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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS
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Shame in the Nineteenth-Century Village Tale in the German-Speaking Context, 1843-1897
by
Angineh Djavadghazaryans

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Angineh Djavadghazaryans

Washington University in St. Louis

August 2016

Dedicated to my parents.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Shame in the Nineteenth-Century Village Tale in the German-Speaking Context, 1843-1897

by

Angineh Djavadghazaryans

Doctor of Philosophy in Germanic Languages and Literatures

Washington University in St. Louis, 2016

Professor Lynne Tatlock, Chair

This dissertation examines the genre of the German village tale, the so-called *Dorfgeschichte*. Looking at village tales published between 1843 and 1897 by Berthold Auerbach, Gottfried Keller, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Clara Viebig, I investigate emotions of shame and examine reasons for the emergence of shameful feelings in village life and the ways in which these feelings are represented in village tales. Shame, as I will show, not only constitutes an important component of the *Dorfgeschichte*, but the genre itself offers a forum in which shame can be discussed. Research has shown that shame is not a modern category; I therefore ask if there is something about village tales that causes the phenomenon to reoccur in the more modern times of the nineteenth century and to become the center of literary representation. To address this question, I analyze social and moral village practices as normative moments of peasant culture, which, when violated, result in feelings of shame. My goal with this research is to advance the understanding of why shame in the village context becomes so important to literature produced in this period and what this literary significance says about village life, village communities, and possibly also about their counterpart, the urban societies of the nineteenth century.

Introduction

Shame and the Genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*

I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other ... Shame is shame of oneself before the *Other*; these two structures are inseparable.

Sartre

I. Introduction

The *Dorfgeschichte*, the village tale in the German-speaking context, quickly gained popularity with readers of various social classes and estates in the nineteenth century. At the end of the century, the total count of village tales published in German totaled over 300, of which about 100 were published in the 1840s alone. This literary genre depicts village life and peasant societies differently from anything that had preceded its rise. Scholars of the *Dorfgeschichte* look at the changes in the representation of village life and the subsequent emergence of the literary form in close relationship with historical, social, and political changes of the time. In *Wesen und Form der deutschen Dorfgeschichte im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (1930), Friedrich Alvar, for instance, comments, “[d]ie Möglichkeit die niedrige Figur des Bauern zum Vorwurf künstlerischer Darstellung zu erheben, war abhängig von ganz bestimmten Voraussetzungen” (44). The changing relationship between city and village that was brought about by industrialization, for example, not only resulted in city dwellers’ new awareness of the village and in the bringing of city and village together; it also influenced village life as a whole. However, Alvar, Uwe Baur, and Jürgen Hein all also point to the change in peasants’ legal, social, and political situation as a key factor in the appearance and popularity of the *Dorfgeschichte* in the Vormärz.

In *Dorfgeschichte: Zur Entstehung und gesellschaftlichen Funktion einer literarischen Gattung im Vormärz* (1978), Baur argues that the German village tale appeared when the long existing feudal system—the legal and economic relationship between peasant and lord—as well as the non-industrial agricultural period ended (47). He explains that the first half of the nineteenth century was marked as a transition period for the emancipation of the peasants; by 1848, the peasant, who until then had no political power, finally free of feudal obligation to the lord, was liberated from his “Jahrhunderte währenden Unmündigkeit” (54) and, for the first time, occupied a respected social status within society at large (Baur 31, 54; Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 57). This change in the peasants’ social status is reflected in literature. Previously, the peasant epic depicted village life in contrast to city life and engaged in mockery of peasants. The *Dorfgeschichten* that emerge in the Vormärz present a changed image of the peasant. They express the fact that “einfache Lebensverhältnisse der dichterischen Gestaltung fähig sind” (Alvatar 37). Peasants are now represented as “Vertreter des niederen Volkes, als einfacher Mann” (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 51), and the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* offers a forum for such representations of peasants and village life.

In this dissertation, I examine the genre of the German village tale. While looking at German village tales published between 1843 and 1897, my research extends beyond this time period and takes into account the long nineteenth century (1770-1918). Although my text examples do not extend that far backward and forward, my examination of the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* does consider the extended timeframe. An investigation of the German village tale must consider its early predecessors (*Volksgeschichten*, *Bauerngeschichten*) as well as its successor (*Heimatlidung*) and its reach across the German-speaking world in order to be able

to draw viable conclusions about the genre for the time period of my interest. Specifically looking at village tales by Berthold Auerbach (1812-1882), Gottfried Keller (1819-1890), Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (1830-1916), and Clara Viebig (1860-1952), I investigate emotions of shame and examine reasons for the emergence of shameful feelings in village life and the way in which these feelings are represented in village tales. Shame, I believe, not only constitutes an important component of the *Dorfgeschichte*, but the genre itself offers a forum in which shame can be discussed. Since research has shown that shame is not a modern category, one needs to ask if there is something about village tales that causes the topic to reoccur in the more modern times of the nineteenth century. To address this question, I analyze social and moral village practices as normative moments of peasant culture, which, when violated, result in feelings of shame.

In this introduction, I engage with the historical development of the genre to develop a definition of the *Dorfgeschichte* as well as with the theory of shame and shaming. I then draw connections between shame and the genre of the village tale in order to create an understanding as to why the *Dorfgeschichte* repeatedly thematizes shame. In order to make this connection, I will be looking at aspects such as honor, social and moral norms, and village practices as these characterize the village tale of the nineteenth century and are important to the emergence of feelings of shame.

II. The Genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*

Many scholars of the *Dorfgeschichte* (such as Alvatar, Baur, and Hein, among others) are not in agreement about the specifics of the genre and, therefore, there exists no universally

accepted definition. Thus, while tracing existing scholarship on the genre of the village tale, I aim to establish my own definition for my investigation.

At first glance, it appears that the genre of the village tale in the German context is rarely discussed on its own. While Josephine Donovan, in her book *European Local-Color Literature: National Tales, Dorfgeschichten, Roman Chametres* (2010), looks at the village tale alongside the peasant novel (*Bauernroman*), Hein defines the genre in connection with the following additional genres: *Dorfdichtung*, *Volkserzählung*, *Idylle*, *Heimatlidichtung*, and *Dialektdichtung* (*Dorfgeschichte* 20-45). Furthermore, it appears that many historical overviews of the genre of the novella discuss the village tale as the “novella of country life” and/or include the village tale as an “interlude” in the history of the novella (such as Edwin Keppel Bennett’s *A History of the German Novelle. From Goethe to Thomas Mann* (1934), 106-23). In *Wesen und Form der deutschen Dorfgeschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (1930), Altvater additionally considers the village tale’s connection to *Kalendergeschichten* (31). Why are village tales as a genre not discussed by themselves? Are they not clearly definable or did they emerge out of these other genres? Can the village tale be examined as a standalone genre with its own unique characteristics?

The challenge in defining the *Dorfgeschichte* as a genre lies in the difficulty of distinguishing its form and content, the vast amount of material, and the various perspectives and methodological approaches taken to the study of the genre. Altvater contributes a first systematic analysis of the genre and proposes a threefold classification of the *Dorfgeschichte*. He contends that in material and content the *Dorfgeschichte* needs to be classified as *Heimatkunst*, in form as an *Erzählung*, and in its stylistic devices as the beginning of realism (11). Inevitably, these three

categories overlap in various ways, but how does each category of Alvatar's threefold classification define the genre in question and how do we define these categories in the end?

Alvatar stresses that the plot of the *Dorfgeschichte* must take place in the village and must deal with the peasant (13). Erwin Rüd further claims that the "Geschichte speziell bäuerlichen Inhalts" must be separated from hybrid forms in which the village becomes the narrative perspective for the city (1). One example often seen as such a hybrid form is Ebner-Eschenbach's *Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten* (1883) and *Neue Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten* (1886) in which "es bezeichnender Weise nicht so sehr das eigentliche Bauertum ist, das uns in lebenswährem Bild entgegentritt, als vielmehr jene Kreise, mit denen die Komtesse und Schloßfrau am engsten in Berührung kam" (Käthe Offergeld, quoted in Alvatar 14). Commenting on Rüd's observation of hybrid forms, Alvatar additionally excludes stories that start in the village and end in the village, but mainly take place outside the village. One such example is Carl Hauptmann's *Mathilde. Zeichnungen aus dem Leben einer armen Frau*. (1902). Hauptmann tells the story of young Mathilde, who leaves for the city to escape the misery of the village. Although the story ends with Mathilde's return to the village, her life and the story unfold in the city. Alvatar summarizes, "Die e c h t e [Dorfgeschichte] hält sich im allgemeinen streng an das bäuerliche Lokal und betrachtet alles Geschehen immer aus dieser Perpektive" (14, emphasis in original). However, according to Alvatar, strictly seen, the pure village perspective is only found in Wladyslaw Stanislaw Reymont's *Chlopi* (1904-1909) in which the plot moves to the city only once (Alvatar 14). Even in the city, we only encounter peasants. Other than this one scene, the village remains the setting throughout and the novel ends when the protagonist is chased out of the village. The story does not follow the protagonist any further as soon as the village border

has been reached. Thus, in its purest form, the village tale concentrates on the ordinariness of peasant life and tells the story of the peasants' fates. These characteristics are reflected in other names that have been given to the genre. In *A History of the German Novelle. From Goethe to Thomas Mann* (1934 and 1965), for example, Bennett calls the *Dorfgeschichte* the "Peasant Story" (1934) and "Novelle of Country Life" (1965).

One can furthermore sort prevalent themes of the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* into four subcategories: 1) the farm, 2) the village community, 3) the village vs. the city, and 4) motifs found in *Kalendergeschichten* (Alvatar 26-31). The category of the farm can be seen in the narrow sense to mean the motif of the farm itself including its downfall (26-27). Often it is the peasant's vices such as gambling, debts, and idleness that cause the downfall and leave the peasant dependent on the community for survival, such as the protagonist Klaus in Jeremias Gotthelf's "Segen und Unsegen" (1899). Gotthelf's tale thematizes extravagance and arrogance. Klaus, who does not view luck and prosperity as God-given, ends in financial ruin and is ostracized by the community.

Other motifs include questions of inheritance such as sibling rivalry regarding the division of the inheritance or the lack of an heir (Alvatar 26-27). In Berthold Auerbach's "Der Lehnhold" (1853), for example, both sons die, and the farm hand inherits the farm after marrying the daughter-heir. In fact, inheritance was early on established as such an important theme of village tales that later village stories repeatedly return to it. In Joseph Friedrich Perkonig's "Der verlorene Sohn" (1934), for example, we encounter an heirless peasant who loses his estate to a stranger and is unable to pass on his blood and name or, as the narrator tells us, "Er war lebendig begraben" (175).

Another common theme is the father and son motif in which the maturing son is ready to take over the father's farm, but the father is not yet ready to give up his farm and retire (Alvatar 26-27). In *Im grünen Klee - im weißen Schnee. Gestalten und Geschichten aus dem hannoverschen Berglande* (1894),¹ Heinrich Sohnrey explores this theme and explains that it is based on the following principle: "Solange man noch selbst Mannes genug ist, soll man die Jungens ducken; und man muß sich nicht eher ausziehen, ehe man nicht zu Bette geht" (285).

In a broader sense, the topic of the farm includes themes of generational conflict, tradition versus modernity, advancement through marriage, forgiveness, as well as the fate of the farmhand. Moreover, the peasant's mindset and morals are prevalent themes (Alvatar 26-27). Tradition and village customs clash with open-minded youth who want to follow their heart, pursue their lovers, and ignore social and/or family boundaries. This is where relationships such as those between peasant son and maid or between the children of hostile families are thematized; such tales often end tragically. One such example is Gottfried Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" (1856),² where the hostility between two families leads to their children's love suicide as the only way they can be together.

Oftentimes, the general topic of marriage is coupled with the motif of advancement through marriage such as in Auerbach's "Barfüßele" (1856)—the story of the orphaned girl Amrei, who grows up working as a goose-girl and maid and ends up marrying a well-respected peasant's son. The importance of the motif of advancement through marriage in Auerbach's *Barfüßele* becomes

¹ Later editions were published with the title *Im grünen Klee - im weißen Schnee. Dorfgeschichten aus dem Hannoverland*.

² First published in volume I of *Die Leute von Seldwyla*. Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1856.

apparent in the original subtitle “Das neue Aschenputtel” (Alvatar 27). The title references to the “from rags to riches” storyline of Grimm’s fairy tale “Aschenputtel” (1812).

The representation of the village community includes motifs such as rival villages, the conflict of the individual with the community, the destruction of the village community, and nature’s effects on the village as a whole (Alvatar 28-29). The village community generally plays a role even in stories that illustrate the life of a single peasant or a single village family. This comprehensive view of the village is first offered by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) (28). In his four-volume *Lienhard und Gertrud* (1781-1787), the socially, morally and economically corrupted village Bonnal and its society form the center of the story. The reason for the village’s downfall is Hummel, the corrupt village bailiff and innkeeper. The society that Pestalozzi depicts in his tale is based on the ordered and productive environment that is influenced by each member of the community. Pestalozzi’s motif of individuals’ role in maintaining a functioning community is found in many variations in stories such as Heinrich Zschokke’s “Das Goldmachedorf” (1900) and Gustav Schröder’s *Der Schulze von Wolfenhagen – Die Geschichte eines Dorfes* (1921). Similarly, stories of villages living in enmity with each other and the peasant’s riot—also known as the “Kohlhass-Motiv” (Alvatar 28)—present the village as a whole.³ Often, the peasant’s riots are directed towards one individual such as in Auerbach’s “Luzifer” (1857) where the village society revolts against the new pastor.

The village-city topic usually contrasts the village with the city and sometimes positions them even as enemies; it also frequently features the returning villager (Alvatar 29-30). In his tale “Die hinter den Bergen” (1900), Sohnrey describes this contrasting presentation of village

³ Such as Heinrich von Kleist’s *Michael Kohlhaas* (1808) and Auerbach’s “Befehlers” (1843).

and city as follows: “Es kam mir so recht zum Bewußtsein, wie unstet und flüchtig die menschlichen Verhältnisse gerade in der Stadt sind. Auf dem Dorfe alles fest und sicher, hier ein ewiges Suchen und Rücken” (105). This basic attitude is visible in village tales of many works, often even portraying the city as a danger for the village. Here, negative influences on the village arising from industry, politics, and fashion, among others, are repeatedly thematized.

Last, the topics of vice and desire of everyday life prevalent in *Kalendergeschichten* and *Schwankerzählungen* often shape *Dorfgeschichten* as well. Such motifs include piety and impiety, greed, addiction to gambling and alcohol, superstition, professional pride, and folk medicine, among others (Alvatar 31). One example of vice in the village is Gotthelf’s *Geld und Geist oder Die Versöhnung* (1843-1844), a story that focuses on money and greed. Farmer Christen’s gambling has turned his family’s life upside down and resulted in a conflict between husband and wife as well as their children. Only after a sermon on Pentecost is the family able to practice forgiveness—another prevalent motif in *Dorfgeschichten*.

Defining the *Dorfgeschichte* in respect to its form is probably the most thankless task as it is very difficult to distinguish it from genres such as *Bauernroman*, *Kalendergeschichte*, *Idylle*, and *Heimatsdichtung*. Bennett goes so far as to claim that the *Dorfgeschichte* appears to be “careless of form” (1934, 106), and there exists little scholarship that does not talk about the *Dorfgeschichte* in connection with at least one of these genres. As mentioned above, Alvatar classifies the village tale as *Erzählung*, but this designation is not very helpful. In a broader sense, *Erzählung* refers to the literary genre of epic in its totality. Thus, the term *Erzählung* can be seen as an umbrella term for all epic genres—such as novel, novella, short story, fairy tale, myth, etc. Even in a narrow sense, the term denotes a separate, but not clearly definable, literary genre.

Characteristic of an *Erzählung*, which is often shorter and less convoluted than a novel and does not adhere to formal structures as does the novella, is a fictional plot or a development that is told chronologically and from one narrative perspective.

This not very clearly defined genre in terms of length and structure, for example, is visible in the great variety of *Dorfgeschichten*—some village tales reach lengths of more than 200 pages, while others can be as short as twenty pages. Additionally, the prevalent motifs as well as the narrative style of the village tales correspond to attempts to define the *Erzählung*. Leo Kyrell, for example, defines *Erzählungen* as “Dichtungen, die sich in ihrem Gehalt an die Wirklichkeit des Lebens anschließen und schlicht und anschaulich eine einfache Begebenheit darstellen” (430). The *Dorfgeschichte*, given its focus on peasant-life, can be classified as an *Erzählung* in accordance with Kyrell's definition. It is a representation of the “Wirklichkeit des [Bauern-]Lebens,” written in a clear and descriptive narrative style.

The classification of the *Dorfgeschichte* as belonging to a particular literary period poses another challenge. Although many scholars of the *Dorfgeschichte* genre admit that village epics existed long before and continue to be written long after the nineteenth century, scholars commonly refer to the mid to the end of the nineteenth century as the “Entstehung und Blütezeit” of the genre (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 20). These scholars consider Auerbach to be the “father” of the German village tale and view the 1840s as the beginning of the genre. The distinguishing feature of this “new” genre is seen in “eine bestimmte Darstellungsqualität des Bäuerlichen” (20). As Gero von Wilpert points out in “Dorfgeschichte,” the “new” *Dorfgeschichte* separates itself from previously existing forms by the fact that the peasantry is now treated seriously and valued rather than ridiculed as was the case in works dealing with the

village and peasantry from the middle ages until the mid-eighteenth century (Wilpert 182-83). Similarly, as Bennett points out, while peasants have been a subject of literature since medieval Germany, it was not until the eighteenth century that they were “treated sympathetically and presented as something having intrinsic interest and not merely as matter for satire” (1934, 106). Thus, the serious presentation of peasant life in nineteenth-century literary works marks the century as the high-point of the *Dorfgeschichte*. Besides the quality of peasant representation, another important change in the village tale of the nineteenth century contrasting with previously existing forms is the move away from a moralizing and pedagogical tone. Village tales are no longer “Lehrbücher” intended to “teach” peasants how to lead their lives.⁴

As mentioned above, Alvatar links the *Dorfgeschichte* to the beginning of realism in regard to its narrational style. Like Alvatar, many scholars point to the importance of the realistic aspects of the genre. Hein, for example, explains, “in der DG entspricht das Milieu ganz dem der bäuerlichen Wirklichkeit” and even goes so far as to call the genre a “Sonderform der realistischen Erzählliteratur des 19. Jahrhundert” (*Dorfgeschichte* 22). Rüd also points to the “bewußte Schilderung des ländlichen Lebens in realistischer Form” (2). Recent scholarship agrees with these claims. Donovan defines the village tale—or what she calls “local-color

⁴ Bennett believes that the moralizing and didactic tendency remains present in many village stories, but is presented in a professional manner (1965, 107 and 123).

literature”⁵—as a form of regional writing that is characterized by “a *realistic focus* upon a geographical locale, its native customs, its physical and cultural environment, and its regional dialect” (Donovan ix, my emphasis).⁶ Why is this “realistic focus” a defining aspect for the genre?

Literary realism is characterized by the objective observation of the world in an attempt to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. It is “[a] mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or ‘reflecting’ faithfully an actual way of life” (Baldick 281). However, it has been repeatedly pointed out that it is not simply a reproduction of reality, but “a system of conventions producing a lifelike illusion of some ‘real’ world outside the text” (281). This illusion is a “representation of reality rather than reality itself” (Kontje 3) and thus this “reality” depends on the reader’s creation of the “effect of the real” through his or her imagination (3). Thus, realist literature cannot be simply defined in terms of verisimilitude since “verisimilitude can lie in the eye of the beholder” (Finney 117).

Realism tends to be concerned with the commonplaces of everyday life among the middle and lower classes: “ordinary people, ... the worker, the peasant, the prostitute, the modern city” (Kontje 4). Important are not only non-idealized depictions of people and places,

⁵ According to Donovan, “local-color literature” is a literary movement that emerged in the early 1800s in Europe and flourished until end of the nineteenth-century. She points out that the term *local-color* is often used derogatively and “suggest[s] lightweight, superficial use of local materials.” In her research, however, she attempts to “expand its connotation to include the idea of validating local knowledges seen in counterposition to the abstract knowledges of modernity.” The key is thus the term *local* which is why she has chosen the term *local-color* “instead of “regional” or “provincial.” The term needs to be seen as an umbrella term encompassing “the various terms used to designate regional literatures at the time: the ‘national tale’ in Scotland; the *Dorfgeschichte* (village tale) in German-speaking regions; *romans champêtres* (rural novels) in France.” One of local-color literature’s prevalent themes is the “clash between dominant, colonizing, mathematizing disciplines of modernity and the rural, eccentric culture ...” Authors of “local-color literature” are “sympathetic to the characters whose lives were being erased by the encroaching powers. It is their word—their subjugated knowledges—that come to life in the literature of local-color” (Donovan ix-xiii).

⁶ Similar to Donovan, scholars such as Hein and Baur point to aspects of regionalism as one of the major markers of *Dorfgeschichten*.

but also certain formal qualities. The author/narrator must, for example, remain invisible. Many realists prefer historical material for their works that allows for a distanced dispassionate representation. Prominent themes comprise social conditions, nationhood, and conflict between individual and society. A key factor in realist literature is the embeddedness of the individual in complex social systems. Narration displays attention to detail, a subjective sense of beauty, and humor (Baldick 281-82, Finney 119-20, Kontje 9-11).

According to Alvatar, the village-tale author's focus is "nur auf[zu]weisen, wie es im Leben [des Bauern] zugeht" (15) and the author's goal is to achieve "Klarheit und Einfachheit der Handlung" (16). The necessity of realistic representation of peasant life emerges from the status of the village tale as what Alvatar calls "Gemeinschaftsdichtung" and "Volksdichtung" (15-16). The life of one individual peasant, he explains, is shaped by the community of the village, and even if a story focuses on the fate of one peasant, it cannot be separated from the community (16). In other words, the life-story of the peasant is "written" by the village as a whole and needs to be represented as such. Thus, the author cannot deviate from a realistic representation of the peasant, and in order to achieve such a representation, the author must consider village customs, laws, morals, etc. The failure to do so risks losing the essence of what a peasant is. In this sense, readers expect of the author an objective representation of everyday village life.

An investigation of the existing scholarship on the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* surprisingly reveals that belief in honor and a religious worldview are not explicitly mentioned as motifs and/or driving forces in these literary works. Although Alvatar mentions morality as well as the motifs of religiosity and impiety (topics of vice and desire of everyday life prevalent in

Kalendergeschichten and *Schwankerzählungen* that are also often prevalent in *Dorfgeschichten*), there appears to be no explicit discussion of the role of honor and religion in nineteenth-century representations of village communities, yet the enduring belief in honor and a religious outlook repeatedly becomes evident in the nineteenth century's village tales. Indeed, these themes are so prevalent as to make it necessary to analyze many (if not all) motifs that Alavator mentions as key characteristics of the German village tale in conjunction with honor and a religious worldview. Moreover, these two themes need to be incorporated into the definition of the *Dorfgeschichte*.

In this vein, my working definition of the *Dorfgeschichte* emphasizes honor and a religious worldview in connection with Alvatar's threefold classification in order to formulate one overarching focus for this dissertation. I will consider the *Dorfgeschichte* as a fictional narrative that 1) takes place in the village, whereby contact with the city may occur (i.e., the storyline may temporarily lead us into the city, the city may influence the village narrative directly or indirectly, a city person may enter the village), but the main conflict of the plot remains bound to the village, its customs, and its inhabitants; 2) is narrated from the village perspective, whereby the author and/or the narrator is not necessarily a villager him/herself, but he or she is certainly aware of village life and its customs and narrates the story from that particular perspective;⁷ and 3) realistically depicts village life as a whole through the representation of village individuals and their interactions with and social standing in the village community.

⁷ One such example is Theodor Storm's "Draußen im Heidedorf" (1872).

III. Feelings of Shame and Processes of Shaming

While there exists no universally accepted definition of shame, scholars generally understand the emotion as a feeling that is a result of an action and has implications for one's social existence. Moreover, shame is highly contextual in nature and emerges in response to transgressions of particular social norms. Thus, when an individual experiences feelings of shame, these are triggered by a behavior or action that challenges a community's established and known set of values. In this sense, feelings of shame are tied both to the individual and to the community; when analyzing shame, it is important to keep this relationship in mind.

While shame is not considered a modern category,⁸ my research does not focus on early conceptions of shame. In *Zur Kulturgeschichte der Scham* (2011), Michaela Bauks and Martin F. Meyer point out that early conceptions of shame have always been connected to nudity and sexuality (9-10), an idea from which I would like to deviate. Although nudity and sexuality certainly play a role in contemporary theories of shame, I aim to take into account those theories that specifically concentrate on the moral component of the emotion as well as its social implications. These two aspects of shame theory are important to my analyses since representations of village life in the nineteenth century, as we will see, reveal the ways in which peasant life is organized around morality, which, in turn, influences and maintains social behavior. Moreover, contemporary shame theory also considers gendered aspects of the emotion,

⁸ Scholars of shame and its historical development point out that shame did not exist at the beginning of humankind in the Christian creation myths. The Old Testament proclaims, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2,25). Among the first to mention shame is Aristotle, who in his work *Rhetorik* develops a definition of shame. He states that "[s]hame may be defined as pain or disturbance in regard to bad things . . . , which seem likely to involve us in discredit [W]e feel shame at such bad things as we think are disgraceful to ourselves or to those we care for. These evils are, in the first place, those due to moral badness" (1384a). Later definitions, such as Immanuel Kant's recall Aristotle's early definition: "Scham ist Angst aus der besorgten Verachtung einer gegenwärtigen Person und, als solche, ein Affect . . . [D]ie Scham . . . als Affect, muß plötzlich eintreten" (255). Because shame emerges out of a particular social context, it appears suddenly and without warning in response to something that causes one's fear of rejection.

which need to be taken into account when investigating the very gendered society at the heart of nineteenth-century *Dorfgeschichten*.

Contemporary writings on shame range from simple statements such as “shame is a ubiquitous emotion in social life” (Nussbaum 173) to more complex ideas that look at shame as an “ethical identity concept”:

The ethical identity conception is that shame is the emotion we feel when we realize that our ethical identity is violated or threatened by our actions. Our ethical identity is defined by our commitment to a set of moral norms. Shame is what we feel when we breach these norms in some serious way. (Braithwaite/Braithwaite 19)

While these two differ in their degree of specificity, they both identify shame as an emotion that influences the social existence of an individual in a specific context.

Contemporary theories of shame also point out that shame is closely related to other human emotions. In *Shame Management Through Reintegration* (2001), John Braithwaite and Valerie Braithwaite, like many other scholars, argue that shame and guilt are closely related concepts (3). The feelings we have when our ethics are in question result in a Shame-Guilt factor, as they call it, which is “defined by feelings of having done wrong, concern that others have been hurt, feeling ashamed of oneself and one’s act, feeling anger at oneself, [and] loss of honor among family and friends. Observed remorse [is] associated with this factor” (7). In keeping with Braithwaite and Braithwaite, Martha C. Nussbaum claims in her book *Hiding from Humanity. Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (2004) that shame, humiliation, embarrassment, disgust, guilt, and rage are all closely related emotions (203-11). Humiliation, she argues, is “the active, public face of shame. To humiliate someone is to expose them to shame; and to shame someone is, in most cases, to humiliate them” (203). Humiliation, she maintains, does not always lead to shame;

however, she believes that it is its intent (Nussbaum 203). She continues by explaining that embarrassment is “a lighter matter of shame” and, contrary to shame, it is usually “momentary, temporary, and inconsequential” (204). Additionally, embarrassment is always social and contextual and cannot occur without an audience, while shame “can be an emotion of self-assessment whether the world is looking on or not” (204-5). The emotions of shame, humiliation, and embarrassment are related in a way that one emotion might quickly move into the other through the smallest distinctions. Embarrassment, for example, moves “towards the universe of humiliation” if it is deliberately inflicted (205-6).

Disgust, guilt, depression, and rage, Nussbaum argues, are not immediate relatives of shame, but do have an important relationship to it and help to understand and explain feelings of shame. Disgust is distinct from shame as it is “an inherently self-deceptive emotion, whose function, for better or worse, is above all to conceal from us, on a daily basis, facts about ourselves that are difficult to face” (206). Further, guilt as a related emotion emerges through the contrast of disgust and anger. Nussbaum explains,

anger responds to a harm or damage; it aims at righting of the wrong. So too . . . does guilt, in the particular case where the wrongdoer is oneself. Guilt is a type of self-punishing anger, reacting to the perception that one has done wrong or a harm. Thus, whereas shame focuses on defect or imperfection, and thus on some aspect of the very being of the person who feels it, guilt focuses on an action (or a wish to act), but need not to extend to the entirety of the agent, seeing the agent as utterly inadequate. (207)

Moreover, Nussbaum sees a strong link between primitive shame and depression as well as between primitive shame and narcissistic rage. Shame may result in the desire of “ideal symbioses and completeness that is unattainable, the unattainability of this object, together with shame at one’s incomplete human existence, produces a global sense of emptiness and

meaningless” (209) and therefore might lead to depression. The link between shame and narcissistic rage emerges at the “source of lack in the self. The self, aware of its inadequacy, seeks to blame someone for this condition” (209) rather than dealing with the emotional burden of shame.

Shaming in turn has also been looked at from many different angles and needs to be examined separately from shame. Braithwaite and Braithwaite differentiate between shame and shaming by looking at “shame as an emotion and shaming as a regulatory practice” (4). Further, they explain that shaming is a regulatory practice that operates similarly to formal punishments and rewards (4). Additionally, they point out that shaming “interacts with identity” whereby “shaming will be most effective when it shames the act but not the person” (16). This is due to the fact that shaming a person may result in destroying that person’s identity while, on the contrary, shaming the act repairs identity and allows for an effective regulation of social conduct (16).

Here, the question arises as to what roles shame and shaming play in society. Braithwaite and Braithwaite, based on Aristotle’s observations on shame and its social dimension (*Rhetorik* 1384a-85a), argue that shame is “the effect of social disapproval” (Braithwaite/Braithwaite 7). According to Nussbaum, furthermore, society selects who is shamed: “Some people . . . are more marked out for shame than others. Indeed, . . . societies ubiquitously select certain groups and individuals for shaming, marking them off as ‘abnormal’ and demanding them to blush at what and who they are” (174). Thus, shame and processes of shaming are inevitably linked to the relationship between individual and community which is based on social norms and values.

IV. Shame and the Genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*

The question arises as to why the genre of the village tale takes up shame and shaming again and again? As the nineteenth century is seen as the *Blütezeit* of the genre, we may be able to answer this question by looking at what role shame played in this period. By analyzing representations of nineteenth-century peasant life, I aim to establish a direct link between conceptions of shame and the genre as a whole.

As discussed above, shame is an emotion that is primarily based on existing social and moral norms. Thus, one must examine how particular social constructions of the time influence not only the understanding of shame, but also regulate how, when, and by whom shame is experienced. In her chapter “Gendering Emotions” from her book *Emotions in History - Lost and Found* (2011), Ute Frevert points out that “emotions ... come in socially specific and culturally diverse forms” (87) and examines how nineteenth-century conceptions of various emotions vary by gender, based on gender-specific norms and values. One particular emotion she investigates is honor, which “was relevant for both men and women, [however] its manifestation and meaning differed widely. For women, honour was exclusively linked to their sex and sexual behavior. For men, it was more socially complex and could be attacked by a wide range of offenses, from verbal insults to a slap in the face” (87). In her *Vergängliche Gefühle* (2013), Frevert further traces how this gendered conception of honor influences the understanding of shame for the nineteenth century. She looks at the cultural development of shame alongside honor and points to how the social and cultural make up of the nineteenth century give shame a particular place within the society of this period. Although Frevert’s writing is very much geared towards the literate middle classes, as we will see throughout this dissertation, these middle class ideas are

operative in village tales written by and/or for middle class readers and are applied to peasant culture.

The deciding factor of how emotions (including shame) are experienced, perceived, and evaluated is the social context. As Frevert asserts, “Gefühle ... sind immer auch sprachlich verfasst und somit an Kultur und Gesellschaft gebunden” (*Vergängliche Gefühle* 11). She thus stresses that it is of utmost importance to look at the language used to express these particular emotions. “Gefühle und Sprache ... sind in gesellschaftliche Zusammenhänge eingeordnet, die ihnen Bedeutung geben ... Die Sprache der Gefühle hört sich bei Arbeitern und Bauern anders an als in der Aristokratie oder im gebildeten Bürgertum” (12). The language of emotions is unique to each community and, Frevert claims, mirrors the norms and conventions of each and gives insight into what people actually felt, wanted to feel, or thought they felt (15). This, in turn, is important, according to Frevert, who bases her observations on Nietzsche’s work on the link between content and form, because the ways in which a feeling is (not) expressed influences the feeling itself (12, 14). Thus, in order to understand the role shame played in the nineteenth century, we must consider not only what was seen as shameful, but also how shame manifested itself in language.

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, the nature of shame included three elements: 1) a moral component based on opinions and habits of people, 2) the decreasing importance of body shame, and 3) the association of sexual shame with both sexes. In the nineteenth century, shame undergoes further changes. While in the first half of the century, the moral aspect of shame prevailed over body shame, human emotion was now bound to feelings of

honor. Shame was seen as a “gelerntes und anerzogenes Gefühl” (*Vergängliche Gefühle* 23), and not connected to one’s biology as it had been in pre-modern times.

This change in definition made honor a key component of feelings of shame. While honor and the protection of one’s honor was typically associated with men, women and especially young girls were taught to feel shame in order to preserve their honor. In fact, female shame was equated to female honor and being a shameless woman was considered the worst state of all. The entire moral existence of a woman was tied to her “Schamhaftigkeit und Keuschheit” (*Vergängliche Gefühle* 20). If violated, a woman lost all her honor and respect in society. In fact, Frevert points out that “men were masters of their own honour while women were not. Female honour, once impaired and insulted, could not be restored by the woman herself. Strictly speaking, it was lost forever” (“Gendering Emotions” 88). While men were able to reclaim their honor by proving themselves, women would be left without honor.

Crucial for this development of the importance of female shame is the role *Kinderbücher* played in the nineteenth century. These texts depicted (young) girls who constantly felt ashamed and whose examples were used to educate many young girls about how to behave appropriately. Because shame is generally considered a reaction towards something that reveals a lack or a weakness (especially morally speaking), feelings of shame were particularly geared towards women as “[w]eakness was what defined and characterized femininity” (“Gendering Emotions” 92). Moreover, weakness was not only coded in terms of “the absence of physical strength. It also indicated a lack of moral and social power” (92). This weakness ascribed to women not only made them prone to shame, but was also seen to influence the ways in which they were (un)able to control their emotions. Frevert points out that “[s]elf-control was something of which only

adult men seemed capable. Women and children were regarded as lacking the moral willpower and discipline to moderate their affects” (“Gendering Emotions” 94). Thus, shame became a response to any violation of the many “weibliche[n] Tugenden - neben Ordnungsliebe und Sparsamkeit vor allem Frömmigkeit, Bescheidenheit, Herzengüte, Geduld, ‘Sanftmuth, Biagsamkeit und Selbstverläugnung” (*Vergängliche Gefühle* 20) and in turn was seen as a desired characteristic for women that if missing would be an indicator of their (lack of) moral goodness.

In the late nineteenth century, the sexual component of shame replaced the moral one. Shame was bound to “‘unanständige’ Worte, Gebärden oder Handlungen . . ., wobei der Begriff des Anstands eindeutig geschlechtlich konnotiert war” (*Vergängliche Gefühle* 23-24). Shame was no longer seen as an emotion that was tied to one’s sense of moral behavior, but used only when referring to female genitals. The shift in this definition also reflects nineteenth-century middle-class society’s call for rigid control of female sexuality. Urbanization and industrialization increased the “need” for this type of control because young women moved to larger cities where it appeared more difficult to keep them from “‘Unzucht’ und ‘Unsittlichkeit’” (25). They became sexual objects for upper class men.

Frevert’s analysis of shame points to the nineteenth century per se as a time when the emotion was still closely connected to honor.⁹ If we take into account Frevert’s observation of

⁹ Frevert considers the turn of the twentieth century as a pivotal moment in time during which there was a shift in what constituted shame as an emotion. According to Frevert, this transition was tied to the changes in the conception of honor, which the twentieth century viewed as an old fashioned concept (*Vergängliche Gefühle* 17). Frevert writes, “Was 1895 den Nerv der Zeitgenossen getroffen hatte, rief achtzig Jahre später Schulterzucken hervor” (18). The reason for the loss of significance in the concept of honor lies in the fact that honor thrives in communities oriented on personal relationships rather than those directed towards economics. Modernization, Frevert summarizes, threatened the basis of what constituted honor: “Die Tage der Ehre waren folglich gezählt und ihr Ende umso näher, je schneller und tiefgreifender sich eine Gesellschaft modernisierte” (18). With the change or loss of the conception of honor, shame moved into the realm of negative connotations now indicating personal weakness and dependence (19).

the link between honor and shame, we can draw conclusions about why the nineteenth-century genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* is an important forum for thematizing shame. Not only does honor have particular meaning in the nineteenth century; it is also a feeling that still figures in rural communities. Urbanization changes the understanding of honor which, in turn, changes how shame is understood, perceived and expressed. Therefore, shame offers a productive lens for analyzing literary representations of village life; shame reflects the communal social norms of the time and is a key component of nineteenth-century peasant life.

V. Chapter Overview

In the following chapters, this dissertation analyzes selected aspects of the literary representation of village life and its customs, social norms, and moral values with respect to feelings of shame and processes of shaming. As I will show, shame in the village tale brings to the foreground how representations of village communities of the nineteenth century construct the social imaginary.

Chapter one, “Shame and the Construction of Social Belonging Through Language in Berthold Auerbach’s ‘Der Lauterbacher’ (1843) and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s ‘Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe’ (1886),” looks at how the genre of the village tale as a whole and the contents of the stories themselves are built on aspects of belonging. It analyzes village practices, in particular language and the opposition of *Hochdeutsch* and dialect, as markers of belonging and shows how these markers contribute to a sense of shame in regard to ethnic and socio-economic status. As I demonstrate, these emerging feelings of shame, in turn, destabilize belonging for the protagonists. Analyzing these two village tales, I investigate how in these tales

shame contributes not only to the understanding of one's identity, but also leads to (dis)integration of individual and collective social belonging.

Chapter two, "Social Norms and the Constructive vs. Destructive Nature of Shame as a Moral Emotion in Berthold Auerbach's 'Des Schloßbauers Vefele' (1843) and Gotfried Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (1856)," investigates the interplay between shame and social and moral norms, and foregrounds what shame reveals about individuals and the village community as a whole. In accordance with theories of shame that look at its constructive and destructive nature, I analyze how shame can be productive for individuals and communities to maintain their moral standards. I also look at how shame can have a negative impact when self-negotiations, which are crucial to resolving feelings of shame, fail. Lastly, I will question whether theories of shame that establish binaries of constructive vs. destructive types of shame can be upheld in the context of the village and what effects they have on representations of rural life.

Finally, chapter three, "Shame and Female Agency in Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's 'Die Totenwacht' (1894) and Clara Viebig's 'Die Schuldige' (1897)," looks at shame and female agency. While it emphasizes how shame can serve both to increase and decrease agency for women, it also looks at ideals of masculinity and how they influence the occurrence of feelings of shame in the male characters. My analyses will make apparent the role that gender, socio-economic status, and geography play in the ways in which shame emerges in village contexts as represented in literary texts.

Bringing together insights from the fields of German, shame studies, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, my research engages with questions of gender roles in literary

representations of village communities. I look at how shame as an emotion can serve in literary texts to reveal the complexities, limitations, and the positioning of these gender roles by foregrounding social and moral norms of village communities. My goal with this research is to advance the understanding of why shame in the village context becomes so important to literature produced in this period and what this literary significance says about village life, village communities, and possibly also about their counterpart, the urban societies of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 1

Shame and the Construction of Social Belonging Through Language in Berthold Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher" (1843) and Marie von Ebner- Eschenbach's "Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe" (1886)

1.1 Introduction

Everyone inevitably establishes a sense of belonging to a distinct group—such as a nation, a country, a region, a city, a village, or a society—or a particular community be it based on language, religion, class, ethnicity, race, sex, sexuality, gender, or even education, among others. Moreover, the development of any sort of sense of belonging to a particular group and/or community is likely a result of a deliberate decision, but it can also be forced upon an individual and/or a group or even occur unconsciously. But what does it mean to have a sense of belonging to any specific group and/or community and how, in turn, does a group/community influence and/or affect one's sense of belonging?

The most fundamental sense of belonging probably arises from one's home: the place where one was born, grew up, and/or spent a significant part of one's life. Many times, the place we call home evokes a multitude of aspects to which we feel connected: a certain city/village, a particular family and/or household, even a specific house, or a distinct community (such as neighbors, friends, church, school, etc.). What separates this place from any other (such as another house, neighborhood, city/village, etc. one lives in for a specific time period) is that this single place remains one's home even if one has (long since) left it and/or will never return.

The Germans use the term *Heimat* to describe such a place. Although it is often translated as *home* or *hometown* or *hometown*, there exists no English equivalent. In the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1854), Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm define *Heimat* as 1) “heimat, *das land oder auch nur der landstrich, in dem man geboren ist oder bleibenden aufenthalt hat,*” 2) “heimat, *der geburtsort oder ständige wohnort,*” 3) “*selbst das elterliche haus und besitzthum heiszt so*” (Vol. 10: 864-66). Similarly, Johann Christoph Adelung’s *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart* (1811) defines *Heimat* as “der Ort, das Land, wo jemand daheim ist, d. i. sein Geburtsort, sein Vaterland” (1077-78). The term has sparked many scholarly discussions and, as will become apparent below, remains one of the words that resonates in the German language.¹

In *A Nation of Provincials. Heimat and German Identity* (1990), Celia Applegate points out that scholars have attempted various, sometimes “less enlightening” (5), answers to the question what *Heimat* is. As Applegate explains, while sociologists and social psychologists determined that *Heimat* is a “basic human need, comparable to eating and sleeping” (5), and not only the place one was born, but also “where one receives an education, comes to consciousness of selfhood, adjusts oneself to family and society, or constructs a ‘social entity’” (5),² political scientists explain *Heimat* “in terms of natural human tendencies, in particular tendencies to form

¹ Celia Applegate, for example, calls *Heimat* a “key word” in German history in the same way in which Raymond Williams used this language to describe words like *identity*, *democracy*, *class*, *art*, and *culture* (6).

² Such as Wilhelm Brepohl in “Heimat und Heimatgesinnung als soziologische Begriffe und Wirklichkeiten” (1965) and “Die Heimat als Beziehungsfeld: Entwurf einer soziologischen Theorie der Heimat” (1952-53), Heiner Treinen’s “Symbolische Ortsbezogenheit: Eine soziologische Untersuchung zum Heimatproblem” (1965), Ina-Maria Grevreus’ *Der territoriale Mensch. Ein literature-anthropologisches Versuch zum Heimatsphänomen* (1972) and *Auf der Suche nach Heimat. Analysen, Thesen, Perspektiven* (1979), and Klaus Weigelt’s “Heimat—Der Ort personaler Identitätsfindung und sozio-politischer Orientierung” (1984).

political alliances” (Applegate 5).³ Applegate objects that these scholars do not succeed in describing the term itself but rather describe it as a human condition.

Moreover, Applegate points out that discourses on the term *Heimat* usually approach the term in connection to something else: “Heimat and speech, Heimat and nation, Heimat as family, as community, as tradition, as natural surroundings” (5).⁴ This amalgam of concepts expressed by the term makes explicit its complex and deeper meanings. It is a concept that denotes the relationship of a person to a certain spatial social unit. Distinct from the English term *home*, *Heimat* not only holds the meaning of home in the sense of where one lives, but also the place to which one has a sense of belonging. Applegate understands the concept of *Heimat* “to express a ‘feeling of belonging together’ (in German, the *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*), whether across class, confessional, or gender lines, or across the lines that divided the province from the nation surrounding it” (x) and, in turn, as a “discourse about place, belonging, and identity” (4). Thus, *Heimat* combines the ideas of physical space and emotional connection to that particular space and is critical to identity formation. In this sense, the significance of *Heimat* does not lie in specific geographical borders, but rather in the “effort ... to maintain ‘community’ against the economic, political, and cultural forces that would scatter it” (6) or, in other words, in the distinction made by Ferdinand Tönnies between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*. While *Gesellschaft* (often translated as *society*) refers to a group that is instrumental for its members’ individual aims and goals, and usually indicates a space that is bound to location and time, *Gemeinschaft* (often translated as *community*) is based on a grouping’s feelings of togetherness

³ See Klaus Weigelt’s *Heimat und Nation* (1984) and Werner Weidenfeld’s *Die Identität der Deutschen. Fragen, Positionen, Perspektiven* (1984).

⁴ See also Ina-Maria Grevreus’ *Der territoriale Mensch. Ein literatur-anthropologisches Versuch zum Heimatsphänomen* (1972), in which she suggests *Heimat* as a synthesis (31).

and mutual bonds which are felt as goals to be maintained.⁵ David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis define community in similar ways: “Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (9). Thus, community implies a sense of belonging that is not determined by physical borders. Therefore, on the one hand, a community can be summarized as a particular geographic space that in turn is defined through certain characteristics (i.e., landscape, regional/local industry, climate); its inhabitants share certain regional identifiers (i.e., language, customs, regional beliefs, etc.). On the other hand, a community could also be described as a social place that is not necessarily bound to geographic borders, but rather “borders” that are established on the basis of particular (religious) beliefs, race, gender, sexuality, etc. In precisely this sense, *Heimat* creates a sense of belonging; it is characterized by a sense of *Gemeinschaft* in which one is emotionally invested.

At the boundaries of community—be they geographic or defined by beliefs or identities—there exists an understanding of “theirs” and “ours.”⁶ The possessive pronouns not only point to an awareness of belonging to a community, but also to an awareness of an “Other” that does not belong. Thus, there must exist some sort of standards, guidelines, patterns, rules, customs, practices, etc., that have been established to differentiate one community from all others. If one adheres to these characteristics, one belongs; one is part of “ours.” If one does not fit these ideals, one does not belong; one is the “Other” and thus “theirs.”

⁵ See Ferdinand Tönnies’ *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1912).

⁶ I draw the idea of these pronouns from Benedict Anderson’s work in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).

How do the markers of an individual community come into being or, in other words, how is it determined who belongs and who doesn't? What happens when individuals decide that they do not want to belong to a certain group anymore? We can certainly identify many different factors that might be used to characterize a community and, in turn, determine an individual's place within that particular community. Such factors may include language, religion, traditions, family lineage, education, agricultural crops and farming practices, norms and values, etc. Given my focus on village tales, I want to pay special attention in this chapter to how individuals move in and out of social groups, what factors play an important role in these shifts, and how these developments affect the community and, in turn, community members' sense of belonging. If belonging is established through a sense of community, how do certain institutions and customs of that community contribute to and/or influence this sense of belonging?

To answer these questions, I investigate how the genre of the village tale itself is built on the concept of belonging. Further, I show how the village communities represented in these tales are operating with a distinct sense of belonging closely tied to a particular group's feelings of togetherness. Through close readings of two village tales, namely Bertholt Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher" (1843) and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe" (1886),⁷ I will demonstrate how this sense of belonging can change for both an individual and a group in regard to specific markers of belonging. I will also show both how shame

⁷ Both Auerbach's and Ebner-Eschenbach's texts are under researched. While they do often appear in scholarship that analyzes the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*, there exists little research that focuses on detailed close-readings of the tales. Auerbach's text has been analyzed by Michele Italo Battafarano and Hildegard Eilert in "Auerbachs Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichte 'Der Lauterbacher' (1843): Simplicianisches, Integration der Juden und Bildung demokratischen Bewusstseins" on the topic of Jewishness. As I do not address Jewishness in my work, I will not directly engage with Battafarano's and Eilert's argument. My research did not reveal any scholarly work that engages with Ebner-Eschenbach's text in detail.

contributes to a sense of belonging and how it plays a major role in maintaining or disrupting this sense of belonging.

1.2 *Dorfgeschichte* and Sense of Belonging

In order to analyze *Heimat*, community, and belonging within the genre of the village tale, let us recall my working definition of the *Dorfgeschichte*. As I established in the introduction, I consider the *Dorfgeschichte* to be a fictional narrative that 1) takes place in the village, although contact with the city may occur, but the conflict driving the plot remains bound to the village, its customs, and its inhabitants; 2) is narrated from the village perspective, although the author and/or the narrator is not necessarily a villager him/herself, but s/he is certainly aware of village life and its customs and narrates the story from that particular perspective; and 3) realistically depicts village life as a whole through the representation of village individuals and their interactions with and social standing in the village community.

If we accept this definition, we can immediately draw a connection between the genre and belonging. The above definition requires a village tale to be bound to a particular setting (geographic) and to depict both the members of that community as well as its customs. Thus, the village tale's main concern lies in the relationship of an individual to the social unit as well as to its norms and customs. If there exists a relationship between an individual and a geographic place and/or an individual and particular customs, there must exist a sense of belonging to or not belonging that determines that relationship. Moreover, the requirement that it must be written from the village perspective implies that there exists an "us" vs. "them" which, in turn, suggests that there is a sense of belonging vs. not belonging. Last, if a village tale is defined by a realistic

representation of the whole through the representation of individuals, we may infer that the character must belong to a larger community which he or she represents.

A look at the historical development of the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* will provide us with additional insights into the ways in which it emerged out of a consciousness of belonging. Scholars place the emergence of the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* in the period of the *Vormärz*. In *Dorfgeschichte* (1976), Jürgen Baur points out that already “vor der Achtundvierziger Revolution sprechen Kritiker von einer Dorfgeschichtenmode” (27). However, only after 1842, starting with Auerbach’s *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1843-1854), is the *Dorfgeschichte* seen as its own literary genre. The reason Auerbach is considered to mark the beginning of the genre is controversial. Scholars argue that there is a change in the way in which peasant life is represented which makes the *Dorfgeschichte* a standalone genre and separates it from closely related genres such as *Dorfdichtung*, *Volkserzählung*, *Idylle*, *Heimatsdichtung*, and *Dialektdichtung*, among others (Bennett 106; Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 20; Wilpert 182-83). Other scholars point out that the existence of the German village tale genre was not recognized due the lack of stories explicitly entitled *Dorfgeschichten* and the existence of many synonyms to describe the genre (Baur 29). Before 1842, stories used titles or subtitles such as *Bilder aus dem ... Dorfleben*, *Volksgeschichten*, *Geschichten aus der Heimat*, *Bauerngeschichten*, or simply *Erzählungen aus [name of the village]*. Although these stories were not historically categorized as *Dorfgeschichten*, many scholars argue that they should in fact be seen as the earliest examples of the genre.

If we do in fact consider these early stories as examples of or at least predecessors of the genre, we can immediately draw a connection between the genre and the concept of *Heimat*,

community, and thus, belonging. The titles of these stories themselves already point to specific places and thus geographically bound communities (*Bilder aus dem/der [name of village/region] Dorfleben, Erzählungen aus [name of village]*) as well as to places described as a *Heimat* (*Geschichten aus der Heimat*). Further, other titles point to particular communities that are established according to specific social groups such as *Bauerngeschichten* and *Volksgeschichten*.⁸

Moreover, when one considers the development of the *Dorfgeschichte* at the end of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century, there appears to be a direct link of the genre to *Heimat*. Post-unification, the village tale moves more and more toward “völkisch-nationale[r] Dichtung” or the genre of *Heimatliteratur* (Baur 24). *Heimatliteratur* reflects people’s preoccupation with identity and the definition of what one’s *Heimat* is (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 91-94). The genre of *Heimatliteratur* exhibits many parallels to the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* in regard to the “Thematisierung des Heimatlichen, Regionalen, Provinziellen und Landschaftlichen” (34). In *Der Bauernroman, Antifeudalismus, Konservatismus, Faschismus* (1975), Peter Zimmerman even goes so far as to call the *Dorfgeschichte* the “Kernstück der Heimatliteratur” (qtd. in Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 34).⁹ *Dorfgeschichte* and *Heimatliteratur* share common motifs, and scholars even talk about the “[Dorfgeschichte] innerhalb der Heimatliteratur” (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 36). Important to both genres is the concept of *Heimat*.

As mentioned above, the term *Heimat* is generally understood to designate someone’s birthplace or the place where one has spent a significant amount of time. In *Dorfgeschichte*

⁸ The German term *Volk* can be translated as nation or people in the sense of a community of people or a specific ethnic group of people. It can also refer to a particular tribe as well as the populace of a particular place.

⁹ Similar arguments are brought forward by Peter Mettenleiter in *Destruktion der Heimatliteratur: typologische Untersuchungen zu Gotthelf, Auerbach, Ganghofer* (1974) and Karlheinz Roszbacher in *Programm und Roman der Heimatkunstbewegung* (1974).

(1976), Jürgen Hein points out that the term carries additional connotations. The adjective *heimisch* emphasizes an opposition to the foreign, and the terms *Heimatbewußtsein*, *Heimaterlebnis*, and *Heimweh* are often connected to a sense of national consciousness (34). The key factor in distinguishing *Dorfgeschichte* and *Heimatlidtung* lies in the way in which *Heimat* is defined, approached, and represented. In the context of the *Dorfgeschichte*, the term *Heimat* connotes a “Dasein innerhalb eines überschaubaren, schützenden Bereichs mit gemeinschaftlichen Wertmaßstäben, Gewohnheiten usw. ... Seßhaftigkeit und ‘Heimatrecht’ sind wesentliche Faktoren” (34). The *Dorfgeschichte* treats *Heimat* as a distinct place and represents *that distinct* village, its customs, and the interpersonal relationships among its inhabitants.

Authors of *Dorfgeschichten* have a particular connection to the village they are writing about in their stories. Auerbach describes his relationship to the materials in his stories with a proverb—“Wer nicht hinauskommt, kommt nicht heim” (*Schrift und Volk* 18)—which can be related to many authors of *Dorfgeschichten*, many of whom left their *Heimat*—the village—to live in the city. Auerbach explains that the detour through the city is necessary to creating a consciousness of *Heimat* and allows for the composition of subject matter that is *heimatlich*, “denn die still in sich beruhende Naivität [des Dörfers] hat ihre eigene Welt noch nicht überwunden, sie beherrscht sie nicht ... Erst wenn man sich entäußert, an die Außenwelt hingegeben und verloren, kehrt man bewußten Geistes wieder zur eigenen Welt zurück” (18). The result is a development of *Heimweh*, which prompts them to fulfill “jede persönliche

Beziehung und Erinnerung, die ins Land der Jugend zurückführt” (Alvatar 72) and leads to a representation of the regional milieu.¹⁰

As described above, many characteristics of the *Dorfgeschichte*-genre derive from the idea of *Heimat*, community, and a sense of belonging. To take this idea further, I want to ask how the writing and publishing of these particular stories as a whole expand these concepts. If we look at the most prominent village tales known today, we note that these tales appear in collections and/or cycles. How can we interpret the decision to publish or even write particular village tales as part of others and what does the form of a cycle contribute to questions of community and belonging?

Berthold Auerbach’s, Gottfried Keller’s, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s, and Clara Viebig’s village tales in themselves, I believe, can be seen as forming a “community.” These authors’ tales were each collected and published as cycles.¹¹ Each cycle itself as well as the four cycles in connection to one another form a community. Similarly, the village tale cycles can be

¹⁰ In *Heimatkichtung*, the term *Heimat* is approached and represented with a nostalgic view. As a result of mobilization and the subsequent cessation of spatial and temporal limitations brought about by industrialization, the term *Heimat* receives a new value: “Heimat wird jetzt—insbesondere in der Gegenüberstellung zur ‘Fremde’—ein anerkannter Wert; in der Auseinandersetzung mit fremden Lebensbedingungen entsteht einerseits neue ‘Heimat,’ greift man andererseits passiv und kompensierend auf eine emotional und sentimental aufgeladene Kulissen-‘Heimat’ zurück” (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 35). It is seen as a “romantisierende[r] Rückverweis auf ein erdgebundenes, autarkes Dasein, in dem die alten Werte ungebrochen und und unkompliziert weiterbestehen” (35). *Heimatkichtung* nostalgically thematizes simplicity and focuses on the villages as a “vom Untergang bedrohter Lebensraum des Volkes und des Bauerntums” (36). It often comments on the danger of foreignization due to industrialization and urbanization and offers an escape into a “Scheinwelt mit Heimatliebe, Heimattreue, Erdverbundenheit usw.” (36). The *Heimatliche* is seen as an opposition to reality, almost as something exotic. Thus, contrary to the *Dorfgeschichte*, *Heimatkichtung* is not defined as literature characterized by a regional milieu, but rather as literature that places the value of *Heimat* above any other concept of value. Here it would be fruitful to analyze Clara Viebig’s *Die Kinder der Eifel* (1897), for example. Can Viebig’s collection of stories be considered a last *Dorfgeschichten* cycle or does it in fact mark the beginning of *Heimatkichtung*.

¹¹ Berthold Auerbach’s *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1843-1854) and *Nach dreißig Jahren. Neue Dorfgeschichten* (1876), Gottfried Keller’s *Die Leute von Seldwyla* Vol. 1 and 2 (1856 and 1874), Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s *Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten* (1883) and *Neue Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten* (1886), and Clara Viebig’s *Kinder der Eifel* (1897).

seen as establishing a means, to use Benedict Anderson's words, to "represent the kind of community" (24-25) that is the village.

Each of these village tale cycles presents a collection of tales that not only concentrate on a particular geographic region, but also a distinct community that shares values and norms—a region and a community that the villagers call their *Heimat* and to which they have established a sense of belonging. Moreover, the tales of each cycle are linked temporally which, in turn, allows for a specific communal connection between the tales that is situated in a particular time and space with its distinct norms and values, which themselves are in turn tied to the moment in history in which they are situated. The question to be addressed in more detail is how Auerbach's, Keller's, Ebner-Eschenbach's, and Viebig's cycles, which are each situated differently (geographically and temporally), can be linked to create a "community" of written print and reading culture. Let us have a look at each cycle in order to draw connections in support of the idea that the cycles together form a community of sorts.

Auerbach's *Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1884) is the largest cycle of the four, containing a total of twenty-eight stories. Originally published in four volumes between 1843 and 1854 as *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, the initial cycle was comprised of eighteen tales.¹² His second three-volume cycle *Nach dreißig Jahren. Neue Dorfgeschichten* (1876)

¹² It first appeared in 1843 in one volume that was divided into two parts. Part one contained seven stories ["Der Tolpatsch" (already published separately in 1842), "Die Kriegspfeife," "Des Schloßbauers Vefele" (already published separately in 1843), "Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange," "Befehlerles," "Die feindlichen Brüder," and "Ivo, der Hajrle"]. The second part contained two stories ("Florian und Creszenz" and "Der Lauterbacher"). The additional 3 volumes were published between 1849 and 1854 as follows: Volume two was published in 1849 and contained three stories ["Sträflinge" (written in 1845), "Die Frau Professorin" (written in 1846), and "Luzifer" (written in 1847)]; volume three was published in 1853 and contained two stories ["Die Geschichte des Diethelm von Buchenberg" and "Brosi und Moni" (both written in 1852)]; volume four appeared in 1854 containing four stories ("Der Lehnhold," "Hopfen und Gerste," "Ein eigen Haus," and "Erdmuthe").

contained three tales.¹³ Additionally, Auerbach published another five village tales which all appeared separately between 1852 and 1880.¹⁴ Posthumously, the two initial cycles were combined with the five additional stories and published in a ten-volume edition that we know today as *Auerbach's Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*.

What unites the twenty-eight village tales is first and foremost the geographic region and the time during which they take place. All set in early to mid 1800s Nordstetten, a village in Swabia in the Black Forest Region—a forested mountain range in the state of Baden-Württemberg in southwestern Germany—the stories are temporally and geographically linked and further connected by the reappearance of certain characters in different stories such as the village mayor Buchmaier, who appears in “Befehlerles” (1843) and “Der Lauterbacher” (1843), for example. Moreover, references within the stories such as “der uns wohlbekannt Matthes” and “die uns wohlbekannt Christine” (“Der Lauterbacher,” Vol. 2.: 63 and 117) remind the reader that certain characters are known to us from stories that appeared previously within the cycle. Additional links that connect the villages of the numerous stories show up in various ways. Repetition of the name Tolpatsch in the titles “Der Tolpatsch” (1842) and “Der Tolpatsch aus Amerika” (1876), for example, connect Auerbach’s earliest village tale and first story in the initial volume of *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* with one of Auerbach’s last tales that first appeared in *Dreißig Jahre danach*. Moreover, stories are connected through the generations. In “Des Lorles Reinhard” (1876), the continuation of “Die Frau Professorin” (1846), for example, we meet Reinhard, who is the son of the Tolpatsch. Furthermore, the village communities

¹³ *Nach dreißig Jahren. Neue Dorfgeschichten* was published in 3 volumes each containing one story (volume one with “Das Dorf an der Eisenbahn,” volume two with “Der Tolpatsch aus Amerika,” and volume three with “Das Nest an der Bahn”).

¹⁴ “Die viereckige oder die amerikanische Kiste” (1852), *Barfüssele* (1856), *Edelweiss* (1861), *Joseph im Schnee* (1861), *Brigitta* (1880), “Des Lorles Reinhard” (1876) and “Der Geigerlex” (1863).

constructed in the stories share similar values, norms, standards, and village practices and customs. One such village practice that binds the stories together is the village dialect.

Auerbach's stories repeatedly include dialogues in dialect, and when we compare these dialogues across various stories, it becomes clear that we are dealing with a particular dialect that is tied to this distinct village community that is represented throughout the tales. Certain expressions that are specific to the local dialect are time and again found across the various tales. These overlapping and interlocking connections between the various individual communities presented in each story create a community that shares communal markers beyond mere geographic borders.

Keller's village tale cycle *Die Leute von Seldwyla* originally appeared in 1856 in one volume that comprised five stories.¹⁵ An extended two-part volume was published in 1874, which contained the original five stories in part one and an additional five stories in part two.¹⁶ The cycle encompasses ten tales that are bound by the fictional small Swiss city Seldwyla. Although not all tales take place directly in Seldwyla—some tales' main settings lie in the surrounding rural areas—all ten tales connect to Seldwyla in one way or another and are thus geographically linked. Keller's working title for the cycle, "Lebensbilder," expresses how each tale depicts a particular image of life, the life of the communities in and around Seldwyla. Keller's description of Seldwyla and its inhabitants in the introduction of the first cycle provides us with additional information about how these stories are connected to one another:

¹⁵ "Pankraz und der Schmoller," "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe," "Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster," "Die drei gerechten Kammacher," and "Spiegel, das Kätzchen."

¹⁶ "Kleider machen Leute," "Der Schmied seines Glückes," "Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe," "Dietegen," and "Das verlorene Lachen."

Seldwyla bedeutet nach der älteren Sprache einen wonnigen und sonnigen Ort, und so ist auch in der Tat die kleine Stadt dieses Namens gelegen irgendwo in der Schweiz. Sie steckt noch in den gleichen alten Ringmauern und Türmen wie vor dreihundert Jahren und ist also immer das gleiche Nest; die ursprüngliche tiefe Absicht dieser Anlage wird durch den Umstand erhärtet, daß die Gründer der Stadt dieselbe eine gute halbe Stunde von einem schiffbaren Flusse angepflanzt, zum deutlichen Zeichen, daß nichts daraus werden solle. Aber schön ist sie gelegen, mitten in grünen Bergen, die nach der Mittagsseite zu offen sind, so daß wohl die Sonne herein kann, aber kein rauhes Lüftchen. Deswegen gedeiht auch ein ziemlich guter Wein rings um die alte Stadtmauer, während höher hinauf an den Bergen unabsehbare Waldungen sich hinziehen, welche das Vermögen der Stadt ausmachen; denn dies ist das Wahrzeichen und sonderbare Schicksal derselben, daß die Gemeinde reich ist und die Bürgerschaft arm, und zwar so, daß kein Mensch zu Seldwyla etwas hat und niemand weiß, wovon sie seit Jahrhunderten eigentlich leben. (Keller, *Die Leute von Seldwyla* Vol.1: 1)

In this characterization, Keller points out that the stories, although each of them can stand alone, concern one large community, the community of Seldwyla, that is communally rich, but whose citizenry is poor. Thus, although the stories do not present reoccurring characters and are not connected through generations, the tales do allow for connections to be made. On the plot level, for example, we can observe repetitive themes. “Pankraz, der Schmoller” (1856) and “Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster” (1856) for example, thematize how men leave Sedwyla to explore the world, yet eventually do return. A number of the tales describe failed love relationships in connection to greed, and two of the tales, “Spiegel, das Kätzchen” (1856) and “Dietegen” (1874), are set in the Middle Ages.

Ebner-Eschenbach’s first cycle, *Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten*, (1883) contains five stories¹⁷ and her second cycle, *Neue Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten*, (1886) includes three additional tales.¹⁸ Two additional tales were added to later editions of the cycles bringing Ebner-

¹⁷ “Der Kreisphysikus,” “Jacob Szela,” “Krambambuli,” “Die Resel,” and “Die Poesie des Unbewußten.”

¹⁸ “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe,” “Er laßt die Hand küssen,” and “Der gute Mond.”

Eschenbach's cycles to a total of ten stories.¹⁹ Like Auerbach and Keller's cycles, Ebner-Eschenbach's stories are bound geographically; they are all situated in Moravia, a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Ebner-Eschenbach's cycles are, however, not solely concentrated on village life per se. As the titles reveal, the two cycles offer a mix of village and/or peasant stories and stories that depict the aristocracy. The combination of stories about the peasantry and the aristocracy provides an important insight into peasant life. Ebner-Eschenbach allows for the clash of cultures to be actually depicted by bringing together village life and that of the aristocracy. In many of her tales, village and castle are bordering and interactions between peasants and people of the aristocracy stand opposite to what many early village tales have thematized: the complete separation of village and any upper-social class such as the bourgeoisie or the aristocracy. These village tales bring together village and aristocracy and allow us to experience how modernization has not only prompted but also influenced the amalgamation of these two cultures.

Last, Viebig's *Kinder der Eifel* (1897) is the first of many collection of stories Viebig wrote over thirty years.²⁰ It includes seven stories that are all bound geographically.²¹ Situated in the Eifel, a mountain range in western Germany and eastern Belgium, her stories paint a picture of the people that live and make up this local region—peasants, farm hands, the forester, the pastor, the children, and the elderly. Presenting this array of people, Viebig demonstrates that they each play their own part within this particular community. The title of the cycle nicely

¹⁹ Added were "Das Gemeindegeld" (1887) and "Oversberg" (1892).

²⁰ Besides *Kinder der Eifel*, Viebig's collections of stories include *Vor Tau und Tag* (1898), *Die Rosenkranzjungfer* (1900), *Naturgewalten* (1905), *Die heilige Einfalt* (1910), *Heimat* (1914), *West und Ost* (1920), and *Menschen und Straßen* (1923). For the purposes of this work and due to the timeframe considered in this dissertation, I will be only discussing her first cycle *Kinder der Eifel*.

²¹ "Simson und Delila," "Am Totenmaar," "Der Osterquell," "Die Schuldige," "Das Miseräbelchen," "Die Zigarrenarbeiterin," and "Margrets Wallfahrt."

summarizes her intention to present a community with these stories rather than seven unconnected tales. *Kinder der Eifel* can be read in multiple ways. For one, the title stands for the entire collection of stories and is not the title of any of the stories. By emphasizing the collective “Kinder,” Viebig indicates that all of her stories belong together; no story is more important than another. The genitive construction of “Kinder der” indicates their belonging. One could even go so far as to read the Eifel as “the mother” whose children we are meeting in these stories. These children are a piece of the community; they were “given birth to,” were nurtured, and shaped by it. Thus, just like Auerbach’s stories, Viebig’s stories are implicitly connected through generations. *Kinder der Eifel*, again similar to Auerbach’s village tales, also introduces the reader to a specific local dialect, the *Moseldialekt*, which is maintained throughout the tales and establishes an overarching local community across the characters we encounter throughout Viebig’s stories.

Another aspect that demonstrates that the stories within each cycle can be viewed as a “community,” becomes visible in Franco Moretti’s mappings of village tales. In *Graphs, Maps, Trees. Abstract Models for Literary History* (2005), Moretti argues that all village stories “arrange themselves in a little solar system” (36) and have “a circular pattern” (39). Thus, the “narrative space is not linear here, it is *circular*” (37, emphasis in original). Moretti goes on to explain why this circular pattern is important and what effect it has: “a circle is a simple, ‘natural’ form, which maximizes the proximity of each point to the centre of the ‘little world,’ while simultaneously sealing it off from the vast universe that lies outside its parameters” (44). In this sense, the circular pattern creates particular borders within which lies a particular

community (the “little world” or the village) and outside of which lie bordering communities (“the vast universe”).

In his mapping of Auerbach’s village tale cycle including the stories written between 1843 and 1853, Moretti concludes that the map reveals that “three spaces interact and compete for attention. The first is composed by Nordstetten and the other Black Forest villages, and its features should by now be familiar; narrow geographic range, daily needs, basic services—all contained within the same circular pattern” (Moretti 49). Moretti’s conclusion reveals that the community created within the circular pattern is not merely based on geographic borders but includes regional customs and practices. Moreover, the circular pattern extends beyond the village itself and encompasses a particular region. Drawing on Ian Duncan, Moretti points out that the region is a place of its own with its own identity (52). It is not merely the province viewed from the city. Moretti continues asking how this circular pattern comes into being as he sees it as “too orderly a space to be a product of chance” (56). He concludes that the circular pattern is “[s]haped from without, as well as from within” (57). A community is an enclosed space, defined from within and without.

As my examples show, the stories within each cycle are connected both by their shared geographic setting and also by the reappearance of and/or relationships between characters, particular norms, practices, and customs, and specific standards of life—be it agricultural standards of the village shared among the stories due to the specifics of the geographic area and/or shared beliefs that are established on the basis of religion and/or village traditions, among others. Furthermore, the stories all express aspects of belonging to not only the particular village,

but to the region and even to other village communities in Germany. In this sense, one can look at each cycle as creating a form of “community” that goes beyond each individual story.

If we can consider each cycle as a form of “community,” both in its content as well as its form, the question remains if and if so how we can establish a connection between the cycles and possibly view them as an extended “community.” Upon a closer look at the cycles, we can determine various connections between them both in form and content. These links reveal a sort of community building and put the various cycles in conversation with one another.

One connection derives from the materials that are said to have influenced the writing of these *Dorfgeschichten*-authors. Prior to the change in the peasants’ social status at the beginning of the eighteenth century,²² peasant epic depicted peasant life in contrast to city life and engaged in mockery of peasants. As Alvatar explains, these early peasant epics involve “Kontrastwirkung, burleske und groteske Effekte ... Tendenzkomik und Freude an der bäuerlichen Einfalt überwiegen, Raufereien und wüste Zechgelage werden zum Hauptgegenstand der Darstellung, Dörper und Tölpel fast identische Begriffe” (33). Similarly, Hein points out that the peasant epic was presented as entertainment for the court: “Der herrschenden Welt wurde in der Literatur als Kontrast zu Kultur und Bildung der bäuerliche Mensch als Schwankfigur und Spottfigur präsentiert ... Sie [die bäuerliche Figur] diente der höfischen Unterhaltung” (Hein,

²² Overall, the agrarian reforms resulted in economic improvements for the peasants by the late eighteenth century (Abel 193). However, the social status of the peasants remained more or less the same across Germany and Austria (Baur 52). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, agricultural associations were founded to support the general promotion of peasants’ life and social status. The October Edict in 1807 was one of the first emancipatory measures for the peasants that “dismantled barriers to the ownership and free disposability of property” (Blackbourn 83). In 1810, “[m]it dem Martinitage ... hört alle Gutsuntertänigkeit in [den] fürstlichen Staaten auf” (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 57). These events not only brought economic and political changes to Germany, but also changed the structure of the state fundamentally. “An die Stelle der feudalen Gesellschaft und des feudalen Staates tritt die bürgerliche Gesellschaft und der bürgerlich-bürokratische Staat” (Nipperdey 7). By 1848, the peasant, who until then had no political power, finally free of feudal obligation to the lord, is liberated from his “Jahrhunderte währenden Unmündigkeit” (Baur 54) and, for the first time, occupies a respected social status within society at large (Baur 31, 54; Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 57).

Dorfgeschichte 50).²³ *Dorfgeschichten* that emerge in the *Vormärz*, however, present a changed image of the peasant. They express the fact that “einfache Lebensverhältnisse der dichterischen Gestaltung fähig sind” (Alvatar 37). Peasants are now represented as “Vertreter des niederen Volkes, als einfacher Mann” (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 51). Besides representing the peasant as part of society, village tales started to take on pedagogical tones in the hopes of bettering peasant life by educating the peasants in economic matters.

Pedagogue and author Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi had a big influence on the pedagogical aims of early village tale authors such as Jeremias Gotthelf and Heinrich Zschokke (Alvatar 15).²⁴ Pestalozzi supported educating the folk in order to strengthen their ability to function independently and cooperatively in a democratic community:

Es ist unstreitig, eine solche Anbahnung der Volksbildung würde dahin wirken können, die Kräfte des häuslichen Lebens zur sittlichen, geistigen und Kunstbildung des Volks zu stärken und die Väter und Mütter des Landes fähiger zu machen, ihren Kindern vom Morgen bis am Abend mit Rat und Tat wirklich beizustehen und in ihrem Tun und Lassen einen wahrhaft bildenden Einfluss auf sie haben. [...] Sie würde die Kraft des Volks, seine Anlagen im Kreis der Seinigen zu gebrauchen und sich im Kreis der Seinigen in allen Bedürfnissen selber und selbstständig helfen zu können, im Volk allgemein beleben und millionenfach erhöhen. (260-61)

Pestalozzi’s *Lienhard und Gertrud* (1781-1787) is often considered the model for early village tales. The four-volume novel centers on the impoverished and morally corrupt village Bonnal. The cause of the village’s misfortune is Hummel, the corrupt bailiff and owner of the tavern, who tempts the villagers to accrue debts. Pestalozzi outlines how the corruption and self-interest of those in power leads to the economic and moral deterioration of the entire community. Over the

²³ Such as peasant representations by Naidhart von Reuental, Heinrich Wittenwiler, Hans Sachs, Sebastian Brant, and Thomas Murner. The most famous example of court entertainment through peasant mockery is probably “Till Eulenspiegel” (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 50-1).

²⁴ Alvatar also points out that Pestalozzi contributed to the emergence of the village tale as the first author who considered the village as a whole in his writings (15).

course of the novel, Pestalozzi demonstrates how communal efforts and education lead to an economic and moral revival of the village. With his novel, Pestalozzi wants “dem Volk einige ihm wichtige Wahrheiten auf eine Art sagen, die ihm in den Kopf und ans Herz gehen sollte” (3), stressing not only that he attempts to reveal certain truths, but also the importance of education both of the mind and the heart.

One prominent example of an early village tale that demonstrates a “bürgerlich-progressive[] Bauerndarstellung” (Zimmermann, qtd. in Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 61) with educational aims, is Zschokke’s *Das Goldmachedorf* (1817), which in later editions was published with the subtitle “Eine anmutige und wahrhafte Geschichte für Schule und Haus.” In the introduction to the 1973 edition,²⁵ Kurt-Ingo Flessau describes Zschokke’s success, “Wissen und Einsichten volkstümlich zu vermitteln, seine Leser angenehm, nicht selten auch rührselig zu unterhalten, auf ihr Gemüt und ihr Empfinden einzuwirken und sie dabei gelegentlich mit großen Gedanken bekanntzumachen” (7). Zschokke himself viewed his *Goldmachedorf* as an educational story: “Das Goldmachedorf schrieb ich eben, um die Ideen von besseren Schulen, Güterarrondierungen usw. unter unsere Landsleute zu bringen; alle übrige Erzählung ist nur Zucker darauf, um die Bauern zum Lesen zu locken” (qtd. in Baur 187, Hein, *Dorgeschichte* 54).

²⁵ Published under the title: *Das Goldmachedorf. Eine anmutige und wahrhafte Geschichte vom aufrichtigen und wohlverfahrenen Schweizerboten.*

Telling the story of the village Goldenthal, Zschokke builds on Pestalozzi's *Lienhard und Gertrud* and takes on many of Pestalozzi's pedagogical ideals (Alvatar 15).²⁶

Another early village tale that builds on Pestalozzi's *Lienhard und Gertrud* and supports Pestalozzi's pedagogical methods is Gotthelf's *Der Bauern-Spiegel oder Lebensgeschichte des Jeremias Gotthelf, von ihm selbst beschrieben* (1837).^{27,28} Both Gotthelf and Zschokke name Pestalozzi's *Lienhard und Gertrud* as an inspiration for their *Bauernspiegel* and *Das Goldmachedorf*, respectively (Baur 76). Like Zschokke, Gotthelf also pointed to his pedagogical goals. In the afterword of *Bauernspiegel* he notes that he wants to "bessern" and "zur Nachahmung reizen" (430). Additionally, Gotthelf stated that he wrote "fürs grobe Volk" (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 75) and saw himself as a "Volksschriftsteller" who "like Pestalozzi and Zschokke wrote for the betterment and instruction of the lower classes" (Donovan 122). These didactic tendencies are common in the early village tales which aim to educate the peasant

²⁶ After seventeen years abroad as a soldier in the Napoleonic Wars, Oswald, full of new ideas spawned by the French Revolution and capitalist industrialism, returns to his hometown Goldenthal. The war has taken its toll on the economically impoverished village: "Unser Dorf hat vom Kriege viel gelitten ... Es lagerten sich fremde Truppen bei uns und verzehrten unsere Vorräte ... wir mussten der Obrigkeit Zins und Steuer zahlen" (Zschokke 246). A believer in Enlightenment theory, Oswald sees the way to prosperity in the establishment of new household and civic management techniques such as accurate accounting and land management including new agricultural methods. Moreover, he proposes more radical ideas such as equalizing wealth, progressive taxation, and communal household labor. However, his ideas are initially met with skepticism and resistance. "Wenn er guten Rat geben wollte, oder wenn er die Unhäuslichkeit und Unordnung tadelte, so bekam er nurrische Gesichter zum Dank" (243), and the villagers even tell him to mind his own business: "Steck du die Nase in deinen eigenen Dreck" (243). Oswald sees the problem in that "die einen ... haben zu viel Land, die anderen gar keines" (250). In reaction to his proposal of leasing out the common grazing area to be used by the poor, Oswald is called "ein Franzose, ein Neuerer, ein Jakobiner, ein Bonapartist" (316), but he persists in his efforts. Eventually, the villagers come around and start supporting Oswald. Asked if he knows how to make gold, Oswald takes the opportunity to present capitalist financial methods teaching the peasants how to manage their debts, collect interest, and refinance it—in other words, how to "make gold." "Wenn ... die Zinsen einkamen, that er sie wieder als ein kleines Kapital aus, dass die Zinsen wieder Zinsen eintragen müssten" (286). Capitalism turns the village into the "Goldmacher-Dorf." Throughout Zschokke's text, the reader is repeatedly advised by didactic and doctrinal proverbs: "Ehrlichkeit wehrt am längsten; Gottesfurcht macht reich. In Gottes Wegen ist Gottes Segen" (66).

²⁷ Albert Bitzius adapted the pseudonym Jeremias Gotthelf from the main character of his *Bauernspiegel*.

²⁸ In this work, the first-person narrator describes the losses and failures he suffers both as a struggling farmer and as a man, ultimately finding salvation and success by becoming a Christian and a writer.

not to be corrupted by greed, self-interest, and loose morals. Zschokke's and Gotthelf's adaptation of Pestalozzi's pedagogy can be seen in many village tales.

The contents of various stories within the different cycles also allow us to link them together as one larger literary-intellectual community. The idea of such a community is central to Moretti's work on distant reading, in which he has discussed how genre, plot, and other aspects of literature can be explored in a different way. By creating maps of various stories across centuries, Moretti places the texts into a network that reveals connections that might go unnoticed when engaging in close readings of one individual text. Recalling Moretti's claim, the various village tales in the four cycles create a network that allows us not only to make connections among the stories, but also reveal how these connections are important to the development of the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* as a whole.

As my analysis later in this chapter will point out, in Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher," for example, a reference to Zschokke's "Das Goldmacherdorf"—one of the earliest stories to be called *Dorfgeschichte*—establishes the connection of "Der Lauterbacher" to the genre of the village tale as a whole. Auerbach's protagonist reads the story to peasants, and the ensuing discussion of the story comments on the historical development of the genre. Another aspect that establishes connections between the cycles are reoccurring plots. As we will see in this chapter and in chapter three, the second part of Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Unverständene auf dem Dorfe" (1886) and Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher" (1843) and Viebig's "Die Schuldige" (1897) and Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Totenwacht" (1894), for example, are very similar in their plot and even present almost identical scenes.

We may also want to consider the cycles as an object—that is, the form of the book itself. Each story in the cycle is bound to specific “borders”: a particular number of pages, a title that indicates the beginning, and some sort of symbol that marks the end of the story.²⁹ If we consider each story separately, we can look at these indicators as boundaries that structure not only the story itself, but also the community presented to us within the story. Each story—or in fact each community—is placed next to another and (unless the first or last) framed by two other communities. While each community is clearly marked separately, the material book also brings them together as one larger “community.” The totality of communities is bound by one large “border”—the book cover. Thus, book publication “materializes” community and makes the collection visible as belonging together as if in a community. Additionally, each cycle brings the communities together by listing them on one page in the table of contents. Here, the order in which the stories are organized builds a community. Although the stories each have their own beginning and ending, there are overlaps that are created by the order in which they appear. The order builds a community by adding new characters to those we have already met in previous stories. Reoccurring characters are aging and generational connections between characters create a continuum across the stories. Through the table of contents, the cycles introduce us to the larger community first and then, with each individual tale, allow us to take a look at the smaller communities within.

The title of each cycle combines the various stories into one large village. Although all of Auerbach’s and Ebner-Eschenbach’s stories, for example, have their own title, they all also bear

²⁹ In the editions I am consulting, the cycles mark the end of the stories by a line (Auerbach, Keller, Ebner-Eschenbach) or stars (Viebig) that appear below the last sentence. Other editions of Auerbach’s cycle use some sort of flourish. Although this is a standard practice and not particular to the village tale cycles or any of the authors, these signs allow for an interpretation of the book as an object that forms a sort of community in itself.

the title *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichte* and *Dorf- and Schloßgeschichten*, respectively, and thus are part of the complex community named in the respective titles. Similarly, Keller's stories are all bound together under the title *Die Leute von Seldwyla*, thus indicating that all the stories, although each its own, present people from this particular geographic region and its community. By grouping all the characters as people from Seldwyla, Keller stresses that all the individuals in the stories are connected. As already mentioned above, Viebig's title *Kinder der Eifel* engenders a motherly feeling. When considering the metaphorical idea of the book, one could certainly understand the author to be the mother since, in this case, Viebig is the creator of the stories and gives birth to them through the process of writing. One could go even further and consider the book as the material object metaphorically as the womb that houses the individual stories (the children). In this sense, all the stories understood as children are related to each other and the "mother"-like source of origin of either the author or the book. In this vein, although the stories each have their own borders that mark off their distinct communities, they are connected to the other stories through their arrangement within the larger community—the book itself.

Further, the cycles additionally establish another "community"—or more exact an "imagined community"—namely the community of the cycles' readership. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson asserts that any sort of community can be classified as an "imagined community," which he defines as a community whose individual members will never know or hear of the entirety of its members. However, each individual has a sense that these others exist and is willing to adhere to the set standards of that particular community (5-6). Thus, a community becomes "imagined" when there are no geographical boundaries for members of this community. However, each

“imagined community” is also limited as it has “finite, if elastic, boundaries beyond which lie other nations” (Anderson 7).³⁰ As I will show, the readership of village tales can be viewed in Anderson’s terms of “imagined community.”

Village tales were not only written by authors who belonged largely to the bourgeoisie but also were likely not meant to be read by the types of people portrayed in the works (i.e., peasants), but by middle-class readers who are more likely to live in cities. Peasants were not reading or, more importantly, could not read the stories, as the literacy rates among the rural population were still very low. “Zum einen bestand das Zielpublikum oft aus Analphabeten, zum anderen richteten sich viele Bücher an ein mehr oder weniger ‘gebildetes’ (Stadt)Publikum” (Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 55). Hein distinguishes here between two types of village tales that were written for two different audiences. On the one hand, the early village stories (late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century tales) that carried pedagogical undertones were most likely meant to be read to peasants for educational purposes. However, many peasants lacked the financial means to acquire such books and due to their heavy workdays, the very small number of literate peasants did not have the time to engage in reading (Alvatar 103, Hein, *Dorfgeschichte* 55).

Keller notes,

auf dem Büchertischen am Jahrmarkt, wo der ‘Eulenspiegel’ und der ‘Gehörnte Sigfried’, der ‘Trenk’ und das Kochbuch liegen, [solche] Volksschriften leider nicht zu finden [sind] ... [D]ie wohlfeilste Ausgabe von Pestalozzis Lienhard und Gertrud [kostet über einen halben Gulden, und die zwei Bände ‘Uli’ beträgt sogar] bainahe vier Gulden ... [Man kann sich denken, wie lange es dauert] bis ein Bauer für ein Buch das nicht die Bibel ist, vier Gulden dispensibel hat.”
(*Sämtliche Werke* 137)

³⁰ It needs to be acknowledged that Anderson discusses imagined communities in the context of “imagined nations” and the formation of nationalism. However, as I will show, his concept of imagined communities can be applied to the community of the readership of these village tales.

On the other hand, later village tales (mid- to late-nineteenth century) were distinguished from earlier stories in regard to their literary representations. These tales were actually considered to be works of art and had a different target audience, the educated reader, in mind. However, due to the lack of literacy and financial means of the peasants, even those stories who were initially written with peasants as their target audience were rarely actually read by peasants. The majority of the readership of the *Dorfgeschichte* is the educated middle class reader. Thus, it seems plausible to say that there exist two communities: the community presented in the village tales and the community of readers and writers that in fact engages with this representation. We are then again presented with a distinction between “we” and “they,” whereby the assignment of these pronouns changes depending on the perspective one considers.

When considering the particular four cycles mentioned above, this analysis of the community of the readers becomes particularly interesting. Auerbach’s, Keller’s, Ebner-Eschenbach’s, and Viebig’s cycles emerge from three different German speaking countries. Thus, on the one hand, we have three distinctive literary reading communities: German, Austrian, and Swiss. On a broader scale, however, these four cycles form a transnational literary reading community.

Considering that the development of the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*, each village tale on its own as well as in connection with one another, the cycles in their content and form, as well as the readership of the tales constitute particular communities, it becomes clear that the genre, the cycles, and each individual village tale establish a sense of “we” and “they.” Once this kind of perspective is present, there can be no doubt that belonging matters. As mentioned above, particular aspects such as customs, familial bonds, and village institutions determine belonging.

As I will show below, shame and shaming are central to establishing and maintaining the markers of belonging, since shame and shaming come about once these markers are violated.

1.3 *Dorfgeschichte*, Belonging, and Shame

How is the sense of belonging central to the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* as a whole including its readership and to each village tale as a standalone story connected to feelings of shame? As I will demonstrate, the genre and its explicit connection to belonging create a forum in which the engagement with shame becomes not only possible, but even necessary.

Modernization plays a key role in the changes that we can observe over time in the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*. Starting in 1800 and continuing until the mid-nineteenth-century, the population increased as never before. In Germany, agricultural population increased from 17 to 22 million and the urban population increased from 7.5 to 34 million (Baur 53). The rapid population growth, which occurred simultaneously with the change from an agrarian state to an industrial state, resulted in fundamental changes in the economic structure of the German territories. The demand for food products increased immensely leading to an “ungleich höheren Bedarf an Nahrungsmitteln, da der Anteil der Selbstversorgung aus eigener Produktion abnahm” (53). The population growth and the changes in agricultural demands resulted in widespread pauperism, especially in regions where industrialization had developed the furthest. Peasants started leaving the villages—the so-called *Landflucht*—in order to work in industrial cities to provide for their families (54-55). These developments wrought changes in the relationship between city and village. As Alvtar outlines,

Mit dem Bau der Eisenbahnen, mit dem mächtigen Fortschreiten der Industrialisierung in den Städten, mit der Ausbreitung des Unternehmertums und der Fremdenindustrie: mit dem Aufkommen all dieser ausgleichenden Elemente, welche Stadt und Land in nächste Nähe aneinanderrückten, beginnt man das Dorf als ‘untergehende Welt’ zu empfinden und entdeckt es gleichsam in letzter Stunde für die Literatur ... So wird der Bauer plötzlich zum Kunstobjekt, zum Gegenstand belletristischer Behandlung. (Alvatar 46)

Alvatar points out that industrialization not only brought city and village together, but the very decline of the village also sparked a new interest in the representation of village life in literature. Pre-unification village tales are thus preoccupied with how the village and village-life are affected by industrialization.

In addition to the economic changes brought about by industrialization, Germany’s political situation also affected the development of the village tale. While pre-unification village tales remained overall conservative, they also became expressions of a nationalist movement. Stories entail narrations of nation and nationhood, commentaries on France, and expressions of nationalist ideas and ideals mirroring the historical and political situation of the time.

One important event that influenced both the unification of Germany and the village tale is the coming to power of Otto von Bismarck (1815-1896) as the minister president of Prussia in 1862 and his pursuit of *Realpolitik* on behalf of Prussian hegemony. *Realpolitik* is based on power, and practical and material forces or factors and is less interested in morals and ethics. In 1866, he won the battle of Königsgrätz against Austria as the decisive battle of the Austro-Prussian War. Austria’s defeat foreclosed the possibility of a *großdeutsches* unified empire, and brought about the *kleindeutsche Lösung*—a unified Germany without Austria (Blackbourn 243). Additionally, the fights about the territory of the *Ruhrgebiet* and the resulting tensions between France and Prussia manipulated by Bismarck culminated in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870/71.

Prussia defeated France, and on January 18th, 1871 Wilhelm I, Emperor of Prussia, proclaimed the German Empire in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles (Blackbourn 244).

How then were the village tales of the post-unification period influenced by the historic, social, and economic changes of the time? In *Imperial Culture in Germany, 1871-1918* (2003), Matthew Jefferies points out that “the Reichsgründung is often viewed as the beginning of German unification, rather than its climax” (12). He explains that, although politically unified, Imperial Germany remained divided by its history, religion, and custom, which resulted in a “heterogeneous, fractious society” (12). Although Imperial Germany now offered the “institutional framework ... for constructing a notionally stable national identity” (12), the political structure and the divides that existed throughout the Empire—the regional divide, the confessional divide, the gender divide, and the urban-rural divide—contributed to “an array of multiple identities ... that would make that process [formation of national identity] very much more difficult” (12). These divisions informed the contemporary preoccupation with questions of identity.

This political and historical situation is reflected in the ways in which the genre of the village tale evolves towards the end of the nineteenth century. Post-unification *Dorfgeschichten* no longer thematize modernization as a threat. Many stories in fact start embracing it as a whole and view it as advancement of the possibility of individual mobility. However, what becomes a central issue in these stories is the ways in which modern times threaten the peasants’/villagers’ local identity.

It becomes obvious that both pre- and post-unification village tales are concerned with peasant life and peasant identity. While pre-unification tales are concerned with how

modernization per se influences peasants' lives, in particular on an economic level, post-unification tales are concerned with how modernization affects peasant identity. Ultimately, both pre- and post-unification tales take up the changes in modern life. The challenge for village communities as a whole as well as individuals within these communities becomes the maintaining of village identity despite the changes brought forth by modernization.

As we will see, maintaining these particular communities depends on developing a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging, in turn, is often tied to an emotional connection or the lack thereof. As I will show, shame (or the absence of it) as a subjective emotion reveals not only the morals and norms of a particular community, but also foregrounds an individual's standing with regard to these standards. Thus, because shame uncovers social conventions, it serves as a fruitful tool to investigate how norms and morals are connected to the development, the maintenance, and even the rejection of belonging and in turn the securing or loss of identity.

1.4 Language as a Key Marker of Belonging

Although, as discussed above and as my close readings will show, there are many factors that contribute to a sense of (not) belonging, language appears to be the key marker of belonging particularly in distinguishing rural and urban belonging. The question arises why and how language serves as a key marker of belonging and, in specifically, how it foregrounds social norms of the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, language establishes a sense of belonging to a particular nation, region, or community. One communicates with others through a shared language, be it a certain native tongue, dialect, or slang, among others, employing a vocabulary specific to the language community. The cultural context in which a given language is spoken

constitutes an important aspect of communication: “When cultural contexts are different, the use of the same language does not necessarily lead to easy communication” (Craith 127). Thus, while language transmits meaning through words, the specific meaning of these words is determined within a particular culture. This communal understanding of meanings, moreover, creates an idea of “we” vs. “them,” i.e., the “Other.” Language inevitably supports a sense of (not) belonging that emerges, is maintained, judged, and even rejected based solely on one’s language patterns.

While a native tongue may establish a sense of belonging to a broad region (i.e., a country), a shared dialect operates on a smaller scale and signals a more localized communal association. Those who speak dialect belong in two ways: to the larger language community and to the regional dialect community. Those who do not speak the dialect only belong to the former and are excluded from the latter. While non-dialect speakers might have trouble fully comprehending a specific dialect, dialect speakers generally do not have difficulties in understanding the standard form of the language as education insofar as it is based in literacy generally takes place in the standard, written language. Dialects can thus establish or thwart a sense of belonging for individuals who are already affiliated within a particular broader language community.

In the nineteenth century in particular, the focus on language and the opposition of standard German to regional dialects comment on middle-class belonging and social mobility or stagnation. Scholars such as Wolfgang Kaschuba and Angelika Linke have addressed how language in its broadest sense contributes to *Bürgerlichkeit* or a sense of bourgeois belonging. Ultimately, middle-class belonging was marked by a particular education, which, in turn, was

closely linked to cultural norms. In fact, discussing nineteenth-century understanding of *Bürgerlichkeit*, Kaschuba describes how the term

no longer signified simply legal status, but developed into a complex concept referring to social status, a concept based on a variety of different criteria ranging from property to career, and from taste to education in such a way that all of these qualities had to come together in an appropriate expression of bourgeois culture and lifestyle. (393)

Both Kaschuba and Linke point to bourgeois *Bildung* as the main contributing aspect of middle-class belonging. One important feature of this education was the instruction in proper expression, or language. Linke points out, “[b]ürgerliche Spracherziehung zeichnet sich also durch eine spezifische Emotionalisierung sprachlicher Leistungen und sprachliches Verhaltens aus und führt dazu, dass bereits in der vorschulischen Sozialisation der Bürgerkinder gruppenspezifische und soziolinguistisch relevante sprachliche Einstellungen ausgebildet werden” (313). Furthermore, Linke claims, “bewusste Sprachbeherrschung—auch die Beherrschung der Schrift—[wird] als ein in die Privatsphäre eingebundenes Kulturgut erlebt” (315). Thus, language not only plays a role in education, but also moves into the personal and situates the individual in the larger bourgeois culture.

If proper speech is seen as one of the main factors that determine belonging to the middle class, it also regulates how other forms of expression such as dialect fall outside of this social structure. Dialect then not only indicates the speakers’ educational background and socio-economic status, but also suggests a different set of cultural norms that shape the person and his/her community. In this sense, language is not merely a means of communication, but one that can be seen as a key marker of belonging as it reflects on personal and social identity.

Language and forms of expression in general, in particular dialect, are repeatedly thematized in village tales of the nineteenth century. Not only do many characters appearing in the stories speak dialect, aspects of dialect are also often specifically addressed and often used to comment on cultural clashes among characters in the stories. Auerbach's "Befehlerles," for example, addresses the effects of the Austrian Empire on the region of the Black Forest and deals with the clash between local customs and practices and the regulations of the Austrian authorities. The protagonist Matthes is arrested for setting up a maypole in front of his fiancée Aivle's house, which is "streng verboten" and considered a "Waldfrevel" (Vol. 2: 88). The Austrian officer who arrests Matthes is eager to please the "österreichische Herrschaft" and "in seiner Dienstbeflissenheit glaubte er auch den österreichischen Dialekt sprechen zu müssen" (89). Throughout Matthes' trial, the conflict of dialects reflects the culture clash. During the hearings, Matthes is addressed with the informal "du" and the officer "schimpfte ihn auf Hochdeutsch ebenso, wie gestern der Schultheiss auf Bauerndeutsch" (91). Matthes denies his guilt, but is nevertheless imprisoned. Aivle is brought before the judge to testify and is tricked into incriminating him. While the court proceedings are held in *Hochdeutsch*, she gives her account in local dialect. Her testimony is "in hochdeutsche Sprache übersetzt und in zusammenhängende Rede gebracht" whereby all her "Weinen und ... Qualen" are removed for the written record (95). When her testimony is read to her, she is surprised by what she has said. Thus, this story uses language, in particular dialect, to comment on intersections between the urban and the rural and how language contributes to questioning village customs and its counterparts.

Moreover, in these village tales, dialect serves immediately to indicate the locale of the story, where a particular character comes from, or who does not belong to a certain community. In Viebig's "Die Schuldige," for example, dialect serves as a way to identify the local peasant woman Barbara Holtzer, who has disappeared from the village: "[S]ie öffnete den Mund, sie sprach, unverfälscht kam der Moseldialekt über ihre Lippen ... Da schien wohl kein Zweifel, das junge Weib ... war die verschwundene Barbara Holtzer" (130, 132).³¹ In this sense, language or dialect serves as a marker of geographic belonging that indicates a person's social origin and thus categorizes the person as a member of a particular rural community.

As I will show, the link between language and social belonging not only reveals social norms of particular communities but is important to questions of collective and individual identity. Additionally, it points to how education and an awareness of one's speech and forms of expression lead to (im)possibilities of social mobility. Nineteenth-century village tales comment on communication (the use of language including dialect) as key to negotiating and understanding one's place within a particular community.

1.5 (Dis)Integration of Individuals and Collective Social Belonging in Bertholt Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher" (1843) and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe" (1886)

Bertholt Auerach's "Der Lauterbacher" (1843) and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe" (1886) both depict social belonging based on traditional village practices such as language, clothing, and farming methods as well as institutional ideals of

³¹ For a detailed analysis of Viebig's text see chapter three.

education and family models. Both texts thematize transgression of these markers, making them apparent by depicting feelings of shame. Although these certainly are not the only village tales to address this question, a comparison of the two reveals many enlightening parallels, which allow us to look at the significance of the particular historic moment of the stories' emergence for their content. In both stories a man from outside the village, or more exactly, a man from the city, is appointed the new village schoolteacher. Auerbach's teacher, Adolf Lederer, and Ebner-Eschenbach's teacher, Anton Wellner, both fall in love with a peasant girl, Hedwig and Marie, respectively. The arrivals of the teachers with their modern ideas challenge the status quo in the respective village communities raising questions of how belonging is determined and how it can change. Although Auerbach's Hedwig and Ebner-Eschenbach's Marie react differently to their teachers and the clash between the rural and the urban, both stories end in a union between the peasant girl and the teacher. As we will see, however, these relationships are only made possible by the characters negotiating feelings of shame in regard to belonging and understanding of identity. While Hedwig remains true to her village origins and helps Adolf to establish his own sense of social community within the village, Marie rejects her roots and distances herself from the community to establish a new sense of belonging to Anton's social community.

Auerbach's and Ebner-Eschenbach's stories reveal tensions between individuals and the village community. The texts depict social bonds that are based on an understanding of a collective identity. These social bonds are expressed in these village tales through shared social practices. These practices define and delineate each member of the community but also the community as a whole. They include everyday aspects of village life such as work ethic, behavior such as eating manners, village dialect, church rituals, and even social activities such as

drinking, smoking, and singing in the tavern. Both “Der Lauterbacher” and “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe” repeatedly point to these village practices as essential to the villagers and village life in general.

Moreover, these practices become deciding factors in questions of belonging and exclusion, and shame often plays a role in the ways in which social bonds are formed, maintained, and even rejected via these factors. If the social bonds are solid, members of the collective experience no shame about their being, their actions, and ultimately their belonging to the community. If shame colors feelings about belonging to a particular community, that social bond is weak and can eventually break. In the two texts, shame emerges when the collective identity is questioned by Auerbach’s teacher Adolf and Ebner-Eschenbach’s protagonist Marie respectively. Both Adolf and Marie see themselves as individuals who have a strong sense of self and are proud of who they are. Nevertheless, the norms and moral values of the collective that force them to adhere to communal ideals that they themselves reject evoke feelings of shame in them.

In both texts feelings of shame are closely tied to the establishment and maintenance of self-identity and communal identity. While in “Der Lauterbacher” Adolf initially firmly holds on to his urban-identity, only gradually becomes part of the village community, and ultimately embraces its collective identity, in “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe” Marie is part of the village community to begin with and supposed to adhere to the collective. She, however, comes to reject it and develops an independent identity that allows her to step out of the social community of the village. These changes are closely linked to experiences of shame and related emotions. While these emotions initially secure Adolf’s identity and prevent the formation of a

communal village identity and belonging, they help Marie to leave the community behind and to affirm her desire not to belong. In this sense, shame determines how a sense of belonging is experienced.

In Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher" the rural clashes with the urban when an educated outsider, Anton Lederer, becomes the schoolteacher of the village and tries to reform the peasantry by educating them in modern ideas. Uncomfortable in the village setting and with his new life as the schoolteacher, Anton makes himself unpopular among the village community by repeatedly commenting negatively on village customs and practices. Only when Anton meets the peasant girl Hedwig and falls in love with her does he slowly start adjusting to village life. Anton nevertheless tries to convince Hedwig, who speaks the village dialect, to learn standard German so that she will be less peasant-like. However, Hedwig refuses to do so as she views her dialect as a marker of her belonging to the village community. Only after accepting her dialect as part of her identity can Anton fully embrace his love for Hedwig. The two marry and Anton is finally accepted in the village.

Auerbach's story immediately establishes who belongs to the community and who does not. The title of the story instantly informs the reader that he or she will encounter an account of someone who does not belong. The grammatical construction of the title—"er" added to the name of a city—indicates that we are about to be introduced to someone from Lauterbach. Through the titles of the cycles, *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, we know that we are reading stories that are set in the Black Forest (if we are familiar with other tales of the cycle, then we know that we are specifically dealing with stories set in Nordstetten). An educated reader will know that Lauterbach is a town located in the federal state of Hessen in central Germany, quite a

distance from the setting of Auerbach's tales. Thus, before we even start reading the story and get to know anything about the village, its inhabitants, or Adolf, the title of this story immediately constructs an expectation in the reader that we are going to have some form of an encounter with an outsider.

In the first few sentences of "Der Lauterbacher," we learn that it is in fact Adolf who is the outsider referred to by the title (although readers do not get to know his name until we encounter one of Adolf's writings; until then the text repeatedly refers to him as "der neue Schullehrer"). The opening scene creates a very ambivalent image of Adolf. When Adolf, "städtisch gekleidet" (*Auerbach's Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, Vol: 2, 59),³² arrives in the village, "grüßte [er] die Leute, die vom Felde herüber kamen, mit einer besonderen Freundlichkeit, ja, als ob er sie kenne. Die Leute dankten herzlich und schauten sich alle nochmals nach ihm um, sie meinten, das müsse einer aus dem Dorfe sein, der aus der Fremde heimkehre; er hatte sie ja so durchringend angeschaut, und doch kannten sie ihn nicht" (59). The feeling of familiar but unfamiliar at the same time immediately establishes what we see carried throughout the text: a difficult relationship between Adolf and the villagers in which the question of belonging or not belonging becomes the main issue.

The villagers have a clear understanding of what it means for someone to be a part of their community. They immediately stamp Adolf as an outsider based on his behavior. Shortly after his arrival, for example, Adolf meets Buchmaier, the mayor of the city, who invites him to dinner. At dinner with traditional "Schwarzwälderessen" (60), unfamiliar table manners establish that Adolf does not belong to the village community. The servants in the kitchen make fun of

³² In the remainder of this chapter, all citations for Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher" refer to the second volume of the ten-volume edition *Auerbach's Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*.

him: “[D]er hat ja das Messer in die recht’ und die Gabel in die link’ Hand genomme und mit zwei Händ’ gessen, das hat man sein Lebtag von keinem ehrlichen Menschen gesehen ... Ja ... der ist auch noch nicht über seines Vaters Miste ‘nauskommen, der hat ja die Knöpsle mit dem Messer verschnitten, statt daß man’s verreißt” (“Der Lauterbacher” 61-62). The servants’ reaction and gossip in the kitchen reveals that Adolf is seen as an outsider. Moreover, Adolf’s character is being judged based on his table manners. The servants conclude that he must be dishonest and thus are questioning his moral character.

As shown above, several aspects of Adolf’s being immediately determine that Adolf does not belong to the village community and establish him as an outsider. However, as will become clear in the following, language appears to be the key marker of what sets Adolf apart from the villagers. The first few pages of “Der Lauterbacher” already point to the ways in which language establishes belonging. When Adolf meets Buchmaier, Buchmaier’s first reaction to Adolf is based on the way in which the latter speaks. Buchmaier guesses where Adolf is from: “Der Sprach’ nach ... scheint Ihr aus dem Unterland gebürtig” (62). Although Adolf speaks standard German and not dialect, Buchmaier’s assumption indicates that Adolf’s speech must still reveal some aspects that are specific to the Lauterbach region. Adolf’s reaction to Buchmaier’s observation uncovers that Adolf bears a sense of shame about his language as a marker of his origin. When Buchmaier asks Adolf where exactly he is from, Adolf “stockte ein wenig, legte beide Hände auf die Brust und sagte endlich ...: ‘Lauterbach’” (62). Buchmaier senses that Adolf is uncomfortable and immediately attempts to convince him that he should not be ashamed of his origins: “Warum habt ihr denn nicht recht mit ‘raus wollen? Das ist ja kein’ Schand” (62). However, Adolf continues to feel ashamed especially because of the famous Lauterbach song

that all villagers are familiar with. He finds the content of the song senseless and does not want to be associated with the ways in which people from Lauterbach are depicted in the song.

The village dialect likewise moves Adolf further into the position of an outsider. Adolf has a strong emotional reaction to this dialect. At dinner on the day of his arrival, he meets Agnes, one of Buchmaier's maids. While Agnes tries to make him feel welcome, Adolf cannot appreciate her gesture, and her dialect results in an immediate judgment of Agnes: "All die Schönheit des Mädchens verschwand plötzlich vor den Augen des Lehrers, da er diese harte, in groben Lauten vorgebrachte Rede hörte" ("Der Lauterbacher" 61). Adolf reacts in a similar fashion—"Der Lehrer schüttelte den Kopf" (61)—when he hears one of the male servants speak in dialect. His dislike goes as far as his attempting to convince Hedwig, the peasant girl for whom he is developing feelings, to speak standard German. He wants to "erproben, wie weit sich Hedwig einer feinern Bildung fügen würde" (102) and attempts to correct her dialect saying to her that "es jammerschade ist, dass Ihr das holprige Bauerndeutsch sprecht, Ihr könntet es sicherlich auch anders" (102). *Hochdeutsch*, he continues, "würde Euch viel besser anstehen" (102). Considering that Agnes' dialect immediately made her unattractive to him, "besser anstehen" can be similarly read as a commentary on the way in which dialect affects Adolf's view of Hedwig.

Hedwig's negative reaction and the subsequent conversation between the two reveals much more than an unwillingness to learn:

"Ich thät mich in die Seel 'nein schämen, wenn ich anders reden thät, und es versteht mich ja auch ein jedes." "Allerdings, aber gut is gut, und besser ist besser. In welcher Sprache betet ihr denn?" "Ei, wie's geschrieben steht, das ist ganz was anders." "Keineswegs, wie man mit Gott redet, sollte man auch mir den Menschen reden." "Das kann ich halt nicht, und das will ich auch nicht. Gucket,

Herr Lehrer, ich wüßt' ja gar nichts mehr zu schwätzen, wenn ich mich allemal besinnen müßt, wie ich schwätzen soll; ich thät mich vor mir selber schämen." ("Der Lauterbacher" 102)

For Hedwig, dialect is part of collective identity. Because Hedwig sees herself as a member of this collective, she cannot imagine changing something that clearly serves as an identity marker. The violation of this communal association can lead to a denial or even a loss of belonging and subsequently marginalization or even exclusion. Moreover, losing one's dialect may also lead to a loss of one's collective identity. Others will no longer be able to identify one's origins. Shame, as an emotion, plays a role in avoiding such loss. Hedwig's reaction explicitly communicates that she would not only be ashamed if she were to speak *Hochdeutsch*, but even feel ashamed of herself as a person. This indicates how strongly dialect is connected to her identity and her deep rootedness in the village community.

On the other hand, dialect not only establishes Adolf as not belonging, but it also interferes with communication. In fact, the teacher not only does not like the dialect, but he also struggles to understand some of the dialect expressions. "Der Lehrer verstand diese nicht sehr geschickte Redensart ... nicht ganz" (65). This lack of understanding of the villagers' language also keeps him from connecting with the villagers: "So wandelte [Adolf] noch lange durch das Dorf, im Herzen traulich zu allen sprechend, aber kein Wort kam über seine Lippen" (86). Adolf only feels comfortable and can only communicate when *Hochdeutsch* is spoken. This becomes clear when he meets Hannes, one of his students. While he has difficulty liking anyone in the village, he does immediately take a liking to Hannes, who greets him in *Hochdeutsch* and has manners and knowledge of educated greeting practices: "'Grüß' Gott,' sagte der Knabe, herzlich die Hand reichend. Das Antlitz des Lehrers war wie verklärt, dieser Gruß aus Kindes Munde, that

ihm gar wohl” (“Der Lauterbacher” 64). Even though he does not know anything about Hannes as a person, Hannes’s use of *Hochdeutsch* makes Adolf feel comfortable and gives him a feeling of familiarity: “Er war jetzt wieder in seinem Paradiese” (64).

The problem Adolf faces in understanding certain expressions and having difficulty communicating with the villagers takes on an additional aspect in “Der Lauterbacher.” Auerbach implicitly comments on dialect and belonging on an extra-diegetic level. Throughout the text we find several footnotes that explain particular words or expressions. The expression *er könne den Rank nicht kriegen* is explained as “Mit einem Fuhrwerk geschickt um eine Ecke biegen, nennt man den Rank kriegen” (86), the word *wasele* is explained as the “Verkleinerungsform von ‘was’” (91), *letz* as “verkehrt” (93), *Beschmus* as a “von den Juden entlehnter Ausdruck, so viel als unnötige Redensart” (93), and *ebber* is footnoted as “so viel als jemand” (116). Moreover, after the first conversation between Hedwig and Adolf a footnote informs the reader, “Hedwig sprach zwar immer ganz im Dialekt, zum besseren Verständnis geben wir es aber möglichst hochdeutsch wieder” (88). This footnote is tied to belonging. As mentioned above, village tales were not read by peasants but rather by middle-class readers from urban communities. The fact that Auerbach decides to continue Hedwig’s lines in standard German (or as close to standard forms as possible) shows that the readers of the story were most likely unable to understand the dialect. In doing so, Auerbach draws a line between the characters and the readers indicating that the readers are positioned outside of and do not belong to the village community.

Although these footnotes may appear to be a gesture of kindness to help the reader through the text, they may also elicit feelings of shame in the reader. Shame can emerge when one realizes a lack or weakness. If readers view not being able to understand the village dialect

as a weakness in their linguistic abilities, it may lead to feelings of shame. On the other hand, the footnotes can also be seen as an act of shaming. While I do not propose that it was Auerbach's intention to engage in any act of shaming through his footnotes, such a reading could potentially be possible. By removing the dialect, Auerbach could be seen to shame the entire village community. He prevents his readers from becoming familiar with the dialect that is such an important part of the villagers' identity. In doing so, he strips Hedwig of part of her identity and ultimately marks her dialect as out of place and foreign. Pointing out dialect as a disruptive feature becomes in effect an act of shaming as it perforce attaches negative connotations to dialect.³³

While the story portrays the many village customs that instantly stamp him as an outsider, Adolf also negotiates questions of belonging for himself. Adolf immediately makes clear that he does not want to belong to this community. He is ashamed of who the villagers are and what they do. His first impression of the villagers is their lack of education. He sees in them nothing but the equivalent of their farm animals, who "sehnen ... sich nach nichts als nach dem Futter für ihren Mund" ("Der Lauterbacher" 60). In his diary he writes after observing the villagers dance at a festival: "Drinnen im Dorfe haben sie heute den Hammeltanz aufgeführt. Solche Dinge passen nicht mehr in unsere Zeit, sie gehören in das Mittelalter" (80). Adolf in fact views the villagers as backward in all aspects of their lives. He thus sees his mission as bringing his knowledge to the villagers and especially the children, "in denen Herzen [er] den Lichtstrahl der Bildung werfen

³³ This reading is a contemporary perspective and strictly based on theories of shame. Auerbach uses this practice of footnoting expressions in dialect throughout the stories in his cycle. As I have pointed out, the readership of village tales was comprised of educated bourgeois readers, who would not have been able to read the stories (or at least fully understand them) had Auerbach not included the footnotes since the bourgeois reader did not speak dialect. Thus, Auerbach's choice of footnoting is most likely constructed with his readership in mind and does not entail a purposely intended negative connotation in regard to the local dialect.

soll” (“Der Lauterbacher” 60): “O, könnt’ ich die Seelen dieser Menschen ganz in meine Gewalt bekommen, ich wollte sie frei machen von ihrem trägen Aberwitz und sie kosten lassen die reinen Freuden des Geistes” (60). Although he is excited about taking on his calling of educating the village children, he has a strong desire to remain outside of any communal bond:

Ich will all meine Kraft zusammenhalten, um mich gegen das Verbauern zu wahren. Tagtäglich will ich mein ganzes Sein aufwühlen, ich will frei bleiben von dem Einflusse meiner Umgebung. Ich habe Lehrer gesehen, die mit dem freien Geiste der Zeit erfüllt in ihr Amt traten, und nach einigen Jahren versanken sie ganz in den Schlendrian, sie waren zu Bauern geworden, selbst ihr Aueßeres war nachlässig und schlapp. (65)

This text passage reveals both Adolf’s negative impression of the villagers and also his personal feelings of shame about being seen as belonging to this community in any way. His use of the verb “verbauern” and his deeming of other teachers who have integrated themselves into village communities as *versunken* carry negative connotations. They indicate that in Adolf’s view being a peasant is below his level of education and socio-economic class. Moreover, *versunken* can be read as *sunken*. Thus, one could possibly even read this passage as Adolf’s belief that peasants lack (moral) integrity. While this may be objectively true, the point is that Adolf condescends to the villagers. He even goes so far to write a note to himself: “Er schrieb auf ein Zettelchen: Memento! und steckte es an den Spiegel” (65). The use of the Latin imperative meaning “remember!” indicates two things. On the one hand, the teacher’s ability to speak Latin further removes him from the knowledge of the villagers. As an educated person, he knows Latin and in fact was required to know it to study. On the other hand, *memento* is a reminder of a person, place or thing; it can also warn and indeed it marks Adolf’s wish to avoid shame.

Shame as a moral emotion emerges when one becomes aware of transgressing moral values. In this vein, shame is seen as a constructive emotion that issues a warning against transgression and/or helps us return to our desired self when transgression has occurred. Adolf's note serves in a similar way. It reminds him not to let himself become assimilated, not to become like the villagers he despises. Moreover, the fact that he places the note on a mirror instills in him a fear of future shame over assimilating. His reflection in the mirror serves to call attention to his outer appearance, but mirrors can also reflect the soul and thus the true nature of the person reflected.³⁴ The mirror in combination with the note reflects his fear of how he would emotionally feel about his outer appearance as well as his inner being should he assimilate. This fear of feeling ashamed serves Adolf as a warning falling into a state that would elicit shame. In order to keep himself from being assimilated, Adolf withdraws and holds on to things that are familiar to him such as drawing and keeping a diary.

Due to this fear, Adolf cannot see that this sense of shame at becoming like the villagers is misguided and in fact further raises fear of shame. A positive sense of belonging to a particular community must be free of internal shame about the members of the community, their customs, and moral values. Freedom from internal shame means a sense of pride about being part of a community. Once Adolf accepts village customs and embraces them without shame, he is able to integrate into the community and in turn is accepted by the villagers.

From his first day in the village Adolf is told that the only way truly to belong is to become part of the village in all its doings. One piece of advice he receives from the villager

³⁴ Vampires, for example, are said to have no soul and therefore no reflection in the mirror.

Matthes is that he must marry a girl from the village: “Das Best’ ist, Ihr nehmet eine aus dem Ort; wenn man nicht aus dem Ort ist und nicht ‘rein heiratet, bleibt man halt wildfremd” (“Der Lauterbacher” 64). In another conversation with the old teacher and the Jewish teacher, Adolf asks for advice on how to feel less strange in the village: “Sie können mir gewiß viel Anleitung geben, meine Herren, über mein Verhalten dahier; ich bin hier so ganz fremd” (72). Adolf finds out that the Jewish teacher felt similar upon his arrival in the village: “Ich kam mir in der ersten Zeit vor, als wär ich in eine fremde Welt verzaubert” (72). The old teacher’s response indicates that one way the Jewish teacher finally established belonging within the community was to marry a peasant girl and he advises Adolf to do the same: ““Nun, du hast dich bald verzaubern lassen und hast das schönst’ Mädle aus dem Ort geheiratet ...’ Zu [Adolf] gewendet fuhr er fort: ‘Ihr müsset halt such ein Mädle aus dem Ort heiraten’” (72). Although the text does not explicitly state whom the Jewish teacher married, we may assume that he married a Jewish peasant girl from the local Jewish community.³⁵ The text appears to indicate that an integration into the village collective is not only possible across different religions, but also encouraged. From this we can infer that a union across socio-economic statuses is also not impossible. Rather, the text suggests that integration into the village collective stands above matters of individual identity and social-economic positioning.

While Adolf’s response to the first encounter with this advice was to feel disdain—

³⁵ The fact that a Jewish teacher was sent to a village suggests that there are enough Jews in the area to form a community and that they can support a teacher. Jews are themselves divided into subgroups geographically. So one needs to imagine the Jewish teacher, who originally came from elsewhere and was sent by a supraregional entity to the area, has become a member of a regional subgroup. So he made the best match he could within the local subgroup, thereby providing an example of what the Lauterbacher needs to do to become a part of a somewhat differently (but still also local) configured subgroup.

“lieber eine Aeffin als so eine vierschrotige Bäuerin zur Frau” (“Der Lauterbacher” 64)—the second conversation startles him: “[Adolf] fuhr ... bestürzt zurück ... es war ihm, als hätte sich alles gegen ihn verschworen, um ihn zu verkuppeln” (72). Adolf points out that he was not interested in personal advice, but rather in the sort that would help him be successful as a teacher. However, in his response—“Und wenn eine Lustbarkeit im Dorf ist, da darf man nicht den vornehmen Herrn spielen, der sich’s eine Weile so anguckt, wie das dumme Volk auch lustig sein kann; nein, da muß man auch mitthun” (73)—the old teacher conveys that one must participate in every aspect of village life no matter how absurd it appears.

Although Adolf resists the advice he receives, he does eventually come to appreciate village customs and loses the sense of disdain he had about village life as a whole. His transformation begins when he develops a sort of filial relationship with Hedwig’s grandmother Mauritia, referred to as the “die alte Frau” throughout the text, who is too weak to leave her home and spends most of the day sitting on a bench in front of her house. The conversations between the old lady and Adolf quickly begin to reveal Adolf’s change of heart towards village life. Mauritia appreciates Adolf’s frequent visits, which allow her to enjoy some company and conversation. Adolf takes a great liking to the old lady and views her as someone who must be liked by everyone in the village. The grandmother’s response—“Wie’s in den Wald ‘neinschallt, hallt’s raus” (85)—appears to be a life-changing moment for Adolf. Although the text does not explicitly comment on it, we may assume that Adolf realizes that he can only be liked and respected by the villagers if he offers them the same. Mauritia’s idiomatic expression elicits very personal information that addresses his feelings, something he previously only revealed in his diary entries, and for the first time Adolf has a desire to belong:

Die Hand der alten Frau streifte ihm plötzlich über das Gesicht; es war dem Lehrer in der That, als ob ihn eine höhere Macht berührte, er saß da mit geschlossenen Augen, und die Augäpfel zitterten und bebten, die Wangen glühten; wie erwachend, faßte er die Hand der Alten und sagte: “Nicht wahr, ich darf Euch auch Großmutter heißen?” (“Der Lauterbacher” 85)

Adolf’s emotional response to the grandmother’s touch is filled with indicators of shame.

Avoiding eye contact and bodily reactions, such as the trembling of his eye lids and the burning of his blushing cheeks, can all be read as outer expressions of inner shame. When one is ashamed of the self, one does not want to face the other; embarrassment about the self in turn can cause body temperature to rise which results in blushing. We can read Adolf’s reaction as a shift in the type of shame he has been experiencing. As we will see, Adolf’s feelings of shame about affiliation with the villagers and village life decrease gradually and are replaced by feelings of shame and regret in regard to himself and his behavior towards others. He is now ashamed of his previous attitudes and shame emerges because he is passing a moral judgment on himself.

Mauritia’s assent to Adolf calling her grandmother establishes a sort of familial bond for Adolf that makes him feel comfortable: “Mit einem erhabenen Wohlgefühl saß nun der Lehrer bei der alten Frau, er wollte gar nicht weggehen” (85). This moment of realization for Adolf —“wie erwachend”—is in turn the beginning of his ability to form an attachment to the village community.

The contact with Mauritia helps Adolf to view village life in a different light. With simple comments such as “Ihr müsset nicht so Sie sagen, ... das ist nicht der Brauch” (84), the old lady slowly introduces Adolf to small customs of the village. Feeling hurt by the ways in which the villagers treat him, Adolf turns to the grandmother for comfort: “Bei allen Gefühlsverletzungen, die der Lehrer durch die Art und Weise der Bauern empfand, wendete er sich aber nicht mehr an

die Mutter Natur, sondern an die Großmutter Mauritia, die ihm über die Art, wie die Menschen hier lebten, manchen Aufschluß gab” (“Der Lauterbacher” 87). Thus, Adolf not only learns about village life, but also slowly removes himself from the habits that once made him feel comfortable such as writing and sketching nature. He no longer feels the need to write down his observations in his diary or engage in writing at all, but rather turns to communication: “Allgemeine Bemerkungen in sein Taschenbuch einzutragen, dazu hatte der Lehrer nur selten Zeit und Stimmung; was er dachte gab er sogleich den Männern preis, und was er dachte und fühlte, offenbarte er Hedwig, und es war ihm genug, es so ausgesprochen zu haben” (126-27). The fact that he gives up writing in itself shows a stepping back from his educated middle-class habits/habitus and the language that informs it.

As mentioned above, Kaschuba and Linke point to the importance writing plays in bourgeois culture and how it expresses a certain social identity. Adolf not only opens up towards village life and its customs, but furthermore, slowly removes himself from his urban upbringing when he gives up his habits of writing. These actions indicate that Adolf’s appreciation of village life goes further than just acceptance. Social integration into the collective requires that he fully embrace village practices and make them his own. Even the villagers observe this transformation: “Viele Leute sagten daher, die alte Frau habe den Lehrer bekehrt” (87). Although *bekehren* can have a deeply religious meaning, we may also simply read it as *to win somebody over to something*. In this sense, the old lady can be seen as the person who opened Adolf’s heart to a desire to belong to the community by helping him to lose the sense of shame he had about what belonging to a village community would mean.

Through contact with the grandmother, Adolf also starts to develop a relationship with Hedwig. While Mauritia is clearly a big part of Adolf's transformation, Hedwig appears to be the reason he starts to participate in village customs. In Hedwig's company, Adolf continues to experience new feelings of shame that are directed towards himself and his relationship to Hedwig rather than to the community. This new type of shame, which emerges in Adolf, is related to his affection for Hedwig. Instead of feelings of shame that push him away from the community, Adolf now realizes that he knows very little about the environment in which Hedwig lives.

He is described as "errötend" ("Der Lauterbacher" 88) and when he is alone with Hedwig "erzitterte sein Herz; er wagte es nicht, aufzuschauen" (100). These bodily signs of shame are the indication of his feelings for her; this shame has less to do with ethics or belonging than embarrassment over strong feelings that could potentially also be of sexual nature. It becomes a reason for him to want to learn more about Hedwig's life and also about the village in general. He is fascinated by her and cannot stop thinking about her: "Diese Worte [Hedwigs] wiederholte er sich oft, sie klangen ihm so innig, so melodisch, trotzdem sie in dem derben Dialekte gesprochen waren, ja, dieser selber hatte eine gewisse Milderung und Anmut dadurch erhalten" (87-88). The dialect that was so repulsive to Adolf at the beginning now takes on different tones for him: "Er hatte die süßen Worte Hedwigs so freudig aufgenommen, daß er sogar die Form derselben liebgewann" (113). Even more, he begins to understand that the dialect is strongly connected to the ways in which the villagers think and he starts learning the dialect himself:

Er gedachte nun den Dialekt zu studieren und ihn beim Unterricht als Grundlage der Denk- und Sprachweise zu benutzen. Jetzt erst lernte der Lehrer manche Besonderheiten des diesländlichen Bauernlebens recht verstehen, er erkannte die Derbheit und die Begierde, sich sogar mit dem Heiligsten und Unnahbaren lustig zu machen. ("Der Lauterbacher" 113)

Only after learning the dialect, is he able to comprehend previously opaque aspects of village life.

Adolf's new insights into the villagers creates a shared language among them and allows for communication that was previously not possible. Adolf loses the association between language and education and now understands "daß man wohl viel miteinander sprechen kann, ohne gerade Bücher gelesen zu haben" (104). This open communication leads to new feelings in Adolf:

Unser Freund [Adolf], der früher immer so gern und fast ausschließlich allein gewesen war, konnte jetzt, wenn er seine Schulstunden beendet hatte, fast keine Viertelstunde mehr allein ausdauern, in seinem Hause oder außer demselben. Von all den Büchern, die er bei sich hatte, paßte ihm keines zu seiner Stimmung, und wollte er etwas in sein Taschenbuch schreiben, erschien es ihm so nackt und nichtig, daß er es alsbald wieder durchstrich. (107)

The emergent desire not to be alone anymore is the crucial change. His former habits no longer satisfy his needs, and he is eager to spend more time with the villagers and learn more about their ways. Adolf begins to spend time in the tavern and even learns about farming practices. From Buchmaier, who informs him that modern technologies do not guarantee survival (96), Adolf slowly starts to understand and respect why the villagers reject these modern tools: "Ich will das Leben und die Denkweisen dieser Menschen achten" (96). Previously he felt as if the villagers were looking down on him because he does not engage in physical labor: "es ist mir da oft, als müßt' ich mich schämen, daß ich jetzt spazieren gehe" (77). The use of the subjunctive suggests

that he thinks that he is expected to feel shame while he is not actually feeling ashamed. Now, in contrast to before he feels almost guilty about the villagers hard work compared to his: “es war ihm eine unüberwindlich mißliche Empfindung, so allein arbeitslos unter den Emsingen dazustehen” (“Der Lauterbacher” 107). Adolf is now ashamed that he is not working as hard as the villagers are. The two adjectives *unüberwindlich* and *mißlich* point to the emotional pain he feels about not laboring physically as do the hardworking villagers. Furthermore, he emphasizes that he now feels lonely. While previously he withdrew and wanted to be alone and engaged in those activities that he knew from his urban life (such as drawing, writing, going for a walk), he now desires to be among the villagers who work together as a collective. His new awareness brings home to him that he is outside of this collective; this insight bothers him and makes him ashamed. According to Kaschuba, activities such as regular walks played a big role in belonging to the bourgeoisie. Such activities indicated “free time, or the leisure time to devote to culture and entertainment” (405). This change in Adolf’s activities can thus be read as his gradual removal of middle-class leisure activities and thus from his middle-class values.

Once Adolf starts participating in the social community of the village by spending time in the tavern with the peasants, he experiences still more shame; he realizes his lack of education in the ways of the village. Adolf joins the casual singing evenings and realizes “zu seiner großen Betrübnis, daß er so wenig von den Volksliedern kannte” (“Der Lauterbacher” 104). Once Adolf gets the hang of the songs, “[s]o vereinte der Lehrer seine Stimme mit denen der dörflichen Sänger” (104). While the text comments here on an actual joining together of voices in singing, this passage may also be read metaphorically as bringing together Adolf and the village community in general. The joining of singing voices links Adolf to the village community.

From here on, both Adolf and the villagers are able to build a connection to one another based on an openness to learn from one another; on several occasions they realize that their individual customs, and particularly their language expressions, are in the end not too different from each other. They quickly develop an awareness of a shared language despite the differences between *Hochdeutsch* and dialect when Adolf brings in the “deutsche Sprichwörterammlung” (“Der Lauterbacher” 121) from which he reads to the villagers. “Immer Pausen machend, begann nun der Lehrer die Sprichwörter zu lesen. ‘Ei, das sagt ja der Schmiedjörgli—und das ist ja des Brunnenbasche’s Red—das hat die alt’ Mauritia immer gesagt—und das ist dein Wort, Andres, Michel Kaspar,’ so hieß es von allen Seiten” (121-22). Through Adolf’s reading of the proverbs, both Adolf and the villagers find a common ground that is based on the understanding that the meaning behind what they say is the same no matter if it is spoken in dialect or standard German.

Moreover, this knowledge opens up a new experience for the villagers in regard to the meaning of books and reading: “sie fürchteten sich nicht mehr vor einem Buche” (122). Adolf continues reading to the villagers, which brings Adolf additional insights about the peasants and village life. When he reads the village tale “Das Goldmacherdorf” by Heinrich Zschokke, the villagers have a strong reaction to the ways in which peasants are represented in the story:

“Mir gefällt’s nicht, daß der Oswald so allein alles gut machen will und muß.” ...
“Und ich mein’, ... die Bauersleut’ seien viel zu dumm hingestellt; so arg ist’s nicht.” ... “[D]as Dorf ist zuerst viel zu schlecht und nachher viel zu gut; ich kann’s nicht recht glauben, daß es an einem Orte so ist.” ... “Mich verdrießt am meißten, ... daß zuletzt auch noch ausgemacht wird, was man für Kleider tragen darf.” (123)

Their comments reveal two things: on the one hand, the villagers criticize the ways in which Zschokke’s village tale, which tells the story of the outsider Oswald’s efforts to educate the

villagers and modernize the village, suggests the need for changes to village life. On the other hand, the villagers believe that the peasants are misrepresented and their characters do not depict peasant life realistically. It is interesting that Auerbach chooses exactly this story for Adolf to read to the villagers. “Das Goldmachedorf” resonates with the contents of “Der Lauterbacher.” The peasant’s reaction to the story may be an indirect reaction to Adolf’s own actions and behavior. Adolf, just like Oswald, intended to bring his modern ideas into the village, educate the villagers, and change them for the better. Moreover, the reaction of the villagers could be seen as a commentary on the development of the genre. While “Das Goldmachedorf” is clearly one of the early village tales that bears pedagogical undertones, in Auerbach’s “Der Lauterbacher” it is introduced as a literary representation of peasant life. This diegetic commentary serves to remind readers that village tales are no longer interested in educating peasants, but rather view peasant life as worthy of literary depiction.

These two critiques lead Adolf to think about village life even more as they also point to the ways in which Adolf behaved when he arrived in the village and the wrong impressions he had formed about the peasants as people.

“Wenn ich diese Blätter ansehe, ist mir oft, als war ich früher ein sonderbarer Egoist; ich habe die Welt nur in mich aufzunehmen, nicht mich an sie hinauszugeben getrachtet. Was ist all’ die eigensüchtige Verfeinerung der Gefühle gegen einen einzigen Gedankenfunken, in eine Seele geworfen? Das ist tausendmal mehr wert als alle noch so sinnreich schwelgersichen Betrachtungen. Es ist gut und war wohl nötig, daß ich diese hinter mir habe ...”

“Wie gar leicht ist es, groß, vornehm und gelehrt zu erscheinen, wenn man sich vom Volke zurückzieht, sich einen besondern Palast des Wissens und Denkens aufbaut, eine Burg auf hoher Bergspitze, fern von Thalbewohnern. Steigt man aber herab zu den Menschen in den Niederungen, lebt man mit ihnen und für sie, da erfährt man’s oft, wie man bisweilen die einfachen Dinge nicht weiß, die besten Gedanken nicht ahnt ...”

“Es ist tief bezeichnend und wohl sinnbildlich, daß die Schriftsprache Wort und Begriff Bauer noch nicht bestimmt zu deklinieren weiß: der Bauer, des Bauern und - des Bauers.” (“Der Lauterbacher” 127)

We may read Adolf’s observation concerning the word *Bauer* and its two possibly genitive forms as exemplary of city people’s lack of understanding of peasant culture. The word *Schriftsprache* points to education. Because the written language is dominated by urban societies that have no contact with the peasants and their culture, just as Adolf did not, it cannot be employed to define who peasants are and what peasant life entails. Thus, Adolf’s last entries in his diary to which the reader has access, reveal not only his new understanding and appreciation of village life and peasants in general, but also admit to shameful behavior that he is happy to leave behind him.

Adolf inserts himself more and more into village life and experiences new insights that are accompanied by emotional reactions: “[D]ie ganze Welt des Volkstums, die sich ihm aufschloß, schwellte ihm die Brust” (97). However, even though Adolf clearly feels a sense of belonging and is also seen to belong by the village community—“Eines Tages kam der Buchmaier zu ihm und forderte ihn, bald Ortsbürger zu werden” (114)—there is still one last feeling precluding a complete communal bond. “Jetzt stand der Lehrer nicht mehr draußen im Felde, während drinnen im Dorfe alles jubelte und tanzte, er selber war mitten unter dem tollen Lärm; noch aber war er nicht ganz dabei” (114). This absolute sense of belonging to the community comes to be only when Adolf experiences a sad loss and beautiful gain: the death of Mauritia and his marriage to Hedwig. “Dem Lehrer ward das Dorf von nun an noch einmal so wert und eigen, er hatte ein neues Leben darin gefunden und einen lieben Toten darin begraben” (117). These events—the happiness of marriage and the pain of loss, or simply the feeling of love (of any kind) towards another person—complete the process of integration for

Adolf. As Brené Brown points out, “[l]ove belongs with belonging” (25). Thus, the emphasis of belonging appears to be on an emotional personal attachment. Or, as Heide Wunder summarizes in *Die bäuerliche Gemeinde in Deutschland* (1986), a rural community as a “besondere Form des Zusammenlebens” is based on “unmittelbare menschliche Beziehungen” (7). Ultimately, social integration into a local community is based on interpersonal relationships with members of that group.

Auerbach’s “Der Lauterbacher” brings to the forefront questions of belonging to a village collective. Although many aspects of village life play a role in determining, maintaining, and even rejecting a collective sense of belonging, Auerbach’s tale foregrounds (mis)communication as a key factor. Social integration appears to be tied to an emotional personal attachment to the villagers, which, in turn, can only be established through mutual understanding, making language a key marker of questions of belonging.

While my reading of Auerbach’s “Der Lauterbacher” reveals how shame accompanies the process of social integration, Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe” will highlight the role shame can play in separating oneself from a community. As I will show, Ebner-Eschenbach’s story, in contrast to Auerbach’s, foregrounds individualism. While Auerbach’s peasant girl Hedwig is unable to conceive of herself as having an individual identity but rather sees her identity as part of the collective village identity, Ebner-Eschenbach’s peasant girl Marie is striving to separate herself from the collective village identity in an attempt to establish an individual identity. Here, just as in Auerbach’s story, tracing how feelings of shame manifest themselves in questions of belonging will provide insight into the tension between communal and individual identity.

In Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe," urban influence similarly leads the story's protagonist, Marie, to question her identity. As a young girl, she falls in love with the son of a rich peasant named Alois who is also in love with her. When they dance in public at the local *Erntedankfest*, they violate the village's customs—Alois is of much higher socio-economic status and is supposed to marry up—and the couple is violently separated by Alois' father. Subsequently, Alois appears to be avoiding Marie, and soon thereafter his engagement to another girl is announced and followed by a big traditional wedding ceremony.

Marie's mother, Josepha, wants to marry off Marie before her death and is in favor of Marie marrying Walter, the son of Josepha's aunt, who had left the village and recently returned. Soon after their wedding, Marie discovers Walter's violent outbursts, alcohol addiction, and gambling problems, but nevertheless has a good marriage with him. After Walter's death in an accident, Marie is left with his debts. She is offered a position as the *hochfürstliche Wäschemeisterin*, which causes upheaval in the village. Rumors about Marie's integrity spread quickly in the village, and cause the villagers to dislike her. From this point on, the plot resembles Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher." Anton, a teacher from Vienna, comes to Moravia, a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Finding Marie appealing, he starts giving her lessons in accordance with Marie's own wishes. Josepha resents the changes in Marie and is upset at Anton for teaching her daughter. She believes that Marie is abandoning her roots and losing her sense of belonging to the community. Despite her mother's initial disapproval, Marie accepts Anton's proposal of marriage.

The beginning of Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe" establishes both the family history of the protagonist Marie, the daughter of a single mother, "Waschfrau

Josepha Lakomb,” (Ebner-Eschenbach, *Neue Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten* 1)³⁶ as well as their socio-economic status. After the death of Marie’s drunken and violent father, who “hätte gewiß seine Frau erschlagen und ihr Töchterchen zur Waise und Bettlerin gemacht, wenn er nur noch ein paar Wochen im Säuferwahnsinn weiter gelebt hätte” (“Die Unverstandene” 1), mother and daughter are now living a good but modest life: “Man hatte sich seit dem Tode des Vaters wieder eingerichtet, lebte anständig, litt keine Entbehrungen, das war aber auch Alles” (4). The difficult past and her successful efforts to survive and provide a decent life for her daughter fill Josepha’s life with “nichts Anderes, als Freude und Stolz” (2).

Despite the fact that she has raised a good daughter, the mother nevertheless feels that she is unable to provide Marie with a life that would be appropriate according to village norms:

Ersparnisse zu einer Mitgift für die Tochter hatte die fleißige Josepha nicht zurücklegen können. . . . Frau Lakomb beklagte sich oft sehr ausführlich darüber und bedauerte ihre Marie, sie trotz ihrer in der ganzen Welt, das heißt auf wenigstens drei Meilen in der Runde, bekannten Bravheit und Schönheit doch nicht unter die Haube zu bringen sein werde. (4)

This text passage describing Josepha’s worries provides us with further information about the setting of the story: a village with a three-mile radius³⁷ in which everyone knows everyone. This type of intimacy is highlighted by the fact that Marie’s goodness and beauty are well known to everyone. Moreover, the passage also hints at the village community’s social norms. Having a fulfilled life as a woman can only be achieved by becoming a wife and presumably also a mother. As we will see, this point of departure will be of major importance in Marie’s development and will be accompanied and affected by feelings of shame.

³⁶ In the remainder of this chapter, all citations for Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe” refer to the cycle *Neue Dorf- und Schloßgeschichten*. For citation purposes, I will abbreviate the story as “Die Unverstandene.”

³⁷ Note that this description supports Moretti’s claim that village stories are organized in circular patterns.

Seventeen-year old Marie is described as a “bildsaubere[s] und grundbrave[s] Jüngerlein” (“Die Unverstandene” 2), who as a child already showed a “gewiße[] anmuthige[] Würde in ihrem ganzen Wesen” (2). This short description of Marie allows us not only to understand who Marie is (or rather how Marie is viewed by the villagers), but also offers insight into village norms and morals. The adjective *bildsauber* provides a moral understanding of Marie in accordance with a particular norm. *Bild* means *picture* or *image* and *sauber* means *clean*, but it can also mean *honest*. The adjective thus indicates that there is a particular image that serves as a standard according to which one is judged. Marie’s image is “clean,” she fits the image to the fullest. The second adjective *grundbrav* not only indicates that Marie is a good child, but also comments on her morality. One of the various meanings of *Grund* is foundation. Thus, the adjective indicates that Marie is good from the inside out rather than merely in her outer behavior. The two adjectives paired with the noun *Jüngerlein* provide more insight into village norms. Marie’s goodness lies in her morality: she is a virgin. The diminutive suffix *-lein* further indicates that she is still seen as a child and only by becoming a wife (which is the only instance in which it is acceptable for her to lose her virginity and thus the descriptor of *Jüngerlein*) can she enter adulthood. Further, Marie is described as full of dignity, the text again commenting on her moral goodness. In this vein, her name also provides an additional moral association. The *Jüngerlein* Marie recalls the Virgin Mary, who is believed by many to be the greatest of all Christian saints and Catholics even accept her as the mother of God. In connection with the word *bildsauber*, one could even go as far to interpret the image (*Bild*) that serves as the standard for judgment as the image of the Virgin Mary. Not only does this association further comment on

Marie's goodness and moral behavior, but it also establishes a religious norm to which the villagers subscribe.

Given these descriptors, Marie is not necessarily portrayed as an individual, but rather as someone who fits into the larger context of the community. Her description fails to include any adjectives that go beyond commenting on her goodness, none that gives us an idea of Marie's personality. Rather, Marie is characterized only in terms of how she subscribes to the morals and norms of the village collective. As we will see in the following, Marie is in fact unable to view herself as part of this collective identity. The collective village identity elicits feelings of shame in her and prompts her to question her sense of belonging and ultimately drives her to separate herself from the collective and develop an understanding of the self that is based on individualism.

Although Marie embodies what according to village morals and norms would be considered the ideal(ized) woman, we learn that Marie never feels true happiness about her life:

Ihrem [Maries] Lachen, wenn es je erklang, merkte man deutlich an, daß es nicht aus dem Herzen kam, sondern nur ein Zugeständnis an die Fröhlichkeit Anderer war. Sie selbst, welchen Grund hätte sie zur Fröhlichkeit gehabt in dieser rauhen Welt, deren Berührung für ein zartes Gebilde wie sie fast immer eine Verwunderung bedeutete? Das zierliche, von schweren, schwarzen Zöpfen umflochtene Haupt leicht vorgebeugt, wandelte sie gleichsam in einer Atmosphäre von mildem, wehmüthigem Selbstgefühl. ("Die Unverstandene" 2-3)

Marie's unhappiness lies in her feelings about herself. She is unable to feel any true happiness in her heart. Further, the text indicates that she has no reason to feel such happiness. This text passage connects her unhappiness to her troubled sense of belonging to the village community. She is unable to comprehend how she could belong in this "rough world," the village. The picture painted by her heavy braided hair and her slightly forward-leaning body creates a sense

of heaviness weighing on her shoulders. She carries herself within the parameters of her village world with a melancholic self-awareness. This bleakness, as I will show, is connected to her difficulty in dealing with the collective identity that she feels forced on her and from which she wants to separate herself in order fully to grasp and embrace her individual identity that she is attempting to develop.

Marie's sense of an identity separate from the collective of the village becomes visible at the *Erntedankfest*, for which the entire village community is gathered in celebration. Among the guests is Alois, “[d]er einzige Sohn eines reichen Bauers,” who had recently begun “dem hübschen Wäscher mädchen schüchterne Aufmerksamkeiten zu erweisen” (“Die Unverstandene” 5). Unexpectedly, Alois asks Marie to dance. Surprised and at first hesitant, Marie steps out on the dance floor with Alois and the text comments on an unusual happiness in Marie that we have not encountered previously: “Weltvergessen, in unaussprechlicher Lebens- und Liebesfreudigkeit drehte sich das glückliche Menschenpaar auf beschwingten Füßen” (8). However, the couple's happiness is contrasted with the displeased reaction of the villagers: “[Die Tanzenden waren] taub und blind für alle Rufe und Zeichen des Mißgefällens, das sein eigenmächtiges Verletzen altherkömmlichen Brauches erregte” (8). Lost in their pleasure, Marie and Alois do not realize that the villagers are not approving of their dancing together. The villagers' reaction is triggered by what they view as a violation of village customs. In their view, Alois and Marie have transgressed village norms because of their respective socio-economic statuses. The text presents Marie and Alois as both being (morally) good; there is no sense that one would be considered wrong for the other—“Er war in seiner Art, was sie in der ihren: ein Gegenstand des Lobes und der Bewunderung” (5). But Marie is “only” the daughter of a poor *Wäschefrau*, while Alois is the

son of a rich peasant. Although Marie and Alois do not notice the displeased gestures and insults of the bystanders, their moment of happiness is interrupted when Alois' father roughly separates the two:

Nicht lange, und es [das Paar] wurde aus seinem Taumel geweckt. Ein kleiner, derb gebauter Mann wackelte mit weit ausgebreiteten Knien auf Alois zu; eine Hand, unter deren Wucht des Jünglings kräftige Gestalt fast zusammenknickte, legte sich auf seine Schulter, und eine vor Zorn erstickte Stimme raunte ihn an: "Komm' nach Haus." Er stand sogleich still und ließ Mariechen fahren, die erschrocken, in peinlicher Verwirrung an ihren vorigen Platz zurückeilte. Ihre Wangen flammten, und eine schmerzlich bittere Entrüstung sprach aus ihren Zügen; doch verlor sie auch jetzt nicht das stolze Bewußtsein ihres Werthes. Unterschätzt konnte sie werden, aber nicht gedemüthigt. ("Die Unverständene" 8-9)

This violent act becomes a moment of public shaming that elicits various emotions in Marie.

Although the text does not specifically comment on feelings of shame, we can nonetheless infer that shame plays a role when we look at Marie's behavior, bodily reaction, and the other emotions that this public display elicits. Marie's first reaction is confusion accompanied by embarrassment. Let us recall that embarrassment is an immediately related emotion of shame that is momentary, temporary, and inconsequential. Embarrassment emerges when one perceives the self as being socially out of place or the object of social scrutiny. While shame is a matter of self-assessment and can occur with or without an audience, embarrassment requires an audience, usually comes by surprise, and is rarely deliberately inflicted. Embarrassment can occur in reaction to an action that one does not necessarily consider morally bad, which society, however, judges as such. The father's act takes Marie by surprise, maybe not necessarily because she is not aware that the villagers will not approve of her dance with Alois (earlier she commented on

Alois' family not approving of a marriage between the two),³⁸ but rather because she was blinded by her own feelings of intense happiness, which closed off everything around her. Due to the sudden and unexpected interruption by the father, Marie is forcefully pulled out of her dream-like state and consequently experiences the father's reaction as harshly pushing her out of place. Although the father might not have deliberately intended to embarrass Marie—he was more concerned about his son's reputation—his act arouses the attention of the people around and places the girl under the watchful eyes of the villagers. Her embarrassment is however only temporary. It releases a bodily reaction of burning cheeks or blushing, and quickly turns into anger and disgust.

What becomes interesting in Marie's reaction to the public shaming of Alois by his father is the deliberate avoidance of humiliation. As outlined previously, humiliation is considered the active, public face of shame. To humiliate someone means to intend to shame that person and thus humiliation is seen as a serious sort of shaming. Because humiliation is an intended act of shaming, it carries a statement about one's dignity and can therefore damage one's self-worth. Because Marie's immediate reaction was embarrassment rather than shame, she is able to avoid a feeling of humiliation. Both shame and embarrassment are subjective emotional states, whereby embarrassment is a lighter matter than shame because it is not accompanied by a sense of fault. Had Marie reacted with feelings of shame, it would indicate that she views herself as outside the morals and norms of the village. However, the fact that shame does not occur, tells us that she

³⁸ In a conversation with her mother about marriage and her interest in Alois, Marie already indicates that she thinks that the prospect of her marrying Alois would be met with disapproval: “[Der Dorf-Majoratsherr] hat Dich lieb, er wird Dich heirathen,” versicherte [Josepha]. Marie jedoch senkte die langbewimperten Augen und erwiderte seufzend: ‘Mutter, das versteht Ihr nicht. Er hat mich lieb, er möchte mich heirathen; aber was werden seine Leute dazu sagen?’” (6)

understands herself, is confident, and values who she is. Since Marie “only” feels embarrassed, her emotional reaction is connected to the momentary situation rather than her being.

What complicates Marie’s “stolze[s] Bewußtsein ihres Werthes” and her understanding of herself is the emergence of a secondary emotional reaction, namely disgust. As described in the introduction, disgust is a self-deceptive emotion that conceals facts about ourselves that are difficult to face. We feel disgust at another person or their actions when they reveal something about ourselves that we do not want to acknowledge or accept. Marie reacts with disgust because the action of Alois’s father shows that she is being seen as a mere *Wäschefrau* of low social standing in the village collective. Feeling disgusted can thus be seen as a protection mechanism that Marie uses to separate herself from the collective identity by which she is being judged, and it reconciles her belief in her worth as an individual with her own sense of identity.

Most upsetting to her is that Alois not only does not stand up for her, but he also does not break with collective village norms:

Hätte Alois die Kühnheit gehabt, sie anzusehen, vielleicht würde er aus ihrem Anblick die Kraft geschöpft haben, einen Kampf aufzunehmen um einen so köstlichen Besitz. Aber er besaß diese Kühnheit nicht. Sanft wie ein Lamm zog derjenige, der soeben erst ein Löwe geschienen, hinter dem voranschreitenden Alten von Schauplatz seines Triumphs und seiner Niederlage ab. (“Die Unverstandene” 9)

While appearing like a “Löwe” at first, in the presence of the villagers and in particular his father, Alois quickly changes into a “[s]anft[es] ... Lamm” who is not willing to fight for her. Instead of asserting his dominance within the group and against any outside challenges, Alois blends in with the herd and follows a leader’s commands. The metaphors of lion and lamb show

that Marie's attraction to Alois was based on her wish for him to be an individual rather than a complacent member of the community.

Following the wishes of his father, Alois stops seeing Marie and avoids her company. Marie's mother does not see any fault in conforming to the collective village norms: "War es nicht gut und klug gethan, sich in einer Kleinigkeit schweigend zu fügen" ("Die Unverstandene" 12). She believes that Alois's behavior was warranted and does not understand why Marie would want him to go against the rules of the community. Josepha supports Alois's lamb-like behavior and does not deem it necessary for him to embrace his inner lion. Contrary, Marie loses interest in Alois exactly because he acted like a lamb and did not stand up for himself and their relationship. She declares, "Ich möcht' mich schämen an seiner Stell'" (33) and brings to the foreground that to her this lack of independence is shameful. She cannot understand how Alois does not feel the need to distance himself from the community and embrace his individuality.

After Walter's death ends an unhappy marriage, Marie accepts the position of the "hochfürstliche Wäschemeisterin" (56). While the women in the village see her as the "kleine[s] Mariechen Lakomb" (57) who is still part of the village community as she used to be when she was a child, Marie sees herself as "die Vertreterin eines der wichtigsten und bestbesoldeten Aemter im fürstlichen Haushalte" (57). Supervising and controlling the other maids, Marie is certainly not the little girl the village women want her to be.

Ihres Amtes waltete Marie mit großartiger Umsicht. Sie ging langsam durch die Waschküche und die Plättstuben; der Schlüsselbund an ihrem Gürtel klorrte und begleitete ihre Schritte, wie eines antiken Feldherrn, mit Erzesklang. Ihre Augen waren schalkenscharf für das kleinste Versehen der Mägde. Wenn sie lobte, geschah es wehmüthig, und nie ohne sich selbst mitzuloben. (59)

Instead, she walks through the household like a “Feldherr” (“Die Unverstandene” 59) meticulously inspecting the maids’ work and criticizing them whenever they make the smallest mistake. By assuming the position of a commander, Marie not only rejects her place among the villagers, but also actively tries to stand apart from the community of the *fürstliche Wäschefrauen*.

This separation between Marie and the villagers becomes even more apparent when they start avoiding her. Due to her position and her behavior, “war sie ... in der Meinung ihrer Mitbürger gesunken” (57). The past participle *gesunken* (from *sinken*) can be read as *had sunk* and may suggest that the villagers believe that Marie is compromising her moral character. Marie on the other hand sees herself as above the villagers and disdains their work ethic and their lack of a sense of responsibility. “[Marie] ging von hinnen, gekränkt in den besten Empfindungen, bestärkt in ihrer schmerzlichen Geringschätzung der Menschen, und betrauerte in der Nachlässigkeit einer ihrer Mägde den Mangel an Pflichtgefühl der gesamten heutigen Jugend” (60). Marie’s arrogant behavior elicits “schamlose Gerüchte” (63) about a love affair between Marie and the *Kanzleirath* among the villagers, causing the divide to worsen and isolating Marie even further. While the *Kanzleirath* is ashamed and humiliated by the false accusations, Marie experiences neither of these feelings. In fact, she she does not care to address the rumors: “Ihrerseits trug [Marie] nichts dazu bei, die allgemeine Mißgunst zu vermindern und wenigstens Einzelne aus dem großen Publikum zu gewinnen. Sie vereiste immer mehr, zog die Oberlippe immer verächtlicher in die Höhe” (59). Given that shame and humiliation emerge in response to being judged for violating norms or a moral defect within one’s self, this lack of emotional response can be read as Marie’s complete separation from the collective. She is unable

to notice that a transgression has occurred because she does not subscribe to the village norms by which this transgression is being measured. Because she does not observe the norms of the collective as her own, she does not see any transgression occurring. “Sie hatte im Bewußtsein ihrer Schuldlosigkeit dem Verdacht ruhig die Stirn geboten” (“Die Unverstandene” 78). She has developed a sense of self that is disconnected from the ideals of the collective community.

Marie’s separation from the village collective manifests itself even further when Anton Wellner, the new village teacher, arrives with his mother Judica Wellner. Judica becomes acquainted with Josepha and starts visiting the Lakombs frequently. Josepha cannot establish a connection with Judica, quickly has enough of “dem Zeug” (97), and repeatedly finds excuses not to have to join the conversations: “”Meistens hatte die alte Josepha schon früher einen Vorwand ergriffen, um sich aus der Gesellschaft, in der es ihr nicht behagte, zurückzuziehen” (106). While Josepha does not enjoy Judica’s and Anton’s company, Marie “vernahm Ausrufungen, die für sie keinen oder nur einen dunkeln Sinn hatten” (92-93), and is immediately overcome with curiosity and starts spending more and more time with Judica and eventually also Anton.

Spending time with the Wellners, Marie starts to feel a sense of comfort that she has not experienced before. “Marie blieb allein mit Anton und Judica, und das Gefühl einer großen aber bänglichen Wonne, das sie dabei empfand, stumpfte sich auch mit der Zeit nicht ab, im Gegentheil, es nahm zu” (106). She enjoys their company; however, she also feels intellectually challenged by their knowledge and soon insecurities emerge. For the first time, Marie is overcome by feelings of shame:

Bisher, wenn sie sich falsch beurtheilt gesehen hatte, war alles Bedauern darüber mit einem Achselzucken erledigt worden.—Du lieber Gott—diese Menschen, was wissen die? Was kann man von ihnen verlangen? Aber jetzt? So oft Judica ihre lebhaften, grauen Augen höchst angeregt und wißbegierig auf Marie richtete und fragte: ‘Wie meinen Sie das, liebe Frau?’—So oft der Schullehrer über eine Aeüßerung ihres naiven Pessimismus staunte und nicht begreifen zu können schien, wie ein rasch verdammendes Urtheil, eine schlimme Voraussetzung so unbefangen von Marien ausgesprochen werden konnte, hätte sie vor Beschämung weinen mögen. (“Die Unverstandene” 106)

Up to now, the judgments of the villagers did not intimidate her, because she did not subscribe to their norms, viewed them as beneath her, and placed herself outside the village collective. In the company of the Wellners, however, the smallest signs of evaluation cause her to blame herself for lacking certain abilities: “Ihre Überlegenheit war es ja gewesen, die sie den Anderen rätselhaft gemacht hatte. Diesen Beiden gegenüber konnte aber von Überlegenheit keine Rede sein. Wenn diese Menschen sie nicht verstanden, dann lag die Schuld an ihr, dann war es traurig für sie selbst” (106-7). She finds herself in between two worlds; she feels superior to the village collective, inferior to the circles of Anton and Judica. This feeling of being inferior to the Wellners elicits feelings of shame in Marie. Here, shame does not necessary serve as a sign of transgression of values, but rather reminds or confirms for Marie who she wants to be and where she wants to belong. “Sie [Marie] wurde von einer heißen Sehnsucht erfaßt, sich zu den so hoch über ihr Stehenden zu erheben” (107). The shameful feelings she experiences prompt her to make the changes she sees necessary in order finally to separate herself from the village collective and establish the sense of self-identity that she has been yearning for.

In contrast to Auerbach’s teacher in “Der Lauterbacher” who attempts to convince Hedwig to let him educate her, Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe” shows how Marie takes the initiative to learn from the teacher. She tells Judica of her wish to learn and

asks if she and Anton would be willing to work with her. Both Anton and his mother are overjoyed by her desire to learn and they are excited to share their knowledge with Marie: ““O, liebe Frau, dürften wir Ihnen von derselben [Bildung] Einiges mittheilen, wir würden uns glücklich schätzen!”” (“Die Unverstandene” 107) Marie starts spending a lot of time with Anton, who gives her notebooks full of poetry. In an attempt to understand, learn, and remember one of the poems, Marie becomes frustrated about her slow progress. She blames her lack of ability on the dialect she speaks and immediately decides that she must learn *Hochdeutsch*.

Contrary to Auerbach’s Hedwig, who refuses to learn standard German because it would be shameful for her to give up her dialect—“Ich thät mich in die Seel’ nein schämen, wenn ich anders reden thät” (“Der Lauterbacher” 102)—Marie eagerly learns High German and spends a lot of time practicing proper grammar: ““Das tiefe Thal, des tiefen Thales, dem tiefen Thale, das tiefe Thal.’ Eine kleine Pause—Wiederholung, und nun auswendig: ‘Das tiefe Thal ... dem tiefen—das ... dem’” (“Die Unverstandene” 116). The Bible is replaced with books such as ““Deutsche Sprachschule’ und ... ‘Lesebuch’” (108). She listens to the teacher’s lessons and quickly her desire to learn goes beyond the language: “Mariens Neugier wuchs von einem Vortrage zum anderen, sie konnte nicht müde werden, Herrn Anton zuzuhören. Als er einst das Wort Weltgeschichte aussprach, bat sie schüchtern und dringend: ‘O, haben Sie die Gnade—erzählen Sie mir die!’” (108) Marie begins to spend less and less time at home or with her mother and uses any opportunity to be around Anton and his mother. Like a sponge, she absorbs any information she can get from the teacher’s lessons and his mother’s stories.

Marie’s mother resents her for starting to speak *Hochdeutsch* and engaging with literature. “Seitdem [Marie] ‘nicht’ statt ‘nit,’ ‘ist’ statt ‘is’ sagte, von den Umlauten manchmal

Notiz nahm und sogar in Büchern las, die keine Gebetbücher waren, nährte die Alte einen bitteren Groll gegen sie” (“Die Unverstandene” 112). She resents the teacher and is outraged “dass er sich vermaß, Marien in dieser Sprache zu unterweisen, die sie doch schon als Kind von ihrer Mutter gelernt” (113). She reprimands Marie: “Sprich, wie sich’s für Unsereins schickt!” (112). Her saying that she wants Marie to continue speaking dialect so that she can remain “Unsereins” shows us two things: on the one hand it shows how speaking dialect is considered to be part of belonging to the collective community. On the other hand it also reveals that Josepha thinks that Marie has stepped out of that communal belonging. Ultimately, Marie’s mother believes that Marie is abandoning her social origins.

Josepha’s concern about Marie speaking *Hochdeutsch* as a sign of not belonging to the collective community is also mirrored in the title of the story. The title refers to Marie as “die Unverstandene.” The word “Unverstandene” in the title can be read from two perspectives. On the one hand, the villagers do not understand Marie—this could be seen both in regard to her speaking standard German, but also concerning her turning away from communal norms and thus the community as a whole. On the other hand, from Marie’s perspective, the title indicates her struggle with belonging to the collective as she feels that her individuality is not understood.

But for Marie the educated circle is her new and desired social belonging. Through her determination and efforts to learn standard German we are finally able to look into Marie’s emotional (dis)connection with the collective village community and its norms. Upon her mother’s disapproval, Marie responds, “schlecht und fehlerhaft sprechen schicke sich für gar Niemanden” (112). Her reply not only indicates that she views dialect as being bad and erroneous German, but it also expresses her desire to be viewed as “better.” In standard German,

schicken can mean *to be appropriate*. Thus, Marie indicates that she believes speaking dialect is improper to an educated person. With this meaning of the verb, we can read Marie's statement as setting new norms for herself according to which speaking dialect is seen as unbefitting to her desired social standing. However, in this case, we may also look at *sich schicken* in its regional connotation. As a regional expression it means *to be sufficient, to suffice, to be enough*. If something is not sufficient, it is lacking something. For Marie, dialect lacks sophistication. She views dialect as inappropriate and even degrading and associates it with lower social standing.

Although Marie is eager to learn standard German and is a good student who studies diligently, she is embarrassed when Anton sees her studying and making mistakes. When Marie is trying to memorize the case endings, Anton unexpectedly shows up exactly in the moment when Marie is stuck and cannot complete the endings by heart and corrects her: “Das tiefe Thal ... dem tiefen—das ... dem ...’ ‘Des tiefen Thales,’ klang es bescheiden berichtigend von der anderen Seite des Baumes herüber, und Marie erbebt” (“Die Unverstandene” 116). Again, Marie is overcome with feelings of shame about who she is:

Jetzt schämte sie sich vor ihm, schämte sich ihrer Lernbegier, die ihr mit einem Male läppisch und lächerlich vorkam, und als er nach einer langen Pause zögernd begann: “Ich muß nochmal um Entschuldigung bitten—ich habe Sie in Ihrem Fleiße gestört—” fiel sie erröthend ein: “Ach, mit meinem Fleiß! ... Was kommt dabei heraus?” (118).

The reason that shame emerges in Marie when Anton observes her studying is not only the fact that she made a mistake, but it is also because she feels shame about having to study in the first place. It reminds her of where she should belong: “Sie können sich gar nicht vorstellen, wie wir aufwachsen, wir Frauen auf dem Land. In der Stadt wird es gewiß ganz anders, dort ...” (118).

Marie, who is falling in love with Anton, fears that even if she studies hard, Anton would never consider being with someone whose roots are ultimately the village collective.

However, Anton is actually inspired by Marie's efforts and in her behavior he sees someone who strives for what she believes in and what makes her happy. Finally, Anton tells Marie that he wants to marry her exactly because of the fact that she is not a city girl: "[H]eirathen Sie mich—ich brauche eine Frau, die mich nimmt, wie ich bin, mit meinen vielen Schwächen, mit meinem wenigen Guten" ("Die Unverstandene" 128). Anton is fascinated by Marie because he sees her as an individual rather than someone who remains stuck in her origins. He himself, we learn, was suffering from having to adhere to collective ideals and norms of the city. Uncomfortable with who he was expected to be and what he was expected to do, Anton separated himself from the collective of his circles in order to do what he loved. Hearing Anton's story, Marie eventually rejects her mother's wish for an arranged marriage according to the village's tradition and agrees to marry Anton for love.

As soon as the villagers hear of Marie and Anton's engagement, we learn once again how the villagers feel about Marie and her behavior. "Bei der Bevölkerung des Dorfes erregte die bevorstehende Verbindung des Herrn Schullehrers mit der Frau Wäschemeisterin lebhaft und nicht unsympathische Theilnahme" (129). In the comments made by the villagers we understand that Marie has long been viewed by them as being outside of the collective—"Daß die Marie immer etwas Apartes haben will, das weiß man ja!" (129), "Der muß von weit herkommen, der ihr recht sein soll" (130). These comments reveal that Marie is seen as different and wanting things that the village community does not offer; she does not belong. Even the engagement itself uncovers the separation that has taken place between Marie and the village collective.

Instead of celebrating the engagement according to village customs, “[wurde] die Verlobung in einem kleinen Kreise von Gönnern und Freunden ... gefeiert” (“Die Unverstandene” 133). When we look at the guests that attend the engagement, it becomes clear that Marie has completely stepped out of the village collective. With the exception of Marie’s mother, all the guests attending are of upper social standing. Not one villager attends or is even invited to celebrate the union between Marie and Anton.

However, the engagement party does not go as planned. In his happiness, Anton drinks a bit too much. When he sees Marie dancing with another man, he gets jealous and separates the two dancers and asks Marie to dance with him instead. “Ihn erfaßte das beklemmende Gefühl, daß er von Feinden umringt sei und kämpfen müsse, ein Einzelner gegen Alle. ‘Was will ich denn? Einen Tanz mit meiner Braut will ich! Mein Recht fordere ich! ... Aus dem Wege!’ rief er, und drängte vorwärts wie ein Löwe” (144). The scene as well as the description of Anton as a lion resembles the beginning of the story. While Anton is exactly acting as Marie back then wished Alois had—like a lion—he also acts just as Alois’s father did when he was separating the dancing couple. Marie is reminded of the public shaming incident with Alois and the painful feelings she experienced resurface: “Was ging nicht alles in ihr [Marie] vor in diesem schrecklichen Augenblick! Da kam er heran der Mann ihres Herzens, ihrer Verehrung, ihrer Anbetung—und erweckte eine fürchterliche Erinnerung, einen entwürdigenden Vergleich ... Ein Bild stieg vor ihr auf, das an Jahre des Elends mahnte, und der Erniedrigung ...” (145).³⁹ Although Anton has no intention of humiliating her, Marie is transported back to the scenario with Alois. While the public shaming by Alois’ father only caused Marie temporary

³⁹ Marie’s memories of prior suffering could also be read to refer to her domestically abusive father.

embarrassment and ultimately anger, Anton's behavior elicits a feeling of humiliation in Marie. Marie feels humiliated because she is reduced to being Anton's bride, and nothing more. While she was hoping that Anton would support her individualism, his action, in Marie's eyes, embeds her into another collective identity—that of being a wife—thus threatening her independence.

By publicly refusing to dance with her groom, Marie provokes an act of shaming, both explicitly and implicitly: “Dicht hinter Anton erscholl Folteneck's spöttisches Lachen: ‘Einen großen Anlauf haben Sie genommen, um sich einen Korb zu holen. Haha!’” (“Die Unverstandene” 146) In response to Marie's behavior, Folteneck shames Anton by pointing out that he has been rejected. Anton is perplexed and pleads with Marie: “‘Einen Korb? ... Marie, das thun Sie mir nicht an! ...’ stammelte der Verhöhnnte” (146). Although Anton feels ridiculed, he attempts to save the situation through the exchange of signs of affection and asks Marie for a kiss. Marie's reaction to his asking for a kiss results in an intensified act of shaming Anton:

“Jetzt einen Kuß?” rief sie. Der böse Geist, der von ihr gewichen war, seitdem sie diesen Mann kennen gelernt, der Geist der Hoffart bemächtigte sich ihrer, bräute von ihrem Antlitz ... Anton sah das unheilverbündende Zeichen nicht oder mißachtete es; in kühner Vertrauensseligkeit beugte er sich zur Geliebten nieder, da erhob sie die Hand ... (147)

Marie slaps Anton and shames him in several ways. Not only does she refuse to kiss him, but she also strips him of power in front of their guests and their mothers. Marie has overstepped all the boundaries and violated Anton's honor. When the tense moment is interrupted by a loud noise of breaking wine bottles that grabs the guests' attention, Anton and his mother leave silently. The silent departure removes Anton and Judica from an embarrassing and humiliating situation.

Only afterwards does Marie realize that her response did not support the social status she desires to achieve. “[A]m liebsten hätte sie sich in tiefste Einsamkeit vergraben. Sie hatte eine

Handlung begangen, durch welche sie in eine Reihe gestellt wurde mit den Gemeinen, sie fühlte sich gesunken, tiefer noch als ins Unglück—in die Schmach” (“Die Unverstandene” 151). She views her actions as disgraceful and humiliating for herself. She feels that she has done exactly what she despises about the villagers. She has violated her own personal standards, an act of which she is now ashamed.

Doubting his love for her after the incident, Marie is devastated and expects Anton to end the engagement and their relationship. After a few days of no contact between Marie and the Wellner family, Judica visits the Lakombs to deliver a message from her son. He wants to invite Marie and her mother to his residence the next day, but does not disclose the reason why they should come. During the conversation, however, it becomes clear that Anton and Judica both blame Anton for the events at the party and not Marie. When Marie and Josepha arrive at Anton’s, they realize that the reason for the gathering to which all the guests from the engagement party are re-invited is Anton’s public apology to Marie. By apologizing in front of all the guests and taking responsibility for his actions, he removes, at least partially, the sense of shame and humiliation Marie felt in response to her actions that night and pays her the kind of respect and “Ehrfurcht” (160) that according to him his bride deserved.

This acknowledgement of his guilt and his misbehavior towards his fiancée expresses to Marie that he considers her to be his equal, and thus she responds with her own apology. In reaction to Marie’s apology, Anton sees the situation as settled: “Jetzt sind wir quitt, Frau Walter, und jedem von uns steht es frei, seinen einsamen Weg weiter zu gehen” (162). While Marie misreads this statement and is ready to leave the party with her mother, Anton holds her back and asks her to stay: “Ich will ein Leiter und Lenker sein und bin nur ein fehlbarer Mensch. Was wäre

mir, dem Soldaten im Dienste der Menschheit, der Besitz eines tapferen Weibes! Eines Weibes, das im Fall der Not sogar dem abgeirrten Herrn und Meister eine Zurechtweisung zu erteilen versteht” (“Die Unverstandene” 162). Even more so, he is thankful that she stood up to him and is the strong and independent woman that she is. Granting her the agency to be the woman she wants to be and put him in his place, Anton supports and appreciates her sense of individuality that separates her from the ideals and standards of the village collective.

As my close-readings have shown, Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe” addresses questions of belonging in regard to collective identities and individualism. Ebner-Eschenbach’s story is an example of how even the smallest influences of the city such as the use of High German in place of dialect and the neglect of traditional cultural norms raise questions of identity.⁴⁰ In telling this story, Ebner-Eschenbach contrasts individuality with the collective and opens a space in which both forms of belonging can develop and exist.

1.6 Conclusion

As my close-readings have shown, Auerbach’s “Der Lauterbacher” and Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe” can be read with language and belonging as their central axis. In fact, in these two stories, language becomes the key marker of belonging, one that is tightly intertwined with feelings of shame. Analyzing language and belonging in the two stories through the lens of shame reveals how contact between the urban and the regional, high and low, influences the construction of identity in different ways. Auerbach’s story values

⁴⁰ It needs to be acknowledged that it is not a given that standard German is spoken in cities. This dichotomy of dialect vs. High German is somewhat manufactured by the author and geography, social class, and education come to play in this division.

the village and the region for itself and places an emphasis on the collective community and its customs. Language as one of the markers of belonging serves as a means of communication that ultimately allows for social integration. In contrast, Ebner-Eschenbach's story comments on the possibility of social distinction by foregrounding language as critical to education, social mobility, and self-actualization.

The idea of collective vs. individualism is highlighted yet again when we consider both the language and content of the endings of both stories. Auerbach's story concludes with the wedding scene in which the village community is assembled in the local church where they all celebrate the marriage between Adolf and Hedwig. Instead of depicting the scene through the lens of the characters, Auerbach gives his narrator the last words. He not only informs the reader about the union between the protagonists, but also expresses his approval thereof. This ending foregrounds the ultimate integration of Adolf into the collective and underlines the importance of the collective over individuality. It is not the voice of an individual protagonist that concludes the story, but rather the singing of the community and the comment of the extra-diegetic narrator.

In contrast, Ebner-Eschenbach's story ends in a conversation between Anton and Marie about their renewed engagement. This scene unlike Auerbach's last scene takes place in *Hochdeutsch* which indicates Marie's ultimate disintegration from the collective and underlines her individual development. Moreover, the content of the dialogue emphasizes Marie's agency as an individual within the relationship. Although Anton literally speaks the last words, they are a response to Marie's actions and indicate how she is equal to him. She has finally established a sense of self that is separate from the village collective and provides her social mobility within the circles of educated bourgeois society.

In taking up these questions of belonging, these two stories ultimately bring to the foreground tensions between the regional and the urban in modern times. While early village tales are concerned with the lives of the peasants and the influence of modern influences on the collective, later *Dorfgeschichten* focus on how modernization affects the identity of individual peasants. What is striking is the role of the schoolteacher in both early and late nineteenth-century village tales. With the introduction of compulsory primary education in the eighteenth century in both Austria (in 1775) and Prussia (in 1763), children of both sexes were provided with skills needed for a modernizing world such as reading and writing—and thus language—but also music and education in ethics. In order to bring this education into rural regions, teachers were sent to villages to provide this mandatory education to peasant children. Since teachers mainly came from urban regions into the villages, they were often the first contact the villagers had with urban influences. Thus, the entry of a teacher into the village increased the likelihood of a culture clash between the urban and the regional including the mixing of different social groups which influences questions of (not) belonging. This becomes evident in both Auerbach's and Ebner-Eschenbach's stories in which both Anton and Adolf initially disrupt the village community. While Auerbach's teacher integrates into the village collective and finally belongs to the community through his marriage to Hedwig, Anton supports Marie's disintegration and helps her establish her individuality in the higher social group. The very presence of a schoolteacher from outside in both stories signals changing times.

As both these stories show, a shift in how shame is experienced accompanies the culture clash between the rural and the urban in modernizing times. As outlined in the introduction, shame in the early nineteenth century is closely tied to a sense of honor in regard to the

community. This relationship between honor and shame plays a role in encouraging each person to maintain an identity that is valued by the collective. Shame in the late nineteenth century, on the other hand, moves toward the personal. With the rise of modernity and the effects of education, individuals, in particular women, gain social mobility that allows them to leave the collective and establish a sense of the self as a distinctly unique being. In doing so, the individual separates him or herself from the collective norms and morals, and even establishes his or her own. When shame emerges, it is a reaction to the transgression or violation of these new individual norms rather than those of the collective.

Chapter 2

Social Norms and the Constructive vs. Destructive Nature of Shame as a Moral Emotion in Gotfried Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" (1856) and Berthold Auerbach's "Des Schloßbauers Vefele" (1843)

2.1 Introduction

As we have seen in chapter one, shame can play a major role in determining, altering, maintaining, and even rejecting one's sense of belonging to a community. Shame serves not only to reveal the community's standards of belonging, but also unleashes an individual's desire (not) to belong. In this chapter, we saw, furthermore, how characters negotiate this shame either within the collective or as individuals and find a resolution that relieves them from it and establishes a sense of belonging that leads to a desired outcome. In such an outcome, one could then say that shame served constructively to guide these (self-)negotiations and eventually to avoid transgressions of either communal values ("Der Lauterbacher") or personal values ("Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe"). What happens, however, when these negotiations cannot be undertaken by the collective or the individual? Does shame then still carry a constructive value? To what extent does it instead become destructive to either the community or the individual?

To address this question, this chapter looks at the interplay between social norms and the constructive vs. destructive nature of shame. Here, it becomes important to address specifically the fact that shame is a moral emotion, especially since village values are based on an idea of moral goodness. Moral goodness determines whether an individual within a community is seen as "good" (adhering to norms) or "bad" (transgressing norms). Thus, when attempting to

determine if and if so how shame can serve constructively and/or destructively in the literary representations of village life, one must look at how the moral aspect of shame supports and/or interferes with the norms of the village community.

Investigating this interplay between communal norms and feelings of shame, I bring to the foreground how shame not only contributes to important stages of belonging and identity development, but also how it functions to serve either constructively or destructively.

Extrapolating from theories of shame as a moral emotion and its implications for one's social existence, I contend that feelings of shame serve as a way of constructively criticizing existing social norms. In particular, leaning on Gabriele Taylor's work on shame in her book *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self Assessment* (1985) and her essay "Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect" (1995), I investigate representations of village life in regard to Taylor's two types of shame and their consequences: "genuine shame" as the constructive type and "false shame" as the destructive one. Focusing on Taylor's concepts, I complicate the idea of the constructive nature of "genuine shame" and the destructive nature of "false shame" and suggest that each might function in opposition to what Taylor's theory proposes.

In my examination of Gottfried Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" (1856) and Berthold Auerbach's "Des Schloßbauers Vefele" (1843), I will analyze how communal values not only contribute to feelings of shame, but also how they have an effect on whether shame serves constructively or destructively. Central to both Auerbach's and Keller's texts are the ways in which communal norms not only shape the individual but also how there exists an interplay between these values and feelings of shame. Although very different in their plots, both village

tales ultimately pose questions about how communal norms contribute to ideas of sexuality, love, and marriage, and how shame often plays a role in enforcing these ideas.

Auerbach's and Keller's texts foreground the constructive and destructive power of shame in influencing the young characters' decisions in regard to the self and their relationships, ultimately leading to their downfalls. While both stories have tragic endings that, as I will show, result from the destructive nature of shame, I argue that the two authors position themselves quite differently in regard to their message. While the deaths of the protagonists are presented as the only way to dispel the shame they have been experiencing, the authors have different foci. Auerbach enables his protagonist Vefele to escape the shame by not only removing her from the village community but also from the mind of the reader. Keller challenges his reader to evaluate his/her judgment of the protagonists Vreni and Sali by instilling a sense of shame in the reader.

2.2 Constructive vs. Destructive Nature of Shame as a Moral Emotion

As we have seen in the introduction and in the previous chapter and will continue seeing throughout this work, feelings of shame can be quite powerful in determining one's behavior. They serve as a warning against transgressing norms and values or guide one toward rectified behavior if transgression has already occurred. The reason shame functions in these ways derives from the moral component evident in the emotion. In fact, psychologists characterize shame as a moral emotion. What does it mean to claim that an emotion is moral and how does it compare to those that are not considered moral emotions?

The researchers Paul Eckman and Robert Plutchik were among the first scholars to investigate a set of emotions as what they call “basic emotions.”¹ Based on a Darwinian approach and Silvan Tomkins’ studies on affect, Eckman defines basic emotions as those that are animalistic emotions, that is, the most basic emotions that humans share with animals and that are thought to be biologically determined. These emotions are characterized as emotions that mainly serve an individual’s self-defense and are seen to be triggers of behavior with high survival value. Moreover, due to their biological nature, these emotions along with the facial expressions that convey them are seen to be universal. In accordance with Eckman, six emotions are generally grouped as “basic emotions”: anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise. In his *Emotion: Theory, Research, and Experience* (1980), Plutchik expanded Eckman’s research and not only added two emotions to the category, but also grouped them into pairs of polar opposites (joy-sadness, anger-fear, trust-distrust, surprise-anticipation) and created a wheel of emotions that illustrates how these emotions are related. While one may argue that an individual’s fight for survival can certainly have communal value (such as for reproductive purposes), at their core, “basic emotions” are self-centered and are not triggered by communal norms; nor do they contribute to them.

Contrary to “basic emotions” stand moral emotions, which are considered to have a communal value. They are defined as “linked to the interests or welfare either of society as a whole or at least of persons other than the judge or the agent” (Haidt 276). Moral emotions, often also referred to as “self-conscious,” “social,” or “higher-order” emotions, are seen as distinctly

¹ The term “basic emotions” was first labeled by Paul Ekman in his 1957 essay “A Methodological Discussion of Nonverbal Behavior” and further expanded in his subsequent work. See “Expression and the Nature of Emotion” (1984), “An Argument for Basic Emotion” (1992), “Are There Basic Emotions?” (1992), and “Basic Emotions” (1999).

human; they “represent a key element of our human moral apparatus, influencing the link between moral standards and moral behavior” (Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek 345).

Furthermore, these emotions can only be experienced by individuals who have a highly developed sense of self-reflection. Moral emotions require that an individual be capable of “position-taking,” that is, the individual must be able to recognize how his/her behavior would affect others as well as how it would be perceived by others. Moreover, he/she needs to be able to imagine how that reception of his/her behavior would ultimately reflect back on his/her character (Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek 347; Leary 329). While early scholars of moral emotions see them as operating on self-serving motives by “protect(ing) people’s social well-being,” later studies show that these

motives to self-enhance, self-verify, and self-expand are rooted in people’s concerns with social approval and acceptance, and self-conscious emotions arise in response to events that have real or imagined implications for others’ judgments of the individual. Thus, these motives and emotions do not operate to maintain certain states of the self, ... but rather to facilitate people’s social interactions and relationships. (Leary 317)

Ultimately, moral emotions arise from the understanding of how others see us, or as Leary puts it, they “are much more strongly tied to what people think other people think of them than to what people think of themselves ... People experience self-conscious emotions not because of how they evaluate themselves but rather because of how they think they are being evaluated by others” (330), and in turn influence our future behavior in order not to disrupt the communal well-being. They are often called “moral” emotions as they guide us to establish our morals in relation to society’s norms. Therefore, they are emotions through which we establish our conformity or nonconformity to any set of communal norms. Thus, moral emotions are

communal: they bind us to others, to their expectations and ideas. Guilt, embarrassment, and pride are grouped, alongside shame, as the four moral emotions.

As we saw in the introduction, shame research is based on the idea that shame is an emotion that is unique to humankind. In *Zur Kulturgeschichte der Scham* (2011), Michaele Bauks and Martin F. Meyer argue that the most important aspect of shame is that the emotion is a human attribute that differentiates humankind from animals (10). It is determined by communal norms and thus context specific; it has consequences for our daily life within particular communities. Let us recall that shame is generally understood as an emotion that is closely related to other human emotions such as guilt, embarrassment, humiliation, anger, compassion, regret, and sympathy. Moreover, scholars investigate shame as a moral emotion, and define it as a feeling that results from an action that has implications for one's social existence. As already outlined in the introduction, contemporary explanations of shame range from simple definitions such as "shame is a ubiquitous emotion in social life" (Nussbaum 173) to more complex ideas that look at shame as a response to a violation of our ethical identity, which "is defined by our commitment to a [particular] set of moral norms" (Braithwaite/Braithwaite 19). Thus, as Jennifer C. Manion nicely summarizes in her article "Girl's Blush Sometimes: Gender, Moral Agency, and the Problem of Shame," shame is a "self-reflective emotion" and involves a "painful, sudden awareness of the self as less good than hoped for and expected" and plays a significant role in moral life (21). Scholars such as Taylor and Manion, among others, examine the moral component of shame as a good thing, arguing that it functions positively by serving as a warning "when we transgress or are in danger of transgressing our own or our culture's moral

expectations” and in turn allows us to re-evaluate our actions (Manion, “Girls Blush Sometimes” 22).

In this vein, due to its self-reflective nature, shame appears to be an individualistic emotion. Thus, feelings of shame are not universally applicable as they depend both on the social context and on the individual’s ability to evaluate him/herself within this context. In fact, shame is perforce socially constructed and there is an element of (positive) social control at work. The emotion offers a communal way of policing that is enforced through the individual’s (non)conformity to the social norms and values. Thus, as a moral emotion, shame attempts to regulate an individual’s (moral) behavior in order to secure communal well-being and affirm the community’s structure.

Although providing an approach to shame similar to what John Braithwaite and Valerie Braithwaite term “ethical identity concept,” Taylor distinguishes between two kinds of shame as a moral emotion, namely “genuine shame” and “false shame.” She sets standards that identify the two kinds of shame as appropriate or inappropriate, beneficial or destructive, or, in her terminology, “genuine” or “false,” and claims that the former is “always constructive in the sense of being a pressure towards maintaining or returning to the equilibrium” (“Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect” 176).² Taylor categorizes genuine shame as “the emotion of self-protection” (*Pride, Shame, and Guilt* 81) and explains that it occurs in response to betrayal of one’s own chosen personal values. Since in this case it is a reaction to one’s “shortcomings with respect to formulating or living up to [one’s] commitments,” it is deemed morally appropriate and beneficial; it functions positively (“Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect” 169). Thus, genuine

² In the remainder of this chapter, the terms “genuine” and “false shame” will be utilized in accordance with Taylor, but used without quotation marks.

shame is triggered by actions that put one's own moral values in question and jeopardize one's integrity. Genuine shame makes one aware of one's transgressions. It calls upon one's self-respect; one must reestablish one's integrity by evaluating and changing one's behavior. One may question whether Taylor's definition of genuine shame as an "emotion of self-protection" contradicts psychologists' definition of moral emotions. My understanding of Taylor's claim is that shame is not an emotion that serves survival as "basic" emotions do, but rather an emotion that establishes (morally) good behavior. This behavior not only protects the self, but it also contributes to the norms and values of the community and thus helps shape the entire community.

Two problems arise in Taylor's account of genuine shame. On the one hand, one needs to ask what it means to have *chosen* one's *own* personal values. Can personal values ever be considered truly one's *own* or are they imposed by the values and norms present in the social surrounding and the community one is part of? On the other hand, one must consider the possibility that one's own beliefs (however we might define what it means to have our *own*, *chosen* personal values) might be wrong. How would that affect feelings of (genuine) shame and what consequence would it have for one's integrity? Could genuine shame still be considered constructive? I will return to these questions in my close readings and analyze how shame can in fact serve positively in regard to "flawed" beliefs.

On the other hand, Taylor argues, false shame is "ill-founded," lacks positive value, and is "destructive to [one's] equilibrium which consists of [one's] genuine commitments" ("Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect" 175-176). According to Taylor, false shame is triggered by measuring oneself against what she calls "alien measures of value that, once the shock of shame

eases, one sees one does not personally endorse” (Taylor, “Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect” 169). For Taylor, false shame is destructive as it results in questioning one’s own moral values and leads to weakened integrity. The label *false* can be misleading as it could be understood as referring to something *bad, wrong, hypocritical, or not real*. It is important to point out that here *false* is not necessarily negatively connoted. The label *false* merely refers to shame that does not occur as a result of one’s own endorsed values, but rather as a result of a judgment made according to someone else’s values. Thus, even false shame is still a true feeling of shame.

Further, I believe, contrary to Taylor, that false shame can also serve positively. While Taylor asserts that questioning one’s own moral values is destructive and leads to weakened integrity, I contend that such questioning of one’s own moral values can indeed be constructive. Evaluating one’s moral standards may be constructive on a broader scale as it may lead to assessing how these standards come about and what role they play in one’s community or in society as a whole. Causing one to challenge one’s own morals, Taylor’s concept of false shame can indeed contribute to reevaluating and transforming one’s personal standards.

Being able to feel and experience shame ultimately means that one has a set of values or, as Manion summarizes,

... having a sense of shame seems requisite for being able to take a moral perspective at all. Shame thus appears to be something we ought to feel for at least two reasons: (a) functionally, feeling shame helps us notice when our value scheme is in jeopardy in some way; and (b) morally speaking, feeling shame helps us maintain the imperative to cultivate self-respect and maintain personal integrity. (“Girls Blush Sometimes” 27)

Thus having no distinct sense of how one values oneself or what one values in oneself (or if one loses this sense for whatever reasons) results in the loss of self-respect, positive moral attitude, and finally integrity.

2.3 Instances of “Genuine” and “False” Shame: Evaluation and Transformation of Moral Values in and Beyond Gottfried Keller’s “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe” (1856)

Im Dorfe Altstellerhausen, bei Leipzig, liebten sich ein Jüngling von 19 Jahren und ein Mädchen von 17 Jahren, beide Kinder armer Leute, die aber in einer tödlichen Feindschaft lebten und nicht in eine Vereinigung des Paares willigen wollten. Am 15. August begaben sich die Verliebten in eine Wirtschaft, wo sich arme Leute vergnügen, tanzen daselbst bis nachts 1 Uhr und entfernten sich hierauf. Am Morgen fand man die Leichen beider Liebenden auf dem Felde liegen; sie hatten sich durch den Kopf geschossen.

Züricher Freitagszeitung, 3. September 1847

First published in volume I of *Die Leute von Seldwyla* (1856),³ Gottfried Keller’s “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe” was inspired by the true story of two young lovers who committed suicide in the Swiss village of Altstellerhausen in 1847. Upon encountering the details of the tragic event in the *Züricher Freitagszeitung*, Keller was reminded of William Shakespeare’s *An excellent conceited tragedie of Romeo and Juliet* (1597) and composed a novella that placed Shakespeare’s storyline in a rural setting. Combining the Shakespearian themes of the family feud and the lovers’ suicide with the motif of the unlawful appropriation of

³ The first volume contained 5 stories (“Pankraz, der Schmolter,” “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe,” “Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster,” “Die drei gerechten Kammacher,” and “Spieglein, das Kätzchen”). The extended volume was published in 1874 under the same title and included a second part with 5 new stories (“Kleider machen Leute,” “Das Schmied seines Glückes,” “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” “Dietegen,” and “Das verlorene Lachen”).

farmland from the Swiss writer Jeremias Gotthelf, with whose village novels Keller was quite familiar, Keller crafted what is today one of his most famous works.

As one of Keller's most well-known and influential works, "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" has received wide scholarly attention. A variety of approaches and interpretations investigate various aspects of Keller's tale. Early scholarship was mainly focused on the tragic conflict and took a number of forms. The focus was, amongst others, the way human life is exposed to the tensions between "Kosmos und Chaos [als] ... Gegenstand der Novellendichtung" (Lockemann 20). Other scholarship examined the relationship between love and hate and the individual vs. the community (Klein 260-66). E. Allen McCormick complicates these opposites and argues for "ambivalence rather than polarity of idyll and tragedy" (266) when looking at the fathers' downfall and the children's love.

Among the most prevalent aspects of analysis both in early and later scholarship are the topics of honor and morality,⁴ justice,⁵ symbolism,⁶ religion,⁷ nature,⁸ desire,⁹ sacrifice,¹⁰ realist writing,¹¹ Keller's tale as "the sole example of tragedy in *Die Leute von Seldwyla*" (McCormick

⁴ See, for example, Walter Silz' "Motivation in Keller's *Romeo und Julia*" (1935).

⁵ See, for example, Eva Geulen's "Habe und Bleibe in Keller's 'Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe'" (2010).

⁶ See, for example, Alexander Honold's "Vermittlung und Verwilderung: Gottfried Kellers Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" (2004) and Gerhard Kaiser's "Sündenfall, Paradies und himmlisches Jerusalem in Kellers *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*" (1971).

⁷ See, for example, Kaiser's "Sündenfall, Paradies und himmlisches Jerusalem in Kellers *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*."

⁸ See, for example, Allen E. McCormick's "The Idylls in Keller's *Romeo und Julia*. A Study in Ambivalence" (1962).

⁹ See, for example, Silz' "Motivation in Keller's *Romeo und Julia*"

¹⁰ See, for example, Derek Hillard's "Violence, Ritual, and Community: On Sacrifice in Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* and Storm's *Der Schimmelreiter*" (2009).

¹¹ See, for example, August Obermayer's "Gottfried Kellers *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*: Ein realistisches Märchen?" (1976), Martin Swales' *Keller's Realism: Some Observations on *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe** (1979), Robert C. Holub's "Realism, Repetition, Repression: The Nature of Desire in *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*" (1985), and Peter Stocker's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe. Novellistische Erzählkunst des Poetischen Realismus" (2007).

265) or as a *Trauerspiel* more generally,¹² and the text as an example of the genre of the novella.¹³ As it is not the goal of this chapter to give a comprehensive overview of the scholarship, I aim here to summarize briefly some approaches to Keller's text in order to demonstrate the broad nature of previous engagement with *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*.

Various scholars investigate the tale's structure in reference to the genre of the novella. Robert C. Holub, for example, looks at "the repetitive nature" (465) of the text as a way to reference earlier works such as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. He claims that repetition authenticates the tale as a realist novella of the nineteenth century. Sonja Boos shows how the structure of the text gives insights into the medical discourse of the time. She looks at the novella's symmetric structure as a reflection of obsessive compulsion and the history of the development of medical psychopathology. She argues that the text demonstrates "the relationship between medical stipulations and literary practice" (186) to examine public morality in the nineteenth century.

Other scholars look at specific topics that drive the tale. One important theme concerns norms associated with the middle class of the nineteenth century. McCormick, for example, points out that the tale presents a "conflict within the middle class itself; it is based on the tragic limitedness of the bourgeois mind" (7). He argues that the tragic ending is necessary because the couple is not able to live in a bourgeois marriage. While most of the scholarship on Keller's texts focuses on his critique of bourgeois values, Virginia L. Lewis is among the few, who look at Keller's writings from a different perspective. Lewis analyses Keller's text as his assessment of

¹² See, for example, McCormick's "The Idylls in Keller's *Romeo und Julia*" and Helmut Rehder's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe—An Analysis" (1943).

¹³ See, for example, Thomas Schestag's "Novelle: Zu Gottfried Kellers *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*" (2002), Waltraud Kolb's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe'-von der Novelle zur Oper" (1993), and Stocker's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe. Novellistische Erzählkunst des Poetischen Realismus."

“the process and consequences of enclosure” (V. Lewis, “Gottfried Keller’s Critique of Enclosures” 77) and how both are related to the rise of capitalism. In her view, Keller had a pre-globalization and pre-capitalist position that contemporary society cannot relate to in the same fashion.

Another widely examined topic in Keller’s text is religion. Christian images and modes of thinking are integrated in the novella in such a way that the prose is charged with religious meaning (Kaiser 23). Religion also often plays a role in the analysis of sexuality and marriage in this work. Gerhard Kaiser’s analysis of the lover’s relationship relies on allusions to the *Sündenfall*, paradise, Dante’s *Divine Comedy* (1320), damnation, and the city of Jerusalem as the origin of Christianity (Kaiser 32-37).

Aside from these topics, a wide range of scholarship concentrates on a comparative analysis of Keller’s text and Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*¹⁴ as well as the above mentioned historic tragic event that is said to have influenced Keller’s writing.¹⁵ These scholars investigate similarities and differences among Keller’s and Shakespeare’s texts and the true event and draw conclusion about why Keller may have made particular decisions and how they influence, alter, and contribute to a reading of the tale.

Understandably, many scholars concentrate on the suicide of the lover’s as the main focus of analysis. The ending of the story has been interpreted as inconsequential (Baechthold 68), immoral and unnecessarily horrible (Köster 95), as well as untrue and harmful in its influence (Huch 65). A great number of analyses approach the suicide from very different angles.

¹⁴ See, for example, Gerhard Stebner’s “Romeo und Juliet im Vergleich zu G. Kellers Novelle *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*” (1982), Robin Clouser’s “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe: Keller’s Variations upon Shakespeare” (1978), and Brian Gingrich’s “Monument, Mountain, Root: Figures of Translation, from Romeo to Julia” (2014).

¹⁵ See, for example, Rehder’s “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe—An Analysis.”

Derek Hillard, for example, looks at the lovers' suicide as a result of exclusion from the community and simultaneously a sacrifice that needs to occur in order to contribute to the development of the community. He demonstrates how social exclusion influences the formation of a community and what role sacrifice plays in this communal development (362). Harold D. Dickerson Jr. takes a different approach and argues that "Romeo und Julia auf den Dorfe" depicts "a *perfect* love that triumphs in an *imperfect* world" (49, emphasis in original). He explains that if one accepts the lovers' death as divine and a moment of sudden revelation, then the tragedy can be understood as the "perfect harmony of two souls with themselves and with the world around them" (49). Walter Silz attempts to explain the tragedy by arguing that the suicide is guided by the protagonist Vrenchen. He sees her "temperament ... [as] an indispensable factor in the tragic motivation" (2) and believes that she "leads and initiates" (3) and "fires Sali with her own passionate volition" (3). Ultimately, Silz claims that Vreni's passion and desire are the basis for the lovers' suicide. Joachim Dyck similarly argues for passion and sexual phantasies as driving forces in Keller's text (174). Helmut Rehder believes that the suicide takes on a much deeper meaning than the tragedy itself by "reveal[ing] the possible depth of human experience" (416). In doing so, Rehder contends, Keller's tale "is occupied with an intrinsic problem of *life itself*" (416, emphasis in original) that cannot be condemned and instead deserves sympathy and respect.

In my reading of Keller's novella and the suicide of the lovers, I offer a new perspective on the tragedy we encounter in the story. While McCormick does mention shame and embarrassment in connection with loss of honor as a leading motive of the lover's suicide (266),

there exists no detailed analysis of shame and its driving forces. An investigation of how shame operates in Keller's tale offers a new approach to the tragedy.

Based on Taylor's theory of shame, I propose that the protagonists and the reader experience a combination of genuine shame and false shame and that this combination serves to bring to the foreground and question or even criticize the social moral values of the time. As I will demonstrate, the protagonists' experiences of shame are of the genuine kind which leads them to stand by their personal values while the narrator attempts to trigger feelings of false shame in the reader to cause him or her to evaluate and change his or her personal standards.

"Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" tells the story of two peasants, Manz and Marti, and their families who, although not particularly close to each other, have lived peacefully together as good neighbors in a small village close to the city of Seldwyla. Each owning an equal size of land, separated by an ownerless third field of equal size that has been lying idle for twenty years, they follow their daily farming routines to cultivate their land and provide for their families. Over the years Manz and Marti continuously expand their land by extending their borders further and further into the unused, unclaimed space. Manz legally obtains the unused land when the city finally decides to auction it off. As a result of Manz' request for Marti to return one corner of the land that originally belonged to the third field, the two peasants get into bitter arguments and become enemies. Consumed by this dispute, the farmers bring about their own downfall and financial ruin.

Parallel to the peasants' downfall, the story of their children unfolds—Manz' son Salomon (called Sali) and Marti's daughter Verena (called Vreni or Vrenchen). Growing up as playmates, they spend many years apart due to their fathers' enmity. Meeting again when Vreni is

seventeen and Sali is twenty years old, they fall in love and struggle to find ways to be with each other. When a relationship between them appears impossible, they decide that the only way for them to be together is to commit suicide, and they drown themselves.

In what follows, I examine Sali's and Vreni's suicide in regard to feelings of shame. I argue that the protagonists experience feelings of shame that can be characterized in Taylor's terms of genuine and false shame. I show how both Vreni and Sali experience genuine feelings of shame in regard to the self. Furthermore, I demonstrate how feelings of shame that occur as a result of their relationship and ultimately lead to the suicide appear to be of the false kind. There exists a moment in which it seems that Sali and Vreni do not endorse the social norms by which their relationship is being judged. However, I will demonstrate that these experiences of shame continue to be of the genuine kind. Lastly, I will connect concepts of genuine and false shame to the larger message that becomes visible at the end of Keller's text.

At only ten and seven years of age, Sali and Vrenchen are already divided by their gender and must adhere to social expectations in compliance with moral norms so as not to jeopardize their integrity:

[S]ie gingen nun nicht mehr gemeinschaftlich auf das Feld, da der zehnjährige Salomon ... sich schon wacker auf Seite der größeren Burschen und der Männer hielt; und das Vrenchen, obgleich es ein feuriges Dirnchen war, mußte bereits bereits unter der Obhut seines Geschlechts gehen, sonst wäre es von den andern als Bubenmädchen ausgelacht worden. (Keller, *Die Leute von Seldwyla* Vol. 1: 75)¹⁶

This passage helps us identify the existing gender norms of the village, which become triggers for Vrenchen's feelings of genuine shame. As we will see in chapter three, gendered norms

¹⁶ In the remainder of this chapter, all citations for Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" refer to the first volume of *Die Leute von Seldwyla*. For citation purposes, I will abbreviate the story as "Romeo und Julia."

contribute in particular ways to feelings of shame. Shame becomes gendered not in the ways in which it is perceived by a man vs. a woman, but rather in the gendered triggers that elicit shameful feelings in them. Although this chapter does not focus on the gendered triggers of shame, we will see throughout that Vreni is certainly exposed to them and shame is often the result of these triggers for Vreni. This is because as a girl and later young woman, “hatte [es] den Kummer und das wachsende Elend des Hauses mit zu tragen” (“Romeo und Julia” 83) while also presenting herself in a feminine manner, both physically and in her behavior.

Vreni herself values these norms and her integrity feels violated when she is unable to adhere to her own and the community’s values:

... es (Vreni) mußte noch sich selbst in acht nehmen und mochte sich gern halbwegs ordentlich und reinlich kleiden, ohne daß der Vater ihm die geringsten Mittel dazu geben wollte. So hatte Vrenchen die größte Not, ihre anmutige Person einigermaßen auszustaffieren, sich ein allerbescheidenstes Sonntagskleid zu erwerben und einige bunte, fast wertlose Halstüchelchen zusammenzuhalten. (83)

Concerned with her physical appearance, Vreni feels ashamed or “in jeder Weise gedemütigt” (83). Feelings of genuine shame serve as a warning of her loss of integrity and she eagerly does anything in her power to reestablish her moral values and her moral standing. When she and Sali discuss going to a dance in a neighboring village, Vreni’s feelings of genuine shame in regard to her appearance surface again: “‘Es wird doch nichts daraus’, sagte sie bitterlich weinend, ‘ich habe keine Sonntagsschuhe mehr’” (116). Only when Sali agrees to sell his pocket watch and use the money to buy her shoes, is Vreni able to look forward to the Sunday outing with her lover.

Similarly, Vreni’s wish to be a good woman who takes care of the home and embodies traditional feminine morals and values elicit feelings of genuine shame. While her home lies in

ruins due to her father's downfall, Vreni still tries to keep up with her duties: "Das Haus selbst war ebenso kläglich anzusehen; die Fenster waren vielfältig zerbrochen und mit Papier verklebt, aber doch waren sie das Freundlichste an dem Verfall; denn sie waren, selbst die zerbrochenen Scheiben, klar und sauber gewaschen, ja förmlich poliert und glänzten so hell ..." ("Romeo und Julia" 99). Ashamed of not being the best housewife she could possibly be, Vreni continues her chores even though the house itself lies in ruins.

Gendered triggers of shame not only elicit shameful feelings in Sali, but they also contribute to Sali's emotional state. Contrary to Vreni, who is concerned with her physical appearance reflecting stereotypical femininity and the values of being a good housewife, Sali experiences feelings of genuine shame in response to failure to live up to personal values that he deems important and that are triggered by his failure to uphold his male honor. As demonstrated throughout this work, in the village context, *Ehre* or honor refers to one's good reputation, good character as judged by other people, and fulfilling high moral standards of behavior. As we will see, honor plays an important role in shame theory and takes on particular meaning in rural settings. Sali's inability to maintain the expectations and ideals associated with his gender role within the village "[erfüllte] ihn oft mit Scham und Kummer" (84). Worried and ashamed about the decline of the family's image due to his father's immoral and irresponsible behavior and the financial ruin as a result of the feud with Marti, Sali begins to withdraw from his family.

For Manz the financial ruin comes fast and he ultimately has to give up "Haus und Hof" (85-86) and move out of the village into the city. On the way to the city of Seldwyla, where the family has obtained a tavern and where Manz wants to try his luck as an innkeeper, Sali "beschleunigte seine Schritte, eilte voraus und ging allein auf Seitenwegen nach der Stadt" (87).

Avoiding the main roads where his parents travel, Sali walks by himself because he does not want to be seen with his parents who have left the village with nothing but borrowed, meager horses to pull the few possessions that they still own.

Upon arriving in the city, the Manz family is shocked by the sight of the tavern that the Seldwylers have leased to Manz in exchange for his forgiving the “einige hunderte Taler” (“Romeo und Julia” 86) they still owed him. The tavern that is supposed to help them build a new life and give them a future turns out to be a run-down and shabby place. It is nothing but a “trauriger Gasthof ... [mit] schlechten Gerätes und ... verdorbenen Betten” (87) that only elicits laughter and ridicule from the city inhabitants. When some city children publicly call the Manz family “das verlumpete Bauernpack” (87), Sali “schämte sich” (87) on account of the mockery; it is not only connected to the family’s low financial and social status, but it also violates his personal pride and honor within the new community in town.

Feeling robbed of the opportunity to establish himself as an honorable and respected citizen, Sali sees no other way but to withdraw further from the family. Based on Taylor’s argument, this withdrawal from the rest of the family can be viewed as a self-protection mechanism resulting from feelings of genuine shame. Unable to change the position of the family within the social hierarchy in the city, Sali is only able to reestablish his integrity by removing himself from the situation.

As demonstrated above, Vreni and Sali as individuals each experience feelings of genuine shame as outlined by Taylor. Once Vreni and Sali develop a relationship with each other, feelings of shame continue to emerge; they are however no longer connected to their individual morals per se, but rather to the morals they uphold as a couple vis-à-vis traditional values of marriage.

As mentioned above, scholars like McCormick see these traditional bourgeois values of marriage as constituting the main conflict that necessitates the tragedy. As I will show, it is not necessarily the values themselves that lead to the downfall of the lovers, but rather the ways in which these values trigger feelings of shame.

Sali's and Vrenchen's relationship triggers feelings of genuine shame because Vrenchen is concerned for herself and Sali that they might fail to maintain their relationships to their parents, especially her connection to her father. When Sali secretly visits her, feelings of shame immediately arise in Vreni—she “[neigte] sein weinendes Gesicht zur Seite ... da es die Hände nicht frei hatte, um es zu bedecken”—she proclaims: “Es wird nie gut kommen ... Wenn auch kein Mensch hier mehr mit uns umgeht, so würden sie doch ein solches Gerede machen, daß es der Vater sogleich vernähme” (“Romeo und Julia” 100-1). Her gestures clearly indicate shame, as she feels that she is violating her value of maintaining her relation to her father as an authority figure.

Similarly, Vreni holds on to her loyalty to her father when Sali intervenes to save Vreni from being beaten by her father. In an attempt to stop Marti, Sali hits him over the head and Marti falls unconscious. Suffering amnesia, Marti is sent to a mental institution. Although her father is now no longer able to interfere with their relationship, Vreni continues to honor his authority: “Ich werde es aber nicht aushalten ohne dich, und doch kann ich dich nie bekommen, auch wenn alles andere nicht wäre, bloß weil du meinen Vater geschlagen und um den Verstand gebracht hast!” (114) The shame Vreni feels can be seen as genuine shame as she respects her father and believes in family values. Since she sees these values jeopardized by her relationship with Sali, genuine shame serves as a means to make her aware that she is about to transgress

these values and she attempts to reestablish her integrity by denying the possibility of their relationship.

The further development of Sali and Vreni's relationship appears to trigger feelings of shame that can be identified as false shame. At first sight, Sali and Vreni themselves appear not to endorse those "alien measures of value" according to which they are being judged in the community. Early to pick up Vreni for the dance, Sali decides not to wait any longer no matter who sees him with Vreni: "Was kümmern uns die Leute!" ("Romeo und Julia" 119) The two lovers embark on their day-long adventure, dining in a tavern, having fun at a fair, and finally going dancing. Enjoying themselves together, both Vreni and Sali realize for just a moment that they do not understand why they cannot be happy with each other: "Sali! warum sollen wir uns nicht haben und glücklich sein!' 'Ich weiß auch nicht warum!' erwiderte er ..." (131). At the fair, however, Vreni and Sali experience shame when they are recognized by people around them:

Während sie in diese Dinge sich versenkten, waren sie so vergessen, daß sie nicht bemerkten, wie nach und nach ein weiter Ring sich um sie gebildet hatte von Leuten, die sie aufmerksam und neugierig betrachteten. Denn da viele junge Bursche und Mädchen aus ihrem Dorfe hier waren, so waren sie erkannt worden. (134)

Sali and Vreni suddenly become aware of the crowd and the "gaffende[n] Gesichter" (134), Vreni "wurde ... bang und heiß, es wurde bleich und roth" (134) and Sali proclaims, "Hier können wir nicht tanzen!" (135) Feeling ashamed of being seen together, Sali and Vreni leave the fair in search of another village where they can finally have their dance.

These text passages could be read as Vreni and Sali not sharing the moral values according to which they are being judged, but nevertheless reacting to the situation. Since they do not know why they cannot be together, one might assume that Sali and Vreni experience

feelings of false shame. One might say that if they were experiencing genuine shame, one must expect them to take their feelings as a warning of transgression that would lead them to change their behavior in order not to jeopardize their integrity. Sali and Vreni do not however stop seeing each other. Rather, they merely continue looking for another space in which their relationship will be tolerated.

A closer look at the text reveals, however, that Sali and Vreni actually have themselves internalized the moral values of the surrounding community towards the end of the story. When offered a space by the “schwarzen Geiger” in which their relationship would be tolerated—a place “in d[en] Berge[n], da braucht ihr keinen Pfarrer, kein Geld, keine Schriften, keine Ehre, kein Bett, nichts als euren guten Willen! ... die grünen Wälder sind unser Haus, wo wir uns liebhaben, wie es uns gefällt” (“Romeo und Julia” 141)—Sali and Vreni do not accept the offer:

“Was meinst du dazu? Mich dünkt, es ware nicht übel, die ganze Welt in den Wind zu schlagen und uns dafür zu lieben ohne Hindernis und Schranken!” [Sali] sagte es aber mehr als einen verzweifelten Scherz, den im Ernst. Vrenchen aber, erwiderte ganz treuherzig und küßte ihn: “Nein, dahin möchte ich nicht gehen, den da geht es auch nicht nach meinem Sinne zu.” (141-42)

They are unable to do so as they have internalized the values of society and thus are in fact experiencing feelings of genuine shame. To them, it is more important to uphold their integrity by upholding standards of society than to escape in order to be able to “lieben ohne Hindernis und Schranken” (141). Leaving becomes impossible because of the “Flamme der Ehre” (140) that creates a “Gefühl in der bürgerlichen Welt nur in einer ganz ehrlichen und gewissenfreien Ehe glücklich sein zu können” (140). The honor and “Gefühl” they uphold with regard to traditional values of marriage point towards genuine feelings of shame that prevent transgression of the social equilibrium. Even when Vreni and Sali decide to commit suicide, traditional values

play an important role. While suicide is the only way they see to be together forever in a “gewissenfreien Ehe,” they also strive for an “ehrliche Ehe.” Before committing suicide, they exchange rings as in a traditional marriage ceremony and Vreni happily announces: “nun sind wir aber doch verlobt und versprochen, du bist mein Mann und ich deine Frau” (“Romeo und Julia” 145).

While this passage shows how genuine feelings of shame prevent transgression of moral values, the question remains as to how the suicide can be related to Taylor’s claim that genuine shame is constructive. To answer this question, I suggest that one needs to move beyond the plot and consider the narrator’s commentary at the end of the story. The narrator closes the story by stating that their death is “abermals ein Zeichen von der um sich greifenden Entsittlichung und Verwilderung der Leidenschaften” (149). The narrator’s comment may be read as an extension of Keller’s attitude towards contemporary society and an attempt to communicate his ideas. With this ending, I contend, Keller makes clear that one should not judge the couple for their suicide, but rather constructively criticizes society’s moral values. Keller wants his reader to evaluate the suicide critically rather than reading it merely as a tragedy. Questioning their suicide, Keller hopes, will lead to examining social norms and communal values as well as asking what type of control these norms and values have over the individual. Keller does so by eliciting feelings of shame in the reader that will inevitably require him/her to reflect upon not only his/her own values, but also on the larger community.

I read Keller’s ending as follows: on the one hand, the commentary is meant to mimic a judgmental society. The narrator becomes the communal voice that judges the couple and their suicide deeming it morally wrong or in the narrator’s words, an “um sich greifende[]

Entsittlichung.” On the other hand, Keller uses the narrator to convey his own moral values. By parroting these norms, Keller judges this society. He implicitly evokes his own measures of value, measures that might be alien to his readers. In so doing, he aims to trigger feelings of shame. Since the reader might not personally endorse the values, the feelings of shame would be of the false kind and result in the reader questioning his or her own morals. This questioning could lead to reevaluating existing social norms. In this sense, false shame should not be seen as something negative or in Taylor’s words “destructive,” but rather serves positively as a way to undermine flawed norms. If Keller succeeds in encouraging readers to understand that the moral values they uphold are flawed, false shame will transform into genuine shame and as a result be a first step towards changing society.

As I hope to have shown, Keller’s “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe” can be read in light of theories of shame as a moral emotion. As demonstrated, Keller uses triggers of genuine shame in order to criticize social norms and society’s behavior as a result of these moral values. Contrary to Taylor’s claim that false shame is destructive, Keller’s text appears to use false shame in a productive way. In so doing, Keller turns the situation around—it is no longer the individual that is being judged by society, but society submits to the individual’s (here Keller) judgment, which potentially results in a constructive re-evaluation of the community as a whole.

While I analyzed Keller’s text under the assumption that genuine and false shame can be distinguished based on whether shame occurs in reaction to transgressions judged according to one’s own chosen vs. “alien measures of value” as Taylor presents it, I aim to complicate Taylor’s claims in the following reading of Berthold Auerbach’s “Des Schloßbauers Vefele.” In this vein, I will question whether it is possible to differentiate between what is one’s *own chosen*

value and what has been imposed on one or whether village life demands that one look at any value as one that is *alien* to a certain extent. In doing so, I will not only comment on the effects that village communities and their norms have on an individual's feelings of shame, but I will also show how this results in a destructive shame that undermines Taylor's claim of shame's constructive nature.

2.4 When *Alien* Measures Become One's *Own Chosen*: Blurring Between "Genuine" and "False" Shame in Berthold Auerbach's "Des Schloßbauers Vefele" (1843)

As I observed in my analysis of Berthold Auerbach's "Der Lauterbacher" (1843) and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe" (1886) in chapter one, Auerbach's "Des Schloßbauers Vefele" (1843) can be seen similarly as a representation of the impact that shame has on individuals and their sense of belonging to a given community. In addition, Auerbach's story brings into play the contrast between peasant vs. city life and shows how the clash of these two communities foregrounds feelings of shame that have severe consequences for the individual trapped in between these two groups. Vefele, the tale's protagonist, experiences shame from two very distinct positions. On the one hand, she is shamed within the village community; on the other hand, she is positioned and shamed as a "city-girl." Paradoxically, the shaming in one community causes her to want to be part of the other: when she is shamed in the village, she starts despising peasant life and strives to distance herself from her origins. However, when she is able to attain a life outside of the village parameters, she experiences a deep personal sense of shame and develops nostalgia for her origins. Due to this

conflict, Vefele is unable to negotiate her feelings of shame, which eventually lead to her downfall.

It is surprising how little attention this village tale has received from scholars. While Auerbach's tale is often mentioned in research that focuses on the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*, there exist only two contemporary works with detailed analysis of the tale itself. Jörg Schönert's "Berthold Auerbachs *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* der 40er und 50er Jahre als Beispiel eines 'literarischen Wandels'?" (2002) reads "Des Schloßbauers Vefele," contrary to other stories published in the same cycle, as a "Bestrafungsgeschichte" (338) which does not depict idyllic village life, but rather focuses on the village as a model for the resolution of conflicts (339). Dorothea Kunz's dissertation on realism in nineteenth-century Scandinavian literature looks at Auerbach's tale as one example of the concept of Poetic Realism that was influenced by early Scandinavian Realism. In particular, she investigates pedagogical intentions of "Des Schloßbauers Vefele" (243-55).

My investigation will show that Vefele's inability to negotiate her feelings of shame lies in the ways in which shame operates in a rural setting. Analyzed through the lens of Taylor's concept of genuine and false shame, Auerbach's text reveals that village life in fact makes it difficult to draw clear lines between these two types of shame. Rather, as my close readings will demonstrate, the upbringing of the story's protagonist and her (not) belonging to the village community result in the blurring of genuine and false shame. Contrasting genuine shame with false shame becomes practically unfeasible as life within a village collective makes distinguishing one's *own chosen* values vs. *alien* values almost impossible. Further, my analysis will question Taylor's binary, that is, her claim that genuine shame is constructive and false

shame destructive based on the interplay between social village norms and norms upheld by Vefele's family, particularly her father, and her *own chosen* individual values.

The tale tells the story of Vefele, the youngest daughter of the wealthy Mr. Zahn, the so-called Schloßbauer, and his wife. Vefele's family is rejected and ridiculed by the village community, both because of her father's practices of collecting large amounts of fees for the use of land as well as the mother's and Vefele's disability, a shorter leg that causes them to limp. This lack of community belonging results in a very lonely life for the family, which eventually contributes to the downfall of the family and finally Vefele.

The Schloßbauer, who moved to Nordstetten from a neighboring village thirty years earlier, acquired his wealth through marriage when his wife's father offered a large dowry in order to assure that his daughter be married off despite her disability. With the dowry, the Schloßbauer buys the feudal estate on which he builds the big house which in the village is known as "des Schloßbauers Haus" (Auerbach, *Auerbach's Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* Vol 1: 41).¹⁷ With the purchase of the land he demands to have the same special privileges as the former feudal lords with regard to votes in the commune, handling of the crops, etc. Although the text does not provide detailed information, it appears that the *Schloß* itself does not exist anymore and the name Schloßbauer is given to Mr. Zahn in reference to the special feudal rights he demanded. Mocked by the community due to what the villagers believe are illegitimate demands, the Schloßbauer starts a financial feud with the villagers over longstanding unpaid debts and as a result lives in enmity with them.

¹⁷ In the remainder of this chapter, all citations for Auerbach's "Des Schloßbauers Vefele" refer to the first volume of the ten-volume edition *Auerbach's Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*.

When the other children start leaving their father's house, Vefele, who is now in her mid-twenties, stays behind, but refuses to marry a peasant and remains single. After her mother dies, Vefele develops a much stronger connection to her father, who supports her decision not to marry unless she finds a decent man of higher social standing. To assure such a marriage, he offers a dowry similar to the one he himself had received.

When Vefele coincidentally meets a stranger from outside of the village named Eduard Brönner, a self-proclaimed doctor, Vefele thinks she has found the man she can marry. Her father is equally impressed by Brönner, who starts to spend a lot of time at the estate. After the father passes away unexpectedly, Vefele and Brönner get engaged. Suddenly, Brönner's behavior towards Vefele changes. He does not treat her well, but Vefele is in love with him and time and again forgives him. Vefele's wish to marry as soon as possible is delayed because, as Brönner tells her, he is still waiting for his identification papers to arrive. One day, he tells Vefele that he will go and get the documents himself and asks her to give him some money to make the trip. Vefele gives him the key to the chest with all her money. Brönner leaves and Vefele patiently awaits his return. After months have gone by without a word from Brönner, Vefele realizes that he has taken all of her money. She confides in her brother Melchior, and it becomes clear that Brönner has played and robbed Vefele. Melchior sets out to find him, but returns unsuccessfully.

Wendel, a peasant who had warned Vefele not to marry Brönner, proposes to Vefele and declares the wish to be a father to Vefele's unborn child. Vefele declines his proposal and leaves to find Brönner herself. The reader follows Vefele's journey, but is left with unanswered questions when Mohrle, her dog, returns from the direction Vefele had last taken with her red scarf in his mouth. What has happened to Vefele remains unclear.

The circle of shame and ultimately Vefele's downfall begin with her mother before Vefele is even born. Her mother, who was "eine schöne, schlanke Frau" ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 41) had a birth defect that started a long cycle of gossip, insecurity, and shame. Her left leg was too short and caused her to limp and exposed her to ridicule. Consequently, she experienced feelings of shame about her physical appearance. Paradoxically, however, the short leg was the reason she acquired the wealth and financially worry-free life she lived: "Dieser Körperfehler war aber auch mit die Ursache ihres ungewöhnlichen Reichtums" ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 41-42). Thus, her "Körperfehler" crucially determines the life she lives between shame and the social standing granted by wealth. On the one hand, her birth defect is the cause of humiliation and laughter and makes her an outsider in the village community. On the other hand, it allows her to improve her social standing when her father promises a large dowry and she and her husband are able to purchase land.

While this money from the father could be read as a kind gesture since it improves the position of the daughter and her family within the village community, it can also be understood as an act of shaming. In the village pub, the father publicly announces his daughter's "Körperfehler," and suggests "daß der kurze Fuß seiner Tochter nichts schade, er stelle als Heiratsgut ein gestrichenes Simri Kronenthaler darunter, und da wollte er sehen, ob das nicht gerade mache" (42). His statement reveals that he perceives his daughter to be of lesser value compared to the other young girls in the village. It suggests that she could not be married off without the promise of a large dowry. His statement "da wollte er sehen, ob das nicht gerade mache" indicates that money will be the only way to look past the birth defect and make his daughter attractive marriage material. Thus, he implies that physical flaws outweigh moral

uprightness. Although the text does not reveal any specifics about the daughter's reaction to the father's announcement or allows the reader insight into her feelings, one can certainly assume that such a public declaration causes embarrassment, humiliation, and shame especially when coming from one's own father. Instead of teaching his daughter to be self-confident and respect herself, he affirms that she is lacking something and needs to be ashamed of her short leg.

This type of shaming continued even beyond the dowry proposal of the father when a suitor, Mr. Zahn (the future Schloßbauer), agreed to marry the daughter in exchange for the dowry. The father kept his promise and

ließ ... ein Simri mit Kronenthalern füllen und so viel hineinthun, als hineinging; drauf strich er mit dem Streichbengel darüber und sagte: 'So, was drin ist, ist dein!' Seine Tochter mußte zum Spaß ihren linken Fuß darauf stellen, und das mit dem Gelde gefüllte Kornmaß prangte als schöne Schüssel auf dem Hochzeitstische" ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 42)

Although done in a joking manner, the gesture of making his daughter place the foot of her short leg onto the container can be understood as degrading and shame inducing. This act can be read as further making visible how the birth defect is seen as a lack and needs to be rectified. In this act, the money literally becomes the extension of the short leg and thus compensates the shortness. Moreover, the container full of money is fully displayed during the wedding and appears to occupy the center of the wedding celebration. The verb *prangen* used to describe the money's arrangement on the table not only means *to be displayed* but can also be read as *to flaunt* or *to boast*. Thus, the money is elevated to the most important aspect of this wedding both in front of the wedding guests but also for the bride. It serves as a reminder to everyone that she has been married off in exchange for money rather than love.

Peasants, of course, did not traditionally marry for love, but rather for property. Therefore, the act of placing the foot on the container filled with money as well as the display of the money at the wedding can be seen simply as a traditional village wedding custom and a presentation of pride. It is thus possible that the bride fully subscribed to her father's values and relished a moment of flaunting their wealth. However, a look at the mother's marriage and her relationship to her daughters indicates that this tradition affected her emotionally. We may be able to infer, furthermore, that the customary display of the money also becomes a publicly displayed symbol of her lack and an act of humiliation and shame. This reading becomes possible when we consider the mother's incongruent relationship with her individual values on the one hand, and communal norms and her wealth on the other.

The mother's past and the wedding arrangement are important to analyzing her daughter Vefe's shame, which ultimately leads to her downfall. It not only initiates a cycle that will be repeated in the future, but it also leads to the mother's insecurities and paradoxical relationship to her wealth and status, which becomes pivotal in Vefe's upbringing and ultimately the development of her values and her sense of (not) belonging. This development, in turn, is crucial to investigating the consequences shame bears for Vefe, or more precisely, why the constructive nature of genuine shame as Taylor presents it needs to be evaluated with care.

Let us recall from the introduction that shame theorists point out that individuals are often marked by the community as less worthy and for this reason are not only prone to shame, but also expected to feel shame about their being: "Some people . . . are more marked out for shame than others. Indeed, . . . societies ubiquitously select certain groups and individuals for shaming, marking them off as 'abnormal' and demanding them to blush at what and who they

are” (Nussbaum 174). As we will see throughout this dissertation, the characters I analyze are each marked in some way or another and their particular markers are triggers of shameful feelings. In chapter one, dialect served as such a marker. This chapter explores physical markers in the form of a birth defect; chapter three will look at financial status and childbirth out of wedlock as dishonorable markers of shame.

Auerbach’s protagonist Vefele can certainly be read as a marked person. In fact, the text explicitly describes her as such: “Das jüngste Kind war Vefele. Es war schön und zart gebaut, daß man es, halb spöttisch, halb anerkennend, das ‘Fräle’ hieß. Halb aus Mitleid, halb aus Schadenfreude bemerkte fast jeder, wenn von ihm die Rede war, es sei eben doch eine ‘Gezeichnete’, denn es hatte den kurzen Fuß von der Mutter geerbt” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 42). Not only does this passage point to the short leg inherited from the mother as the marker of a lack and the community’s involvement in this marking process—they ridicule her and explicitly call her “the marked one”—but it also points beyond the physical disability and gives insight into how Vefele’s character is perceived by the villagers.

The term *Fräle* is a dialect form of *Fräulein*, whereby the -le ending, similar to the -lein ending, indicates a diminutive form. According to the *Schwäbisches Wörterbuch*, *Fräulein* and *Fräle* refer to 1) a young noble woman, 2) an unmarried girl, 3) a salutary address when followed by the surname, and 4) “Dirne, Hure, Beischläferin” (1716). The dictionary entry further reveals that if it used without a surname and in particular when used in rural areas, it often alludes to *Jungfer*, a virgin. But generally, the dictionary indicates, the term is not used in reference to peasant girls (1715-16).

Given that *Fräule* is usually reserved for the nobility, Vefele is called something she is not. She is not part of the noble estate, but her family, especially her father, is performing this status. Not only is the family of higher financial standing compared to the rest of the village community, but the family's house is referred to as a *Schloß* by the villagers. Thus, the term mocks the attempt of the Schloßbauer to disassociate from the community since, in the eyes of the villagers, the family belongs to the peasant estate.

The text continues to describe the implications of being called the "Gezeichnete" and explains what consequences it bears:

Mit dem Ausdruck "Gezeichnet" verbindet sich ein schlimmer Nebenbegriff; man nennt die Roten, Buckligen, Einäugigen, Hinkenden so und will damit sagen, daß Gott sie damit gezeichnet habe, weil sie gewöhnlich gefährliche und unguntmütige Menschen seien. Weil man nun solche Unglückliche spöttisch und argwöhnisch behandelt, werden sie meist schakelhaft, bitter und hinterlistig; das anfänglich ungerechte Vorurteil ruft die Folgen hervor, die man als Bestätigung für das Vorurteil annimmt. ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 42)

In this explanation we learn what it means to be marked. Here, it is interesting that the act of marking is removed from the community per se. Rather, it is believed that "Gezeichnete" are marked by God. Moreover, the marking is seen as a punishment for the lack of goodness. This idea of being marked by God as punishment is usually associated, especially in rural areas, with sins of the fathers or mothers. This belief goes back to the *Old Testament* in which Cain is marked by God for killing his brother Abel. As such, Vefele's physical disability could be interpreted as a punishment for her father's greedy behavior and "bad" moral character.¹⁸ Thus, this belief not only removes any responsibility from the community and places it into the hands

¹⁸ In this interpretation one would need to ask why Vefele's mother is "marked." In accordance with this belief, it would indicate that her father or mother had sinned in one way or another for which she was punished. As the text does not provide enough details about the mother's parents to make this claim, this interpretation is an inference and cannot be backed up by the text.

of a higher power, but it also implies that such markers are seen as indicating moral quality. If Vefele's moral qualities are questioned, the fact that she is called *Fräle* can be interpreted in a different way. Although I do not mean to suggest that Vefele is a being called a prostitute, *Fräle* can in fact refer to women who lack moral values. And in any case, by using a term inappropriate to her station, the villagers are calling Vefele's character in question.

If lacking moral goodness is ascribed to such individuals, they are not only selected as targets of shaming, but they themselves are also forced to feel shame about their being. The recognition of one's moral lack is the primary source of feelings of shame. Paradoxically, however, the moral deficits of those who are marked results from the ways the community treats these individuals. Communal prejudice is confirmed by the behavior of the "marked ones," which in turn perpetuates the stereotype that the "Gezeichneten" inevitably lack moral goodness. Therefore, although the initial physical defect is linked to God in the eyes of the community, it is ultimately the community that marks the individual through shaming, ridicule, and humiliation on a daily basis. As we will see, this vicious cycle can also be traced in the development of Vefele's attitude towards communal norms and values.

Being marked, Vefele unavoidably enters a realm of shame. The sense of shame that shapes Vefele's life is based on an interplay between her personal norms and values and those of the village community. As my close readings will show, however, Vefele's sense of identity and belonging, and with it her norms and values, are blurred from a very young age. This blurring not only contributes to her sense of shame but also inhibits her ability to judge instances of shame for what they are. Instead of serving constructively, shame ends up being destructive to her sense of belonging and ultimately her sense of self.

From a very young age, Vefele is exposed to contradicting norms and values. On the one hand, her family's lack of belonging, which is the consequence of the behavior of the Schloßbauer towards the villager, and his explicit attempts to disassociate himself from the community, distances Vefele from communal norms. Further, it supports Vefele's negative view of the villagers and the community, which she develops because of the vicious cycle described above. On the other hand, her mother teaches her to care for the community and appreciate her origins. The mother's communal interest becomes particularly intriguing as she herself is shamed by the community as "gezeichnet." Her mother's good deeds instill in Vefele a sense of belonging to the community and models respect towards village norms and values.

The Schloßbauer, who is originally from a neighboring village called Baisingen, has been living in Nordstetten for over thirty years; he has, however, never been truly accepted and is even rejected by the villagers:

Der Schloßbauer lebte aber mitten im Dorfe wie auf einer Einöde. Kein Mensch bot ihm die Zeit, kein Mensch besuchte ihn. Wenn er ins Wirtshaus kam, war alles plötzlich still. Es war ihm immer, als ob sie gerade von ihm gesprochen hätten. Er legte seinen mit gutem Tabak gefüllten Beutel neben sich auf den Tisch, aber eher hätte einer seinen Mund auf einen Stein aufgeschlagen, ehe er den Schloßbauer um eine Pfeife Tabak gebeten hätte. ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 44)

Villagers deliberately avoid the Schloßbauer, and he lives a secluded and lonely life. In fact, for eighteen years he has feuded with the villagers over the "patronatsherrlichen Rechte" (42), which has created an even more severe divide between them, eliciting hate in the villagers towards the Schloßbauer:

[E]r bezog den Rauchhafer, Hühnerhafer, Weghafer, und wie alle die grundherrlichen Abgaben heißen; auch hatte er fünfzig Stimmen bei der Schultheißenwahl. Nur mit dem tiefsten Aerger, mit Schelten und Schimpfen, entrichteten die Bauern diese ihre gewohnten Abgaben. So sind die Menschen!

Einem Grafen, Baron oder Freiherrn hätten sie ohne Widerrede alles entrichtet; aber jetzt verfluchten sie jedes Körnchen, das sie an einen ihresgleichen abgeben mußten. (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 42-43)

The hate of the villagers is not based on the actual fact that he collects the fees, but rather on the fact that he is seen as undeserving to hold the position of a feudal lord—their judgment of the inappropriateness of his aspirations inheres in the very sobriquet they attach to him: Schloßbauer. He is a peasant himself and thus equal to the villagers in status. He has, moreover, merely acquired his wealth through marriage and has no birthright to this status. For the villagers, his behavior and insistence on the fees as a peasant himself dishonor and humiliate the peasant community.

The Schloßbauer himself also never truly established a sense of belonging to the Nordstetten village community and after some initial attempts started disassociating himself from the villagers:

Anfangs gab er sich Mühe, um die wie verabredete Feindseligkeit aller durch Freundlichkeit und Güte zu zerstreuen, denn er war von Natur ein guter und nur etwas strenger Mann; als er aber sah, daß es nichts fruchtete, verachtete er alle insgesamt, scherte sich wenig mehr um sie und setzte nun erst recht seinen Kopf darauf, sein Recht zu behaupten. (44)

Not only does he withdraw himself and his family from the community, but due to his stubbornness he also forecloses any possibility of reintegration into the village. This complete detachment is further exacerbated by his refusal to participate in Sunday mass in the village church: “Er schloß sich nun selber von allem ab ... und um auch nicht einmal Gott mit seinen Dorfgenossen zu dienen, ging er Sonntagmorgens jedesmal nach Horb in die Kirche” (44). The village church itself is usually seen as one of the central components of village life that ties together the community. Mass is the ultimate event that brings together the entire community.

Partaking in church services signals one's engagement in communal practices and rituals. The Schloßbauer's decision to attend mass at a church outside of the village shows that he does not want to belong to the religious congregation or indeed ultimately to the larger village community. Moreover, he attends services at a church in another village where he is equally an outsider. He is only a visitor rather than a member of the community and thus never truly belongs here either. Essentially, he belongs to no community at all.

The Schloßbauer's feud and the resulting disassociation from the community are closely tied to feelings of shame. At the height of the feud, the Schloßbauer threatens the villagers:

“Gebt nur acht ... Ich will euch schon betten, daß ihr kein Stroh mehr unterm Kopf habt zum Draufliegen. Und wenn ich und Weib und Kind drüber zu Grund gehen soll, und wenn mir kein Handbreit Ackers übrig bleibt, keinen roten Heller lass' ich euch jetzt mehr nach ... Wartet nur!” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 46) Vefele, who has great influence over her father, tries to convince him to let go of the enmity with the villagers. The Schloßbauer, however, would rather risk the well-being of his family than show any signs of weakness:

In dieser letzteren Beziehung war der Schloßbauer, trotzdem er nach außen so fest und bestimmt auftrat, doch innerlich in einem gewaltigen Zwiespalte. Er hätte gern seinen Feinden gutwillig die Hand gereicht, aber er schämte sich, so schwach zu sein, wie er es nannte, und er glaubte auch, er habe es schon zu weit kommen lassen, seine Ehre hänge davon ab, es durchzuziehen. Dann, wenn er an die Ehre dachte, erhob sich wieder sein Stolz, und er hielt sich für etwas Besseres als alle die anderen Bauern. (46-47)

In his eyes, backing away from his threat would show a vulnerable side and admit to the villagers that he was wrong. In doing so, he believes, he would reveal his flawed behavior, and acknowledging his mistake would lead to the loss of his honor. While shame often serves to

prevent transgression of moral norms and guides people to do the right thing, here shame functions in a way that has the opposite outcome.

The shame of vulnerability and the loss of honor prevent the Schloßbauer from considering the happiness of his family and their integration into the community:

So geht's. Der Schloßbauer lebte in Unfrieden, mit sich, mit seinem Weibe, mit seinen Mitbürgern, mit allen, bloß weil er sich nicht demütigen wollte, weil er nichts von den alten Herrenrechten, oder besser Unrechten, nachlassen wollte, während er doch sonst noch vollauf auf leben hatte; sein Herz und seine Gedanken kamen immer mehr in Verwirrung, und er richtete sich und die Seinigen zu Grunde, während es ihnen doch hätte so wohl sein können. ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 47)

This narrator commentary reveals the power of shame. By prefacing the statement with "[s]o geht's," the narrator points to the way in which shame controls one's actions and can affect one's emotions and thoughts. Although he might realize that his demands are "[u]nrecht" or he might in his heart want to settle the feud for Vefele's sake, shame and the fear of losing his honor overpower both rationality and positive impulses.

In contrast to Vefele's father's disrespect for the villagers and his efforts to remove himself and his family from the community, Vefele's mother shares a bond with the community and attempts to teach Vefele these communal norms and values. She does not approve of her husband's behavior and his disassociation from the village community. She appears to value the community and places an importance on communal norms and together with her two daughters suffers from the separation from the village community: "Die Mutter und ihre Kinder, namentlich aber ihre beiden Töchter Agathe und Vefele, litten am meisten bei dieser Trennung von der Gemeinde" (44). She is, however, unable to stand up to her husband and even asks her father to get involved, but he too is unsuccessful in convincing the Schloßbauer to change his

ways and “[Mutter und Töchter] saßen oft bei einander und klagten über ihr Los und weinten, während der Vater in der Stadt mit seinen Advokaten saß und erst spät heimkehrte” (44). For Vefele, the mother’s suffering creates a divide in her relationship to her mother and her father.

The community’s hatred of the family goes so far as to create a divide among community members as well. “So weit war der Haß gegangen, daß selbst die Armen, aus Furcht vor den anderen, keine Gabe aus des Schloßbauern Hause nehmen durften” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 44). The poor peasants do not dare to accept any charity from the house of the Schloßbauer for fear that they will also be outcast by the community if they do so. The mother, however, cannot keep herself from helping the community: “In doppelter Heimlichkeit, sowohl vor dem Vater als vor den anderen Dorfbewohnern, übten die Mutter und ihre Töchter ihre fromme Wohltätigkeit; gleich als ob es Diebstahl wäre, trugen sie Kartoffeln, Korn und Mehl in den Schloßgarten, wo die Armen ihrer warteten” (44). Notably, her mother’s efforts in communicating communal values to Vefele take place in double secrecy, both without the knowledge of the Schloßbauer as well as the other community members. Teaching Vefele that the communal values of respecting every community member and helping others can only be executed in secret may challenge her understanding of right and wrong and may even convey that one cannot admit publicly to sharing village norms. Knowing that the poor keep the mother’s help a secret may communicate a sense of shame about both being poor and needing help. Thus, being in need of help as well as helping others and associating with people of lower socio-economic standing are stigmatized as shameful.

When the mother suddenly dies from an illness, the Schloßbauer continues to convey messages to Vefele that separate her even further from the village community and its norms and

values. Now twenty-five years old, Vefele has many suitors who propose marriage to her. Vefele declines these as she does not want to marry. Vefele's aversion to marriage, however, appears to be guided by her father. Time and again, the Schloßbauer advises Vefele not to marry a peasant but rather find a suitor of higher social standing:

“Vefele, du bist zu fein für einen Bauersmann, und wenn ich meinen Prozeß gewinn', ziehen wir in die Stadt, und ich geb' die auch ein Simri voll Kronenthaler zum Heiratsgut, und dann kannst du unter den Herrenleuten wählen.” Das Vefele lachte zwar, aber innerlich gab es seinem Vater doch darin recht, daß, wenn es auch heirate, es doch nie und nimmer einen Bauern heiraten wolle. (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 51)

In doing so, he places Vefele in the same circle of shame her mother experienced upon marrying him. On the one hand, he relays to her that she is worthy of marrying someone of higher social standing. On the other hand, he demeans her by offering a dowry to her future husband that figures as a bribe. Thus, the father instills in Vefele a sense of shame about her own being. Both, her peasant origins and her birth defect render her unsuitable marriage material for anybody who is not a peasant.

Due to this shame, Vefele learns to hate the peasants and believes that she is better than them:

Es [Vefele] hatte ihre Leidenschaftlichkeit und Unversöhnlichkeit zu lange mit erduldet und hatte nun ein tiefes Vorurteil gegen sie; es währte, in de Stadt, wo die Leute gesitteter und feiner wären, müßten sie auch besser und braver sein. Die vielen Kränkungen hatte es nur dadurch ertragen, daß es die Leute für zu roh und sich selber für etwas Besseres hielt, und indem es so immer mehr über das Bauernleben nachdachte, hielt es sich selber nicht nur für besser als die anderen, sondern auch für höher stehend und vornehmer. Das war sein großes Unglück. (51)

Because of the way she has been perceived and treated in the village, which often resulted in feelings of shame, Vefele shares her father's prejudice towards the peasantry. Being constantly

reminded of this shame as a result of her father's enmity toward the community, she loses sight of her origins and the fact that she is a peasant herself. This change in attitude, however, "war sein großes Unglück." Vefele's hatred of the peasants and her disassociation from them cause her even more shame. Still unmarried, she has to suffer the community's mockery: "Je mehr sich Vefele nun der trübseligen Altjungferzeit näherte, umso mehr erlaubte man sich, das 'Schloßfräule' zu necken und zu verhöhnen" ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 52). Even the young boys in the village dare to shame her publicly when they jokingly announce "Tralle, ein halbstummer Dorftölpel" (52) as Vefele's groom. Tralle too is "marked" by the community because of his speech impairment. The epithet "Dorftölpel" further marks Tralle as an unintelligent, clumsy, and annoying person. In response to the boys' teasing Vefele feels completely humiliated and "glaubte, es müsse vor Scham und Aerger in den Boden sinken" (52). Her shame emerges for various reasons. For one, she knows that she is being teased for not being married at her age. Although she does not want to get married, her shame indicates that she must, even if only unconsciously, conform to the norms of the village that determine what is considered an appropriate age for marriage. Second, Tralle is much younger than Vefele and the boys' announcement of them as a pair might carry undertones of inappropriateness as a decent young girl would not be in a relationship with someone that much younger. Moreover, announcing another "marked" person as her groom has additional implications. In matching Tralle with Vefele, the boys imply that a "marked" person could not be married to someone who is not "marked." Even the young children in the village contribute to the belief that "the marked ones" should remain among themselves and ultimately be cast out. Vefele is thus not only made

fun of, but also degraded. The deep shame caused by this incident leads Vefele to despise the peasants even more.

Rumors spread in the village about Vefele's attitude toward peasant life and her belief in her superiority. Paradoxically, although Vefele thinks of herself as better, she is ashamed when she finds out that the villagers are aware of this. To prove that she is not ashamed of hard peasant work, she "zwang sich absichtlich zu dieser groben Arbeit, weil es gehört hatte, daß die Leute im Dorfe sagten, es schäme sich einer solchen" ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 54). Instead of dismissing or ignoring the rumors, Vefele feels compelled to demonstrate her belonging by enacting norms. This scene is one of many that follow that highlight Vefele's indistinct sense of herself, her norms, and her belonging. Although she is encouraged by her father to elevate herself to a higher social standing, her mother's values also affect her behavior. Not knowing which set of norms defines who she is, Vefele repeatedly finds herself ashamed of herself. Ultimately these feelings lead to her downfall.

When Vefele meets Eduard Brönner, her life changes drastically and her lack of defined moral values and norms surfaces more and more. Upon their meeting, Vefele's behavior immediately reveals that she is ashamed of her birth defect. When Brönner thinks she hurt herself falling, she responds: "Nein, ich hab' einen kurzen Fuß," sagte Vefele, und trotzdem, daß es an allen Gliedern fror, schoß ihm doch das Blut siedenheiß ins Gesicht. Es bedeckte sich mit der Schürze das Gesicht und that, als ob es sich abtrocknen wollte, und doch war die Schürze ganz durchnäßt" (54). Explaining her short leg, Vefele not only blushes, but also covers her face and avoids eye contact, bodily gestures that signify shame. When Brönner and Vefele begin to converse, Vefele initially feels uncomfortable in his presence because of his glasses. The fact that

the text calls the glasses a “Gelehrteninstrument” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 54), allows me to read Vefele’s reaction as a sign that she recognizes her lack of education and lower standing compared with Brönner. Only when he removes his glasses is he fully welcomed in her heart.

Brönner and Vefele quickly start a relationship. Secretly, Brönner spends the night with Vefele. In this night her father passes away and Vefele gets pregnant: “In derselben Nacht teile sich der Engel des Lebens und der Engel des Todes in die Herrschaft des einen Hauses” (57). Although the villagers spread rumors that Brönner had possibly poisoned the Schloßbauer, Vefele is blind to the accusations. Just shortly after her father’s death, the couple announces their engagement. Vefele is overjoyed and excited about this union as she believes that it will allow her finally to separate from the peasant community: “[E]s ist doch gräßlich, wie dumm und hartnäckig so ein Bauer ist, und es freute sich, darüber hinausgekommen zu sein” (58). Her feelings of excitement however quickly turn into feelings of shame. Once she starts imitating city ways, she begins experiencing shame about who she is or rather who she has become. Here is where the two contradicting norms and values (her father’s vs. her mother’s) resurface and cause Vefele to question her being.

Brönner’s expectations of Vefele and his behavior towards her repeatedly cause her to evaluate her sense of belonging. Brönner’s request that she change her clothing affects her quite deeply: “Die erste Veränderung, der sich nun Vefele unterwerfen mußte, war eine sehr traurige. Der Brönner schickte ihm eines Tages eine Näherin aus der Stadt und ließ ihm Kleider anmessen. Vefele kam sich vor wie ein Rekrut, der nicht mehr Herr über sich ist und sich in jede beliebige Uniform stecken lassen muß ...” (58). The military comparison of feeling like a “Rekrut” describes Brönner and Vefele’s relationship. Vefele is robbed of all her agency and, like a

conscript, has to follow all Brönnner's orders. This loss of agency and her altered physical appearance elicit feelings of shame in Vefele. In fact, the interplay between agency or the lack thereof and shame will become important in chapter three in which I will analyze how shame and (female) agency interact and what consequences that interaction has for the female protagonists.

When she is forced to give up her old clothes in exchange for the new ones, Vefele feels as if she is giving up a part of herself:

Als es nun am Sonntage darauf die neuen Kleider anziehen mußte, stand es weinend bei der Näherin in der Kammer, es nahm von jedem einzelnen Stückchen wehmütig Abschied, es war ihm, als ob es seinem ganzen bisherigen Leben damit entsagte. Mit besonderer Wehmut betrachtete es den feinen Wiflingrock; seine Mutter hatte ihn ihm gegeben, als es gefirmt wurde, es war darin zum erstenmale zur Beichte und zu Gottes Tisch gegangen, und die Mutter hatte ihm gesagt, es solle einst damit zum Traueraltare gehen. Auch das ist eine Unannehmlichkeit der Stadtkleider und bezeichnet schon das Herrenwesen, daß man sie nicht allein anziehen kann und jemand zum Zuhafeln braucht. Vefele schauderte immer zusammen, wenn die Näherin so an ihm herumbosselte. Die Haare waren in einen Zopf geflochten und mit einem Kamme aufgesteckt, und als nun das Vefele endlich fix und fertig dastand und sich im Spiegel betrachtete, mußte es über sich lachen, und es verbeugte sich höflich vor sich selber. ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 58-59)

Saying goodbye to each piece of her clothing, Vefele sheds the layers of her social self one by one. Moreover, she remembers how her clothes, in particular her skirt, have been part of memorable moments in her life which are all traditional events of particular importance in a village community. She also recalls her mother's wishes to see her daughter get married in this skirt as was traditional for peasant weddings. Thus, Vefele's lamentation at giving up her clothes can be read as her reluctance to separate herself fully from her origins and village norms and values. When she sees her reflection in the mirror with her new clothes and hairdo, she mocks herself. Laughing at her reflection, she bows down as if she and the reflection in the mirror were

two separate people. While inwardly she is still a peasant girl, the reflection bears no traces of her origins.

When Vefele tells Brönner that she feels uncomfortable in the new clothing and would prefer to continue wearing her peasant dress, Brönner calls her complaints “dummes Bauerngeschwätz” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 59). Vefele feels insulted by Brönner’s comment, but does not resist his wishes further. As a result, feelings of shame take control over her being and her daily life: “Das Vefele ging fast gar nicht mehr aus dem Hause, denn es schämte sich, so ‘vermaskiert’ zu sein” (59). The term *vermaskiert* indicates that Vefele feels that her clothing is masking her inner being, hiding her origins. Thus, her social self is being split off from her previous sense of self, in which her inward sense of her social identity was one with the social identity she performed.

Brönner continuously intensifies Vefele’s feelings of shame. When he announces his plan to emigrate to America, Vefele begs him to stay in the village. She assures him that she has enough money so that they can live a splendid life here. In response to Vefele’s pleading Brönner calls her a “dummes Dorfkind, das nicht wisse, daß hinterm Berg auch noch Leute wohnen” (59-60). Vefele feels “mißachtet” and thinks that she would have to endure a hard life and be “ewig unglücklich” (60) where they to leave the village. These changes have such an affect on Vefele because they make her realize how much she actually values communal village life and its norms. Brönner, by dismissing everything that has to do with peasant life and calling Vefele dumb anytime she refers to her peasant origins, prompts a conflict in Vefele. While at bottom she wants to return to village belonging, Brönner’s acts of shaming prevent Vefele from embracing

these norms and values. She feels divided just as she had when her father instilled in Vefele the wish not to marry a peasant.

This shameful feeling of having to mask her true self is further reinforced in Vefele when Brönner avoids introducing her to a friend with whom he wants to take a trip to Tübingen: “[Vefele] glaubte, er [Brönner] schämte sich seiner vor seinem Freunde” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 60). The reason for Brönner’s behavior, however, has nothing to do with Vefele per se. What Vefele does not know is that he is about to trick her and leave with all of her money. Vefele is so wrapped up in her shame that she is unable to see through Brönner’s plans.

Brönner leaves and weeks go by without any word from him. Sad and depressed, Vefele starts questioning her relationship to Brönner: “Vefele war oft betrübt in dem Gedanken, daß es sein ganzes Leben einem Manne hingegeben sein solle, der keinen rechten Respekt vor ihm hatte; es war nicht stolz, aber es dachte doch daran, wie jeder, und sogar der Schultheiß im Orte, sich hochgeehrt gefühlt hätte durch seine Hand” (61). Her thoughts about the lack of respect afforded her by Brönner and her other suitors who, she believes, would have treated her with respect shows that she wants to be regarded for who she is and what she has to offer, a rich and honorable peasant girl. On the other hand, she is ashamed of having these thoughts; she, furthermore, is not proud to be thinking about other suitors when she has promised herself to Brönner. Again she finds herself in a conflict between the wish to be respected as a morally upright individual and her moral values of respecting the relationship she has entered.

After weeks of not hearing from Brönner, Vefele finally discovers that all her money is gone. Suddenly realizing that Brönner has tricked her and will never return, she is overcome by desperation: “Mit raschen Schritten sprang Vefele an das Dachfenster und wollte sich

hinausstürzen” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 61). She is barely saved by her brother who coincidentally has just walked into the room. In tears, Vefele tells her brother about everything for the first time: “Da fiel Vefele auf das Angesicht und erzählte ihm seine Schande” (61). *Schande* names the disgrace and shame she feels in regard to her pregnancy and about having been taken advantage of in this way. After she shares everything with her brother, both feel shame as avoidance of eye contact indicates: “beide scheuten sich fast, einander anzusehen” (61). It is interesting that Vefele’s brother, who has done nothing wrong, avoids looking at her. Is he afraid of shaming Vefele more by having an expression of judgment in his eyes? Is he ashamed of his sister? Or is he feeling and sharing her shame?

The shame completely takes over Vefele’s life. Unable to live with the humiliation, she withdraws from the community:

Wer das Vefele früher gekannt hatte, wäre jetzt furchtbar erschrocken über die Veränderung seines ganzen Wesens. Es ließ sich aber vor niemand sehen, es lebte ein Leben ohne Willen, das kein eigentliches Leben war, es aß und trank, schlief und stand auf, aber es wußte und wollte von alledem nichts, es blickte immer drein wie eine Wahnsinnige. Auch weinen konnte es nicht mehr. All sein Denken, seine tiefste Seele war wie scheinot, wie lebendig begraben; es hörte die Welt draußen hantieren, es verstand sie wohl, aber sich selber konnte es nicht verständigen. (62)

Vefele no longer lives a meaningful life. While physically alive, she suffers from her emotional condition greatly and falls into a state of depression. Her soul is seemingly dead as if it were buried alive. The image of being buried alive can be read in terms of Vefele’s position in the village community. She is physically alive, but not present in the minds of the villagers. Moreover, the image can also be applied to Vefele’s emotional state. She has no way to escape the shame she feels, she is doomed to live in shame forever separate from the village.

Having been tricked in this way, Vefele feels that Brönnner's insults to her intelligence are warranted. But more importantly, she feels that she has lost the remnants of her true being, her peasant girl being, not because she wanted to give them up, but because she feels that after this incident she will never belong to the community. She believes that everyone is aware of what happened: "es war ihm, als ob Millionen Zungen durch die Welt hin seinen Schmerz und seine Schande verkündeten" ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 62). Her sister-in-law declares her the one who "einen solchen Schandfleck habe" (63). The once "Engelsmilde, sollte die Schande ihrer Familie sein" (63). Thus, Vefele is not only carrying her own shame, but she feels that she is also responsible for the shaming of the entire family. In this vein, Vefele sees herself as having transgressed norms that are dishonorable and contributed to the destruction of her family's reputation. The family's reputation, of course, was not good to begin with due to the Schloßbauer's behavior towards the villagers. Therefore, the shame that is laid onto Vefele can be read as a displacement of blame and shame.

At the depth of Vefele's depression, farm servant Wendel, a prior suitor who had warned Vefele against Brönnner, proposes marriage to Vefele once again. He wants to take care of her and her unborn child. Wendel's proposal elicits feelings of shame in Vefele: "Vefele entzog ihm rasch die Hand und bedeckte sich damit die Augen, dann stand es auf und sagte glühenden Anlitzes: 'Weißt du denn auch, daß ich bettelarm bin? Gelt, das hast du nicht gewußt?'" (63) Filled with shame, she hides her blushing face. Vefele believes that Wendel has not heard that she has lost all her money, because if he had, he would not propose to her. Vefele's self-esteem has hit bottom, she cannot imagine that someone like Wendel would propose to her if it weren't for her money. Wendel, who knows what has happened and truly likes Vefele, experiences a sense of shame on

her behalf: “Wendel stand eine Weile still, Zorn und Mitleid kämpften in seinem Herzen wie auf seinem Angesichte, er schämte sich für das Vefele und für sich selber über diese Rede” (“Des Schloßbauers Vefele” 63). On the one hand, he is angry about who she has become. On the other hand, he pities her lack of self-respect and her self-doubt.

After Vefele rejects Wendel, she is told she “müsse das Dorf verlassen und nach seinem Geburtsort zurückgehen, da sonst das Kind, wenn es hier geboren würde, Heimatsrechte ansprechen könne” (65). The community not only rejects Vefele, but also does not want her child in their midst. Rejected by the villagers, she has completely lost her sense of belonging. In a song that she sings to herself repeatedly, she expresses not only this loss of standing in the village community, but she also reveals her loss of honor and pride in herself:

Weinst du um dein Vätergut,
Oder weinst du um dein' stolzen Mut?
Oder weinst du um dein junges Blut?
Oder weinst du um deine Ehr?
Ja Ehr?
Die findest du nimmermehr. (64)

She has given up any hope of re-establishing her honor ever again. As outlined in the introduction and in accordance with Ute Frevert, female honor, contrary to male honor, could not be restored once lost (“Gendering Emotions” 88). As a result of this realization, Vefele sees no other way but to leave the village community forever. The only friend that follows her on her journey is Mohrle, her father’s beloved dog. When offered support one last time by Marem, a family friend and an outsider himself, she rejects even this helping hand and continues her path with Mohrle. On his way back from the city, Marem encounters Mohrle who has only Vefele’s

red scarf in his mouth. Mohrle prompts Marem to follow him to the river where the dog jumps into the water and swims off until he is out of Marem's sight.

Instead of telling the reader what has happened to Vefele, the text remains ambiguous by providing only two long dashes. After a section break in the text, we are only told: "Das vornehmste Haus des ganzen Dorfes, das gehörte einst dem Vater des Vefele; der Vater ist tot, die Mutter ist tot, die fünf Kinder sind tot, und das Vefele ist spurlos verschwunden" ("Des Schloßbauers Vefele" 66). This ending could be read in various ways. For one, we could understand it as Vefele having literally disappeared and never been seen again. However, the dog's end (although not explicitly stated, we may assume that he drowns) may parallel Vefele's own disappearance that may lead us to conclude that she has died and possibly even committed suicide.

We may also consider the possibility that there is an inconsistency in the text. When we take into account that this text passage specifies that five children are dead, we may approach the ending "Vefele ist spurlos verschwunden" from a different angle. Earlier in the text, we are informed that the Schloßbauer and his wife have five children. Thus, the statement seems to contradict this information: if five children are dead and Vefele has disappeared, this would add up to six children. We might however be able to read the ending conveying information beyond the fact that she is dead. Specifying that the dead Vefele is "spurlos verschwunden," the narrator may be commenting on the fact that she has disappeared. This emphasis, I believe, is not necessarily exclusively about the physical body of Vefele, but also highlights the disappearance of the idea of who Vefele is as a human being in her own awareness as well as that of the village community. Shame transformed her into someone she and the villagers no longer recognized.

Leaving Vefele's destiny uncertain for the readers, Auerbach gives Vefele the only chance she has to be freed of the shame, that is, by vanishing.

Overall, Vefele's inability to negotiate the shame she experiences in her relationship with Brönnert is connected to her upbringing, an upbringing that influenced her sense of norms. The dispute between the father and the villagers and the father's parenting after the mother's death model a separation between village and family for Vefele whereas her mother's behavior had taught her communal belonging. As a result of this indistinct sense of (not) belonging and the double standard of social norms, her sense of shame and the ability to distinguish genuine from false shame are obscured. In accordance with Taylor, the shame that Vefele experiences is of the genuine kind and should serve constructively to restore her equilibrium. I argue, however, that it is difficult to make a claim for genuine shame when one considers the ways in which her *own chosen* values have been established. Because Vefele grows up (unconsciously) torn between the village norms and her father's values that reject the village norms, she is unable to negotiate her feelings of shame constructively. She is neither entirely able to embrace the values she learned from her father nor those of her mother. Therefore, she is unable to judge the values against which she is being shamed as her *own* or *alien* and, thus, cannot distinguish whether the shame she experiences is genuine or false. Being trapped in this middle ground between the two types of shame she cannot evaluate her norms to restore her equilibrium; nor can she dismiss them as false. Only if she could do one or the other would shame serve constructively in accordance with Taylor's views. For Vefele, however, the distinction fails and she is trapped in blurred feelings of shame. These failed self-negotiations ultimately result in her downfall; there is for her no other escape but to disappear forever.

2.5 Conclusion

As we have seen, the moral aspect of shame allows us to investigate village tales in regard to social norms and to determine how these values affect an individual's sense of belonging, his or her behavior, his or her standing in the community, and ultimately his or her fate. Adducing Taylor's theory of constructive vs. destructive shame, or genuine vs. false shame, my readings of Gotfried Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" and Berthold Auerbach's "Des Schloßbauer's Vefele" have revealed not only the power of shame and its consequences, but, additionally, my analyses have foregrounded the ways in which depictions of shame can serve as criticism of moral norms and values of village life. Moreover, my readings have questioned the applicability of Taylor's concepts of the constructive and destructive nature of shame when taking into account the very specific circumstances that (forcefully) shape the life of an individual in a rural community.

My investigation of Keller's text demonstrates how shame as a moral emotion not only guides one's personal behavior, but can influence also the relationship between two individuals. I show that genuine shame, in accordance with Taylor's claims, results in evaluations of one's transgressions of norms and the resulting judgment of one's moral behavior and, in turn, provides opportunities for the individual to amend his/her conduct to return to an equilibrium that reinstates his/her moral goodness. In this case, shame serves constructively and positively to regulate and maintain one's standing in the community. However, my analysis of the text also reveals how genuine shame can ultimately be destructive as it may trap individuals in a position that does not allow them to evaluate their moral behavior. As I have shown, this lack of ability to assess one's transgressions, or what are perceived as such by the village community, may lead to

behavior that sooner or later ends tragically. Further, my take on Keller's intention with the tragic ending of the story complicates ideas of false shame as merely destructive. Instead, I show how false shame can in fact serve constructively by eliciting self-reflection and evaluation of the social norms and values.

My investigation of Auerbach's village tale as a representation of village life, on the other hand, not only reveals the destructive nature of shame for individuals who are unable to evaluate the nature of their shameful feelings, but it also questions whether village life allows for a distinction between genuine and false shame. As my reading shows, rural communities operate in ways that make it difficult, maybe even impossible, to separate one's own chosen values from "alien measures of value" imposed by the social context. Individuals grow up internalizing the values and norms of the village community without any possibility of evaluating whether or not they subscribe to these standards in the end. In this vein, my readings ultimately question Taylor's concept of the constructive and destructive nature of shame. They demonstrate that the constructive value of shame derives from the ways in which norms are imposed on the individual by the community rather than whose values serve as the reference point for judgment.

Chapter 3

Shame and Female Agency in Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Totenwacht" (1894) and Clara Viebig's "Die Schuldige" (1897)

Shame, for women, is this web of unobtainable, conflicting, competing expectations about who we are supposed to be. And it's a straight-jacket.

Brown

3.1 Introduction

As we have seen in the two previous chapters, examining feelings of shame and processes of shaming in literary representations of nineteenth-century villages reveals the ways in which the respective village communities operate on a social level. As studies on shame have shown, shame and its related emotions (such as embarrassment, humiliation, and guilt, among others) emerge in reaction to the violation of norms, be they personal, communal, or national. Moreover, these emotions are contextual, which in turn determines not only the type of emotion that will emerge, but also its intensity, frequency, and consequences. Furthermore, as shame has been shown to be a highly gendered emotion—or more precisely, the instances that trigger shame are highly gendered—feelings of shame also reflect the prevailing stereotypical gender norms. Thus, analyzing notions of shame in these village tales brings to the forefront the established social norms and values—and with it the gendered notions present within these norms—of these particular village communities. Shame in these literary representations serves to comment on and critique the rigid (gendered) social structures of the rural nineteenth-century German-speaking world.

This chapter takes the notion of shame as an indicator of (gendered) social norms further and shows that feelings of shame and processes of shaming do not only reveal communal values. As the chapter outlines, they also make evident the ways in which these village communities are informed by rudimentary legal systems and thus are predicated on injustice, in particular for women. In order to make apparent what feelings of shame and processes of shaming can tell us about notions of justice—both legal and personal—in village tale communities, this chapter addresses shame as a source of public order. As briefly outlined in chapter two, shame is perforce socially constructed and there is an element of (positive) social control at work. Shame, as I will show, can serve to establish a certain kind of order within a community. As mentioned, feelings of shame emerge when norms are violated. Thus, in an attempt to avoid being shamed, community members will do their best to adhere to these particular norms. In turn, shame serves to maintain the order of the community. However, the need to maintain this public order can be oppressive to individuals within the community. Moreover, it may lead to injustices. What I aim to show is how shame can be reversed to disrupt public order and subsequently allow the individual to gain autonomy. In other words, I will examine how shame not only reveals the ways in which the execution of law in two literary depictions of rural areas is rudimentary or practically non-existent, but also how shame, or more specifically acts of shaming, can provide individuals with an opportunity to claim (female) agency and to achieve a kind of personal justice.

For my analysis, I will look at Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Totenwacht" (1894) and Clara Viebig's "Die Schuldige" (1897). These two texts not only demonstrate how feelings of shame and acts of shaming reveal norms and values of their village communities, but they can

also be read as commentaries on the lack of legal rights for women in these village communities. The reasons for pairing these two village tales are manifold. For one, the stories are written by two women writers who play an important role in the literary production of the late nineteenth century. Ebner-Eschenbach and Viebig wrote stories that reflect on the rural areas to which they were emotionally connected (Moravia and the vicinity of the Eifel)¹ even though both of them lived in urban spaces for much of their lives: Ebner-Eschenbach in Vienna and Viebig in Berlin. Although Ebner-Eschenbach and Viebig were highly educated and grew up in upper socio-economic circles—Ebner-Eschenbach was an aristocrat and Viebig a member of the upper middle class—both authors were invested in and cared deeply about the (uneducated) communities, and particular the women from these rural areas. Ebner-Eschenbach's and Viebig's works repeatedly comment on and critique then current images of women, their lives, and their rights, or the lack thereof in the rigidly defined communities of the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, "Die Totenwacht," set in a small village in Moravia, and "Die Schuldige," set in a small village in the Eifel, present parallel stories differing mainly in their endings. Their protagonists, Anna and Barbara, are both women of the lowest economic status within their village communities, who find themselves pregnant and abandoned by the fathers of their children. While Ebner-Eschenbach's Anna is raped, Viebig's Barbara appears to have consented to sexual intercourse; nonetheless the presence of violence cannot be ruled out in this case either. Both women are subjected to injustice, and it quickly becomes apparent that the legal system fails to protect them or to provide them with any kind of justice. Shamed by the community for

¹ Ebner-Eschenbach grew up in Moravia and cared deeply about the Moravian community. Viebig knew the Eifel from various visits. In 1876, Viebig spent one year in Trier with the family of a regional court consultant, whom she called uncle Matthieu. Matthieu's rural borough covered the part of the Eifel that belonged to Trier and he took Viebig along to many of his crime interrogations. During this time, Viebig learned a lot about the region and its community and developed a particular liking for the Eifel.

their poverty, unmarried status, and illegitimate children, Anna and Barbara withdraw from the community, are marginalized, and even ostracized. After years of suffering shame, both women are confronted by the men who impregnated them. Anna has to face Georg, the father of her now deceased child, who suddenly wants to marry her. Barbara faces Lorenz, who wants to take away her child to raise it with the woman he wants to marry. While Anna is able to free herself from the shame that has cast a pall on her life, achieving a sort of justice for herself and securing her future, Barbara is not offered any opportunity to break free. Rather, Barbara is arrested and her child is taken away from her and the story ends suggesting a bleak future for Barbara.

Given these similarities and differences, the question arises as to why two such parallel stories written by two female authors (just three years apart from each other) in the late nineteenth century offer such drastic differences in their endings. This difference suggests the usefulness of a comparative analysis of the two stories through the lens of contemporary shame theory. Among other things, shame theory will help to uncover why Ebner-Eschenbach's and Viebig's protagonists experience divergent fates.

3.2 Shame and (Gendered) Agency

As discussed throughout this dissertation, shame as a moral emotion has received wide attention among philosophers and psychologists, as well as academics in various other disciplines.² However, what appears to be lacking is a consideration of ways in which shame might be gendered. Only few accounts exist that offer an examination of the gendered nature of

² Shame has become an important category of inquiry in fields such as gender studies, queer theory, political sciences, sociology, anthropology, and environmental studies, among others.

shame.³ Once one sees how gender not only influences but also determines the extent to which shame is experienced, it quickly becomes apparent that not taking into account aspects of gender can easily lead to misreadings of shame. In her article “Girls Blush Sometimes: Gender, Moral Agency, and the Problem of Shame” (2003), Jennifer C. Manion numbers among the few scholars who recognize that the analysis of shame as a moral emotion requires considerations of the connections between shame and gender. Manion’s account, as we will see, will help me investigate what role these connections between shame and gender play in literary representations of peasant life.

Before looking at the gendered nature of shame, let us quickly recall the notion of shame as a moral emotion and particularly the discussion of Gabriele Taylor’s account of “genuine” vs. “false shame.”⁴ Many scholars agree that shame (together with other emotions such as guilt, regret, empathy, sympathy, and compassion) plays a significant role in moral life.⁵ As a self-reflective emotion, shame is generally considered to be a good thing, morally speaking. Shame as a moral emotion emerges when one becomes aware of the self transgressing certain moral

³ See, for example, Sandra Bartky’s *Femininity and Domination* (1990), Leslie R. Brody’s “Gender and Emotion: Beyond Stereotypes” (1997) and *Gender, Emotion, and the Family* (1999), Robin Dillon’s “Self-Respect: Moral, Emotional, Political” (1997), Paul W. Eftim’s and Maureen E. Kenny’s and James R. Mahalik’s “Gender Role Stress in Relation to Shame, Guilt, and Externalization” (2001), Tamara J. Ferguson’s and Susan L. Cowley’s “Gender Differences in the Organization of Guilt and Shame” (1997), Ferguson’s and Heidi L. Eyre’s “Engendering Gender Differences in Shame and Guilt: Stereotypes, Socialization, and Situational Pressures” (2000) as well as Ferguson’s, Eyre’s, and Michael Ashbaker’s “Unwanted Identities: A Key Variable in Shame-Anger Links and Gender Differences” (2000), C. A. Gross’ and N.E. Hansen’s “Clarifying the Experience of Shame: The Role of Attachment Style, Gender, and Investment in Relatedness” (2000), Ullanliina Lehtinen’s “How Does one Know What Shame is? Epistemology, Emotions and Forms of Life in Juxtaposition” (1998), Helen Block Lewis’ *Guilt and Shame in Neurosis* (1971) and “The Role of Shame in depression in Women” (1987), Michael Lewis’ *Shame. The Exposed Self* (1992), and Jennifer C. Manion “Girls Blush Sometimes: Gender, Moral Agency, and the Problem of Shame” (2003) are among the few scholars that in detail address aspects of gender in their works on shame.

⁴ In the remainder of this chapter, the terms “genuine” and “false shame” will be utilized in accordance with Taylor, but used without quotation marks.

⁵ Such as Leonard Boonin’s “Guilt, Shame and Morality” (1983), Manion’s “The Moral Relevance of Shame” (2002), Matha C. Nussbaum’s *Hiding from Humanity. Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (2004), Anthony O’Hear’s “Guilt and Shame as Moral Concepts” (1976-77), Gabriele Taylor’s *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self Assessment* (1985) and “Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect” (1995), among many others.

values. In this vein, shame is seen as a constructive emotion that issues a warning of transgression and/or helps us to return to our desired self when transgression has occurred.

Taylor further distinguishes this aspect of shame by looking at when exactly the warning of transgression of values is constructive or morally appropriate and when it is destructive or morally inappropriate. She considers shame “the emotion of self-protection” that allows an individual to prevent putting him/herself “into a certain position [of vulnerability]” (*Pride, Shame, and Guilt* 81) and thus prevent his/her personal values from being threatened. In Taylor’s view, having no sense of shame would mean having no understanding of self-worth and thus one would lose what she regards as self-respect: “if someone has self-respect then under certain specifiable conditions he will be feeling shame. A person has no self-respect if he regards no circumstances as shame-producing” (“Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect” 161). Self-respect, in turn, indicates integrity and thus being able to feel shame implies that one is able to take on a moral perspective in the first place.

With this idea in mind, Taylor differentiates between what she calls genuine and false shame. Genuine shame, she explains, occurs when shame emerges in response to transgressions of one’s own, chosen, personal values. In Taylor’s view, this kind of shame is morally appropriate and constructive as it is a reaction to “shortcomings with respect to formulating or living up to [one’s] commitments” (169) and drives the self to restore these values and to “return[] to the equilibrium” (176). False shame, in contrast, emerges in reaction to being judged by what Taylor calls “alien measures of value” (169), values that one does not personally hold. Moreover, she considers false shame to be morally inappropriate and even “destructive of the equilibrium” (175) as it results in the individual questioning and being confused about his/her

own values. She suggests that one needs to dismiss such instances of false shame and realize that the feeling of failure that resulted in feelings of shame is based on standards that one does not hold as one's own.⁶

How does gender come into play when we look at shame as a moral emotion and/or particularly in Taylor's distinction between morally appropriate and inappropriate shame? Drawing on early mappings of shame onto feminine traits such as Sigmund Freud's statement that "shame [is] a feminine characteristic *par excellence*" (132, emphasis in original) as well as Aristotle's notes on shame as only "suitable for youth" due to their immaturity leading to irrational and "womanish" emotionality (*Nicomachean Ethics* 115), Manion concludes that such "mappings of shame onto feminine traits indicate a link between shame and gender in our cultural memory" ("Girls Blush, Sometimes" 22). Many other scholars have similarly pointed out that in our culture shame more frequently informs women's emotional lives rather than men's.⁷ While acknowledging that men and women both encounter feelings of shame, philosopher Sandra Bartky, for example, theorizes "that women are more prone to experience the emotion in question and that the feeling itself has a different meaning in relation to their total psychic situation and general social location than has a similar emotion when experienced by men" (84). Marion, among others, explains that we often regard women as more prone to shame since it is an emotion that indicates "vulnerability to and powerlessness in response to negative judgments others make of us" which in turn "signifie[s] absence or weakness of certain stereotypical masculine traits such as assertiveness, dominance, self-confidence, and emotional

⁶ For a detailed discussion of Taylor's concept of genuine and false shame see chapter two.

⁷ See, for example, Bartky, Brody, Ferguson and Crowley, Ferguson, Eyre and Ashbaker.

inviolability” (Manion, “Girls Blush Sometimes” 23).⁸ Manion further develops the link between shame and gender by leaning on work on the psychology of shame,⁹ which indicates the connection of shame to an “individual’s subjective process of identity formation,” whereby women, contrary to men, “organize their personal sense of self around feelings of shame, that is, around a sense of disappointment in failing to meet some proposed ideal, especially in the eyes of others” (24). The propensity for shame in women is thus triggered by their defining the self in relation to and dependent on others and by vulnerability to social expectation.

Research has additionally shown that the idea of a propensity for shame in women is also a result of the ways in which shame studies have been conducted. Tamar Ferguson, Heidi Eyre, and Michael Ashkabar, for example, point out that scenarios used in psychological shame studies are based on traditional feminine gender roles and almost exclusively neglect any traditional masculine gender roles. Their work shows that scenarios presented to participants for the question “Would you feel shame about ...?” all address failure in what is traditionally considered a feminine trait such as kindness, interpersonal relationships, nurturing of and care for others, etc. (140-41). In a separate study, Ferguson and Eyre show studies incorporating scenarios based on traditional masculine gender roles revealed no evidence that supports claims that women are more prone to shame than men. Rather, they demonstrate that there is no gender difference in the intensity and/or frequency of shame in men and women. Moreover, the results of these new studies confirm that men are more shame-prone and feel shame in a more intensified manner to the questions that included scenarios that indicated failure in expressing traditional masculine

⁸ See also Efthim, Kenny and Mahalik, and Ferguson and Eyre.

⁹ Manion primarily focuses on the work on the psychology of shame by Helen Block Lewis in *Guilt and Shame in Neurosis* (1971), “The Role of Shame in Depression in Women” (1987), and *The Role of Shame in Symptom Formation* (1987) and by Michael Lewis in *Shame: The Exposed Self* (1992).

traits (Ferguson and Eyre 261-63, 266-69). Ferguson and Eyre's research thus confirms that the only gendered difference in the emergence of shame lies in the events that trigger such feelings.

Michael Lewis proposes that although both men and women experience shame, their experiences differ in the ways in which they employ strategies to cope with shame (174). In both men and women, shame is a reaction to failure, whereby the nature of the failure is different in men and women. The reactions to these failures do not merely differ but stand in complete opposition to one another. While women blame personal inadequacies for their failures and attribute their successes to external sources, men do the exact opposite; they attribute their successes to personal abilities while they blame external sources for their failures (Manion, "Girls Blush, Sometimes" 24). Moreover, events that trigger shame are based on gender socialization: while women feel shame in response to failure in maintaining personal relationships and due to physical unattractiveness, events indicating failure in any task deemed important as well as failure related to sexual potency trigger shame in men (M. Lewis 187). In summary, shame is an emotion both men and women feel in response to an unwanted identity attributed to the self. It differs only in the nature of the shame-triggering events.

Considering this gendered triggering of and coping with shame, Manion challenges Taylor's account of genuine and false shame. She argues that Taylor's understanding of shame not only does not support a woman's moral agency but indeed destroys it because of the fact "that the social contexts that fashion masculinity and femininity influence what counts as 'good' instances of shame for women" ("Girls Blush, Sometimes" 22). In other words, gendered instances of shame are the result of gender role socialization. Mistaking these values for one's own, chosen, personal values and thus rendering any emerging feelings of shame related to these

values as genuine is “unacceptable,” according to Manion (“Girls Blush Sometimes” 26). In turn, Taylor’s view of women’s vulnerability to shame as moral agents as signifying a positive moral attribute is problematic, for this vulnerability is not driven by personal moral values, but rather by “cultural conventions, demands, and expectations regarding feminine goodness” (Manion, “Girls Blush Sometimes” 26). Manion explains that the concept of genuine shame neglects gender role socialization and claims that “women and girls ought to adopt a particular moral vision” (36). Calling into question the putative constructiveness of genuine shame, she asserts that moral values of femininity internalized by women through gender role socialization are based on maintaining interpersonal relationship and thus on the “well-being of others at the cost of [their] own” (30). How can shame that emerges to warn a woman to sacrifice herself for the care of others be constructive or genuine? For Manion, it cannot.

Manion proposes a different idea of an individual as a moral agent. While Taylor believes that it is in the interest of a moral agent to protect his/her own values in order to maintain equilibrium and stability (“Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect” 176), Manion claims that “what is in the interest of a person as the particular human she is and for her own sake is the protection of a set of self-chosen values that necessarily contains ... self-concern” (“Girls Blush Sometimes” 29). Manion proposes that only values that ensure a woman’s own well-being rather than others’ are linked to her integrity. Further, she argues that the only way to maintain integrity through self-concern is constantly to question the moral values that one holds. It is here, according to Manion, where Taylor’s distinction between genuine and false shame falls short. Taylor’s approach suggests that what is of importance for the moral agent is stability and tranquility, which one achieves by constantly working towards returning to the ideal of one’s

own values when experiencing genuine shame and/or by dismissing false shame and thus the “alien measures of value.” Manion, however, disagrees and explains that “[t]his approach neither requires nor recommends deep reflection on [one’s] set of values and standards ... [and] implies that a ‘genuine’ set of values is that set one has first and that resists challenges” (“Girls Blush Sometimes” 34). Manion suggests, that it is not the type of shame one experiences that is constructive or destructive, but rather the way in which one manages shame. Women should constantly reflect on and question values that cause shame from a perspective of self-concern in order to maintain their integrity (37). Only this kind of reflection will secure women autonomy as moral agents.

Relying on Manion’s discussion, I turn now to “Die Totenwacht” and “Die Schuldige” to point to particular gendered instances of shame. I will demonstrate that the shame that the female protagonists experience leads to reflections on and destabilization of social norms against which they are judged. As I will show, only when the protagonists approach their coping with shame from a perspective of self-concern, does it result in (re)gaining female agency.

My use of the term *agency* draws on what in philosophy and sociology is referred to as human agency. Broadly defined, the term refers to the ability of an individual or a community to make choices and to shape their lives. This particular type of power enables persons or groups to determine their ideas and actions for themselves in a way that assures the well-being of the self. Looking specifically at female agency,¹⁰ I additionally draw on feminist concepts of agency, which in general terms define the core ideas of feminism and equality. Relying on Kathryn

¹⁰ I use the term female agency over women’s agency as I understand women’s agency to refer to actual women’s lives. Female agency, in contrast, indicates the concept of agency for women and lends itself for the discussion of literary representations.

Abrams' essay "From Autonomy to Agency: Feminist Perspectives on Self-Direction" (1999), who defines autonomy as "both a characteristic of a human subject and a quality that inheres in particular acts or choices" (805), I will, for my purposes, use the terms agency and autonomy interchangeably.¹¹

For women, the question of autonomy is directly tied to stereotypical gender socialization. Male-dominated hierarchies inherently imply that women have less agency than men. Thus, female agency refers to "how women even within oppressive structures undertake little acts that ... lead to transformative change in their lives or their children's lives" (Bhattacharjya n.p.). In this vein, female autonomy is not so much defined as the ability to act per se, but rather as "women's experiences of making the most of their situation, in the following ways: her ability to rise above the situations she is pressed with; participation in the community; assertion of identity; and how she continues to survive and make changes for herself and her immediate environment and community" (Cabrera n.p.). In this sense, female independence is defined by a woman's ability to withstand the pressures that come along with stereotypical gender socialization and may often result in some kind of oppression of women. Thus, a woman has agency when she is able to make decisions about her life whether they conform to or differ from the established norms.

In the above definitions of agency and, in particular, the qualifications of how autonomy plays into women's lives, there appears to be a connection between agency and self-concern. In his work *Autonomy* (1989), Joel Feinberg describes an autonomous individual or self as someone who shows qualities of moral authenticity, integrity, and distinct self-identity (Feinberg 30-43).

¹¹ I will also use the terms power and influence as synonyms for agency as well as the terms independence, freedom, and self-determination as synonyms for autonomy.

Similarly, Abrams argues that “[a]gency manifests itself in various forms of self-definition and self-direction” (Abrams 806). Thus, it appears that agency is directly linked to a sense of oneself (self-identity) as well as a concern for the well being of this particular self (self-concern).

As we see, Manion, Abrams, and Feinberg share conceptual similarities regarding ideas of autonomy. While Manion foregrounds shame management through self-concern, Abrams and Feinberg consider self-concern the key component to women’s agency. Although these scholars do not engage with each other, I will use their respective concepts in conjunction as an interpretive frame to help me think about how shame management and female agency are represented in Ebner-Eschenbach’s and Viebig’s works.

3.3 Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Totenwacht” (1894): Female Agency and (Re)Establishing Personal Justice

Ein “Nein” zur rechten Zeit, selbst von den geliebtsten Lippen – ich konnte es verwinden. – Aber ein “Nein”, wenn die Augen hundertmal “Mag sein!” gelächelt, – wenn der Ton der Stimme hundertmal nach “Gewiß” geklungen – so ein “Nein” macht einen – . . . zum Narren... oder zum Spötter!

Arthur Schnitzler, “Weihnachtseinkäufe“

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, who considered herself a realist, approaches questions of injustice from an optimistic and hopeful perspective. Literary realism of the nineteenth century depicts the mundane and banal activities and experiences in lieu of using a romanticized or stylized mode of (re)presentation (Baldick 281). Ebner-Eschenbach offers a realistic representation of village life in the nineteenth century, concentrating on the “mundane and banal activities and experiences” of women in particular to foreground social and political issues. Todd

Kontje points out that women writers of German Realism engaged in political debates of the nineteenth century whereby “they took unpopular positions, but they also seemed aware of the limitations of the spheres of their activity” (19). Ebner-Eschenbach respects these limitations by avoiding utopian moves for her protagonist that would convey an unrealistic sense of female agency. Instead, what Ebner-Eschenbach does for her protagonist and ultimately her readers is to offer a hopeful and promising view of the possibility for change.

Ebner-Eschenbach’s optimistic perspective is evident in her short story “Die Totenwacht” (1894), which offers an interpretation and analysis of male violence towards women—more specifically rape—and women’s powerlessness to react and/or act against this violent behavior and its consequences. By doing so, this text simultaneously establishes and brings into dialogue power and gender relations of the late nineteenth century. However, I offer a different reading of this text in which I show that Ebner-Eschenbach not only comments on the male-dominated hierarchy in rural Austria, but also critiques it and offers her protagonist Anna an opportunity to break free from the social order established by traditional institutions of power and to obtain justice outside of the law for herself. I suggest that the text allows for an alternative interpretation of shame and shaming that is connected to the rape that occurs in the narrative.

In my reading, I primarily focus on three questions: 1) who is shamed, 2) who feels shame, and 3) who shames whom. The rape is committed by a male on a female. It entails an act of shaming by the man who puts the female victim into a shameful position within her community. It thereby underlines the power and gender relations mentioned above. However, the tale offers a turning point at which feelings of shame and the act of shaming and the consequences this bears for the person shamed within the particular village community are

reflected upon and questioned. This turning point occurs through a reversal of the shaming process in which shame is inflicted by a female on a male. Moreover, it is not just any male that is shamed by any female, but specifically the man (Georg) who has raped the woman (Anna). I suggest that Anna's reflection on the shame she has been subjected to and the subsequent act of shaming Georg can be read as an act of (re)establishing her self-integrity and consequently (re)gaining her agency. My reading uncovers Ebner-Eschenbach's critique of the late nineteenth century and its fairly stable and rigidly defined roles for men and women and explains how this critique challenges the traditional hegemonic structure of the times.

"Die Totenwacht" opens during Anna's vigil over her deceased mother. It is past midnight and the impoverished Anna calmly sits alone beside her mother's bed when Georg Huber, the son of the well-off neighbor, enters the room. It immediately becomes clear that Anna is not excited about Georg's presence when she repeatedly asks him to leave. However, he refuses to do so stating that he has come to pay his last respect to Anna's mother, who, he claims, has forgiven him (what this forgiveness refers to does not become clear until later). Anna gets very angry about Georg's claim and the two start an argument, over the course of which we learn about her childhood and her drunken father, who was the main reason for the family's poverty. During their conversation it becomes clear that Anna and Georg grew up developing a friend-enemy, love-hate relationship. Georg often bullied Anna and even injured her by throwing rocks at her. The argument escalates and Anna accuses Georg of having raped, impregnated, and abandoned her. Her child, we learn, died before its first birthday. Georg finally reveals the reason for his sudden appearance: He wants to marry Anna. Although Anna is willing to forgive Georg, and she explicitly does, she does not want to marry him and explains that she will be leaving the village

in the morning to go work for a peasant woman as a weaver. Georg refuses to accept Anna's rejection. Anna, however, stands by her decision and in the end Georg leaves empty-handed. The story ends with a sense of peace and quiet.

As mentioned above, Anna's feelings of shame can be directly linked to Georg. However, it needs to be acknowledged that aspects in her upbringing already developed and ingrained a sense of shame in Anna's perception of herself. Moreover, this sense of shame does not only emerge from Anna herself, but is imposed on her and even expected from her by the community she is a member of. As I have outlined previously, society selects who is shamed and "marks" these individuals as "abnormal" expecting them to feel shame about their very being (Nussbaum 174). Anna can be seen as one of these "selected" individuals.

The village community's expectation of Anna's feelings of shame are manifold. On the most basic level, being a woman already makes Anna an individual "selected" for shame. Traditional nineteenth-century values of femininity assign to Anna traits such as weakness and passivity and thereby block the development of traits such as assertiveness and dominance. Consequently, these values of femininity place her in a position of vulnerability, which makes her prone to feelings of shame. Moreover, the story quickly establishes that Anna is not conforming to traditional gender roles. Early in the story she is described as "ein nach dörflichen Begriffen altes Mädchen" (Ebner-Eschenbach, "Die Totenwacht" 153) and we learn that she is thirty years old. The label "ein Mädchen" instead of "eine Frau" implies that Anna is not yet married. The adjective "alt" adds another dimension and indicates that being unmarried at her age is seen as inappropriate. Beyond her unmarried status, Anna is a working woman: "Dreißig Jahre der Entbehrung und der Arbeit wiegen schwer" (153). Without a husband to serve or a

household to take care of, Anna is not only marginalized, but even placed outside the traditional understanding of femininity. With the death of her child, it may have seemed that Anna failed to nurture her child and thus did not fulfill her motherly duties. Thus, traditional gender expectations as well as Anna's nonconforming life place her in the realm in which she is "selected" for shaming and even expected to feel shame.

Anna's economic status also marks her for shame. Before we learn of Anna or anything else, the setting of the story in the first sentence immediately establishes her poverty: "Es war am Ende eines kleinen Dorfes im Marchfeld, das letzte, das ärmlichste Haus" ("Die Totenwacht" 152). Not only is the house described as the poorest in the village, but it is also located at the margins of the village. Further, the next sentence promptly informs us that the conditions of the house are shameful: "Seine niedrigen Lehmmauern schienen jeden Augenblick aus Scham über ihre Blöße und all ihre zutage gekommenen Gebrechen in sich zusammensinken zu wollen" (152). The personification of the house—it feels shame about its appearance—intensifies the severity of its present state which is then described in detail in the following passages.¹²

Throughout the story, Anna's poverty is repeatedly mentioned, and it becomes clear that Anna has internalized her poor upbringing as worthy of shame. Anna exclaims,

"Weil du reich warst, und weil ich arm war, darum! Weil du in Stiefeln gegangen bist von klein auf und ich bloßfüßig gelaufen bin. Weil deine Kleider ganz waren und die meinen zerlumpt. Weil du immer satt warst bis daher" — sie legte den Rücken der flachen Hand an den Hals — "und ich immer aus'hungert ... so

¹² "Das schiefe Strohdach bot nur noch einen sehr mangelhaften Schutz gegen Hitze und Kälte, Sturm und Schnee. Die Eingangstür, die des Schlosses entbehrte, war mit Stricken and den verrosteten Angeln befestigt, klaffte von allen Seiten und hatte längst aufgehört, eine feste Schranke zu bilden zwischen der Straße und dem einzigen Wohnraume der Hütte" ("Die Totenwacht" 152).

ausg'hungert, daß ich ... Heut noch, wenn ich's denk, schäm ich mich in die Haut hinein ..." ("Die Totenwacht" 163-64)

Remarks about her parents' financial state, her clothing, and the lack of food not only mark Anna as "selected" for shame within her community, but the memories of her hardship are also shame-bearing for Anna.

Besides social gender expectations and Anna's poverty, her father, or more specifically her father's standing in the community, also contributes markers that imply the community's expectations of Anna's shame. Anna describes her father as a "Lumpen ... der alles vertut, einem das Dach überm Kopf verspielt und die Kleider vom Leib" (158) and it quickly becomes clear that her father is not only a gambler, but also a drunk, who is physically violent towards his daughter. When Anna's father steals a dress she has received as a present in order to pay his bill at the tavern and to continue drinking there, Anna desperately tries to get her father's attention only to receive a "Fußtritt, gut gezielt, einer von der wohlbekanntten Art" (Ebner-Eschenbach 163). The descriptor *wohlbekannt* allows us to infer that domestic violence is not a rarity in Anna's life. Moreover, while Anna blames Georg for the loss of her reputation within the village community, the story hints at previous (sexual) abuse of Anna by her father: "'Du hast mir's nicht vorzuwerfen, du nicht! War ich's denn? Nein. Ich bin's durch dich geworden.' 'Natürli!' höhnte er. 'Alle Schuld wird immer auf mich g'wälzt. Durch mich allein bist böse geworden, durch andre nicht; am wenigsten schon durch dein Vatern'" (157). Learning this from Georg and not Anna herself, we may assume that members of the community are also aware of her father's abuse—it may be fact or merely a rumor.

The above-mentioned aspects of Anna's life make clear that Anna was marked from early on as "abnormal" and "selected" by her community as an individual who "deserves" to be shamed and maybe even "expected" to feel shame. These aspects furthermore relate to Anna's understanding of her own identity. In accordance with theories of gendered shame, all these markers relate to her socialization to organize her identity around maintaining relationships with others and furthering their well-being. They further indicate a sense of dependency on others that strips Anna of any kind of autonomy. When Anna describes her need for daily bread, for example, we learn about her dependency on Georg:

“Daß ich aufgepaßt hab jeden Nachmittag, ob du herauskommst mit deiner Jausen. Du richtig gekommen, und ich gewartet und gehofft, jetzt und jetzt krieg ich einen Brokken; und du hineingebissen in dein Butterbrot, das dick beschmierte, und g'schwätzt und herum g'schaut, wer dich bewundert, daß du so reich bist und essen kannst, solange dir's schmeckt. Wenn ich das denk! Ich aber bin g'standen und hab mich nicht g'rührt, bis du g'nug und überg'nug g'habt hast und den lumpigen letzten Bissen üben Zaun hing'worfen hast auf die Straß'n. Der war für mich! über den bin ich herg'fallen wie ein hungriger Hund.” (“Die Totenwacht” 164)

Anna's description makes it sound as though her dependency on Georg for food was a daily routine.

Similarly, we see a dependency on and concern for both her mother and father that shape her identity. In spite of her father's physical violence and alleged sexual abuse, Anna protects her father and does not question his morals: “Was dein Vater tut, muß dir recht sein, hab ich immer von der Mutter g'hört” (157-58). Thus, Anna strove always to honor the relationship between father and daughter and not to question his actions. The shame that Anna feels because of the relationship to and dependency on her mother comes from a different concern. Anna loves her mother and will do whatever it takes to protect her mother from being hurt even if that means

acting against her own well-being. Anna was never able to tell her mother about any of the abuse she encountered, neither about the abuse by her father nor by Georg. ““Wenn *das* meine Mutter g’wußt hätt! ... Aber sie hat’s nicht g’wußt; ich hab ihr’s nicht sagen können, die Scham hat mir’s Wort in der Kehl’n zusammeng’würgt.” (“Die Totenwacht” 168, emphasis in original).

The shame that prevented her from sharing her most painful feelings with her mother is connected to her fear of judgment by her mother and other village members. Anna continues,

“So is’s auf mir sitzen’blieben wie ein Mühlstein. Ich hab’s g’schleppt durch mein ganzes Leben. Wie mich jemand ein bisschen lang ang’schaut hat, is mir’s wie Feuer zum Kopf g’sstieg’n: Meinst vielleicht *das*? Aufschrei’n hätt ich mögen: Menschen, Menschen, glaubt’s nix Schlecht’s von mir, ich bin nicht schlecht.” (168, emphasis in original)

Being judged by others, including her mother, leads to Anna’s insecurity in her own identity as she defines it through the relationships with and care for people other than herself. This insecurity causes her to question her entire being, to hate herself (164) and even to wish to disappear (168).

The way in which Anna defines her identity through her relationship with others also becomes apparent in the very few accounts of happy moments in her life. When Anna receives a beautiful new dress as a present from the mortally ill countess, her thoughts immediately turn to her mother:

Jetzt brachen zwei Worte voll des Jubels über ihre Lippen: “Die Mutter!” Was wird sie sagen, die Mutter, die immer stopft und flickt an das Töchterleins altem “G’wandl” und gestern erst bitterlich geweint hat, weil ihr das morsche Zeug unter der Nadel zerfiel — was wird sie sagen? Die Kleine [Anna] war blaß gewesen vor innerster Erregung; auf einmal schoß ihr das Blut ins Gesicht, sie wandte sich und lief davon ... von dem Gedanken an die Mutter getragen wie von Flügeln. (160-61)

Instead of enjoying the present and her own happiness, Anna is only concerned with giving pleasure to her mother. Not considering herself as worthy of this kind of happiness and not paying attention to her own well-being, she only strives for the well-being of her hard-working mother.

In keeping with the research introduced in the previous section, Anna's concern about others in lieu of her own well-being causes her shame that cannot be constructive to her identity and even destroys her integrity. This is because her desire to reach a particular ideal is based on both socially constructed norms as well as the well-being and judgments of others; it disregards her own welfare. In accordance with Taylor's work on shame, Anna's shame can be categorized as partially genuine and partially false. When Anna feels that she is failing at making her mother happy, the shame she experiences is genuine as her failure is judged against her own chosen values. However, the shame she experiences when her father accuses her of having stolen the dress that she received as a gift, for example, is of the false kind. In Taylor's view, the former would be constructive to Anna's integrity as she would strive to reach the ideal and the latter would be destructive as it is measured against alien values. Taylor's suggestion would be for Anna to dismiss that type of shame.

However, as I will show, if we look at the shame Anna experiences with Manion's claim in mind, we can see that Anna's shame has been destructive to her at all times—no matter which kind of shame she has experienced. This, I suggest, is because Anna does not question moral values. As long as Anna accepts the values she holds as well as those she is judged against by others without questioning them, she feels shame. Earlier I suggested that I will pursue a reading that sees Anna as (re)establishing her integrity and (re)gaining agency. As I will demonstrate, this

turning point, when Anna breaks free from shame, occurs exactly, when Anna starts questioning all and any values that have caused her shame throughout her life. Moreover, evaluating said values, Anna is able to break free from her identification of her self through others and their well-being and, for the first time, regards her life with self-concern.

At her mother's deathbed, Anna is confronted by the man, Georg Huber, who raped and impregnated her years ago, leaving her helpless and publicly shamed:

“[W]enn du mich nur wirklich tot g'macht hättst damal'n, du hättst mir später das viel Ärgere nicht antun können ...” Die Stimme wollte ihr [Anna] versagen; schwer atmend fuhr sie fort: “Wenn *das* meine Mutter g'wußt hätt! . . . Aber sie hat's nicht g'wußt; ich hab ihr's nicht sagen können, die Scham hat mir's Wort in der Keh'l'n zusammeng'würgt. So is's auf mir sitzen'blieben wie ein Mühlstein. Ich hab's g'schleppt durch mein ganzes Leben. Wie mich jemand ein bisschen lang ang'schaut hat, is mir's wie Feuer zum Kopf g'stieg'n: Meinst vielleicht *das*? Aufschrei'n hätt ich mögen: Menschen, Menschen, glaubt's nix Schlecht's von mir, ich bin nicht schlecht! . . . Verkriechen hätt ich mich mögen, so tief, so weit, daß keine Seel mir hätt nachkommen können.” (“Die Totenwacht” 168)

While Anna's helplessness against the violence and the suffering she experienced due to the consequences and the shame that has been weighing upon her is apparent throughout her life, Anna does not remain helpless during this confrontation. Anna in fact avenges the violence she has experienced by “shaming back.” Her revenge is foreshadowed when she almost threatens Georg: “Aber vor der Sünd fürchtest dich nicht, nur vor der Straf, und das ist sogar dumm; denn die Sünd muß nicht sein, aber die Straf muß sein und is! da verlaß dich drauf!” (169) Anna “fights” back and the shame she has been living with is not only lifted off her shoulders, but also subsequently placed onto Georg through an act of shaming.

Let us briefly recall the concept of shaming, an act that needs to be examined separately from shame. In *Shame Management Through Reintegration* (2001), John Braithwaite and Valerie

Braithwaite differentiate between shame and shaming by looking at “shame as an emotion and shaming as a regulatory practice” (Braithwaite/Braithwaite 4). Further, they explain that shaming is a regulatory practice that operates similarly to formal punishments and rewards (4). They point out that shaming “interacts with identity” whereby “shaming will be most effective when it shames the act but not the person” (16). This is due to the fact that shaming a person may result in destroying that person’s identity while, by contrast, shaming the act repairs identity and allows for an effective regulation of social conduct (16).¹³

Anna’s foreshadowed threat of punishment takes on the form of confrontation and begins to take effect soon after Georg appears in her house. For the first time, Anna breaks her silence and stands up to Georg concerning what we only later find out is her having been raped by Georg. She emphasizes how she “wurde nicht gehört, nicht damals — und nie!” (“Die Totenwacht” 163) and demands that it is time to be heard: “Immer neu, immer brechen die versteckten Wunden auf, und einmal solln’s ausbluten!” (169) We may interpret the bleeding dry of wounds as a wish for her secrets to be revealed and her shame to come to an end. Her body language shows us how determined she is: “sie suchte seinen Blick, der dem ihren auswich, festzuhalten” (169). Here, the text taps into what we conceive as common knowledge: avoiding eye contact is often associated with feelings of shame. Georg’s avoidance of eye contact may indicate an attempt to evade the confrontation with the past. Anna’s deliberate effort to meet Georg’s eyes not only indicates that she is not willing to end this conversation without her desired outcome, but is also a sign of her own diminishing shame with regard to Georg.

Anna breaks her silence by talking about the hardship she went through because of

¹³ For a detailed discussion of processes of shaming, see introduction.

Georg, who immediately warns Anna that such talk is not appropriate. Anna, however, is no longer willing to keep her secrets for Georg's sake. "Dir war's freilich recht, daß ich g'schwiegen hab, und am liebsten wär's dir, ich schweiget noch. Aber nein! Enamel sag ich's; jetzt sag ich's meinem alten, lieben, kleinen Mutterl, weil sich's drüber nicht mehr zu Tod kränken kann und mich doch hört vom Himmel aus, in den's sie aufg'fahren is!" ("Die Totenwacht" 168-69). Not only does Anna confront Georg without concern for his feelings and well-being, but she also feels free to share these thoughts as she no longer feels an obligation to preserve her mother's well-being. Furthermore, due to her mother's passing, she feels free of the shame of being judged by her mother: "Jetzt kann ich zu dir sprechen und werd nicht einmal mehr rot" (173). Like avoiding eye contact, blushing is generally considered a facial expression of shame (Van Manen and Levering 145) and thus, Anna's statement can be read as her no longer feeling shame in regard to her mother.

Moreover, Anna also frees herself from her dependency on Georg. As described above, Anna spent her childhood relying on Georg's leftovers to satisfy her hunger. With self-concern, Anna has already made plans for her future and informs Georg that she will be leaving the village immediately after her mother's funeral. Georg's reaction, both angry and mocking, reveals that he believes that she needs him: "Such dir einen andern, den d'zum Narren halten kannst! Gehn wirst? Wohin denn? Hast keine Seel auf der Welt, hast nix und niemanden" ("Die Totenwacht" 175). Anna's response reveals her liberation from Georg and ultimately from her dependency on the village as a whole: "Du irrst. Zwei gute Freund hab ich—die da! Stolz und selbstbewußt streckte sie ihre kräftigen Arme aus. 'Solang mich die nicht verlassen, bin ich nicht verlassen'" (175). Anna reveals that she has secured a job with the "Weberbäuerin" (175) and

thus will no longer need anyone but herself.

Freeing herself from the dependency on her mother, Georg, and the community as a whole, Anna is able to (re)gain her integrity and (re)establish her agency. This liberation occurs through an act of shaming that needs to be examined. Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Totenwacht" turns on an act of rape, and shame and shaming occur in the story in relation to this rape. A look at nineteenth-century definitions of rape will be useful to understanding the interplay between the rape and the emerging shame as well as why the act of shaming gives Anna a sense of autonomy and a feeling of liberation.

Today, rape is usually associated with the act of intercourse against the will of one of the individuals involved and is usually connected to some form of violence. Two terms were commonly used in the nineteenth century to refer to rape: *Nothzucht* and *Unzucht*. In the *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart* (1811), Johann Christoph Adelung documents general usages of these terms as follows:

... [e]ine jede Gewalt, welche man einem andern anthut und zufüget, auch der Zwang wider dessen Willen; eine veraltete Bedeutung, welche ehemals sehr häufig war, wo nothziehen und nothzogen auch zwingen war . . . In der engsten und gewöhnlichsten Bedeutung, die mit angewandter Gewalt ohne Willen der andern Person mit ihr begangene Unzucht, gewalthätiger Beyschlaf. (543)

... eine jede so wohl der gesellschaftlichen Wohlanständigkeit, als auch der bürgerlichen Ordnung, und den Gesetzen zuwider laufende Handlung zu bezeichnen; da es denn theils mit Ungesittetheit, Unanständigkeit, theils mit Frevel, Unfug, Ausschweifung, theils auch mit Verbrechen und andern ähnlichen Ausdrücken gleich bedeutend war . . . In engerer und gewöhnlicherer Bedeutung ist die Unzucht der Mißbrauch des zur Fortpflanzung verordneten Naturtriebes auf eine diesem Zwecke zuwider laufende Art . . . Unzucht treiben. Mit einer Person Unzucht treiben. Sich der Unzucht ergeben. In Unzucht leben. Jemanden zur Unzucht verleiten. (1143-1144)

From these definitions we can conclude that the general understanding of rape is in agreement with our contemporary associations of the term.

The Austrian law of the nineteenth century defines rape in similar ways. In §125-133 “Von der Nothzucht, Schändung und anderen schweren Unzuchtsfällen,” the *Handbuch des allgemeinen österreichischen Strafrechts* (1871) defines three categories of rape:

Von den in diesem Hauptstücke behandelten und schon in der Ueberschrift gesonderten drei Gattungen von Verbrechen unterscheiden sich die beiden ersten [Nothzucht und Schändung], einander übrigens nahe verwandten, darin daß im Begriffe der Nothzucht der (vollbrachte oder unternommene) außereheliche Beischlaf enthalten ist, während Schändung eine davon verschiedene Art geschlechtlichen Missbrauches voraussetzt, – und daß erstere nur an Frauenpersonen, letztere auch an Personen männlichen Geschlechtes verübt werden kann. Bei beiden ist aber wesentlich, daß der Thäter und die mißbrauchte Person verschiedenen Geschlechtes seien, und daher nicht das Verbrechen der Unzucht wider die Natur [...] eintrete. (Herbst 280)

It seems obvious that this law would define Georg’s crime as *Nothzucht*. However, the ambiguity of the law made it difficult for women to obtain justice for what they had experienced and allowed for a different interpretation. §125 describes *Nothzucht* in greater detail:

Wer eine Frauenperson durch gefährliche Bedrohung, wirklich ausgeübte Gewaltthätigkeit oder durch arglistige Betäubung ihrer Sinne außer Stand setzt, ihm Widerstand zu thun, und sie in diesem Zustande zu außerehelichen Beischlaffe missbraucht, begeht das Verbrechen der Nothzucht. (293)

According to this paragraph of the law, it could be seen as arguable whether Georg committed rape as not all conditions of the definition were met. Yet while (to our knowledge) his act was neither life threatening nor did it occur while Anna was unconscious, intercourse did occur outside of marriage, and the text clearly points to the violence involved:

“Damal’n hast dich an mir versündigt, schrecklich, fürchterlich . . . nicht zum Sagen! Just wie ich Vertrauen g’faßt hab, just wie ich g’meint hab: so arg böses is er doch nicht, bist über mich herg’fallen wie ein wildes Tier, daß ich mir nicht hab

helfen können, mich nicht hab retten können vor dir und deiner Kraft, deiner verfluchten Kraft, Verfluchter!” (“Die Totenwacht” 171)

The question arises as to whether Georg feels shame for his actions. Although the text does not directly refer to feelings of shame in Georg, his reaction to Anna’s outburst—“Hör auf, hör auf!” (172)—suggests that he does feel ashamed. Moreover, his marriage proposal can also be interpreted as a sign that he is feeling shame and is trying to make amends for his action: “Ich will alles gut machen” (173); “Verzeih mir’s Annerl, und gib mir ein gutes Wort und sei wieder gut” (178). Braithwaite and Braithwaite call this “Shame Acknowledgement [which] involves the discharging of shame through accepting responsibility and making amends” (12). If this is indeed shame acknowledgment, it means that Georg is well aware of his wrongdoing. His marriage proposal is a way of lifting the shame off his shoulders. However, it also indicates that he expects her to get beyond the shame she has experienced to provide a space that is comfortable for him. Thus, his plea of marriage appears to be a selfish move that attempts to secure his honor and free him from the shame he experiences about his wrongdoing without consideration of how this affects Anna and what consequences it holds for the feelings of shame that she has encountered. It is important to point out that this interpretation of Georg’s marriage proposal is an alternative reading; other passages in the text point to the possibility that the reason for Georg’s proposal lies in true feelings he has for Anna. Nevertheless, even if one considers Georg’s proposal as signifying his affection for Anna, one may still argue for Georg’s attempt to make amends. As Aristotle points out, “the people before whom we feel shame are those whose opinion of us matters to us. Such persons are: those who admire us, those whom we admire, those by whom we wish to be admired, those with whom we are competing, and those whose opinion of us we

respect” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1384b). Thus, knowing that one has done someone wrong whom one cares/feels for might increase feelings of shame and, consequently, result in a wish to make amends for one’s wrongdoing.

I have suggested that Anna “shames back” and by so doing infringes upon Georg’s honor, reputation, and social standing, placing him in a realm of emotional vulnerability that destabilizes those traits commonly considered masculine such as agency and physical and emotional strength. For this reading, I will return to the definitions of *Nothzucht* and *Unzucht*. While the sexual act per se is the most narrowly defined way to look at these terms, both concepts also include a broader understanding: any “gesellschaftliche[] Wohlanständigkeit, als auch der bürgerlichen Ordnung . . . zuwider laufende Handlung.” In consideration of this broadest understanding, one may well argue that Anna disgraces Georg by going against the social order, not accepting his marriage proposal, and shaming him socially. Thus, Anna’s actions can be seen as social disobedience as it is “inappropriate” according to village codes.

How can one consider Anna’s refusal of Georg’s marriage proposal as an act that goes against the socially accepted order and/or inappropriate according to village codes? An important aspect for this reading lies in the difference in Anna’s and Georg’s social standing and is supported by Michael Bauks’ and Martin F. Meyer’s claim that shame appears in close relation to class and gender (12-13). As already mentioned, Anna’s socioeconomic position is immediately established in the first sentence of the story: “Es war . . . das ärmlichste Haus” (“Die Totenwacht” 152). Her social status and financial struggles become further apparent when she and Georg recall stories from their childhood: “Ich aber bin g’standen und hab mich nicht g’rührt, bis du g’nug und überg’nug g’habt hast und den lumpigen letzten Bissen üben Zaun

hing'worfen hast auf die Straß'n. Der war für mich! Über den bin ich herg'fallen wie ein hungriger Hund'" ("Die Totenwacht" 164). Simultaneously, their childhood encounters as well as the description of Georg in the present establish Georg as possessing higher standing: He lives in a "blankes Haus," has a "verwöhnte Kuh," and he looks like a "Herr in seinen städtischen Kleidern, und seine neuen Stiefel knarrten gar vornehm" (154-55). Moreover, Anna is described as "ein nach dörflichen Begriffen altes Mädchen" (153). It would be feasible to assume that Georg's marriage proposal should be a "blessing" for Anna. The socioeconomic differences between Anna and Georg should make Anna feel honored when Georg wants her as his wife as it is not common for a man of his status to marry a woman of Anna's status. Moreover, it is likely that the "Unglück" (173) that brought shame and suffering into her life—the fact that she is no longer a virgin, which is known to the community due to the birth of her child—drastically decreases her chances of ever being seen as a suitable wife for anyone. Thus, marriage to Georg would offer her security for the future, especially now that her mother has died. We can reasonably assume that by declining his marriage proposal she decides for a life without marriage and "gives up" her "natural" role as wife and mother. One might consider her action as going against the social order since she is refusing to follow what society considers to be the norm and therefore committing a "der bürgerlichen Ordnung . . . zuwider laufende Handlung." Although Anna's decision not to marry Georg is not illegal, it can be seen as inappropriate in the unwritten codes of village life. This becomes apparent if we look at Georg's first reaction to Anna's refusal: "'Mach ein End!' herrschte er sie an. 'Dich zu bedanken hast, nix andres . . . Du nimmst mich nicht? Für so dumm wirst mich doch nicht halten, daß ich dir das glaube!'" (176). Since Georg is a representative of the village community with high social standing, his reaction

allows me to infer that Anna's refusal of his proposal of marriage goes against the natural order established in the village. Therefore, Anna's refusal is a disruption to the public order of the community. Additionally, one needs to keep in mind that Georg's marriage proposal is itself a disruption of the social order—he wants to marry someone of lower socioeconomic status—and thus, her rejection bears even more weight.

Georg's reaction to her refusal to marry him shows how she has shamed him. At first still firm and exercising his power as a man, he claims his "right" to take her as his wife as becomes apparent in his threat: "Sei g'scheit; ich rat dir's, sonst gibt's ein Unglück!" ("Die Totenwacht" 179) Georg's threat of an "Unglück"—a threat of violence—shows his anger. One might consider two possible reasons why Georg becomes so angry. On the one hand, he wants her to be reasonable. Georg believes that by not marrying him, Anna places herself in a situation that will be regarded as wrong within the community and, therefore, she is consciously and willingly accepting its disapproval. On the other hand, he does not want his honor threatened. His forceful behavior, however, changes quickly to begging: "Ich hab dich aber lieb über alles! Ich wär glücklich, wenn ich dich hätt. Ich bitt dich, kniefällig bitt ich dich: werd wieder gut und werd mein Weib!" (179) He thus attempts to persuade her with charm so as to avoid the shame in the community of being turned down by a woman of lower social standing. Georg had not considered the possibility of being turned down, and arrangements for their nuptials have already been made: "Der Herr Pfarrer verkündigt uns am nächsten Sonntag zum erstenmal, und in drei Wochen hol ich dich zur Trauung" (174). Although the priest might refrain from posting the bans, we can infer from this statement that Georg has likely not hidden his intention from others and, thus, Anna's refusal to marry him will become known in the community.

With her refusal, Anna breaks with traditional gender roles winning agency over her own life. Her refusal is only possible because she is able to break free from gendered notion of identity formation. Paradoxically, the death of her child is what makes her liberation possible in the first place:

“Unbarmherzig hab’ ich ihn g’scholten, den Höchsten, vor dem ich heute auf die Knie fall und zu dem ich ruf: Barmherziger! Allgütiger, du weißt, was du tust! Sei gelobt und gepriesen! ... Du hast mein Kind zu dir g’nommen, es ist ein Engel im Himmel, und ich darf—Gott sei Lob und Dank!—, ich darf zu dem Menschen dort sagen: Ich nehme dich nicht; lieber in die Höll’ als in dein schönes Haus.” (“Die Totenwacht” 177-78)

Not having to define her being through the well-being of others—be it her mother or her child—she is able to view herself as an independent self and make decisions that take into account her welfare over others’. This self-concern gives her autonomy, which in turn allows her to break free from Georg.

While she has suffered the consequences of the rape and therefore lived in shame for years, stepping out of the social norm and gaining independence, she feels freed from this shame. The relief and/or liberation Anna experiences emerges due to her feeling that justice has been done. In fact, as Gesa Dane argues, the confrontation between Georg and Anna that takes place in front of the dead mother “nimmt Züge einer Anhörung vor Gericht an. Anna hat die Rolle der Anklägerin, er [Georg] die des Beklagten” (Dane 137). As Braithwaite and Braithwaite point out, “shame and shaming are useful concepts [for] restorative justice. Restorative justice is about the notion that because crime (or any other kind of injustice) hurts, justice should heal” (4). Based on Braithwaite and Braithwaite’s claim that shaming repairs one’s identity and allows for an effective regulation of social conduct, one can argue that Anna repairs her identity through

shaming and reestablishes her being in the community. Anna's refusal and Georg's subsequent departure evoke "einen solchen Ausdruck der Erlösung" ("Die Totenwacht" 181) and a feeling of having redeemed herself from George (and possibly also the community as a whole) for the shame to which she has been subjected. Additionally, one could take this argument further by looking at shame as "a pervasive part of practices of punishment" (Nussbaum 174). Thus shaming Georg, Anna punishes him for the rape he has committed.

It remains unclear whether Anna's behavior is intentional or not. If intentionality drives Anna's behavior, then contrary to Georg's "Shame Acknowledgement," Anna experiences "Shame Displacement [which is considered to be] the displacement of shame into blame and/or anger toward others" (Braithwaite/Braithwaite 12). It suffices to mention that the intentionality of Anna's action opens an entirely new aspect for this analysis since intentionality could be interpreted as morally wrong. The New Testament demands that Christians "turn the other cheek," that is, respond to an aggressor without violence. Figuratively speaking, Anna's behavior is a "slap" in Georg's face and not a matter of turning the other cheek. On the other hand, intentionality could involve aspects of self-concern, even though such action might be evaluated as bad in moral terms. However, this alternative reading goes beyond the scope of this chapter and would deserve a much closer analysis than can be undertaken here.

More importantly, Anna's final sentence in the story—"So, mein Mutterl, so, jetzt haben wir beide unseren Frieden" ("Die Totenwacht" 182)—indicates her concluding release from dependency. She is free not only from Georg, but also from her mother who, having died, no longer can be ashamed of her daughter. The story ends with Anna's last moments next to her

mother's deathbed when finally "die Kerze erlosch und mit ihr das rötliche Schimmer" ("Die Totenwacht" 182) and with it the blushing shimmer of Anna's shame.

As I hope to have shown, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's tale "Die Totenwacht" addresses power and gender relations of the late nineteenth-century. However, rather than simply describing and "accepting" these social norms—and specifically in village communities—Ebner-Eschenbach offers an escape from these rigidly defined norms for her female protagonist. This agency is connected to Anna's questioning of the moral norms against which she judges herself and against which she is judged by others. Evaluating these norms with self-concern in mind gives Anna agency allowing her to remove the shame she has been living with her entire life. Anna's agency is elevated to the highest possible level when she "shames back," restoring/obtaining justice outside of the law and liberating herself from the constraints placed on her by the village community.

3.4 Clara Viebig's "Die Schuldige" (1897): Female Agency and Personal Justice Denied

The village tale "Die Schuldige," published in Clara Viebig's first book publication *Kinder der Eifel* (1897),¹⁴ portrays the moral conflict between right and wrong and guilt and innocence and comments on the intersections of social order and the legal system. Numerous scholars have analyzed the novellas in *Kinder der Eifel* with respect to the depiction of rural life and its various elements (landscapes, poverty, peasant life, motherhood, working women, among

¹⁴ After Viebig's encounter with Émile Zola, in particular his novel *Germinal* (1885), which inspired her greatly, Viebig wrote "Die Schuldige" in one sitting. She was disappointed when nobody wanted to publish her novella. It was then published as part of the novella cycle *Kinder der Eifel* in 1897. Viebig's drama *Barbara Holtzer* (1897) is an adaptation based on her novella.

many others) as well as the question as to whether to consider Viebig's work part of *Heimatkunst* or Naturalism.¹⁵

Although Viebig is often referred to as a naturalist, scholars are in disagreement as to whether her writing truly subscribes to the naturalist program. In *Clara Viebig. Zeit und Jahrhundert* (1927), for example, Gottlieb Scheuffler writes on the question as to whether Viebig is a naturalist or not:

Wenn Naturalismus heißt: Menschen darstellen wie sie sind, dann ist Clara Viebig eine Naturalistin. Wenn aber Naturalismus heißt: vorwiegend das Elend schildern und blind sein gegen die Schönheiten des Daseins, dann ist Clara Viebig keine Naturalistin. Wenn Naturalismus heißt: der Wirklichkeit in gleichem Maße dienen wie dem eigenen Temperament, dann ist Clara Viebig eine Naturalistin. Wenn Naturalismus heißt: die beschwingte Geistigkeit nicht hinter den Zeilen wirken lassen, dann ist Clara Viebig keine Naturalistin. (Scheuffler 11)

Scheuffler nicely visualizes the conflict that scholars continue to face when analyzing Viebig's work. Caroline Bland, for example, describes Viebig's art as "[g]ripping narratives full of the earthy detail that was the hallmark of authenticity at the beginning of the twentieth century, yet that still aspired to the edification of poetic realism" (Bland 77). However, Bland also acknowledges, similar to Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, that Viebig's writings are often described as drawing from two literary movements, namely naturalism and *Heimatkunst* (Bland 80, Boa and Palfreyman 42-43). Jennifer Asky characterizes Viebig still more elaborately as a "naturalist with the appellation romantic, poetic realist, or *Heimatkünstlerin*" (120-21).

¹⁵ See, for example, Jennifer Asky's "I Read it Secretly: Clara Viebig's Struggle with Naturalism" (2001) Caroline Bland's "Clara Viebig: Using the Genres of *Heimatkunst* and *Großstadtroman* to Create Bestselling Novels" (2012), Elizabeth Boa's and Rachel Palfreyman's "Heimat at the Turn of the Century. The Heimat Art Movement and Clara Viebig's Eifel Fiction" (2000), Stephanie Günther's *Weiblichkeitsentwürfe des Fin de Siècle* (2007), Maria-Regina Neft's *Clara Viebig's Eifelwerke (1897-1914)* (1998), and Volker Neuhaus' and Michel Durand's *Die Provinz des Weiblichen. Zum erzählerischen Werk Clara Viebig's* (2004), among others.

My reading of “Die Schuldige” will concentrate on the ways in which, similar to Ebner-Eschenbach, Viebig uses feelings of shame and processes of shaming to uncover norms and male-dominated hierarchies of the rural area in the Eifel, a low mountain range north of Trier in western Germany and eastern Belgium and Luxembourg. I will particularly investigate the ways in which Viebig’s story, contrary to Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Totenwacht,” neither provides her protagonist with an opportunity to break free from the injustices she has to endure nor gives her the possibility to obtain justice outside of the law for herself.

My reading of Ebner-Eschenbach’s “Die Totenwacht” revealed the ways in which shame serves the female protagonist as a means to establish personal justice. In particular, shame enables Anna to claim agency where the legal system does not protect her rights. As my analysis revealed, female autonomy exists outside of the community and thus the social structures that are traditionally male dominated. While the law fails Anna, shame obtains justice for her. Anna’s agency is established through what I call “shaming back,” an action that restores the female character’s integrity, provides justice, and in the end disrupts public order.

Viebig’s text in contrast challenges the possibility of such justice. For Viebig’s protagonist, Barbara, “shaming back” only establishes temporary agency and neither provides justice nor a disruption of the public order in the long run. Rather, my analysis will show how for Barbara both law and shaming fail. Neither one allows her to restore her integrity within the village community. While Ebner-Eschenbach’s Anna acts in self-interest and removes herself from the community with the hope of a better future, Viebig’s Barbara is not only forcefully removed from the village, but also loses her child. Moreover, the ending of the story does not

provide any details about the futures of any of the characters, and we are left with a bleak picture.¹⁶

“Die Schuldige” is set in Ehrang, a small village in the vicinity of Trier, where a young unmarried *Dienstmagd*, Barbara Holtzer, is impregnated by Lorenz Simon, the son of her employer. Nobody knows that Lorenz is the father of Barbara’s child, and Barbara agrees not to reveal this information to protect Lorenz’ reputation. In return, she makes Lorenz promise never to marry. Under duress, Lorenz agrees and additionally promises Barbara to take care of her and the child. Shamed and ostracized by Lorenz, his parents, and the community at large, Barbara leaves the community. Unknown to everyone except for Lorenz and her aunt, Barbara raises her child in what the villagers call the *Genovevahöhle*, which is known as such based on the legend of Pfalzgraf Siegfried’s wife Genoveva. As we will see, the legend contains some parallels to Barbara’s situation.

Siegfried was married to Genoveva, the daughter of the duke of Brabant, a State of the Holy Roman Empire established in 1183. Sigfried’s servant Golo accused Sigfried’s wife of infidelity while he was away at a battle. Siegfried abandoned his wife and son, who fled to the forest and lived in a cave for many years. Genoveva lived in such poverty that she had to feed her child from a hind’s milk. She had no possessions, and only her long blonde hair served to keep her and her child warm. According to the legend, an angel crowned her holy and she was thereafter referred to as the *Heilige Genoveva*. Finally, after many years, Siegfried reunited with

¹⁶ How Viebig’s hopeless ending can be interpreted in comparison to Ebner-Eschenbach’s optimistic perspective, will be discussed in the next section.

his wife full of remorse as he found out that Golo had unjustly accused her of infidelity. Golo is said to have received due punishment.¹⁷

After Viebig's Barbara has disappeared, rumors spread in the village that the *Heilige Genoveva* herself has been sighted in the woods in front of the cave. Prosecutor Milde, who is not superstitious, wants to investigate the reports. Secretly observing the Genoveva cave, he discovers that it is Barbara whom the villagers have identified as Genoveva. Conflicted about his own morals as well as questions of right and wrong, Milde does not reveal Barbara's secret. Shortly after Milde's discovery, the town is confronted with sad news. Lorenz who in the meantime has gotten engaged to Anna, the rich landowner's daughter, has been found dead next to the river on the path to the cave. Milde's knowledge of Barbara's whereabouts as well as physical evidence lead to Barbara's arrest for Lorenz's murder. Admitting to having murdered Lorenz to prevent him from taking her child away from her, Barbara is removed from the village handcuffed with the villagers standing around her and watching. The story leaves unclear what happens to Barbara's child who was taken away from her upon her arrest.

Similar to Anna in Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Totenwacht," Barbara can be seen as a person "selected" for shame. She is described as what one might call a *Gemeindekind*, who "nicht Vater noch Mutter mehr hat und von klein auf zwischen fremden Leuten herumgestoßen [wurde]" (Viebig, "Die Schuldige" 107).¹⁸ Like Pavel in Ebner Eschenbach's *Das Gemeindekind* (1887), whose father was executed and whose mother was sentenced to jail and who became a

¹⁷ Until the mid-nineteenth century, the *Genovevahöhle* was known as the *Kuttbachhöhle*. It became known as the *Genovevahöhle* only after an official visited the cave on a hike and was reminded of the legend of Siegfried Genoveva.

¹⁸ In: Viebig, Clara. *Kinder der Eifel*. 1998. Alf: Rhein-Mosel Verlag, 2007. 104-60. In the remainder of this chapter, all citations refer to this edition.

burden to the community, which was now expected to raise him, Barbara lost her parents as a child. Although we do not know what exactly happened to her parents, it becomes clear that Barbara grew up without a permanent home or parental love and care. The family for which she works regards her as an ill-mannered burden, similar to the way in which Pavel is viewed within the community.

Additionally, Barbara's poverty contributes to her status as a person who "deserves" to be shamed. Barbara is employed as a *Dienstmagd*, which as a position of service automatically places her in a lower socio-economic status. Moreover, she is employed by the Pfalzel family, who themselves are described as the poorest family in the village.

Abseits vom Dorf liegt der Hof des Simeon Pfalzel... der Simeon Pfalzel ist kein reicher Mann. Das Dach über seinem Kopf ist nur von Stroh, die Mauer um sein Gehört bröcklicht; im Stall brüllen nur wenige Kühe, ein dürrer Hahn kräht auf dem Misthaufen, und die zwei Ackergäule sind richtige Schindmähren. ("Die Schuldige" 105)

Living at the margins of the village under the poorest conditions, the Pfalzel family themselves can be seen as socially selected for shame. Barbara's employment with this particular family, which places her even lower than the family, indicates Barbara's low socio-economic status.

As a "selected" person to be shamed, Barbara finds herself in a position lacking protection of any kind. As a woman of low socio-economic status she already has no legal rights in a male-dominated community. Being unmarried and pregnant only contributes to this lack of protection. However, here is where acts of shaming establish some sort of agency for Barbara—even if temporary—that serves as protection.

As already pointed out above, shame has often been described as an instrument of public order, especially in rural areas where the legal system is rudimentary. By exposing someone to

shame (or even just by threatening to expose someone to shame) one can establish agency over the other and secure a particular order. On a broader scale, this fear of shameful exposure coerces behaviors that conform to communal values and norms and that enable the individual to avoid subjection to shame in the first place.

Barbara's status as an unmarried pregnant woman is not only seen as shameful by the community, but also by Barbara herself. At dinner, Mrs. Pfalzel shames Barbara, accusing her of not only taking advantage of but also shaming the family with her pregnancy: "Fressen on saufen on net satt ze kriehn on neist mieh arweiden können on eim en Bankert uf den Hals setzen - e ne, e su ebbes schreiwet Sankt Paulus net; schämen muß mer sich vor de Leut, mit de Fingren weisen se uf ons Magd" ("Die Schuldige" 111). Angrily, Barbara responds, "[e]hrlich on unschullig sein ech ze eich kommen" (111). Mr. Pfalzel feels attacked by Barbara's response:

"Ehrlich u on unschullig? — Haha! Willste vielleicht gar saon in onsem Haus haste dein Ehr on Unschuld verloren? Duh kriehn ech et äwer sat - wän von uns hat se der geholt, sag, wän?" Er schrie sie an, und dabei flog sein Blick wie ein scharfes Messer zu dem Sohn hinüber, der den Kopf gesenkt hielt und unverwandt auf seine Schuhspitzen starrte." (111)

Simon Pfalzel's aggressive response and his piercing look at his son likely indicates that he knows (or at least suspects) that his son impregnated Barbara, which, if known in the community, would shame the family even more.

All family members react to this implicit accusation with feelings of shame. As the above passage shows, Frau Pfalzel is ashamed of Barbara being their maid, and Mr. Pfalzel's angry response reveals a shame-anger-guilt reaction. As discussed in depth in the introduction, according to shame theorists, anger and guilt are relative emotions of shame and often emerge in conjunction with one another. Let us recall that "anger responds to a harm or damage; it aims at

righting of the wrong. So too . . . does guilt, in the particular case where the wrongdoer is oneself. Guilt is a type of self-punishing anger, reacting to the perception that one has done wrong or a harm” (Nussbaum 207). Nussbaum calls the emotion of anger that is connected to shame “narcissistic rage.” The link between shame and narcissistic rage, she explains, emerges at the “source of lack in the self. The self, aware of its inadequacy, seeks to blame someone for this condition” (209). Thus, the family’s anger can be interpreted as an indication of their knowledge that someone (within the family) has done Barbara wrong (the question as to whether they are fully aware of the extent of the wrongdoing remains unclear). Lorenz is the family member who is shamed most by Barbara’s implicit accusation. When his father’s piercing look meets his, Lorenz has an immediate bodily reaction: “Des Burschen Wangen brannten, sein Herz klopfte ungestüm. - Wenn sie sprache, wenn...” (“Die Schuldige” 111). Like his father, Lorenz exhibits a shame-anger-guilt reaction. His burning cheeks can be read twofold—burning with anger or burning as shameful blushing. Moreover, Lorenz’ reaction is accompanied by fear. As Max van Manen and Bas Levering point out, “[s]hame and embarrassment are the emotional and behavioral answers to the undesired revelation of a secret” (Van Manen and Levering 145). He fears that he will be further shamed if Barbara reveals him to his parents as the father of her child. However, Barbara does not reveal Lorenz as the father. ““Ech sein eich dao drüwer kein Rechenschaft schullig, mein Ehr is emal weg on kemmt net widder”” (“Die Schuldige” 112). Her response not only indicates that she herself believes that her honor is lost due to the pregnancy, but it also demonstrates that she does not believe that the community would shame her less if she revealed Lorenz as the father.

Although Barbara asserts some sort of autonomy by implicitly accusing the Pfälzel family for her loss of honor and thus eliciting feelings of shame in the family members, her agency is very short-lived. As asserted above, Viebig's protagonist experiences moments of temporary power; however, as I will show, each time Barbara establishes any kind of agency, it breaks down shortly thereafter. Here, her shameful feelings about the pregnancy remain unresolved. Not revealing Lorenz as the father, she takes on all the shame that the family (and the community at large) places on her. Had she exposed Lorenz, she would have possibly been able to displace some of the shame onto him rather than bearing the entire burden. Rather, she alone carries the shame, which subsequently weakens her religious beliefs and leads to thoughts of suicide. This is where her temporary agency breaks down. While her implicit accusation gave her a modicum of power, the shame that she has to endure leads her to question her own moral behavior, resulting in a struggle with her religious beliefs. On the one hand she cannot bear the burden of shame and sees the only way out in suicide: "Aber nun war's aus - alles aus! ... War's nicht am besten, sie lief hinunter und sprang in die Kryll? Die brauste und schäumte heut. Wenn Eins die Augen zumachte und ward sich auf den Grund, dann war das Wasser tief genug, um drinnen zu ertrinken" ("Die Schuldige" 107). However, as soon as she completes the thought, she is ashamed of her unchristian ideas: "Aber nein, das wär eine grausame Sünd! 'Du sollst nicht töten!' ... und das ist gleich, ob man's selber ist oder noch was Ungeborenes" (107). Although she wants to hold on to her religious morals, she questions which pain—her shame or the sin—is greater: "'Wann ech sterben wollt, däht dän mich net dran hinnern on kein Gebetbuch on kein Kirch. Was später kömmt, dat waaß mer net, on wenn each in dat ewig Fegfeuer muß, duht et lang net su brennen als dat Quälen her!'" (108) However, although she is trying to gain

agency over both her shame and her morals, she breaks down and reverts back to traditional religious beliefs: “‘Maria, Modder Gotts! Gebenedeite unner den Weibern, verzeih mir die Sünd!’” (“Die Schuldige” 108) Here, her begging forgivenesses for her sins potentially has a double meaning. Is she asking to be forgiven for having thoughts of suicide and thus sinning or is she asking forgiveness for her sin of pregnancy out of wedlock? Either way, Barbara cedes her autonomy to religious norms and is thus stripped of independent thought and any agency that comes with it.

In another instance, Barbara employs shaming practices to fight for her rights as an employee (establishing agency in her relationship to her employer), which are technically protected by the law; however, Simon Pfalzel ignores the law. When Barbara is fired and asked to leave the Pfalzel residence, she speaks up for her rights. “‘Ech ziehn net zom erschten, Bauer, ech ziehn zom fünfzehnden Mai, vierwöchentliche Kündigung es afgemaach. Ihr dürft mech net vorher rausschmeißen. Ech bleiwen bis zom fünfzehnden; äwer ziehn ech ehnder, müßt Ihr mir Kost on Lohn gäwen; dat is mein Recht’” (111). Simon’s response is filled with anger: “‘Wat, wat?’ Der Bauer schlug auf den Tisch, daß die Schüssel tanzte. ‘Seid dir gäckig?!’” (111) Simon’s angry outburst continues and he becomes verbally violent: “‘Sieh einer dat Framensch an, et will mer Vorschriften gäwen! Had dei Maul, sei du e su froh, dat ech dech net morgen erausschmeißen!’” (111) His anger emerges because Barbara not only disobeys his orders as her employer, but also speaks up and questions him in front of his entire family. Barbara not only responds, but dares him both with words as well as her body language: “‘Versucht et!’ Das Mädchen kreuzte die Arme über der Brust und trat einen Schritt näher’ (111). Not only does she shame him by speaking up against him from her position as a woman of lower socio-economic

status, but also by questioning his honor as a man and an employer. Her arms crossed on her chest and stepping towards Simon, she asserts a kind of confidence that establishes power. By shaming Simon in this way, she assures her rights, which should be protected by law, to be heard. In this vein, she exhibits agency. However, as before, this self-determination is only temporary.

Feeling threatened, Simon and his wife change the conversation from what is supposed to be Barbara's right to her pregnancy, thereby attempting to shame her. Simon then becomes loud and continues using violent, accusatory, and degrading language. Finally, he demands that she explain her implicit accusation of the family's complicity in her shameful situation:

“Red!” (“Die Schuldige” 112) This is where her agency breaks down. Although she feels that she does not owe them an explanation, she is defeated and gives in to his demands: “Bauer, dir braucht net e su ze schrein, each ziehn am erschten Mai” (112). Her agreement to leave her employment without proper notification or compensation indicates how her autonomy has been taken again, and her subsequent body language—“Tonlos verklang ihre Stimme ... Langsam schlorrten draußen ihre Holzpantoffeln über das Steinpflaster” (112)—shows how she has been stripped of agency and once again feels shamed.

Barbara employs similar shaming practices towards Lorenz to assure her right to be heard as a mother. While Barbara always knew and understands that Lorenz is unable to marry her —“dat de mech net heiaoden kanns, waaß ech, hon ech gewußt, ehnder ech -” (115)—she wants her and her child's needs to be secured. Instead of trying to convince Lorenz to marry her, she practically forces him to promise not to marry anybody else:

“Bei der Allerheiligsten schwör mer't, dat de dat Anna net heiraods on aach kein annere net - schwör mer't!”

“Barbe, ech kann net, laaß mech!” Er suchte sich loszumachen und nach der Tür zu entweichen. Sie hängte sich an ihn mit ihrer ganzen Schwere, eine eiserne Gewalt schien in ihren Armen zu ruhen.

“Ech laossen dech net, schwör!”

“Barbe, laaß mech!” Der Bursche krümmte sich.

“Dau schwörst, dau saost: Ech schwören bei der Allerheiligsten, bei meiner ewigen Seligkat, sch heiraoden der Anna net on aach kein annre’ - nau saag’t!” Ihre Stimme klang leise, raunend, und doch wie Erz; wie Hammerschlag fiel jedes Wort. Ihre Hand hob die des Mannes in die Höhe: “Bei der Allerheiligsten, ech schwören -”

“Barbe, Barbe!”

“Bei der Allerheiligsten, ech schwören -.” Unbeirrt, mit eiserner Festigkeit klang die Stimme der Barbara; mit verzehrendem, sich einbohrendem Feuer hingen ihre weitgeöffneten Augen an den Zügen des Burschen. “Nau, saog et! Sch schwören bei der Allerheiligsten -”

“Ech schwören bei - der Allerheiligsten - bei meiner ewigen Seligkat” - der Lorenz lallte nur so - “ech heiraoden dat -” Er stockte.

“Ech heiraoden dat Anna net on aach -”

“Ech heiraoden dat Anna net on aach -”

“Kein annre -”

“Kein annre!” (“Die Schuldige” 117)

Although Lorenz does not want to make that kind of promise, he gives in as he sees this as the only way to assure that Barbara will leave the village and not reveal that he is the father of her child. This promise can be seen as shaming in two ways. On the one hand, Barbara shames Lorenz by asserting her power over the situation. On the other hand, she sets up a condition that will bring shame to Lorenz in the future should he not keep his promise. Both acts of shaming rely on Lorenz’ need to preserve his honor—his honor in front of his family and the community at large, but also his honor vis-à-vis Barbara.

Again, Barbara uses shaming to gain agency; however, it soon becomes clear that this power is not only temporary, but also debatable. While Barbara does get Lorenz to promise not to marry anyone, she has to promise to leave the village community in return. The only thing Lorenz is concerned about is preserving his secret. In order to do that, he needs to assure that

Barbara will leave: “Wenn die Barbe nur fort wäre, fort um jeden Preis” (“Die Schuldige” 109).

One could thus conclude, that Lorenz is the one who actually gets what he wants while Barbara ends up ostracized and living in even poorer conditions, while clinging to an empty promise, which, as she will soon find out, will be broken. Therefore, while the text initially points to Barbara’s influence by giving her a way to exert control over Lorenz, Viebig not only strips her protagonist of this power, but also indicates that this agency might be spurious. The text provides the reader with information that is unavailable to Barbara—the fact that Lorenz wants her gone by any means—and thus, while Barbara believes that she exerts autonomy, the reader realizes her failure. One could even argue, that Viebig now not only allows Lorenz and the community as a whole to shame Barbara, but that she also invites the reader to judge Barbara’s naiveté.

Barbara’s decision to abandon the community and raise her child in the cave can also be interpreted as exhibiting female agency. For one thing, the cave is the place where her child was conceived: “Hier, hier hatte er mit Barbara gegessen - und hier bei dem Steinbruch zweigte der Pfad ab in die enge Schlucht, durch die es einsam und verborgen hinaufging zur Genofevahöhle, wo er mit ihr [Barbara] geweiht in schwüler, wetterdurchleuchteter Nacht, vergessen von Gott und der Welt” (113). Thus, although physically separated from Lorenz, Barbara holds on to the relationship symbolically and builds her life around the joy of motherhood. ““Erscht sein ech e su arm gewest, an sein ech e su reich” (130). Moreover, Barbara removes herself from the community in which she feels shamed. By doing so, she places herself into a situation in which she has the “upper hand”—“Se finnen mech net, mech net on dech net” (131)—and she no longer has to worry about being shamed. By suddenly leaving overnight and living in the cave, she prompts the community actually to think about her—“wissen wollte man doch gern, wohin

sie gegangen war” (“Die Schuldige” 124)—while before she was a “nobody” in the eyes of the community members. Moreover, the space she chooses to withdraw to has a particular significance. She has so to speak returned to the scene of the transgression (sex) and that transgression itself took place outside the space of the community. The cave can thus be seen as a particular important space in which to assert agency. By returning to the place where the sinful act/the act of shaming occurred, she re-appropriates the space that should bring forward negative feelings into a safe space, which can be read as an empowering act.

Moreover, Barbara not only becomes known in the community by being absent, but she is actually elevated to a sacred status. Not knowing that it is Barbara who lives in the cave, the villagers begin to believe that they have been blessed with the sight of “Die Heilige Genofeva” (122): ““Mer haon se gesiehn, de heilig Genofeva! Se stand owen vor ihrer Höhl, en Heiligenschein uf em Kopp, de Hirschkuh lag er ze Füßen, on Engelcher wiegten dat Kind, mer konnt de himmlische Muhsik heren’ ... Da war kein Haus, in dem nicht von der wunderbaren Begebenheit die Rede war” (122-23). Suddenly, Barbara who was rejected by the community becomes the fascination of the village, which implies a certain power.

However, this agency is again taken from Barbara, at least partially. When prosecutor Karl Milde hears about the rumors of the *Heilige Genofeva* living in the cave, his lack of superstition drives him to find out more about what the villagers have seen. When he hides in the bushes, he sees a figure in front of the cave that truly matches the description of Genofeva. However, after observing her for a while and listening to her sing and speak to the child, Milde recognizes Barbara: “Nein, das war keine Heilige, sie öffnete den Mund, sie sprach, unverfälscht kam der Moseldialekt über ihre Lippen ... Da schien wohl kein Zweifel, das junge Weib in der

Genofevahöhle war die verschwundene Barbara Holtzer, des Pfalzelbauern Magd” (“Die Schuldige” 130, 132). Barbara’s dialect, which is distinct to the geographic region, reveals her identity to Milde. Just as we have seen in chapter one, here too dialect serves as a marker of belonging to a particular community. Although Barbara is not aware that Milde has seen and recognized her, the rumors are at least quashed for the reader (and of course Milde) who now knows that it is Barbara who is hiding in the cave. The fascination of the villagers with the sighting of Genoveva and the accompanying agency lent Barbara vanishes when she is reduced again to a mere *Dienstmagd* with an illegitimate child.

Viebig’s tale reaches its climax when Milde receives a note with the news of Lorenz’s murder: “Sohn des Pfalzelbauern ermordet. Leiche heut gefunden im Ramsteiner Forst unweit Genofevahöhle am Bach” (139). Lorenz’s “Körper lag in einer dunklen Lache ... In der Brust saß die Todeswunde; ein tiefer Stich war bis zum Herzen gedrunge” (143). The story quickly reveals that Barbara is in fact his murderer. In her confession, she reveals that Lorenz threatened her, tried to take away her child, and became violent: “‘Lorenz packt mech on schlät mech in’t Gesicht: ‘Vettel, schär dech! Biste still, sunst murksen ech dech af!’” (152-53). Angry and concerned about what will happen to her child, Barbara kills him.

This murder can be read in two ways: on the one hand the murder empowers Barbara. Her actions are driven by her motherly instincts. As discussed earlier in this chapter, women are socialized to base their identities on maintaining interpersonal relationships and concern themselves with the well-being of others at the cost of their own. Barbara thus did exactly what she had been nurtured to do, protect her child to fulfill her motherly duties. Indeed, she assures that the values she holds for herself are not violated and in this respect gains agency. Moreover,

the murder results in the village finding out that Lorenz was the father of her child—or in other words, the exposure of the long-kept secret. What is important is that the disclosure of the secret occurs in public, which in turn elicits feelings of shame: “Shame is the feeling that often accompanies the public revelation of a secret that is considered deviant, indecent, ill mannered, or morally abhorrent by others. But one only feels shame about transgressions or faults that one accepts as faults” (Van Manen and Levering 145). Although Lorenz is no longer alive and thus cannot physically feel ashamed or accept his transgression as a fault, the public revelation leads to the awareness among the community members of his fault and the transgression. As Van Manning and Levering assert, “when a secret is uncovered, the effect may be quite similar to the exposure of one’s naked body. The exposure of a secret is like the uncovering of especially intimate and vulnerable aspects of the self. To be uncovered, to be seen naked in public, may evoke shame, embarrassment, or guilt” (143). In this sense, Lorenz is helplessly exposed in front of the community. One may go so far as to claim that his lifeless body can be compared to a naked body. Like a naked body, Lorenz lifeless body is stripped of all power, exposed to be judged by others. Moreover, community members not only become aware of his transgression, but they also judge it as “deviant, indecent, ill mannered, or morally abhorrent.” Therefore, Barbara actually shames Lorenz even in his death, i.e., shames his memory—one could say, she has the “last laugh.” Further, as Manen and Levering claim, keeping a secret in itself can cause stressful feelings: “As long as the secret remains on the side of the inner, it may be felt by the bearer to be a burden, a guardedness, or fear—the fear of exposure” (142). For a long time Barbara has had to bear the burden of the secret and live with the fear of exposing it against

Lorenz' will. With the secret finally exposed, Barbara releases herself from a part of the shame she had to carry in the past.

On the other hand, the murder can be read as Barbara's loss of the power she might have possessed temporarily and even allows us to conclude that Barbara never had any chance of maintaining agency. Lorenz not only threatens to take away Barbara's child, but he actually threatens her life. He repeatedly declares that he wants Barbara to disappear: "Wie glücklich hätte er sein können, alles konnte gut und schön werden, wenn nur die Barbe nicht wär" ("Die Schuldige" 137). Over and over he blames Barbara for standing in the way of his happiness; enraged, he makes comments that have quite violent implications: "[E]r hätte ihr in's Gesicht schlagen mögen, und sie an den langen Haaren reißen" (137). He actually uses the term "afmursken" (153), which goes beyond threat of physical violence, but rather indicates that he wants to kill her. Since Barbara felt threatened by Lorenz, one can read the murder as self-defense: "on wie hän mech pack on dat Messer mer aus der Hand reißen will, duh - o Hähr, onset Hähr Jesus soll mer vergäwen - duh stoßen each zu" (153). Lorenz himself is murderous. Would he have killed her, if she had not killed him? In a case of self-defense, one would expect the law to support Barbara. However, after hearing her confession, Milde's only response is "Ich kann dir nicht helfen, Barbara Holtzer; Gott erbarme sich deiner!" (153) Here, Milde's position as an officer of the law provides insight.

Milde's view on right and wrong, justice and injustice underlines the ways in which Barbara never has a chance at maintaining agency. Watching Barbara and seeing her joy in motherhood, Milde starts questioning concepts of guilt and innocence:

[S]ie [Barbara] saß oben in der Höhle und verbarg ihre Schande vor der Welt. Ihre Schande - oder ihr Glück? Ja, da war er wieder, der böse Zwiespalt, der so oft die Seele ängstet und Recht in Unrecht kehrt, Unrecht in Recht! War es denn nicht die reinste, von Gott selbst erschaffene Freude, die der Mutter an ihrem Kind? Gab es etwas holdseligeres als jenes junge Weib, dessen Gesicht mitten in der Verlassenheit den Stempel schönster Verklärung trug? War hier Sünde, Schande? ... Warum soll man hier sagen 'das Kind der Schande' und mit Aber und Pfui das schöne Mutterglück in den Staub treten? Warum? - Das Gesetz spricht sein 'Ungültig' über die Verbindung, der das junge Menschenwesen entsprossen, es drückt mit starker Hand den Stempel des Makels auf die Stirn der Mutter und wirft das Kind zu den Namenlosen; es ist grausam, aber - Gesetz bleibt Gesetz, die Sitte muß bestehen, es sei denn, die Welt ginge aus den Fugen. ("Die Schuldige" 132)

Milde's inner monologue puts forth the idea that norms and values have taken the place of the law and that judgments of "unlawfulness" are being made according to these established norms. This insight raises the question as to what the laws are based on? What comes first? The law or the norms? Are laws socially determined or is there some kind of idea of a universal law that pre-exists communal norms such as the idea of natural law? Or does Christian morality determine lawfulness? According to Milde's view, laws appear to be made to support the norms of particular communities.

The operation of law in respect to norms contributes to Barbara's failed agency by reducing her rights both as an individual and also as a member of the community. Whether she tries to establish autonomy in respect to norms or the law, there is no way out for her. Condemned and shamed by the village due to her violation of the norms, she has no hope of justice in or outside the law. Rather, the law further contributes to the injustice done to Barbara. After she has been arrested and interrogated, Barbara is transported to Trier, where she, presumably, will be put in jail. Barbara never attempts to get out of the situation. She voluntarily confesses and follows all orders she receives. Barbara's only concern remains her child, who has

been taken away from her. The lack of self-concern in exchange for the well-being of her child contributes to Barbara's sense of shame. She has committed murder because of her motherly "duty" to protect her child; however, both the norms and the law fail her. In fact, she appears to be the one who has failed. She has failed according to village norms for having a child out of wedlock and for not being able to take care of her child. She has failed according to the law for committing murder.

Barbara's removal from the village and thus from the community constitutes a public display of shame. When she is taken to the wagon, the villagers are eagerly waiting to watch her departure. Barbara's body language reveals the shame she feels: "Ihre Blicke sind stier zu Boden gesenkt, kein Muskel in dem todbleichen Anlitz regt sich; sie sieht aus wie eine Abgeschiedene" ("Die Schuldige" 159). The description of her as an *Abgeschiedene* can be read as the death of any kind of agency that she might have claimed, as an individual, a mother, a community member, or a person before the law. In the end, the effect of law is nothing more than additional shame. Viebig thus comments on and critiques the ways in which norms and the law intersect and reinforce each other stripping individuals of personal and legal protection that would allow them autonomy over their lives and agency in their respective communities.

Viebig's novella offers an additional instance of failed female agency and thus suggests the impossibility for women to establish any sort of independence for themselves. This second instance of attempted, but failed, female autonomy can be observed towards the end of the story in a second female character, Anna. Anna, whose father, the "reiche[] Pächter" (109), owns the tavern "auf dem Ramstein" (109), is initially introduced as a pious girl who upholds high moral values. Anna "war zu Trier bei den lieben Nönnchen in 'Pennsjoohn' gewesen und erst vor

kurzem heimgekehrt” (“Die Schuldige” 109). Her upbringing in the convent has strengthened her religious beliefs and shaped her moral values. She is described as modest and pure: “eine sanfte Röte lag auf den runden, noch kindlichen Wangen. Sie hielt beharrlich die Augen gesenkt bei allen Schmeicheleien, die ihr zugerufen wurden” (125). Admired by many men who visit the tavern, Anna remains modest in the face of the flattery she receives and is ashamed to talk when the topic of a prospective husband comes up: “‘Wären auch viel zu fein für mich!’ Sie lachte leise und ein tiefes Rot flog über ihre Wangen” (126). Lorenz, who wants to marry Anna both because he likes her, but also because he wants to improve his own socio-economic status through the marriage, is worried that she has become so “zimmerlich” (109) and would not want him if she found out that he impregnated Barbara. Only when she becomes engaged to Lorenz, does Anna feel less ashamed to talk about marriage and proclaims, “‘ich will mich verändern, ich bin Braut, seit gestern!’” (126) According to religious beliefs and social norms—“‘Ja, ja, aus Kindern werden Leute, aus Mädchen werden Bräute’” (127)—the engagement makes it socially acceptable for her as a woman to be less ashamed about socializing with a man.

When Anna finds out about Barbara, it becomes clear how much she believes in her moral values. Instead of being angry, she actually supports Barbara:

“[D]en Lorenz hat unrecht der Barbara Holtzer getan? Es hat mer zwar kein Mensch ebbed davon gesagt, der Vadder antwortet mer net, und die Mutter weint alleweil; aber gelten Se, die Barbara hat ein Recht an den Lorenz gehabt, er ist der Vater von ihrem Kind gewest, und weil er mich heiraten wollen, drum hat sie ihn umgebracht?” (155).

Seeing her engagement to Lorenz as the reason for the murder, Anna feels guilty. “‘Ich sein Schuld an all dem Elend—ich kann net mehr in der Welt leben, ich gehen in ein Kloster’” (155). She wants to make amends to clear her guilt in accordance with her beliefs and values.

Milde, who promised Barbara to make sure that her child is taken care of, asks Anna to take in the child and care for it. Anna's persona is deeply rooted in religious morals and values, which might prompt us to believe that she will/should do the Christian thing and take in the child. Milde pleads, "bewahren Sie das hilflose Wesen vor dem Umhergestoßenwerden in einer kalten und lieblosen Welt! Sie werden nicht uabelohnt bleiben, Sie werden einen Segen empfinden, der überschwenglicher ist als jeder andere auf Erden" ("Die Schuldige" 157). He directly points to what would be considered Christian behavior and the ways in which Anna would be able to redeem herself before God; however, Anna refuses to take the child.

Anna's refusal to do what according to Christian values would be the right thing to do is unexpected. It therefore becomes particularly interesting to investigate this text passage more closely. Although one could possibly argue that Anna is asserting agency by rejecting what is considered right, I offer a different reading. Anna's refusal, I suggest, can in fact be understood as her lack of autonomy. The reason Anna does not take in the child is that she is viewing herself through the lens of the village and thus through the lens of village norms. Her concerns are based on the existing values of the villagers who condemn the child as "[u]ngültig" and "[n]amenlos[]" (132). Anna lapses into prudery and maintains,

"ich sollt meine Hand noch bieten und e so en Kind nehmen, auf dem der Fluch liegt - nein! ... was würd' mein Vadder und meine Mutter sagen, was würden de Leut denken? Sie würden mit Fingern auf mich zeigen! Und ich - ja, ich tät Angst haben, das Kind von der Mörderin könnt auch emal im Zuchthaus en End nehmen." (158)

Instead of maintaining and attending to her own religious values, Anna loses herself in the village norms.

Here the question arises as to why Viebig does not permit Anna any agency. If we consider Barbara a marginalized and “selected” character who has violated village norms and the law, we might understand why her story has to end tragically. However, why is Anna, who is a valued community member and who is pious and lives her life by morals and norms, not granted any autonomy? One might conclude that Viebig attempts to question the very possibility of female agency in the particular social setting of rural communities. In this view, women’s social standing is moot. By rejecting any possibility of female independence, Viebig might also be commenting on what she believes to be a characteristic of rural societies. Anna and Barbara do belong to two different ends of the socioeconomic spectrum within the village and occupy two opposite sides of the moral norms, but they are both far removed from sophisticated urban culture. Although Anna perfectly exemplifies what is expected of women in village communities, neither Anna nor Barbara achieve agency. This outcome leads me to conclude that Viebig’s text comments on the impossibility of female autonomy within the rural milieu as a whole: female agency is limited by the milieu per se and is not based on socioeconomic rank within the village community, moral goodness in respect to the established norms of the village, or any other kind of hierarchy that emerges among women in rural life.

3.5 “Die Totenwacht” and “Die Schuldige”: Similar Stories, Different Endings

These two contrasting endings of the stories raise the question as to why two female authors who tell parallel stories of public shaming and legal injustice portray such different outcomes. While Ebner-Eschenbach offers her protagonist an opportunity to get justice for herself by breaking free not only from the social norms of her patriarchal society, but also from

the shame she has been subjected to most of her life, Viebig strips both her female characters of agency and does not allow them to escape the shame of their respective lives and positions in the village community. The answer as to why these authors approach the endings to their stories so differently might not lie in the texts themselves, but rather in the ways in which each author situated herself within contemporary literary discourse. While both authors use their texts not only to question social morals and norms of the late nineteenth-century village, but also comment on and critique women's legal rights, they do so based on the outlooks, prescriptions, and characteristics of the respective literary movements to which they affiliate themselves.

As mentioned above, Ebner-Eschenbach's writings offer a hopeful and optimistic view of the possibility for change.¹⁹ One such example is her protagonist Anna in "Die Totenwacht." Showing an optimistic outcome for Anna, who at the beginning seems to be condemned to failure and shame, while still keeping it real, allows Ebner-Eschenbach to communicate to her female reader that there is a possible way out no matter how bumpy the road seems.²⁰ In doing so, she not only asserts that female autonomy is possible, but also comments on why it is important for the community. Although not specifically looking at female agency, Virginia L. Lewis makes a similar observation. Looking at Ebner-Eschenbach's *Das Gemeindekind* and questioning the reason for the optimistic ending of the story, she concludes that "[m]aking rural Moravian society better was not the business of ... outsiders. It was the business of the suffering peasant individuals like Pavel Holub" ("The Price of Emancipation" 19). Similarly, with "Die

¹⁹ Here one might question if this possibility of change is only given because the child is dead. Overall, both the genders of the children as well as the fact that both Ebner-Eschenbach's and Viebig's protagonists eventually lose their children opens up another aspects that could potentially contribute to an additional reading of shame and female agency. However, this goes beyond the parameters of this chapter and requires its own analysis.

²⁰ Of course, I am not suggesting that Ebner-Eschenbach imagines only women as her readers, however, I believe that "Die Totenwacht" has a particular significance for her female readers.

Totenwacht,” Ebner-Eschenbach might be reaching out to her women readers to let them know that women, just like Anna, could shape their own destinies.

Contrary to Ebner-Eschenbach’s text, “Die Schuldige” is best understood as a naturalist work, albeit focused on a rural setting. For one, my reading of Viebig’s tale has shown it to be a “more deliberate kind of realism ... usually involving a view of human beings as passive victims of natural forces and environments ... Naturalist fiction aspired to sociological objectivity, offering detailed and fully researched investigations into unexplored corners of modern life” (Baldick 221). Viebig’s writings were especially influenced by naturalist writer Émile Zola, in particular his novel *Germinal* (1885)²¹ and its claim to “a ‘scientific’ status for his studies of impoverished characters miserably subjected to hunger, sexual obsession, and hereditary defects” (Baldick 221). Viebig herself described Zola’s influence as a revelation: “Dieser ‘Germinal’ war mir eine Offenbarung ... O diese Kraft, diese Größe, diese Glut der Farben, diese Fülle der Gesichte, diese Leidenschaft der Gefühle - so muß man schreiben, so! Ohne Rücksicht, ohne Furcht, ohne scheues Bedenken ... nur ehrlich, ehrlich!” (“Vom Weg meiner Jugend,” n.p.) Under this influence she aspired to writing that is truthful and free of unrealistic embellishment. Given that Viebig wrote “Die Schuldige” in one sitting right after reading Zola’s *Germinal*, it is not surprising that her novella was strongly influenced by this aspiration. Moreover, as Stephanie Günther points out, Viebig considered herself a naturalist (369). Commenting on her drive and writing style, Viebig wrote,

Was trieb mich Schreiben? Die Natur. Ich weiß selbst nicht, wie das passierte. Ich liebte die Natur: Ich fühlte mich verpflichtet, sie zu beschreiben. Personen

²¹ Zola’s novel is one of the most significant novels of nineteenth-century French literature and offers the rigid, realistic, and grim picture of a coalminers’ strike in northern France in the 1860s. It has been translated in over 100 languages and inspired numerous film adaptations.

belebten sie, die zu mir sprachen: Auf ihrem Gesicht las ich ihre Geschichte. Und wenn ich schrieb, schien es mir, dass eine innere Stimme mir diktierte. (Viebig, qtd. in Günther 369)

Thus, Viebig herself described her work in regard to a naturalist program.

Viebig's inspiration and her aim to produce naturalist fiction can help us explain why her female characters must fail to maintain agency. Simply put, Viebig's female characters are "passive victims" who are exposed to "natural forces and environments" that are determined by social norms and values. Although Viebig is most certainly commenting on and critiquing these "natural forces" to which rural women of the late nineteenth-century were subjected, she does not offer an optimistic outlook on the possibilities individuals have to reshape their environment.

3.6. Conclusion

While Ebner-Eschenbach and Viebig both question the execution of laws and the norms of nineteenth-century village communities due to their lack of protection of women, they do so differently. Both authors' protagonists suffer injustices that cause feelings of shame because the law fails to protect them. However, Ebner-Eschenbach offers her protagonist, Anna, an opportunity to (re-)establish her integrity and achieve a kind of personal justice for herself. Anna does so by detaching herself from gendered notions of identity, which are based on the maintaining of relationships to others and their well-being. Instead, she questions the injustices that she has experienced with self-concern. Once she does so, she is able to gain agency over her life and make decisions that promote her own welfare. Furthermore, she succeeds in establishing justice for her suffering by "shaming back." Thus, she employs shame as an instrument of power,

which allows her not only to question the norms she has been judged by, but also to stand up to Georg. By doing so she ultimately liberates herself from the shame she has had to endure.

Viebig, by contrast, allows her protagonist only temporary agency. Although Barbara also uses acts of shaming to gain control over certain situations, she ultimately lacks autonomy of any kind. For Viebig's protagonist both the legal system as well as shaming as a source of personal justice fail in the end. Thus, Barbara is not offered the opportunity to question social norms, practice self-concern, and experience personal well-being or liberate herself from the shame of her life. Instead, Barbara experiences further injustice, is shamed again, loses her child, and is punished by being taken to jail.

Overall, in "Die Totenwacht" and "Die Schuldige," both Ebner-Eschenbach and Viebig, respectively, address and critique social norms in the late nineteenth century. Relying on contemporary gendered shame theory, I have brought to light how both texts specifically comment on possibilities of female agency. Looking at shaming as a means of personal justice, I have examined how shame can function to establish female agency for the protagonists. In accordance with existing theories of the connection between shame and agency, moreover, my readings made apparent that shame can only be constructive when the norms that caused these feelings to emerge in the first place are questioned with self-concern in mind. As these two texts show, judging existing social norms with consideration of one's well-being establishes the opportunity for autonomy over the self.

Epilogue

In this dissertation, I have analyzed various customs, social norms, and moral values that contribute to the emergence of feelings of shame in literary representations of village communities of the nineteenth century. My three chapters foregrounded how shame can serve to make visible communal norms and values and how it ultimately contributes to a sense of (not) belonging. Chapter one, “Shame and the Construction of Social Belonging Through Language in Berthold Auerbach’s ‘Der Lauterbacher’ (1843) and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s ‘Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe’ (1886),” focused on the influence that dialect has on an individual’s understanding of his/her identity and analyzed how this understanding, if challenged, may result in feelings of shame, which, in turn, lead to possible (dis)integration of individuals into and from the collective social. Analyzing the protagonists Hedwig and Marie in Auerbach’s and Ebner-Eschenbach’s tales, respectively, revealed how language not only operates on a communal level, but also how it contributes to questions of belonging when dialectal language patterns are disrupted by the conflict with standard German brought into the village by the new village schoolteachers Adolf and Anton.

Chapter two, “Social Norms and the Constructive vs. Destructive Nature of Shame as a Moral Emotion in Gotfried Keller’s ‘Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe’ (1856) and Berthold Auerbach’s ‘Des Schloßbauers Vefele’ (1843),” investigated the interplay between shame and social and moral norms and showed how this interplay can either serve productively or destructively. Both Keller’s and Auerbach’s village stories uncovered the power of shame. My discussions of these two tales provided new perspectives into the tragedies we encounter and

additionally questioned whether theories of shame can be upheld in the village context. As we saw in “Des Schloßbauers Vefele,” the communal force with which norms and values are internalized by individuals such as Vefele make it difficult if not impossible to distinguish between one’s *own chosen* values vs. those that are imposed on the individual by others.

Finally, chapter three, “Shame and Female Agency in Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s ‘Die Totenwacht’ (1894) and Clara Viebig’s ‘Die Schuldige’ (1897),” concentrated on what impact shame has on (female) agency and, in turn, how it reveals the role that gender, socio-economic status, and geography play in the ways in which shame emerges in village contexts as represented in literary texts. As we saw in Ebner-Eschenbach’s and Clara Viebig’s texts, analyzing feelings of shame and acts of shaming reveals communal power structures and aids in understanding questions of agency. While Ebner-Eschenbach’s protagonist Anna is able to confront her shame and, in turn, gain agency, Clara Viebig’s character Barbara, while she retains some agency throughout the tale, is ultimately powerless against the norms and values of the community.

The majority of the characters I analyzed are female. This was not initially my intention; it however confirms what many scholars of shame, in particular contemporary researchers, are discovering about the emotion. While shame itself is not gendered, the triggers that elicit the feeling are highly gender specific. Thus, depictions of communities with norms, values, and traditions that are gendered present opportunities to feature female characters. It appears that authors such as Auerbach, Keller, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Viebig made deliberate choices to foreground women’s issues of the nineteenth century in their representations of village communities. Because of the specific norms and values of rural life, these authors, as proto-

realist, realist, and naturalist writers, took particular interest in not only revealing gendered norms that lead to these women's difficulties, but also to challenge these norms with their writing.

Of course, men are also subjected to gendered norms, but these norms are generally based on power structures that allow men to be dominant within a given community. While men in nineteenth-century representations of village life also experience shame in reaction to loss of honor, physical weakness, and the lack of sexual potency, such as Georg in Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Totenwacht," the women in these tales can be seen as specifically "marked" for shame. As my analysis of Hedwig ("Der Lauterbacher"), Marie ("Die Unverstandene auf dem Dorfe"), Vreni (*Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*), Anna ("Die Totenwacht"), and Barbara ("Die Schuldige") has shown, they experience shame on a multitude of levels, including but not limited to, physical (un)attractiveness, the lack of femininity, lack of power, expectations in regard to their roles as wife and mother, and most importantly lack of moral goodness.

My initial inquiry asked what role shame plays in literary representations of village life and what it reveals about the village communities that are depicted in these tales. Through my close readings I have shown that shame is an emotion that is not only crucial in the depiction of peasant life, but that it also needs to be taken into account when analyzing these narratives with respect to aspects such as communal norms and values, community belonging, behavior of individuals and the community as a whole, as well as power dynamics. Analyzing these texts through the lens of shame not only reveals the narrative structures of the tales and the sociological context, but it also provides insights that, in turn, permit these narratives to be evaluated for their broader contribution to the literary genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*.

While the above inquiry was the main goal of this dissertation, I further aimed to explain why shame is so important to village tales of the nineteenth century. Moreover, I asked if and if so how we may use these analyses to provide insights into shame or the lack thereof in depictions of urban societies in this time period. While I have not made any comparisons to urban tales to draw conclusions about differences in how shame is perceived, evoked, and evaluated in city narratives, I claim in closing that analyzing shame in *Dorfgeschichten* of the nineteenth century allows us to make inferences about how shame may figure differently in literary accounts of nineteenth-century urban life.

The reason that shame plays an integral role in depictions of peasant life lies in the difference between “open” and “closed societies.” The concept of an “open society” was first proposed by French philosopher Henri Bergson in his *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932) and later developed by Austrian-British philosopher Karl Popper in his two-volume *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945). An open community maintains social relations with other communities, but within the community itself, people have little to no “face to face” contact (Popper 174). In this vein, community members have limited or no personal interaction with one another and know little about and do not interfere with day-to-day aspects of other people. Relationships exist mainly on an economic level. For this reason Popper refers to it as an “abstract or depersonalized society” (174). He describes an open society as one “in which individuals are confronted with personal decisions” (173) and in which “many members strive to rise socially, and to take the places of other members” (174). Thus, in an “open society,” although inequalities may exist, individuals are able to move up to a higher social class or down

to a lower one through hard work, luck, or marriage. Hence, an individual can achieve status and is granted social mobility.

A closed community, in contrast, intentionally limits links with other communities and interacts only with the people that live in it; everyone else living outside of it is excluded. Within the “closed society” a person’s status is assigned at birth and set for life without the possibility of social mobility. Popper defines a “closed society” as a “collectivist society” (173) that “resembles a herd or a tribe in being a semi-organic unit whose members are held together by semi-biological ties—kinship, living together, sharing common efforts, common dangers, common joys and common distress” (173). Thus, members of a “closed society” have a particular relationship to one another and share communal values.

While Popper does not explicitly comment on examples of “open” vs. “closed societies,” we may infer the following: late nineteenth-century urban life can be seen in light of Popper’s definition of the “open society.” In fact, Popper points out that modern societies, due to changes brought about by industrialization, resemble what he calls “abstract societ[ies]” (174). Late nineteenth-century modernization contributed not only to the possibility of social mobility, but, with the development of technology, it also provided the means by which people were connected to other surrounding communities rather than being confined to their own communities. As a result of these developments, life became more and more anonymous and no longer solely shaped by communal norms and values.

By contrast, Popper’s idea of a “closed society” mirrors literary depictions of nineteenth-century rural communities. These communities are based on everyday interactions between their members and the community can only thrive through collective efforts. Such a structure depends

on conformity to specific norms and values, which, in turn, determine who is seen as a member and who does not belong. This understanding of belonging not only establishes who is included, but also marks some as outsiders. Moreover, the lack of (social) mobility in these rural communities contributes to the confinement of its members to a particular geographic region.

If we see village communities in terms of a “closed society,” we may draw conclusions about why shame is important to the literary depictions of these communities. As we have seen, shame is contextual and a response to some form of transgression that is being judged by others. In order for this kind of judgment to take place and, in turn, elicit feelings of shame, there must be some kind of relationship among the involved parties. Berthold Auerbach alludes to this relational aspect in his “Des Schloßbauers Vefele”:

Man irrt sich gewaltig, wenn man glaubt, auf dem Land da könne man ganz ungestört allein für sich leben. Das kann man nur in einer großen Stadt, wo die Menschen sich nicht untereinander kümmern, wo einer an dem andern täglich vorübergeht, ohne zu wissen, wer er ist, was er thut und treibt, wo man ohne Gruß, ja fast ohne Blick vor einem Menschen vorbeirent, als ob er ein Stein, und nicht, also ob er ein Mensch wäre. Auf dem Lande, in einem Dorfe aber, wo die kleine Anzahl der Einwohner sich kennt, muß man gewissermaßen von seinem Thun und Treiben einem jeden Rechenschaft geben, man kann sich nicht selbst abschließen. (*Auerbach's Sämtliche Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* Vol. 2: 51)

In dieser ausgesprochenen Teilnahme an dem Thun und Lassen des anderen liegt eine gewisse sinnige Gesellschaft des Lebens, die sich über alles ausbreitet; aber auch hier fehlen die Schattenseiten nicht. Will einer aus besonderen Gründen sein Leben so einrichten, daß es gegen die allgemeinen Sitten und Gewohnheiten verstößt, so ist er dem Widerstreben und dem Spotte aller ausgesetzt. (52)

As Auerbach's narrator nicely summarizes in these text passages, village life, in contrast to city life, creates a particular environment that lends itself to the passing of judgment about everyday behavior. If there is no face-to-face interaction and thus no personal relationships among members of a community, as is the case in an “open society,” then judgments in response to

transgressions may never occur as the individual's actions do not resonate in the community due to the fact that "Menschen sich nicht untereinander kümmern." And if such judgments do occur, they are never publicly expressed and thus do not affect the judged one and cannot result in the emergence of feelings of shame. In the village setting, in contrast, behavior is always judged according to the community's norms and values. Moreover, due to the intense personal interactions among its members, transgressions become immediately known by the entire community. Thus, the rural context, as Auerbach points out, requires that each member of the community be accountable for his or her actions. This accountability requires conformity to communal norms and values. When these are transgressed, it results in mockery and ridicule, which, in turn, undermines one's integrity and elicits feelings of shame.

If we consider the six tales I have analyzed in this dissertation, we can clearly see how shame operates in village communities. As "closed societies," they create specific circumstances under which shame becomes unavoidable for the characters. Most of the characters I have analyzed are confined to the village parameters and are, in turn, held accountable for the norms and values of the community. Because of various transgressions of these norms, the characters are experiencing feelings of shame, which they are mostly unable to resolve. In the most severe cases, as Vreni and Sali in Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe," Vefele in Auerbach's "Des Schloßbauers Vefele," and Barbara in Viebig's "Die Schuldige," the confinement of a "closed society" and the emerging feelings of shame can only be resolved through a tragic ending.

One example that illustrates how the concept of a "closed society" contributes to feelings of shame and strips any power from its community members, in particular from women, is Ebner-Eschenbach's "Die Totenwacht." As I have shown, Anna, shamed by the community for

many years, is able to cast off her shame and gain agency over her life. The only way she can achieve this is by leaving the village and finding employment as a weaver. Had Anna not left the village, she would have had to continue to be shamed by Georg and the community at large. Moreover, we might assume that she might have had to accept Georg's shaming marriage proposal in order to survive. Anna thus escapes the confinements of the "closed society" and is able to gain social mobility. In doing so, she exemplifies the possibilities given to an individual outside of a "closed society" by (re)establishing her self-integrity and financial security, which are all signs characteristic of the onset of twentieth-century modernity.

With my research, I offer a model for approaching the study of shame in other village tales of the nineteenth century and beyond. Although the *Dorfgeschichte* of the German-speaking world experienced its "Blütezeit" in the nineteenth century, German village tales still exist, continue to be published, and remain an important genre for literary studies.¹ Contemporary authors are returning to realist narration by means of the village tale (Moser n.p.). These contemporary tales not only engage with the genre, but also thematize many of the topics that are important to nineteenth-century *Dorfgeschichten*.

In Joseph Haslinger's tale *fiona und ferdinand* (2006), for example, an unnamed first-person narrator returns to his birth place, a village in Austria's *Waldviertel*, that is forced to reckon with its past when a bundle of human bones wrapped in newspaper are discovered in a

¹ For examples of contemporary literary studies that engage with the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte* see Franco Moretti's *Graphs, Maps, Trees. Abstract Models for Literary History* (2005), Josephine Donovan's *European Local-Color Literature: National Tales, Dorfgeschichten, Romans Champêtres*. Contrary to these scholars, who bring contemporary views to nineteenth-century village tales, Natalie Moser, in her article "Realismus für das 21. Jahrhundert (1): Die Wiederkehr der Dorfgeschichte" (2016), Werner Nell's and Marc Weiland's (eds.), in their edited volume *Imaginäre Dörfer. Zur Wiederkehr des Dörflichen in Literatur, Film und Lebenswelt* (2014), and Kerstin Stüssel, in her article "Entlegene Orte, verschollene Subjekte, verdichtetes Wissen. Problematisches Erzählen zwischen Literatur und Massenmedien" (2013), analyze the return of village tales and investigate how these contemporary stories draw from the nineteenth-century predecessor.

locked trunk in one of the villager's home, giving rise to many rumors. As we follow the childhood memories of the narrator, who tells the story of how he and his friend Franz found, played with, and hid the bones of two people years ago, we encounter topics such as the village dialect vs. *Hochdeutsch*, questions of moral goodness, introduction of technology into village practices, and the intrusion of outsiders into the village. The tale ends with a reference to Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe." After unsuccessful attempts to identify the remains, Franz and the narrator make up a story for themselves and agree to name the two Fiona and Ferdinand, two lovers who had made a suicide pact.

Another contemporary village tale is Saša Stanišić's novel *Vor dem Fest* (2014), in which the fictional village Fürstenfelde becomes the protagonist of the story. In the narrative structure, the "we" that speaks represents the collective voice of the landscape. Fürstenfelde is a village in the slowly depopulating vastness of the Uckermark where there exist no more businesses and where the young are moving away and the old are dying off. However, there remains the one important tradition: the *Annenfest*. Although it has been celebrated in the village for centuries, nobody really knows what it is that they are celebrating. Frau Schwermuth, the village historian, who keeps the story of the village alive, becomes the center of the tale. Ultimately, Stanišić tells the tale of a village tradition that celebrates the mere fact that the village exists.

Finally, Juli Zeh's last publication and the most recently published village tale *Unterleuten* (2016) shows how an idyllic village such as Unterleuten can be plain hell. The tale sketches the seemingly charming village Unterleuten, which is located somewhere in the state of Brandenburg, with its neighboring towns, its untouched nature with rare birds, and the small houses occupied by city people from Berlin, who bought these houses in the hope of escaping the

stress of Berlin and fulfilling their dreams of an innocent and pure life. However, the village gets into uproar when an investment firm proposes building a wind farm immediately proximate to it. Major conflicts between the province and the metropolitan self-righteousness and arrogance of the Berliners result. Zeh's tale ultimately asks whether in the twenty-first century there still exists a society with a sense of morality apart from self-interest.

These contemporary authors especially call upon the genre in response to the antagonism against realist writing prevalent in contemporary Germany (Moser n.p.). In "Erzählen ist im Idealfall ich-los," Daniel Kehlmann explains this return to realism as follows: "Die wirkliche Frage, die auch die Zukunft der Literatur berührt, ist nicht die Frage Erzählen oder Nicht-Erzählen, sondern die des Realismus. Es ist einfach nicht so: Realismus = Erzählen = altmodisch und andererseits Nicht-Erzählen = Sprachkritik = modern. Das sind Gleichungen, in denen kein einziges Glied stimmt" (31). By using the genre of the *Dorfgeschichte*, these authors not only revive realist writing, but also reestablish the importance of the village tale in the contemporary literary market.

Much like the *Dorfgeschichten* of the nineteenth century, these contemporary village tales employ the genre in order to address and discuss socially complex topics in realist fashion. As we have seen, in their representations of village life, Auerbach, Keller, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Viebig reveal issues that were crucial to peasant life. Analyzed through the lens of shame, their village tales help to bring to the forefront how rural communities operated on the social and moral level. We may then question whether the return of the genre in the twenty-first century addresses issues of rural life in similar ways and whether shame is still an important emotion in representations of rural communities.

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