicht die Gier nach den Federn ist's, sondern die Weidmannslust, die Lust zu morden. Pulverknall in die leere Luft oder auf die Scheibe ist nicht lustig, da stirbt nichts.²⁵²

In this passage, the narrator makes clear that it is not hunger for food nor any greedy desire for trophy feathers that drives the hunters' desire; a murderous hunger to kill motivates them. In contrast to Ladislaus and the “Kampelherr”, Jakob's poaching (illegal since the right to hunt game in the forest belongs only to the Kampelherr) is portrayed as follows: “Niederschießen! Man schießt heutzutage die Kalbinnen nieder, man schießt die Leut' nieder, warum soll man nicht einen Hirschen niederschießen, wenn er in den Gemüsegarten bricht!”²⁵³ The contrast between Jakob's natural but illegal desire to kill and the Lord of the Forest's murderous cravings continues throughout the novel. It is

²⁵¹ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 78.

²⁵² Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 317.

²⁵³ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 326.

indeed symbolic that Jakob wishes only to protect his garden by killing those animals that intrude past his fence and the Kampelherr and his associates kill more animals during their Fall hunt than they could possibly eat. Whereas Jakob wishes to defend his existential rights, the Kampelherr (and Ladislaus by extension) feeds his desires to hunt and kill – desires historically reserved for the wealthy and privileged in Austrian society, the class to which he belongs.

Still, there is some ambiguity present because Ladislaus acts only as the employee of the Kampelherr; he protects his employer's legal rights to hunt the wild game in the area, rights which his employer has purchased. There is an implication that those rights are luxuries and thereby are subject to inherent criticism by Rosegger; the reader familiar with the author's works recognizes the desire for luxury as immoral and decadent in Rosegger's writings. However, there is a consistent theme within Jakob der Letzte that supports the legal system, namely Jakob's unwillingness to tolerate or support defiance through illegal activities. Jakob roundly criticizes his neighbor for sitting in jail for a day for breaking the law, and he criticizes his son for deserting the army. Jakob makes repeated attempts to explain to the local legal administration that the Lord of the Forest's hunting rights are impinging upon his rights to live peacefully. Even though Jakob is turned back, he continues to obey the law until the the last few chapters in the novel where his estrangement from the rest of society and his inability to adapt to the times coincide with his unlawful activity leading eventually to the murder of Ladislaus. The conflict between the Kampelherr's legal rights that Ladislaus defends and Jakob's natural rights to defend his livelihood is not solved in the novel, which leaves the reader to interpret for himself the activities of Ladislaus and Jakob.

Dean Garret Stroud's broad interpretation solves this and other conflicts within Rosegger's oeuvre far too clearly. Furthermore, he does not accurately assess the issue of readership – a valuable tool for understanding Rosegger's works. One could conclude on the basis of Wagner's research into Rosegger's publication history and Bahr's description of likely readers of similar literature that Rosegger's audience was mostly an urban low to middle-class audience that had recently moved from the countryside into the city.²⁵⁴ The audience could read, in contrast to the overwhelmingly illiterate rural populous, had little superfluous resources, and could not afford the excessive extravagances that city life offered those with real means. These readers did not experience the grandeur of the Hofburg in Vienna or the intellectual atmosphere of the coffeehouses; thus their fondness for the city likely remained limited and their criticisms manifold. Still, they made a decision to leave their small villages and migrate into the city in search of upward social mobility. The growth of an urban poor proletariat and the decline of farming villages in Austria due to industrialization and a host of other factors, a central theme in Jakob der Letzte, remains a consistent idea throughout Rosegger's journalistic and literary writings. A consideration of Rosegger's address to an implied reader – in the vein of Wolfgang Iser – can lead us to a greater awareness of the ambivalence towards modernization within the novel. In Jakob der Letzte, Rosegger's implied reader could sympathize with the loss of connection to the land and his home town, but he could also recognize the laws and the growth of industry as symbols of his own mobility.

²⁵⁴ This is based on the cost of *Heimgarten* and the issues Rosegger had with the publisher, Leykam, as documented in Karl Wagner, Die Literarische Öffentlichkeit Der Provinzliteratur: Der Volksschriftsteller Peter Rosegger, Studien Und Texte Zur Sozialgeschichte Der Literatur (Stsl): 36 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991).

The address to the implied reader in many of Rosegger's works repeatedly provides us with the strongest sense of ambivalence. In Erdsegen and Weltgift, the two novels to which we will now turn our attention, we see explicit evidence of the implied reader, but even in Jakob der Letzte the narrator overtly gestures toward that reader, especially if one considers the foreword to the novel. Rosegger's appeal points us to a reader that may well understand the demographic and social changes that Rosegger describes in the novel. Throughout the foreword and the rest of the text, Rosegger guides his implied reader to a clearer understanding of the problematic dichotomies of advancement and adaptation to a changing industrialized world and social and moral decline due to this change. This relationship between the narrator and an implied reader is exemplified best in Rosegger's ending of the foreword: "Es sei jedoch nicht geschrieben, bloß um ein Bild von dem äußeren Wandel zu stellen, sondern vor allem, um bei Lostrennung von der Heimatsscholle die Vorgänge im Menschenherzen zu schildern; und es sei geschrieben der Treue wegen, die in meinem Jakob lebt."²⁵⁵ The inner workings of the human subject as it adjusts to a changing world captures Rosegger's literary imagination in the novel; these effects, to borrow a phrase from Iser, are also those which the novel elicits from the implied reader.

Social, economic, moral, and demographic changes remain important ideas within Rosegger's oeuvre. In another of Rosegger's novels, Weltgift, the narrator depicts a burgeoning proletariat and the social unrest that accompanies the growth of that class. In the beginning of the novel, the protagonist flees his home city just before violent proletarian mobs threaten his father's business. It is likely that many of the readers or their families had recently come from the countryside into the city and aspired to greater

²⁵⁵ Rosegger, Jakob der Letzte, 12.

social standing; however, this mobility also went hand in hand with the growth of the urban poor proletariat. Certainly those moving from the countryside into the city did not desire to become part of the urban poor; they more likely sought an increase in their living standard and some of the luxuries that urban life could afford. It is this aspiration to become what Stroud terms “Kulturmenschen” that Rosegger criticizes in the introduction to Jakob der Letzte, calling on the officials to do their best to save the farmers in the Alps and on the farmers to humbly accept their place in the world. The author predicts that the day will come when the migration from rural communities into the cities reverses; former farmers and the cultural elite will then see the value of this lost culture. Rosegger writes,

Es wird sich zeigen, ob bei dem steten Wachsthum der Bevölkerung unsere wenn auch kümmerlich Erdscholle verachtet werden darf, ob der Mensch des Jagdwildes willen heimatlos sein soll, und ob das Reh und der Hirsch seine Herrschaft in unseren Bergen behaupten kann. Schon heute vollzieht sich alljährlich eine Völkerwanderung von den Städten aufs Land, ins Gebirge. Noch kehren sie, wenn die Blätter gilben, wieder in ihre Mauern zurück, aber es wird eine Zeit sein, da werden die wohlhabenden Stadtleute sich Bauerngründe kaufen und bäuerlich bewirtschaften, Arbeiter sich solche aus der Wildnis roden und reuten. Sie werden auf Vielwisserei verzichten, an körperlicher Arbeit Gefallen und Kräftigung finden, sie werden Gesetze schaffen, unter denen wieder ein festständiges, ehrenreiches Bauerntum bestehen kann, und das Schlagwort vom “ungebildeten Bauer” wird man nicht mehr hören.²⁵⁶

An interpretation that attempts to draw a strict line between the city and the farming village, between the “Kulturmensch” and the “Naturmensch” has misread Rosegger and Jakob der Letzte. The novel is not a diatribe against the former or an ode to the purity of the latter; it merely gives voice to and acknowledges the loss of the latter. The foreword from the start blurs the borders between city and countryside; Rosegger’s Jakob

²⁵⁶ Rosegger, “Foreword,” Jakob der Letzte, 11.

represents a commemoration of a passing cultural phenomenon that is seen as an inherent part of nature, the rural farming community in the Alps.

Along with the passing of this way of life comes the industrialization of Rosegger's native Styria.²⁵⁷ As no shortage of researchers have noted, Rosegger realizes earlier than many others the environmental degradation that industrialization and the rapid growth of urban centers (Vienna and Graz in particular) wreak upon the land, air, and water. Rosegger sees the growth of the proletariat as the direct result of the flight of agricultural workers from rural poverty into the city, where they are quickly absorbed into the masses of the proletariat. Indeed, Rosegger holds this development responsible for the degeneration of society as a whole: "Wo aber findet man die größte Roheit, das krasseste Laster, die wildeste Verthierung? Bei den Armen, den Ungebildeten auf dem Lande? Nein, bei dem Proletariate der Großstadt – gerade auf der Stätte der gepriesenen menschlichen Hochkultur."²⁵⁸

As a necessary prevention of a proletarian revolution and as a cure for the "sickness" in modern society, Rosegger adumbrates a "Rückkehr zur Natur." He explains,

Um mein Bestreben klarer und unanfechtbarer zu bezeichnen, wollen wir statt "Rückkehr zur Natur" sagen: "Heimkehr zum ländlichen Leben." Ist das etwa nicht möglich? Ist es infolge der Culturentwicklung dem Menschen bestimmt, dass er sein Leben in einem ungeheueren Mauerwerke zubringe, verpestete Luft, stinkendes Wasser genieße, spitzfindige Geistesspiele treibe, den Körper verweichliche, das Herz verstocke, die große Gottesnatur nur nachgeahmt in Kunstwerken schaue, die Nacht zum Tage, den Tag zur Nacht mache und in der großen Stadt stets über dem ungeheueren Abgrunde zwischen der üppigsten Pracht und

²⁵⁷ Paul Roth, "Die Industrialisierung der Steiermark und des Mürztal (1843-1918)," Peter Rosegger: 1843-1918, ed. Gerald Schöpfer (Graz: Styria, 1993) 131-32.

²⁵⁸ Peter Rosegger, "Rückkehr zur Natur. Ein Zwiegespräch" Heimgarten, (Graz: Leykam, 1892) 678.

dem trostlosesten Elende schwebte? Sollte das thatsächlich des Menschen Bestimmung sein? Ich sehe in einer solchen Cultur nicht mehr eine Entwicklung, sondern einen Niedergang, ein Faulwerden.²⁵⁹

The author rejects the polluted water, air, and lifestyle of the city and brands it as the signal of social degradation. Rosegger does not, however, reject modern culture per se. He notes in the same essay that he intends to bring the cultural progress that the urban population enjoys (education, arts, technology) to the countryside. Rosegger argues, “Was in der Stadt wirklich Cultur ist, das läßt sich auch aufs Land verpflanzen. ... Ich verlange also nicht, dass der Städter verbauern solle, sondern dass auch der Bauer die Errungenschaften der Civilisation genieße.”²⁶⁰ In this short article, Rosegger maintains repeatedly that he does not intend a return to a romanticized myth of nature, nor does he suggest a regressive movement that retreats from recent social and cultural progress in technology or education. The author, using simply the name Peter in the article, reasons, “die menschliche Natur verlangt Bezähmung der Leidenschaften, Maßhalten und Eingezogenheit. Die Tugenden sind wenigstens so naturgemäß als ihr Gegentheil, sonst würden sie nicht Wohlbefinden und ein langes Leben verursachen können.”²⁶¹ The themes of moderation in this passage echo the argument in Jakob der Letzte and allow us a clearer glimpse into Rosegger’s concept of nature: nature does not appear in Rosegger’s writings as a philosophical “other” for culture. On the contrary, nature in his writing compels much more an existence in harmony with the world that surrounds us. Rosegger argues, furthermore, that one can have a natural life of simplicity and moderation just as well in the city as in the country. Therefore, the so-called return to nature ought to be seen neither as an absolute rejection of modern urban culture nor as an idealization of

²⁵⁹ Rosegger, “Rückkehr zur Natur,” 677-680.

²⁶⁰ Rosegger, “Rückkehr zur Natur,” 679-680.

²⁶¹ Rosegger, “Rückkehr zur Natur,” 680.

rural life. As Rosegger outlines it in the article “Rückkehr zur Natur,” the return might be best understood as an alteration and critique of what he perceives as the negative aspects of “modern” life.

It is difficult, however, to assert that “Peter’s” views in this article represent the “true” Rosegger, since the author often wrote statements that directly contradict each other, often with little temporal distance between the two. As Gerhard Pail observes, “Bei der Fülle des Gesamtwerkes und der engagierten, über Jahrzehnte verstreuten und daher auch oft widersprüchlichen, tagespolitischen Äußerungen und Kommentare Roseggers können jedenfalls je nach Bedarf entsprechende Belegstellen zitiert werden.”²⁶² Thus, National Socialists and pacifists alike (among others) have appropriated Rosegger’s name, popularity, and writing – each according to his or her particular ideological inclinations. Even such academic pursuits as Wagner’s Die literarische Öffentlichkeit der Provinzliteratur: Der Volksschriftsteller Peter Rosegger remain limited in their one-sided characterizations of Rosegger, not to mention numerous non-academic studies of Rosegger that lack vigor and sound methodology. Wagner refers to Roseggers “erfolgreiche Mythen der Regression”²⁶³ and later objects “Da diese Rückkehr individual- und gattungsgeschichtlich auszuschließen ist, bleibt im äußersten Fall die Dramatisierung des Scheiterns: ‘Und wenn das auch nicht geht, weil’s nicht gehen kann, dann am liebsten – sterben.’”²⁶⁴ If Wagner had continued reading that same passage, he would have noted Rosegger’s response that tempers the preceding lines:

²⁶² Gerhard Pail, “Vom Nothelfer zum Tourismus-Animateur. Peter Rosegger als Gegenstand und Anlass öffentlicher Aufmerksamkeit nach 1945,” Peter Rosegger: 1843-1918, ed. Gerald Schöpfer (Graz: Styria, 1993) 381.

²⁶³ Wagner, Die literarische Öffentlichkeit, 5.

²⁶⁴ Wagner, Die literarische Öffentlichkeit, 98.

Nein doch, ich vertraue der Zukunft. Es werden Stürme kommen, wie sie die Welt noch nicht gesehen; aber wenn wir die großen Anbilder und Tugenden der Besten unserer Vorfahren und der Wenigen von heute, die Schlichtheit, die Opferwilligkeit, den Familiensinn, den Frohsinn, die Liebe, die Treue, die Zuversicht in die Zukunft hinüberzutragen vermögen, um sie neu zu beleben und zu verbreiten, dann wird es gut werden.²⁶⁵

This passage shows that even his extensive academic study of Rosegger does not prevent Wagner from transferring his own views to Rosegger; Rosegger does not advocate “Mythen der Regression” as the answer to a pessimistic world view. Rather, this passage contradicts the dark imagery and pessimism of the preceding paragraph and shows that the author saw room for hope in the future and hoped that the values of the past would be transferred to the future.

As in the case of fascist and pacifist readings of Rosegger, nature can be seen from multiple perspectives in Rosegger’s writing, depending upon one’s vantage point. While Wagner’s interpretation of Rosegger’s autobiographical sketch seems clouded by a desire to interpret narrowly the author’s oeuvre in order establish a broad interpretational schema throughout his writing, the regressive aspect in many of Rosegger’s texts cannot be overlooked. In 1910 for example, Rosegger writes an article titled “Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern” and urges,

Die Liebe zur heimatlichen Scholle, wie problematisch ist sie doch geworden in unserer Zeit! Diese Scholle, die den Altbauern jetzt abstößt und den Städter anzieht. Der Kulturmensch wird sich freilich der Heimatliebe bewußt, die den Naturmenschen unbewußt festgehalten hat auf seinem Boden. Ich wünsche es keinem, daß es ihm so ergehe wie mir, der nicht vierzehn Tage leben kann außerhalb der Steiermark, obschon er anderswo oft besseres Verstehen gefunden hat als daheim. ... so müssen wir uns ein wenig verbauern. Anders geht es nicht. Aber auch unsere schönen heimischen Städte dürfen nicht so übertrieben der großstädtischen Gleichmacherei zutrachten. Auch sie sind aus dem Lande hervorgewachsen, aus der produktiven Dorfschaft, aus dem gewerblichen

²⁶⁵ Rosegger, Lebensbeschreibung des Verfassers von ihm selbst, 32.

Märktewesen, und wenn sie wieder Beziehungen zum heimatlichen Leben finden wollen, so müssen auch unsere Städte sich ein wenig verbauern.²⁶⁶

Whereas the younger Rosegger insisted earlier that his “*Rückkehr zur Natur*” did not demand that the city-dweller “*verbauere*,” the author contends just eighteen years later in this passage that the whole city must “*verbauern*.” If one understands the author to be speaking of himself both as the *Kulturmensch* and the *Naturmensch* in the passage, one notes a sense of regression in the article; Rosegger, now the *Kulturmensch*, is searching for the lost *Heimat* of his earlier life as a *Naturmensch* in Alpl.

IV. City vs. Countryside or *Heimat* vs. *Heimweh*

A pattern does emerge in many of Rosegger’s works. Stroud interprets the pattern as a dichotomy between the “*Kulturmensch*” and the “*Naturmensch*” – an interpretation that explains important aspects of Rosegger’s works. In particular, this interpretation helps to explain the rift between the character Hans Trautendorffer in Erdsegen, who represents the “*Kulturmensch*,” and the Adamshauser family, who represent “*Naturmenschen*.” Specifically, this section will pay attention to Erdsegen and Weltgift, and in particular to the portrayal of the city vs. countryside conflict within these novels. Rosegger’s sometimes saccharine treatment of the countryside as a location of “*Heimat*” and his acerbic stylization of the city as a symbol of sickness in modern society can exasperate the reader. Nonetheless, the author in the end approaches both the city and the countryside with some degree of impartiality and open-mindedness, especially in these two works.

²⁶⁶ Rosegger, “Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern,” Heimgarten (Graz; Leykam, 1910) 211.

If one rereads the passage from Rosegger's 1910 article "Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern," one can discern a *Heimatlosigkeit* when the author refers to himself as both *Kulturmensch* and *Naturmensch* and when the author remarks on the "Scholle, die den Altbauern jetzt abstößt und den Städter anzieht."²⁶⁷ Rosegger's attachment to this *Heimat* becomes especially poignant when he expresses his sentiment for the Steiermark; incidentally, this homesickness is not meant as an abstract possibility but as an historical fact of Rosegger's life. Nonetheless, there is an ambivalent tone to Rosegger's writing when he notes, "obschon er anderswo oft besseres Verstehen gefunden hat als daheim."²⁶⁸ Rosegger's *Heimatlosigkeit* is localized, and yet its broad appeal to his readership throughout Austria and parts of Germany may indicate part of the draw of *Heimatliteratur* for mass-readership. Consumption of and reading of *Heimatliteratur* allowed Rosegger's readers to experience their lost home again and reflect upon a lost sense of place. *Heimatliteratur*, in this way, represents a regressive sentiment both within the author's works and within his potential readership. Although not every reader longed for Rosegger's *Waldheimat*, many likely identified with or longed for the rural idyll Rosegger portrayed – the *heile Welt* in the mountains of Styria. Rossbacher's statement, *Heimatkunst* "[wollte] die gesamte Kultur auf eine landschaftsbedingte und stammesorientierte Grundlage ... stellen," explains the intended or unintended goals of *Heimatliteratur*, which Rosegger's "Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern" aptly embodies.²⁶⁹

The dichotomy of the *Kulturmensch* and the *Naturmensch* – a consistent theme in Rosegger's *Heimatliteratur* – is especially apparent in Rosegger's Erdsegen in the

²⁶⁷ Rosegger, "Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern," 211.

²⁶⁸ Rosegger, "Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern," 211.

²⁶⁹ Rossbacher, Heimatkunstabewegung und Heimatroman, 13.

juxtaposition of the character Hans Trautendorffer and members of the Adamshauser family. The *Kulturmensch* Hans Trautendorffer, “Wirtschaftsredakteur der Kontinental Post” settles in Hoisendorf as a “Bauernknecht” after entering into a drunken wager with colleagues (and his boss), who bet a year’s wages that he would not manage a full year on a farm. The epistolary form of the novel with its narrator allows the reader intimate knowledge of the main character and the dual audiences (the addressee of Trautendorffer’s letters and Rosegger’s readership).

In a letter addressed to “Herrn Professor A Simruck, Dr. phil. in M.,” Trautendorffer, the newspaper reporter turned farmhand, relates the events that led to his stay in Hoisendorf,

Also kurz, die Sache wurde weitergekratzt, und auf einmal fiel das Wort: “Der Bauernknecht ist trotz allem ein echterer Mensch als etwa ein Bankier, dessen Beruf es ist, Geldpapierfetzen durch seine Finger gleiten zu lassen, die noch wesentlich unsauberer sind als ein Bauernknittel. Ist sicher auch ein sittlicherer Charakter als zum Beispiel ein Zeitungsmacher, der seinen papiernen Mantel fortwährend nach dem Winde drehen muß.” Gesagt hatte es wieder der vermaledeite Jungwein.²⁷⁰

The newspaper editor’s persiflage of his own profession in the above passage indicates more than a light-hearted disdain for the media; severe criticism of the financial system and an overt skepticism of money and newspapers echo Rosegger’s criticism of these institutions that stand as symbols for modern urban life. Trautendorffer leads the reader to believe that his drunken state is a regular occurrence when he characterizes his outburst: “Gesagt hatte es wieder der vermaledeite Jungwein.” The reader, familiar with the author’s strong disdain for alcohol except for medicinal purposes, can read into

²⁷⁰ Peter Rosegger, Erdsegen. Vertrauliche Sonntagsbriefe eines Bauernknechts (Leipzig: Staackmann, 1906) 20.

Trautendorffer's urban lifestyle decadence, sickness (alcoholism), and luxury – all major aspects of Rosegger's criticism of modern urban life.²⁷¹

In contrast to the negative portrayal of urban life, rural life offers Trautendorffer such possibilities as communion with nature, closeness to God, and inner peace, to name a few. In a letter to explain his absence at the newspaper, the farmhand responds to his former colleagues,

Ich bin bereits zu sehr verbauert, um dafür die richtige Wertschätzung aufzubringen. Ihr werdet schon verzeihen, daß der Spaß wirklich Ernst geworden ist. Der Philister in mir wird bereits so vordringlich, daß ich aufhöre zu "wissen" und anfangs zu ahnen, was das weltberühmte Wort heißt: Im Schweiß deines Angesichtes! Und was Menschenleben heißt!²⁷²

Trautendorffer relates a sense of appreciation for the hard labor that he has grown accustomed to on the farm. "Philister" is a sarcastic barb that Trautendorffer uses to mock the language of his colleagues – a language that Trautendorffer also used before coming to Hoisendorf. When the narrator praises his newfound knowledge of what it means to live "by the sweat of your brow" "and what it means to be human," his sarcastic criticism of the city dissociates him from the alienation associated with urban life. For Rosegger's readers, this alienation is part of their daily life, as the distance between their labor and their identity grows with a shift from agricultural to industrial production. Rosegger thus gives voice to a desire to overcome this alienation and return to a prior state of communion with nature in an agrarian lifestyle. Furthermore, this short passage can be read in anticipation of ideas later fleshed out in the 1910 article, "Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern;" Rosegger's journalistic writing mirrors his literary production

²⁷¹ For a good resume of Rosegger's writing on alcohol, see Reinhard Farkas, "'Unsere Rückkehr zur Natur' – Peter Rosegger und die Lebensreform," in Gerald Schöpfer ed. Peter Rosegger (1843-1918), (Graz; Styria, 1993) 302.

²⁷² Rosegger, Erdsegen, 104.

when he concludes, “Diese Scholle, die den Altbauern jetzt abstößt und den Städter anzieht. Der Kulturmensch wird sich freilich der Heimatliebe bewußt, die den Naturmenschen unbewußt festgehalten hat auf seinem Boden.”²⁷³ Indeed, Trautendorffer, the *Kulturmensch*, gains an appreciation for the land, the *heimatliche Scholle*, and all that rural life represents during his stint as a farmhand. Trautendorffer here expresses his newfound knowledge of the connection to the earth – a connection that the *Naturmenschen*, the Adamshauser family, instinctively experience.

The dichotomy between the deprecation of city life and the glorification of rural life remains strong throughout the novel and represents a common thematic thread in Rosegger’s oeuvre. However, this dichotomy is not as clear-cut as it may initially seem. At the end of the novel, Trautendorffer explains that the youngest son will go to the city to a “Landwirtschaftsschule.” In addition, the farmhand, Trautendorffer, does not intend to remain on the farm permanently but expects to live part of the year in the city and part of the year on the farm. Finally, the fictional publication of the letters by the Staackman publishing company (Rosegger’s publisher at the time) and their marketing, which are both aspects of the urban complex, saves the farm; the writer uses the proceeds from their publication to pay the taxes that are past due. Indeed, one must be careful to read Rosegger’s *Erdsegen* with an eye to the progressive elements in the text. Wagner’s characterization of Rosegger’s writing as “Mythen der Regression” misses these aspects. Instead of suggesting a regression, Rosegger’s prose calls the notion of unmitigated urban development into question and specifically asks what qualities of rural life are lost with rapid industrialization and urban growth accompanied by rural decline.

²⁷³ Rosegger, “Wir müssen uns ein wenig verbauern,” 211.

A short analysis of the narrative structure of the novel illustrates as well how Rosegger's novel negotiates both fictional and real borders between the city and the countryside. Despite their addressee and the numerous literary and philosophical references to Homer, Klopstock, and Goethe, the language of Trautendorffer's letters remains informal and draws the reader into a feeling of intimacy – that is a sense of unmediated communication between narrator and reader. Karl Wagner notes the subtitle “Vertrauliche Sonntagsbriefe eines Bauernknechtes,” the “affektivische Nähe” of the letters, the “Abbau formaler Mittel dialogischer Verständigung,” and the “zunehmende monologische Tendenz.”²⁷⁴ The last two qualities may seem contradictory to this sense of unmediated communication; however, one might also read this development as the reader replacing the addressee of the letters. Thus, the reader is drawn into the novel, and the last remaining formal element that separated him from the narrator is removed. Wagner further notes, “Der Briefschreiber als Verfasser des Briefromans kündigt seinem Leser seinen Besuch an: ‘Bereite dich mit einer Flasche Rudesheimer vor, denn ein derbgebrannter Bauernknoten wird vor dir stehen, voller Durst und Dankbarkeit für dich, du alter treuer Knabe’ (425). Die Vertraulichkeit geht über das Textende hinaus, Hans und Alfred, Rosegger und der Leser finden ohne Text zueinander.”²⁷⁵ The narrative employs these structures in order to bridge finally a gap that has been fading between the reader and the narrator. It thereby contributes to a feeling within the reader that she is connected to the narrative and to the events within the narrative via Trautendorffer's letters. In a sense, Rosegger's readers are thus connected to their lost *Heimat*.

²⁷⁴ Wagner, Die literarische Öffentlichkeit, 358-59.

²⁷⁵ Wagner, Die literarische Öffentlichkeit, 359.

The affected intimacy between the reader and the narrator as well as between the author and the reader parallels the intimacy between Rosegger and his readership.

Rossbacher's study of *Heimatliteratur* asserts,

Im Falle der Heimatkunst handelt es sich um ein sehr geschlossenes sozialistisches Bild; die überdurchschnittliche Homogenität von Herkunftsschicht, Bildungsgang, gesellschaftlicher Position läßt den Schluß zu, daß der substantielle Teil des Publikums auf der gesellschaftlichen Positionsebene der Autoren zu suchen ist. Es ist die Schicht der Aufsteiger in die unteren bis mittleren Bildungsschichten, von wo aus dann einzelne hervorgehobene Autoren noch höher steigen; die gebildeten Ackerbürger – ein Ausdruck aus dem Rechtswesen von Dörfern und Kleinstädtern – gehören ebenfalls hierher; ferner die Opinion-leaders dieser Kommunen, aber auch das städtischen Mittelstandes.²⁷⁶

As Karl Wagner notes, Rossbacher's analysis of *Heimatliteratur* and its readership applies especially to Rosegger's readers as well.²⁷⁷ In his oeuvre, Rosegger continually describes rural communities. However, his readership, like that of other *Heimatkunst* authors, consisted of literate urban dwellers who undoubtedly benefited from and reflected the increased social and economic mobility of the nineteenth century.

Rossbacher echoes Hermann Bahr's assessment of the readers of *Heimatliteratur*. The symbiosis of *Kulturmensch* and *Naturmensch* in Erdsegen and other works of Rosegger's oeuvre reflects therefore on the author and on his readership, those whom Bahr refers to as the "Zwischenschicht" on their way between an agrarian and an urban lifestyle.

Indeed, Erdsegen evokes the emotions felt by displacement and loss of *Heimat*.

Conversely (Trautendorffer moves into the countryside, whereas the readers have moved into the city), Trautendorffer illustrates for the reader the gains and losses in the transition from city to country living. The Adamshauser family illustrates that which is lost in the transition from agrarian to urban life.

²⁷⁶ Rossbacher, Heimatkunstabewegung und Heimatroman, 98.

²⁷⁷ Wagner, Die literarische Öffentlichkeit, 359-60.

As Rossbacher has noted in his research on *Heimatliteratur*, the importance of feeling far outweighs reasoned explications in the literary programs of the movement. Rossbacher explains, “Irrationalismus ist als Anliegen ins Programm aufgenommen.”²⁷⁸ However, the “feelings” expressed in the novel are not uniformly positive towards the countryside or uniformly negative towards the city. The main protagonist in *Erdsegen*, Hans Trautendorffer, is certainly given to intense emotional feelings towards the *Heimat*, but his feelings toward the city embody similar sentiments when he writes of a cold November evening at the Adamshaus, “An einem solchen, mein Freund, ist mir plötzlich das Heimweh gekommen nach – der Stadt. Ein ganz brutales Heimweh.”²⁷⁹ *Heimweh*, an intense feeling of emotional attachment to the home that appears principally when one is away from the home, is a common feature in Rosegger’s writing; however, *Heimweh* in reference to the city is unique and contrasts with his critique of urban life. Indeed the former newspaper editor moans, “Wenn jetzt zum inneren Frieden auch so ein bißchen Kultur da wäre!”²⁸⁰ Curiously, aspects of culture do not include newspapers, literature, theater, or opera. The minor “Korruption” of the *Heimat* that Trautendorffer envisions includes proper heating, a sofa, medical care, electric lighting, and a piano, among others.²⁸¹ After a year at the Adamshaus, Trautendorffer can no longer decide between the luxuries of city life and the inner peace of the countryside – a conflict common in Rosegger’s works. This was also a conflict familiar to Rosegger’s readership, who likely shared similar sentiments. As has been shown, Rosegger aimed for an amalgamation of the two (culture and nature), combining the simplicity and peace of the

²⁷⁸ Wagner, *Die literarische Öffentlichkeit*, 359-60.

²⁷⁹ Rosegger, *Erdsegen*, 386.

²⁸⁰ Rosegger, *Erdsegen*, 386.

²⁸¹ Rosegger, *Erdsegen*, 386.

countryside with some of the luxuries of city life. Trautendorffer navigates this precipice by suggesting a bridge between the two, “Ich will einverstanden sein mit den zu erbauenden Brücken zwischen Land- und Stadtleben. Ich will selbst dem Handel gelegentlich ein Loblied singen und sagen, daß der Bauernhof ein kleiner Staat und der Staat ein großer Bauernhof ist.”²⁸² While this passage emphasizes the bridge between city and countryside, the last sentence echoes Karlheinz Rossbacher’s notion that *Heimatliteratur* attempted to place all cultural phenomena within a scheme that held *Heimat* and the rural lifestyle at its center. In this metaphor, the state literally becomes a farm. However, *Erdsegen* does not call for an isolated farming community with no connection to modern life – an imagined ideal often propagated in *Heimatliteratur*; Trautendorffer ambivalently accepts the bridges that must be built between the countryside and the city, even if they represent some “Korruption” of the rural idyll.

As has already been noted, one can readily pick out sections in Rosegger’s oeuvre that contradict one another. However, one may also see those passages as complementing one another. In the case of *Erdsegen*, Rosegger presents the reader with an evident complement, the novel *Weltgift*. At first glance, one would expect the exact opposite of *Erdsegen* (a sequel to counter/complement the first novel); the main protagonist would migrate from the countryside into the city, falter, and eventually fail due to the worldly city, to which he could not adapt. *Weltgift*, however, bears no resemblance to *Erdsegen*; neither form nor characters nor scenery resemble one another. Vienna and the news industry are not significant parts of the novel’s setting, and the relatively clear message of *Erdsegen* is nowhere to be found in *Weltgift*. Instead, a small city in the midst of an industrial boom and a proletarian revolt makes up the initial

²⁸² Rosegger, *Erdsegen*, 386.

setting. As opposed to the small bucolic setting at the top of a mountain in Erdsegen, the main protagonist of Weltgift moves from the city into a castle at first and then further up into the mountains. And whereas one can speak of Erdsegen as a success story almost in the fashion of a *Bildungsroman*, Weltgift imparts only the moderate success of some characters and the complete collapse of others. Finally, the framework of an epistolary novel in Erdsegen gives way to a more conventional novel form in Weltgift.

Still, there are important similarities between the two novels. The bridging of the distance between narrator and reader as well as the theme of literature as an industry and its role in modern society both find their way into Weltgift. The positive association with the pastoral idyll on the mountaintops as opposed to the corrupting influence of the city also makes up important subject matter in the novel. Finally, the stark juxtaposition of *Naturmenschen* with *Kulturmenschen* as well as the positive and negative associations with each of those categories builds further upon the discussion of nature and culture in Erdsegen.

While Trautendorfer in Erdsegen leaves the reader with some room for the interpretation of city life – the positive values of education contrasts with the negative effects of the press and conspicuous consumption, the narrator in Weltgift at first allows little ambiguity. The city in Weltgift initially embodies all that is awry in modern society. The story in Weltgift begins with a death; the narrator explains that he is telling the life story of Hadrian Hausler. The third person narration leads the reader to believe that the narrator is merely relating the events of someone's life, which he has collected by reading Hadrian's journal. The journal, according to the narrator, begins with the

following words: “Heute bin ich endlich gestorben.”²⁸³ The journal filtered by the narrator then recounts Hausler’s background as a wealthy son of an industrialist and speculator who renounces his father’s business, is disowned, and leaves home to begin a new life imitating both the landed gentry and the bourgeoisie. Hausler and the city in which he grew up are described as follows:

Dieser Mann, der in seinem neununddreißigsten Lebensjahr also schrieb, nennt sich Hadrian Hausler. Seine Vergangenheit ist verworren, eine rostbraune Rauchsicht liegt darüber. Eine Rauchsicht, die sich in dünnen Fäden und schwarzaufwirbelnden Stricken aus dem Schornsteinwald spinnt. Zwischen den Fabriksgebäuden staubiges, geschnirgeltes Buschwerk, Gärten genannt. In diesen Gärten die Herrenhäuser, mit allem ausgestattet, “was das Leben ziert.” Doch hinter den Mauern herum das Gemurre störrischer Arbeiter in Massen, das erstickte Geschrei verwahrloster Kinder in Rudeln.²⁸⁴

In contrast to this dark scene of industrial pollution and mass poverty, the narrator describes the “üppigen Mahlzeiten, die fein verdeckten Sondervergnügungen gewürzt mit immer drohenden Arbeiterstreiks und Revolten” in and around the Hausler home. The auctorial narrator also relates Hadrian’s intense dissatisfaction with this life that offers him no real joy or substance, “Das war ja das so viel umworbene, glanzvolle Leben der Reichen. Vergnügungen? In Überfülle. Freuden? Keine. Mit angestrengtem Auge sucht er nach echten Freuden dieser Vergangenheit, mit der Lupe sucht er – und findet keine.”²⁸⁵ The big city thus offers neither the industrialist nor the proletarian factory worker joy or fulfillment. If one considers again Rosegger’s own situation as well as that of his readership, one can read this as a depiction of their conditions. Given this background, the narrative thus projects discontentment upon the industrialist and interprets for the reader in auctorial fashion the negative connotations of big city life.

²⁸³ Peter Rosegger, Weltgift (Leipzig: Staackmann, 1903) 1.

²⁸⁴ Rosegger, Weltgift, 2.

²⁸⁵ Rosegger, Weltgift, 3.

Hausler flees from the city towards an unknown location with his coach driver, known only by his first name Gabin, a bastard child who the reader later learns is Hadrian's own son. Along the way, the two meet a farmer who is on his way from his farm in the mountains to deliver his sons to the university in the city. The meeting with this farmer is at first innocuous, but the acquaintance becomes important later in the novel when Hadrian and Gabin buy a small parcel of barren land and a ramshackle cottage from the farmer. After their meeting with the same farmer in a bar, the two find a small run-down country castle, and Hadrian decides to purchase the castle and its grounds and operate it as his estate with the funds he has received from his father. In keeping with the theme of the novel, Hadrian dies as a result of unlucky decisions and fateful relationships with the wrong people; he has no success in running the estate, especially when he entrusts the day-to-day running of the estate to a hired hand. The hired hand embezzles all the funds that Hadrian gives to him, and (a common feature in Rosegger's novels) a flood destroys the estate.

Gabin, once a servant and now treated as a son, helps Hadrian to sell the estate and purchase a piece of the farmer's land, a small acreage on top of a mountain where the two build for themselves the self-sufficient and simple lifestyle of mountain farmers in Austria. If this were typical *Heimatliteratur*, the two would find wives and live the rest of their lives happily in their mountain home. However, Rosegger remains true to his theme; Hadrian finds no joy in work on the farm, and his past comes back to haunt him as his father's wife (whose hand Hadrian himself had once sought) leaves her husband and comes to poison the mountain idyll that Gabin and Hadrian have built. Gabin decides to use his guile in order to rid the village (the men in the village are unhappy at the woman's

presence) of the “grüne Lehrerin,” as the ex-wife is known. When Gabin runs away with the woman in order to facilitate her disappearance, Hadrian is left alone to fend for himself. Hadrian finally suffers a mental collapse, and he returns home to confront his father. Although his father is not at home when Hadrian arrives, Hadrian, suffering hallucination, shoots at a bust of his father. The bullet ricochets and hits him in the head. When Gabin finally learns where Hausler is staying, he leaves his farm immediately and goes to care for Hadrian in the hospital/mental institution where the latter has been placed. Despite his precarious mental and physical state, Hausler recognizes Gabin and calls him his “son.” A short time later, Hadrian dies, and Gabin returns to his mountain idyll where he marries and lives the rest of his life happily in his rural mountain idyll. We will return to this final development below.

In Weltgift, Rosegger offers the critical reader a counterbalance to the message of much of his journalistic writings as well as some of his literary works. Whereas other novels and articles of Rosegger suggest the notion of a return to nature, the idea that Rossbacher so aptly explains as the attempt to interpret all of culture and society according to rural social and cultural norms, Weltgift communicates a decidedly different message and tone. Although the rural mountain ideal plays a large part in the novel, the protagonist cannot return to this mountain ideal. The circumstances and events that seal Hadrian’s fate and his inability to work on the farm make life in the countryside impossible for him. The narrator sums up the central message of the novel, “Und auch uns hat dieses Schicksal gezeigt, daß ein Mensch, dessen Seele von Weltgift zerfressen ist, nicht in die ländliche Natur zurückkehren kann und soll.”²⁸⁶ Gabin, on the other hand, has always shown an affinity towards horses and nature; he never was a person

²⁸⁶ Rosegger, Weltgift, 401.

whose soul was eaten by the “worldly poison.” Gabin can therefore succeed in retreating into the idyll that remained inaccessible to Hadrian.

Just as the reader learns of the narrator in Erdsegen as both narrator and character within the novel, the reader of Weltgift learns of a similar narrator at the end of the novel. One of the three sons of the farmer on the mountain has become a professor, another a doctor, and the third remains on the farm. The professor, the reader learns, is the narrator of Weltgift. In this manner, Rosegger again reflects on the role of literature and urban consumer culture. At the end of the book, the doctor and the professor have the following exchange:

Und da war ... auf die wunderliche Idee gekommen, die Lebensgeschichte des unseligen und nun seligen Hadrian Hausler herauszugeben. “Dann, Bruder, vergiß nicht, auf den Einband des Buches einen Totenschädel zu zeichnen,” sagte Doktor Anton, “denn es ist – Weltgift.” “Totenschädel!” gab der Professor zurück. “Behalten der Herr Doktor dieses Wappen gefälligst für sich. Ich gebe zu meinem armen Hadrian den frischen Gabin. Das ist Gegengift.” Doktor Anton schwenkte sein Sacktuch zum Fenster hinaus und rief lachend: “Losknallen, meine Herren, der Professor hat endlich einmal einen vernünftigen Gedanken!”²⁸⁷

If much of Weltgift is devoted to a more modernist notion of society and culture where industrialized and poisoned culture cannot simply return to nature, this passage contradicts this notion and tempers the tone of the rest of the novel. Through the words of Anton, himself a doctor educated in the city, the narrator delivers a commentary on modernity and the philosophy that undergirds it. When Berthold, the professor of philosophy, claims that Gabin’s figure on the front of the book will be a potent enough antidote to the *Weltgift* in the book, the reader recognizes that Gabin represents the trope of the *Naturmensch* in Rosegger’s writing. The innocent bastard child whose work ethos

²⁸⁷ Rosegger, Weltgift, 402.

endears him to Hadrian and ensures his ability to adapt to the harsh conditions on the top of the mountain recalls the idea of a return to rural nature. Thus the message of the novel remains that not everyone is doomed to failure upon a retreat into the pastoral idyll; only those whose souls are poisoned by the modern world are condemned to ultimate failure. In this sense then, the novel communicates an ambivalent meaning about the rural as an idyllic space. On the one hand, bucolic agrarian tranquility (in the tradition of Rosegger's mountain spaces) remains accessible for those who can adapt to it. On the other hand, those whom modern culture and society have corrupted will also flounder in the countryside. This ambivalence, therefore, denies an exclusively regressive sentiment in Rosegger's writing; the novel does not advocate that everyone should revert to an agrarian rural lifestyle.

V. Conclusion

This analysis shows how Rosegger navigates the border between the city and the countryside, advocating a bridge between the two that facilitates limited cultural transfer from the city to the countryside and vice versa. Specifically in Erdsegen and in Weltgift, elements of the urban such as education find their way into the rural, while the rural with its genuineness affects the urban, as is the case with Trautendorffer. The exploration of Erdsegen and Weltgift and their narrative structures shows how the narratives deliver two messages. These two novels deliver both "unmediated" and "mediated communication" between the narrator and the reader. Thus, they call the reader to reflect upon the impact of that communication upon both the countryside and the city. In addition, the chapter points to the expression of *Heimatlosigkeit* or loss of *Heimat* as a central theme in Rosegger's works. Rosegger and his audience may well have sympathized with

Trautendorffer's homesickness and Hausler's modern malady; memories of the *Heimat* were still strongly embedded in the minds of the "Zwischenschicht" that Bahr recognizes as Rosegger's readership. As the comparison of Rosegger's depiction of *Heimat* with Rossbacher's study of *Heimatkunst* shows, Erdsegen parallels important aspects of other *Heimatliteratur* especially in the central focus upon the farm and rural life as the model for a reformation of the modern urban lifestyle. Although the novel continually emphasizes the dichotomy between the city and the countryside, the newspaper editor turned farmhand Trautendorffer suggests, in the end, a bridge between the two worlds allows the positive aspects of modern *Kultur* to benefit the lifestyle of *Natur* at the Adamshaus. This chapter argues for a differentiated interpretation of Rosegger's Erdsegen that focuses on ambivalence and conflict in the text instead of the black and white imagery that both Stroud and Wagner identify.

When one looks at Rosegger's oeuvre as a whole, one also notes a general pattern of ambivalent conflict, an example of which occurs when one compares the two titles Erdsegen and Weltgift. The former, meaning the blessing(s) of the earth, contrasts directly with the latter, meaning the poison of the world. Given the directly contrasting titles (Welt vs. Erde and Segen vs. Gift) the reader may expect a contrary and contradictory message to Erdsegen from the novel Weltgift. However, the author focuses less upon contradicting the earlier novel and more upon producing a complementary work in the sense of a *Gesamtwerk*. If one is tempted by understanding Erdsegen to romanticize a return to a more "natural" agrarian state, Weltgift complements and tempers especially that message and leaves the reader with a reflection upon the sickness of the modern condition without prescribing the return to nature as its cure. The author,

one may infer, has determined that there is no cure for this modern sickness. There is no restoration of the rural as a palliative for ills of modern society – a message which later *Heimatliteratur* would propagate as one of its central tenets. This revised understanding of Rosegger and his oeuvre enables us to see the conflict between the city and the countryside within the novel as remaining unresolved – a conflict that Rosegger continually portrays throughout his works.

Along with the conflict between the city and the countryside, the representation of nature constitutes a major theme in Rosegger's works, especially in Jakob der Letzte. While Rosegger's treatment of nature has been thoroughly researched by previous critics, it has principally been studied as a part of a greater symbolic system, not as a theme on its own. I have shown that this approach has led to misinterpretations of Rosegger's writing. The author's depiction of nature in Jakob der Letzte involves a more complex system than the black and white imagery suggested in previous secondary literature. Instead of nature functioning merely as a philosophical "other" for culture, the natural emerges throughout the novel as the human subject, e.g., Jakob, existing in harmony with the world around him. If one attends closely to both the subtle and direct criticisms in the novel directed at the villagers in Altenmoos, one observes that their abandonment of the rural farming community, their lack of humility, and their inability to adapt cause their own demise and the destruction of nature. Reading Jakob der Letzte in light of the author's journalistic writings on nature reveals that the chronic lack of moderation in modern society exists both in rural and urban environments. Indeed, a "natural" life is also possible in the city, the bastion of "*Kultur*." While it is clear that Rosegger laments the passing of rural farming culture that he portrays as part of nature, he also advocates

the “transplanting” of modern culture into the countryside, as long as it supports the improvement of “natural” communities. The conflict between the demise of nature and the ascent of urban culture forms one of the central themes in Jakob der Letzte, but the narrative does not solve this conflict, which Rosegger felt and thematized throughout his oeuvre. Instead, the novel sheds light on the effects of disregarding nature in the rush for social and economic advancement.

The Styrian author’s direct life experiences in nature certainly offered him material for much of his writing; many of the settings in his novels bear a strong resemblance to the author’s hometown, Alpl. However, Rosegger’s nature philosophy also reveals the heavy influence of Adalbert Stifter, whose “sanftes Gesetz” provides an important key to understanding nature within Rosegger’s works, e.g. Heidepeters Gabriel.

The notion of a return to a rural idyll or the disastrous elision of rural landscape and culture recurs frequently in Rosegger’s works. Although this trope becomes almost nauseating in its repetition, each work provides a slightly different nuance on the theme, and each work contributes to its development. As has been noted, Rosegger perceived it as his mission to stem the tide of burgeoning urban development and rural decline by portraying the positive aspects of life in the *Heimat* and by exposing the negative effects of abandoning this “natural” lifestyle. However, the author profited from this development, which provided him both with the means to an education and a reading public. One of the greatest paradoxes in Rosegger’s life is that his writing contributed in many ways to the commodified modern culture that he so often portrayed as sick, decadent, and deviant. The gold-embossed editions of Rosegger’s works that have a high aesthetic value as a fetishized commodity, regardless of their literary value, illustrate how

the author, despite good intentions, contributed to a system he so deplored. Of course, the irony of Rosegger's own literary success is not lost on him, as this chapter has shown in the analysis of Erdsegen, where commodified literary production saves the family farm. The author, furthermore, had no misconceptions about the glory of the starving artist, as a letter from Rosegger to Anzengruber illustrates: "Sie haben den 'Waldschulmeister' gelesen – er hätte Ihnen schier gefallen. Lieber Freund, sagen Sie das in einem guten Blatte. Sie wissen, ich bedarf der Reklame mehr, wie manch Anderer; Weib und Kind machen mir keine Sorgen, aber mein Geldbeutel. ... Aber, wenn Sie was schreiben, so schenken Sie mir auch Ihren Namen dazu."²⁸⁸ The passage from the letter exchange between the Viennese Anzengruber and Rosegger demonstrates that Rosegger knew the importance of and methods for marketing his writing to his urban readership.

While common Rosegger myths stress the weight of his often juvenile, bucolic depictions of rural life, it is clear that a broader and more accurate interpretation of Rosegger's works must address ambivalence in the author's literary and journalistic writing, especially concerning nature, technology, and the conflict between the city and the *Heimat*. As has been noted, it is common for Rosegger researchers to assert that they have discovered the "real" or "authentic" Rosegger and have sorted this "real" picture of the author from heaps of misinformation. Unfortunately, these authors end up applying their own ideological bents under the guise of discovering the "real" Rosegger. In fact, these earlier works of secondary literature serve as a warning for contemporary Rosegger research by illustrating how biases have led to misreadings and promulgated misleading myths. Instead of aiming to discover the "true" Rosegger – a goliathan task far too

²⁸⁸ Peter Rosegger, "Letter: November 27, 1884," Peter Rosegger – Ludwig Anzengruber Briefwechsel 1871-1889, ed. Konstanze Fliedl and Karl Wagner (Vienna: Böhlau, 1995) 90-91.

complex for the present context - this chapter has focused on a few basic themes in the novels Erdsegen, Weltgift, Jakob der Letzte, and Heidepeters Gabriel and a few excerpts from Rosegger's journalistic publications in Heimgarten.

While reading Rosegger's literary and journalistic works, this chapter offers a differentiated reading of the complex relationship between nature and culture, between industrialization and agrarian lifestyle, between the city and the countryside, and between the recognition of the desire for mobility and the simultaneous anguish at the loss of *Heimat* and the connection to nature.

Excursus

Rosegger: Anti-Semitism, Nature, and Austrian Literature

Understanding the literary, intellectual, and political climate surrounding an author is important to understanding his work within an ecocritical analysis, especially in the case of Rosegger. When reading Jakob der Letzte, for instance, one must remain aware of the fact that Rosegger's readers most likely identified with the loss of *Heimat* and the destruction of the rural idyll. Indeed, when one considers the reoccurring themes in Rosegger's works, one learns a great deal about his readers and what interested them. Whereas Stifter's readers had access to a high level of education, which enabled a discussion of nature and phenomenology within his works, Rosegger's readers at the time belonged to that class which was just emerging from poverty, was preoccupied with upward social mobility, and was lamenting a loss of their connection to the land and their natural *Heimat*.

Part and parcel of the mental horizons of this newly urbanized class in Austria was an underlying anti-Semitism. The nature of this anti-Semitism will become the principal subject of this excursus because it shows how Rosegger and his readers related to one of the most important social questions of their time. Additionally, it offers insight into the context in which Felix Salten, the next author that this dissertation considers, wrote. For now, I will focus on Rosegger and will shift in the next chapter to Salten and his Viennese Jewish background.

Since Rosegger depended upon his writing for his livelihood, and since he was successful at securing an income that allowed his economic and social ascent, one can conclude that his writings both challenged and pandered to his readers' views. His

literary and journalistic works spoke to his readers' interests in the Austrian countryside, rural decline, educational issues, the ills of modern urban lifestyles, and the value of a rich connection to nature and the environment.

In researching themes of nature and *Heimat*, one immediately runs the danger of whitewashing a literary figure or committing what the scientist in Raabe's Pfisters Mühle refers to as *Schönmalerei*. Indeed, a cursory glance at many secondary sources yields the impression that Rosegger was a free-thinking left-wing environmentalist who has been misunderstood and underappreciated. By any account, many of these sources represent the literary equivalent of historical revisionism. Within this dissertation, my examination of the role of anti-Semitism in Rosegger's life and writing serves to guard against the tendency to discuss only those issues where many of today's readers would agree or at least sympathize with Rosegger while ignoring other more fraught questions that informed his readers' awareness of nature and the environment that surrounded them. Similar to the author's writings on nature, Rosegger's relationship to anti-Semitic political and cultural movements reflects an ambivalence that complicates any reading of the author's works. Much of the attention to Rosegger's relationship to anti-Semitism must be revisited within the context of recent critical examinations of anti-Semitism in Austrian society. Only by reading Rosegger's writing on racism within this context can we begin to understand the ambivalent and complicated relationship of the author to this political and social issue.

As this analysis will show, the myth of Rosegger most often precedes critical analysis of his actual literary production, and it is misleading to attach a particular ideology to him, even when that ideology may be perceived as a positive revision. In

insisting, as Latzke does for instance, that Rosegger was no anti-Semite or that his true intentions can be closely aligned with modern twentieth-century environmentalist and conservationist movements, as Anderle does, one further inflates the myths that surround the author and confounds a credible literary interpretation of his works. At the same time, labeling Rosegger as radically anti-woman and anti-Semitic, for example, as Philippoff does, merely demonizes the writer rather than offering a fair and accurate interpretation of his work.

At first glance, it may seem awkward to include a discussion of anti-Semitism in a dissertation on ecology and literature, but the two themes are not as distinct from one another as they first may seem. One might argue that the division of humans into various classifications and the demonizing of one subset of humans correlate also with a creation of an “Other” in nature where the natural “Other” can be discarded or disregarded because of its “Otherness.” Xenophobia and anthropocentricity are philosophical brothers whose deep-rooted disregard for the “Other” results in the destruction of that “Other.” As Christopher Manes notes in his reception of Foucault,

social power operates through a regime of privileged speakers, having historical embodiments as priests and kings, authors, intellectuals, and celebrities. The words of these speakers are taken seriously (as opposed to the discourse of “meaningless” and often silenced speakers such as women, minorities, children, prisoners, and the insane). We can, thus, safely agree with Hans Peter Duerr when he says that “people do not exploit a nature that speaks to them.” Regrettably, our culture has gone a long way to demonstrate that the converse of this statement is also true.²⁸⁹

Relegating nature to the position of the silent “Other” of culture opens the door for its devastation by culture.

²⁸⁹ Christopher Manes, “Nature and Silence,” The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm eds. (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996), 16.

In a similar vein, the inability to break through the silence to understand the history of Jews in Austria left Rosegger particularly influenced by cultural prejudices and unable to advocate for an enlightened position. In a sense, this ecocritical reading of Rosegger's literary oeuvre may also cast a glance at another "Other" in his writings in order to identify how the author deals with these "Others." Although Rosegger continued to advocate for a closer relationship between humans and nature, his writings on anti-Semitism reveal a racist populism that calls into question the progressiveness of his writings.

Any attempt to understand anti-Semitism within an Austrian context must grapple with the meaning of the term as well as its varied manifestations within Austrian and German society. Specifically, anti-Semitism in Austria had a very different character from its counterpart in Germany, due mainly to the different geographical and social composition of Austrian society. In a groundbreaking study (the first to explore anti-Semitism in Austria in the inter-war period between 1914 and 1938), Bruce Pauley explores the nature and character of Austrian anti-Semitism. Although his study lies somewhat outside the timeline in this dissertation, its relevance is still strong because the seeds of twentieth-century anti-Semitism germinated earlier in the second half of the nineteenth century. In laying out the terms of his study, Pauley contrasts other scholars' understandings of anti-Semitism in order to show that the slippery topic is problematic but must nevertheless be defined in order to provide parameters for a discussion. Pauley reaches to earlier works on anti-Semitism, one by Gisela Lebzelter and another by Julius Carlebach, and contrasts definitions in those studies in order to lay the framework for his own discussion.

Gisela Lebzelter's more radical definition of anti-Semitism outlined in her analysis of anti-Semitism in England encompasses a so-called "latent totality of [the] phobia" that separates Jews from all others in society. In contrast, Carlebach's study of Marx and anti-Judaism provides a more comprehensive definition that characterizes anti-Semitism as "an attitude of hostility towards Jews as such . . . The hostility . . . must be associated definitely with the quality of being a Jew." Whereas Carlebach's definition encompasses a hostile attitude towards Jews that was specifically aimed at individuals due specifically to their Jewishness, Lebzelter's definition points to the irrational and xenophobic nature of anti-Semitism and its all-pervasive presence in society and culture.²⁹⁰ In his historical analysis, Pauley also notes the instinctual, pseudo-religious aspect of anti-Semitism that posited within Jews all that was disliked or feared. From ritual murder to usury and unethical business practices, Austrian and German anti-Semites used a variety of arguments to bolster their position that Jews formed a criminal race whose victims were the (non-Jewish) Germans and Austrians. Anti-Semitism became the daily *parole* of Austrian politics and culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century. With the emergence of radical anti-Semitic political parties like Schönerer's *Deutschnationaler Verein Partei* and the election of the open anti-Semite Karl Lueger as the Christian-Socialist mayor of Vienna, it became clear to all that anti-Semitism was not merely a radical right-wing position. In the late nineteenth century, anti-Semitism became a common marker in cultural discourse in Austria.

Although the views of Lueger and Schönerer are particularly Austrian expressions of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and hatred of Jews were certainly not limited to Austria,

²⁹⁰ Bruce F. Pauley, From Prejudice to Persecution : A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina P., 1992) 1.

and the charges against Jews remained somewhat similar accross national boundries. Thus, another well-known aspect of nineteenth-century anti-Semitism comes to the fore, namely its international scope and its local nature. In the Czech crownlands, for example, the Jews were disliked not only for their Jewishness but also for their connection to German-language Austrian culture. In Austria, the Jewish language of Yiddish was a target of ridicule; Jewish “otherness” could be linked to dress, language, and profession in addition to other aspects including religion. It is important to recognize, however, that anti-Semites accross Europe often worked in concert and brought about similar charges against the Jews, as the ritual murder charges from Russia to Poland to Germany and France in the nineteenth century attest. As Hillel Kieval notes in his work on ritual murder accusations, the place where the accusations took place often colored the nature of the allegations, but ritual murder charges against Jews sprung up accross Europe just before the turn of the century.²⁹¹

In the nineteenth century in Austria, Pauley notes, Jews were made out to be “sensual scoundrels” who preyed on Austrian and German women, imitators and exploiters of the “Aryans,” and materialists (in the pejorative sense) as opposed to the idealists (Germans and Austrians). Throughout the nineteenth century, Jews became more and more associated with urban modernity, particularly in Vienna, due to a large concentration of Jews in the metropolis of the monarchy. Along with a varying population of Jews in Vienna, the history of Jews in Austria is one of repeated “toleration” pacts and persecutions; as a result, only a few hundred Jews lived in the

²⁹¹Hillel Kieval, "The Importance of Place: Comparative Aspects of the Ritual Murder Trial in Modern Central Europe," Comparing Jewish Societies, ed. Todd Endelman (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997) 135-65.

predominantly German-speaking Austrian crownlands until the 1870s. In contrast, other areas of the empire had a few hundred thousand Jewish inhabitants, mostly in Galicia, Bohemia, and Moravia. Although a brief period of toleration and “enlightenment” ensued at the end of the eighteenth century during the reign of Joseph II, Austria was the only country that still imposed medieval restrictions on Jews in 1848, and Jews, in contrast to other immigrant groups, were forever considered foreigners.²⁹² Still, the Jewish community managed to grow numerically and economically during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In stride with the surrounding culture as well as other authors of the time, Rosegger’s writings evidence numerous explicit and implicit instances of anti-Semitism. Like Wilhelm von Polenz who in Der Büttnerbauer chronicled the downfall of a German farm due to industrialization and capitalism, the ugly sides of which were inextricably linked to the Jews, Rosegger’s stories and novels locate capitalism (the ugly sides of which often have a Jewish element) not in the urban centers where the Jews largely lived but in the rural villages and farming communities about which he wrote.

In the short story about Rosegger’s childhood “Wie ich mit dem Thresel ausging und mit dem Maischel heimkam,” the narrator recounts how he was “lent” to the traveling saleswoman Thresel in order to help her sell toys, etc. at a local festival. When Thresel and Peter arrive at the market, a Jew named Maischel has already taken the spot that Thresel had occupied for years; the man in charge tells Thresel that Maischel paid double his booth dues in order to have the better position. Thresel responds, “Für einen solchen Handel . . . sei ein Jude zu wenig, einer müsse sein, der das Gebot mache, und ein

²⁹² Pauley, From Prejudice to Persecution, 19.

zweiter, der es annehme.“²⁹³ The smile that the local pub-owner exchanges with Thresel indicates tacit agreement with her anti-Semitic slant and her prejudice that Jews work deceitfully on the market.

The description of Maischel fits all the usual stereotypes from the little, dark eyes to the red face to the curly hair and the shifty looks that avoid looking another in the eye. The narrator even goes so far as to call Maischel a “Leutanschmierer” – the equivalent to a greasy salesman – and insists that villagers in the town will not buy anything from him.²⁹⁴ In predictable manner, the Jew is wildly successful despite his inability to pronounce the words properly, and Thresel’s stand has no customers. After a fight, the local police cast Peter out of the village, and he waits to explain the circumstances to Thresel. When he sees her walking with the boy with whom he had just fought, he hides from her and tries to make his way home on his own. On the way fatigue overcomes him, and he curls up along side the path. Maischel, the Jew at the market, finds Peter and rescues him from hypothermia. The narrator describes the scene: “Er hielt mir ein Holzplützerchen an den Mund, und als ich daraus ein paar Schlucke tat, da wurde mir so warm inwendig, so warm ums Herz, daß es mir zu Sinn kam: der Maischel ist doch kein schlechter Mensch.“²⁹⁵

In this short story, we have all the customary canards of German anti-Semitism from the good Jew to the bad Jew as well as all of the physical markers that identify Maischel as an outsider. The reader notes that the author, no longer a child, certainly reminisces upon his childhood and his naiveté. One may therefore brush aside many

²⁹³ Peter Rosegger, “Wich ich mit der Thresel ausging und mit dem Maischel heimkam,” Als ich noch der Waldbauernbub war, ed. Hamburger Jugendschriftenausschuß, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Staackmann, 1913) 48.

²⁹⁴ Rosegger, Wie ich mit der Thresel 49.

²⁹⁵ Rosegger, Wie ich mit der Thresel 57.

elements of the story as the narrative voice of the child characterized by an innocent albeit offensive anti-Semitic tone to the text. In other words, the author may simply be parroting statements about Jews in order to show Peter's development: learning to appreciate Maischel as a "good Jew" instead of judging him on stereotypes was part of his education as a "Waldbauernbub."

However, not all of Rosegger's writings hide behind the innocence of a child's voice when it comes to anti-Semitism. Indeed, the author's journalistic writings and publishing as the editor of the journal Heimgarten belie an even more problematic position than the one expressed in his literary writings. Under the guise of combating anti-Semitism, Rosegger reiterates arguments for anti-Semitic leanings and provides equal space for racist diatribes and philosophical rebuttals displaying overt racism. In a reprint of an article from another journal, Dorfbote, which appeals to the small reading public in the villages of the Styrian countryside, Rosegger adopts the title "Der vernünftige Antisemitismus." The title alone causes the modern-day critic to raise an eyebrow, a critic who may well recoil at such an oxymoron. The article, itself, however proceeds to criticize a new "deutsche Volkspartei" and its racist policies that target Jews for their influence in economic and political spheres. The author states,

Die einen sagen: Das ist der Antisemitismus, welcher schon so viel Unheil gestiftet, was Volk verwirrt, die Deutschen gespalten hat; da thun wir nicht mit, obgleich wir selbst keine Judenfreunde sind. Die anderen erwidern: Die Verfasser des Programmes haben recht, der jüdische Einfluss soll bekämpft werden, Antisemitismus ist nothwendig, er ist das Kennzeichen einer guten deutschen Gesinnung.

Der "Dorfbote" seinerseits meint aber, die Führer der deutschen Volkspartei sollen zunächst genau sagen: Erstens was sie unter jüdischem Einfluss verstehen und zweitens, durch welche Mittel sie denselben bekämpfen wollen. Dann erst wird es möglich sein, sich ein sicheres Urtheil zu bilden.

Wenn die deutsche Volkspartei verhüten will, dass jüdische Banken und Eisenbahngesellschaften den Staat ausbeuten, wenn sie verhüten will, dass jüdische Geschäftsleute Lebensmittel fälschen, unlauteren Wettbewerb treiben und andere schlimme Dinge verüben, so wird ihr selbstverständlich jedermann recht geben. Nur würde sie dann vielleicht richtiger sagen: Ich bekämpfe den Schwindel, ich bekämpfe die Ausbeutung, ich bekämpfe jedes unlautere Treiben, und da Schwindel, Ausbeutung, unlauteres Treiben großentheils von Juden ausgeht, so bekämpfe ich jenes Judenthum, das sich der erwähnten Übelthaten schuldig macht.

... Sollte aber die deutsche Volkspartei dahin wirken, dass beispielsweise die bürgerliche Gleichberechtigung aufgehoben werde, sollte sie die Wiederherstellung der confessionellen Schule anstreben, bloß um die jüdischen Schulkinder von den christlichen zu trennen ..., so würde sie wenigstens in unserer Steiermark schwerlich einen großen Anhang finden.

Einen Antisemitismus, der im Wesentlichen ein Kampf gegen die Corruption ist, lässt sich die Bevölkerung gerne gefallen; einen Antisemitismus aber, der als Racenhetze auftritt, lehnen gerade unsere besseren Volkskreise ab.²⁹⁶

The article's stated subject is a rational anti-Semitism, which is an impossible position from today's standpoint. On its surface, the author argues that anti-Semitism can be considered a "good and healthy German" position, as long as it targets crimes and character flaws that are allegedly prevalent among Jews. Underneath this surface, a more menacing racism becomes apparent, for neither the author of the article nor Rosegger as a re-publisher considers the basis for his own ideas about Jews. For instance, the author does not consider the reason for Jewish influence in railways, in the market, and in politics; this influence is due to imperial policies that limited financial services to Jews and then used these services to finance public works and other imperial endeavors including wars. In other words, the author implies that corruption in political and financial spheres is exceptionally ubiquitous in Jewish society, although the emperor and his citizens profited directly from this sphere, which they also artificially created. In

²⁹⁶ Dorfbote, "Der vernünftige Antisemitismus," Heimgarten (1896): 942.

addition, it is unlikely that Rosegger's readership gained much from the nuanced definitions of anti-Semitism in the article; Lueger's election in 1895 as Mayor of Vienna attests to the public's affinity for political and racial anti-Semitism. In fact, sections of the article remind the reader of Lueger's infamous comment, "Ich bestimme, wer Jude ist."

It is this form of anti-Semitism that makes Latzke's claim that Rosegger was no anti-Semite dubious. While Rosegger may not have espoused rabid anti-Semitism in the manner of the *Deutsche Volkspartei* or the Schönerer party, his writings still carry a tone of latent anti-Semitism that correlates with the often more blatant racism of *Blut und Boden* literature. A further nuance colors the debate over whether Rosegger espoused an especially strong anti-Semitic position, namely his criticism of racist and confessionalist hatred. As the reader notes above, the author of the article decries confessionalist hatred that advocated rolling back reforms that had granted Jews rights under civil code (reforms that came largely as a result of the 1848 revolution and the new constitution in Austria during the early 1860s). Although the shift in anti-Semitism during the nineteenth century from religious and cultural anti-Semitism to racial anti-Semitism largely left the religious discussion behind, Rosegger's tolerant (by nineteenth-century terms) relationship to other faiths provides the discussion with another nuance. Additionally, this tolerance leaves one bewildered; how could an educated liberal-minded writer with such a passion for open-mindedness in religion still espouse positions and notions of Jews that were based on naked prejudice?

Still, Rosegger's insistence upon ecumenism among various faiths distinguishes him from authors of *Blut und Boden* literature in Austria. In a country with few

Protestants, where the state had an official concordat with the Pope in Rome, Rosegger, in his journal Heimgarten, called for donations to build a Protestant church in Mürzzuschlag, the nearest city to his hometown of Krieglach/Alpl (1900). And despite his own scorn for such simple and seemingly naive religious practices such as devotion to Mary, Rosegger stipulated that an icon of the virgin be placed in the Protestant church – the icon depicts Mary with Joseph and Jesus.²⁹⁷ Several biographers take note of this event as an indicator of Rosegger’s anti-dogmatic religious inclination. However, when Henry Charles Sorg discusses Rosegger and Catholic beliefs in his book, Rosegger’s Religion, he does not mention this icon. Sorg does thoroughly depict a conflict that remains ever-present in Rosegger’s writings between liberalism (influenced by the intellectual climate in Graz and Dr. Svoboda, publisher of a local newspaper in Graz and a well-known atheist) and the tradition of naive Catholic faith in which Rosegger grew up. Sorg notes,

It was certainly not the liberal Rosegger that wrote these eulogies in praise of the Queen of Heaven. This was the Catholic Rosegger that could not but break for once the crust of modern liberalism, the Rosegger who could not bring himself to believe in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mother, yet all his life felt in his heart the great “Heimweh des Herzens nach dem Herzen.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ This may at first seem offensive to Protestants who reject the cult of Mary. However, there is no documented resistance to the placing of the icon. Rosegger and his children grew ever closer to the Protestant church, and his children eventually converted. Their conversion to Protestantism (and Rosegger’s positive reception thereof) and Rosegger’s affinity for Protestant belief and practices, however, were not a rejection of prayer to Mary. Instead, it marks more an allegiance to the *Los von Rom* movement and Rosegger’s own misgivings about Catholicism in Austria. Rosegger is even quoted as saying that Mary was “gut evangelisch.” Maximilian Liebmann, “Religion – Glaube – Kirchen. “Kirche Ist Mit Nebensache, Das Christentum Hauptsache”,” Peter Rosegger (1843-1918), ed. Gerald Schöpfer (Graz: Styria, 1993) 221.

²⁹⁸ Henry Charles Sorg, Rosegger’s Religion; a Critical Study of His Works, Catholic University of America. Studies in German,; V. 11; Variation: Catholic University of America.; Studies in German ;; V. 11. (New York: AMS Press, 1970) 130.

It is clear that Catholic faith exerted strong influence upon Rosegger long after he had distanced himself from the more traditional practices of Catholics in his local Styria. Despite an in-depth study of religion in Rosegger's literary works, Sorg's criticism of Rosegger's religious beliefs and positions unbalances his reading of the author's texts. Sorg's emphasis upon the conflict between liberal modern positions and traditional Catholic beliefs in Rosegger's texts highlights a central theme within the author's oeuvre. However, it may be more helpful for understanding Rosegger to underscore the conflict within each text rather than to seek unity within texts and linear development in the author's philosophical thought, as does Sorg. For example, Rosegger's call for funding the Protestant church may have seemed to some an affront to traditional Catholics in Styria. However, when one takes into account his insistence upon the icon of Mary and his continued membership in the Catholic Church despite his disagreements with its officially sanctioned theology and its clergy, it becomes apparent that the conflict between his childhood faith, his education, and his own liberal beliefs continued to influence both his thought and his writing. Although Catholic belief and religious practice cannot be reduced to prayer to Mary, Rosegger's complicated beliefs about such devotion illustrate the author's multi-faceted and conflicted relationship to his faith and the religious beliefs dominant in Styria.

The inner conflict in Rosegger regarding influences from his Catholic upbringing, his own religious belief, and his liberal education quite possibly also contributed to his religious tolerance. In summing up positions expressed in Rosegger's novels, Sorg explains, "Especially revolting to Rosegger's sense of Christian justice and charity was every form of religious intolerance. On this score, he waged relentless war against the

Catholic clergy whom he accused of pharisaical legalism, of refusing baptism to unwed mothers, and of denying Christian burial to those who had committed suicide from despair or insanity.”²⁹⁹ It is clear that the author challenged traditional religious practices that he viewed as intolerant, especially when dogma outweighed mercy. This compels the modern critic to examine each position and text within the author’s works carefully and evaluate them individually in order to appreciate the cumulative variety of positions expressed within the sum of his writings. This is the close reading approach that this dissertation adopts. While some of Rosegger’s texts champion religious tolerance and freedom of religious belief, latent racist anti-Semitism also colors his works. As a cursory reading of “Wie ich mit dem Thresel ausging und mit dem Maischel heimkam” indicates, the author was sometimes unable to step outside his culture and conscientiously question the basis for his prejudice against Jews. Rosegger’s failure here to see through cultural prejudice and recognize these as a significant source of the cultural clash with Jewish members of the empire muddles and, at some points, complicates his literary works, especially for current readers.

While one cannot simply place Rosegger firmly in the camp of racial anti-Semites, the presence of anti-Semitism in his works must influence any reading of his oeuvre. From his journalistic work to his literary publications, there are simply too many instances within the author’s writings that belie his liberal leanings and reveal an ignorant prejudice that appealed to readers of *Blut und Boden* literature.

²⁹⁹ Sorg, Rosegger’s Religion 148

Chapter Four

Felix Salten: Bambi, Nature and Modernity

I. Introduction

Felix Salten, who was born Siegmund Salzmann as the son of Hungarian Jews from Budapest, certainly endured the brunt of Austrian anti-Semitism. The young Salten was able to rise as one of the stars of the Jung-Wien literary circle through his publications in numerous newspapers from Die Zeit to Die Neue Freie Presse as well as his short stories, plays, novels, and essays. Salten eventually became the president of the Austrian P.E.N. club but relinquished that role after a debacle during the 1933 international congress of P.E.N. clubs at in Dubrovnik where the criticism of the burning of books in Germany led to a splitting of the Austrian P.E.N. club between the more conservative and liberal wings of the group. In 1936, Salten's books were officially banned in Germany, and in 1938, Salten emigrated to Zurich in order to escape the *Anschluss* and its aftermath. However, some of the most biting anti-Semitic criticism to be leveled at Salten came not from the Nazis but from Karl Kraus, an assimilated Jew who, for a time, became Catholic and later renounced his membership in the church. Salten no doubt drew Kraus's condemnation due to his publication in newspaper feuilletons, a genre that Kraus despised. Nevertheless, as Doron Rabinovici (among others) has noted, Kraus also criticized Salten's literary pursuits, in particular his "jüdelnde Hasen," as Kraus titled an article in his own journal, Die Fackel.³⁰⁰ Kraus's criticism, according to Rabinovici, was a typical anti-Semitic jibe that ridiculed the Jew's use of German, which allegedly represented not an authentic use of the German language

³⁰⁰ Doron Rabinovici, "Bambis jüdischer Vater," Felix Salten : Schriftsteller, Journalist, Exilant, ed. Siegfried and Schwarz Mattl, Werner Michael (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2006) 15.

but a translation from the “secret language” – Hebrew. Rabinovici points to Salten’s support of Zionism and his travel log about his trip to Palestine as reactions to this and other forms of anti-Semitism common in Austrian and European society.

Although I will look to Salten’s journalistic work in order to augment the interpretation of the texts that I examine in this chapter, I will focus primarily upon Salten’s Bambi: eine Lebensgeschichte aus dem Walde, Die Wege des Herren, Hic Rhodus, and Freunde aus Aller Welt: Roman eines zoologischen Gartens. The importance of Salten’s novel about Bambi for perceptions of animals and the environment world-wide can hardly be overestimated. This is perhaps more due to Walt Disney’s film adaptation (1942) of Salten’s novel and its success at the box office than to the Hungarian-born Austrian’s novel; however Salten’s story about the young fawn was a success in its own right, as translations into numerous foreign language attest. The author’s ability to capture the life of the animals in the forest with striking detail while avoiding an overly romanticized anthropomorphism of animal life captivated readers young and old. The other two works, while less known, offer additional perspectives on the relationship between humans and animals as well as humans and nature. A look at these works will reveal that they were written primarily for children. I did not set out to examine children’s literature per se; however, these works are central to understanding Salten’s oeuvre as it pertains to the central concerns of this dissertation. These texts, as I will show, speak to young and old readers alike, especially in their portrayal of nature. In order to provide a framework for a discussion of animals with respect to the larger topic of nature in literature, this chapter will use the theoretical writings of Paul Shepard, an American ecocritic and literature scholar whose theories help to explain the relationship

of humans to nature, specifically of humans to animals and vice versa. In Shepard's writings, I will observe how specific notions of animals and the human relationship to non-human nature are constructed in literature.

II. Biophilia: the need for "wild Others"

In his chapter in The Biophilia Hypothesis, Shepard examines the theoretical and genetic underpinnings for the human relationship with animals. He uses socio-anthropological work by Claude Lévi-Strauss as well as Julia Kristeva's ideas involving the Narcissus myth to explain the relationship between animals and humans as necessary for the human subject to understand itself. To begin with, Shepard calls upon Lévi-Strauss's work with tribal peoples to explain the relationship between modern humans and nature around them, specifically to animals. Lévi-Strauss, according to Shepard, observed that tribal peoples often draw a distinction between nature and culture and that they, distinguishing at first between that which is human and that which is non-human, build a system of distinctions from the things around them and continue to refine these classification systems.³⁰¹ This system of distinctions between human and non-human nature (or nature and culture) is part of human social development then, and it follows that our sense of who we are as humans also derives in part from this distinction. In questioning further the implications of this socialization, Shepard asks, "If the development of the person's sense of his own structure depends on the beauty, strangeness, and diversity of a wild fauna, assimilated ceremonially as food and perceptually as the plural assembly of the self, what can the collapse of of the Lévi-

³⁰¹ Paul Shepard, "On Animal Friends," The Biophilia Hypothesis, ed. Stephen R. and Wilson Kellert, Edward O. (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993) 276.

Strauss line mean as animals are domesticated?”³⁰² His answer is that such species that cross the border between the non-human (uncultured) sphere and the human (cultured) sphere become “like refugees from a ruined nation or guerillas in support of a failing ministry.”³⁰³ He continues, “Once across, captive and bred, domestic animals become numerous, docile, and flaccid, their brains diminished, their anatomy and physiology subject to dysfunction, and their ethology abbreviated. At the same time the remaining wild fauna recedes from human sight and table.”³⁰⁴ Once animals cross the line between nature and culture in the classical sense, the consequence is confusion for animals and humans alike. Shepard explains,

From this metonymic stew of the animal as friend and object emerges the paradox that primal peoples kept their distance from animals — except for their in-taking as food and prototypes — and could therefore love them as sacred beings and respect them as other “peoples” while we, with the animals in our laps and our mechanized slaughterhouses, are less sure who they are and therefore who we are. The surprising consequence is that “nature” is more distanced, not less.³⁰⁵

The human relationship with animals that has evolved over thousands of years has thus come to a point where a select number of “pets” occupy a privileged (or not privileged if one considers what has happened to them) space in our environments while the others are kept at a distance. Due to this distance from the remaining “wild fauna” – animals that have not crossed the line into the culture sphere –, Shepard asserts, we become unsure of who we are. In other words, the domestication of a select number of animals causes humans to create a false distance from the other “wild” animals, whereby human identity becomes unstable because there is no “other” to contrast ourselves with. I will return to

³⁰² Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 282.

³⁰³ Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 282

³⁰⁴ Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 282.

³⁰⁵ Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 289.

this notion of “otherness” in animals in the discussion of Bambi, as there are numerous markers in the text that point to Salten’s problematizing of the relationship between humans and animals in the text.

The second major part of Shepard’s chapter looks at the issue of identity more closely and examines the formation of human identity in light of the Narcissus myth and Julia Kristeva’s analysis thereof. Narcissus is a particularly interesting subject for identity formation because the Greek myth tells of infatuation with the self and the inability to form a stable identity in light of the problem of “otherness,” a problem of modern and ancient societies alike. In the myth, the hunter (Narcissus) commits suicide and is transformed into a flower after he has spurned the love of Echo and fallen in love with his own image. Kristeva interprets the myth as the subject’s (Narcissus’) loss of the thinking *Nous* of the ancient world, which would have allowed him to approach the other as a multiplicity of objects or parts.³⁰⁶ Instead of having a multiplicity of others around him, from whose reflection he could form an image of himself, Narcissus is left with an empty reflection. Shepard calls this an “empty psychic space, [which] is a result of the disarray and the paradox of the solitude of cosmopolitan life, the doubt, disintegration, and estrangement of the soul in the urban stewpot, the deracination and cacophony of the city, a dilemma remaining with us still.”³⁰⁷ Instead of the goddesses or gods of Homeric Greece as Kristeva contends, Shepard argues for a “zoological theriophany” of primal others, whose image and “otherness” allows us as human others to realize who we are as

³⁰⁶ Julia Kristeva, Tales of Love (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987) 212.

³⁰⁷ Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 292.

humans and what makes us human as opposed to part of so-called non-sentient nature.³⁰⁸

Shepard writes, furthermore,

[Kristeva] notes that the cultures of the ancient world (early civilizations) had not solved the problem [of otherness]. The reason was, in fact, that they had created it. The epiphany of the goddess may have indeed represented a lost sensibility more organically tuned than that of the modern world. But what it replaced was a pantheon of wild others, the many-specied consort of preagricultural humanity, part of the genesis of imagination itself, a company in whom both the condition and fulfillment of life were incarnate. ... It was only after the defeat of that numinous, nonhuman presence of animals as a meditation on the nature of the self, in the era of the “ancient” world of cities, goddesses, and gods, that Narcissus rises and falls. All the humanized deities were insufficient substitutes for a zoological theriophany. As the subject of its own meaning, the human figure produced disillusion and inner crisis, the dead end of remaking the gods in human form.³⁰⁹

Our ability to recognize who we are rests thus not on our relationship with Kristeva’s

Other but rather on our relationship with animals and non-sentient nature around us.

Shepard thus upholds the Biophilia Hypothesis – the subject of the book in which his chapter “On Animal Friends” is found. This hypothesis, formulated by Edward O.

Wilson in the 1980s, informs discourses on ecology, biology, anthropology, and literature. It refers to an essential biological need – essential for humans’ physical and mental growth – for humans to relate with life and nature.³¹⁰ Without this essential

relationship to the wild Others, Shepard argues we would be left with “nothing but our own image to explain ourselves by – hence empty psychic space.”³¹¹ The relationship

³⁰⁸ Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 292.

³⁰⁹ Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 292-93.

³¹⁰ As Kellert interprets it, the biophilia hypothesis “proclaims a human dependence on nature that extends far beyond the simple issues of material and physical sustenance to encompass as well the human craving for aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive, and even spiritual meaning and satisfaction.” Stephen R. Kellert, “Introduction,” The Biophilia Hypothesis, ed. Stephen R. and Wilson Kellert, Edward O. (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1993) 20.

³¹¹ Shepard, “On Animal Friends,” 294.

between humans and animals in the modern world is simultaneously too close and too removed. By removing ourselves from the animal Others, we are left in the position of Narcissus, staring at our own reflection. As Shepard concludes,

The substitution of a limited number of genetically deformed and phenotypically confusing species [i.e. pets] for the wild fauna may, through impaired metaphorical distance between ourselves and the wild animals and the incorporation of domestic animals as slaves in human society alter ourselves and our cosmos. Without distance and difference, the others remain monsters of a terrifying jungle or, dissolved in our own unconscious minds, monsters of a chaotic and undifferentiated self.³¹²

The preservation of wild Others is thus, according to Shepard, necessary for a differentiated self – a self that is aware of its place in the world – as well a proper relationship with animals, i.e., non-sentient nature.

III. Bambi

Felix Salten's animal stories use animals not merely as anthropomorphic allegorical tools for narration but also as wild Others, against whose image humans can differentiate themselves. But, Salten does not suggest a return to the wild. Nor do his works present a simplified juvenile image of animals as cute creatures devoid of their natural behaviors, i.e., carnivorous appetites. While Bambi speaks and has a voice in the novel, he is not entirely anthropomorphic. The narrator notes specifically his inability to show human emotions. Instead of mere anthropomorphic tales with animals as the main characters, Salten, as we read in the subtitle "Eine Lebensgeschichte aus dem Walde" composes the story of Bambi's life in the woods. Far from the saccharine Disney tale that truncates its message and washes the novel in the cinematic glow of a melodrama,

³¹² Shepard, "On Animal Friends," 298.

Salten's story specifically points to the problematic relationship between humans and animals, the problem of technology, and the relationship of animals to one another.

To begin with, Salten's novel Bambi: eine Lebensgeschichte aus dem Walde presents anthropomorphized animals that invite the young reader to sympathize with Bambi's experience of loneliness when his mother leaves him, his fear of the world around him, and his bewilderment at the behavior of other animals, etc. Throughout the narration, the animals are continually portrayed as speaking to one another using human language. One may argue that this anthropomorphizing blurs the line between humans and animals, as Shepard maintained of domestication. However, not all anthropomorphizing has the same effect: fairy tales with anthropomorphized animals such as "Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten" or "Der Wolf und die sieben Geißlein" wherein the child is called upon to identify with the animals differ greatly from Salten's novel, which does not induce its young readers to identify to the same degree with Bambi. While the animals in the aforementioned fairy tales, especially in "Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten," have specific animal qualities and attributes (claws, hooves, cawing) as well as their anthropomorphic qualities (musicianship in the case of the "Stadtmusikanten"), humans are not main characters in these tales. Instead, the animals function as humans in the story, and the reader is induced to identify with the animals in the story; the animals effectively lack a non-human identity. In contrast to these tales, Bambi clearly distinguishes baby animals from human babies. Bambi is more than merely an anthropomorphized deer; the narrator places significance upon Bambi's Otherness – his non-human identity. We read, "Bambi war ein Kind. Wäre er ein Menschenkind gewesen, so hätte er gejauchzt. Aber er war ein junges Reh und Rehe

können nicht jauchzen, wenigstens nicht auf diese Art, in der die Menschenkinder es tun.”³¹³ There is therefore a marked differentiation between the human child and Bambi, whereby the reader is called to consider Bambi’s identity as part of non-sentient nature. Readers, mostly children, are thus able to distinguish between the humans in Salten’s novel and their animal Others, although the line between the two has been blurred by the anthropomorphic narration.

Lévi-Strauss and Shepard both suggest that the blurring of this line between animals and humans results in confusion of the human psychic space as well as the deformation and ultimate annihilation of the animals themselves. The blurring of the line and what Shepard refers to as an “impaired metaphorical distance” is portrayed in Bambi most palpably in the figure of Gobo, Bambi’s friend and Faline’s (Bambi’s eventual mate) brother. In the first appearance of the humans in the novel when Bambi’s mother is killed during a hunt, Gobo cannot flee due to his weak condition; the narrator notes that Gobo had been weak as a fawn and that his mother was concerned about this weakness. Gobo is assumed to have been killed until Bambi and Faline encounter him on the edge of the meadow in the spring. Bambi and Faline both remark on the “stranger’s” (Gobo’s) strange behavior. “Wie ungeniert er sich benimmt!,” Faline utters, and Bambi replies, “Dumm, . . . wirklich dumm! Er benimmt sich wie ein kleines Kind . . . als ob es gar keine Gefahr gebe!”³¹⁴ Bambi and Faline are not aware that this “stranger” is Gobo and are surprised to find out that he is not dead. When Gobo tells them that he has spent the winter with the human, Faline is astonished, and in her surprise and joy, she does not note

³¹³ Felix Salten, Bambi (Berlin: Zsolnay, 1937) 20. Bambi, 20.

³¹⁴ Salten, Bambi, 142.

the boastful tone in Gobo's voice. Other changes have taken place with Gobo, as the narrator imparts to the reader in the following:

Ein paarmal mußten sie über weite Blößen. Es fiel ihnen auf, daß Gobo niemals am Rande der Dickung stehen blieb, niemals auch nur einen Augenblick sichernd umherspähte, ehe er ins Freie trat, sondern ohne alle Vorsicht einfach hinauslief. Bambi und Faline wechselten erstaunte Blicke, so oft das geschah. Aber sie sprachen kein Wort und folgten Gobo ein wenig zögernd.³¹⁵

During his time with the humans, Gobo has lost the instinctive sense of fear that still spurs Bambi and Faline to exercise caution. Gobo has been desensitized to the presence of humans, whereas the others have an instinctual fear of them.

Gobo has crossed the line between nature and culture in the paradigm of Lévi-Strauss as a result of the hunter's treatment of him when he could not flee. Gobo tells the animals in the forest after his return that the dogs were howling at him and would have torn him apart, except "Dann kam Er! Er rief die Hunde an und sie wurden sofort ganz still. Er rief noch einmal und sie lagen regungslos vor Ihm auf dem Boden. Dann hob Er mich auf. Ich schrie. Aber er streichelte mich. Er hielt mich sanft an sich gedrückt, Er tat mir nicht weh. Und dann hat er mich fortgetragen."³¹⁶ The experience convinced Gobo that the human was not necessarily someone to be feared. A little later, Gobo recounts to the others how the human – simply called "Er" – fed him through the winter, petted him, and played with him. Gobo's relationship to humans becomes so familiar that he tells the others who are astounded at his lack of fear, "Niemand in der ganzen Welt kann so gut sein wie Er . . ."³¹⁷ When "Der Alte" – the patriarchal deer figure in the novel and the voice of wisdom for all of the animals – notes the fur on Gobo's neck

³¹⁵ Salten, Bambi, 145.

³¹⁶ Salten, Bambi, 150.

³¹⁷ Salten, Bambi, 152.

that has been matted by a collar that he had worn when he was living with the humans, he remarks, “Unglücklicher.”³¹⁸ The collar, a symbol of servitude and dominion literally marks Gobo, who sees it as a great honor to wear such a collar, as not free and therefore unfortunate. Crossing the line from nature into culture has meant for Gobo the surrender of his freedom and the sacrifice of his identity as a natural being; he is no longer instinctually afraid of humans and, as a further marker of his estrangement from his natural environment, he cannot perceive his loss and calls it instead his great honor. The loss of freedom and the sacrifice of identity is a theme to which Salten often returns. A later novel, Freunde aus aller Welt: Roman eines zoologischen Gartens, which this chapter will also examine, treats the lack of freedom that causes deaths and all sorts of maladies.

The altered ethology that Shepard posits as a negative result of the passing of animals from the natural realm into the cultural realm is markedly manifest in Gobo, and the other animals in the forest are keenly aware of this change. We read of the striking difference that the animals perceive in Gobo:

Alle merkten bald, daß Gobo eine Lebensgewohnheit hatte, die ihnen seltsam und bedenklich schien. Er schlief bei Nacht, wenn die anderen wachten und umhergingen. Des Tages aber, während die anderen ihre Verstecke suchten, um zu schlafen, war er munter und ging spazieren. Ja er trat, wenn er wollte, ohne Zögern, aus dem Dickicht und stand im hellen Sonnenlicht seelenruhig auf der Wiese.³¹⁹

The reader suspects that this lack of instinctual fear is dangerous for Gobo, and there can be only one end; indeed, he dies as a result. When a human hunter again enters the forest, Gobo does not fear the human but instead saunters onto the meadow to see him. He is shot and dies; his final words to his friend Marena are “Marena . . . Er hat mich

³¹⁸ Salten, Bambi, 153.

³¹⁹ Salten, Bambi, 162.

nicht erkannt”³²⁰ The novel does not indicate clearly whether or not this is the same hunter as before. The reader cannot, just (as one would assume) the wild animals cannot, differentiate between one human and another; the humans are referred to only as “Er” or “die Gefahr.” Gobo’s crossing of the line into the cultural sphere as he dons the collar and becomes one of the humans’ “pets” has lethal consequences.

Animals that have previously crossed the line between nature and culture are also depicted as pariahs; their role is transformed from one of relative harmonious coexistence with other animals to that of a slave in service to the human master. During a hunt after a fox has been shot, the hunter’s dog tracks down the fox, and the wild animal first pleads for the dog to leave him alone. After the fox realizes that his pleading is in vain, he scowls at the dog,

du Überläufer . . . du Abtrünniger! . . . Du Scherge . . . Du Elender . . . du spürst uns auf, wo Er uns nicht findet . . . du verfolgst uns, wo Er uns nicht einholen kann . . . du lieferst uns aus . . . uns, die wir alle Verwandten sind . . . mich, der ich beinahe dein Bruder bin . . . und du stehst da und schämst dich nicht?³²¹

The other forest animals chime in, and all condemn the dog for his complicity with the humans. The dog, having crossed into the human cultural sphere has lost his connection to his roots in nature. Whereas the human has lost its Other and suffers the psychic fate of Narcissus, the dog mistakes the human for a god-figure. The narrator recounts his retort to the animals:

‘Ihr!’ rief er. ‘Was wollt ihr? Was wißt ihr? Alle gehört ihr Ihm, wie ich ihm gehöre! Aber ich . . . ich liebe Ihn, ich bete Ihn an! Ich diene Ihm! Ich wollt euch auflehnen . . . Ihr Armseligen, gegen Ihn? Er ist allmächtig! Er ist über uns! Alles, was ihr habt, ist von Ihm! Alles was da wächst und lebt, von Ihm!’³²²

³²⁰ Salten, Bambi, 167-68.

³²¹ Salten, Bambi, 198.

³²² Salten, Bambi, 199.

For the dog, the human is a god. “Der Alte,” Bambi’s mentor/father, later shows this belief in the omnipotent human to be a lethal fallacy. However, the dog further defends himself by also pointing out that he is not the only animal or “relative” of the wild animals that serves the human; sheep, horses, cattle, and others also serve the humans. The scene ends with a monologue by “der Alte” that emphasizes the danger in identifying the human as a god. Bambi remarks about the dog killing the fox: “Furchtbar.” The dog’s killing of the fox is terrible to Bambi possibly due to the fact that Bambi is an herbivore. However, “Der Alte,” not captivated or surprised by the bloody scene, reflects on “das Furchtbarste”: “Sie glauben an das, was der Hund da verkündigt hat. Sie glauben daran, sie verbringen ihr Leben voll Angst, sie hassen Ihn und sich selbst . . . und sie töten sich um Seinetwillen.”³²³ The killing of the fox alone does not disturb the old deer, who in his mature wisdom sees beyond the actions of the dog and points instead to the identity problem. One could certainly interpret this scene (and others within Bambi) as an allegorical discourse on the politics of the early twentieth century from fascism to anti-Semitism to neo-absolutism and the horrors of World War I.³²⁴ Indeed, multiple discourses are layered on top of one another in Bambi. However, sticking with the theme of nature and the human, we can see that “der Alte” expresses a central problem of modernity, namely the lack of a stable human identity. In Salten’s Bambi, this lack of identity is not only a problem experienced by the humans, but it also extends into the wild animal sphere (nature), where it has “terrible” consequences.

³²³ Salten, Bambi, 200.

³²⁴ Siegfried Mattl and Werner Michael Schwarz, "Felix Salten: Annäherung an Eine Biographie," Felix Salten: Schriftsteller – Journalist – Exilant, ed. Siegfried Mattl and Werner Michael Schwarz (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2006) 53-54. See also Rabinovici, “Bambis jüdischer Vater,” 15.

Those consequences are, for instance, fatal for Gobo, but they are symbolic of larger struggles as humans wrestle with an identity crisis once a lack of animal Others arises. The nature-culture divide becomes unstable with the lack of a viable image of nature, which in turn creates an empty psychic space, imperiling the identity of the human subject. In Bambi, danger lurks at every turn; in addition to the loss of identity for the human subject, the deer and other animals of the forest are constantly on the lookout for “die Gefahr” and for “Er” – both references to an ever threatening and seemingly ubiquitous archetype of humans. Death, however, threatens not only the animals in the story – among the deer, both Gobo and Bambi’s mother are killed, and “der Alte” dies of natural causes at the end of the story – but also humans as the scene with the poacher lying dead in the snow illustrates. Indeed, one of the central messages of the novel is what humans and animals have in common; death underlines their connection.

In the scene examined above, “der Alte” is disgusted by the animals’ inability to perceive the human as subject to the same natural laws as they are. In their blindness, he points out, they even kill themselves for him. In one of the final scenes from the story, the narrator drives this idea home when “der Alte” and Bambi encounter a dead hunter in the forest. Bambi and “der Alte” have heard shots in the forest, and the old deer wants to take Bambi to show him the aftermath. He tells Bambi, “komm jetzt und sei ohne Furcht. Ich bin froh, daß ich dich hinführen und dir das zeigen kann”³²⁵ As they come closer to the human, Bambi catches his scent and wants to flee, but the old deer tells him not to be afraid. This assurance not to be afraid marks this scene as different from the

³²⁵ Salten, Bambi, 204.

rest of the novel where a constant fear of the human prevails. The narrator describes the scene as Bambi and the old deer see the human as follows:

Da lag Er, das blasse, nackte Gesicht nach aufwärts gewendet, der Hut ein wenig abseits für sich im Schnee, und Bambi, der nichts von Hüten wußte, meinte, dies furchtbare Haupt sei in zwei Stücke zerschlagen. Der entblößte Hals des Raubschützen war von einer Wunde durchbohrt, die wie ein kleiner roter Mund offen stand. Blut sickerte noch leise hervor, Blut starrte in den Haaren, unter der Nase und lag in einer breiten Lache im Schnee, der von seiner Wärme zerschmolz.³²⁶

Here, we learn of the human's identity as a poacher, and we see him lying dead on the ground. The old deer asks Bambi, "Hier stehen wir, . . . ganz bei Ihm stehen wir . . . und wo ist nun die Gefahr?"³²⁷ He then asks another question of Bambi, "erinnerst du dich an das, was Gobo gesagt hat, an das, was der Hund gesagt hat, an das, was sie alle glauben . . . erinnere dich?"³²⁸ The old deer continues in this didactic tone:

siehst du nun, daß er daliegt, wie einer von uns? Höre, Bambi, Er ist nicht allmächtig, wie sie sagen. Er ist es nicht, von dem alles kommt, was da wächst und lebt, Er ist nicht über uns! Neben uns ist Er und ist wie wir selber, und Er kennt wie wir die Angst, die Not und das Leid. Er kann überwältigt werden gleich uns, und dann liegt er hilflos am Boden, so wie wir anderen, so wie du Ihn jetzt vor dir siehst.³²⁹

In order to make sure that Bambi has understood his message, the old deer asks him to tell him what he thinks the old one has meant, and Bambi replies, "Ein anderer ist über uns allen ... über uns und über Ihm."³³⁰ Instead of experiencing the human as a god-figure, Bambi now recognizes him as an "animal" like himself, also having fears and worries, and also mortal.

³²⁶ Salten, Bambi, 205.

³²⁷ Salten, Bambi, 205.

³²⁸ Salten, Bambi, 206.

³²⁹ Salten, Bambi, 206.

³³⁰ Salten, Bambi, 206.

The book does not conclude with a “happy ending” as the Disney version does. The old one parts from Bambi after the two exchange their goodbyes, and “der Alte” then finds a place to die. There exists a melancholic tone in the scene where Bambi and the old deer part whereby the reader is called to consider the nature of life and mortality. The final chapter of the story leaves us with Bambi reproaching two young fawns who are crying for their mother after she has left them alone. In this reprisal of the earlier scene between him and “der Alte,” the familiar theme of a recurring pattern of life in the woods sets in. Nature goes on despite the death of the old deer and in contrast to the individual life of the poacher. As part of a larger ecological system, humans will continue to exist, so the text suggests, but they do not exist outside or above but rather within that system.

The contrast between technology and nature constitutes yet another dichotomy within the text. One notes that the only figure in the novel connected to the use of technology is the human, and even his use of the gun is viewed by the animals as an extension of his natural physiology. The human becomes synonymous with technological innovation. Karus, one of the young deer befriended by Bambi, explains, “Die dritte Hand, sagt die Krähe, ist die böse. Sie ist nicht angewachsen, wie die beiden anderen, sondern er trägt sie über die Schulter gehängt. Die Krähe erzählt, sie wisse ganz genau, ob Er oder sonst einer seiner Sippe gefährlich sei oder nicht. Wenn er ohne die dritte Hand daherkomme, dann sei Er nicht gefährlich.”³³¹ Technology (the gun) is thus a marker of human culture; the gun is also an extension of the human body. When the human does not have culture in tow, he is not dangerous. Bambi’s mother claims, “Es gibt doch welche unter ihnen, die gar nicht gefährlich sind. Das merkt man gleich.”³³²

³³¹ Salten, Bambi, 89.

³³² Salten, Bambi, 90.

The human, when armed, however, resembles the “Moloch” of expressionist poetry; he is described as being “ganz aus Feuer.”³³³ Invoking yet another image of the demonic human that destroys and devours animals, another deer claims that, instead of a third hand, the human throws a tooth and that one dies from his bite. When a young deer, Marena, speaks of a harmonious relationship with the humans that will develop some day, a more skeptical deer, Frau Nettla, answers,

Das seh ich wirklich nicht ein. Versöhnen! Seit wir denken können, ermordet Er uns, uns alle, unsere Schwestern, unsere Mütter, unsere Brüder! Seit wir auf der Welt sind, läßt Er uns keinen Frieden, tötet Er uns, wo wir uns zeigen ... und dann sollen wir uns mit Ihm versöhnen? Was für eine Dummheit!³³⁴

Marena retorts, “Versöhnung ist keine Dummheit . . . Versöhnung muss kommen.”³³⁵

The parallels to a discussion on the existence of God are clear, as one deer’s image of the god/human is a demonic view while the other, in youthful optimism, hopes for a day when she can be one with the human/god. One could interpret the demonic portrayal of the human in the novel as an affirmation of Nettla’s skepticism – an interpretation that would connect this animal story to Salten’s colleagues in the Young-Vienna movement, especially with respect to their cynical portrayals of society, church, and government. However, the later chapter where “der Alte” shows Bambi the dead human affirming a god-figure that is “above us all” shows that Salten’s novel does not express such an unabated skeptical vision of the world. While union between humans and animals only occurs within the novel in death, the potential of a harmonious existence of the two with one another nevertheless exists, but only as long as the animals can recognize the “Otherness” of the human – that is the fact that humans and animals exist as Others for

³³³ Salten, Bambi, 91.

³³⁴ Salten, Bambi, 92.

³³⁵ Salten, Bambi, 92.

each other instead of being locked in a relationship where the human is a god figure with the animals as its servants, slaves, or subjects.

Salten's Bambi expresses an overtly pessimistic view of the impact of technology upon human and non-human life in modernity. This pessimism, a similarity that Salten's writing bears to that of his Jung-Wien contemporaries, is born also out of Salten's (and in general society's) traumatic experience of World War I. In an article for the Neue Freie Presse in 1917, Salten writes the following:

Die moderne Technik hat schon mehrmals das Zeitmaß der Welt verändert, zuerst als sie uns die Eisenbahn gab, dann mit dem Telegraphen, dann mit dem Telephon, dem Luftschiff und mit anderen Einzelleistungen. Jetzt aber rückt sie am Zeiger der Weltenuhr, und die drei Jahre sind nicht drei Jahre, sondern ein ganzes Zeitalter. An vielen Merkzeichen läßt sich's erkennen, wenn wir nicht wieder blind sein wollen.³³⁶

Like the other authors that I have discussed in this dissertation, especially Rosegger and Ebner-Eschenbach, Salten is cognizant of the changes that technology brings about. In the above passage, he suggests that technological advances have not only changed modes of transportation and communication but also the perception of time. Salten continues,

An uns selbst, an allen Menschen, die überall so verändert sind, wie nur eine lange, tiefgehende Entwicklung zu ändern vermag. An Staatsproblemen, deren Lösung man vom nächsten Jahrhundert – vielleicht – erst erwartete und die jetzt in Erfüllungsreife bersten. An der fabelhaften Rapidität, mit der Menschen, von denen wir ein Leben lang glaubten, sie seien unvergeßlich, in Vergessenheit sinken. An der außerordentlichen Kraft, mit der das Volk in allen Ländern nach seinen Rechten greift, als habe es nicht die ganze letzte Zeit atemlos gekämpft, sondern still und gesammelt über seine Rechte nachgedacht.³³⁷

Technology, Salten asserts, has allowed for political changes that have radically altered the life of the people and has increased the pace at which Austrians were forgetting

³³⁶ Felix Salten, "Die Moderne Technik," Neue Freie Presse September 27 1917.

³³⁷ Salten, "Die Moderne Technik."

seemingly unforgettable personalities. This may be an allusion to the death of emperor Franz-Josef, whose death in 1916 marked the end of an era – Franz-Josef had reigned from 1848 until his death. In the passage above, Salten may also be referencing the Russian czar's abdication in March 1917 and the revolution that radically changed the face of Europe, and in particular Eastern-European politics. Despite the enormous human tragedy that World War I represented, Salten seems hopeful in this article that positive changes can come about. Like others at the time, he hoped that this would be the war to end all wars and that peace could ensue after “alle Schicksalsfragen der ganzen Welt” have been answered.

In the article, Salten also notes the demonic aspect of technology with respect to its employment in war, i.e., the change in the way war was fought as a result of technological innovations such as Dreadnought class ships, tanks, poison gas, and machine guns, to name a few. Salten reflects,

Eine dämonische Rolle spielt die moderne Technik in diesem Krieg. Sie weitet den engen Raum dreier Jahre zu einer fast übertrieben inhaltsreichen Epoche. Von der rasenden Gefährlichkeit ihrer Mittel ist eine Lockung ausgegangen, die das Blut der Menschen zum Sieden brachte. Ungeduldig, ihre unermeßlichen Mittel zu Wasser und zu Land, unter See und in den Lüften endlich besser genützt zu sehen, hat sie die Menschen dazu verführt und gezwungen, ihre Streitigkeiten einmal auszufechten. Die andere Auslegung, daß die Natur sich räche, indem sie nun die Menschen mit den Kräften niederschlägt, die ihr entrissen und enträtselt wurden, ist sentimental und unwahr zugleich, denn sie schafft einen Gegensatz zwischen Natur und Mensch. Geht daran vorbei, daß sich gerade an jenen Menschen, die den Blitz der Wolke niederholten, das Geheimnis des Vogelfluges ergründeten, die Mikroben fanden, die Sprengkraft der Vulkane imitierten und dem Tod tausend verborgene, giftige Waffen aus den Knochenfingern wanden, die Natur in ihrer glühendsten Schönheit offenbart.³³⁸

³³⁸ Salten, “Die Moderne Technik.”

Like a demon, the author suggests, technology tempts humans to use it to their fullest capabilities in order to seek the destruction of the others. He argues that this is another example of how technology has turned the hands of time ever faster and accelerated movement; death could be inflicted upon masses of enemy soldiers in a shorter period of time than ever before. The idea that technology accelerates movement and time is one that we encountered with Stifter, albeit in reverse through his avoidance of technology in Brigitta, specifically with regard to the narrator on foot. If Stifter avoids the introduction of technology (with the exception of the telescope in Der Hochwald) due to his specific literary program, Salten presents it overtly in his writing and thereby accomplishes a similar objective, namely the critique of a technological perspective – that is, one that extols the advantages of technology. In addition, Salten’s critique bespeaks a generalized angst that he (and many of his contemporaries) had concerning technology and its application in the modern world, as is not surprising given the experience of World War I.³³⁹ What is surprising, however, is Salten’s insistence upon the idea that this demonic technology is merely an example of nature. In other words, Salten contradicts the nature/culture dichotomy and sets up a unity between the two in this article. This is all the more astonishing given the chasm between the two in Bambi, where technology, especially in the hands of the human, is portrayed as evil in contrast to the positive depiction of the natural world.

This dichotomy between nature and culture has featured prominently in criticism of the text and Disney’s film version, especially in the use of technology as a marker of

³³⁹ See also the short discussion of Das Maschinenzeitaler in the introduction to this dissertation.

culture. David Whitley, in his discussion of the Disney's *Bambi* film, specifically discusses the edenic/pastoral aspect of the forest in the animated feature. He writes,

Bambi is not just a depiction of the life cycle of the deer, picked out with a degree of realistic detail that is highly unusual within the format of a children's animated feature. The film is capable of engaging with our feelings powerfully because it is also, at a deeper level, a version of the Eden myth. The forest is conjured with a kind of joyful and lyrical delight appropriate for the representation of unfallen nature within paradise. As in the biblical Eden, nature's predatory, stinging, biting, aggressive functions are almost wholly absent. The only natural predator represented in the film, the owl, is a kind of grumpy, middle-aged guardian of forest life whose most aggressive act is to hoot a group of amorous birds who are disturbing his springtime peace.³⁴⁰

That nature's aggressive features are absent is arguably not true of Salten's novel where dogs and foxes play prominent roles. This absence is more characteristic of the film adaptation of the book. Whitley acknowledges this fact and further examines the pastoral in the film as he explains,

The storyline of the film – changed from Felix Salten's book – finishes with a kind of expulsion from this forest paradise, as the combination of large-scale hunting expedition and a fire drive the deer up and over the mountains to seek safety. The relative ease with which the animals are able to reclaim their scarred but rejuvenating 'Eden' at the end of the film can perhaps be understood as a result of the fallen state of their world being attributable wholly to Man, who drives them out, and not at all to the gentle, innocent forest creatures that nature eventually rescues. Finally *Bambi* is himself showcased as a gawkily comic pastiche of the biblical Adam, when he struggles, in anthropomorphic vein, to acquire language early in the film and to name the other forest creatures. The version of the Eden myth that is offered to us within *Bambi* is also, in the broadest sense (as with *Snow White*), a kind of pastoral.³⁴¹

Salten's story of *Bambi*, and Disney's adaptation thereof exhibit ambivalences in the author's work between portraying a unity of nature and culture as in a pastoral and a

³⁴⁰ David Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation*, Ashgate Studies in Childhood, 1700 to the Present (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008) 61.

³⁴¹ Whitley, *The Idea of Nature*, 61-62.

dichotomy of the two, i.e., the connection of the machine to culture and the increasing gap between human culture and the nature that surrounds humans.³⁴²

IV. “Die Wege des Herrn” (1908)

In one of his early works, the novella Die Wege des Herrn, Salten presents the reader with a pessimistic tale of a dog and his master. The novella begins by describing the dog and his living quarters. We never learn the dog’s name or the name of the city in which he—the dog—and his master live. He is depicted as an every-day dog, “ein gewöhnlicher Hund, wie es deren viele gibt. Er war nicht schöner als die anderen und nicht häßlicher, nicht gescheiter und nicht dümmer.”³⁴³ The dog is also old and subject to the maladies of aging; he can be grumpy and excitable and feel quite tired, sore, and out of breath at times. His master is depicted as cruel and insensitive, especially when he beats the dog for lying on the sofa. Indeed, he, the dog, believes it is the master who causes these maladies:

In solchen Stunden kam er zu seinem Herrn geschlichen, setzte sich ganz nahe heran, war demütig, zeigte sich auffallend brav und bettelte um ein Zeichen der Gunst. Es war nämlich in ihm, als ob sein Herr es sei, der diese Schmerzen und Beklemmungen über ihn verhängt habe, und als

³⁴² There are certainly a number of articles that have examined Disney’s feature film “Bambi.” Few, if any, are relevant to the discussion of Salten’s works, since they focus almost exclusively on the film and often do not even mention Salten as the original author. Majer O’Sickey, for instance, uses feminist literary criticism to interpret the movie as an important marker in the “bambification” of the female in the larger culture. Rather than rehashing work on Disney’s movie, which is not necessarily relevant to the discussion within this dissertation, I will focus primarily on Salten’s text and view Disney’s movie as a separate text. See Ingeborg Majer O’Sickey, “Framing the Unheimlich: *Heimatfilm* and Bambi,” Gender and Germanness: Culture Productions of Nation, ed. Patricia Herminhouse and Magda Mueller (Providence: Bergham, 1997) 208-09.

³⁴³ Felix Salten, “Die Wege des Herrn,” Die Wege des Herrn (Vienna: Deutsch-Österreichischer Verlag, 1911) 10.

könne sein Herr diese Trübeseligkeit auch wieder von ihm hinwegnehmen.³⁴⁴

This passage shows the master as a god-figure for the dog, one who controls all aspects of his life. However, the reader is not offered a benevolent image of the master, as the dog believes that the master has caused the pains in his aging body.

One day as the dog is lying in the corner sleeping, a whistle is heard, and he is summoned for a walk. In a pessimistic tone, the dog foresees his looming fate, since on the day before the master had taken him on a similar journey where he was made to follow on foot the *Omnibus* in which the master rode. We read thereof: “Derartige Mühsal ertrug er jetzt nicht mehr wie sonst. Es lag also noch von gestern in ihm.”³⁴⁵

The dog’s eventual demise is thus foreshadowed. On a similar run this day, he races past other dogs who are enjoying their day and playing in the sunshine, and he happens upon a female poodle who flirts with him and tempts him to leave his pursuit and instead frolic in a nearby park with her. The dog does not even grant the poodle an answer; we later read of his thoughts on such activities: “Was waren das überhaupt für Hunde, die da herumvagierten, nur an ihr Vergnügen dachten, nur genießen wollten und immer nur genießen! Sie würden schon sehen, wie weit sie damit kommen. Nur, daß es dann zu spät sein wird.”³⁴⁶

The run continues, and the tension builds as the dog tires. Following his master’s *Omnibus*, he comes to an intersection where several of the vehicles cross paths; he is confounded by their sheer number and loses track of his master’s carriage. Exhausted, the dog follows one carriage down a street until it eventually stops. However, his master

³⁴⁴ Salten, Die Wege des Herrn, 11.

³⁴⁵ Salten, Die Wege des Herrn, 12.

³⁴⁶ Salten, Die Wege des Herrn, 14.

is not in the carriage. In delirious exhaustion, he lies down on a pile of trash (thinking it is his bed at home) and dreams of the other dogs enjoying themselves, himself cavorting with the poodle, and finally of his master and the heel of his master's shoe that kicks him. Thereupon, the dog stretches out his legs and dies. Klaus Müller-Richter, who characterizes the novella as a "psychophysische Pädagogik des Urbanen," interprets the tale as follows:

Bereits der andeutungsreiche Titel, "Die Wege des Herrn" von Saltens Tiernovelle verweist voraus auf die "unergründliche," unlesbare Topographie, die zu durchlaufen dem Protagonisten des Textes, einem Hund, schicksalhaft bevorsteht; und präludiert die letztlich tödliche Hierarchie zwischen Herr und Knecht, Gott und Gläubigen, die sich im Fortgang der Novelle vor allem als Unterschied von Mobilitätsformen und Raumpraxen im Terrain der Metropolis (Wien) enthüllt. Denn woran der Hund in dieser Geschichte zu Grunde geht, ist die Beschleunigung der Bewegung im Stadtraum durch die Technisierung des urbanen Verkehrs, hier: durch die Straßenbahn, die sein Herr benutzt und die ihm vorenthalten wird.³⁴⁷

The dog, Müller-Richter claims, dies not as a result of old age but as a result of the technologizing of urban transportation – transportation that is withheld from him.

Müller-Richter continues,

Es bedarf wenig interpretatorischen Wagemuts, Saltens Hybrid aus Tiergeschichte und Großstadt-Allegorie trotz gesicherter Tierliebe Saltens nicht – oder doch weniger – als Plädoyer für ein höheres Maß an Tierliebe zu verstehen, sondern viel mehr als Allegorie auf mangelnde Raum- und Lektürekompentenz, mithin auf die existentielle Gefahr für jene, die mit der Großstadt (noch) nicht vertraut sind.³⁴⁸

Müller-Richter's elegant interpretation certainly hits on a central theme in the story, namely the city as danger for those who cannot manage the urban maze. However, this

³⁴⁷ Klaus Müller-Richter, "Voll Aufmerksamkeit für ihren Gang: Felix Saltens Graphologie urbaner Bewegungen in den frühen Novellen (1893-1911)," Felix Salten: Schriftsteller – Journalist – exilant, ed. Siegfried Mattl and Werner Michael Schwarz (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2006) 74.

³⁴⁸ Müller-Richter, "Voll Aufmerksamkeit für ihren Gang," 74.

interpretation reduces the novella to a simple message; to understand the complex of ideas that Salten weaves into the text, it is necessary to dig deeper. For instance, the other dogs and the female poodle as commentaries on the decadence of modern life also play a role, as well as the dog's insistence on following the master's street-car as an allegorical depiction of an outmoded blind faith in God despite indications to the contrary. The master is not a benevolent god-figure. On the contrary, the dog's death is, at least in part, caused by the master, and the animal's dream culminates in the heel of the master's shoe kicking him as he dies.

The modern city in the novella represents a danger to the dog, who eventually dies, and it also endangers the other dogs in the story whose existence shows no purpose other than biding their time in blissful ignorance. The behavior of these dogs stands out as anomalous. It is no secret that Salten, a dog owner himself, often uses dogs as important characters in his writing such as Der Hund von Florenz, Hunde, and "Die Wege des Herren," among others.³⁴⁹ In addition to those works, dogs are also prominent in Salten's other novels such as Bambi and Kleine Welt für sich. In Salten's animal stories where dogs are prominent characters, the author portrays them as simple-minded but loyal slaves of their masters, who, often in contrast to wild animals, have no sense of or longing for freedom. Jürgen Ehneß analyzes a scene from Salten's novel Fünfzehn Hasen where a dog has hunted down a fox. In the scene, the fox, lying on the ground, ridicules the dog for his blind servitude to the human master. Ehneß concludes that the anthropomorphic portrayal of the dog allows the narrative to present his loyalty to his

³⁴⁹ See the photos of Salten with his dogs in Mattl and Schwarz, eds., Felix Salten: Schriftsteller – Journalist – Exilant, 12 and 120.

master as a function of the dog's nature.³⁵⁰ In a similar manner, Ehneß argues, the anthropomorphic depiction of wild animals in Salten's writing presents their actions as an instinctual urge for freedom. Ehneß explains, "Die Anthropomorphisierung ist auch ein Mittel, um das Verhalten verschiedener Tiere nicht nur darzustellen, sondern auch – da es offenbar für den Menschen rätselhaft ist – zu erklären."³⁵¹ The explanatory anthropomorphism in "Die Wege des Herren," shows how loyalty to the dog's owner is taken to the extreme as he eventually dies in exhaustion after running after the *Omnibus* in which he thinks his master is sitting.

The other dogs in the story thus become indicative of a decadent urban lifestyle that has caused animals, and presumably humans as well, to deviate from their natures. This portrayal of the dogs' altered nature is also related to Salten's broader theme of animals' rights, which is an important aspect of the author's animal stories in general. In regard to "Die Wege des Herren," Müller-Richter notes the love of animals as an important aspect of the text. This is perhaps most apparent in Salten's treatment of the main dog in the story as well as the portrayal of the other dogs. In Kleine Brüder (1935) Salten writes, "Tiere sind immer ein Stück Natur. Unverfälscht, auch wenn sie Haustiere, selbst wenn sie Stubengenossen, sogar wenn sie fern von ihren Daseinswurzeln, ebtblößt von jeglicher Scheu, trübselig denaturiert, in Käfigen gehalten werden, sind sie noch ein

³⁵⁰ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's novel about a dog Krambambuli also deals with the loyalty of dogs to their masters. For instance, Krambambuli the dog is torn between his new master, Hopp, and his old master, "der Gelbe." In this case too, the dog's loyalty to his master – the old master – causes his demise. See Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, "Krambambuli," Dorf- und Schlossgeschichten, ed. Strelka Joseph, 1. Aufl. ed. (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1991).

³⁵¹ Jürgen Ehness, Felix Saltens erzählerisches Werk : Beschreibung und Deutung (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2002) 269.

Stück Natur.”³⁵² The main dog in “Die Wege des Herren” illustrates Salten’s notion that animals are always “a piece of nature” vividly. Even in his death, the dog is portrayed as natural via the loyalty that is an inherent feature of the dog’s makeup. The dog’s thoughts about the poodle and other dogs that merely bide their time instead of “serving their masters” seem therefore ironic, since he predicts their demise due to this “unnatural” behavior. One can thus certainly agree with Müller-Richter’s analysis that the city in the story represents a danger for those who cannot adapt to it. This dog, who – in contrast to the others – does not change his “natural” behavior but continues to show extreme loyalty to his master, therefore dies, whereas the dogs who have adjusted to their life in the city presumably continue to live. This too can be read as part of Salten’s general plea for animal rights in so far as the story directs greater attention to the “nature” of dogs.

V. Freunde aus aller Welt

In a similar manner to the portrayal of the nature of the main dog in “Die Wege des Herren,” Salten’s novel Freunde aus aller Welt: Roman eines zoologischen Gartens (1931) depicts the nature and actions of animals kept in zoos as centered in a basic primal urge for freedom. Salten provides a narrative that excoriates modern zoos and their keeping of animals. Unlike his other animal stories that deal largely with local wildlife, i.e., Bambi the deer, Freunde aus aller Welt addresses the plight of exotic animals that are mainly captured in the wild and live their lives in a zoo. Constructed as a series of shorter narratives that are interconnected, the novel begins with the story of the birth of Tikki, an orangutan born to parents who are captured from the wild. Instead of chronicling the events of the birth, the omniscient third-person narrator recounts the

³⁵² As cited in Ehness, Felix Saltens Erzählerisches Werk, 283.

capture and transport of Yppa, Tiki's mother, as well as her mate Zato to the zoo. In keeping with Salten's narrative style, the narrator takes on an omniscient third-person perspective and delineates a clear separation between the zoo animals and the humans. After Yppa reaches through her cage on her way to the zoo and claws at one of her captors, she feels the snap of a whip that forces her to release the man. When she feels the sting a second time, she takes the whip into the cage and destroys it, whereupon we read,

‘Seid ihr verrückt?’ schrie der Mann. ‘Der eine Hieb, damit der Affe losläßt, – mienetwegen! Aber was für ein dummer Einfall, den Orang zu strafen! Ihn zu schlagen! Wie blödsinnig! Weg mit euch! So wird der Orang niemals friedlich werden! Nie wird er zahm! Nie wird er Vertrauen zu uns haben!’ . . . ‘Hast du Ihnen die Peitsche genommen? Gut so, Lili.’ Er sagte ‘Lili’ zu Yppa. ‘Die Peitsche zerissen? Recht hast du, Lili. Brav bist du, Lili, sehr brav.’ Er reichte ihr Bananen, er lockte sie mit grünen Feigen und Nüssen. ‘Da . . . Lili . . . das ist für dich. Nimm doch, Lili. Das wird dir schmecken.’ Yppa würdigte ihn nicht der kleinsten Grimasse. Regungslos saß sie wieder da, hielt die langen, schmalen Hände über ihrer Stirne und verbarg ihr Gesicht. Unterdessen ging die Reise weiter. Diese Menschen, die Yppa verschleppten, hatten noch allerlei andere Geschöpfe mit sich. Manchmal sah Yppa einige ihrer Leidensgefährten. Immer spürte sie deren Witterung. Kleine Affen, Papageien, ein junger Tiger und andere Urwaldbewohner. Des Nachts hörte sie alle. Kreischnen, brüllen, jammern.³⁵³

Earlier in this first chapter, we have read that Yppa was captured when she ate a large amount of bananas (laced with sedatives) that were strewn about on a clearing in the forest. The ape's relationship to humans thus begins on a strained note, and the disharmony continues. The narrator makes it clear through the use of the name Yppa as well as the description of her capture and transport to the zoo that he has an omniscient position. Additionally, the narrator does not merely adopt the perspective of the animals (in this case, Yppa) or remain content to portray them from the perspective of the

³⁵³ Felix Salten, Freunde aus aller Welt, Roman eines zoologischen Gartens (Berlin: Zsolnay, 1931) 16.

humans. Instead, his position allows him to express the thoughts and sentiments of the animals while employing a different method of anthropomorphism.

As Jürgen Ehneß explains, Salten's works mainly employ two degrees of anthropomorphism. Ehneß notes, however that Salten usually does not employ the third and most comprehensive type of anthropomorphism. Ehneß enumerates the levels as follows:

- I. Der Mensch schreibt dem Tier bestimmte geistige Eigenschaften (besonders die des Denkens) zu, interpretiert tierische Verhaltensweisen und tierisches Aussehen menschlich;
- II. Das Tier besitzt die geistigen Eigenschaften des Menschen, kann denken, fühlen, sprechen, hat gewisse menschliche Moralvorstellungen;
- III. Das Tier besitzt die geistigen und körperlichen Eigenschaften des Menschen.³⁵⁴

As the above schema shows, any insertion of thoughts and emotions involves imposing human capacities upon the animals, for we cannot communicate with the animals in order to ascertain their thoughts. Like the narrative structure in the story of "Bambi," Salten's novel Freunde aus aller Welt adopts a middle position in between total anthropomorphic imposition of human features onto the animal characters in the text and a distanced position vis-à-vis the animals in the manner of a narrative about the animals from an exclusively human perspective. The narrator in Die Wege des Herren employs mainly the first level of anthropomorphism, while Freunde aus aller Welt and Bambi utilize the second level. Salten's works do not solve the philosophical canundrum of how to portray the world through the eyes of an animal without committing an anthropomorphic fallacy. Instead, the assumption of this middle position allows the reader to construct the events in the novel from the perspective of the animals. The ideal reader remains aware that the

³⁵⁴ Ehness, Felix Saltens erzählerisches Werk, 249.

thoughts and emotions of the animals in the novel do not belong directly to them but are instead conjured up by both the narrator and the reader as likely feelings of the animals. In this manner, the reader of Freunde aus aller Welt, like the reader of Bambi, is encouraged to identify with the animals and participate in the construction of their sentiments/perspective within the narrative.

Salten himself was well aware of the pitfalls of anthropomorphism, especially concerning the blurring of a division between animals and humans. Still, he deemed the tradeoff of anthropomorphism and blurred division between humans and animals as necessary for the development of animal rights and the development of human culture. Salten wrote in the motto to Fünfzehn Hasen, “Suche nur immer das Tier zu vermenschlichen, so hinderst du den Menschen am Vertieren.” Ehness observes in this motto a specific didactic paradigm that is aimed at educating the reader to recognize the nature of animals and to treat them properly.³⁵⁵ Another note that Salten makes on the connection between humans and animals exemplifies the effect vis-a-vis humans and the cultural sphere that he intends through his writing on animals. Salten asserts, “Der Umgang mit Tieren bedeutet Suche nach dem eigenen Ich, Suche nach einem mittelbaren Zusammenhang mit der Natur, Hoffnung auf eine Heimkehr zur unmittelbaren Natur.”³⁵⁶ This statement expresses the same connection between humans and animals as the ecocritical notion of Biophilia explained above. Shepard clarifies that our knowledge of ourselves rests upon our understanding of animals and that our collective psychological experience of what it means to be human is intrinsically connected to our relationship to animals. It is noteworthy that Salten advocated a return to nature, a notion that seems

³⁵⁵ Ehness, Felix Saltens erzählerisches Werk, 282.

³⁵⁶ Salten, Kleine Brüder, 12, as cited in Ehness, Felix Saltens erzählerisches Werk, 283.

remarkably similar to Rosegger's notions of a return to nature via a bridge between modern urban society and the rural culture that was waning in Austria throughout the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.

Like the newspaper writer in Erdsegen who expresses an awareness of the both the benefits and drawbacks of modern city culture, Salten's narrator in Freunde aus aller Welt expresses ambivalence with respect to the zoo. Certainly there are a number of characters within the novel that express vociferous opposition to the institution of the zoo, and the animals unanimously desire the freedom that is kept from them. However, there are also instances within the novel that remind the reader that the zoo director and many of his employees at least have good intentions.

In the chapter about the birth of Tikki, we read of the visit of Dr. Wollet, who sharply criticizes the zoo. The narrator describes the scene as follows:

Ein junger Herr, der den Garten sehr oft besuchte, stand mit dem Direktor vor dem Käfig. Beide Männer schauten Yppa lange zu.
'Furchtbar,' sagte der junge Herr, 'furchtbar!'
Der Direktor lächelte: 'Die Tiere haben es gut bei mir . . .'
'Zweifellos,' fiel ihm Dr. Wollet ins Wort, 'zweifellos, Sie sind ein gütiger Mensch, Direktor. Die meisten Ihrer Kollegen sind gütige, liebevolle Menschen. Gerade dadurch wird das alles so unbegreiflich!'
'Lili!' bat und schmeichelte der Direktor, dem Käfig zugewendet. 'Lili, komm, sei brav, Lili, da hast du das schöne Bananen.'
'Sie wird sterben,' sagte Dr. Wollet, 'an gebrochenem Herzen wird sie sterben.'
Rasch kehrte sich der Direktor zu ihm: 'Warum kommen Sie denn eigentlich hier herein? Immer und immer wieder? Warum?'
'Aus Mitleid', antwortete Dr. Wollet einfach.³⁵⁷

Dr. Wollet expresses his dismay at the enterprise of a zoo, and his laconic display of empathy also incorporates within the novel a familiar historical fact about early zoos and the keeping of large primates, namely the shortened lifespan of primates in captivity.

³⁵⁷ Salten, Freunde aus, 19.

In contrast to Dr. Wollet's explicit pessimism, the director expresses faith in his zoo and a sense that the animals will survive. We read of his optimism, "'Ich bring' sie durch!' jubelte der Direktor. 'Ich werd' sie schon durchbringen. Man muß nur Geduld haben'"³⁵⁸ Dr. Wollet responds, "'Wenn Sie ahnten,' . . . 'wenn Sie ahnten, wie viel ungeheure, wie viel übermenschliche Geduld hier im Garten beisammenwohnt, Sie könnten das Wort für sich gar nicht in Anspruch nehmen.'"³⁵⁹ The director then retorts, "'Gefühlsduselei.'"³⁶⁰ In his commentary on Dr. Wollet's expression of empathy for the animals, the zoo director recalls for the reader the problematic notion of ascribing human emotions to animals. By specifically evoking this idea, the narrator does not avoid the discussion but places this ambivalence directly in front of the reader, who is thereby induced to consider whether or not animals are sentient beings.

Later, in the twelfth chapter titled "Ein Narr!," the novel again calls upon the reader to reflect on the problem of ascribing human sentiments and cognition to animals. In the second chapter in the novel, we have learned that a young man, a frequent visitor named Rainer, was found crushed to death inside the elephant's cage. The director and the keepers are dismayed at the event because the elephant is believed to have a mild temperament as his companionship with a small white goat attests. The event remains a mystery until the twelfth chapter in the novel when Rainer's father visits the zoo. Elisa, the keeper of a chimp named Peter whom Rainer regularly visited, notices an older gentleman inside the chimp's pen. When she confronts him, he reveals that he is Rainer's father. In the course of her conversation with his father, Elisa learns that Rainer's death was not an accident but a calculated act of suicide. Additionally, Elisa

³⁵⁸ Salten, Freunde aus, 20.

³⁵⁹ Salten, Freunde aus, 20.

³⁶⁰ Salten, Freunde aus, 20.

discusses the negative aspects of zoos with Rainer's father. The father asks Elisa, "Können Sie leugnen, daß die Ahnung frühen Sterbens diesen Schimpansen mit einem wehmütigen Hauch umschwebt?"³⁶¹ Echoing the concern of Dr. Wollet earlier in the novel that captivity will shorten the quality as well as the length of the animals' lives, Mr. Ribber (Rainer's father), expresses empathy for the animals in captivity that reflects his son's beliefs.

We read of Rainer's empathy for the animals when Mr. Ribber explains to Elisa, "Er hat alle Geschöpfe geliebt, alle . . . nicht bloß die Gefangenen dahier . . . auch das, was draußen in der Freiheit lebt . . ." Er unterbrach sich und wiederholte mit seltsamer Betonung: 'Freiheit . . .' Dann: 'Tja . . . aber die armen Gefangenen da . . . bei ihnen war sein ganzes Herz . . .'³⁶² This passage underlines a familiar theme in Salten's works concerning animals. Especially in Bambi and in Kleine Welt für sich (1944), Salten deals with the topic of freedom for the animals. In the latter novel, the farm animals' captivity is contrasted with the freedom of the forest animals, and the farmer's concern for his animals even leads him to leave the gates open, offering his animals freedom if they so choose. The young man's (Rainer's) compassion for the animals was especially strong in the case of Peter, the chimpanzee. The narrator relates the following exchange between Elisa and Mr. Ribber in which Mr. Ribber expresses a deep sympathy for the plight of the animals kept in captivity in the zoo. Instead of seeing the zoo as entertainment or experiencing a visit to the zoo as joyful, Mr. Ribber is disturbed by the pitiful existence of the zoo animals. We read,

'Den Kleinen da hat er immer so herzlich bedauert . . .'

³⁶¹ Salten, Freunde aus, 142.

³⁶² Salten, Freunde aus, 139.

‘Bedauert?’ Elisa dachte nicht daran, zu widersprechen, doch sie wollte feststellen: ‘Mit dem Peter braucht keiner Mitleid haben, dem geht’s sehr gut, der ist fidel!’ Sie geriet in Eifer.

‘Glauben Sie?’ antwortete der Vater. ‘Sie pflegen ihn aufopfernd . . . das leugnet niemand, und mein Sohn hat Sie deshalb so sehr geschätzt, – aber sehen Sie sich doch jetzt das kleine Tier an, schaut ein fröhliches Geschöpf so aus?’

Elisa blickte hin, war einen Moment betroffen, doch sie wehrte ab: ‘Ach, Peter schläft – danach darf man nicht urteilen.’

‘Vielleicht haben Sie recht . . .’, sehr langsam kamen die Worte des Vaters, ‘. . . vielleicht . . . aber ich bin hier, um mich von den Eindrücken, von dem Urteil meines Sohnes zu überzeugen, und mir scheint doch eher, mein Sohn hat recht. Wissen Sie, er war immer der Ansicht, daß der Schlafende dahier so erschütternd wirke, so aufwühlend wie eine hoffnungslose Klage.’³⁶³

The narrator, always cautious not to criticize the good intentions of Elisa and the zoo director, tempers the criticisms of Mr. Ribber and Dr. Wollet by directing them instead at the institution of the zoo. Certainly, there are zoo keepers in the novel, such as a former keeper for the elephant, who mistreat the animals; however, the majority of characters associated with the zoo are depicted as having good intentions but serving a faulty system.

Mr. Ribber expresses one of the main criticisms of the zoo in the following passage:

‘Was es ist, weiß ich nicht genau, allein ich begreife es jetzt meinen Sohn. Sehr nah bin ich ihm jetzt . . . sehr nah . . . so ein Tier im Schlaf enthüllt sich ganz deutlich. Ist es nicht, als gräme sich Peter, fern von seinem Tropenwald zu sein, ohne Brüder und Schwestern, einsam, in einer künstlichen Existenz. Er hat Zerstreuung, freilich, er hat alles Mögliche . . . aber das Mögliche bleibt nur Ersatz und Ersatz kann ihm niemals die ihm so notwendige Natur ersetzen.’³⁶⁴

In the novel, freedom is synonymous with the animals’ nature, as the above passage indicates. From his son Mr. Ribber has acquired a sense of empathy for the animals in

³⁶³ Salten, Freunde aus, 140.

³⁶⁴ Salten, Freunde aus, 141.

captivity. The “Ersatz” mentioned above substitutes for what he terms “Die Wurzeln des Daseins,” i.e., freedom to exist in one’s natural habitat. The novel does not serve merely as a mouthpiece for Rainer’s, Mr. Ribber’s, and Dr. Wollet’s criticisms however, as a debate between Mr. Ribber and Elisa ensues about the nature of the zoo. After Elisa expresses the view that Rainer was “lieb” but always “übertrieben,” the elder Ribber responds,

‘Richtig. Wir anderen nennen eine Seele wie meinen Rainer jedesmal übertrieben. Aber,’ und nun monologisierte er, ‘aber alles Edle und alles Barmherzige und alles Befreiende ist nur von Menschen in die Welt gebracht worden, die so übertrieben waren, wie du, mein Rainer. Wo wären wir alle jetzt, ohne das, was wir Übertriebenheit nennen!’ Er berührte mit kaum spürbarem Finger Elisas Arm: ‘Können Sie leugnen, daß die Ahnung frühen Sterbens diesen Schimpansen mit einem wehmütigen Hauch umschwebt?’³⁶⁵

When Mr. Ribber confronts Elisa with the fact that chimpanzees and other animals kept in captivity die early deaths, which, according to him, everyone knows, Elisa firmly defends herself. Mr. Ribber then makes clear that his criticisms are not directed at her or even at the zoo director but instead at the institutional maltreatment that a zoo implies.

He comments,

Erst nimmt man diese Geschöpfe alle gefangenen, diese Unschuldigen, diese Ahnungslosen, diese Wehrlosen, dann läßt man sie die Qual des Transportes leiden, dann fügt man ihnen die beständige Marter des Käfigs zu und dann, dann erst beginnt man an den Gepeinigten Barmherzigkeit zu üben. . . . Oh dieser Garten da . . . dieser Garten³⁶⁶

Elisa is bewildered by his criticisms and asks, “Dieser Garten . . . um Himmels willen . . . muß der nicht sein?”³⁶⁷ Mr. Ribber’s response to her question provides a larger

³⁶⁵ Salten, Freunde aus, 141-142.

³⁶⁶ Salten, Freunde aus, 142.

³⁶⁷ Salten, Freunde aus, 142.

interpretive framework for the novel and offers the reader a critical perspective, from which he can understand the novel. We read,

Jawohl dieser Garten muß sein! Muß! Viele Leute behaupten, daß er nützlich ist, belehrend, ein Kulturbedürfnis, eine Freude für groß und klein! Viele Leute behaupten das! Ich nicht, ich wirklich nicht! Ich? Ich wage es nicht einmal auszusprechen, daß es erst dann eine wahre Kultur geben wird, wenn die Menschen an gefangenen Tieren keine Freude mehr haben, erst dann eine wahre Kultur, wenn sie solch einen Garten nicht mehr als Ergötzen, sondern als einen Ort des Grauens empfinden³⁶⁸

Mr. Ribber's criticisms, mediated through the narrator, resonate with the reader who is repeatedly confronted in the novel with the bleak atmosphere of the zoo and the keeping of wild animals in cages. Any joy the animals experience in the zoo, such as the birth of Tiki the ape, is tempered or clouded over by the miserableness of their existence with its lack of freedom and its distance from their natural homes.

During Mr. Ribber's visit with Elisa we learn that Rainer did not accidentally die but committed suicide. Mr. Ribber relates the contents of Rainer's suicide note to Elisa as follows:

‘Dann schreibt er: “Kann ich wie die andern Menschen denken: Was kümmert's mich? Unmöglich” Und es steht drin: “Ich spüre alles Leid, das die Geschöpfe Gottes ertragen, aber alles Leid ist zu viel für mich!” . . . “Wenn mich kein Raubtier erledigt,” hat er geschrieben, “und die gefangenen Raubtiere sind nicht schlimm, sondern gebrochen und unglücklich, wenn mich kein Raubtier erledigt, gehe ich zum Elefanten. Der beschützt einen kleinen Liebling, der kann zornig werden, der ist stark” . . . ja . . . das hat er geschrieben . . . “dem gebe ich mich preis, damit er an mir Vergeltung übe für alles und für alle . . .”³⁶⁹

Like Salten's Bambi story as well as Ebner-Eschenbach's story about Pavel, Freunde aus aller Welt contains a strong didactic aspect.³⁷⁰ While the novel appears on its surface as

³⁶⁸ Salten, Freunde aus, 143.

³⁶⁹ Salten, Freunde aus, 144.

³⁷⁰ The treatment of animals was often portrayed as a didactic moment in German literature in the nineteenth century. In this dissertation, I have also

an ostensibly neutral story about life in a zoo and the title does not hint at the activist tone within the text, Salten portrays the zoo in terms of animals' rights as inhumane. The novel makes it clear, however, that not everyone understands the malevolent nature of zoos and that most people have good intentions but still serve a corrupt system. Indeed, a minority in the text – Dr. Wollet, Rainer, and Mr. Ribber – are or become aware of the zoo as an inherently problematic enterprise. Empathy, the ability to identify with the pain the animals experience at the loss of their freedom, is depicted by the narrator and by Mr. Ribber as cultural progress and leads Rainer in his anguish to offer himself as a martyr for penance to the animals in the zoo.

The novel does not merely leave readers to form their own opinions or interpretations of Rainer's letter but instead provides an interpretation that falls in line with its general moral message. In order to emphasize the gravity of Rainer's actions, Mr. Ribber articulates his own interpretation of the events as well as of the zoo as a whole. The narrator relates, “‘Schrecklich . . .’” hauchte Elisa. ‘Jawohl!’ Er sprach ein wenig lauter. ‘Schrecklich, daß es wahr, und wahr, daß es schrecklich ist.’ Er fügte hinzu: ‘Polonius,’ aber das blieb für Elisa nicht verständlich.”³⁷¹ Mr. Ribber's quoting of the Shakespearean character and Elisa's inability to understand the meaning and connotation thereof – not of the words but of the identity of Polonius – are indicative both of her social status and education in contrast with Mr. Ribber's broad knowledge and higher social status. It is likely no coincidence that the characters in the novel who express the strongest empathy for the animals all belong to a highly educated social class

highlighted this aspect in Pavel's treatment of animals in Ebner-Eschenbach's Das Gemeindegeld. Pavel's killing of the peacock but also his companionship with his own dog later in the story are iterations of this familiar topic.

³⁷¹ Salten, Freunde aus, 144.

– recognition of the zoo as inhumane is a marker of culture, and the reader is called to acquire this ability through the didactic nature of the narrative.

Although this aspect of “civilized etiquette” is portrayed as essential to the formation of cultural morality within the text, Mr. Ribber, and the narrator through him, make it clear that society at large is not ready for such notions. We read,

Er lachte, ganz leise: ‘Ein Narr!’ Und er nickte lebhaft, wie zur
Bekräftigung eines Urteils: ‘Jawohl, ein Narr! Ein gottgeschlagener Narr!
Ein jeder Mensch wird das sagen. Deshalb muß der Brief geheim bleiben!
Scht! . . . Scht!’ Er legte den Zeigefinger vor die schmalen, blassen
Lippen. ‘Auch ich würde lachen, kicherte er, ‘auch ich . . . wenn’s nicht
mein Sohn wäre,’ sein Kichern kippte in ersticktes Schluchzen, ‘mein
einziger Sohn, der mich erzogen hat . . .’³⁷²

Rainer figures as a Zarathustrian character whose preachings are misunderstood and unappreciated by society as markers of mental illness. Mr. Ribber determines that, instead of allowing his son to be deemed insane, it is better to keep secret the suicide note and Rainer’s intentions. By providing the contents thereof to the reader, however, the narrator accomplishes the opposite; Rainer is not portrayed as crazy. Instead, society, in its treatment of animals and its formation of the zoo as a cultural institution – and thereby its complicity with inhumane treatment of animals – is depicted as senseless.³⁷³ Salten’s education of the individual within a corrupted and barbaric culture thus contrasts with Ebner-Eschenbach’s portrayal of social advancement through the progress of the individual, for there is no indication that Salten’s individual will have a pronounced impact on society. Freunde aus aller Welt presents little or no hope for progress in society vis-à-vis zoos and animals in captivity. Instead, only the individual can progress in terms of culture. The grand narratives of social progress that are common to all of the

³⁷² Salten, Freunde aus, 145.

³⁷³ The theme of insanity (social and individual) is one that is common to many of Salten’s *Jung-Wien* associates.

other authors studied in this dissertation contrast markedly with Salten's emphasis on the education of the individual not as a means for the progress of society but instead as a moral imperative for the individual.

Although Freunde aus aller Welt places a great importance on the cultural education of the individual, Rainer, his father, and Dr. Wollet do affect other characters in the novel. This effect is clear from Elisa's exchange with Karl, a fellow zookeeper who is romantically interested in Elisa. When Elisa confronts him in the next to last chapter of the novel about his mistreatment of the bears, she challenges him to consider their suffering in captivity. "Die Bären," exclaims Karl in anger, "niederträchtige, tückische, boshafte Biester sind das" ³⁷⁴ Elisa forcefully replies, "So? . . . Und daran, daß sie gefangen sind, denkst du nicht? Daß sie tückisch werden, weil du sie peinigst, das fällt dir nicht ein?" ³⁷⁵ Elisa later reminds Karl that he is no victim of any injustice, implying that the bears' captivity and Karl's treatment of them is an "Unrecht." ³⁷⁶ When Karl protests to her that her treatment of him could also be seen as an injustice, Elisa tells him bluntly that she cannot treat him well due to his mistreatment of the bears. When Karl then, in frustration, throws the chimpanzee Peter, who had been clinging to Elisa, against the wall, Elisa orders him to leave, and the reader is left to conclude that any relationship between the two is finished. Elisa's transformation is marked. Whereas she defended the zoo earlier in the novel against Mr. Ribber's criticisms, her exchange with Karl displays her espousal of his notion that captivity represents an intrinsic injustice in the treatment of wild animals. Rainer's ideas, therefore, do not pass with him; they have affected Elisa, who may function in the novel

³⁷⁴ Salten, Freunde aus, 244.

³⁷⁵ Salten, Freunde aus, 144.

³⁷⁶ Salten, Freunde aus, 144.

as a marker of optimism in the midst of a bleak world of mistreatment, death, insanity, abuse, and oppression.

The last chapter, in its poetic disharmony is, however, not the climax in the story, and it is not the most graphic description of the ills in the zoo. Nonetheless, it does function as a culmination of the novel's cry for humane treatment of animals. As night begins to spread over the zoo, the animals come more to life – the common idea that animals come to life and speak to one another when humans are not present pervades a good deal of literature on animals. What sets Salten's writing apart is his ability simultaneously to anthropomorphize the animals and emphasize their animality, as the end of this novel shows. We read:

Löwen ächzten, Tiger stöhnten, als berste ihnen die Brust.
Elefanten erhoben ihr dröhnendes Trompeten.
Eisbären brüllten und die braunen Bären tobten mit Gebrüll.
Wölfe heulten langgezogene Klagelaute.
Hyänen stießen gellendes Gelächter aus.
Affen kreischten.
Alle riefen das gleiche:
Wie lange sollen wir gefangen bleiben?
Was habe wir getan, daß wir so leiden?
So Entsetzliches leiden?
Warum sind wir hier?
Warum?
Plötzliche Stille.³⁷⁷

The narrator translates the animals' language for the reader into questions and cries of complaints that pull at the heart strings of the reader. The reader has little room for doubt; the zoo as an institution represents inherent maltreatment, torment, and persecution of wild animals. As if to wait for an answer from their human captors, the animals pause their cry. However, as the narrator depicts the scene in the final lines,

³⁷⁷ Salten, Freunde aus, 246-247.

Der Chor ihrer Klage, ihrer Frage erreichte die Menschen nicht, die sich
vergnügten oder den Schlaf der allzeit Gerechten schliefen.
Der Chor der Gefangenen stieg auf zu den Sternen.
Aber die Sterne schimmerten, leuchteten, glänzten. Und blieben
stumm.³⁷⁸

Even the stars, an ostensible reference to a god or at least something beyond humans, do not return the animals' cry; their complaints are met with silence, and the reader is left to assume that their pain will continue.

As with Salten's reproachful portrayal of hunting in the Bambi novel, Freunde aus aller Welt presents one with problematic ambivalences if one interprets the novel in light of the author's larger oeuvre. While reading Bambi, the informed critic can read the text ambivalently when considering that Salten was an avid hunter and drew upon his experiences at his hunting lodge on the Attersee in Austria in order to portray the deer and other animals in the text. Likewise, Freunde aus aller Welt, the novelist's work can leave the reader with a feeling of ambivalence vis-à-vis the zoo as a cultural institution and the keeping of animals in captivity, especially if the reader considers Salten's positive portrayal of Carl Hagenbeck in the short essay "Der alte Hagenbeck" (1913). In other short stories about animals in zoos and pet stores too, Salten repeats the theme of captivity as torment for the animals. "Der alte Hagenbeck," however, represents a notable break with this line of thinking. Ehneß summarizes and interprets the story as follows:

Es ist eine Lebensbeschreibung des heute beinahe legendären Tierhändlers Carl Hagenbeck (1844-1913), der den Tierpark Stellingen bei Hamburg gründete. Geschildert werden einige Anekdoten, bei denen Hagenbeck auf Tiere trifft, die ihn erkennen und stürmisch begrüßen. Exemplarisch wird so das Bild eines echten Tierfreundes gemalt, wie sich vor allem in der "Zuneigung, die ihm die Tiere entgegenbringen" zeigt. Daneben wird

³⁷⁸ Salten, Freunde aus, 248.

ein kurzer Lebenslauf gegeben, der von übertriebenem Respekt gekennzeichnet ist und den Tierhändler beinahe mystifiziert.³⁷⁹

One may surmise from this story that Salten did not interpret all zoos as inhumane, and certainly he did not uniformly portray zookeepers as depraved.

Salten's admiration for Hagenbeck no doubt derives from Hagenbeck's reputation as the most famous early revolutionary force in zookeeping. Whereas other nineteenth-century zoological gardens provided entertainment for the bourgeoisie with animals kept in undersized cages often with metal bars, Hagenbeck's *Tierpark* was designed to offer an experience of an animal paradise where moats and rock walls etc. provided barriers to confine the animals. Additionally, the animal environments were designed to appear as natural in contrast to earlier zoo designs that simply displayed animals in cages or pens.³⁸⁰ But, Hagenbeck may not represent the ideal animal keeper or the most ethical person in terms of animal and even human rights. As Nigel Rothfels explains, Hagenbeck had garnered a reputation before the construction of his zoo and beyond his work as a seller of wild animals, that is, as the impresario of spectacles of various kinds; his people shows, traveling shows in which he attracted large audiences to observe other cultural groups (Sami, Somali, Egyptian etc.) often accompanied by animals from that country, were extremely profitable. Rothfels's work on Hagenbeck and the birth of modern zoos points out that Hagenbeck was also a dealer in animals at the time that his zoo was built; the zoo was a sort of living catalog for would-be buyers. While expressing an awareness of Hagenbeck's contribution to the modern zoo, Rothfels shows the less benevolent side of Hagenbeck's work. He writes,

³⁷⁹ Ehness, Felix Saltens erzählerisches Werk, 274-275.

³⁸⁰ For an excellent resume of Carl Hagenbeck and the revolution that he introduced to animal husbandry and zookeeping see Nigel Rothfels, Savages and Beasts (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 2002).

As much as the Hagenbeck business was a *business*, it is also important to recognize that Hagenbeck cared about the animals in his park. Indeed, there is ample evidence that Hagenbeck was unusually thoughtful about the animals in his care and that he went to significant lengths to be sure that their needs were being met. With this said, Hagenbeck's Animal Park evolved primarily both to entertain the public and to meet the needs of the various branches of the Hagenbeck enterprise, all of which had at their base the business interests of the firm. Hagenbeck's animal trade, people shows, circus, and Animal Park would have become operations of such impressive proportions if they had not been profitable; and just as the trade was not primarily organized to protect exotic animals from exploitation, just as the shows of people were not organized to protect indigenous peoples, the park was not built primarily to shelter either the world's exotic people or exotic animals from harm.³⁸¹

The objectification of animals and humans alike as things meant to entertain in addition to the commercial nature of Hagenbeck's animal park make him a less than ideal friend of animal rights. Still, Salten's differentiation among zookeepers affords Hagenbeck a place among those who cared for their animals in a manner that exceeded the standard treatment at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

An additional aspect of Freunde aus aller Welt leads the reader to a more tempered interpretation than an initial surface reading might suggest. Throughout the original edition, Salten and his publisher interspersed a number of original photographs of animals in zoos. The photos, as is indicated in the bibliographical information at the beginning of the novel, were licensed to the publisher by notable zoos and photographers. Among the zoos, one finds names that would have been familiar to the German reader – Hagenbeck's Tierpark in Stellingen and zoos in Leipzig and Berlin are among them. The pictures are often accompanied by humorous subtitles or phrases that the animals in the novel have uttered. But, some, like that of a lion, are merely pictures of the animals unaccompanied by text. By including these photographs, Salten's novel serves both an

³⁸¹ Rothfels, Savages and Beasts, 182.

informative purpose and increases the entertainment value of the novel for younger readers who may learn in the passages not only how a lion appears but also its “personality.” This entertainment factor and the use of material from the zoos also mitigates Salten’s condemnation of zoos in the novel. Instead of a scathing condemnation, the novel, when read in a larger context of the images and Salten’s other writing about animals in captivity as well as his essay on Hagenbeck, invites the reader to consider the darker side of zoos along with their entertainment and educational value.

VI. Fünf Minuten Amerika

Beyond the animal stories, other works in Salten’s oeuvre reiterate the author’s concern for nature and the environment. In his travel writings, Salten does not limit himself to a portrayal of landscape but confronts his reader with notions of nature and environment that challenge ideas of natural beauty, conservation of nature, and the impact of technology on nature. As I will show in the following analysis, the author adopts a position with respect to technology and America that simultaneously observes the grandeur of America’s nature parks and satirically claws at the relationship between Americans and the nature around them.

Salten was not alone in discussing these topics but participated in a public debate on the effect of technology upon society; Stefan Zweig, for instance, also discussed the influence of America upon the rest of the world. In his reply to Zweig, Salten writes,

In dem Essay “Die Monotonisierung der Welt”, den Stefan Zweig neulich hier veröffentlicht hat, sind Spuren von all dem enthalten. Beichte und Anklage. Jedenfalls aber sehr bittere Klage über diese Gegenwart, über die Gleichmacherei, die von der Technik angerichtet wird, und über die fortschreitende Amerikanisierung Europas. . . . Dennoch, Stefan Zweig ist in seinen Auseinandersetzungen so interessant, in seiner Art zu argumentieren, so anregend, daß es verlockt, mit ihm zu diskutieren.

Wenn es schon nicht gelingt, einen Geist, wie den seinen, von fest gefaßten Anschauungen abzubringen, aus Pessimismus und Schwermut zu lösen, darin er augenblicklich gefangen scheint, und daraus er sich, dessen bin ich sicher, am besten selbst befreien kann, so mag doch versucht werden, von anderen Gemütern jene Verfinsterung zu bannen, die sich ihrer infolge mancher Härten dieser Gegenwart bemächtigt und darin sie etwa durch Trauerreden, wie die von Stefan Zweig, noch tiefer versinken können³⁸²

Salten, in contrast to Zweig, expresses optimism and a belief that America and its influence in the twentieth century do not represent a monotony of culture. Instead, he focuses on the opportunities that America, via technology, presents for the modern individual.

In a later essay collection about his exploration of American landscape and culture Fünf Minuten Amerika (1931), Salten explores what he sees as the essence of modern US-culture, especially in urban and marginally urban environments but also in more remote places such as Yosemite National Park. The author includes two essays that are especially pertinent to this chapter because they deal specifically with nature and our perception thereof. These essays offer us an image of Salten as a biting satirist who was well aware of the pitfalls of national parks, nature conservation, and the effects of westward expansion in the United States but also a cultural critic who was unaware of the socio-historical events and the people who shaped the United States' nature preserves.

Concerning his visit to Yosemite National park, Salten writes,

Viele Hirsche sieht man unterwegs zur Höhe des Glacier Point, wo man auf Wildwiesen noch Schneeflecke findet. Die Hirsche stehen ruhig, bei Tage, und äsen, oder sie liegen niedergetan nahe der Straße und heben nicht einmal das Haupt, wenn die zahllosen Autos in kaum dreißig Schritt Distanz vorbeirasen. Da sie seit Dezennien, also seit Dutzenden von Hirschgenerationen weder gejagt noch beschossen werden, sind sie zu ihren Urgewohnheiten heimgekehrt. Das wirkt angenehm und erfreulich,

³⁸² Felix Salten, "Monotonisierung Der Welt?," Neue Freie Presse February 8 1925: 1.

selbst wenn man weiß, daß die Schutzparks nur den letzten Rest des einstigen unermeßlichen Wildreichtums retten sollen.³⁸³

The last line of the passage above establishes the elegiac tone of the essay on Yosemite, a brief break away from the larger theme of American cities as a harbinger of modernity. The author shows no evidence of awe at the majesty of a pristine wilderness; there is an ease about the passage like that of the deer that do not move as the cars drone on around them. Salten interprets the deers' lack of fear as a return to a more natural ethology, whereby the deer are indifferent to the presence of humans, since humans that do not hunt them present no danger to them. In contrast to Bambi, this portrayal of nature lacks the philosophical overtone and reads more as a stream of consciousness from the aesthetic perspective of the travel(ing) journalist. Salten does not consider, for instance, that even in the preservation of Yosemite, humans affect the ecological system of the park. Although Salten evidences an awareness of the paradox present in the tourists' expedition in automobiles in a park that is meant to preserve wilderness, he does not, for example, consider that the behavior of the deer in the park may be an indication of an unstable and problematic ecosystem where the animals, in the absence of a natural predator, roam about with no awareness of danger.³⁸⁴ The contrast to Bambi in the earlier novel could not be more pronounced, and the juxtaposition of the two reveals that the behavior of the deer may indeed be aberrant. Yet, Salten perceives this as "angenehm und erfreulich," since his perception of a threatened ecosystem is limited and does not account for an organic structure larger than the species.

³⁸³ Felix Salten, Fünf Minuten Amerika (Berlin: Zsolnay, 1931) 120-21.

³⁸⁴ The annihilation of wolves in the American West can be seen as an example of the removal of a predator that would control the population of certain species and thereby keep an ecosystem in balance.

Like many visitors to the park before him, Salten is enthralled by the panoramic vistas offered from a hotel overlook over the Yosemite valley. Salten takes an inventory of the view in the following:

Von der Terrasse des kleinen Hotels auf dem Gipfel des Glacier Point überschaut man das Yosemite-Panorama. Hier, gegenüber, ragt die granitene, mächtige Kuppelhälfte des "Halbdoms", da reihen sich in großartig einfachen und energischen Formen die Gletscher. Dort, gegenüber, stäubt der Yosemite-Fall zur Tiefe, und hier oben vernimmt man auch sein Brausen, das noch aus der Ferne gewaltig ist, während es – eine wunderliche Laune der Akustik – da unten im Tal, ganz nahe am Wasserfall, vollständig unhörbar bleibt. Rund um den Kessel dieses Hochtales führen halbsbrecherisch angelegte Straßen zur lieblichen Mulde von Meiwina und weiter nach Mariposa zu den Baumriesen.³⁸⁵

Words like "mächtig," "großartig," and "gewaltig" evince a sense of romantic wonder at the vastness and power of the landscape of the Yosemite valley. Salten is captivated by the landscape. Of the "tree giants," as Salten calls the giant Sequoia trees that are one of the most important features of the park, we read,

Man nennt diese Bäume "die ältesten lebendigen Wesen der Erde", und man behauptet, sie seien vier Jahrtausende auf der Welt. Nach den "Jahresringen", die an ihren toten Brüdern gezählt wurden, will man das wissen. Es klingt unglaublich. Diese Bäume waren also schon alt zu einer Zeit, da in Rom die Cäsaren herrschten, da Christus geboren wurde? Und hier überall wachsen jungen Sequoiabäume aus dem Boden und sind noch zart. Wenn die einmal so hoch und machtvoll dastehen, wie weit wird das Menschengeschlecht es dann gebracht haben? Wie vergessen werden diejenigen sein, die wir jetzt für unsterblich halten? Unheimlich, daran zu denken. Und unmöglich. Fühlen wie Denken des Menschen ist eng begrenzt. Stelle ihn vor die große Natur, und ein paar Jahrtausende bringen ihn aus der Fassung. Die Amerikaner freilich, in ihrer Jugend, scheinen sich bloß zu freuen, daß ihr Land "die ältesten lebendigen Wesen der Erde" besitzt, und sie haben einen großen, jovial heiteren Stolz. Ihr Verhältnis zur Natur ist oder scheint durchweg heiter und primitiv. Sie kommen aus ihren Städten in den Wald, per Auto selbstverständlich, und sie bringen städtischen Betrieb in die einsame Stille, die nunmehr weder einsam noch still ist. Sie werfen hier draußen alle puritanischen Verbote, Heucheleien, Lügen und Vorurteile weg und lassen alle ihre Instinkte Exzesse feiern. Der Natur scheinen sie mit biederer derber Hand auf die

³⁸⁵ Salten, Fünf Minuten Amerika, 121.

Schulter zu dreschen und sie wohlwollend zu fragen: Hallo, old fellow!
How are you? Die breite Mehrzahl der Amerikaner. Die Babbits.

For a moment, Salten experiences the sequoias in their sublimity in the manner of Friedrich Schiller, as discussed in chap. 1, as these giant trees challenge Salten's ability to comprehend their seemingly eternal existence. Salten's use of the words "unheimlich" and "unmöglich" indicate his experience as one of an encounter with the sublime. In this passage, the author also reiterates a notion of nature that we encountered in Stifter's Der Hochwald, namely nature as an existence that supersedes humanity because it seems infinite – it existed before us and will continue to exist long after us. In the comparison of humans to the sequoias then, the reader is reminded of the transitoriness of the human condition in contrast to seemingly eternal nature.

If the author seems, in earlier passages, unaware of the ethical and philosophical quandary that the national park system presents, this final section of the essay about Yosemite reveals to us that he is attentive to the relationship between Americans and their nature parks. Salten suggests that, due to the relatively young age of the nation, the Americans are just happy to possess something ancient – the sequoias. Salten shows an awareness of the problem of national parks as places not intended as nature preserves solely for the preservation of pristine wilderness but instead as parks meant for citizens to enjoy. Thus, he notes the cars that they use to travel to and within the parks and the noise and hustle and bustle of the city that they bring with them. The satirical ending, wherein Salten depicts the Americans clapping an anthropomorphized nature on the shoulder and asking him (nature as an "old fellow) how he is, reiterates a stock image of Americans as shallow in their incapacity to consider the meaning of such natural wonders. The author's references to "puritanischen Verbote, Heucheleien, Lügen und Vorurteile" tell

the reader that he is working with these stock notions of American culture. Lastly, Salten's reference to the Babbits and thereby to the 1922 satire by Sinclair Lewis titled Babbit points to the vacuousness of an American culture that, emblematic of modern mass culture in general, consumes nature as an object instead of appreciating in its sublimity. Yosemite in Salten's essay becomes not a triumph of nature preservation and environmental awareness but an indictment of American culture as shallow and lacking substance. The reader is left to ask, however, why Salten visited this place in the midst of his tramp through American cities. Indeed, the author shows no understanding of Yosemite's complicated history or the influence of such notable people as John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and Theodore Roosevelt in preserving Yosemite in perpetuity. Salten seems interested in Yosemite not as an example of the sublime natural beauty of the American west or as an inspiration for nature preservation but as a symbol of every-day urban American culture that he finds strangely appealing in its superficiality.

VII. Conclusion

In his travel writings as well as in his fictional tales, Salten presents nature and the human relationship to nature as a complicated network that has been clouded by a series of mistakes and misunderstandings. Salten's vivid stories about animals and the relationship between humans and animals endeared him to a reading public that included not only children but also adults in Austria and abroad. Although his story of Bambi is a household name worldwide due to its adaptation by Disney as the tale of a feeble-legged deer that matures into adulthood, the author himself has never received the same attention. As this chapter has shown, Salten's understanding of nature and his portrayal

of the destruction/maltreatment of non-human and human nature deserve more consideration.

In *Bambi*, Salten presents us with a life-like depiction of a fawn who grows into adulthood in the woods. Far from the saccharine Disney version, Salten's *Bambi* story is rife with conflict and attempts more than a merely anthropomorphized tale of deer in the woods. Instead, a story of "life in the woods" emerges, wherein the reader is called to question the position of humans vis-à-vis animals. As *Bambi* learns from the elder deer, a moral of equality emerges whereby humans and animals alike inhabit a place beneath God; the fallacy of god-like humanity that so many of the animals believe is exposed especially in the death of the poacher in the novel. This is an important part of Salten's novel that does not find its way into the Disney version where humans are portrayed in black and white language as purely malevolent. In Salten's novel, a human takes care of Gobo, *Bambi*'s friend, and the reader may conclude that the poacher has been killed by another human. The importance of the relationship between humans and animals in the story is reminiscent, as I have noted, of ideas of a human-non-human ecological nature whereby a theriophany – to use Shephard's word – of animal others helps us as humans to understand our identity and our place within the world as Others instead of superiors to animals. More didactic moments in the story point to notions of technology as a negative aspect of modern culture – a notion that is expressed and made more complex in Salten's journalistic writing – and the importance of maintaining a semi-distant relationship.³⁸⁶ Beyond this didacticism, Salten's novel is remarkable in that it accomplishes something that the Disney version notably lacks, namely an ambivalent depiction of hunting free from the broad brush of moralizing that characterizes the later film adaptation. Salten, of

³⁸⁶ See the discussion of Lévi-Strauss and Shephard above.

whom it is known that he drew upon his own experiences as a hunter for the novel, instead directs his ire at the poacher who kills indiscriminately.

In Die Wege des Herren, the author turns to the life of an aged pet, a dog, in the city. As Müller-Richter explains, the story is not merely one of an old dog that dies after losing his way but also an allegorical narrative of the importance adaptation to life in the modern technological city and the consequences of an inability to do so. The novella is also woven with other themes including the familiar depiction of decadence in the early twentieth-century urban environment. Beyond its treatment of modern urban life, “Die Wege des Herren” serves as a prime example of Salten’s love of animals and his understanding of their nature. In describing the dog’s loyalty to his master – loyalty that eventually costs the dog his life – the story presents this trait as a feature of the dog’s animality, i.e., what it means to be a dog.

In contrast to domesticated animals like the dog in Die Wege des Herren, the animality of the wild animals in Freunde aus aller Welt is expressed not in loyalty to their masters but instead in an instinctual longing for freedom from captivity. The narrator describes abysmal conditions of animals in captivity and makes a convincing argument that zoos as cultural institutions do not edify our culture but instead represent some of the most base and malevolent aspects of society. However, while a number of zookeepers in the novel are portrayed as callous individuals, the majority of the keepers treat the animals with great respect. Still, as Rainer Ribber, a young man who commits suicide in the novel due to his deep sorrow about the captivity of the animals, Dr. Wollett, and Mr. Ribber all argue, the zoo as an institution represents a mistreatment of the captive animals who are taken from the freedom of their their homes and brought to live in the zoo. The

poetic culmination at the end of the novel repeats the familiar anthropomorphism that the reader of Salten's works has come to expect as it allows the animals to express their cries of protest against their captivity. Like the other animal stories examined in this chapter, Freunde aus aller Welt is a strong example of Salten's works that plead for a greater respect for animals. When read through the lens of a broader understanding of Salten's works, however, the novel's depiction of zoos is put into a somewhat different perspective. Particularly with respect to Carl Hagenbeck, the legendary zookeeper, Salten's biographical essay and the inclusion of photographs from Hagenbeck's animal park in Freunde aus aller Welt calls on the reader to consider how a more humane zoo may look.

Finally, Fünf Minuten Amerika offers an example from Salten's travel writings, as opposed to his fictional animal stories. Here, the author travels through the United States, commenting on the sites of mostly urban America. Familiar places such as New York and Chicago find their way into the chronicle, but some of the more interesting moments in the book involve Salten's visit to Yosemite Park where the author is awestruck by the grandeur of raw nature. It is hardly surprising when the author returns to the familiar tone of mild sarcasm that is prevalent in his journalistic writings. In his juxtaposition of sublime nature in Yosemite with the supposed superficiality of "American culture," Salten attempts a cultural analysis via the relationship between Americans and their nature parks. The accuracy of his critique notwithstanding, Salten ignores important Americans who have preserved Yosemite in a "natural" state. I hesitate to write "its natural state" because by cordoning off this section of land, we have affected its future development, not to mention the fact that man-made pollution affects

Yosemite. The author expresses an awareness of a pitfall of nature parks whereby individuals may experience nature parks as objects of grand beauty, but they may not necessarily incorporate that care for nature into their daily lives when they leave the park.

Taken as an aggregate, the novels, novellas, travellogues, and feuilleton articles in this chapter allow a picture of Felix Salten to emerge as a complex writer who was not only the creator of the Bambi figure that has enchanted children worldwide but also an astute cultural critic who took an intense interest in the burgeoning animal rights movement.³⁸⁷ It is little wonder that Salten's writings gave cause for animal rights groups in and outside Europe to recognize him with numerous awards. It is also a cruel twist of history that one must mention Salten, the Hungarian born Austrian Jew who was forced into exile in Switzerland during World War II, in the same category as Adolf Hitler. Hitler, an outspoken advocate for animal rights in general and the abolition of vivisection in particular, received the same "Eichelberger Humane Award" three years before Salten was given this honor.³⁸⁸

In selected writings from Felix Salten, this chapter has elucidated vivid portrayals of animal life as important markers of the author's concern for nature and the environment. Over a half century after Stifter's works entered the scene, Salten's oeuvre takes up a by then established discourse on the relationship between nature and technology. Like Rosegger in certain of his works, Salten uses biting criticism – as in the case of hunting with Bambi or zoos with Freunde aus Aller Welt.

³⁸⁷ See Salten's correspondence with John Galsworthy, the British author who was well known as an advocate for social reform and animal rights.

³⁸⁸ Dietmar Grieser, Im Tiergarten der Weltliteratur : Auf den Spuren von Kater Murr, Biene Maja, Bambi, Möwe Jonathan und den Anderen (Munich: Langen Müller, 1991) 25.

It is unfortunate that, despite his early recognition and the fame of Bambi worldwide, the author's status in Austrian literature still lags. There are certainly a number of members from the Jung-Wien movement who have garnered much more interest from an academic perspective. Salten, like Rosegger with Als ich noch ein Waldbauernbub war, suffered perhaps from the notoriety of Bambi as a children's story. As I have shown in this chapter, however, Salten's works are more than just stories for children, as they invite the reader to consider complex notions of environment and nature, especially the relationship between humans and animals. A recent exhibit on Salten at the Jewish Museum in Vienna (2006) as well as a recent monograph by Jürgen Ehneß (2002) may be indicative of a growing interest in the author's works beyond just the Bambi novel. In seeking to understand the role of human and non-human nature in the author's texts, this chapter points to an additional area of interest with respect to Salten's works, namely the relationship between humans and nature.

Conclusion

Ecology, as I have shown, is an idea of the nineteenth century – the time period when scientific and technological advances coupled with urbanization and the industrial revolution led to vast changes in European society. As an early initiator of this shift, Alexander von Humboldt’s writings provide insight into the discussion of science and technology that gave rise to ecology as a scientific and philosophical discipline. In his Kosmos: Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung, arguably one of the most influential works by a German scientist of the nineteenth century, Humboldt suggests that the “noblest and most important result [of the study of physical phenomena is] a knowledge of the chain of connection, by which all natural forces are linked together, and made mutually dependent upon each other”³⁸⁹ Humboldt’s assertion of a “chain of connection” as well as the interdependence and interlinking of all natural forces anticipates central aspects of ecological science and thought. In this passage and in the works that we have explored in this dissertation, we have observed what Axel Goodbody has referred to as proto-ecological perspectives in literature – that is, literature that has taken environmentalist positions before the mid-twentieth century environmentalist movement took place.

One could call Humboldt’s idea of linked and mutually dependent natural forces ecological *avant la lettre*, since “ecology” as a word did not exist until Ernst Haeckel’s 1866 Generelle Morphologie and since the scientific study of ecology as a stand-alone discipline did not come about until later. Haeckel defines ecology as follows: “Unter Oekologie verstehen wir die gesamte Wissenschaft von den Beziehungen des Organismus

³⁸⁹ Alexander von Humboldt, Cosmos : A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe, trans. E.C. Ottè (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P.P, 1997) 23.

zur umgebenden Außenwelt, wohin wir im weiteren Sinne alle ‘Existenzbedingungen’ rechnen können.”³⁹⁰

In the nineteenth century a more systematic approach to the understanding of an organism emerges, an approach whereby the scientist directs his inquiry not only at the organism itself but also at the relationship between that organism and the entire system of nature. Haeckel, referencing Carl Linnaeus and his taxonomic research, refers to this system as the “Naturhaushalte” or the “Ökonomie des Naturganzen.”³⁹¹ In the twentieth century, ecology has come to be understood not only as a scientific discipline but also as an area of philosophical study. Additionally, the study of ecology has given rise to an environmental movement that has challenged the ways that humans have interacted with nature.³⁹² This is not to say that scientists and thinkers of the nineteenth century were not concerned with the environment; this dissertation, in the analysis of writing from four important Austrian authors, has shown that there was a nascent concern about the effect of humans upon the environment in the nineteenth century.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the widespread disquiet about a looming ecological crisis yielded a new area of literary scholarship, ecocriticism, which aims to study the interconnection between nature and culture. While it was not the earliest consideration of the connection between ecology and literature, William Rueckert’s 1978 essay, “Literature and Ecology: an Experiment in Eco-Criticism” served as a point of departure and offered a definition of an ecological approach to literary study.

³⁹⁰ Ernst Heinrich Philipp August Haeckel, Prinzipien der generellen Morphologie der Organismen : wörtlicher Abdruck eines Teiles der 1866 erschienen generellen Morphologie (Allgemeine Grundzüge der organischen Formen-Wissenschaft, mechanisch begründet durch die von Charles Darwin reformierte Deszendenz-Theorie) (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1906) 334.

³⁹¹ Haeckel Prinzipien der generellen Morphologie, 334.

³⁹² see the discussion of Rachel Carson in the introduction.

In his article, Rueckert states his goal as a “contribution to human ecology, specifically, literary ecology, though [he uses] (and transform[s]) a considerable number of concepts from pure, biological ecology.”³⁹³ Indeed, Rueckert quotes from the preeminent scientific ecologist of the twentieth century, Barry Commoner, who stated: “Everything is connected to everything else.”³⁹⁴ At first this comment seems trite, but its meaning for science and literature is significant. The human is no longer separate from its subject (nature); it has reassumed its position as part of nature and scientific inquiry, and both sentient and non-sentient nature has regained intrinsic value. With this understanding of the relationship between humans and nature, Rueckert proposes the reading, teaching, and critical study of literature from an ecological perspective.

In this dissertation, I have applied ecocriticism to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Austrian texts which evidence a particular connection between nature and the formation of ecological and social conscience. The scientific revolution that brought about the industrial revolution took place in Germany already in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which readings of Goethe and Humboldt, among others, suggests. In Austria, however, the revolution and the social, scientific, philosophical, governmental, and economic changes that accompanied it set in later in the nineteenth century. By analyzing works from this critical moment in Austrian culture, I emphasize the influence of proto-ecological thought on four prominent authors of literature in Austria from the late nineteenth- to the early twentieth- centuries.

Beginning with ecocritical readings of two novellas from Adalbert Stifter as well as

³⁹³ William Rueckert, "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-Criticism," The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology, ed. Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: U. of Georgia P., 1996) 107.

³⁹⁴ Rueckert, Literature and Ecology, 108.

a short analysis of his “Sanftes Gesetz,” I have shown that these works, in particular, conceive of nature as a totalizing system that includes human nature within a larger order. While Der Hochwald allows nature to emerge as a “hero” or main agent that eventually overshadows the entire human presence in the narrative, Brigitta allows the reader insight into the cultural formation of landscape and our perception of nature. By using ecocriticism, my reading highlights the female protagonist in Stifter’s Brigitta as more than a marginalized figure subject to the will of the Major. By considering the connection between gender and nature via Judith Butler’s notion of crossdressing as subverting traditional gender performance, I draw a parallel between Brigitta and nature.. Although the landscape does not “perform” and cannot therefore crossdress in a traditional sense, its portrayal in the novella makes us aware that it is indeed constructed instead of masking that construction in symbolism. In Brigitta, the landscape, i.e., nature, like Brigitta herself, is narrated as “natural,” and its overt narrative construction allows the reader to question and understand our basis for evaluating the text and its depiction of the environment.

Whereas the reading of Stifter’s works may fall within the more traditional ecocritical purview of nature writing, the chapter on Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s novel Das Gemeindekind expands the scope of ecocriticism to analyze a text that focuses more on culture than on nature. Nevertheless, the incorporation of science and technology as well as an anti-pastoral motif into the text offers particular perspectives on the relationship between humans and nature in the nineteenth century. In her reliance on the modern ethical movement—a philosophy that drew upon contemporary scientific developments, among them Darwin’s theories of evolution, Ebner-Eschenbach places her

novel within the paradigm that sought to supplant religious thought with science and technology, leading to a post-mythic society. This notion is problematic, however, as Adorno and Horkheimer have shown us in their Dialektik der Aufklärung – scientific thought did not replace myth but instead became part of a dialectical relationship with myth. William Mackintire Salter, whose influence upon Ebner-Eschenbach we explored, was also aware of the importance of religious thought for the eventual development of ethical belief that was not based upon a theistic system but instead upon morality as the ultimate virtue. In the inclusion of Salter's ethical movement – Habrecht eventually calls himself a disciple of the movement – as well as Pavel's unique technological affinity and ability to adapt to the changes that industrialization brings, Ebner-Eschenbach's novel offers us a glimpse into the changes that the second half of the nineteenth century brought to a prototypical small Moravian village.

Whereas Pavel and Habrecht embrace the social change that comes about as a result of technological and scientific innovation coupled with industrialism, the works of Peter Rosegger, especially Jakob der Letzte and Erdsegen record and lament the loss of *Heimat* and the connection to nature that characterized the rural communities at the end of the nineteenth century. In my reading of Rosegger's literary and journalistic works, I returned to a more customary aspect of ecocriticism, especially in the selection of texts that emphasize the relationship between humans and nature around them. As my analysis has shown, Rosegger's text depict complex relationships between nature and culture, between industrialization and agrarian lifestyle, between the city and the countryside, and between the recognition of the desire for mobility and the simultaneous anguish at the loss of *Heimat* and the connection to nature. While Rosegger is often disregarded as a

writer of uncritical and merely affirmative *Heimatliteratur*, I have shown that his writing also called upon his readers to consider the detrimental effects of unrestrained urbanization and industrial development both in its impact on culture and on the environment. Although one may be tempted by some of Rosegger's works, e.g., Erdsegen, to romanticize a return to a more "natural" agrarian state, other texts, e.g., Weltgift, tone down this message and instead reflect the sickness of the modern condition without prescribing the return to nature as its cure. Rosegger does not offer the restoration of the rural idyll as a panacea for the ills of modern society. As the reading of another of Rosegger's novels, Jakob der Letzte, has shown, the author's writing offers more than mere the black and white imagery suggested in previous scholarly work on Rosegger. And when his literary oeuvre is viewed in light of the his journalistic writings on nature, it becomes clear that Rosegger sees a chronic lack of moderation in modern society that exists both in rural and urban environments. A "natural" life, the author suggests, is also possible in the urban environment which is the bastion of "*Kultur*."

As my analysis of Felix Salten's writing, particularly that of Bambi and Die Wege des Herren, shows, Salten's animal stories point to the relationship between humans and animals as critical to the understanding of the nature of animals. By incorporating ecocritical methods from Paul Shepard in the interpretation of Bambi, I highlight the ability of Salten's "Lebensgeschichte aus dem Walde" to engage the reader in considering the position of humans vis-à-vis animals. In the didactic message of Bambi for young and old readers alike, a moral of equality emerges with humans and animals occupying a common space beneath God. In contrast to Disney's film version, which simplifies Salten's text by employing more black and white imagery and painting humans

as purely malevolent, the novel emphasizes both the positive and negative aspects of the relationship between humans and animals in the story. This relationship thus evokes ideas of a human-non-human ecological nature whereby a theriophany – to use Shephard’s word – of animal others helps us as humans to understand our identity and our place within the world as Others instead of superiors to animals.

While the reading of Bambi highlights the relationship between humans and animals in the novel, the sections on Die Wege des Herren and Freunde aus aller Welt attend to the plight of animals in urban and zoological environments. In Die Wege des Herren, the dog’s loyalty to his master is portrayed as part of his nature as a dog, whereas the nature of the wild animals held captive in the zoo in Freunde aus aller Welt entails a longing for their lost freedom. Consistent in all of Salten’s animals stories is a plea for animal rights including better treatment of wild and domesticated animals in and out of captivity. Beyond his animal stories, Salten’s journalistic writing and his travelogues reveals him as a cultural critic who was especially attuned to the cultural underpinnings of our perception of our selves and the natural world around us. And, unlike Rosegger who bemoans the passing of *Heimat* and the destruction of nature due to the impact of urban growth and industrialization, Salten greets the city and modernity with enthusiasm. “In ihrem Rücken, wie solche Dinge immer hinter dem Rücken [*sic*] der Freiheit sich vollziehen, sind die Zwingburgen der Stadt hoch emporgestiegen und reden mit Architekturen von ungeheurer Kühnheit das donnernde, sachliche und dennoch von Romantik geschwellte Pathos der Gegenwart,” writes Salten about New York in Fünf

minuten Amerika.³⁹⁵ If Ebner-Eschenbach’s Das Gemeindekind reflects the anticipation of a paradigmatic shift towards a post-mythic society, Salten’s commentary on New York

³⁹⁵ Salten, Fünf Minuten Amerika, 21.

reminds us that the dialectical relationship of technology and myth cannot be escaped but only reinterpreted and redirected.

From Stifter's novellas, which, on the one hand, refocus the readers attention onto nature as a totalizing system that is omnipresent in all phenomena and, on the other hand, highlight the cultural formation of our perception of nature, to Salten's works, which call for an increase in animal rights, this dissertation has attended to the relationship of humans to nature, as it is reflected in literature. By employing ecocriticism to explore the seam between nature and culture, I have shown that four leading Austrian authors in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflect an awareness of nature and the environment in their literature. While it is commonly accepted that the modern twentieth century environmental movement first gained broad acceptance in the aftermath of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, the interpretations and analysis in this dissertation have demonstrated that there were notable figures in nineteenth-century Austrian culture, among them Adalbert Stifter, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Peter Rosegger, and Felix Salten, whose works signaled a growth of environmental awareness in the midst of social, economic, and scientific development that altered the way nineteenth-century Austrians lived and perceived their lives.

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