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## ABBREVIATIONS

Frequently cited works are referred to as follows:

- BA Raabe, Wilhelm. *Sämtliche Werke*. Edited by Karl Hoppe and Jost Schillemeit. 20 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau/Braunschweig: Verlagsanstalt Hermann Klemm, 1951-1959; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960-1994.
- GB Keller, Gottfried. *Gesammelte Briefe*. Edited by Carl Helbling. 4 vols. Bern: Verlag Benteli, 1950-1954.
- HKG Stifter, Adalbert. *Werke und Briefe. Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Edited by Alfred Doppler, Wolfgang Frühwald, and Hartmut Laufhütte. 9 vols [as of 2019]. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978 -.
- HKKA Keller, Gottfried. *Historisch-Kritische Gottfried Keller-Ausgabe*. Edited by Walter Morgenthaler (Leitung). 32 vols. Basel: Stroemfeld Verlag; Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1996-2012.
- PRA Stifter, Adalbert. *Sämtliche Werke*. Edited by August Sauer et al. 25 vols. Prag: J.G. Calve, 1901-1918; Prag: Verlag der Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen, 1920-1924; Prag: Verlag der Deutschen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften und Künste für die Tschechoslowakische Republik, 1925-1927; Reichenberg: Sudetendeutscher Verlag Franz Kraus, 1928-1941; Graz: Stiasny Verlag, 1958-1960; Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1979.
- SW Keller, Gottfried. *Sämtliche Werke*. Edited by Thomas Böning, Gerhard Kaiser, and Dominik Müller. 7 vols. Frankfurt a.M: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985-1996.

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the motif and operation of recognition in poetic realist works by Adalbert Stifter (1805-1868) and Gottfried Keller (1819-1890). Taking as a starting point the mutually dependent relationship between recognition (*anagnorisis*), reading (*anagnosis*), and mimesis in Aristotle's *Poetics*, it demonstrates that recognition scenes, which are utterly ubiquitous in poetic realist texts, self-reflexively stage the dominant epistemological and medial concerns of the period. In Aristotle's account, recognition is not only a constitutive component of the plot-structure. As the basis for mimetic pleasure, the operation underlies the very way in which we gain knowledge about the world. Mimetic pleasure in Aristotle's account derives from recognition *qua* representation, but when this recognition is absent, the constructedness of an object, e.g. its color or workmanship, can still generate pleasure. While these two features are distinct in Aristotle, poetic realism short-circuits the two, such that recognition generates both a "reality effect" and an awareness of a work's artificial nature. This study argues that this dual effect is more broadly indicative of the dialectic at the heart of the period, for poetic realist texts both maintain a link to reality and foreground their own aesthetic transfiguration thereof. In poetic realist recognition scenes, which are often also scenes of reading, characters come to knowledge about the overlap between their life and literature. Their recognition of their own mediated understanding of reality – an operation that the extradiegetic reader repeats – thus throws into relief the preconditions for the narratives' production and reception. By providing close readings of canonical narratives and archival materials like manuscripts, personal journals, and doodles, this study offers a media historically oriented approach to epistemologies of poetic realism.

## Introduction

“That scar –  
as the old nurse cradled his leg and her hands passed down  
she felt it, knew it, suddenly let his foot fall –  
down it dropped in the basin – the bronze clanged,  
tipping over, spilling water across the floor.  
Joy and torment gripped her heart at once,  
tears rushed to her eyes – voice choked in her throat  
she reached for Odysseus’ chin and whispered quickly,  
‘Yes, yes! you are Odysseus – oh dear boy –  
I couldn’t know you before...  
not till I touched the body of my king!’”<sup>1</sup>

Odysseus’ incognito return to Ithaca leads to perhaps the most famous recognition scene in Western literature. In Book 19 of *The Odyssey*, the old nursemaid Eurycleia shows the customary hospitality to the haggard stranger before her and begins to wash his feet. Upon touching the scar on his leg, a reminder of a hunt during which his leg was gored by a boar, Eurycleia recognizes the man in front of her as Odysseus. Overcome with emotion, she drops his foot. The basin is knocked over, clanging noisily against the ground as it sends water flying. One can almost feel the water droplets, hear the bronze, as Eurycleia chokes out Odysseus’ name and tells him what she now knows. This scene, with its rich sensory impressions, contrasts sharply with the later recognition scene between Odysseus and Penelope, where recognition occurs via memory and reasoning. After Odysseus vanquishes the suitors, Penelope is not yet certain that the man is her husband (““But the story can’t be true, not as you tell it, / no, it must be a god who’s killed our brazen friends – ””<sup>2</sup>) and decides to test his knowledge. She orders Eurycleia to move their bed, and Odysseus, aghast, recounts how he built the piece of furniture, shaping it

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<sup>1</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin, 1996), 405.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, 457.

from an olive tree still rooted in the ground. It is this display of profoundly intimate knowledge of the marriage bed that firmly establishes Odysseus' identity *as* Odysseus, thus contributing – as part of a longer series of events – to his return to Ithaca.

Aristotle writes in the *Poetics* that “‘recognition’ is, as indeed the name indicates, a shift from ignorance to awareness, pointing in the direction either of close blood ties or of hostility, of people who have previously been in a clearly marked state of happiness or unhappiness.”<sup>3</sup> Yet this formulation is somewhat opaque, since characters experiencing recognition do not suddenly know something altogether new. As Terence Cave elaborates in his encyclopedic study of the operation – the path-breaking 1988 monograph *Recognitions* –, “‘Ana-gnōrīsis’, like ‘re-cognition’, in fact implies a recovery of something once known rather than merely a shift from ignorance to knowledge.”<sup>4</sup> In the examples just given, Eurycleia and Penelope recognize Odysseus as someone they *already know*. And this recognition, which, in the Greek tradition involves both the recognition of identity and political acknowledgement,<sup>5</sup> is contingent upon a kind of defamiliarization. Unlike other heroes who attempt to return home – and Agamemnon is the famous counterexample – Odysseus disguises himself, strategically delaying recognition.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Gerald F. Else (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 36.

<sup>4</sup> Terence Cave, *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 33.

<sup>5</sup> “[Odysseus’ affinity for disguise] represents the ability to endure a suspension of recognition – both in the narrow sense of recognition of identity, and in the broader sense of recognition of achievement and status – that other Homeric heroes are unable to tolerate. In the world of the Homeric epics, the recognition of identity also involves recognition in this broader sense, because there identity is bound up with honor and prestige” Sheila Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 5. In an effort to rein in the scope of this study, I largely bracket out the question of acknowledgement or *Anerkennung* and focus instead on the mechanisms of *Wiedererkennen*.

<sup>6</sup> “The *Odyssey*’s sense of its own story as extraordinary is expressed throughout in its use of the Agamemnon story, not just as a foil to the story of Odysseus, but as a norm from which the story of Odysseus departs.” Murnaghan is here referring to Penelope’s loyalty vs. Clytemnestra’s treachery, but notes earlier that “Odysseus’ story departs from the larger pattern of ‘the Achaeans’ bitter homecoming.’” Murnaghan, 125, 4.

This, as Sheila Murnaghan puts it, “allows him to achieve the greatest possible success for a Homeric hero: *nostos*, ‘returning home,’ after winning *kleos*, ‘glory.’”<sup>7</sup> In other words, the repetition of knowledge makes possible the transformation of the unfamiliar to the familiar, the unrecognized to the recognized.

Odysseus’ scar has long assumed archetypal status – and this long before Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis* decisively linked this recognition scene with one of the dominant representational paradigms in Western literary tradition. Jumping ahead nearly two millennia, one finds echoes of this recognition scene in Franz Kafka’s “Das Urteil,” which, in literary historical terms, marks the point at which recognition turns into a decidedly psychological affair.

‘Aber schau mich an!’ rief der Vater, und Georg lief, fast zerstreut, zum Bett, um alles zu fassen, stockte aber in der Mitte des Weges.

‘Weil sie die Röcke gehoben hat’, fing der Vater zu flöten an, ‘weil sie die Röcke so gehoben hat, die widerliche Gans’, und er hob, um das darzustellen, sein Hemd so hoch, daß man auf seinem Oberschenkel die Narbe aus seinen Kriegsjahren sah, ‘weil sie die Röcke so und so und so gehoben hat, hast du dich an sie herangemacht, und damit du an ihr ohne Störung dich befriedigen kannst, hast du unserer Mutter Andenken geschändet, den Freund verraten und deinen Vater ins Bett gesteckt, damit er sich nicht rühren kann. Aber kann er sich rühren oder nicht?’

Und er stand vollkommen frei und warf die Beine. Er strahle vor Einsicht.

Georg stand in einem Winkel, möglichst weit vom Vater. Vor einer langen Weile hatte er sich fest entschlossen, alles vollkommen genau zu beobachten, damit er nicht irgendwie auf Umwegen, von hinten her, von oben herab überrascht werden könne. Jetzt erinnerte er sich wieder an den längst vergessenen Entschluß und vergaß ihn, wie man einen kurzen Faden durch ein Nadelöhr zieht.<sup>8</sup>

The primal scene of recognition is transformed into one of psychological terror. Standing upon his bed, Georg’s father recriminates him and begins to reveal the years-long deception that has occurred in their relationship. While Georg had kept his engagement a secret from his long-

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<sup>7</sup> Murnaghan, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Franz Kafka, “Das Urteil,” in *Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, ed. Wolf Kittler, Hans-Gerd Koch, and Gerhard Neumann, *Frankz Kafka: Schiften, Tagebücher, Briefe; Kritische Ausgabe* (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 1994), 57.

suffering friend who had emigrated to Russia, his father had informed the friend of everything, who thus ““weiß ja alles hundertmal besser als du selbst.””<sup>9</sup> Here, there is no longer a congruence between knowledge and corporeal immediacy, as in the scene between Odysseus and Eurycleia. Georg attempts to walk toward the bed, “um alles zu fassen,” but hesitates. By the time his father has made his initial utterance, Georg finds himself in a corner, remembering and then forgetting his already long-forgotten resolve to observe everything carefully, so that he would not be surprised “von hinten her, von oben herab.” All Georg can do is watch as his father exposes his scar and shocks him with his knowledge.

As in Homer’s epic, recognition relates to intimate, hidden knowledge associated with sexuality, even if Kafka’s depictions might – to borrow Auerbach’s phrasing – have more of the “rätselvoll und hintergründig” character common to the Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>10</sup> But the actors have changed roles, and it is Georg’s father who at once plays Odysseus and Penelope. The bed is once more the locus of knowledge, but the object of recognition has shifted. Recognition is no longer about identity, but about knowledge itself, about Georg’s discovery of his father’s knowledge. And it is his father’s superior knowledge that ultimately gives him the authority unceremoniously to sentence his son to death. The father’s revelation is tremendously unsettling, since it suddenly proves erroneous the reader’s assumptions about the characters’ relationships. Together with Georg, the reader assumes one thing to be true, only to be faced with evidence of the opposite as the familiar (and the familial) becomes unfamiliar.

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<sup>9</sup> Kafka, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur*, 11th ed. (Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2015), 14.

One is tempted to read Kafka's text in Freudian terms: the recognition scene bears the hallmarks of the uncanny, with once-hidden, repressed knowledge coming to light.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the father's scar, precipitously high on his leg, might serve as a mark of castration, with recognition relating to the primal Oedipal configuration. Arguably the dominant model of recognition for the past hundred or so years, this kind of psychological recognition emerges from Freud's reading of another Greek text central to Aristotle's delineation of recognition: Sophocles' *Oedipus*. In Kafka's "Das Urteil," these archetypal scenes of knowing are made, in a way, uncanny. Part of the shock effect of the text derives from the strange familiarity the reader has with the scene. As bizarre and unsettling as the story might be, one has the sense that one has seen something like it before.

Recognition is, above all else, a figure of rereading: of projecting meaning onto the past, of retrospectively imbuing clues, fragments of the narrative with significance. It is not just, as Cave puts it, a synecdoche for the whole of literature, but also, more implicitly, for the whole of the scholarly enterprise.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the scholarly treatment of recognition is likewise a project of rereading, of imbuing the *Urszene* of recognition with an historically contingent meaning. It is no coincidence that anagnorisis is frequently linked to retrospective narration: the first mention of Odysseus' scar notably leads to a lengthy digression on its origin before recognition transpires.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> As Cave's account attests, this uncanniness is constitutive of recognition. "Anagnorisis is always the recovery of a buried past which is problematic, threatening, often equivocal in character as fact or fiction [...]. Furthermore, it represents the repetition or recovery of something once known and familiar as implausible, unexpected or astonishing. Recognition has many of the characteristics of the *unheimlich* [sic], and stories of the uncanny frequently stage recognition scenes." Cave, *Recognitions*, 240–41.

<sup>12</sup> Cave, 8.

<sup>13</sup> For more on recognition and retrospective narration, see Cave, 22; Eva Geulen, "Anagnorisis statt Identifikation (Raabes *Altershausen*)," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 82, no. 3 (2008): 424–47; Cornelia Zumbusch,

This detailed digression is of course a key feature of the Homeric style, but even in Kafka's text, the father's scar, already a memory of his wartime years, leads to an account of the various ways in which he had outmaneuvered his son. It is fitting, then, that Cave titles the opening chapter to his monograph "Odysseus' Scar," an homage to the opening chapter of Auerbach's *Mimesis*. (Auerbach is of course concerned with representational modes in the Greek and the biblical traditions, not with the status of recognition, but the Athens vs. Jerusalem representational dichotomy might indeed map onto recognition as well.<sup>14</sup>)

The operation and motif of recognition has undergone countless transformations, changing to suit the corpus and the intellectual concerns of a given era.<sup>15</sup> This is a dissertation about the long-overlooked role of recognition in one specific moment in the German literary tradition: the nineteenth-century period known as poetic realism. This study argues that recognition is as monumental for poetic realism as it is for ancient Greek *nostos* tales or for psychoanalysis, and that the operation holds the key to understanding the epistemological underpinnings of nineteenth-century literary production and reception. Defined both by its mimetic impulse and a rapidly changing media landscape, poetic realism found in recognition a condensation of its guiding principles. By granting a privileged place to recognition scenes and refracting the operation through the lens of various nineteenth-century discourses, realist authors self-reflexively depicted their own aesthetic and poetic concerns. The Aristotelean operation,

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"Nachgetragene Ursprünge: Vorgeschichten im Roman (Wieland, Goethe, Stifter)," *Poetica* 43, no. 3/4 (2011): 267–99.

<sup>14</sup> Piero Boitani attends more to biblical recognition than does Cave, focusing on specific instances of "re-Scripting" of biblical recognition. See Piero Boitani, *The Bible and Its Rewritings*, trans. Anita Weston (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. 1-57, 130-205.

<sup>15</sup> See here again Cave, *Recognitions*.

then, holds the key to understanding knowledge and representation in an era in which both underwent immense shifts.

## RECOGNITION IN ARISTOTLE

This study takes as a starting point the mutually dependent relationships between recognition [*anagnorisis*], reading [*anagnosis*], and mimesis. Aristotle discusses these concepts at various points in the *Poetics*, and in order to understand how they interrelate, it is helpful to recapitulate Ellwood Wiggins' delineation of three levels of recognition: as part of mimesis, part of the plot-structure, and part of the work of the poet or critic.<sup>16</sup>

(1) In chapter four of the *Poetics*, Aristotle describes poetry as originating in humankind's proclivity for mimesis. "(1) [T]he habit of imitating is congenital to human beings from childhood (actually man differs from the other animals in that he is the most imitative and learns his first lessons through imitation), and so is (2) the pleasure that all men take in works of imitation."<sup>17</sup> Mimesis, first and foremost, is the vehicle by which we gain knowledge about the world. Mimesis is also a source of pleasure, but this does not mean that this pleasure is limited to, say, beautiful objects. Rather, it is the fact of representation that pleases. As Aristotle notes, certain objects might indeed be painful to view – e.g. "the least favored animals" or "cadavers" – but their representations *qua* representations are pleasurable.<sup>18</sup>

But what exactly is pleasant about viewing a depiction of an utterly unpleasant object? Aristotle soon clarifies that what is at stake here is the pleasure of recognition. "For the reason they take pleasure in seeing the images is that in the process of viewing they find themselves

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<sup>16</sup> The following summary remarks broadly follow this paradigm. Ellwood Wiggins, "Dramas of Knowledge: The 'Fortunate Event' of Recognition," *Goethe Yearbook* 17 (2010): 207–10.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1967, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, 20.

learning, that is, reckoning what kind a given thing belongs to: ‘This individual is a So-and-so.’”<sup>19</sup> That is, by recognizing an object *as* an exemplum of a given type of object, one experiences mimetic pleasure. And because viewing representations is pleasurable, learning about reality becomes pleasurable. Moreover, if one fails to recognize the object, then mimetic pleasure is absent. Instead, one is pleased by the artificiality of the representation, i.e. “through its workmanship or color or something else of that sort.”<sup>20</sup> That is, recognition necessarily involves an element of repetition, and in the absence of this repetition, one is drawn not to the reality depicted within the artwork, but the means of artistic production. Finally, it is worth underscoring again the fact that humankind’s mimetic drive is the source of poetry. Stated differently, poetry emerges from the pleasure we take in recognizing the identity of a real object and its representation. In short, *recognition is what underlies the poetic process.*

(2) In chapters 10 and 11, Aristotle defines recognition as a constitutive component of the complex plot-structure. This level was discussed above, but a few summary remarks offer some additional context. Aristotle notes that the best recognition occurs in conjunction with a reversal (*peripeteia*), which, taken together evoke pity or fear. In chapter 16, he offers a ranked typology of recognition, which can take the following forms, from worst to best: recognition via a sign (e.g. Odysseus’ scar), recognition contrived by the poet, recognition via memory, recognition via reasoning (or false reasoning), and recognition that “arises from the events themselves; the emotional shock of surprise is then based on probabilities.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, 20. See also Wiggins, “Dramas of Knowledge,” 208. “Both the joy and edification that imitation affords are the result of an act of recognition. It is the excited exclamation, ‘That’s him!’ ([...] literally ‘This one is that one!’) in which the epistemological and pleasurable boons of *mimesis* bear fruit.”

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1967, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, 47.

Reading this level of recognition through the first offers a few insights. For one, depictions of recognition repeat mimetically the operation that undergirds our perception of both reality and art.<sup>22</sup> That is, in viewing or reading about a character experiencing recognition, *we apprehend the very operation that is concurrently determining our own apprehension of the representation*. There are, in other words, two further subdivisions within this level of recognition: intradiegetic recognition (e.g. recognition scenes) and extradiegetic recognition, whereby we, as readers or viewers, recognize the representation as a representation.<sup>23</sup>

(3) Chapter 17 of the *Poetics* introduces a third level of recognition that implicitly expands on the type of extradiegetic recognition just elaborated. This chapter is devoted to the poet's composition of a plot, but Aristotle focuses especially on the poet as a reader (or visualizer) of his or her own work. At the beginning of this section, he recommends that "in constructing one's plots and working them out in language one should put them directly before one's eyes as much as possible. That way, seeing most vividly, as if he were actually getting close to the events as they happen, the poet can devise the appropriate 'business,' and discrepancies are least likely to escape his notice."<sup>24</sup> It is, as Wiggins emphasizes, the poet's visualization of the piece's performance that is key to the poetic process.<sup>25</sup> In other words,

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<sup>22</sup> I am expanding here on Wiggins' model. He notes that "recognition within the text is doubled by the reader, and is an inevitable aspect of reading," but does not explore the medial consequences of this. Ellwood Wiggins, "To Grasp the Minds of Men: Performing Recognition" (Doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2011), 80.

<sup>23</sup> Throughout this study I use Gérard Genette's terminology in order to differentiate these two levels. See Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 227–31.

<sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1967, 47.

<sup>25</sup> "[I]magining its *performance* is the way to recognize the central movement of the story. And Aristotle does not stop with his deservedly famous demand that one place the story 'before the eyes.' He also suggests that one imaginatively work through the gestures and the other sensual affects [sic] of an experience in order to discern the true core shape of an action." Wiggins, "Dramas of Knowledge," 210.

implicit here is the poet's imaginative experience of the work *as a viewer or reader* that will help him or her to avoid glaring plot-related errors.

The readerly activity of the poet also recalls the first level of recognition. Just as the first level requires that one recognize an object as an exemplum of a larger class of objects, so, too, does the third level require that the poet identify those key elements of the plot that comprise the general structure. Aristotle here offers a few examples, briskly summarizing the plots of *Iphigenia* and the *Odyssey* and identifying the central action. Wiggins contends that differentiating the whole (general plot-structure) from the part (individual episodes) is itself an act of recognition.<sup>26</sup> However, he is right to note an underlying tension. On the one hand, the poet's visualization of the plot demands an episodic focus, for the poet should attend to specifics, like linguistic expression. On the other hand, the composition of a coherent plot requires the poet to zoom out, to keep the big picture in view. In other words, this level of recognition necessitates that the poet continually toggle between the part and the whole.<sup>27</sup>

To summarize: First, the operations for making sense of the world and for deriving mimetic pleasure are one and the same. Second, this same operation manifests itself within the plot-structure. Third, this operation characterizes the activity of the poet, as both a creator and as a reader of his or her own work. One can also restate this paradigm in slightly modified terms: recognition applies to the activity of the *recipient* of a work of art (an image is pleasurable

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<sup>26</sup> Wiggins, 209. "True, this is not the kind of recognition that can be imitated for a soul-moving drama, a virtue chapter eleven has already reserved for recognition between persons, but as we have seen, Aristotle admits that *anagnorisis* 'can happen in relation to nonliving and random things, or to discover whether someone has or has not done something' (1452a 35), and this is precisely what a poet must do before she can shape her material into a soul-moving work of art."

<sup>27</sup> "The simultaneous injunctions that one 'see the story in its wholeness at a glance' and that one be 'immersed' in the sensual experience of the story's details require readers to dip back and forth from within and without the text, to sink into close engaged reading and then to gasp for breath as one surfaces for air and a wider perspective." Wiggins, 210.

because I recognize within it an object I already know); recognition features within the *artwork* (i.e. as a scene of anagnorisis); and recognition undergirds the activity of the *poet* (*qua* creator and recipient).

While these facets of recognition are universal, it is the task of the present study to reveal the precise contours of the operation in nineteenth-century realist prose. Because the relationship between reality and art comes under intense scrutiny at this time, all three levels of recognition are thrown into relief. Stated more precisely, *recognition, because it underlies our understanding of reality and its artistic representation, becomes the vehicle for negotiating a literary movement based on a very specific configuration of the relationship between reality and art.* The following sections trace out the role of recognition in poetic realism, as well as the medially specific dimensions of the operation and its relationship to reading. Next, the defamiliarization inherent to the operation – present already in the *Odyssey* – is specified for the German nineteenth century. Finally, a brief survey of epistemological shifts in this period locates recognition within a broader discursive paradigm spanning both literature and science.

## **REALIST RECOGNITION**

Poetic realism is one of the most notoriously slippery terms in German literary history. This is in part a side-effect of the dearth of theoretical treatises by writers of the period. Though scholars typically make recourse to the scattered reflections by Otto Ludwig and Julian Schmidt, any study of the period must necessarily take a text-immanent approach that allows the fictional works to disclose their own poetic and aesthetic preconditions. Despite this initial caveat, scholars can generally agree on a few points. First, broadly speaking, poetic realism designates the period from roughly the 1840s to the 1890s. In contradistinction to other European realisms – English, French, and Russian, as the comparison generally goes – German poetic realism is less

socially critical and more provincial, more apt to focus on the static and idyllic than on contemporary sociopolitical ruptures.<sup>28</sup> As Auerbach would put it rather unceremoniously, “Keiner der Männer zwischen 1840 und 1890, von Jeremias Gotthelf bis zu Theodor Fontane, zeigt in voller Ausbildung und Vereinigung die Hauptmerkmale des französischen, d.h. des sich bildenden europäischen Realismus: nämlich ernste Darstellung der zeitgenössischen alltäglichen gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit auf dem Grund der ständigen geschichtlichen Bewegung.”<sup>29</sup> The peculiarities of the German, Austrian, and Swiss traditions of course make such general political judgments difficult, if not impossible, but the point is that in each of its national or proto-national

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<sup>28</sup> For more on the political context of German realism, see Robert C. Holub, *Reflections of Realism: Paradox, Norm, and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century German Prose* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 175–76. “The age of realism in Germany, more than in France or England, overlaps with the rise of middle-class economic power, and the concurrent restructuring of society thrusts the theoretical question of apposite occupation into the center of literary debate. Of equal importance for the poetics of the latter half of the century, however, was the dismal failure of the revolution of 1848. The return of the *ancien régime* meant the end of hopes for a democratically based national unity and for the consolidation of bourgeois power. The bourgeoisie either retreated into a Schopenhauerian pessimism [...] or it restricted itself to economic and, within limits, cultural affairs, forfeiting political leadership in large measure to the aristocracy. Realism thus represents for the German bourgeoisie both a response to the revolution and a recognition of its altered role in society. It is more than an artistic movement, a style, or an aesthetic doctrine. In Germany it coincides with, and is reinforced by, a ‘Realism’ in the economic and political spheres as well. This unique mixture of resignation and revitalization, of national, classist pride and political impotence, sets German realism apart from its European counterparts and makes the question of what characters do for a living an issue of both literary and political consequence.”

<sup>29</sup> Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 480. Or as he puts it elsewhere: “[B]is gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts blieben die bedeutendsten Werke, die überhaupt Gegenstände der zeitgenössischen Gesellschaft ernsthaft zu gestalten suchen, im halb Phantastischen oder Idyllischen oder doch wenigstens im engen Bezirk des Lokalen; sie geben das Bild des Wirtschaftlichen, Gesellschaftlichen und Politischen als ein ruhendes. Das trifft gleichmäßig so verschiedene und jeweils so bedeutende Schriftsteller wie Jean Paul, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Jeremias Gotthelf, Adalbert Stifter, Hebbel, Storm – noch bei Fontane greift der gesellschaftliche Realismus kaum in die Tiefe, und die politische Bewegung bei Gottfried Keller ist ausgesprochen schweizerisch. Vielleicht hätten Kleist und später Büchner eine Wendung herbeiführen können, aber es war ihnen keine freie Entwicklung beschieden, und sie starben zu früh” (420-21).

iterations, German-language realism appears less concerned with socio-political reality and more concerned with its own poetic nature.<sup>30</sup>

Second, poetic realism is governed at once by poetic and realist impulses. Stylistically, German-language texts of this period aestheticize reality via the indeterminate process of “Verklärung,” that *je ne sais quoi* that distinguishes poetic realism from what Fontane would term “der nackte, prosaische Realismus.”<sup>31</sup> As he elaborates: “Vor allen Dingen verstehen wir *nicht* darunter [unter ‘Realismus’] das nackte Wiedergeben alltäglichen Lebens [...]. [...] Das Leben ist doch immer nur der Marmorsteinbruch, der den Stoff zu unendlichen Bildwerken in sich trägt; sie schlummern darin, aber nur dem Auge des Geweihten sichtbar und nur durch seine Hand zu erwecken.”<sup>32</sup> As a kind of Pygmalion figure, the realist writer is uniquely able to perceive the slumbering work of art within the bare material of everyday life. Thus, as Wolfgang Preisendanz argues, literature insists upon its *poetic* nature, which distinguishes its

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Preisendanz, “Voraussetzungen des poetischen Realismus in der deutschen Erzählkunst des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Begriffsbestimmung des literarischen Realismus*, ed. Richard Brinkmann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 472–73. “Wer das Hauptaugenmerk auf die jeweilige weltanschauliche Position oder auf den sachlichen Ertrag, etwa an psychologischen oder soziologischen Entdeckungen und Einsichten, an gesellschaftskritischen Befunden, richtet, dem entzieht sich das Eigentliche einer Erzählkunst, die ja gerade solch versachlichende Darstellung von Wirklichkeit als prosaische, unverklärte Wiedergabe vermeiden wollte. Ihre wesentliche Leistung ist wohl nur wahrzunehmen, wenn man beachtet, wie die Sprache den Spielraum eröffnet, um selbstherrliche Phantasie und Kenntnis von Faser und Textur der positiven natürlichen und geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit zu vermitteln, wie sich im Medium der Sprache jene Modelung, Verklärung ereignet, die dem Erzählen bei allem Respekt vor der objektiven Wirklichkeit das Wesen des ‘Gedichts’ wahr. Insofern ist der Erzählstil im poetischen Realismus weder Ausdruck der Person noch Ergebnis sachgerechter Darstellung, sondern primär Möglichkeit, die Darstellung abzuheben sowohl vom versachlichenden Wirklichkeitsverhältnis der Wissenschaft wie von dem, was Hegel das ‘prosaische Bewußtsein im alltäglichen Leben’ nannte.”

<sup>31</sup> Theodor Fontane, “Unsere lyrische und epische Poesie seit 1848,” in *Aufsätze und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Jürgen Kolbe, vol. III.1, *Sämtliche Werke* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1969), 273.

<sup>32</sup> Fontane, 240–41.

representations of reality from those made possible by the advancing sciences.<sup>33</sup> That is, *Verklärung* upholds the very poeticity of poetic realist works.<sup>34</sup>

This poetic quality is contingent upon the author's ability to recognize *art* within reality, yet it also makes it possible for the reader to recognize *reality* within the art. This is to say that *Verklärung* is the process by which one presents – in literature – a reality that is *more legible* than real reality. In Otto Ludwig's programmatic pronouncement, "Es handelt sich hier von einer Welt, [...] in der der Zusammenhang *sichtbarer* ist als in der wirklichen."<sup>35</sup> Of course, this heightened recognizability is a self-consciously *literary* effect. Poetic realism, then, attempts two things at once: it wants to present a heightened version of reality, and it wants to foreground its own artificial status. These two impulses are not in themselves contradictory, but they do imply distinct aesthetic experiences: on the one hand, the awareness of a work's poeticity, on the other, what Roland Barthes "reality effect," whereby "'the real' (and not its contingent contents) [...] is

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<sup>33</sup> Preisendanz, "Voraussetzungen des poetischen Realismus," 470. "All diesen Äußerungen [von Stifter, Keller, Fontane und Raabe] ist das eine Grundsätzliche gemeinsam: der Anspruch, daß die dargestellte Wirklichkeit unter einem spezifisch poetischen Strukturgesetz stehen und sich als eine imaginativ erschaffene, selbstherrlich bestehende Wirklichkeit erweisen solle. Und all diese Äußerungen sind Reaktion auf eine Trift, in deren Verlauf die Erzählkunst zur Funktion soziologischer oder psychologischer, kulturgeschichtlicher oder kulturkritischer Intentionen zu werden drohte. Das Problem, das ein poetischer Realismus lösen sollte, war dieses: Wie kann die Erzählkunst vermeiden, zum Vehikel wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse, zur Verherrlichung der 'wissenschaftlichen Seligkeiten' zu werden?"

<sup>34</sup> Glossing Fontane, Preisendanz writes: "Verklärung meint demnach eine Schreibweise, die den Unterschied zwischen dem vom Leben gestellten Bilde und dem dichterischen Gebilde nicht verwischt, sondern verbürgt, eine Schreibweise, in der Darstellung nicht mehr als Nachbildung oder Bestandsaufnahme, in der sie Grund und Ursprung einer Wirklichkeit ist." Preisendanz, 469–70.

<sup>35</sup> Otto Ludwig, "Der poetische Realismus," in *Shakespeare-Studien*, ed. Moritz Hendrich (Leipzig: Verlag von Carl Cnobloch, 1872), 264, <https://books.google.com/books?id=7QaGb2kW5csC&pg=PP5#v=onepage&q&f=false>. Emphasis added.

then signified.”<sup>36</sup> These are, of course, the same two aesthetic responses Aristotle describes in chapter four of the *Poetics*. These two elements exist in a state of permanent tension. Poetic realist recognition necessarily implicates both poetry and reality, and one cannot attend to one without attending to the other. But this, perhaps, is the great achievement of literary works of the period: by underscoring the poetic means of rendering reality and the realistic elements within poetry, poetic realist texts consistently exemplify at the level of narrative their own epistemological underpinnings.

If the reality effect marks one’s recognition of reality, what exactly happens when one becomes aware of a work’s poeiticity, and what does this accomplish? Surely there is more at stake than what Aristotle describes as the appreciation of workmanship. Cave remarks that moments of recognition, even when they occur in real life, strain credulity.<sup>37</sup> There is something fantastic, wildly improbable, about the contingent circumstances that reveal hidden, intimate knowledge about individuals: lightning strikes a blind girl, restoring her sight and enabling her to

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<sup>36</sup> “[I]t is the category of ‘the real’ (and not its contingent contents) which is then signified; in other words, the very absence of the signified, to the advantage of the referent alone, becomes the very signifier of realism: the *reality effect* is produced, the basis of that unavowed verisimilitude which forms the aesthetic of all the standard works of modernity.” Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect,” in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 148. My reading of this dual nature of realism is indebted to Robert Holub and Eric Downing. Holub suggests that realist texts “conceal any traces of their nature as fantasy and invention: the fiction they perpetrate is that they are not fiction at all.” Of course, the realist illusion is not without its ruptures, and he focuses on the aporias within realist narratives, arguing that realism in fact “self-destructs by reflecting on its own fictional underpinnings.” Holub, *Reflections of Realism*, 16, 18. Downing’s study aims “to see realism not only as grounded in a repetition or redundancy of the dominant discourse, but also in its resistance; to recall the self-conscious, somewhat self-deconstructive dimension that is intrinsic to realism; and to explore the self-representations or -understandings of their realist dimensions that these texts yield.” My study takes a similar approach, emphasizing the contradictions and moments of tension within poetic realist texts. Eric Downing, *Double Exposures: Repetition and Realism in Nineteenth-Century German Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>37</sup> Cave, *Recognitions*, 3–4, 12–15.

recognize her father; a man tours a portrait gallery and recognizes his own likeness, but in an image of a man long dead; two men, in love with the same woman, are haunted by a spirit, but one manages to touch its face and discover that the woman has simply donned a mask in order to play a trick on them, and he is rewarded with the woman's love; a man finds inside his neighbor's briefcase altered copies of his own love letters to his wife and recognizes that he has in front of him the material for a work of literature he has been so desperately trying to create. These are not cheap plot tricks, last-ditch efforts on the part of the authors to add suspense to their narratives. Rather, these examples, all of which are discussed in the subsequent chapters, are indicative of the overarching concern in poetic realism with the relationship between life and art and comprise attempts on the parts of their authors – Adalbert Stifter and Gottfried Keller – to reflect upon their own creative transformations of reality. In these woefully contingent moments, the protagonists confront the limits of their knowledge and, to varying degrees of directness, grapple with the congruence between their life and art. What is more, these moments reveal *poetic* preoccupations. The blind girl's perceptual mode informs Stifter's post-romantic poetological reflections; the man who sees himself in an old portrait commences a writing program that resembles Stifter's own; the haunting scene features in a narrative that contains an excessive number of intertextual allusions and that exemplifies Keller's conviction that literature is only ever written from other literature; the deceived dilettante writes literature in a similar way as Keller, while the neighbor is obsessed with a book that Keller likewise read. This is to say: recognition scenes reveal the *poetic* concerns of realist authors, who strive to transfigure reality in such a way as to make it more easily recognizable to their readers.

The central claim of this study is that the object of recognition in poetic realism is the poetic realist text itself, and this in a dual sense. Scenes of anagnorisis reveal the constructed

character of realist texts, while the recognition inherent to the reality effect makes apparent the text's congruence with external reality. The out-of-the-ordinary event of anagnorisis turns in on itself, revealing the very processes by which one makes sense of and aestheticizes reality. That is, the astonishing impact of recognition simultaneously evokes the mundane reality effect.

Recognition exposes the inherent instability of poetic realism, drawing conspicuous attention to the representational means that make possible the reality effect.<sup>38</sup> Poetic realist recognition, then, even more forcefully than the specifically Aristotelean operation, unites artistic production and reception, poetics and aesthetics.

This is not to reduce the problem of poetic realism to one of self-reflexivity, but instead to acknowledge the complex entanglement of medial and epistemological concerns in authors' self-conceptions of their own literary production. Nearly all the narratives under examination here feature reading protagonists, and the recognition scenes are decisively influenced by this bookishness, whether or not the recognition scenes are also scenes of reading (though this is often the case). The realist recognition scenes under consideration here are inherently self-reflexive, but this feature illustrates some of the broader stakes of the realist project per se. That is, the self-reflexive register betrays the basic conceptual undercurrent of poetic realism, namely

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<sup>38</sup> To a certain extent, this is already present within recognition plots. "Allgemeiner aber besteht der Skandal der Anagnorisis in ihrer potentiellen Uneinholbarkeit durch die poetologische Reflexion. Für Aristoteles und seine Nachfolger durch die Jahrhunderte ist das Auftreten von Dingen und Zeichen, die ihren Ursprung außerhalb des plots haben, ein beständiges Ärgernis, weil sie sich damit der Logik entziehen, die doch zumindest als narrative die Dichtung durchherrschen soll. Aus diesen Dingen und Zeichen als Singularitäten sind keine gültigen Schlüsse zu ziehen, sondern höchstens Paralogismen, die das Richtige nur zufällig treffen vermögen. Wer erst anhand einer Haarlocke oder einer Tätowierung einen Verwandten wiedererkennt, hat vorher geirrt und kann sich deshalb auch jetzt irren. Das heißt aber, daß die Schlüssigkeit der Anagnorisis selbst erfunden und inszeniert werden muß." Helmut Müller-Sievers, "Ahnen ahnen: Formen der Generationerkennung in der Literatur um 1800," in *Generation: Zur Genealogie des Konzepts – Konzepte von Genealogie*, ed. Sigrid Weigel et al. (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2005), 159–60.

the concern with how to render the world adequately in literature. The problem is at once epistemological and medial, an issue of both knowledge and representation. The scholarship has tended to focus on one or the other side of the realist problem, with older epistemological approaches describing the period in terms of subjectivity and objectivity,<sup>39</sup> and newer approaches attending to realist authors' reading, writing, and publishing practices.<sup>40</sup> By examining poetic realism's text-immanent poetics, this study unites these two methods, which all too frequently have run on parallel tracks.

This study provides an account of recognition in a very specific context. The term is, however, remarkably adaptive to any range of historical and discursive contexts and is so flexible that it risks losing any specificity. (This is to say nothing of the various translations and cognates: *Wiedererkennung*, *Anerkennung*, *Erkennung*, *reconnaissance*, *uznavanie*, or related concepts like revelation.<sup>41</sup>) In the German context especially, Hegel and Freud have left an

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<sup>39</sup> See esp. Richard Brinkmann, *Wirklichkeit und Illusion: Studien über Gehalt und Grenzen des Begriffs Realismus für die erzählende Dichtung des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1977).

<sup>40</sup> The Fontane scholarship has paved the way for media historical approaches to poetic realism. See esp. Petra Spies, "Original Compiler: Notation as Textual Practice in Theodor Fontane" (Doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 2012); Rudolf Helmstetter, *Die Geburt des Realismus aus dem Dunst des Familienblattes: Fontane und die öffentlichkeitsgeschichtlichen Rahmenbedingungen des Poetischen Realismus* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998). For other important media historical contributions to the study of the nineteenth century, see Daniela Gretz, ed., *Medialer Realismus* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2011); Manuela Günter, *Im Vorhof der Kunst: Mediengeschichte der Literatur im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Cave provides a more comprehensive list of translations. See Cave, *Recognitions*, 5. I attempt to limit the scope of the term whenever possible but still allow for some degree of conceptual flexibility when examining its various iterations in each author's oeuvre. In general, I use the terms "anagnorisis," "recognition," and "wiedererkennen" interchangeably, but limit my use of the Greek to specifically Aristotelean renderings. The specific nuances that the individual authors imbue the term with are noted in the respective chapters. The association of recognition and revelation is present already in the *Odyssey*. Murnaghan for instance, makes note of "the similarity between the scenes in which Odysseus sheds his disguise and reveals himself and scenes of divine epiphany." Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 12–13.

indelible mark on these terms and exert an unavoidable influence on the modern critic's perspective. The point is not to provide a strictly Aristotelean account of recognition, nor is it to disavow entirely its modern resonances. But by attending carefully to how the realists deploy the operation, by taking seriously their aesthetic and poetic concerns, it becomes possible to gain a better understanding of its nineteenth-century function.

### **REALIST READING**

One of the reasons this study focuses on scenes of reading and recognition is to clarify an imprecision present already in Aristotle, namely that epic and dramatic recognition are essentially the same.<sup>42</sup> This study does not account decisively for the different forms the operation might assume in these genres, but rather it illustrates the degree to which media can condition recognition. Dramatic recognition takes place within the space of a theater – or is envisioned to do so – and the spectator can view characters as they experience recognition. Prosaic recognition, by contrast, is mediated not by the stage but by the page. As vivid as the narration might be, the characters will never be physically present, and the reader can only ever imagine the depicted operation of recognition. In other words, Aristotle's recommendation that the poet imagine a piece's performance runs up against an obvious generic limitation. However, it is possible to circumvent this limitation and specify this level of recognition in prose by focusing on *scenes of reading*, where characters are engaged in the same activity as the extradiegetic reader.<sup>43</sup> The characters are not made manifest, but their actions are. Thus, reading

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<sup>42</sup> Aristotle explicates tragic recognition with examples taken from epic, and for all his claims that tragic effects rely on plot-structure, rather than spectacle, he devotes considerable space to discussing theatrical media. See here Halliwell's commentary in Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Stephen Halliwell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 97–98.

<sup>43</sup> A brief terminological note: I discuss throughout scenes of reading, by which I mean simply those scenes in which characters apprehend or engage with printed or written text. In realism

and recognition occur on two levels simultaneously, thereby engendering multiple (poetic) reality effects: the intradiegetic reader perceives the congruence between their life and art, and the extradiegetic reader perceives the congruence of literary and extra-literary reality. In other words, in reading about readers confronting the life/art distinction, the extradiegetic realist reader comes to reflect upon the ways he or she conceives of this distinction.<sup>44</sup> In short, such scenes neatly fuse all three levels of recognition and open up new perspectives on Aristotle.

There are also historical reasons for focusing on the operation of readerly recognition: the unprecedented proliferation of readers and reading material in the nineteenth century. Due to developments in print technology and improved means of distribution, literature was produced

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especially, where depictions of visual media abound, the act of reading often intersects with the apprehension of other media, most frequently paintings. Moreover, the fact that many realist texts were pre-published in illustrated periodicals means that the act of reception was from the outset often already linked to both reading and viewing. However, I am not suggesting that reading and viewing are identical processes. My interest lies primarily in the way the mode of apprehension is translated in linguistic form to the extradiegetic reader. It is the depicted act of reading that implicates the extradiegetic reader in the plot. While the individual chapters indeed consider relevant instances of viewing, these discussions are in the service of elucidating the realist reading process.

<sup>44</sup> In her study on Gottfried Keller, Gail Hart proposes a similar type of absorptive/distanciatory reading. “The (real) reader of these books about books encounters something of a mirror image, not of reality, as Uwe Japp points out, but of himself: ‘Das Buch wird auf komplexe Weise zum Spiegel, nicht der Welt, sondern des Lesers selbst.’ It follows from Japp’s observation that the spectacle of fictional reading has a specific effect on the reading of fiction, that of ‘distancing’ the reader by reinforcing his consciousness of the ‘untruth’ of fiction – a product of its simultaneous resemblance to and noncorrespondence with ‘reality.’ This distancing function of the refracted mirror image works to neutralize any potentially seductive features of the fiction itself (by placing it in a category distinct from ‘real’ experience) and should block any attempts at stepping through the looking glass.” While I am using some of the same terminology to describe readerly recognition, I am less concerned with fictionality than I am with the poetic means of translating reality into literature. Gail K. Hart, *Readers and Their Fictions in the Novels and Novellas of Gottfried Keller* (Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 4–5; Uwe Japp, “Das Buch im Buch: Eine Figur des literarischen Hermetismus,” *Neue Rundschau* 86, no. 4 (1975): 658.

and consumed by a much broader range of the populace.<sup>45</sup> Female readership in particular increased enormously during the century, with illustrated *Familienblätter* finding particular resonance.<sup>46</sup> Literacy rates skyrocketed: rough estimates (which obscure the huge gaps between urban and rural areas) put the literacy rate in central Europe at 15% in 1770 and 75% in 1870.<sup>47</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the literary marketplace became a subject in its own right in nineteenth-century literature. Thus, clarifying the relationship between reading and recognition thus offers new insights into the nineteenth-century media landscape.<sup>48</sup>

### ABSORPTION AND (ANTI-)THEATRICALITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

While this project exclusively considers prosaic recognition, a brief excursus into theatrical discourse helps to situate historically poetic realist recognition. This is not to deemphasize the medial specificity of recognition, but rather to draw out some of the historically and cross-generically stable features of the operation. The first of these features is defamiliarization, which already plays a central role in epic and tragic tales of *nostos*. The

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<sup>45</sup> For an overview of these changes, see Helmstetter, *Die Geburt des Realismus*, 47–65; Lynne Tatlock, “Introduction: The Book Trade and ‘Reading Nation’ in the Long Nineteenth Century,” in *Publishing Culture and the “Reading Nation”: German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Rochester: Camden House, 2010), 4–11.

<sup>46</sup> See Helmstetter, *Die Geburt des Realismus*, 76–77.

<sup>47</sup> Rudolf Schenda, *Volk ohne Buch: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der populären Lesestoffe 1770-1910* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1970), 444. Schenda makes note of the urban/rural divide and is careful to note that these are only rough, optimistic estimates. “Das sind nur abgerundete und optimale Zahlen, und sie bedeuten nicht, daß ein solcher Prozentsatz der Bevölkerung auch wirklich las” (445).

<sup>48</sup> Media historical accounts of the nineteenth century, which chart the emergence of poetic realism alongside the growth of the periodical industry, have drawn attention to the medially conditioned ways in which realist authors depicted reality within their works. The Fontane scholarship in particular has shown the extent to which writing and reading practices responded to the demands of the nineteenth-century literary marketplace. Yet recognition has received minimal attention in the realist context. See esp. Spies, “Original Compiler”; Helmstetter, *Die Geburt des Realismus*.

vocabulary choice here is of course deliberate, but one cannot help but be reminded of the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*, which worked against the mode of *Einfühlung* promoted by Lessing. Rather than passively identifying with the characters, the spectators would be spurred to action. “Die neuen Verfremdungen sollten nur den gesellschaftlich beeinflussbaren Vorgängen den Stempel des Vertrauten wegnehmen, der sie heute vor dem Eingriff bewahrt.”<sup>49</sup> Just as the *Odyssey* posits recognition as inseparable from defamiliarization, so, too, does Brechtian theater. “Die Vorgänge sind also dem Zuschauer zunächst in ihrer Erstaunlichkeit und Befremdlichkeit zu übermitteln. Dies ist nötig, damit sie nach ihrer beherrschbaren Seite hin vorgestellt werden, aus *bekanntem* zu *erkanntem* werden können.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, the *V-Effekt* disrupts the automatic, routinized perception of the familiar, thus provoking an altogether different type of recognition that stimulates in the viewer a heightened, reflective awareness.<sup>51</sup>

Lessing is the key intermediary within this long trajectory from *nostos* dramas and epics to Brecht’s epic theater. Lessing’s *Mitleid*, a rendering of Aristotle’s *eleos*<sup>52</sup> that was influenced by Diderot’s theater of the fourth wall, rests upon an identification between spectator and character. The tragic affects are reorganized, with fear (for Lessing no longer *Schrecken*, but

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<sup>49</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “Kleines Organon für das Theater,” in *Schriften 3: Schriften 1942-1956*, ed. Barbara Wallburg, vol. 23, Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe (Berlin/Weimar; Frankfurt a.M.: Aufbau-Verlag; Suhrkamp Verlag, 1993), 81.

<sup>50</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “Thesen über die Aufgabe der Einfühlung in den theatralischen Künsten,” in *Schriften 2: Schriften 1933-1942*, ed. Inge Gellert and Werner Hecht, vol. 22.1, Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe (Berlin/Weimar; Frankfurt a.M.: Aufbau-Verlag; Suhrkamp Verlag, 1993), 176. Emphasis added. Roman Jakobson would describe this same process of defamiliarization in his seminal essay “On Realism in Art,” which I discuss in Chapter One.

<sup>51</sup> For a more on distanciation and anagnorisis in reception-oriented theory, see Geulen, “Anagnorisis statt Identifikation (Raabes *Altershausen*),” esp. 430-34.

<sup>52</sup> See Thomas Martinec, “The Boundaries of *Mitleidsdramaturgie*: Some Clarifications Concerning Lessing’s Concept of ‘Mitleid,’” *Modern Language Review* 101 (2006): 751–54.

*Furcht*) subsumed under compassion, or *Mitleid*.<sup>53</sup> “Er [Aristoteles] glaubte nemlich, daß das Übel, welches der Gegenstand unsers Mitleidens werden solle, notwendig von der Beschaffenheit sein müsse, daß wir es auch für uns selbst, oder für eines von den Unsrigen, zu befürchten hätten. Wo diese Furcht nicht sei, könne auch kein Mitleiden Statt finden.”<sup>54</sup>

Bourgeois tragedy rests upon this identification, and dramatic content was adjusted to make such identification possible in the first place.<sup>55</sup> The focus on identification and absorption introduced a whole range of medial aporias, ultimately resulting in anti-theatrical drama.<sup>56</sup>

What realist prose shares with Enlightenment theater is a fraught relationship with its own mediality. That is, in attempting to sustain an illusion (of reality, of theatricality), both end

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<sup>53</sup> “Er [Aristoteles] spricht von Mitleid und Furcht, nicht von Mitleid und Schrecken; und seine Furcht ist durchaus nicht die Furcht, welche uns das bevorstehende Übel eines andern, für diesen andern, erweckt, sondern es ist die Furcht, welche aus unserer Ähnlichkeit mit der leidenden Person für uns selbst entspringt; es ist die Furcht, daß die Unglücksfälle, die wir über diese verhänget sehen, uns selbst treffen können; es ist die Furcht, daß wir der bemitleidete Gegenstand selbst werden können. Mit einem Worte: diese Furcht ist das auf uns selbst bezogene Mitleid.” Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, “Hamburgische Dramaturgie,” in *Werke 1767-1769*, ed. Klaus Bohnen, vol. 6, *Werke und Briefe* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 556–57.

“Aus dieser Gleichheit entstehe die Furcht, daß unser Schicksal gar leicht dem seinigen ebenso ähnlich werden könne, als wir ihm zu sein uns selbst fühlen: und diese Furcht sei es, welche das Mitleid gleichsam zur Reife bringe.” Lessing, 559.

<sup>54</sup> Lessing, “Hamburgische Dramaturgie,” 558.

<sup>55</sup> “Lessing insists on the actor’s (and the playwright’s) need to tone down extreme violence, to avoid abrupt shocks and unmotivated turns and to hold on to a psychologically and pragmatically plausible continuity of action conducive to the spectator’s sympathetic identification. [...] Mostly – and correctly – seen as a result of Lessing’s ‘bourgeois leanings’, this norm of the dramatic character as being ‘one of us’ (*mit uns von gleichem Schrot und Korne*, as the often-cited phrase goes, cf. no. 75) must also be judged as a consequence of the spectatorial arrangement inherent in the social concept of sympathy.” Helmut J. Schneider, “Humanity’s Imaginary Body: The Concepts of Empathy and Sympathy and the New Theater Experience in the 18th Century,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 82, no. 3 (2008): 390.

<sup>56</sup> See on this point Christopher Wild, *Theater der Keuschheit – Keuschheit des Theaters: Zu einer Geschichte der (Anti-)Theatralität von Gryphius bis Kleist* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2003).

up emphasizing the medial constructedness of the recipient's absorption (via the text, via the theater).<sup>57</sup> That is, the inherent contradiction within poetic realism operates analogously to the anti-theatrical theater of the Enlightenment. Further, the ruptures in the realist illusion – the inadvertent *V-Effekte* of realism – do not inhibit *Einfühlung* in the way Brecht would later propose. Rather, they simply make apparent that the empathic, identificatory response is a result of a specific medial configuration.

Like the *V-Effekt*, recognition betrays the poetic mechanisms by which the realist illusion is otherwise sustained. But if the *V-Effekt* is partly contingent upon theatricality (e.g. staging, acting, etc.), the poetic realist equivalent is contingent upon poeticity. To whatever extent *Verklärung* might be at work, the events in the diegesis are things that could really happen in the reader's world, and the characters are people who would similarly be at home in the extradiegetic reality. Yet the poetic character of German realism manages to affirm the boundaries between life and art that it ostensibly seeks to overcome. The point is to make the reader feel the extent to which the overlap between reality and the diegesis *is a product of the reading process*. The constructed nature of the absorption is thus never out of view.

## NINETEENTH-CENTURY KNOWING

The types of knowledge generated by Lessing or Brecht's theaters differ starkly from the that promulgated by poetic realist texts, and this project traces the specifically nineteenth-century ways in which knowing occurs and the ways in which this knowledge is co-constituted by literary works. Though not a study on the poetics of knowledge per se, the chapters, in reconstructing the ways in which poetic realism articulates its own epistemological status, draw

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<sup>57</sup> I am drawing this critical vocabulary from Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

from contemporaneous scientific and aesthetic discourses.<sup>58</sup> The goal is not to show *that* literature took up extra-literary discourses, but rather to show that literature was invested in articulating knowledge in a way that both complemented and expanded upon other modes of knowledge production.

Simply put, the way in which the individual is understood to perceive reality shifted profoundly during this century. It was not only realist literature that tackled the problem of subjectivity and objectivity, but also science and aesthetics as well. This was, after all, the century that saw the very emergence of scientific objectivity.<sup>59</sup> Central to this study are the developments in optics that increasingly emphasized the *subjectivity* of visual perception. No longer was the observer able to view objects as distinct from him- or herself; instead, the observer's body was understood actively to produce visual sensation.<sup>60</sup> A new branch of aesthetic theory, so-called empathy aesthetics [*Einfühlungsästhetik*], that developed out of this discourse, highlighted the ways in which aesthetic pleasure and, by extension, mimesis itself, were indebted to subjective, corporeal experience.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Methodologically, this study is informed by Joseph Vogl's work on the poetology of knowledge. See, for example Joseph Vogl, ed., "Einleitung," in *Poetologien des Wissens um 1800* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999), 7–16.

<sup>59</sup> See here Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity*, First paperback edition (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> See here Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990).

<sup>61</sup> Philip Ajouri makes a passing association between realist epistemology and empathy aesthetics. "Richard Brinkmann hatte bereits 1958 festgestellt, daß im Realismus 'die tatsächliche Wirklichkeit erst recht eigentlich problematisch geworden ist' und eine 'Subjektivierung der Wirklichkeit' nach sich zieht. Dieser Vorgang läßt sich also auch im Bereich der Ästhetik festmachen. Dies wird an der Entwicklung des Naturschönen als objektiver Kategorie hin zur Einfühlungsästhetik, in der Schönheit vom Subjekt ausgeht, hinlänglich deutlich." Philip Ajouri, *Erzählen nach Darwin: Die Krise der Teleologie im literarischen Realismus; Friedrich Theodor Vischer und Gottfried Keller* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2007), 178.

Conceptions of knowledge were likewise transformed by scientific developments.

Zeynep Çelik Alexander argues that a distinct type of knowledge, what she terms “kinaesthetic knowing,” assumed prominence in the nineteenth century. One of the key thinkers in this tradition was Hermann von Helmholtz, who, in one of his *Populäre wissenschaftliche Vorträge*, drew a key distinction between *Wissen* and *Kennen*:

Neben dem Wissen, welches mit Begriffen arbeitet, und deshalb des Ausdrucks in Worten fähig ist, besteht noch ein anderes Gebiet der Vorstellungsfähigkeit, welches nur sinnliche Eindrücke combinirt, die des unmittelbaren Ausdrucks durch Worte nicht fähig sind. Wir nennen es im Deutschen das *Kennen*. Wir kennen einen Menschen, einen Weg, eine Speise, eine riechende Substanz, *das heisst wir haben diese Objecte gesehen, geschmeckt oder gerochen, halten diesen sinnlichen Eindruck im Gedächtniss fest und werden ihn wieder erkennen, wenn er sich wiederholt, ohne dass wir im Stande wären uns oder anderen eine Beschreibung davon in Worten zu geben*. Dessen ungeachtet ist es klar, dass dieses *Kennen* den allerhöchsten Grad von Bestimmtheit und Sicherheit haben kann, und in dieser Beziehung hinter keinem in Worten ausdrückbaren Wissen zurücksteht. *Aber es ist nicht direct mittheilbar, wenn nicht die betreffenden Objecte zur Stelle geschafft, oder deren Eindruck anderweitig nachgeahmt werden kann, wie zum Beispiel für einen Menschen durch sein Portrait.*<sup>62</sup>

As Çelik Alexander shows, Helmholtz argues that the scientific camps represented by Newton, on the one hand, and Goethe, on the other, were not as incompatible as they might appear.

Rather, they follow “competing epistemic principles,” with Newton seeking to “*know about*” [*Wissen*] and Goethe seeking to “*know*” [*Kennen*].<sup>63</sup> Beyond this historical synthesis,

Helmholtz’s distinction between these types of knowledge is helpful in understanding the epistemological consequences of recognition in the nineteenth century. If *Wissen* relies upon

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<sup>62</sup> Hermann von Helmholtz, “Die neueren Fortschritte in der Theorie des Sehens,” in *Populäre wissenschaftliche Vorträge*, 2. Auflage, vol. 2 (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1876), 92–93, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433069077596>. Emphasis via *Sperrung* in original; emphasis via italics added. Quoted in Zeynep Çelik Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing: Aesthetics, Epistemology, Modern Design* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 29, 31.

<sup>63</sup> Çelik Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, 29.

concepts and is expressible in language, *Kennen* is corporeal and is somehow beyond language.<sup>64</sup> As will be borne out by the following chapters, realist recognition manifests itself precisely as an inexpressible phenomenon, not integrable into the realist text. Marked by dashes in a way reminiscent of Kleist's *Die Marquise von O*, or depicted as an event which exceeds the characters' capacity for linguistic expression, realist recognition firmly aligns itself with kinesthetic knowledge.

But the link between *Kennen* and *Wiedererkennen* is, in fact, already present in Helmholtz. In fact, *Kennen* is implicitly always a *Wiedererkennen*: One cannot know something one senses for the first time, and it is the repetition of the sensory impression that makes possible *Kennen/Wiedererkennen*. What is more, this type of knowing remains inexpressible *unless* the object in question is made available or represented mimetically ("wenn nicht die betreffenden Objecte zur Stelle geschafft, oder deren Eindruck anderweitig nachgeahmt werden kann, wie zum Beispiel für einen Menschen durch sein Portrait"). Thus, a faithful representation of an object (faithful in the sense that it is capable of generating the same impression of the original) is uniquely poised to *re-duplicate* this form of knowing. These are, of course, the same terms in which Aristotle had articulated the relationship between recognition and mimesis. But

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<sup>64</sup> In her study on Stifter, Brodersen likewise takes up Helmholtz's notion of *Kennen*, examining it within the context of his sign theory of perception. Her overarching argument relates to the linguistic interpretation of bodily sensation. "Erst in der Sprache kann das als gesetzmäßig und real wahrgenommene Wissen über Welt gesichert werden [...] von wo aus es dem wahrnehmenden Subjekt wieder als Vorlage ('Wissensfolie') für weitere Wahrnehmungsakte zur Verfügung steht." My own account has a different emphasis. I am not concerned with gradual, processual knowing (e.g. *Bildung*), and instead focus on the instantaneous moments of *Wiedererkennen/Kennen* and their significance for poetic realism on the whole. Silke Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne': Adalbert Stifters Poetik der Wahrnehmung" (Doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2008), 79.

Helmholtz's formulation, which emphasizes the corporeal of recognition, updates the concept for the nineteenth century.

Attending to the corporeal underpinnings of realist recognition offers new insights into the sensory shifts associated with nineteenth-century literature. Reading practices, once oral, became silent and visual.<sup>65</sup> In media historical terms, one can also speak here of the transition from the *Aufschreibesystem* around 1800, which was characterized by the orality of alphabetization and literary production as genial translation from the *Muttermund*, to the *Aufschreibesystem* around 1900, which conceived of language in terms of materiality.<sup>66</sup> This medial and discursive shift, evident in the texts under consideration here, is fundamental to realist recognition scenes. Realist texts rely on predominantly visual metaphors, but this is far from the only sensory domain implicated in these narratives. While some of the narratives deal more or less explicitly with the shift from orality to print, the earlier examples are concerned with sound, touch, and movement in space, while the later examples deal more narrowly with the latter two domains. As the shift from the oral to the written occurs, the realists become preoccupied with the sensory impact of their texts. Their frequent references to artifacts like paintings reflect the visual, rather than acoustic reception of their works, while the metaphorical repertoire of touch and movement indicates an attempt to speak not to some imaginary readership, but to the real reader in the real world. Recognition, then, reflects major shifts in both

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<sup>65</sup> Holub shows that one of the earliest pronouncements of realism, namely the so-called "Kunstgespräch" in Georg Büchner's *Lenz*, illustrates this transition. "The confounding of the visual, the auditory, and the literary in the *Kunstgespräch* is thus symptomatic for the problems of an incipient realism. Lenz's formulation reveals a tension between two traditions, neither of which is fully able to account for the complexities of the written word. Both traditions attempt to bring literature to life by an appeal to the senses. The earlier views count on literature to have an effect as the result of auditory stimulation; the rising nineteenth-century aesthetic tends to rely on the reproduction of something visual." Holub, *Reflections of Realism*, 47.

<sup>66</sup> Friedrich A. Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1985).

reading techniques and in the underlying sensory perceptual modes one too often assumes to be self-evident.

## CHAPTERS

Given the utter ubiquity of anagnorisis, a study on recognition in poetic realism could conceivably pick and choose from any number of authors and texts. The reasons for assembling the present corpus are both methodological and pragmatic. The primary texts under consideration in this study span the bulk of poetic realism. The chapters proceed roughly chronologically, beginning with a selection of Stifter's works from 1842-1868, continuing with a selection of Keller's works from 1874-1881, and concluding with brief remarks on two of Wilhelm Raabe's works from 1888 and 1902. The standard caveats about the imprecisions of periodization naturally apply, but this study locates with Stifter the beginnings of poetic realism in his response to romanticism, treats Keller's works as representatively realist, and, following the lead of other scholarship, highlights with Raabe the transition from realism to modernism. Furthermore, each of these authors hails from a different German-speaking land. While geopolitical context is not a focus of this study, it nevertheless exerts influence on the authors' particular forms of poetic realism, not least because of their respective relationships to religion or political engagement (or lack thereof), or the publishing venues that stood open to them. The point is not to elide these differences, but instead to highlight the common features that make poetic realism discernible as such.

A detailed comparison of Stifter and Keller is particularly fruitful from a philological perspective. The older edition of Stifter's collected works – the so-called Prague-Reichenberg edition (PRA) – is lacking in some areas. For instance, it does not reproduce all of the versions of all of the texts. The new historical-critical edition (HKG), which does just this and draws on

additional manuscripts and archival documents, is only partially complete.<sup>67</sup> Stifter's *Nachlass* is spread across libraries in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic, and while some facsimiles are available in print form or online, these materials are difficult to access, particularly for scholars based outside of Europe. This study thus does important philological work by reproducing and engaging with these materials. By contrast, the historical-critical edition of Keller's works (HKKA) is complete and accessible in both print and digital form. While it lacks the "Sachkommentar" of other editions, the HKKA includes extensive documentation on the various versions of Keller's works.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the wealth of facsimiles and digital reproductions are enormously fruitful for scholars, and this study takes advantage of this important editorial work.

Each half of the dissertation emphasizes one side of the poetic realist dialectic. Part I focuses on Stifter's recognition scenes, which reflect new modes of perceiving *reality*. Chapter One begins with two of his early works: "Abdias" [1842/1847] and the essay "Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842," which together lay out the beginnings of his realist poetics and aesthetics. The chapter takes as a starting point Stifter's reception in "Abdias" of the Enlightenment thought experiment known as Molyneux's Problem, which asked whether a formerly blind person able to differentiate two objects via touch would be able to recognize them visually upon being made to see. Successful recognition in this context is contingent upon sensory substitution, a process whereby one sense can assume the role of another. The recognition scenes in "Abdias" make clear that Stifter, like Molyneux, considered such

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<sup>67</sup> For an overview of these two editions, see Jens Stüben, "Stifter-Editionen," in *Editionen zu deutschsprachigen Autoren als Spiegel der Editions-geschichte*, ed. Rüdiger Nutt-Kofoth and Bodo Plachta (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2005), 403–31.

<sup>68</sup> For more on the editorial principles, see HKKA 23:13-101.

substitution an impossibility. Furthermore, the recognition scenes defamiliarize prominent romantic motifs, thus enabling Stifter to articulate an early realist aesthetics. While “Abdias” relies on an Enlightenment model of recognition to tackle primarily aesthetic questions, “Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842” draws on Enlightenment media to address poetic questions. Stifter again evokes the paradigm of sensory substitution to describe his knowledge and experience of the total solar eclipse. Initially separating various realms of knowledge and experience (science/vision vs. affect/audition), he finally proposes that these two spheres be combined, likening the potential effect to the “visual music” produced on a bizarre eighteenth-century invention known as the ocular harpsichord.

Chapter Two traces the effect this paradigm of recognition has on the reading and writing practices both depicted and undertaken by Stifter. The chapter first takes up the methods of collecting (i.e. *lesen* in its original sense) described in the famous preface to *Bunte Steine* [1852]. As is widely acknowledged, Stifter’s analogy between collecting in the scientific and moral realms notably lapses into a series of contradictions. However, viewing the analogy not in terms of substitution, but in terms of fusion, reveals a method of recognition that *unites* the two realms. The chapter then turns to two stories from the earlier *Studien* collection: “Die Narrenburg” (1842/1844) and “Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters” (1841-42/1847/1864/1867). “Die Narrenburg” features a prominent recognition scene that heralds the protagonist’s initiation into a familial reading and writing program. Not only do the depicted textual practices obey the methodological prescriptions from the later preface to *Bunte Steine*, but the narrative proposes a corporeal mode of readerly recognition that is only latent within the preface. “Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters” treats these reading methods in greater detail, illustrating how the protagonist assembles a narrative from the individual, case-like texts authored by his grandfather. The frame

narrative posits a mode of reading contingent upon kinaesthesia, and, via its spatial metaphors, implicates the extradiegetic reader in the same type of kinaesthetic knowing. The chapter concludes by reconstructing Stifter's own writing and editing practices, which themselves promote the same type of corporeal reading as his narrative prose.

Part II turns to Keller's recognition scenes, which are preoccupied with *poetic* tradition. Chapter Three examines his 1881 novella cycle *Das Sinngedicht*, for which he began preliminary work in the 1850s. Focusing on the frame narrative and one embedded narrative – “Die Geisterseher” –, it considers the excessive layers of literary mediation that inform how the characters behave in the(ir) real world. The cycle is based on the Pygmalion and Galatea myth – as transmitted by a Logau aphorism in the Lachmann edition of Lessing's works – and the chapter argues that Keller's distinctly literary realism is indebted to the mode of recognition inherent to Enlightenment renderings of the Pygmalion myth, which additionally emphasized the concatenation of multiple sensory and medial registers. The recognition scenes, which bring together both literary and contemporaneous scientific discourses, thus obey a logic of concatenation not unlike that found in Stifter's works. Keller's realism is decidedly more poetic than Stifter's, which is to say that his texts are defined more by their intertextuality than on their references to the real world. “Die Geisterseher,” which alludes to countless other works – most prominently Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* – is emblematic of this tendency and demonstrates that recognition is the moment in which one becomes cognizant of the fusion of life and literary tradition.

Chapter Four turns to the 1874 novella “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” from the second volume of *Die Leute von Seldwyla*. A satirical (*Sünden-*)*Fallgeschichte* about the nineteenth-century literary world, the novella draws on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anthropological

discourse and the associated genre of the case study to present recognition as a mode of self-knowledge that is indebted to the act of reading. The recognition scenes in this novella resemble those in *Das Sinngedicht*, likewise representing the momentary cognizance of the overlap between life and art. As in *Das Sinngedicht*, “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” contains the same oscillatory movement between the recognition of reality and the recognition of poeticity. But “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” goes a step further by tying recognition to the specific concerns of the nineteenth-century literary marketplace. The chapter also examines a series of doodles and a mutilated painting to show that the structural and motivic repertoire of recognition permeated even Keller’s most personal works.

The Coda contextualizes the central findings from the study from the vantage point of the period’s end. Following Eva Geulen’s analysis of Raabe’s 1902 *Altershausen*, in which she identifies the “Selbstrückblick” as a form of recognition that all but vanished at the end of the nineteenth century, this section highlights via a brief reading of the 1888 *Das Odfeld* the significance of recognition’s wane for poetic realism.

## Part I | Adalbert Stifter

1.  
Genealogies of Recognition  
“Abdias” and “Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842”

Poetic realism begins with a lightning strike. Or rather, with the repetition of a lightning strike. Adalbert Stifter’s 1842/1847<sup>69</sup> novella “Abdias” follows the eponymous protagonist as he comes of age in a Jewish enclave in the North African desert, immigrates to Europe, and settles in a rural Bohemian village with his congenitally blind daughter, Ditha. After being struck by lightning, Ditha miraculously gains the sense of sight and gradually refamiliarizes herself with her surrounding environment. Yet the effects of her blindness linger. She never fully adapts to her new way of being and is unable to extricate herself fully from the realm of fantasy and imagination that had reigned in her early years. With her poetic speech and unusual fondness for blue flowers, Ditha functions as an embodiment of romanticism in this post-romantic novella. When the text closes with Ditha’s brutal death via a second errant lightning strike, the reader is left questioning both the reason for the violence and the purpose of such a heavy-handed allegory. “[W]arum nun dieses?” is a question the reader poses not only about the various *Schicksalsschläge* in Abdias’ life (HKG 1,5:239), but also about the literary specificity of this work.<sup>70</sup> Why is such an overt rejection of romanticism necessary, and what alternative does Stifter propose instead?

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<sup>69</sup> The first version appeared at the end of 1842 in an issue of the *Österreichischer Novellen-Almanach* dated 1843. The second version appeared in 1847 in volume four of the *Studien* collection.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Utz makes a similar gesture: “Der Hiob-Frage wird nun zur Meta-Frage der Interpretation, die der Text an seinen Leser weitergibt.” Peter Utz, “Die Lücken, die jetzt sind’ – Visualität und Blindheit in den beiden Fassungen von Stifters *Abdias*,” in *Blindheit in Literatur und Ästhetik, 1750-1850*, ed. Sabine Eickenrodt (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012), 269.

Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that the novella responds both to romanticism and to one of the Enlightenment's most famous epistemological debates concerning recognition.<sup>71</sup> In his 1689 *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke took up a question first proposed by William Molyneux: If a congenitally blind man were able to differentiate a cube and a sphere by touch, would he, upon gaining the sense of sight, be able to distinguish the two objects merely by looking at them?<sup>72</sup> Stated differently: could the same object be recognized via a different sensory register? Locke answered in the negative, and his conjecture was confirmed by the results of the first cataract surgery, performed by William Cheselden in 1728. As reported at the time, the newly sighted patient "knew not the Shape of any Thing, nor any one Thing from another, however different in Shape, or Magnitude; but upon being told what Things were, whose Form he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe, *that he might know them again.*"<sup>73</sup> Molyneux's Problem was debated intensely as philosophers sought to understand the acquisition or innateness of ideas, and while these discussions took sensory perception as a starting point, what was truly at issue was a linguistic question.<sup>74</sup> Assuming vision could be restored without incident, would one be able to give name

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<sup>71</sup> Wilhelm Kühlmann and Peter Utz both develop this connection. While I draw on their work, my approach differs by focusing on the poetic realist ends to which Stifter adopts the experiment and on the role of vision relative to the other senses. Wilhelm Kühlmann, "Von Diderot bis Stifter: Das Experiment aufklärerischer Anthropologie in Stifters Novelle 'Abdias,'" in *Adalbert Stifter: Dichter und Maler, Denkmalpfleger und Schulmann; Neue Zugänge zu seinem Werk*, ed. Hartmut Laufhütte and Karl Möseneder (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996), 395–409; Utz, "Die Lücken, die jetzt sind."

<sup>72</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Book II, Chapter IX, §8.

<sup>73</sup> William Cheselden, "An Account of Some Observations made by a young Gentleman, who was born blind, or lost his Sight so early, that he had no Remembrance of ever having seen, and was couch'd between 13 and 14 Years of Age," *Philosophical Transactions* 35 (1727/1728): 448. Emphasis added.

<sup>74</sup> Joachim Gessinger, *Auge und Ohr: Studien zur Erforschung der Sprache am Menschen 1700-1850* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), 12. "Die visuell wahrgenommene Ungleichheit der Form (als

to something one had touched, but never before seen? Would one recognize reality – and be able to articulate this fact –, or would one have to come to “know again” the surrounding world?

The import of Molyneux’s Problem for realism is perhaps even more obvious than Stifter’s allegorical murder of romanticism. The question governing the thought experiment, namely how one knows reality (or rather, comes to know it *again*), is of course the same question at the heart of realist literature. At stake is the *repeated* knowledge of reality via the literary text. “Abdias,” an early realist text still grappling with the legacy of romanticism, is thus exceptionally well-suited for an inquiry into the birth of the period. But “Abdias” alone gives only a partial view of this nascent literary movement. The novella is concerned above all with the perception of reality, with *aisthesis*, and offers only minimal insight – at the level of its own construction – into the literary transformation of reality, i.e. the *poietic* dimension of poetic realism. But another text written in 1842 – an essay published in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* entitled “Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842” – offers an account of this side of the realism problem.

In the essay, Stifter describes the total solar eclipse visible over Vienna on July 8, 1842. He depicts the darkened sky and the strange light effects in apocalyptic terms, drawing again on romantic interlocutors as he tries to represent the staggering – and staggeringly brief – transformation of reality. He closes the essay by musing upon the medial representation of eclipse via an eighteenth-century technology associated not with blindness, but with deafness. While Enlightenment philosophers had co-opted the newly sighted in their treatises on language, epistemology, and sensory perception, the mid-eighteenth century saw a shift in emphasis. If the

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syntagmatische Form der Anschauung) *und* die begriffliche, klassifizierende Identifikation (als paradigmatische Denkform) erst machten es dem Blinden möglich, zu sagen, was er sieht.”

blind had hitherto featured prominently in such texts, the growing interest in the other senses, particularly hearing and touch,<sup>75</sup> called into question the traditional hierarchy of the senses and ushered in the so-called “deaf-mute” as a complimentary “Gedankenfigur.”<sup>76</sup> While Stifter’s essay is not concerned directly with recognition, it addresses the poetic consequences of Stifter’s literary recognition scenes, both in “Abdias” and in his later works. As a pair, then, “Abdias” and the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay reflect intertwined debates about sensory perceptual discourse, indicating the role of the body in the perception and artistic transformation of reality, in *aisthesis* and *poiesis*. By reading these two texts together, this chapter explicates the origins of Stifter’s realism and the discursive history from which it emerges.

This chapter’s overarching claim is that Stifter’s repetition of Enlightenment topoi – both recognition and the underlying sensory perceptual discourse – serves as the initial articulation of his realist program. Following Eric Downing, realism is conceived of here in terms of repetition: of reality or of older discursive systems, along with the internal tensions and contradictions therein.<sup>77</sup> What “Abdias” and the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay illustrate is how inextricably intertwined this operative definition of realism is with recognition. Stifter does not merely repeat prior discourses of recognition; rather, he transforms older models in order to defamiliarize the

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<sup>75</sup> For an overview of the reception of Molyneux’s Problem and of the relationship of vision to the other senses, see Peter Utz, *Das Auge und das Ohr im Text: Literarische Sinneswahrnehmung in der Goethezeit* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1990), 19–25.

<sup>76</sup> Gessinger, *Auge und Ohr*, xvi–xviii. The tradition of ignoring the lived experiences of the disabled in various thought experiments is, unfortunately, a long one. For a recent critical approach to this legacy, see Georgina Kleege, “Blindness and Visual Culture: An Eyewitness Account,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 522–30.

<sup>77</sup> Downing, *Double Exposures*, 13. “It is, then, to no small extent the attempt to restore an awareness of the dual nature of poetic realism that motivates this study: to see realism not only as grounded in a repetition or redundancy of the dominant discourse, but also in its resistance; to recall the self-conscious, somewhat self-deconstructive dimension that is intrinsic to realism, and almost inseparable from what we value as *literary* realism.”

very operation of recognition, both depicting and provoking in his readers a new view of reality. What is significant in these texts is not merely the repetition of knowledge (“Abdias”) and its medial transformation (the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay), but also the repetition of a whole discursive network spanning both literary and intellectual history. This chapter’s secondary claim relates to the specific import of sensory perception on Stifter’s realism. Following recent work by Silke Brodersen, it attends to Stifter’s reception of scientific discourse.<sup>78</sup> The focus lies, however, less in the interplay between literature and contemporaneous scientific discourse and more in the historical epistemological realm from which the scientific discourse emerges and its significance for poetic realism.

The following remarks begin by exploring several non-realist treatments of Molyneux’s Problem, so as to provide an historical scaffolding for the subsequent analysis. After identifying a basic motivic structure of recognition, the chapter turns to the realist transformation thereof in “Abdias.” The final sections examine the poetological register of the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay and analyze the medial framework to which Stifter’s conception of recognition is wedded.

#### **ARTICULATIONS OF RECOGNITION: A PRE-HISTORY**

In order fully to understand Stifter’s reception of Molyneux’s Problem in “Abdias,” it is first necessary to survey other selected treatments of the phenomenon. Stifter likely read about the thought experiment in Herder, who referenced in several texts Diderot’s *Letter on the Blind*

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<sup>78</sup> Brodersen, “Die Wirklichkeit im ‘Hohlspiegel der Sinne.’” While Brodersen traces a broad history of sensory perception in her introductory chapter, she is interested primarily in Stifter’s treatment of contemporaneous scientific discourse. Additionally, although she investigates the perception of reality, she does not consider realism as a movement, nor does she take up the operative concept of this study: recognition.

*for the Use of Those Who See* (1749).<sup>79</sup> While Diderot's *Letter on the Blind* is one of the most important eighteenth-century philosophical works on blindness, it also serves as a model for subsequent literary treatments of Molyneux's Problem, which draw attention to the affective processes accompanying recognition. In these literary renderings of Molyneux's Problem, the experiment is turned into a scene of Aristotelean anagnorisis. At stake is no longer the differentiation of a sphere from a cube, but instead the recognition of kinship relations – an especially prominent configuration of anagnorisis in Enlightenment drama<sup>80</sup> – and the resultant emotional response, akin to pity or fear.<sup>81</sup> In these literary works, too, recognition is a linguistic problem: knowledge about reality must be articulated in some way, whether to other characters or the reader.

In his *Addition to the Letter on the Blind*, Diderot describes a cataract surgery performed by Jacques Daviel. In contradistinction to the *Letter* proper, where Diderot suggests that the newly sighted would need gradually to become accustomed to visual sensation before recognition would be possible,<sup>82</sup> this addendum establishes a dramaturgy of immediate recognition.

Poor patients seeking Daviel's help were drawn to his laboratory from all the provinces of the kingdom by his charity, and his reputation also gathered there a large body of interested and learned spectators. [...] The patient was seated and his cataract removed; Daviel laid his hand upon the eyes which he had just restored to the light. An old woman,

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<sup>79</sup> An enthusiastic reader of Herder, Stifter was undoubtedly familiar with *Kritische Wällder* (1769) or *Plastik* (1778), where these discussions appeared. For more on this background, see Kühlmann, "Von Diderot bis Stifter," esp. 398-400; Utz, "Die Lücken, die jetzt sind," 261-64.

<sup>80</sup> Consider, for instance, Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* or Diderot's *The Natural Son*.

<sup>81</sup> Utz identifies familial recognition and affect (i.e. tears) as characteristic of Enlightenment renderings of Molyneux's Problem. My account expands on this work by highlighting the linguistic articulations that accompany recognition and by examining the realist rendering of this paradigm. Utz, *Das Auge und das Ohr im Text*, 29, 31.

<sup>82</sup> Denis Diderot, "Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who See," in *Diderot's Early Philosophical Works*, ed. and trans. Margaret Jourdain (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916), 134; Utz, *Das Auge und das Ohr im Text*, 21.

standing beside him, showed the liveliest interest in the success of the operation; she shook in every limb at each movement of the operator. The latter signed to her to draw near, placed her kneeling opposite the patient, and removed his hands. The patient opened his eyes, saw, and cried: ‘Oh, it is my mother!’ I have never heard a more piteous cry; I seem to hear it still. The old woman fainted, the spectators wept, and gave their money freely.<sup>83</sup>

Molyneux’s Problem is answered here in the affirmative: The cataract patient opens his eyes after the surgery and promptly recognizes his mother. The utterance “‘Oh, it is my mother!’” establishes that recognition has indeed transpired. The scene is so moving that it evokes a “piteous cry” from the mother and flowing tears and money from the other spectators. The dry philosophical problem expands here into a scene of familial recognition and affective display. Subsequent literary treatments of the newly sighted follow this model with remarkable consistency, with characters (and presumably readers, too) sobbing or barely holding back tears.<sup>84</sup>

The romantics, Peter Utz shows, modified this scene, using it to pivot to an ironic self-reflexivity and to call into question the dominance of vision relative to hearing.<sup>85</sup> This self-

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<sup>83</sup> Denis Diderot, “Addition to the Letter on the Blind,” in *Diderot’s Early Philosophical Works*, ed. and trans. Margaret Jourdain (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916), 145.

<sup>84</sup> Utz contends that cataract surgery becomes the “Urszene der Aufklärung. Dies nicht nur, weil hier die moderne, angewandte Wissenschaft dem Triumph des Auges realisiert, weil sie Licht bringt in Analogie zum ersten Schöpfungstag, einem Schöpfungsakt, den das schon sehende Publikum mit Rührungstränen feiern kann.” Utz, *Das Auge und das Ohr im Text*, 31.

<sup>85</sup> Utz, 177–84. As Utz shows, the cataract surgery in Jean Paul’s *Hesperus*, whereby the patient recognizes his doctor as his son, initially proceeds according to the Enlightenment model. “Endgültig ironisch gebrochen wird die Szene jedoch durch den Schluß des Romans, wenn man erfährt, daß der geheilte Blinde gar nicht der Vater des Arztes ist. Die Die angestrebte Doppelheilung von Auge und Familie durch die spektakuläre Szene entlarvt sich ex post als großangelegte Täuschung, der auch der so unmittelbar einbezogene Leser unterliegt: Sein Leser-Auge, so muß er feststellen, ist ebenso manipulierbar wie die poetische Fabel des ganzen Romans. / [...] Aus dem Triumph der Aufklärung, mit welchem der Roman einsetzt und von dem er sich fortschreibt, wird ein Triumph des Erzählens selbst.” (178-79). Utz identifies a similar “Selbstaufhebung des Erzählens” in Bonaventuras *Nachtwachen* (180). For more on romantic sensory perceptual discourse, see esp. pg. 197-210.

reflexivity and the emphasis on auditory sensation was not, however, restricted to romanticism, as a final example from late silent film makes clear. The point is not to suggest any kind of direct link between with Stifter, but instead to illustrate the consistency of artistic treatments of Molyneux's Problem and to show the interlinkage between recognition and media. In the final scene from Charlie Chaplin's 1931 silent film *City Lights*, a formerly blind woman recognizes Chaplin's Tramp character, whom she had met before gaining the sense of sight. Early in the film, the woman mistakenly assumes the Tramp is a millionaire, and the Tramp, after various drunken adventures with an actual millionaire he has befriended, acquires sufficient money to fund the woman's eye surgery. He lands in prison as a result, and the final scene picks up after his release (and the woman's surgery) and shows him walking down the street. He stops to pick a flower from the street, turns, and recognizes the woman (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Charles Chaplin. *City Lights*. DVD. The Criterion Collection, 2013.

The woman gives a flower and a coin to the Tramp, whom she is seeing for the first time. The moment their hands meet, she is taken aback (Figure 2, panel 1). The film cuts to a close-up of

two figures' clasped hands (Figure 2, panel 2), before highlighting their emotional responses. The woman is visibly shocked (Figure 2, panel 3), and utters a phrase analogous to that in Diderot, which is displayed on a title card: "You?" (Figure 2, panel 4). After this shot, the camera zooms in slightly.<sup>86</sup> The penultimate shot shows the woman struggling to hold back tears (Figure 3, panel 1), and the film closes with a shot of the Tramp (Figure 3, panel 2), smiling joyously as his eyes, too, well up with tears.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> For an overview of the shots forming the final sequence, see Charles Maland, *City Lights* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), 96. Maland notes that Chaplin generally avoided close-ups, but that the emotional power of the final scene required them (97).

<sup>87</sup> The emotion extends to the viewer as well. Chaplin, recounting in his autobiography the film's premiere, notes that even Albert Einstein, who was in attendance, was moved by the scene. "During the final scene I noticed Einstein wiping his eyes – further evidence that scientists are incurable sentimentalists." Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 332.

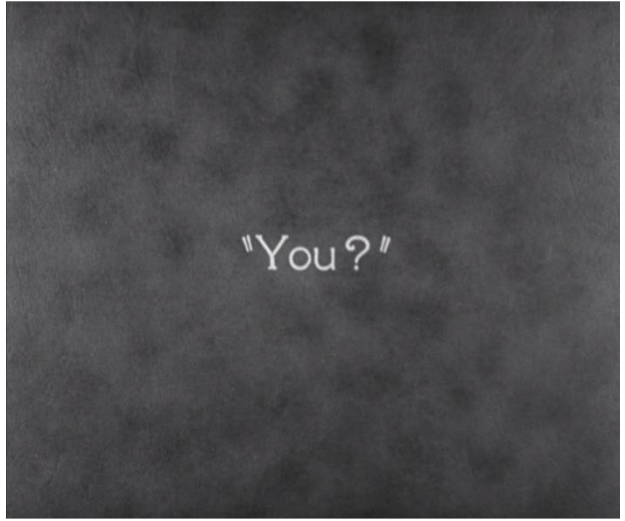


Figure 2. Charles Chaplin. *City Lights*. DVD. The Criterion Collection, 2013.



Figure 3. Charles Chaplin. *City Lights*. DVD. The Criterion Collection, 2013.

While Diderot answered Molyneux's Problem in the affirmative, Chaplin, just like Locke, answered in the negative.<sup>88</sup> It is only via touch that the woman can recognize the Tramp. This scene of recognition also suggests a link between sensory perception and affect, on the one hand, and artistic production and reception on the other. *City Lights* was made at a time when sound films were beginning to take over the motion picture landscape, but Chaplin nevertheless insisted upon producing a silent film, albeit with a recorded musical score that he helped to compose.<sup>89</sup> The spectator's experience of the film hinges upon the score, or rather its absence during two key moments: the two instances of recognition.<sup>90</sup> The score briefly cuts out when the

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<sup>88</sup> Kenneth Calhoun is reluctant to read *City Lights* as participating in older "epistemological debates" (395), but he does acknowledge the parallels with eighteenth-century philosophy. See Kenneth S. Calhoun, "Blind Gestures: Chaplin, Diderot, Lessing," *MLN* 115, no. 3 (April 2000): 394–95.

<sup>89</sup> "Ultimately, Chaplin decided on a compromise solution to the challenge of sound: he would include a musical score with some sound effects but entirely refuse spoken language." Maland, *City Lights*, 29–30. See also Calhoun, "Blind Gestures: Chaplin, Diderot, Lessing," 381–82.

<sup>90</sup> While he notes that Chaplin eventually rejected many of the developments of cinematic sound, Maland argues that much of the emotion impact of *City Lights* derives from its use of a recorded score. Maland, *City Lights*, 102.

Tramp glimpses the woman (Figure 1), and when the woman touches the Tramp's hands (Figure 2, panel 1). The spectator is provided only with visual cues during these two central moments, and acoustic input returns only *after* the characters' respective flashes of insight. That is, the recognition scenes are, for the uninvolved spectator of the silent film, entirely visual because *silent*.<sup>91</sup> This reveals is an affinity between the recognition scene and its medium. While the foregoing example shows the extent to which recognition generates intense pathos, *City Lights* illustrates that such scenes can reflect their own medial constitutiveness. The following remarks demonstrate how Stifter uses the recognition scene to reflect on the epistemological and medial preconditions for his realist prose.

With "Abdias," Stifter modifies this otherwise stable scene in several notable ways. First, he splits the cognitive and affective dimensions of recognition, breaking the scene into its two constitutive parts. This split highlights two of the three levels of Aristotelean recognition identified in the Introduction: The cognitive dimension of recognition relates to the first level, i.e. one's ability to recognize an object or person *as* that object or person, while the affective dimension of recognition relates to the second level, i.e. to depicted scenes of anagnorisis. However, by dividing recognition into two of its component parts, Stifter is not suggesting that the two levels operate independently of one another. In fact, the opposite is true. Stifter will be at pains throughout his career to join both cognition and affect, and making recourse to Molyneux's Problem, which he answers in the negative, allows him to emphasize the necessity of bringing together these two realms of experience. Second, Stifter grants a much less prominent role to the

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<sup>91</sup> Calhoon suggests that silent film in general and its use of pantomime in particular inscribe both actor and spectator within a discourse of deafness. He also contends that Chaplin functions like the "theoretical mute" Diderot discusses in his *Letter on the Deaf and Dumb for the Use of Those Who Hear and Speak*. I discuss this second *Letter* below. Calhoon, "Blind Gestures: Chaplin, Diderot, Lessing," 381, 395.

articulation of recognition, displacing this act from the characters onto the narrator. Recognition thus expands from a mere motif to an operation integral to the narrative's construction. The third level of recognition discussed in the Introduction – the poet's recognition of the part/whole within the plot-structure – finds brief expression in these early texts, but will be more fully developed in the narratives treated in Chapter Two. In all of these texts, then, recognition becomes a means for conceptualizing not just the perception of reality, but also its literary transformation.

### **POST-ROMANTIC RECOGNITION: "ABDIAS"**

"Abdias" is an unusual story in Stifter's oeuvre. While most of Stifter's other works are emphatically provincial, centering on Christian characters in rural Bohemia, "Abdias" opens in the North African desert and features Jewish characters unable or unwilling to assimilate either in Africa or, later, in their adopted Bohemian homeland. "Abdias," like many other realist texts, relies on anti-Semitic stereotyping to emphasize a normative view of reality.<sup>92</sup> Abdias, with his dark skin and pockmarked face, disfigured by syphilis, stands in sharp contrast with his daughter, who, with her blond hair and blue eyes, passes as non-Jewish.<sup>93</sup> Racialized (non)visibility is one of the dominant epistemological paradigms in the narrative, which, as Joseph Metz shows, reflects epistemological anxieties about nationhood and belonging in nineteenth-century Austria.<sup>94</sup> The text's racism, specifically its emphasis on corporeality, is in dialogue with the

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<sup>92</sup> Robert Holub analyzes several major realist texts (Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben*, Wilhelm Raabe's *Der Hungerpastor*, Gottfried Keller's *Martin Salander*) and suggests that they deploy Jewishness "as a moral rather than a racial category." Stifter's "Abdias" differs from these other texts by treating Jewishness in both moral *and* racial terms. Holub, *Reflections of Realism*, 194.

<sup>93</sup> For more on the corporeal "signs" of Jewishness, see Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>94</sup> For discussions of the novella's anti-Semitism, see Joseph Metz, "The Jew as Sign in Stifter's *Abdias*," *The Germanic Review* 77, no. 3 (2002): 219–32; Martha B. Helfer, "Natural Anti-

sensory perceptual discourse that emerges most fully in literary renderings of Molyneux's Problem: "Abdias" is a narrative about the limits of knowledge, about the individual's limited perception of the world through the senses, and about his or her limited recognition of other(ed) bodies.<sup>95</sup>

This is not to suggest, however, that Stifter's choice of a Jewish protagonist is solely in the service of reflecting the normative discourse of the time, for the text is not unambivalent on this point.<sup>96</sup> The protagonist's Jewishness also underscores the broader epistemological

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Semitism: Stifter's *Abdias*," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 78, no. 2 (2004): 261–86. Joseph Metz argues that the frequent references to Abdias' Jewishness via historical stereotypes serve to reflect epistemological uncertainties in nineteenth-century Austria, particularly as they relate to nationhood (220-21). In Metz's reading, Jewishness in "Abdias" operates according to a semiotic logic and signifies "certain anxieties about the ability to interpret and know" (220). To this I would couple the narrative's treatment of disability. Because Stifter is engaging with Enlightenment discourse in this novella, because he is literarizing Molyneux's Problem in order to work through the epistemological preconditions of poetic realism, he carries out, to borrow Metz's terms, a *second* "reduction of the human to the tropic" (221). Martha Helfer points out that Jewishness and blindness have long been linked. Drawing on Sander Gilman's work, she remarks: "The notion that the Jews are a 'blind' people, unable to see the truth of Jesus, dates to Paul; by the Middle Ages Church leaders argued that the only way to cure the Jews of their blindness was through the sudden flash of divine inspiration" (280). Utz points out another link between Judaism and blindness: "Entsprechend trägt in der christlichen Ikonographie die 'Synagoge', wenn sie der 'Ecclesia' allegorisch gegenübergestellt wird, eine Augenbinde, wie die 'Fortuna', jene Allegorisierung des 'blinden' Schicksals, das uns die Einleitung aufklärerisch wegreden möchte. [...] Um die Binde lösen und die Juden von ihrer Blindheit zu heilen, braucht es die Heilungswunder des Neuen Testaments. So die Heilung der beiden blinden Bettler oder die Heilung eines Blindgeborenen am Sabbat, die in Jesus' Worten gipfelt: 'Ich bin zum Gericht auf diese Welt gekommen, auf daß , die da nicht sehen, sehend werden, und die da sehen, blind werden.' Indem Christus die Blinden sehend macht, zeigt er sich ihnen gleichzeitig auch als der Messias, als den ihn die Juden nicht anerkennen wollen." Utz, "Die Lücken, die jetzt sind," 267–68.

<sup>95</sup> Some of this is apparent in Chaplin's films as well. As Calhoon points out, "certain commentators [...] have found signs of Jewishness in Charlie, if not Chaplin himself." Calhoon, "Blind Gestures: Chaplin, Diderot, Lessing," 388.

<sup>96</sup> "[T]o cast the Jew thus, as a matter of tropes and metatropes, can itself be seen as an anti-Semitic move, a forgetting of the real Jewish human beings who most certainly have been forcibly converted, expelled, and worse, in part as a result of the tendency to reduce Jews to tropes – a tendency that Stifter's novella indulges in even as it cautions against it. Thus reading

implications of the narrative. “Abdias” reflects, against the backdrop of universal human experience, what Stifter takes to be representative of an exceptional people. It is in this regard that the novella assumes both exemplary and representative status as a case study.<sup>97</sup> As othered as Abdias might be, his life is but one link in the “Blumenkette” (HKG 1,5:238) of cause and effect Stifter describes in the narrative’s famously enigmatic opening.<sup>98</sup> Finally, the novella’s biblical register should not be overlooked in this context. Abdias is a rendering of Obadiah, a minor Old Testament prophet,<sup>99</sup> and the epistemology at play in the novella’s recognition scenes thus resonates with prophetic and theophanic discourse, in addition to Enlightenment sensory perceptual discourse.

The basic epistemological problem reflected in this one individual’s life centers on the question of *repeated knowledge*, i.e. that essential feature of Molyneux’s Problem and

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the figure of the Jew in Stifter’s text reveals itself to be a matter of anti-Semitism and anti-anti-Semitism.” Metz, “The Jew as Sign in Stifter’s *Abdias*,” 230.

<sup>97</sup> For more on “Abdias” as a case, see Daniela Gretz, “Von ‘hässlichen Tazzelwürmern’ und ‘heiteren Blumenketten’: Adalbert Stifters *Abdias* und Gottfried Kellers *Ursula* im Spannungsfeld von Fallgeschichte und Novella,” in *Fall – Fallgeschichte – Fallstudie: Theorie und Geschichte einer Wissensform*, ed. Susanne Düwell and Nicolas Pethes (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2014), 274–86; Eva Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen: Darstellungsproblematik und Sprachreflexion in der Prosa Adalbert Stifters* (München: Iudicium, 1992), 62–64; Brodersen, “Die Wirklichkeit im ‘Hohlspiegel der Sinne,’” 160–61, 166–67.

<sup>98</sup> The scholarship on this text’s opening is too extensive to list here in full. For representative accounts, see Rudolf Jansen, “Die Quelle des ‘Abdias’ in den Entwürfen zur ‘Scientia Generalis’ von G.W. Leibniz?,” *Vierteljahresschrift des Adalbert-Stifter-Instituts des Landes Oberösterreich* 13, no. 3/4 (1964): 57–69; Peter Schäublin, “Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen (Fortsetzung),” *Vierteljahresschrift des Adalbert-Stifter-Instituts des Landes Oberösterreich* 24, no. 3/4 (1975): 92–95; Kurt Mautz, “Das antagonistische Naturbild in Stifters ‘Studien,’” in *Adalbert Stifter: Studien und Interpretationen; Gedenkschrift zum 100. Todestage*, ed. Lothar Stiehm (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm Verlag, 1968), 34–39; Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 60–68.

<sup>99</sup> For more on the religious background, see G.H. Hertling, “Adalbert Stifters zeitlose Botschaft: Obadja-Abdias,” *Vierteljahresschrift des Adalbert-Stifter-Instituts des Landes Oberösterreich* 25, no. 3/4 (1976): 117–29.

Aristotelean anagnorisis.<sup>100</sup> While Ditha's visual refamiliarization with reality comprises the most prominent such moment, the text features multiple recognition scenes that work through the same epistemology. Each of the three chapters, named for the women in Abdias' life – *Esther*, his mother, *Deborah*, his wife, and *Ditha*, his daughter – features a recognition scene, and this genealogical continuity *via the recognition scene* serves as the narrative's dominant structuring principle.<sup>101</sup> Taken together, the three chapters depict variations on a theme: unexpected events that disrupt an otherwise unchanging reality and that require the individual to see reality in a fundamentally new way. While this configuration of eventfulness would find its clearest elaboration in the preface to *Bunte Steine* (discussed in Chapter Two), "Abdias" represents an early articulation of this paradigm. Because of the text's explicit engagement with romantic literary motifs – something absent from the preface to *Bunte Steine* –, it reveals how Stifter's realism both responds to and breaks with its predecessors. The following remarks move roughly chronologically through the narrative, illustrating how each chapter's recognition scene reflects more general concerns about knowledge and clarifying the points of intersection with the foregoing examples from Diderot and Chaplin.

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<sup>100</sup> Repetition is also crucial to biblical recognition. For more on the role of repetition in biblical recognition and its points of overlap with Aristotelean anagnorisis, see the first and fifth chapters in Boitani, *The Bible and Its Rewritings*, 1–57, 130–205. As Barbara Potthast notes, revelation in the Old Testament takes place via natural phenomena: earthquakes, fires, and like, whereas in the New Testament, God appears among the people. By depicting scenes of interpersonal recognition, Stifter is, in a sense, mapping the New Testament paradigm of recognition onto an Old Testament figure, thereby undertaking, to borrow Boitani's phrasing, an act of "re-Scripting." Barbara Potthast, "'Ein lastend unheimliches Entfremden unserer Natur': Adalbert Stifters 'Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842' als Dokument einer anderen Moderne," *Scientia poetica* 23 (2008): 126–27.

<sup>101</sup> For an overview of Stifter's genealogical poetics, see esp. Cornelia Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition: Adalbert Stifter oder das Erzählen im Zeichen verlorener Geschichten* (Freiburg: Rombach Verlag, 1998), 27–80.

## 1. ESTHER

After the first chapter's lengthy opening remarks on the nature of fate, the narrator begins to describe the isolated enclave where Abdias and his family live. Uncertainty reigns: the unnamed city is lost to history ("eine alte, aus der Geschichte verlorene Römerstadt," HKG 1,5:239) and unknown to those who reside elsewhere.<sup>102</sup> Abdias' subterranean home is itself hidden inside a "Mauerklumpen, dessen Zweck nicht mehr zu erkennen war" (HKG 1,5:240). The secrecy surrounding the enclave establishes the *limiting* of knowledge as central to the events in the story.<sup>103</sup> Interlinked with the theme of knowledge is the narrative's emphasis on *repetition* and *recovery* – and not merely of knowledge. When Abdias comes of age, his father sends him away: "'Sohn, Abdias, gehe nun in die Welt, und da der Mensch auf der Welt nichts hat, als was er sich erwirbt, *und was er sich in jedem Augenblicke wieder erwerben kann*, und da uns nichts sicher macht, als diese Fähigkeit des Erwerbens: so gehe hin und lerne es. [...] Jetzt, Sohn Abdias, sei gesegnet, gehe hin und verrathe nichts von dem Neste, in dem du aufgeäzert worden bist'" (HKG 1,5:243-44). The only thing the individual can ever truly possess are those things he or she acquires and could at any moment *re-acquire*.<sup>104</sup> Nothing is certain except the recovery of that which has been lost.

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<sup>102</sup> "Sie [...] hat seit Jahrhunderten keinen Namen mehr, wie lange sie schon keine Bewohner hat, weiß man nicht mehr, der Europäer zeichnete sie bis auf die neueste Zeit nicht auf seine Karten, weil er von ihr nichts ahnete, und der Berber, wenn er [...] das hängende Gemäuer stehen sah, dachte entweder gar nicht an dasselbe und an dessen Zweck, oder er fertigte die Unheimlichkeit seines Gemüthes mit ein paar abergläubischen Gedanken ab" (HKG 1,5:239).

<sup>103</sup> This emphasis appears already in the narrative's prefatory remarks, which highlight gaps in knowledge, represented by the "Blumenkette" of cause and effect: "[D]ie Lücken, die jetzt sind, erzeugen das Unerwartete" (HKG 1,5:238). For more on the "Versteckmotivik" in the novella, which derives from this opening, see Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 60–81.

<sup>104</sup> For more on the link between this "Tauschgesetz" and the novella's opening, see Geulen, 67–68.

It is within this context that the narrative's first recognition scene transpires. The scene in question is one of homecoming, i.e. that primal scene of recognition. Abdias returns after fifteen years away, and the narrative describes at length the recovery of his kinship relations. First, however, the narrative underscores the paradoxical epistemology central to recognition: "nachdem fünfzehn Jahre vergangen waren, kam er *wieder zum ersten Male* in die verschollene Römerstadt" (HKG 1,5:245; emphasis added). During moments of recognition, one encounters a person one already knows (*recognition*), but the moment of insight constitutes an unrepeatable act of cognition. That is, one uncovers information one knew all along, but seemingly for the first time. Furthermore, in order for cognition to comprise simultaneously the act of *recognition*, there must be an instance of repetition or identification. Is the person I see in front of me now identical to the person I last saw fifteen years ago? Does my perception in the present correspond to the memory I have of this person?

These tensions are all apparent in Abdias' homecoming. In line with the narrative's racial stereotyping, recognition is delayed by the characters' focus on Abdias' wealth. It is only after Abdias shows his father the money he has earned during his time away that either can display their feelings. " – – Dann, als bräche die Rinde plötzlich entzwei, oder als hätte er mit der Vaterfreude warten müssen, bis erst das Geschäft aus war, stürzte er gegen den Sohn, umarmte ihn, drückte ihn an sich, heulte, segnete, murmelte, betastete ihn, und benetzte sein Angesicht mit Thränen" (HKG 1,5:246). Abdias then leaves the room to rest briefly and to give expression to his own emotions. "Abdias aber ging, da dies vorüber war, wieder in die Vorstube hinauf, warf sich auf einen Haufen Matten, die dalagen, und ließ den Quell seiner Augen rinnen – er rann so milde und süß" (HKG 1,5:246). While these first two moments emphasize the *affective* register –

depicting, like the artistic treatments of Molyneux's Problem discussed above, an outpouring of tears – the *cognitive* work of recognition receives attention in the reunion of mother and son.

Dann wurde er in die inneren Zimmer gebracht, wo Esther auf den Polstern saß und geduldig wartete, bis ihn der Vater herein führen würde. Sie stand auf, da der Angekommene unter dem Vorhänge des Zimmers herein ging – aber *es war nicht mehr der süße weiche schöne Knabe, den sie einst so geliebt hatte*, und dessen Wangen das so sanfte Kissen für ihre Lippen gewesen waren; sondern er war sehr dunkel geworden, das Antlitz härter und höher und die Augen viel feuriger -: aber auch sah er die Mutter an – *sie war nicht minder eine andere geworden*, und das unheimliche Spiel der Jahre zeigte sich in ihrem Angesichte. Sie nahm ihn, da er bis an ihre Seite vorwärts gekommen war, an ihr Herz, zog ihn gegen sich auf die Kissen, und drückte ihren Mund auf seine Wangen, seine Stirne, seinen Scheitel, auf seine Augen und auf seine Ohren. Der alte Aron stand seitwärts mit gebücktem Haupte, und die Zofen saßen in dem Gemache daneben hinter gelbseidenen Vorhängen und flüsterten. (HKG 1,5:246-47)

Both Abdias and Esther have changed over the years, and this passage underscores the question of identity. And as was the case for Greek *nostos* tales, here, too, is recognition necessarily preceded by defamiliarization. Abdias “war *nicht mehr* der [...] Knabe” Esther had so loved; Esther, too, “war nicht minder *eine andere* geworden.” Their reunion consists largely of an attempt to reestablish their initial familial roles, when Abdias cheeks had served as “das so sanfte Kissen für ihre Lippen.” Esther pulls her now adult son onto the pillows, and his face once more becomes a pillow (Kissen) for her kisses (Küsse).<sup>105</sup>

The two reunions share several features, the first of which is an emphasis on privacy. Aron and Abdias reunite in a secluded room, and Esther and Abdias maintain some privacy during their reunion: Aron averts his gaze, and the maidservants sit sequestered behind a curtain,

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<sup>105</sup> This play on words has long been present in German-language texts, as “Kissen” was spelled “Küssen” until the eighteenth century. See *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, s.v. “Kissen,” accessed November 30, 2017, [woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB](http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB). For more on the metaphoric substitution of Kissen/Küssen, see Geulen, 75. The incestual overtones here are yet another example of the text's anti-Semitic stereotyping. For more background on Jewishness and criminal sexuality, see Sander L. Gilman, *The Case of Sigmund Freud: Medicine and Identity at the Fin de Siècle* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), esp. 169-215.

and these figures can thus only *listen* to the reunion. The interactions between father and son and between mother and son likewise underscore the role of sensory perception. The description of the former repeatedly emphasizes the haptic: Aron embraces Abdias (“er [...] umarmte ihn, drückte ihn an sich”), then sobs, blesses him, mumbles, touches him (“betastete ihn”), and covers his son’s face with his tears. The latter reunion begins by accentuating the visual, with Esther and Abdias gazing upon each other, before it likewise draws out the haptic with their physical embrace. The description closes in an odd way: after kissing Abdias’ cheeks, forehead, and the top of his head, she then kisses his eyes and ears. The preposition *auf* appears here three times – once to introduce the cheeks/forehead/crown, once the eyes, and once the ears. The fact that Esther kisses Abdias’ eyes and ears is already strange, and the prepositional repetition only draws further attention to this.

But why does the narrative underscore perception via sight, sound, *and* touch? First, the text emphasizes sensory perception without focusing exclusively on vision. While the description of the cognitive work of recognition draws out the visual register, it is contextualized by the haptic and the acoustic. This breadth of sensory experience will characterize the narrative’s subsequent recognition scenes. Second, the emphasis on corporeality occurs through description, rather than dialogue. The moments of *articulated* recognition present in the foregoing renderings of Molyneux’s Problem are notably absent in “Abdias.” It is not that the scenes are silent – Aron and Esther sob and/or mumble – but that recognition is not performed for an audience. Recognition, in other words, is a private matter, hidden from view like the domicile in which it transpires.

The narrative soon jumps ahead in time. Abdias leaves home once again, this time to fetch his bride, Deborah. The two travel back incognito, with Abdias disguised as a Turk and

Deborah as his slave. “Zurück ging er als bewaffneter Türke mitten in einer großen Karawane, denn das Gut, das er mit sich führte, konnte er nicht in Klüften verstecken, und, konnte es, wenn es verloren ginge, *nicht wieder erwerben*” (HKG 1,5:248; emphasis added). The text underscores here the fragility of human life. If, according to Aron’s claim, the only thing one can truly possess is that which can be replaced, then human relationships appear utterly tenuous, subject to the vicissitudes of fate and luck. This *irreversibility* – the fact that some things cannot be recovered or repeated – will assume special prominence in the subsequent two chapters, which focus more intensely on the recovery and repetition of knowledge. The chapter closes by describing how Aron and Esther grow old and die and how Abdias continues to travel far and wide as he amasses wealth.

## 2. DEBORAH

The second chapter begins by describing the tensions in the relationship between Abdias and Deborah, which it embeds within a sensory perceptual context. The reader learns that Abdias was once beautiful, but that his face was disfigured.<sup>106</sup> As a result, Deborah, who had once taken pleasure in her husband’s appearance, now finds herself disgusted by the sight of him.

Da er aber einmal in Odessa krank geworden war, und die böse Seuche der Pocken geerbt hatte, die ihn ungestaltet und häßlich machten, verabscheute ihn Deborah, als er heim kam, und wandte sich auf immer von ihm ab; denn nur die Stimme, die sie gekannt hatte, hatte er nach Hause gebracht, nicht aber die Gestalt, – – und wenn sie auch oft auf den gewohnten Klang plötzlich hin sah – so kehrte sie sich doch stets wieder um, und ging aus dem Hause; sie hatte nur leibliche Augen empfangen um die Schönheit des Körpers zu sehen, nicht geistige, die des Herzens. (HKG 1,5:249-50)

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<sup>106</sup> The disfiguration is a result of *Pocken* – more likely syphilis than smallpox, as the incidence of the former among Jews was the subject of much anti-Semitic discourse in the nineteenth century. See Metz, “The Jew as Sign in Stifter’s *Abdias*,” 231 n2; Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, esp. 96-103.

The narrative draws here a distinction between Deborah’s “leibliche Augen” – the proper organs of sight – and her “geistige [Augen]” – affective organs that perceive love. As the passage makes clear, the latter are associated with *sound*, rather than *sight*.<sup>107</sup> While Deborah might be revolted by the sight of her husband, his voice retains its power. Acoustic perception evokes a positive *affective* response, only to be undone by the subsequent visual impression and *cognitive* response. As the next recognition scene makes clear, the “geistige [Augen]” serve as the proper organs of recognition.<sup>108</sup>

This next scene, too, is linked with a homecoming. Abdias’ frequent travels provide him an opportunity to amass both riches and glory (*kleos*): “[I]n der Ferne wurde ihm zu Theil, was

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<sup>107</sup> See on this point Peter Schäublin, “Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen,” *Vierteljahresschrift des Adalbert-Stifter-Instituts des Landes Oberösterreich* 23, no. 3/4 (1974): 110. “Da ihr [Deborah] allein die äußere Gestalt seine [Abdias’] Identität verbürgt, ist er für sie ein Fremder geworden. Würde sie dagegen ihrem Ohr vertrauen, so sähe sie ihn mit den Augen des Herzens und ließe sich durch die Entstellung seines Leibes nicht beirren. Denn die Stimme des Abdias ist treu im doppelten Sinne des Wortes: als Zeichen der inneren Identität trotz äußerer Entstellung und als Zeichen der Treue des Mannes Abdias. Das leibliche Auge, das nicht durch das Ohr geleitet wird, erweist sich als ebenso korrumpierbar wie die äußere Gestalt, die es wahrnimmt.”

<sup>108</sup> Schäublin illuminates the “leibliche” vs. “geistige Augen” distinction and Deborah and Ditha’s perceptual abilities via a reading of Herder’s *Kalligone*. “Das Sehen des beseelten Auges ist selbst beseelend. Darum ist auch eine Unterscheidung zwischen dem leiblichen Auge und dem Auge des Herzens nur solange notwendig, als das Auge des Herzens fehlt. Ist es da, so ist es eins mit dem leiblichen Auge, wie bei Ditha.” Schäublin, “Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen (Fortsetzung),” 91. The *leibliche/geistige Augen* distinction also plays a role in Lessing’s work, notably in *Laokoon*, where distinction is framed in terms of *leibliche Augen/Einbildungskraft*. For an overview of Lessing’s use of the terms, see Utz, *Das Auge und das Ohr im Text*, esp. 39-46. For a brief overview of the role of *Einbildungskraft* in poetry vs. the plastic arts, see David E. Wellbery, *Lessing’s Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), esp. 106-7, 131-32. Finally, the *leibliche/geistige Augen* distinction also features prominently in the Leibnizian intertexts that inform Stifter’s “Blumenkette” metaphor at the beginning of the novella. See on this point Jansen, “Die Quelle des ‘Abdias’ in den Entwürfen zur ‘Scientia Generalis’ von G.W. Leibniz?,” 63, 67.

man ihm zu Hause entzog: Hochachtung, Ansehen, Oberherrschaft” (HKG 1,5:251).<sup>109</sup> Respect [*Anerkennung*] is generally withheld whenever Abdias returns home, and this time is no different. He arrives to find his city and home plundered, and the other residents blame him, arguing that his displays of wealth attracted attention and revealed their location. Furthermore, they demand that Abdias replace everything that was lost or destroyed: ““Du mußt *ersetzen*, was genommen ward, du mußt *alles ersetzen*, du mußt es *zehnfach ersetzen*, und mehr”” (HKG 1,5:255; emphasis added). The emphasis lies, once more, on repetition and recovery, and again, this sets the stage for the recovery of familial relations in the subsequent recognition scene.

Abdias finally enters his home, and finds that Deborah, long presumed infertile, has given birth prematurely. “Er fand wirklich Deborah in dem größeren Gemach, [...] und – *siehe*, wie seltsam die Wege und Schickungen der Dinge sind: sie hatte ihm gerade in dieser Nacht ein Mägdlein geboren [...]. Er aber stand in dem *Augenblicke*, wie einer, der von einem furchtbaren Schläge geschüttelt wird, da” (HKG 1,5:258; emphasis added). Initially, visual language dominates in the descriptions of his reaction, beginning already with the narrator’s biblical “*siehe*.” As though struck by a terrible blow or a *Blitzschlag*, like those that will later strike his daughter, Abdias gazes upon his newly expanded family. Next, the haptic and the oral are emphasized, as Abdias cares for Deborah, using his finger to moisten her lips with water. Then, Deborah gazes upon him with her “*geistige*” eyes:

[E]r [sah] noch genauer auf sie hin, und streichelte, neben ihrem Haupte kauernd, ihre kranken, bereits alternden Züge – sie aber lächelte ihn seit fünf Jahren *wieder zum ersten Male* mit dem düsteren traurigen Antlitze an, als sei die alte Liebe neu zurück gekehrt – [...] *es fiel ihm von den Augen herunter, wie dichte Schuppendecken, die darüber gelegen waren* – es war ihm mitten in der Zerstörung nicht anders, als sei ihm das größte Glück auf Erden widerfahren – und [...] so wurde ihm in seinem Herzen, als fühle er drinnen bereits den Anfang des Heiles, das nie gekommen war, und von dem er nie gewußt hatte,

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<sup>109</sup> Recognition scenes linked to *kleos/nostos* feature prominently in the Ancient Greek tradition, with the *Odyssey* serving as only the most obvious example.

wo er es denn suchen sollte – es war nun da, und um Unendliches süßler und linder als er sich es je gedacht. *Deborah hielt seine Hand, und drückte sie und liebte sie – er sah sie zärtlich an* – sie sagte zu ihm: ‘*Abdias, du bist jetzt nicht mehr so häßlich, wie früher, sondern viel schöner.*’ (HKG 1,5:258-59; emphasis added)

The syntactical inversion here – “wieder zum ersten Male” instead of “zum ersten Male wieder” – repeats a key formulation from the description of Abdias’ homecoming in chapter one (“er [kam] *wieder zum ersten Male* in die verschollene Römerstadt”) and establishes another connection between the two recognition scenes. This scene, too, emphasizes the changes in the figures’ appearance. Deborah’s face bears traces of aging (“ihre [...] bereits alternden Züge”), while Abdias is of course no longer as beautiful as he was when they met. Their mutual recognition returns them, as it were, to a prior state, restoring their original relationship. Abdias is overjoyed, and his reaction is inscribed within a sensory perceptual context: it is as though he is finally able to see, and he experiences the greatest happiness imaginable. The emphasis here is on the affective, *geistige Augen*, not the physical organs of sight, and this focus becomes clearer in the subsequent descriptions. While Abdias gazes upon Deborah, she holds and caresses his hand and then remarks that he is much more beautiful. The impression garnered by her *leibliche Augen* is unchanged – Abdias’ appearance is just as it was – but her *geistige Augen* – linked now with the haptic, perceive their mutual love. The original spousal relations are thus restored.

This happiness is, however, short-lived. Abdias feeds Deborah some soup, covers her with a coat, and then leaves his Abyssinian slave Uram to keep watch while he goes to his neighbors. By the time he returns, Deborah has died.

Als Abdias eintrat, war das Gemach noch immer einsam, es war auch hierher noch niemand zurück gekehrt. Uram, wie ein Bild aus dunklem Erze gegossen, saß an Deborahs Lager und wachte noch immer, Augen und Pistolen gegen die Thür gerichtet; sie aber lag, wie ein Bild von Wachs, bleich und schön und starr hinter ihm – und das Kind lag an ihrer Seite, schlummerte süß, und regte im Traume die kleinen Lippen, als sauge es. – Abdias that einen furchtsamen Blick hin und schlich näher; – mit eins wurde ihm die Gefahr klar [...] – er stieß aus Überraschung einen schwachen Schrei aus

– dann aber nahm er das Oberkleid, das er früher auf sie gebreitet hatte, und andere Lappen, die da lagen, weg, um zu sehen: es war deutlich, auf was er nicht geachtet, und was sie gar nicht gewußt hatte. Er zupfte aus einem Kleide eine Faser heraus, [...] und hielt sie vor ihren Mund: – aber sie rührte sich nicht. Er legte die Hand auf ihr Herz; – er fühlte es nicht. Er griff ihre nackten Arme an: sie begannen schon kühler zu werden. Er hatte bei Karawanen, in Wüsten, und im Hospitale Menschen sterben gesehen, und erkannte das Angesicht. (HKG 1,5:267-68)

Abdias returns to find Uram sitting like a dark, cast statue and Deborah laying like a pale wax sculpture (note again the racial overtones). Unmoving, unchanged, the two appear lifeless.

Looking more closely at Deborah, Abdias realizes what has transpired. He removes the coat and clothes covering her and confirms visually his suspicion, before double-checking for signs of life: breath, which would visibly move the fiber, and a heartbeat, which he would feel with his hand. Touching her arms, he feels their lack of heat. The description, which had begun in the visual register and transitioned to the haptic, moves back into the visual. Abdias recognizes Deborah's countenance as that of the recently deceased ("Er [...] erkannte das Angesicht"). After feeding the baby, he then lends expression to his grief: "Wie er saß, flossen aus seinen Augen Thränen, wie geschmolzenes Erz" (HKG 1,5:268). This latter description associates both Abdias and Uram with the same racial discourse, as was common at the time.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, read alongside the preceding descriptions, it presents the three figures as something like a sculpture disintegrating into its constitutive parts: Uram, the finished sculpture, Deborah, the wax mold, and Abdias, the molten ore. If sculpture, according to Herder, is "die schöne Kunst des Gefühls,"<sup>111</sup> this oblique reference to the medium not only underscores the importance of the

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<sup>110</sup> See here Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 99–100. "The Jews are black, according to nineteenth-century racial science, because they are not a pure race, because they are a race which has come from Africa. But the blackness of the African, like the blackness of the Jew, was credited to the effect of certain diseases, specifically syphilis, on the skin of the African."

<sup>111</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, "Die kritischen Wälder zur Ästhetik," in *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Literatur 1767-1781*, ed. Gunter E. Grimm, vol. 2, Werke (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993), 307. Emphasis in original.

haptic, but furthermore suggests an association between non-visual recognition and a given artistic medium.

### 3. DITHA

After some time passes, Abdias' decides to take his daughter to Europe, and they settle in a rural Bohemian valley that replaces [*ersetzen*] the North African desert. Perhaps even more notable than the locales' shared "Oede" and alleged "Unfruchtbarkeit" (HKG 1,5:302) is the lack of knowledge of the two areas. The valley, like the desert, is shrouded in mystery. "Sehr viele werden das Thal nicht kennen, da es eigentlich nicht einmal einen Namen hat, und, wie wir sagten, so sehr vereinsamt ist. Es führt keine Straße durch, auf der Wägen und Wanderer kämen, es hat keinen Strom, auf dem Schiffe erschienen, es hat keine Reichthümer und Schönheiten, um die Reiselust zu locken, und so mag es oft Jahrzehnte da liegen, ohne daß irgend ein irrender Wanderer über seinen Rasen ginge" (HKG 1,5:300).

Within this isolation and general setting of epistemological uncertainty, Abdias comes to a sudden insight. After taking note of Ditha's slow development – at age four, she can neither crawl nor walk nor speak – he takes measures to improve her physical development and discovers that sounds evoke a strong response. "Abdias kam bei dieser Entdeckung auf einen Gedanken, *der sich wie ein Blitz, wie eine leuchtende Lufterscheinung durch sein Haupt jagte*, er dachte: das arme, gemarterte Kind könne blos blind sein" (HKG 1,5:311; emphasis added). The lack of narrative subtlety aside, the hackneyed metaphor prepares the reader for the lightning strike that will eventually heal Ditha's "leibliche Augen."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> The narrative also draws out here the potential for *misrecognition*. "In der andauernden Nacht war die junge, *verkannte*, über das Wesen der Welt ahnungslose Seele blos hilflos gebunden gewesen, und hatte nicht gewußt, was sie entbehre" (HKG 1,5:312; emphasis added). Another

The narrative then describes Abdias' attempts ("Versuche," HKG 1,5:311) to confirm Ditha's blindness, his consultations with doctors, and his final resignation that he will not be able to restore her sight. Turning his attention away from her visual organs, he works to enable a kind of sensory replacement:

Statt nun eine Erziehung zu beginnen, die so viel an Geist und Leben entwickelt hätte, als nur immer zu entwickeln war, verfiel Abdias auf einen ganz andern Gedanken, nemlich einen ungeheuren Reichthum auf das Kind zu laden, damit es sich durch denselben einstens, wenn er stürbe, Hände kaufen könnte, die es pflegen, und Herzen, die es lieben würden. Einen großen Reichthum wollte er auf das Kind häufen, daß es sich dereinst mit jedem Genuße seiner andern Sinne umringen könnte, wenn es schon den des einen entbehren müßte. (HKG 1,5:313)

Here, the underlying economic discourse (*erwerben/ersetzen*) is brought more overtly into line with sensory perceptual discourse. Wealth, Abdias surmises, will make it easier for Ditha to compensate for her blindness: she can buy hands and hearts, bodily care and love. Additionally, she will be able to enjoy the full pleasures afforded by her other senses.<sup>113</sup>

This substitutory movement emerges most forcefully in the aftermath of the miraculous lightning strike that restores Ditha's vision.<sup>114</sup> Abdias sits in his room as a storm gathers, when

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prominent instance of misrecognition comes when Abdias shoots his dog, thinking it to be rabid. In fact, the dog was merely trying to alert Abdias to the fact that he dropped his money pouch.<sup>113</sup> See here Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne,'" 177. "Indem Abdias Ditha hilft, ihre Blindheit mit den anderen ihr zur Verfügung stehenden Sinnen zu kompensieren, lernt er aber auch selbst, sein so haltloses Sehen mittels bewusster sensorischer Erfahrung stärker in der Realität zu verankern. Verständnis von Wirklichkeit, so macht die Erzählung deutlich, kann nur durch eine adäquate und umfassende sinnliche Erfassung aller Wirklichkeitsbereiche stattfinden und durch die Einsicht, dass Wahrnehmung, so wie im Fall von Dithas Blindheit, ihre Grenzen und Unvollkommenheiten hat. Erst dann wird auch sachlich und moralisch richtiges Handeln möglich."

<sup>114</sup> The event is refaced with a brief description on its miraculous nature, which evokes the narrative's prefatory comments on the nature of fate. "Es geschah eine wundervolle Begebenheit – eine Begebenheit, die so lange wundervoll bleiben wird, bis man nicht jene großen verbreiteten Kräfte der Natur wird ergründet haben, in denen unser Leben schwimmt, und bis man nicht das Liebesband zwischen diesen Kräften und unserm Leben wird freundlich binden und lösen können. Bisher sind sie uns kaum noch mehr als bloß wunderlich, und ihr Wesen ist uns fast noch nicht einmal in Ahnungen bekannt" (HKG 1,5:318).

suddenly the house is filled with blinding light (“einen blendenden Schein,” HKG 1,5:319). He immediately realizes that his house has been hit by lightning, and the narrative underscores this again with its customary lack of subtlety: “Abdias erkannte *augenblicklich*, daß der Blitz in sein Haus gefahren sei. Sein erster Gedanke war Ditha” (HKG 1,5:319; emphasis added). Abdias rushes in to check on his daughter, who is unharmed but terrified. After confirming his “wahnsinnige Vermuthung” (HKG 1,5:320) by testing her ability to follow a moving object with her eyes, Abdias sends for a doctor and tries to calm his daughter. Once again, the narrative draws attention to the multiple sensory registers involved in recognition.

Abdias [hatte] die Eingebung gehabt, alle Fensterbalken in Ditha’s Zimmer zu zu machen, und noch dazu die Vorhänge herab zu lassen, damit die Augen vorerst in der ihnen holden Finsterniß blieben, und von dem plötzlich eindringenden Lichte nicht verletzt würden. Als er dieses gethan hatte, [...] setzte sich zu ihr, und fing über eine Weile zu reden an. *Die Stimme war das Gewisseste, was sie an ihm kannte*, und sie übte nach und nach ihren gewöhnlichen Einfluß aus. Das geschreckte Kind beruhigte sich nach einiger Zeit – und in der Finsterniß vergaß es gemach den furchtbar herrlichen Sturm des ersten Sehens. Nach mehreren Augenblicken fing es sogar selber zu reden an, und erzählte ihm von fernen bohrenden Klängen, die da gewesen, von schneidenden, stummen, aufrechten Tönen, die in dem Zimmer gestanden seien. [...] *Ditha, welche zu der Stimme noch ein anderes Merkmal hinzu geben wollte, faßte nach seinen Händen, und als sie dieselben hatte, streichelte sie darüber hin, um sich zu überzeugen, daß er es wirklich sei, den sie habe.* (HKG 1,5:320-21; emphasis added)

So as not to injure Ditha’s eyes, Abdias plunges the room back into the darkness to which her eyes are accustomed (“in der ihnen holden Finsterniß”).<sup>115</sup> Once visual stimulation has been removed, the other senses assume more prominent roles. First, acoustic sensation is emphasized. Abdias’ voice, so familiar to Ditha, calms her, and she gradually recovers from the initial terror of vision.<sup>116</sup> While the sound of her father’s voice has a calming effect, Ditha finds it necessary

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<sup>115</sup> As Peter Utz points out, this is exactly what Diderot had surmised in the *Letter on the Blind* would be necessary. Utz, “Die Lücken, die jetzt sind,” 262.

<sup>116</sup> Schäublin makes note of this as well, and observes that both Deborah and Ditha must identify Abdias by the sound of his voice. Schäublin, “Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen,” 110. See also Kühlmann, “Von Diderot bis Stifter,” 404–5. “Mutatis mutandis entspricht diese

to confirm Abdias' identity via touch. "Ditha, welche zu der Stimme *noch ein anderes Merkmal hinzu geben wollte, faßte nach seinen Händen, [...] um sich zu überzeugen, daß er es wirklich sei, den sie habe.*" Acoustic *and* haptic perception accomplish what vision cannot yet do, and Stifter thus answers Molyneux's Problem in the negative. In Stifter's parlance, the *Erwerb* of this sense does not – cannot – replace [*ersetzen*] the others. As in the preceding chapters, there is no articulation of recognition – the fact of recognition is transmitted by the narrator. What is more, Ditha's language appears fundamentally insufficient when she tells her father about the acoustic phenomena that accompanied the lightning strike.<sup>117</sup> The "ferne[] bohrend[] Klänge[]" are easy enough to imagine, the "*schneidende[], stumme[], aufrechte[] Töne[], die in dem Zimmer gestanden seien,*" which suggest a kind of audio-visual synesthesia, less so.

The emphasis here on sensory compensation requires a brief scientific excursus, since it is only against this backdrop that Stifter's rendering of Molyneux's Problem can be fully understood. The three key intersecting concepts that inform the above scene are the so-called vicariate model of the senses, synesthesia, and magnetism/Mesmerism.<sup>118</sup> The vicariate model of

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Vorherrschaft der akustischen Wahrnehmungsformen, also die Isolation eines bestimmten Zeichensystems und des dazugehörigen 'Kanals', dem Verhalten jenes Blinden bei Diderot, der allein im Gefühlssinn 'die Grundformen aller seiner Ideen' fand. Erst in der Interpretation liebgewordener 'Zeichen', denen des Gehörs und des Tastsinns, findet die verstörte Ditha wieder Ruhe und gefühlshafte Sicherheit."

<sup>117</sup> This might also be read alongside Herder's *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*. As Schäublin observes, Ditha's development after the lightning strike resembles that described by Herder in this text. "Am Anfang ist das Gefühl, und in diesem ist der Mensch ganz. Durch das Gefühl nun erweckt die Natur die Seele zur ersten deutlichen Empfindung durch den Schall, also gleichsam aus dem dunklen Schlafe des Gefühls. In höchstem Maße synthetisch, umschließt Herders Entwicklungsbegriff hier Menschheitsgenese, Individualgenese und Sprachgenese." Schäublin, "Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen," 110–11.

<sup>118</sup> My overview derives from Jutta Müller-Tamm's discussion of these models in Jutta Müller-Tamm, "Das Vikariat der Sinne: Zum Argument der Synästhesie in Physiologie und Ästhetik des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Ästhetik von unten: Empirie und ästhetisches Wissen*, ed. Marie Guthmüller and Wolfgang Klein (Tübingen/Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2006), 289–307.

the senses emerged from discussions of Molyneux's Problem, and referred initially to the ability of one sense to compensate for another.<sup>119</sup> The term gradually came to encompass the outlandish sensory perceptual abilities associated with Mesmerism and somnambulism, for instance seeing with one's fingers.<sup>120</sup> Nineteenth-century physiology would reject the vicariate model as incompatible with Johannes Müller's doctrine of specific nerve energies,<sup>121</sup> instead using the latter to explain synesthetic phenomena.<sup>122</sup> In turn, empathy aesthetics [*Einfühlungsästhetik*], which emerged in the latter half of the century, drew on the vicariate model as it sought to ground aesthetic experience in human physiology.<sup>123</sup> Stifter's narrative invokes the vicariate

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<sup>119</sup> Müller-Tamm, 290.

<sup>120</sup> Müller-Tamm, 290–91. See here Ernst Bartels, *Grundzüge einer Physiologie und Physik des animalischen Magnetismus* (Frankfurt a.M.: Varrentrapp und Sohn, 1812), 40–41, [https://books.google.com/books?id=O7A6AAAacAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=bartles+grundz%C3%BCge+einer+physiologie+und+physik+des+animalischen+magnetismus&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjh5YSzp\\_LdAhXo4IMKHe0JAdYQ6AEILDAA#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=O7A6AAAacAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=bartles+grundz%C3%BCge+einer+physiologie+und+physik+des+animalischen+magnetismus&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjh5YSzp_LdAhXo4IMKHe0JAdYQ6AEILDAA#v=onepage&q&f=false). “Im [...] vierten Grade, dem einfachen machnetischen Schlafwachen, [...] unterscheiden die selten offenen, immer starren und unempfindlichen, Augen nichts als höchstens Licht und Finsterniß; aber die Organe des Gefühls, hauptsächlich an den Fingerspitzen und der Herzgrube, verwandeln sich in Organe des Sehens.” Müller-Tamm likewise references this text. Anton Mesmer's pseudoscience will not be recapitulated here – for the purposes of this study, it suffices to gesture toward role of Mesmerism in romantic literary texts, e.g. E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Der Magnetiseur*, and to point out an historical connection between Mesmerism and blindness. As the critical commentary to “Abdias” notes, in the 1770s Mesmer allegedly healed the blind Viennese pianist Maria Theresia Paradis, before she lapsed back into blindness shortly thereafter (HKG 1,9:281). Mesmer immediately left Vienna for Paris, where he would find considerably more support for his work. For more on the role of Mesmerism in “Abdias,” see Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition*, 225–26. For more on Stifter's treatment of Mesmerism, see Johann Lachinger, “Mesmerismus und Magnetismus in Stifters Werk,” in *Stifter Symposion: Im Rahmen des Internationalen Brucknerfestes '78 Linz; 27.-30. September 1979, Vorträge und Lesungen*, ed. Johann Lachinger (Linz: Linzer Veranstaltungsgesellschaft mbH, Adalbert-Stifter-Institut des Landes Oberösterreich, 1978), 16–23.

<sup>121</sup> The doctrine stated that different stimuli would evoke the same response when applied to a given sensory nerve. Conversely, the same stimulus applied to different sensory nerves would evoke the response specific to that nerve. Müller-Tamm, “Das Vikariat der Sinne,” 294.

<sup>122</sup> Müller-Tamm, 295. Thus, Müller-Tamm argues, the general assumption that the doctrine was anti-synesthetic is incorrect.

<sup>123</sup> Müller-Tamm, 302–5.

model with its staging of Molyneux's Problem, synesthesia with its descriptions of Ditha's sensory impressions, and Mesmerism with its references to Ditha and Abdias' shared affinity for electricity. (A link to empathy aesthetic likewise begins to crystallize in this narrative, but is dealt with more extensively in Chapter Two.) "Abdias" is not concerned with the correctness of any one of these scientific models and instead links the scientific questions to literary ones. What does it mean for a subject to perceive the world in a new way? What does a literature based on this problem look like?

The literary import of these questions quickly becomes apparent when the narrative links familial recognition to broader questions about the perception and recognition of the world and the role of language therein. Most immediately, the narrative begins to open up the recognition scene to encompass not just the familial unit, but the world as such. The narrative describes how Ditha gradually becomes accustomed to light, and then illustrates Molyneux's Problem once again. "[E]ndlich wurden die letzten Vorhänge der Fenster empor gezogen – – und die ganze große Erde und der ungeheure Himmel schlug in das winzig kleine Auge hinein. – – Sie aber wußte nicht, daß das alles nicht sie sei, sondern ein Anderes, außer ihr Befindliches, das sie zum Theile bisher gegriffen habe" (HKG 1,5:322-23).<sup>124</sup> As in the previous scene when Ditha recognizes her father, here, too, she does not understand that the things she sees are the same things she knows by touch. This passage also gets at the utter shock accompanying the onset of vision: the entirety of the heavens and the earth pierce Ditha's eyes, which are exposed to the

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<sup>124</sup> See here Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne,'" 180. "Anhand der Figur Ditha stellt der Text Merkmale der Wahrnehmung *vor* ihrer psychologischen Verfestigung in der Erfahrung und *vor* der Fixierung im konventionell Sprachlichen dar. Die Identität von sinnlichem Reiz und kognitivem Konzept eines Gegenstandes ist nämlich – anders als in der 'normalen' Erfahrung – für Ditha nicht unmittelbar gegeben, sondern muss mühsam (wieder) erlernt werden." Emphasis in original.

world in its overwhelming bountifulness. She is unable, however, to distinguish between herself and the world, and assumes everything she sees is part of her own body.<sup>125</sup> The object of recognition is here generalized: the question is no longer (just) whether Ditha can recognize her father, but also whether she can recognize the world as such. As a result, recognition is no longer confined to a private, intimate setting; it opens up onto the entire world.

Part of this process involves Ditha learning to distinguish herself from the exterior world. The narrative's descriptions of this learning process yet again invoke Molyneux's Problem.

Abdias fing nun an, Ditha sehen zu lehren. Er nahm sie bei der Hand, daß sie fühle, daß das dieselbe Hand sei, die sie so oft an der ihrigen im Zimmer oder im Garten herum geführt hatte. [...] Er führte sie einen Schritt von dem Sessel weg, dann ließ er sie die Lehne greifen, die ihr so lieb geworden war, dann die Seitenarme des Stuhles, die Füße, und anderes – und sagte, das sei ihr Sessel, auf dem sie immer gerne gesessen sei. Dann hob er den Schemel empor, und ließ sie ihn fühlen, und sagte: hierauf habe sie die Füße gehabt. Dann ließ er sie ihre eigene Hand, ihren Arm, die Spitze ihres Fußes sehen – er gabe ihr den Stab, dessen sie sich gerne zum Fühlen bedient hatte, ließ sie ihn nehmen, und die Finger sichtbar um ihn herum schlingen – er ließ sie sein Gewand greifen, gab ihr ein Stückchen Leinwand, führte ihre Hand darüber hin, und sagte, das sei das Linnen, welches sie so liebe und gerne befühlt habe. Dann setzte er sie wieder in den Sessel zurück, kauerte vor sie hin, zeigte mit den zwei Zeigefingern seiner Hände auf seine Augen, und sagte, das seien die Dinge, mit denen sie nun alles, was um sie herum sei, sehe [...]. Er ließ sie die Augenlieder schließen, und mit ihren Fingern die durch sie verhüllten Aepfel greifen. Sie kannte die Kugeln gar wohl, die sie öfter an sich befühlt hatte – that aber die Finger schnell weg und öffnete die Lieder wieder. Er wies ihr nun, da sie saß, alle Dinge des Zimmers, die sie sehr gut kannte, und sagte ihr, wie sie dieselben gebraucht habe. (HKG 1,5:323-24)

Abdias teaches Ditha how to “see” by having her touch familiar objects, which he then names.<sup>126</sup>

(Recall here Aristotle's discussion of the educational component of recognition: we learn about

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<sup>125</sup> For more on the subject/object distinction here, see Kühlmann, “Von Diderot bis Stifter,” 405–6.

<sup>126</sup> See Utz, “Die Lücken, die jetzt sind,” 263. “Synästhetische Wahrnehmungsverknüpfungen, die in der Romantik zu einer neuen Mythisierung der Blindheit führen, werden vom aufklärerischen Sehlehrer Abdias zurückbuchstabiert. Er nimmt ernst, was man spätestens seit Diderots *Lettre sur les aveugles* weiß: Sehen muss gelernt werden, in Analogie zur Sprache und mit Hilfe der Sprache. [...] [B]egriffen ist ein Ding nur, wenn es auch benannt ist.” This learning process, in which the world is *named*, reverberates throughout Stifter's work, most notably in

reality via the recognition intrinsic to mimetic pleasure.) She touches her chair – including its arms and feet – and then her footrest, before viewing her own hands, arms, and feet. At stake is more than just the subject/object distinction, for Ditha learns to *identify* her body with extracorporeal objects. That is, *recognizing the world becomes a way of recognizing the self*. The passage then highlights the means by which recognition occurs: Ditha grasps the cane she uses to help orient herself in space, then Abdias’ linen garb, and then her own eyes. The linen reference will remain oblique until later in the narrative, when it is associated more directly with the visual organs. But the other two details indicate a sensory transition, from the haptic prosthetic (Ditha’s cane) to the visual organs themselves.

The link between vision and language suggested in this passage is soon drawn out further. “[S]ie [die Augen] fingen zu reden an, wie Menschenaugen reden – und Fröhlichkeit oder Neugierde oder Staunen *malte sich* darinnen – auch Liebe *malte sich*, wenn sie plaudernd und schmeichelnd auf Abdias Züge schaute, die nur ihr allein nicht häßlich erschienen; denn was die Außenwelt für ihre Augen war, das war er für ihr Herz – ja er war ihr noch mehr, als die Außenwelt; denn sie glaubte immer, er sei es, der ihr diese ganze äußere Welt gegeben habe” (HKG 1,5:327-28; emphasis added).<sup>127</sup> Several aspects of this passage should be drawn out. First, multiple sensory and medial registers are invoked simultaneously. Ditha’s eyes *speak*, and

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“Granit” (*Bunte Steine*, 1853). See also Brodersen, “Die Wirklichkeit im ‘Hohlspiegel der Sinne,” 180. “Anhand der Figur Ditha stellt der Text Merkmale der Wahrnehmung *vor* ihrer psychologischen Verfestigung in der Erfahrung und *vor* der Fixierung im konventionell Sprachlichen dar. Die Identität von sinnlichem Reiz und kognitivem Konzept eines Gegenstandes ist nämlich – anders als in der ‘normalen’ Erfahrung – für Ditha nicht unmittelbar gegeben, sondern muss mühsam (wieder) erlernt werden, zum Beispiel indem bereits bekannte Gegenstände erneut abgetastet werden.”

<sup>127</sup> While Ditha is blind, her eyes remain in a language-less void: “In derselben sprachlosen Ruhe blieb das schöne Auge” (HKG 1,5:311-12).

her feelings become visible, *painting themselves* upon her visual organs.<sup>128</sup> Second, when she gazes at Abdias – while speaking – she perceives him with the same “geistige Augen” that her mother had just before her death. Finally, Abdias is more important to Ditha than the external world, because she believes he has given her this very world. In other words, the world and the family are utterly inextricable from one another: *the world belongs to this genealogy*.

Ditha’s speech patterns reflect this same ambiguous sensory and medial register. Initially, when she was still blind, she and her father spoke a language of their own. “Er lehrte sie Worte sagen, deren Bedeutung sie nicht hatte – sie sagte die Worte nach und erfand andere, welche aus ihrem inneren Zustande genommen waren, die er nicht verstand, und die er wieder lernte” (HKG 1,5:314-15). This linguistic uniqueness persists even after Ditha is able to see. “Ihre vergangene, lange, vertraute Nacht reichte nun in ihren Tag herüber, und jene willkürlichen von andern Menschen nicht verstandenen *Bilder* ihrer innern Welt, die sie sich damals gemacht hatte, mischten sich nun unter ihre äußeren [...]; es entstand eine Denk- und Redeweise, die den andern, welche sie gar nicht kannten, so fremd war, wie wenn etwa eine redende Blume vor

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<sup>128</sup> Herder links the representational modus of painting with the perceptual abilities of the newly sighted: lacking depth perception, such individuals view reality as a single plane. “Der Blinde, der das Gesicht bekam, sah alle Gegenstände, wie eine große kolorierte Bilderfläche unmittelbar auf seinem Auge liegen: eben so sehen Kinder: eben so würden wir auch sehen, wenn wir nicht durch lange Erfahrung diese Fläche gleichsam vom Auge weiter weggerückt, und von der verschiedenen Entfernung der Dinge Begriff erlangt hätten. Durch das Gesicht unmittelbar erlangen wir diese also nicht: alles malet sich, nur mit verschiedner Größe auf eine Retina. Der weite sich vor uns herabsenkende Himmel, und der entfernte Wald, und das nähere Feld, und das vorliegende Wasser, alles ist ursprünglich eine Fläche. Siehe da, den ersten Stoff zur Malerei! Sie ahmt diese große Tafel der Natur mit allen Bildern im kleinen nach, und gibt auch, wie diese Himmel, Erde, Meer und Bäume und Menschen auf Einer Fläche. Diese Repräsentation der Dinge *nach ihrem äußern Anschein in Einem Flächenraume*, oder ihre Gestalt, wie sie sich *auf Einem geraden Continuum mit andern uns vorspiegeln*, das ist der erste Begriff der Malerei.” Herder, “Die kritischen Wälder zur Ästhetik,” 320. Emphasis in original.

ihnen stände” (HKG 1,5:329-30; emphasis added).<sup>129</sup> As Cornelia Blasberg shows, Ditha’s poeticity is linked not only with Herderian *Ursprache*, but also with the model of language Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert developed in his foundational texts on Mesmerism. Schubertian *Ursprache* manifests itself “nur fragmentiert, entstellt, verzerrt; in Prophetien, in der Poesie und im Traum wirke sie so dunkel und angsterregend, daß man sie in die Sprache des Verstandes übersetzen müsse. [...] Schuberts Analyse der Traumsprache schärft den Blick dafür, daß Ditha in Stifters Erzählung wenig direkt spricht, daß Abdias sie stets als Zuhörer, Interpret und Übersetzer begleitet.”<sup>130</sup> The conception of Abdias as a translator or *Mittler* links up with both biblical prophetic discourse<sup>131</sup> and with anti-Semitic discourse, which treated Jews as intermediaries in both economic and cultural spheres,<sup>132</sup> and this register becomes clearer in the descriptions of his and Ditha’s multilingualism. “[M]it Ditha sprach er am liebsten arabisch. Da

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<sup>129</sup> For a reading of the flower metaphors in terms of the “Blumenkette” described at the novella’s outset, see Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 60–81. Brodersen reads this linguistic difference in terms of physiology, but I don’t find much in the narrative to support her claim: “Der Erzähler bewertet diesen Ditha eigentümlichen Sprachhabitus als Vermischung von ‘Tag- und Traumleben’, also als Übergriff der Phantasie auf die Wahrnehmung (329). Diese Beurteilung erscheint allerdings unpräzise, denn im Fall Dithas kann nicht von einem Übergreifen einer frei flottierenden Phantasie auf die Realität gesprochen werden. Vielmehr treten die Abweichungen in der Wahrnehmung selbst auf, betreffen also die unrichtige subjektive Interpretation *tatsächlicher* äußerer Eindrücke.”

<sup>130</sup> Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition*, 228. For another reading of Ditha’s language in terms of Herderian *Ursprache*, see Schäublin, “Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen,” 111.

<sup>131</sup> See here Mautz, “Das antagonistische Naturbild in Stifters ‘Studien,’” 44–45. “Nicht nur die Geburt, auch das Kind selbst [Ditha] wird als ein Wunder beschrieben: Während seinen Eltern tiefschwarze Augen haben, deutet die unerklärliche ‘wundervolle Bläue’ seiner Augen auf die des Himmels, d.h. auf seinen göttlichen Ursprung. Evident wird dieser Sinnbezug erst durch die leitmotivisch-metaphorische Funktion der Himmelsbläue (Flachs, Cyanen, Lieblingsfarbe) in den Schlußpartien der Erzählung. Als Abwandlung der mythischen Gestalt des göttlichen Kindes personifiziert Ditha das wiedergeborene Wesen des Abdias, seine Bestimmung zum ‘Seher’, der ‘göttliche Dinge zu erzählen’ hat.” For more on Ditha as a Christian figure, see Metz, “The Jew as Sign in Stifter’s *Abdias*,” 228.

<sup>132</sup> See Rachel Seelig, “The Middleman: Ludwig Strauss’s German-Hebrew Bilingualism,” *Prooftexts* 33, no. 1 (Winter 2013): esp. 79-83.

er aber zuweilen eine andere Sprache des Morgenlandes gegen sie gebrauchte, da sie auch sowohl von seinem Munde also auch von dem der Dienstleute die Landessprache lernte: so kannte sie eigentlich ein Gemisch von allem, drückte sich darin aus, und hatte eine Gedankenweise, die dieser Sprache angemessen war” (HKG 1,5:335). As Metz notes, the text here picks up on the derogatory association of Yiddish with *Mauscheln*.<sup>133</sup> Once again, the sensory perceptual register is brought into association with the text’s normative discourse. Ditha’s otherness is both a result of her late eyesight and the non-German languages she hears and speaks at home.

Despite the strong associations between Ditha and these various discourses, especially those of romanticism, she is not an unequivocally romantic figure.<sup>134</sup> Take, for instance, her fondness for blue flowers:

Als sie einmal etwas weit von ihrem Hause waren, durch den Föhrenwald gingen [...] und jenseits desselben an einem großen glühenden Flachsfelde standen, rief sie aus: ‘Vater, sieh nur, wie der ganze Himmel auf den Spitzen dieser grünen stehenden Fäden klingt!’

Sie verlangte hierauf, daß ein Stück davon nach Hause genommen würde. Er aber führte sie näher, zog einige Fäden aus, zeigte ihr die feinen kleinen Blumen, und machte ihr so klar, daß man nicht gleich ein ganzes Stück von diesem Blau wegnehmen könne. Dafür versprach er ihr, daß sie bald zu Hause ein solches blaues Feld haben werde.

So sprach sie auch von violetten Klängen, und sagte, daß sie ihr lieber seien, als die, welche aufrecht stehen und widerwärtig seien, wie glühende Stäbe. Ihre Stimme, die sie in der letzten Zeit ihrer Blindheit immer lieber zum Singen, als zum Sprechen erhoben hatte, wendete sich frühzeitig einem sanften klaren Alte zu. *So lebte sie eine Welt aus*

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<sup>133</sup> See here Metz, “The Jew as Sign in Stifter’s *Abdias*,” 229. “Ditha’s peculiar language [...] is not simply ‘poetry arriving from the East,’ Herderesque *Ursprache*, or even Austrian polyglotism. It is also a covert take on the stereotype of Jewish *Mauscheln* and as such ‘proof’ of the fact that, despite a German appearance, Ditha and her ‘poetry’ – that crucial semiotic locus of the romantic construction of Teutonic identity – can only be essenceless imitations or mimicry of what in ethnic Germans would be ‘national soul.’” The “andere Sprache des Morgenlandes” is never specified, and given *Abdias*’ origins in North Africa, might be Ladino, rather than Yiddish. My thanks to Matt Johnson for pointing this out.

<sup>134</sup> Utz suggests that Ditha is less “romantic” in the *Studienfassung* than in the *Journalfassung*. Utz, “‘Die Lücken, die jetzt sind,’” 270.

*Sehen und Blindheit, und so war ja auch das Blau ihrer Augen, so wie das unsers Himmels, aus Licht und Nacht gewoben.* (HKG 1,5:330; emphasis added)

Ditha's impression of the flax field is intensely synesthetic: "*sieh nur*, wie der ganze Himmel auf den Spitzen dieser grünen stehenden Fäden *klings!*"<sup>135</sup> Lacking the appropriate language to identify what she sees, Ditha likens the blue mass to the sky, a monolithic entity described again in vaguely musical terms as a "Stück." Yet the synesthetic impressions soon give way to a different perceptual mode. The world perceived by Ditha's eyes is likened to the sky, which is composed of a mixture of light and night. Here, Ditha's eyes become indistinguishable from the blue sky and the blue flowers, for which the sky is already a metonym.<sup>136</sup> As in the earlier scene, where Ditha saw her body (arms/feet) in exterior objects (chair arms/feet), here, too, her body is identified with the world. It is this similarity between perceiving subject and perceived object, grounded in human physiology, that breaks with romantic models of perception and begins to evoke later doctrines of empathy aesthetics. In other words, this passage contains a *discursive* shift. Just as Ditha embodies the *intermixture* of sight and blindness, reality and imagination, so too does the text join together multiple discursive systems.

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<sup>135</sup> Ditha's synesthesia can also be understood through Herder. Schäublin again: "Die Ausbildung der Sinne ist ihm [Herder] ein Vorgang der Differenzierung aus einem einheitlichen Grund heraus. [...] In der Zeit ihrer [Dithas] Blindheit haben sich Gefühl und Gehör, unbeeinflusst vom Gesichtssinn, so weit ausgebildet, daß sie nun auch das Sehen prägen, das sonst die andern Sinne verdrängt." Schäublin, "Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen," 111. For more on the Novalis reference, see Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition*, 224. The critical commentary also notes that Ditha's synesthesia "ist wohl auch ein Zeichen von Stifters Kritik an ihrer Erziehung" (HKG 1,9:298).

<sup>136</sup> Several commentators have noted that both Ditha's blue eyes and blond hair ("die Haare, so gelb und klar wie goldener Flachs," HKG 1,5:310) correspond to the plant. Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition*, 217; Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 79. This might also be read as an example of what Brodersen terms Stifter's "Körperlandschaften," i.e. figurations of landscapes that magnify the body. Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne,'" 208–14.

Abdias does indeed plant a flax field for Ditha, and it is while gazing upon this expanse of blue flowers that the second fateful lightning strike occurs. This scene, which contains the only substantial piece of dialogue in the entire narrative, is of particular importance because of the way this articulated language brings together the text's *repetitive* nature, its increasing emphasis on openness rather than privacy, and a new focus on knowledge transmission. Stifter makes several important revisions, and a comparison of the 1842 *Journalfassung* with the 1847 *Studienfassung* reveals the changed status of knowledge in the scene. First, the *Journalfassung*:

Ditha hatte ihre Gewitterfreudigkeit und sagte zu ihm, *während sie seine Hände streichelte*: 'Sieh, wie es nur so herrlich, so unsäglich herrlich ist da oben – weil du nun da bist, o Vater, so ist es mir noch lieber. Ich will dir nun erzählen, was ich dachte, als ich eben dort bei dem Linnenfelde stand – glaubst du nicht auch, die Wolken sind ja gar nicht dicht, mir wäre leid, wenn sie schwere Tropfen hätten, und die blauen, feinen Linnenblüthen herabschlugen – sie ist ein Freund des Menschen, diese Pflanze, das dachte ich mir eben, als ich so dort stand, wie sie den Menschen lieb habe. – *Sieh nur*, erst hat sie die gar so liebe Blüthe auf dem zarten grünen Säulchen, dann wenn sie todt ist, gibt sie ihm die seidenweiche, silbergraue Faser zu dem Gewebe, das seine eigentlichste Wohnung ist von der Wiege bis zum Grabe – wie sie nur so wunderbar zu dem weißen, lichten Schnee zu bleichen ist, dann legt man das neugeborne Kind hinein, und umhüllt damit die Gliederchen – der Braut geben sie es mit, *siehst du*, und je größer die Berge dieses Schnees sind, je reicher ist sie, und wenn wir todt sind, hüllen sie die weißen Tücher um uns.' – – – Sie schwieg plötzlich, ihm war, als hätte er seitwärts an der Garbe einen sanften Schein lodern sehen [...]; [...] wie er hinblickte, war schon Alles vorüber, nur ein kurzes heiseres Krachen war auf den Schein gefolgt; aber Ditha lehnte gegen eine Garbe zurück und war todt. (HKG 1,2:155-56; emphasis added)

Again, multiple sensory registers are engaged simultaneously. Ditha strokes her father's hands as she emphasizes three times the visual register in her speech ('Sieh,' 'Sieh nur,' 'siehst du').

Again, the sky and the flax flowers are brought into close association, as Ditha discusses the atmospheric phenomena 'da oben' and the resultant effects upon the flax below. Again, there is confusion between the part and the whole. Even though Ditha speaks of flowers, she views them

in terms of their composite product, describing not *Flachsblüten* but *Linnenblüten*.<sup>137</sup> Linen, Ditha remarks, accompanies one from the cradle to the grave. From the moment one enters the world, linen marks the point where the individual meets the world, where subject and object collide. Linen appears at three prominent stages in life: birth, marriage, and death, all three of which are represented in the narrative: the birth of Ditha, the marriage of Abdias and Deborah, and the deaths of Esther, Deborah, and now Ditha. In other words, linen provides the substrate for the genealogical continuity of the text. And this at a material level as well, for linen rags long provided the raw material for paper.<sup>138</sup>

The general thrust of the passage remains the same in the revised *Studienfassung*: Ditha is struck and killed by lightning while telling her father about flax. But the revised and extended passage contains a few subtle changes:

Ditha hatte ihre Gewitterfreudigkeit, sie wendete sich gegen Abend, und sagte: ‘Wie es so herrlich ist, wie es so unsäglich herrlich ist. Weil du nun auch da bist, o Vater, so ist es mir noch lieber.’ (HKG 1,5:338)

‘Glaubst du nicht auch,’ sagte Ditha, ‘daß die Wolken gar nicht dicht sind, und daß sie gewiß nicht große und gar schwere Tropfen werden fallen lassen? Es wäre mir leid, wenn sie die feinen schönen Linnenblüthen herabschlagen, die heute erst aufgebrochen sind.’  
‘Ich denke, daß sogar schwere Tropfen die blauen Blätter nicht abzuschlagen vermögen, weil sie erst heute aufgeblüht sind, und noch strenge haften,’ sagte Abdias.  
‘Ich liebe die Flachspflanzen sehr,’ fing nach einer Weile Schweigens Ditha wieder an, ‘es hat mir Sara auf mein Befragen vor langer Zeit, da noch das traurige schwarze Tuch

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<sup>137</sup> For a detailed treatment of the significance of textiles in “Abdias,” see Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 74–81.

<sup>138</sup> For an overview of paper-making in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Dard Hunter, *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1978), 309–99. Beginning in the eighteenth century, the increasing volume of printed matter meant that the linen and cotton rags needed for paper production were soon in short supply. Jacob Christian Schäffer was one of the first to propose alternative materials, but it was not until the nineteenth century that wood pulp became more widespread in the industry. Friedrich Gottlob Keller patented a wood-grinding machine in 1840, and this invention, together with the paper machine (invented in 1798 by Nicholas-Louis Robert), “[enabled] the paper and printing industries to make their marvelous expansion in succeeding years” (376). I have not been able to determine what type of paper Stifter used.

in meinem Haupte war, vieles von dem Flachse *erzählt*, aber ich habe es damals nicht verstanden. *Jetzt aber verstehe ich es und habe es selbst beobachtet*. Sie ist ein Freund des Menschen, diese Pflanze, *hat Sara gesagt*, sie hat den Menschen lieb. Ich weiß es jetzt, daß es so ist. Zuerst hat sie die schöne Blüthe auf den grünen Säulchen, dann, wenn sie todt ist, und durch die Luft und das Wasser zubereitet wird, gibt sie uns die weichen silbergrauen Fasern, aus denen die Menschen das Gewebe machen, welches, *wie schon Sara sagte*, ihre eigentlichste Wohnung ist, von der Wiege bis zum Grabe. *Siehst du*, das ist auch wahr: - wie sie nur so wunderbar, diese Pflanze, zu dem weißen lichten Schnee zu bleichen ist – dann legt man die Kinder, wenn sie recht klein sind, wie ich war, hinein, und hüllt die Glieder zu – *ihrer Tochter hat Sara viel Linnen mit gegeben*, da sie fort zog, um den fremden Mann zu heirathen, der sie wollte; sie war eine Braut, und je größere Berge dieses Schnee's man einer Braut mitgeben kann, desto reicher ist sie – unsere Knechte tragen die weißen Linnenärmel auf den bloßen Armen – und wenn wir todt sind, hüllen sie die weißen Tücher um uns, *weißt du.*' – –

Sie schwieg plötzlich. Ihm war es, als hätte er seitwärts an der Garbe einen sanften Schein lodern gesehen. [...] Da er hinblickte, war schon alles vorüber. Es war auf den Schein ein kurzes heiseres Krachen gefolgt, und Ditha lehnte gegen eine Garbe zurück, und war todt. (HKG 1,5:339-40; emphasis added)

The confluence of sensory registers is removed. Ditha no longer touches her father's hands and no longer emphasizes the visual register to such a strong degree – the two visual imperatives from the *Journalfassung* ('Sieh,' 'Siehe nur') are excised. The revised passage also returns to the question of knowledge. In the *Journalfassung*, Ditha had relayed her own thoughts about flax, but in the *Studienfassung* the information all derives from Sara, who is mentioned here for the first and only time ('es hat mir Sara [...] erzählt,' 'hat Sara gesagt,' 'wie schon Sara sagte,' 'ihrer Tochter hat Sara viel Linnen mit gegeben'). Ditha, unable to see the flax for herself, had to rely upon Sara's descriptions. Once she gained the sense of sight, Ditha was able to confirm this information – "Jetzt aber verstehe ich es und habe es selbst beobachtet." Not only this: the sense of sight allows her to perceive and understand linen in a *new way*, since she had long enjoyed touching it.<sup>139</sup> At issue now is the *repetition* of cognition, its transmission from one

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<sup>139</sup> "Sie streichelte öfter mit ihren kunstreichen Händen, nachdem sie ein wenig in der Luft gesucht hatte, seine harten Wangen, und seine schlichten dünner werdenden Haare. Zuweilen legte er Geschenke in ihre Hand, ein Stückchen Stoff zu einem Kleide, dessen Feinheit sie

person to another. This is the last thing Ditha will express before her death: “‘weißt du’ – –.” The invisible violence, represented only by successive dashes, itself serves as another literary repetition: of the famous dash in Kleist’s *Die Marquise von O.*<sup>140</sup>

The *Studienfassung* suggests here the potential for the operation of recognition to expand beyond the confines of the family. The fact that Ditha’s re-cognition of flax/linen depends on the transmission of information from someone *outside* implicates a broader community. This is important to underscore because Ditha’s final speech is about a universal experience, about one’s orientation to life and death. The “Linnenblüthen,” representative though they might be of Ditha’s body, are also representative of the fate of every individual. That is, Ditha’s body stands in for the whole of humankind: linen will accompany us all from cradle to grave. This universalizing gesture finds additional expression in another repetition: just as a rainbow had appeared after the first lightning strike, so too does a rainbow appear after the second. “Das Gewitter, welches dem Kinde mit seiner weichen Flamme das Leben von dem Haupte geküßt hatte, schüttete an dem Tage *noch auf alle Wesen* reichlichen Segen herab, und hatte, wie jenes, das ihr das Augenlicht gegeben, mit einem schönen Regenbogen im weiten Morgen geschlossen”

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greifen konnte, und verstand; namentlich Linnen, das sie sehr liebte, dessen Glätte, Weiche und Reinheit sie besonders zu beurtheilen verstand” (HKG 1,5:315).

<sup>140</sup> Stifter’s punctuation is inconsistent and frequently excessive, but the dashes in both versions (four in the *Journalfassung* and two in the *Studienfassung*) replace the direct portrayal of the event. The gendered violence here is more broadly representative of Stifter’s depictions of sexually mature women. As Ann Reidy puts it, “Death is routinely presented as the inevitable, logical consequence for sexually mature or expressive women within Stifter’s narrative women.” While she makes this point in her discussion of “Die Narrenburg,” she also notes that it applies to Ditha in “Abdias” and Gabriele in “Brigitte.” Ann Elizabeth Reidy, “Histories of Realism: Stifter, Storm, and Meyer in the Age of Ranke” (Doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 1997), 83. For a discussion of Ditha’s sexuality within the context of Jewish assimilation, see Helfer, “Natural Anti-Semitism: Stifter’s *Abdias*,” 282–83. For more on the anti-Semitic implications of this scene, see Metz, “The Jew as Sign in Stifter’s *Abdias*,” 229.

(HKG 1,5:341; emphasis added). The storm blesses the community with a divine covenant represented by the rainbow.<sup>141</sup>

The story ends as it began, emphasizing once again the limits of knowledge. After Ditha's death, Abdias apparently does nothing but sit in front of his house, for how long, no one knows, not even Abdias. "[U]nd er wußte nicht, wie lange er gesessen war, denn *nach glaublichen Aussagen* war er wahnsinnig geworden" (HKG 1,5:341; emphasis added). Abdias lives several decades more, but how long exactly likewise remains a mystery. "Dreißig Jahre nach dem Tode Ditha's lebte Abdias noch. Wie lange nachher, weiß man nicht" (HKG 1,5:342). The status of knowledge becomes even more fraught, with the transmitted narrative itself subject to the same uncertainty that dominates at the thematic level.<sup>142</sup>

"Abdias" is a story about the fraught nature of repetition, about the impossibility of decisively replacing [*ersetzen*] one's mode of perceiving and understanding of the world. It is, finally, about the potential for realism to supplant romanticism. When Ditha dies in front of the field of blue flowers, Stifter is signaling his reception and productive transformation of romanticism: in other words, this is not the *Ersetzen* of a literary legacy, but rather a response thereto that acknowledges and works in concert with a prior mode of sense-making.<sup>143</sup> Just as

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<sup>141</sup> Helfer reads this as a reflection of the text's underlying anti-Semitism: "Reading the biblical gloss, presented here in the form of a natural sign, together with the other nature metaphors in the passage reveals a subtextual – and perhaps subliminal – anti-assimilationist message couched in completely natural terms: the sexually mature Jewess Ditha, visually indistinguishable from the Austrians, would give birth to Jewish children visually indistinguishable from Austrians were she to go forth and multiply, and this is why her death brings 'abundant blessings' to the local population." Helfer, "Natural Anti-Semitism: Stifter's *Abdias*," 283.

<sup>142</sup> Utz shows that the narrator in the *Studienfassung* has considerably less knowledge of the events than the narrator in the *Journalfassung*. See Utz, "Die Lücken, die jetzt sind," 252–55.

<sup>143</sup> See Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne,'" 182. Brodersen argues that the text breaks with romanticism by associating it with the pathological. "Das pathologische Abweichende in Dithas Wahrnehmung soll mit den Programmbegriffen des Romantischen verbunden werden, das wie schon so oft als Gegenprinzip des Wirklichen erscheint. Dabei geht

Ditha must draw on multiple sensory registers to recognize reality, so, too, must Stifter draw from multiple literary historical registers. For all the overwrought symbolism in the narrative, Ditha is not *merely* a romantic figure. Despite her links with the period, the narrative is preoccupied with her physical development, her mode of being *in the real world* and her *repeated* perception thereof. Stifter, in other words, *modifies* some of the central topoi of romanticism in his early realist narrative, such that the reader must come to see his literary language – its transmitted motifs and structures – in a fundamentally new way.

Roman Jakobson famously describes realism in relative terms. While a given artistic movement seeks to approximate reality with a codified set of norms, another movement might reject these norms as inaccurate, instead deforming them to represent reality more accurately. The latter will interrupt the process of recognition that governs the reception of the work: “As tradition accumulates, the painted image becomes an ideogram, a formula, to which the object portrayed is linked by contiguity. Recognition [*uznavanie*] becomes instantaneous. We no longer see a picture. The ideogram needs to be deformed. The artist-innovator must impose a new form upon our perception, if we are to detect in a given thing those traits which went unnoticed the

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es dem Text aber nicht mehr hauptsächlich um die ideologische Denunziation romantischen Schwärmertums. Vielmehr wird vorgeführt, dass das Realitätsprinzip selbst anfällig ist: Wo die Wahrnehmung in ihre körperlichen Konstituenten zerfällt, erscheint das ‘Romantische’ als pathologisches Symptom.” She argues that Stifter’s early texts are generally concerned with the realist replacement of romanticism, but links this primarily to scientific discourse. “Das Problem, um das die Texte kreisen, besteht letztlich darin, eine Darstellungssprache zu finden, die ‘hinter’ das naive (romantische) Phänomen blickt, aber gleichzeitig wissenschaftlich abstrakte Erkenntnisse in den Vordergrund der Naturbeobachtung holt, um diese an den Phänomenen selbst sichtbar zu machen und an die menschliche Lebenswelt anzuschließen” (109). I address the limitations of this approach in the next section. Mautz has a decidedly more pessimistic reading of the end of the novella: “In der Gestalt des Abdias hat Stifter sich selbst dargestellt [...], im Schicksal Dithas die Problematik seiner eigenen Dichtung, in den Lebensbedingungen, die ‘das wahre und wahrhaftige Menschenleben’ versagen und den Geist der Poesie erlöschen lassen, die Welt, in der er selber lebte.” Mautz, “Das antagonistische Naturbild in Stifters ‘Studien,’” 51.

day before.”<sup>144</sup> Stifter not only transforms some of the most prominent romantic motifs; he also turns the concomitant disruption of “instantaneous recognition” into the motivic and operative center of his narrative. The three recognition scenes in “Abdias” depict disruptions that restore or draw out bonds of familial love, and the second lightning strike, a repetition of the third such disruption, merely underscores the birth of repetitive realist poetics out of the spirit of romanticism. Stifter would later lay out this program more explicitly in the preface to *Bunte Steine*, but he renders it in literary form already a decade earlier. Yet “Abdias” provides only an eclipsed view of this future program. Clarifying the link between realist aesthetics and poetics is another text, namely “Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842” and its reception of sensory perceptual discourse.

#### **POST-ROMANTIC POETICS: “DIE SONNENFINSTERNIß AM 8. JULI 1842”**

The “Todeskuß” signaling the birth of poetic realism in “Abdias” is further developed in the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay, which picks up on this same metaphor to describe the apocalyptic transformation of reality that occurs during the solar eclipse.<sup>145</sup> Quoting liberally from a variety of sources, from the Gospels to Lord Byron to Jean Paul, Stifter positions within literary history his own articulation of the event, which, as Edda Ziegler shows, was a “mediales Ereignis” in its own right.<sup>146</sup> The essay was published alongside four other accounts of the event in the *Wiener*

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<sup>144</sup> *Uznavanie* is the standard Russian translation of *anagnorisis*. Roman Jakobson, “On Realism in Art,” in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Chicago/Normal: Dalkey Archive Press, 2002), 39–40. See also Downing’s discussion of this text in Downing, *Double Exposures*, 4–5.

<sup>145</sup> The critical commentary points out the recurrence of the “Todeskuß” motif in “Abdias” and the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay (HKG 1,9:299).

<sup>146</sup> Edda Ziegler, “Im Zirkelodem der Sterne: Über die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. July 1842 in Wien,” in *Stifter-Studien: Ein Festgeschenk für Wolfgang Frühwald zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Walter Hettche, Johannes John, and Sibylle von Steinsdorff (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000), 4.

*Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*, a periodical where many of Stifter's other works appeared. A representative product of the burgeoning periodical industry, the *Wiener Zeitschrift* appealed to a wide, increasingly female, readership.<sup>147</sup> The discursive diversity of such publications is captured by the final fashion page of the issue from July 21, 1842 (Figure 4). As Ziegler describes it: "Die beiden Modelle posieren vor ungewöhnlichen Accessoires. An die Stelle versatzstückhafter Exterieurs, Interieurs und Schönheitsutensilien tritt ein Fernrohr, postiert in einer Fensternische, und die Damen halten ein Manuscript in Händen, betitelt *Beschreibung der Sonnenfinsternis 1842.*"<sup>148</sup> This issue represented the conclusion to the periodical's attention to the event, and the depicted documents thus serve as a retrospective reference both to the preceding issues and the event itself. The woman holding the documents faces away from the telescope, which still stands in the window thirteen days after the eclipse. Like this issue of the *Wiener Zeitschrift*, Stifter's essay concludes by reflecting upon the experience of the event and its subsequent medial transmission. Why does this event grab our attention, and in what medium could one best capture the event, retrospectively?

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<sup>147</sup> Helmstetter, *Die Geburt des Realismus*, 76–77.

<sup>148</sup> Ziegler, "Im Zirkelodem der Sterne: Über die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. July 1842 in Wien," 4.



Figure 4. The final page in the issue of the Wiener Zeitschrift from 21. July 1842. <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wzz&datum=18420721&seite=9&zoom=33> Last accessed September 24, 2018.

Both questions are central to Stifter's realism, and the aim of this section is to clarify how these questions of representation derive from the operation of recognition described above. The central link between "Abdias" and the "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay lies in the texts' engagement with language, specifically the means by which one's altered perception of reality can best be articulated. While "Abdias" frames realist epistemological questions initially in terms of interpersonal recognition and then opens these questions onto the recognition of reality, the "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay is concerned less with recognition and more with literature's ability to provoke the kind of defamiliarization Jakobson describes. That is, the text reflects on *the technical, poetic means by which to disrupt* the "instantaneous recognition" of reality and to restore the shock effect that accompanies the process. If "Abdias" had only obliquely associated medial forms like sculpture with recognition, the "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay attends more explicitly to this medial register. While the event itself had changed one's perception of reality, its medial representation is intended to *repeat* the process. The following remarks demonstrate that this medial dimension – the representational means by which defamiliarization can be provoked – derives from the same discursive history that informed Stifter's treatment of recognition in "Abdias." This text, too, reveals the emergence of poetic realism out of romantic and Enlightenment conceptions of sensory perception.

The essay opens with Stifter's declaration that the eclipse had prompted a shift in his knowledge. "Es gibt Dinge, die man fünfzig Jahre weiß, und im einundfünfzigsten erstaunt man über die Schwere und Furchtbarkeit ihres Inhaltes. So ist es mir mit der totalen Sonnenfinsterniß ergangen" (PRA 15:5). At first, he had understood the phenomenon in scientific terms: "[I]ch [kann] die Sache recht schön auf dem Papiere durch eine Zeichnung und Rechnung darstellen" (PRA 15:5), Stifter remarks, before listing in detail the various phases of the eclipse. He

eventually concludes: “– dieß Alles wußte ich voraus, und zwar so gut, daß ich eine totale Sonnenfinsterniß im Voraus so treu beschreiben zu können vermeinte, *als hätte ich sie bereits gesehen*” (PRA 15:5; emphasis added). Despite this knowledge, Stifter is unable to account in advance for the *emotional* experience of the eclipse. “Aber, da sie nun wirklich eintraf, [...] da geschahen freilich ganz andere Dinge [...] – Nie und nie in meinem ganzen Leben war ich so erschüttert, von Schauer und Erhabenheit so erschüttert, wie in diesen zwei Minuten – es war nicht anders, *als hätte Gott auf einmal ein deutliches Wort gesprochen*, und ich hätte es verstanden” (PRA 15:5-6; emphasis added). While science and mathematics provide Stifter with the tools to know so much about the eclipse that it is as though he has already *seen* it, the unexpected *affective* import of the actual event – pronounced as revelatory and sublime<sup>149</sup> – is linked with *acoustic* experience. As in “Abdias,” there is a split between cognition and affect, vision and the other senses. Notable, though, is Stifter’s framing of these remarks in the subjunctive. These formulations reflect not the uncertainty of sensory perception, but rather a linguistic problem. As in Molyneux’s Problem, the question is whether perception can be *articulated*.<sup>150</sup> It is here that the cognitive/affective split, borne out in the sensory perceptual split

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<sup>149</sup> Katherine Arens, *Vienna’s Dreams of Europe: Culture and Identity Beyond the Nation-State* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 143. “[T]hat rational narrative converges with an unexpected, sublime experience, proof for the heart of a kind of divine plan beyond humanly knowable. Stifter here casts faith and reason as symmetrical, or syncretic, in this event. The ‘facts’ of the event are not at issue; what needs to be understood is the rest of the event, to show its impact on individuals [...]. Here, faith meets reason at the limits where both ultimately fail.” For more on the religious context of the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay, see Potthast, “Adalbert Stifters ‘Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842’ als Dokument einer anderen Moderne,” 126–30. For more on the sublime in Stifter’s essay, see Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 18–23; Isolde Schiffermüller, *Buchstäblichkeit und Bildlichkeit bei Adalbert Stifter: Dekonstruktive Lektüren* (Bozen/Innsbruck/Wien: Edition Sturzflüge/Österreichischer StudienVerlag, 1996), 31–40.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Arens, *Vienna’s Dreams of Europe*, 146. Referencing a later passage, Arens writes: “Stifter adheres to the subjunctive to frame God’s existence, marking his passage with *as if* to stress it is a narrative rather than a truth of revelation.”

between vision/hearing, assumes medial significance, for Stifter's text must capture both. "Ich will es in diesen Zeilen versuchen, *für die tausend Augen*, die zugleich an jenem Momente zum Himmel aufblickten, *das Bild*, und *für die tausend Herzen*, die zugleich schlugen, *die Empfindung* nachzumalen und festzuhalten" (PRA 15:7; emphasis added).

At this point, it is necessary to step back from the essay to contextualize these passages. Stifter is far from alone in depicting the solar eclipse as a moment of revelation, but the significance of this register lies in its relationship to that famous feature of poetic realism: the aestheticizing principle of *Verklärung*. In a later essay ("Ausstellung des oberösterreichischen Kunstvereins," 1867), Stifter describes the world – and thus realist art – as necessarily divine: "Das höchste Werk, worin dieses Göttliche ausgedrückt wird, ist die Welt, die Gott erschaffen hat. Und wenn der Mensch das Göttliche durch die Kunst darstellen will, so ahmt er Teile der Welt nach" (HKG 8,4:352). This is not, however, to be confused with bare or naïve realism. For while the sciences merely *replicate* reality, art *does something more with it*.

Realismus (Gegenständlichkeit) wird so gerne geradehin verdammt. Aber ist nicht Gott in seiner Welt am allerrealsten? Ahmt die Kunst Theile der Welt nach, so muß sie dieselben den wirklichen so ähnlich bringen, als nur möglich ist, d.h. sie muß den höchsten Realismus besitzen. Hat sie über ihn hinaus aber nichts weiter, so ist sie nicht Kunst, der Realismus kann dann noch für die Naturwissenschaft Werth haben, für die Kunst ist er grobe Last. Idealismus ist eben jenes Göttliche, von dem ich oben sagte. Ist es in der Kunst dem größten Realismus als höchste Krone beigegeben, so steht das vollendete Kunstwerk da. Wie bloßer Realismus grobe Last ist, so ist bloßer Idealismus unsichtbarer Dunst, oder Narrheit. (HKG 8,4:353-54)

What exactly comprises this "something more" ("Idealismus"/"das Göttliche") is up for debate – Christian Begemann notes that Stifter's use of the term "Idealismus" is far from stable.<sup>151</sup> But the

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<sup>151</sup> "[D]er Begriff des Idealismus oszilliert bei Stifter zwischen objektiver Idee in einem quasi platonischen Sinn und subjektivem Ideal, und allenfalls im ersteren Fall wäre der Idealismus einem mimetischen Konzept integrierbar." Christian Begemann, "'Realismus' oder 'Idealismus'?" Über einige Schwierigkeiten bei der Rekonstruktion von Stifters Kunstbegriff," in *Adalbert Stifter: Dichter und Maler, Denkmalpfleger und Schulmann; Neue Zugänge zu seinem Werk*, ed.

point worth underscoring here is what Stifter sees as art's necessary *extension* or *supplementation* of scientific methodology, of naive realism.<sup>152</sup> This is the same question that drives the "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay. Science allows one to predict the eclipse and allows for bare cognition; art captures something more and allows for a fundamentally different kind of knowledge. This means that the recognition inherent to mimetic pleasure is not enough. It does not suffice in realist literature to identify a correspondence with the real world, to ascertain, as Aristotle puts it, that "This individual is a So-and-so." What is missing from this equation is the *affective* register specific to anagnorisis, the shock factor of recognition. In the "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay, Stifter limns this experience as sublime. In his later fictional works, he will emphasize the *simultaneity* of cognition and affect in the recognition scene. For now, however, the question remains a poetic one: how exactly might art convey this "something else"?

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Hartmut Laufhütte and Karl Möseneder (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996), 7. Emphasis in original. This discussion also appears in the final chapter of his monograph, which considers Stifter's views on art and realism more broadly. Christian Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen: Stifter-Lektüren* (Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag, 1995), 359–411.

<sup>152</sup> See again Begemann: "Wie es oben hieß, ist nämlich der Idealismus dem Realismus 'beigegeben', er kommt zu diesem *hinzu*. Nimmt man diese Formulierung ernst, dann entbirgt die Kunst nicht oder jedenfalls nicht nur den ideellen Kern des sinnfälligen Realen, sondern sie gibt dem Gegenständlichen ein qualitativ andersartiges Ideelles bei – eines mithin, das nicht in den Dingen, sondern im *Künstler* liegt. In einer solchen Vielzahl von Texten, daß es bei Stifters genereller Tendenz zur Abarbeitung von Subjektivität erstaunen muß, wird unmißverständlich deutlich, daß das Kunstwerk immer Ausdruck der Innerlichkeit seines Schöpfers sei, der seine Seele, sein 'Herz', sein Gefühl in ihm 'verkörpert'." Further, "Der 'Idealismus' im Sinne der 'höchste[n] geistige[n] Idee', die 'im Kunstwerke herrschen' soll, wäre in dieser Perspektive die Präsenz einer *subjektiven* Idee, eines *Ideals*, das der *Künstler* sich selbst von seinem Gegenstand *entwirft*, den er auf diese Weise beseelt. Die Kunst bringt 'das Zauberbild des Lebens *in Verklärung*', dekretiert Stifter 1856 in einem Brief an Geiger, und das heißt in diesem Kontext, daß sie die Dinge in ihren Sollzustand zeigt, *wie diesen das große Subjekt imaginiert*." Begemann notes, however, that realism and idealism are in a kind of permanent tension with one another; there is no satisfying synthesis of the two concepts. Begemann, "'Realismus' oder 'Idealismus'?" 8, 9.

The “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay addresses this question by making recourse to romantic discourse. As in “Abdias,” Stifter does much to transform romantic motifs, defamiliarizing here the language of the heart.<sup>153</sup> If the romantics, as Utz argues, conceived of the heart as a totalizing organ of synesthetic perception,<sup>154</sup> Stifter’s early realist articulation of the heart appears fractured, since the visual and acoustic metaphors remain distinct. This becomes especially apparent when Stifter proclaims the inadequacy of his own words in relation to that other language of the heart: music.<sup>155</sup>

Ich habe die alten Beschreibungen von Sonnenfinsternissen für übertrieben gehalten, so wie vielleicht in späterer Zeit diese für übertrieben wird gehalten werden; aber alle, so wie diese, sind weit hinter der Wahrheit zurück. Sie können nur das Geschehene malen, aber schlecht, das Gefühlte noch schlechter, aber gar nicht die namenlos tragische Musik von Farben und Lichtern, die durch den ganzen Himmel liegt – ein Requiem, ein Dies irae, das unser Herz spaltet, daß es Gott sieht und seine theuren Verstorbenen” (PRA 15:13)

For all the conflation of sensory and medial registers here, there is no real synthetic whole that emerges. Stifter’s language can only *paint* the visual effects poorly, the emotional experience even worse. Language cannot even approximate the inarticulably tragic *music* of light and color in the heavens that rends the heart and makes present the divine. The musical reference, specifically to the *Dies irae*, requires further explication. One of the most famous settings was

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<sup>153</sup> “[D]er Verstand triumphirt schon, daß er ihm die Pracht und Einrichtung seiner Himmel nachgerechnet und abgelernt hat [...] aber siehe, Gott hab ihm auch für das Herz etwas mit [...]: das Wort gab er ihm mit: ‘Ich bin’ – ‘nicht darum bin ich, weil diese Körper sind und diese Erscheinung, nein, sondern darum, weil es euch in diesem Momente *euer Herz schaudernd sagt*, und weil dieses Herz sich doch trotz der Schauer als groß empfindet.” (PRA 15:6-7)

<sup>154</sup> *Das Auge und das Ohr im Text*, 203–6. For an overview of the metaphor of the *Herzensschrift*, see Manfred Schneider, *Die erkaltete Herzensschrift: Der autobiographische Text im 20. Jahrhundert* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986), 9–15.

<sup>155</sup> Beginning in the late eighteenth century, music was described as the “Sprache des Herzens.” See here Corina Caduff, “Fantom Farbenklavier: Das Farbe-Ton-Verhältnis im 18. Jahrhundert oder Vom Einspruch gegen das clavecin oculaire und seinen ästhetischen Folgen,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 121, no. 4 (2002): 496.

composed by Mozart in 1791.<sup>156</sup> While it is unclear whether Stifter would have been familiar with the setting, he does reference the composer in his 1841/1844 story “Feldblumen.” As the character Angela remarks: “Mozart theilt mit freundlichem Angesichte unschätzbare Edelsteine aus, und schenkt jedem etwas; Beethoven aber stürzt gleich einen Wolkenbruch von Juwelen über das Volk; dann hält es sich die Hände vor den Kopf, damit es nicht blutig geschlagen wird, und geht am Ende fort, ohne den kleinsten Diamanten erhascht zu haben” (HKG 1,4:84).

The Mozart/Beethoven discussion becomes important toward the end of the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay, when Stifter underscores again the limits of language. “Ihr aber, die es im höchsten Maße nachempfunden, habet Nachsicht mit diesen armen Worten, die es nachzumalen versuchten, und so weit zurückblieben. Wäre ich Beethoven, so würde ich es in Musik sagen; ich glaube, da könnte ich es besser” (PRA 15:15; emphasis added). If the experience of the eclipse itself is like Mozart’s *Dies irae*, available to the whole of Vienna, its representation would be like a sudden storm, an overpowering and dangerous event that does not encourage such communality, but instead turns the community against itself. In other words, the effect would be something like what Stifter would later describe in the preface to *Bunte Steine*: a violation of moral law that, paradoxically, provokes ethical behavior and brings about the very sense of community that was violated in the first place.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> For more background, see John Caldwell and Malcolm Boyd, “Dies irae,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), 466.

<sup>157</sup> “Wenn aber Jemand jedes Ding unbedingt an sich reißt, was sein Wesen braucht, wenn er die Bedingungen des Daseins eines Anderen zerstört, so ergrimmt etwas Höheres in uns, wir helfen dem Schwachen und Unterdrückten, wir stellen den Stand wieder her, daß er ein Mensch neben dem Andern bestehe, und seine menschliche Bahn gehen könne, und wenn wir das gethan haben, so fühlen wir uns befriediget, wir fühlen uns noch viel höher und inniger als wir uns als Einzelne fühlen, *wir fühlen uns als ganze Menschheit*” (HKG 2,2:12; emphasis added). For more on the preface to *Bunte Steine*, see Chapter Two. Theophil Anonicek likewise contends that Beethoven is representative of the *sanftes Gesetz*, albeit from a slightly different perspective: “Für Stifter ist

Stifter then closes the essay with two questions. The first asks why one generally notices “Naturgesetze” during disruptive events, rather than during everyday occurrences. “Warum, da doch alle Naturgesetze Wunder und Geschöpfe Gottes sind, merken wir sein Dasein in ihnen weniger, als wenn einmal eine plötzliche Aenderung, gleichsam eine Störung derselben geschieht [...]?” (PRA 15:15). The preface to *Bunte Steine* will of course engage with this question in more detail, but one important point to underscore is that Stifter is describing yet again the *repeated, defamiliarized* perception of something already known.<sup>158</sup> The second turns back to the musical register and asks whether “eine Musik für das Auge” might approximate the visual effects of the eclipse.

Könnte man nicht auch durch Gleichzeitigkeit und Aufeinanderfolge von Lichtern und Farben eben so gut eine Musik für das Auge wie durch Töne für das Ohr ersinnen? Bisher waren Licht und Farbe nicht selbständig verwendet, sondern nur an Zeichnung haftend; denn Feuerwerke, Transparente, Beleuchtungen sind doch nur noch zu rohe Anfänge jener Lichtmusik, als daß man sie erwähnen könnte. Sollte nicht durch ein Ganzes von Lichtaccorden und Melodien eben so ein Gewaltiges, Erschütterndes angeregt werden können, wie durch Töne? Wenigstens könnte ich keine Symphonie, Oratorium oder dergleichen nennen, das eine so hehre Musik war, als jene, die während der zwei Minuten mit Licht und Farbe an dem Himmel war, und hat sie auch nicht den Eindruck ganz allein gemacht, so war sie doch ein Theil davon. (PRA 15:16)

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die Musik Beethovens in dieser Gemeinschaft ‘großer sanfter Menschen’ beheimatet. Beethoven gilt ihm also nicht als der Revolutionär, der Zerstörer der Form, einer, der seinen Kreis und den seiner Kunst zerbricht und damit der Verbannung preisgegeben werden müßte. [...] Beethoven bietet für Stifter das Höchstmaß künstlerischen Ausdrucks: tiefstes, ‘reinstes’ Gefühl ohne Leidenschaft.” Theophil Antonicek, “Adalbert Stifters Beethoven-Bild,” *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 29, no. 1 (1974): 82.

<sup>158</sup> “Von einer Störung ist nur vergleichsweise zu reden, da sich im furchtbaren Augenblick nichts Neues, sondern das Bekannte im Aspekt seiner Unbekanntheit entdeckt. Entsprechend lautet auch der erste Satz der ‘Sonnenfinsternis’: ‘Es gibt Dinge, die man fünfzig Jahre weiß, und im einundfünfzigsten erstaunt man über die Schwere und Furchtbarkeit ihres Inhaltes.’” Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 18. Geulen discusses this tension further and relates it to the uncanny (20–21). For more on the uncanny in this text, see Schiffermüller, *Buchstäblichkeit und Bildlichkeit*, 36–40. For more on the relationship between recognition and the uncanny, see the Introduction.

While it seems like a stretch to connect “Lichtmusik,” with all its romantic resonances, to realism, the prehistory of the term makes this connection clearer. “Lichtmusik” is not (just) some strange, unprecedented, synesthetic art form of the future. It was the product of an invention known as the ocular harpsichord [*clavecin oculaire*], first proposed in 1725 by the Jesuit priest Louis-Bertrand Castel.<sup>159</sup> Drawing on work by Athanasius Kircher, as well as Newton’s *Opticks*, Castel tried to develop an instrument that would fully realize the analogy between color and sound.<sup>160</sup> In essence, pressing keys would bring colors into view via some unspecified

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<sup>159</sup> There is little scholarly consensus what Stifter’s “Lichtmusik” actually is. To give two examples: Brodersen notes in passing the association of tones with colors as far back as Newton, and remarks that “Georg Phillip Thelemann [sic]” wrote about the “Augenorgel.” She does not pursue this comparison any further. Instead, her argument centers on the role of visual perception: “Der Erzähler schildert die Erfahrung eines theoretisch gewussten, aber nicht sinnfälligen Erlebnisses, d.h. eines Erlebnisses, in dem Wissen über ein Ereignis und das sinnliche Erleben desselben auseinanderfallen und nur mühsam wieder zusammengebracht und als Erfahrung integriert werden können. [...] Die Abfolge dieser Weltdeutungsmodelle zeigt aber vor allem eins: die Nichtadäquatheit der traditionellen Sprache für die Beschreibung des Tatsächlichen. Dieses soll am Ende die radikal neue ‘Sprache der Musik’ leisten, die aber nur oberflächlich eine romantisch-synästhetische Apotheose der Kunst darstellt, tatsächlich aber eine Sprache für das wissenschaftliche Wesen des Lichts und der Farbwahrnehmung zu finden sucht.” My argument has a similar starting point, but I come to a very different conclusion. As I argue above, Stifter’s essay is aimed at the affective *supplementation* of scientific discourse. Visual perception alone, no matter how reflective of scientific developments, remains wholly inadequate to his realist literary agenda. Brodersen, “Die Wirklichkeit im ‘Hohlspiegel der Sinne,’” 131 n154, 123–24. Jutta Müller-Tamm contextualizes Stifter’s *Lichtmusik* within the scientific discourse and reads the passage in question alongside Purkinje’s reference to “Augenmusik” in his *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Sehens in subjectiver Hinsicht*. Purkinje’s treatise draws heavily on Goethe’s *Farbenlehre*, which seems to me the key text here. Goethe discusses Castel in the *historischer Teil*, which could well another source for Purkinje’s (and Stifter’s) formulation, in addition to the section on *physiologische Farben* Müller-Tamm identifies. See Jutta Müller-Tamm, “Farben, Sonne, Finsternis: Von Goethe zu Adalbert Stifter,” *Goethe-Jahrbuch* 125 (2008): 169–72. In order to maintain consistency with prior scholarship, I use the slightly incorrect translation “ocular harpsichord,” rather than “ocular organ.” Finally, I have yet to encounter a single piece of Stifter scholarship that references Castel directly, and I am grateful to Emily Dreyfus for bringing the ocular harpsichord to my attention.

<sup>160</sup> Wilton Mason, Maarten Franssen, and Thomas L. Hankins provide excellent overviews of Castel’s invention, from which my own account derives. Franssen (26, 68) and Hankins (153-55) both note that Castel attacked Newton much in the same way that Goethe would in the *Farbenlehre*. Goethe, however, did not consider Castel’s efforts particularly convincing: “Man

mechanism (see Figure 5).<sup>161</sup> Although Castel was never able to build a fully operational model of his instrument,<sup>162</sup> and although this “Dom-Guichotte des mathématiques” (in Voltaire’s derisive assessment<sup>163</sup>) was met with ridicule for his various fanciful and dilettantish ideas, the ocular harpsichord drew considerable attention in the eighteenth century.

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kann nicht leugnen, daß er die Probleme der Farbenlehre meist alle vorbringt, doch ohne sie gerade aufzulösen. Seinem Buche fehlt es nicht an einer gewissen Ordnung; aber durch Umständlichkeit, Kleinigkeitskrämerei und Weitschweifigkeit verdirbt er sich das Spiel gegen den billigsten Leser. Sein größtes Unglück ist, daß er ebenfalls die Farbe mit dem Tone vergleichen will, zwar auf einem andern Wege als Newton und Mairan, aber auch nicht glücklicher.” See Wilton Mason, “Father Castel and His Color Clavecin,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 17, no. 1 (September 1958): 103–16; Maarten Franssen, “The Ocular Harpsichord of Louis-Bertrand Castel: The Science and Aesthetics of an Eighteenth-Century Cause Célèbre,” *Tractrix* 3 (1991): 15–77; Thomas L. Hankins, “The Ocular Harpsichord of Louis-Bertrand Castel: Or, the Instrument That Wasn’t,” *Osiris* 9, Instruments (1994): 141–56; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Zur Farbenlehre*, ed. Manfred Wenzel, vol. I.23.1, *Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche* (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1991), 879.

<sup>161</sup> Several unspectacular prototypes were constructed. As Hankins relates: “In 1730 Castel had exhibited some kind of device, but apparently all it did was raise colored slips of paper into view. [...] His anonymous English assistant later made an instrument which he demonstrated in London after Castel’s death. This harpsichord contained five hundred lamps (probably candles) and must have given off a prodigious quantity of heat. This is probably why a manuscript note attached to the description of the English ocular harpsichord says that it was there to be observed in Soho, but was never played.” Hankins, “The Ocular Harpsichord of Louis-Bertrand Castel: Or, the Instrument That Wasn’t,” 146–47.

<sup>162</sup> It is unclear if Castel even *wanted* to build a functional instrument. Hankins describes it instead as a kind of “thought experiment.” Hankins, 147; Franssen, “The Ocular Harpsichord of Louis-Bertrand Castel: The Science and Aesthetics of an Eighteenth-Century Cause Célèbre,” 23.

<sup>163</sup> Quoted in Hankins, “The Ocular Harpsichord of Louis-Bertrand Castel: Or, the Instrument That Wasn’t,” 144. Similar pronouncements from Voltaire on Castel’s supposed lack of intellectual ability can be found in the *historischer Teil* of Goethe’s *Farbenlehre*. See Goethe, *Zur Farbenlehre*, I.23.1:871–72.



Figure 5. An anti-Jesuit caricature of Louis-Bertrand Castel sitting at his harpsichord. The caption at the bottom reads: “If only they had all occupied their time on the same machine.” Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin. “Que n’ont ils tous Employés leurs tems à la même Machine.” 1740-c 1757. Watercolor, ink, and graphite on paper. Waddesdon (National Trust) Bequest of James de Rothschild, 1957. Acc no: 675.302. Photo: Waddesdon Image Library, Bodleian Imaging Services.

Castel's invention was introduced to a German-speaking audience in 1739, thanks to Georg Philipp Telemann's pamphlet "Beschreibung der Augen-Orgel oder des Augen-Clavicimbels, so der berühmte Mathematicus und Jesuit zu Paris, Herr Pater Castel, erfunden und ins Werk gerichtet hat." It is unclear which prototype Telemann had viewed (if, in fact, any),<sup>164</sup> but he gives a fairly detailed description of the instrument:

Um einen Klang hören zu lassen leget man die Finger auf die Claviertaste, man drückt sie nieder, und, indem sie sich vorn hinein senket, oder hinter aufhebet, öffnet sie ein Ventil, das den begehrten Klang mitteilt. Eine andere Taste öffnet ein anderes Ventil. Mehrere zugleich, oder nach einander, niedergedrückte Tasten lassen mehrere Klänge auf einmal, oder nach und nach, hören.

Zu gleicher Zeit, wenn die Taste, um einen Klang zu haben, das Ventil aufmachet, hat der P. Castel seidene Schnüre, oder eiserne Drähter, oder hölzerne Abstracten angebracht, die durch Ziehen oder Stoßen ein färbiges Kästgen, oder einen dergleichen Fächer, oder eine Schilderen, oder eine helle bemahlte Laterne, entdecken, also daß, indem man einen Klang höret, zugleich eine Farbe gesehen wird. [...]

Je mehr die Finger auf dem Claviere springen oder laufen, je mehr erblicket man Farben, entweder in Accorden, oder in melodischer Folge.<sup>165</sup>

The ocular harpsichord does not *substitute* color for sound, but instead *pairs* them. Each tone is matched to a color (see Table 1), such that one hears and views music simultaneously.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> See here Caduff, "Fantom Farbenklavier," 492.

<sup>165</sup> Georg Philipp Telemann, *Beschreibung der Augen-Orgel oder des Augen-Clavicimbels, so der berühmte Mathematicus und Jesuit zu Paris, Herr Pater Castel, erfunden und ins Werk gerichtet hat* (Hamburg: Piscator, 1739), 4–5, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001E15D00000000>. The document is not paginated, but I have included numbers for ease of reference. I begin numbering with the page that begins "Meine Leser!"

<sup>166</sup> Telemann, 3; Caduff, "Fantom Farbenklavier," 489. Caduff offers additional detail, summarizing from Castel's texts. "Gleichsam beiläufig wird hier ein zwölfteiliger Farbenkreis propagiert, der ganz zufällig eine Zahlengleichheit zu den zwölf Tönen der chromatischen Tonleiter (c, cis, d, dis, e, f, fis, g, gis, a, ais, h) aufweist. So weitete Castel die gängige, an der diatonischen Tonleiter (c, d, e, f, g, a, h) ausgerichtete Siebenteilung von Farbe und Ton auf eine Zwölfteilung aus, indem er sämtliche Töne der ganzen Skala berücksichtigt." She lists the tone/color pairings I provide in Table 1 and continues. "In der Folge totalisiert Castel die 12er Zahl weiter: Er legt fest, dass jede dieser Farben in sich wiederum zwölf Farbtöne aufweist [...]. Derart kommt man insgesamt (12 x 12) auf 144 Farbtöne, die ihrerseits den 144 Tönen von zwölf Oktaven entsprechen, ein Oktavumfang, den Castel nun, immer im Kontext der Farbe-Ton-Analogie, für die Orgel forderte. Pragmatische gesehen, erscheint diese Forderung ziemlich unsinnig; so zumindest argumentiert Jewanski, der darauf hinweist, dass die damalige Orgel 5-6







c	Blau	
cis	Celadon	
d	Grün	
dis	Oliven	
e	Gelb	
f	Aurore	
fis	Orange	
g	Rot	
gis	Carmesin	
a	Violet	
as	Agath	
h	Violant	

Table 1. Castel’s color-tone pairings. The colors in the third column are my own approximations.

This is less a synesthetic medium than one based upon what Müller-Tamm calls the weak version of the vicariate model of the senses, whereby data is transmitted to multiple senses simultaneously, such that one could stand in for the other.<sup>167</sup> (In fact, Castel had from the outset conceived of his instrument as producing music for the deaf.<sup>168</sup> And in this context, Stifter’s reference to Beethoven assumes additional significance.) This technological apparatus, then, is associated with the same model of sensory substitution that emerged from discussions of Molyneux’s Problem.

As was the case for Stifter’s literary rendering of that topos of recognition, central to his reception of the ocular harpsichord is an articulatory problem, namely the medial transmission of

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Oktave hatte, dass der Hörbereich zehn Oktave umfasst, und dass die Arme eines Orgelspielers, der vor einem 12-oktavigen Instrument sitzt, zwei Meter lang sein müssten.”

<sup>167</sup> As Caduff points out, eighteenth-century discussions of the relationship between colors and tones were not yet linked to synesthesia. The association of Castel’s instrument with synesthesia appears instead to be a product of early twentieth-century scholarship, notably several influential texts by Albert Wellek. Caduff, “Fantom Farbenklavier,” 487.

<sup>168</sup> Albert Wellek, “Farbenharmonie und Farbenklavier: Ihre Entstehungsgeschichte im 18. Jahrhundert,” *Archiv für die gesamte Psychologie* 94 (1935): 361.

divine presence. Both of these issues – revelation and language – are already present in Telemann’s early pamphlet on the instrument (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. The top of the second page of Telemann’s “Beschreibung der Augen-Orgel.”  
Georg Philipp Telemann. *Beschreibung der Augen-Orgel oder des Augen-Clavicimbels, so der berühmte Mathematicus und Jesuit zu Paris, Herr Pater Castel, erfunden und ins Werk gerichtet hat.* Hamburg: Piscator, 1739. <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001E15D00000000>. Last accessed 31 May 2017.

This image is never addressed, nor does it stand in any obvious relationship to Castel’s instrument. These remarks are thus necessarily speculative, but the image seems to operate within the same discursive network as the other texts under consideration here. First, and most obviously, the image depicts divine revelation. The link to Stifter’s “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay is in this respect clear. A connection to the end of “Abdias” also emerges when one considers that Castel conceived of his instrument as reproducing the divine rainbow.<sup>169</sup> Second, the tetragrammaton (YHWH) is considered by Jews to be too sacred to utter; instead, it is replaced

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<sup>169</sup> Sebastian Klotz, *Kombinatorik und die Verbindungskünste der Zeichen in der Musik zwischen 1630 und 1780* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 119.

with Adonai (Lord).<sup>170</sup> YHWH, in other words, can only be apprehended visually; a different term is spoken and heard. The tetragrammaton, then, is linked with a similar multisensory register as that apparent in Stifter's "Abdias" and characteristic of Castel's instrument. Common to all three is the potential for *substitution*.

Lest this reading seem overly associative, a second text offers further insight into the link between linguistic substitution and the ocular harpsichord, namely Diderot's 1751 *Letter on the Deaf and Dumb for the Use of Those Who Hear and Speak*, in which the author describes viewing Castel's instrument together with a deaf friend. The *Letter on the Deaf* is concerned above all with language acquisition and the development of inversions in language,<sup>171</sup> and it is within this context that his treatment of Castel's ocular harpsichord must be understood. Diderot's friend did not understand the purpose of musical instruments, much less the ocular harpsichord, which he imagined to be a device for communication.

Our deaf-and-dumb friend imagined that the inventor was also deaf and dumb, and that his harpsichord was the instrument by which he communicated with other men; he imagined also that each shade of colour represented a letter of the alphabet, and that by touching the keys rapidly he combined these letters into words and phrases, and, in fact, spoke in colours.

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<sup>170</sup> F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., "Tetragrammaton," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), <http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780192802903.001.0001/acref-9780192802903-e-6754>.

<sup>171</sup> For a brief summary, see Calhoon, "Blind Gestures: Chaplin, Diderot, Lessing," 395–97. Calhoon argues that Chaplin's Tramp in *City Lights* operates like the "theoretical mute" Diderot describes elsewhere in this text: "A man born deaf and dumb, unencumbered by 'prejudices with regard to the manner of communicating his thoughts,' offers a clue to prehistoric stages of human cognition, to which we otherwise have no access. For Diderot, the deaf exhibited a diminished capacity for abstraction consistent with those earlier stages. Thus it was given to this 'theoretical mute,' who is himself not deaf and dumb but acts as if he were, to translate a French speech into sign language: 'from the succession of his gestures' one would be able to infer 'the order of ideas' according to which early humans conveyed thoughts without words" (395). Calhoon also relates Diderot's anecdote from this text about visiting the theater and plugging his ears, so as better to judge to actors' performances (396).

You may imagine he was pleased with his own perspicacity in finding this out; but our friend did not rest on his laurels; the idea suddenly came into his head that he now grasped what music and musical instruments were. He supposed that music was a peculiar manner of communicating thought, and that musical instruments – lutes, violins, and trumpets – were so many different organs of speech.<sup>172</sup>

According to Diderot's friend, music, whether perceived visually or aurally, is nothing more than the transposition of written language into colors or tones. One can speak in words, colors, or musical tones – the language remains the same, and only the medium (the larynx, ocular harpsichord, or lute) changes. Diderot is impressed by this insight, and after discussing gestural communication and linguistic inversions, returns to the instrument.

[I]n the mind there is not the successive development we observe in speech; if it had twenty mouths, and each mouth able to say a word, all the above ideas would be expressed at once. This could be excellently executed on Father Castel's harpsichord, if our dumb friend's theory were in practice and each colour combined to form words. No tongue would approach it in the rapidity of its speech. But as we have not many mouths, people have attached several ideas to a single term. If there were more of these vigorous terms, instead of the tongue panting after the mind, such a number of ideas could be expressed at once that the mind would lag after the tongue which hastened in advance of it.<sup>173</sup>

The ocular harpsichord, envisioned here as a linguistic machine,<sup>174</sup> is more capable than twenty mouths speaking in concert. It would permit the simultaneous expression of ideas that would have to be expressed sequentially in language, and all of the elements necessary to convey a given idea could be conveyed instantaneously. The ocular harpsichord thus promises the

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<sup>172</sup> Denis Diderot, "Letter on the Deaf and Dumb for the Use of Those Who Hear and Speak," in *Diderot's Early Philosophical Works*, ed. and trans. Margaret Jourdain (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916), 171.

<sup>173</sup> Diderot, 184.

<sup>174</sup> Caduff goes so far as to call it a typewriter, arguing that Diderot anticipates here the beginnings of a new *Aufschreibesystem*. "Die Technik der Tastatur [gerät] tatsächlich zum zentralen musikalischen und alphabetischen Aufschreibesystem [...], eine Entwicklung, die von der Klavierspielerin zur Tippse führt." Further, "In dieser Figuration der *clavecin*-Lektüre durch den Taubstummen tut sich ein ganz neuer Blick auf das Instrument auf, der die Aufschreibesysteme des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts vorwegnimmt." Caduff, "Fantom Farbenklavier," 501, 502.

immediate transmission of cognitive material without the time-lag inherent to language, and thus emerges as a linguistic equivalent to the overwhelming force of Beethoven's music.

Despite these points of intersection between Stifter's text and these others, the *Lichtmusik* reference remains somewhat vexing, especially given the intense ridicule of Castel by one of Stifter's most important intellectual influences: Herder. The latter made repeated reference to the ocular harpsichord, generally in order to criticize its conflation of spatiality (appropriate to image) with temporality (appropriate to music). In the fourth *Kritisches Wäldchen*, he writes that the ocular harpsichord can do one of two things: either it presents images slowly enough to allow the eye enough time truly to see [*sehen*], in which case it produces pleasure but has nothing whatsoever to do with music; or it presents images so rapidly that one can only gape [*gaffen*], in which case the musical analogy is preserved at the expense of pleasure.<sup>175</sup> In this case, the ocular harpsichord simply produces "schmerzliche unaufhörliche Betäubung."<sup>176</sup>

So why does Stifter ignore Herder's criticism and grant such a prominent role to such a reviled device? It seems that the grotesqueness of the instrument is part of its appeal. After all, Stifter will proclaim in the preface to *Bunte Steine* that he strives to avoid depicting great, disruptive events like storms, volcanic eruptions, or earthquakes, while at the same time filling his stories with such spectacles. The point is, again, that these phenomena bring about an appropriate response. *Lichtmusik*, then, belongs to the same category of phenomena, appropriate

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<sup>175</sup> Herder, "Die kritischen Wälder zur Ästhetik," 322–23.

<sup>176</sup> Herder characterizes the ocular harpsichord similarly in his *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*. "Wie kurz, ermüdend und unausstehlich wäre die Sprache jedes gröbern Sinnes für uns? Wie verwirrend und kopfleerend für uns die Sprache des zu feinen Gesichts? Wer kann immer schmecken, fühlen und riechen, ohne nicht bald, wie *Pope* sagt, einen aromatischen Tod zu sterben? Und wer immer mit Aufmerksamkeit ein Farbenklavier begaffen, ohne nicht bald zu erblinden?" Johann Gottfried Herder, "Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache," in *Frühe Schriften 1764-1772*, ed. Ulrich Gaier, vol. 1, Werke (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 748. Emphasis in original.

precisely because it is so inappropriate.<sup>177</sup> Crucially, the ocular harpsichord pairs the very realms Stifter is trying so desperately to combine: light and sound, cognition and affect, science and the human. This hypothetical medium would engage these realms *simultaneously*, thereby generating in the spectator the desired two-fold response.<sup>178</sup>

The production of ocular music remains, of course, a practical impossibility (“Feuerwerke, Transparente, Beleuchtungen sind doch nur noch zu rohe Anfänge jener Lichtmusik, als daß man sie erwähnen könnte”). Limited by technology, Stifter’s musings on ocular music, formulated in the subjunctive, thus remain hypothetical. He can only describe the *Lichtmusik*, and the effects it is intended to replicate, within the confines of written language, and the reader only has access to a version of the experience as mediated by Stifter: “in so ferne dieß eine schwache, menschliche Feder überhaupt zu thun im Stande ist” (PRA 15:7). What, then, is the status of Stifter’s own text? Just like “Abdias,” it turns in on itself, displacing its articulatory register in order to reflect on its own constructedness. This becomes clearest in the essay’s treatment of sublimity. As Geulen illustrates, the text’s rendering of the sublime diverges from Kantian and Schillerian models by virtue of the subject’s lack of “Selbstvergewisserung”: it is the natural end of the eclipse, not any kind of cognitive effort, that prevents the subject from

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<sup>177</sup> Müller-Tamm makes a similar point. “[S]eine Frage [ist] wirkungspsychologisch angelegt und zielt auf die Maximierung ästhetischer Effekte im Hinblick auf ein ‘Gewaltiges, Erschütterndes’, auf einen religiösen Schrecken. Allein das Aussetzen von Normalität, die Unterbrechung regulärer Wahrnehmungsvollzüge – so der wahrnehmungspsychologische Basisgedanke bei Stifter – ermöglicht die Erfahrung des Göttlichen. Insofern geht auch Stifter von einer Aktivierung des wahrnehmenden Subjekts aus und bindet die Idee der ‘Lichtmusik’ zwar nicht an den Wahrnehmungsvollzug selbst, doch an die ihn begleitende affektive Erregung.” Müller-Tamm, “Farben, Sonne, Finsternis: Von Goethe zu Adalbert Stifter,” 171.

<sup>178</sup> See here Potthast, “Adalbert Stifiers ‘Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842’ als Dokument einer anderen Moderne,” 139. “Im erhabenen Eindruck der Himmelsvorgänge versagen nicht nur die wissenschaftlich bewiesenen Naturgesetze, sondern auch die künstlerischen Ausdrucksformen als einzelne. In diesem Sinn bedeutet Erhabenheit das Zusammenwirken von Perspektiven, Disziplinen und Methoden, welche üblicherweise getrennt werden.”

being overwhelmed.<sup>179</sup> Geulen locates “das erlösende Moment” not at the level of depiction [*das Dargestellte*], but instead at the level of narrative [*die Darstellung*]: “Stifter [wird] selbst zum Propheten und Verkünder, zum ‘Dolmetsch und Priester des Höchsten’ [...]. Das ist das Erhabene in diesem Text: Stifter hat das Wort verstanden und weiß infolgedessen das Ungeheuerliche in Worten darzustellen. Als Schriftsteller wird er ein weiteres Glied in der Kette religiöser Verkünder. Nicht das Ereignis der Sonnenfinsterniß, sondern Stifters eigener Text ist die Offenbarung.”<sup>180</sup> Put in slightly different terms: Stifter’s prophetic text is meant to convey revelation, generating the cognitive and affective response originally associated with the eclipse.<sup>181</sup> While the essay offers no decisive conclusions as to *how* this might come about, it represents the beginning of Stifter’s sustained engagement with these questions. Importantly, the

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<sup>179</sup> Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 22.

<sup>180</sup> Geulen, 22, 23. Geulen quotes here from Stifter’s 1848 essay “Über Stand und Würde des Schriftstellers” (HKG 8,1:39). Stifter will also equate literature with prophecy in the preface to *Bunte Steine*.

<sup>181</sup> This argument builds on and modifies Begemann’s reading of the essay as an allegory of semiosis. I think Begemann is correct to identify moments of deferral in the text, but I do not think that ascribing them to a kind of proto-semiotics quite does justice to the discursive history Stifter invokes. Put differently, the medial and sensory perceptual registers reveal that the essay operates according to a different (perhaps even additional) *modus* of deferral and substitution. See Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 53–54. “So mündet der Versuch, die Sonnenfinsternis als Epiphaneerlebnis zu begreifen, in dem die *Präsenz Gottes* erfahren wird, in eine Bewegung des permanenten Aufschubs, in der man sich mit einer bloßen ‘*Gottesnähe*’ zufriedengeben muß. Wo der Erzähler Gott ‘selber [zu] schauen’ behauptet (15), stößt er immer wieder auf Barrieren semiotischer Vermittlung, die ihn von der unverstellten Anwesenheit Gottes trennen. Indirekt erweisen die signitiven Vermittlungen gerade die *Abwesenheit* Gottes für die Erfahrung, kann dieser sich doch selbst im Augenblick seiner größten ‘Nähe’ nicht einfach in seiner Existenz offenbaren, sondern bedarf des Signifikanten: Er *zeigt* sich nicht, sondern *sagt* ‘Ich bin’, und dieses Sagen, das nur metaphorischen Status hat, vollzieht sich wiederum über weitere Zwischeninstanzen. So haftet die Wahrnehmung immer an Zeichen, die ‘vor’ das von ihnen Bezeichnete treten und es ersetzen. Gott ist der Erfahrung nicht als er ‘selber’ präsent, sondern nur im *Modus* der Re-Präsentation. Der Signifikant tritt an die Stelle der Epiphanie. Die gleiche Struktur wiederholt sich konsequenterweise auf der Ebene des Textes selbst, sieht sich doch der Versuch, ‘das Bild, und [...] die Empfindung nachzumalen und festzuhalten’ (7), auf ‘Feder’ und Signifikanten verwiesen: ‘habet Nachsicht mit diesen armen Worten, die es nachzumalen versuchten, und so weit zurückblieben’ (15).”

essay shows that the conceptual scaffolding for Stifter's realist poetics derives from an extended reception of Enlightenment recognition, and this will lay groundwork for his more famous poetological treatise: the preface to *Bunte Steine*.

## CONCLUSION

While Stifter is generally treated as a deeply visual writer, such interpretations require some caution, or at least context. It is only in relation to the other senses that Stifter's visuality can be understood. In fact, one of the most frequently cited works on Stifter's visuality, Walter Benjamin's second fragment on the author, already makes this point.

Er kann nur auf der Grundlage des Visuellen schaffen. Das bedeutet jedoch nicht daß er nur Sichtbares wiedergibt denn als Künstler hat er Stil. Das Problem seines Stils ist nun wie er an allem die metaphysisch visuelle Sphäre erfaßt. Zunächst hängt mit dieser Grundeigentümlichkeit zusammen daß ihm jeglicher Sinn für Offenbarung fehlt, die *vernommen* werden muß, d.h. in der metaphysisch akustischen Sphäre liegt. Des ferneren erklärt sich in diesem Sinne der Grundzug seiner Schriften: die Ruhe. Ruhe ist nämlich die Abwesenheit zunächst und vor allem jeglicher akustischen Sensation. Die Sprache wie sie bei Stifter die Personen sprechen ist ostentativ. Sie ist ein zur Schau Stellen von Gefühlen und Gedanken in einem tauben Raum. Die Fähigkeit irgendwie 'Erschütterung' darzustellen deren Ausdruck der Mensch primär in der Sprache sucht fehlt ihm absolut. [...] Er ist seelisch stumm, das heißt es fehlt seinem Wesen derjenige Kontakt mit dem Weltwesen, der Sprache, aus dem das Sprechen hervorgeht.<sup>182</sup>

In Benjamin's assessment, Stifter is unable to depict revelation that must be apprehended in language. Indeed, the deferrals of articulation in "Abdias" and the "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay would seem to support this claim.<sup>183</sup> But Benjamin's formulations betray a deeper reason for this

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<sup>182</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Stifter," in *Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. II.2, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), 609–10. Emphasis in original.

<sup>183</sup> Schäublin argues that Benjamin misreads Stifter here, as "Abdias" draws particular attention to the acoustic register. Schäublin, "Stifters Abdias von Herder aus gelesen," 108–12. Utz contends that "Abdias" is a primarily visual text in which silence dominates. This, however, ignores the multisensory perception at play in the recognition scenes. Utz, "Die Lücken, die jetzt sind," 258–59. See also Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 51–52. "Benjamin kritisiert aber

apparent failure. Spoken language in Stifter's works is nothing more than the vulgar presentation of feelings and thoughts in a deaf space ("ein zur Schau Stellen von Gefühlen und Gedanken in einem *tauben* Raum").<sup>184</sup> Stifter himself is psychologically mute ("seelisch *stumm*"). The visual reigns because his prose is struggling to *synthesize* two realms of experience. The acoustic component of ocular music, then, yet falls on deaf ears.

The genealogies of recognition that inform this perceptual mode culminate in Stifter's veiled articulation of realism as a mass media phenomenon. After all, what is the sensory "Betäubung" Herder ascribes to the ocular harpsichord but an anticipation of the shock effect of film? The technologically (re)producible language of the ocular harpsichord allows Stifter to draw his audience, as a *collective*, into his works. He cannot compose ocular music, but he can work to approximate its effects. As Benjamin reminds his reader in *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*: "Die Geschichte jeder Kunstform hat kritische Zeiten, in denen diese Form auf Effekte hindrängt, die sich zwangslos erst bei einem veränderten technischen Standard, d.h. in einer neuen Kunstform ergeben können."<sup>185</sup> Stifter's "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay, a theory of film before the advent of film, conceptualizes the reception of his work in a way that would prove exemplary for his realist contemporaries and for his modernist successors.

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gerade diese Erschütterungen [i.e. die bebende Rebellion und Verfinsterung der Natur], weil sie nicht sprachlich werden, sondern sich als sprachloses Handeln ereignen."

<sup>184</sup> For a discussion of this fragment within the context of Benjamin's theories of language, see Geulen, *Worthörig wider Willen*, 45–52.

<sup>185</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit, Dritte Fassung," in *Abhandlungen*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. I.2, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), 500–501.

2.  
Reading, Writing, Re-cognition  
“Die Narrenburg” and “Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters”

Composed the same year as “Abdias” and “Die Sonnenfinsterniß am 8. Juli 1842,”

Stifter’s novella “Die Narrenburg” [1842/1844<sup>186</sup>] offers an additional distortion of romantic motifs. In the novella’s central scene, which is torn straight from the pages of Novalis’ *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Stifter’s protagonist Heinrich, a natural scientist, strolls through the family portrait gallery in a strange, mostly uninhabited castle, and recognizes his own likeness in one of the images.<sup>187</sup> He becomes in this moment fully aware that he is the long-sought heir to this estate, and, after legally proving his ancestry, swears to uphold the bizarre familial oath to write his complete life story and read those of all his ancestors. While the initial intent of the reading and writing requirement was for each generation to learn from the mistakes of those prior, the descendants end up obeying only part of their ancestor’s directive to heed the past (“sich [...] daran zu spiegeln und zu hüten,” HKG 1,4:322). By reading the dictum a bit too literally, the family members uncritically mirror the behaviors of generations past. They fail to recognize similarities between their own lives and those they read about, thus becoming ever more foolish and achieving precisely the opposite of what their ancestor had intended. The strange mimetic logic that infiltrates this activity, short-circuiting life with text, subverts the tenets of the various

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<sup>186</sup> The story was first published in “*Iris*”: Taschenbuch für das Jahr 1843, which appeared in 1842. Stifter then revised the text, subsequently republishing it in 1844 in the second volume of his *Studien* collection.

<sup>187</sup> Novalis’ Heinrich famously recognizes his own likeness in the illustrations of a book. “[D]as Buch gefiel ihm vorzüglich [...]. Es hatte keinen Titel, doch fand er noch beim Suchen einige Bilder. Sie dünkten ihm ganz wunderbar bekannt, und wie er recht zusah, entdeckte er seine eigene Gestalt ziemlich kenntlich unter den Figuren.” Novalis, “Heinrich von Ofterdingen,” ed. Paul Kluckhorn and Richard Samuel, vol. 1, *Schriften* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1960), 264.

romantic intertexts and thereby raises the question as to the status of post-romantic literature. The text not only reflects changing conceptions of literature, but also new modes of making sense of reality. At stake is nothing less than the emergence of realism proper.

That this comes to a head during a scene of recognition is no coincidence. As in “Abdias,” Stifter deploys the operation as a means of reflecting upon the epistemological preconditions of his narrative prose. But with “Die Narrenburg,” Stifter goes a step further. By depicting the reading and writing practices that emerge in a story world striving to break with romanticism, by citing the famous recognition scene from Novalis, itself a scene of reading, Stifter uses recognition to think through the medial conditions for his own realist aesthetics and poetics. Published as part of the *Studien* collection [1844, 1847, 1850], “Die Narrenburg” offers an early iteration of the poetics Stifter would later elaborate in the preface to his *Bunte Steine* collection [1852<sup>188</sup>]. Preoccupied with a natural scientist’s production and consumption of texts, the story begins to develop the (ultimately confused) analogy between science and morality familiar from the famous preface. If the natural scientist Heinrich starts by collecting natural artifacts, after the moment of recognition he also begins participating in a textually constituted familial collective, thus practicing *lesen* in both senses – as reading and collecting.<sup>189</sup> “Die Narrenburg” is, in the end, a story about the production and composition of literature according to a codified set of techniques borrowed from the natural sciences.

Some of this is already familiar from Chapter One: Stifter is interested in making available to his readers a realm of human experience that goes beyond what science can offer. And though some of the terms will shift (e.g. the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay is concerned with

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<sup>188</sup> *Bunte Steine* appeared in late 1852 but was dated 1853.

<sup>189</sup> “Lesen” once had the meaning of “auflesen” or “sammeln.” See *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, s.v. “lesen,” accessed February 21, 2017, [woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB](http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB).

cognition vs. affect, the preface with science vs. morality), the general paradigm remains largely the same throughout Stifter's work. But what remains to be determined is *how* recognition translates into realist reading and writing practices. If "Die Narrenburg" shows that Stifter conceives of reading and writing as contingent upon recognition, another text, namely "Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters" (hereafter "Die Mappe"), indicates how reading and writing actually transpire. Stifter produced four separate versions of "Die Mappe" [1841-42, 1847, 1854, 1867-68] over almost three decades. Part of the same textual cycle as "Die Narrenburg" and likewise published as part of the *Studien* collection in 1847, "Die Mappe" considers a textual tradition predicated on the type of recognition largely absent from "Die Narrenburg." In the frame narrative, the unnamed narrator (in version one, Heinrich from "Die Narrenburg") locates his great-grandfather's own two-volume *Mappe*, the excerpted contents of which comprise the embedded narrative. After being rejected by the woman he would later marry and nearly committing suicide, the great-grandfather, referred to simply as the Doctor, received a piece of advice from his future father-in-law (in the first version, one Julius Scharnast<sup>190</sup>): in order to overcome his troubles, he should compose journal entries and seal them for a period of three years, at which point he should break the seals and reread what he had written. The Doctor follows this advice, and indeed begins to heal. The emotional distance gained through the writing process has a salubrious effect, for the Doctor can reflect upon past events and compare his prior thoughts and feelings with the actual course of events, thereby recognizing his own errant, correctable ways. The frame narrative tracks the narrator's discovery of the manuscript, as well as his initial reception and transmission of the contents. The depicted practices of textual

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<sup>190</sup> In version two of "Die Mappe," the neighbor's name is changed to Casimir Uhldom, which disrupts the narrative and genealogical continuity with "Die Narrenburg."

collation not only resemble those in “Die Narrenburg,” but they also reflect Stifter’s own technique of compiling textual components into a coherent whole. The editorial frame narrative undergoes significant changes in each version of “Die Mappe,” and, read alongside materials like letters, manuscripts, and personal journals, emerges as a self-reflexive narrative about Stifter’s own writing methods.

Taken together, “Die Narrenburg” and “Die Mappe” establish a cohesive, genealogically inflected model of reading and writing that operates in tandem with the methodology elaborated in the preface to *Bunte Steine*. If the preface establishes the means by which recognition transpires and the ends to which it aspires, “Die Narrenburg” and “Die Mappe” illustrate how readerly recognition operates. “Die Narrenburg,” by depicting intradiegetic recognition, demonstrates that the characters within Stifter’s narrative prose behave in a way that prefigures the methodological prescriptions of the preface to *Bunte Steine*. “Die Mappe” extends the model and indicates that the extradiegetic reader of Stifter’s own works *re-enacts* the depicted practices. In order to distinguish the two levels of this operation, the intradiegetic process will be glossed as *recognition* and the extradiegetic process as *re-cognition*.

While re-cognition might seem like a trivial, self-reflexive flourish, it is in fact the key to understanding Stifter’s realist literary production. The deceptively simple operation is only made possible by the nineteenth-century scientific discourse that reverberates throughout the preface. Readerly re-cognition, so the overarching claim of this chapter, is contingent upon the bodily situatedness of author and reader alike, i.e. the fact of the author or reader being present, in his or her lived, bodily reality, before the text.<sup>191</sup> While the recognition scene in “Die Narrenburg”

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<sup>191</sup> I am adapting this terminology from Michael Fried’s study of Adolph Menzel, which informs the later analysis of “Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters.” This notion of readerly/authorial embodiment in the act of recognition correlates with what Wiggins describes as the performative

alludes to romantic instantiations of metalepsis, the foregrounding of corporeality marks a break with these models. At the same time as the narrative suggests Heinrich's slippage across diegetic levels (i.e. from the intradiegetic to the metadiegetic level), it emphasizes his bodily situatedness on the intradiegetic level, thereby disrupting the metalepsis. In other words, the dual nature of recognition, as both absorptive and distanciatory, is split across diegetic levels. As "Die Mappe" makes clear, the extradiegetic reader is similarly both interpellated into and held back from the diegesis by virtue of his or her own bodily situatedness. Moreover, because re-cognition occurs via the act of reading, the medial constructedness of the absorption remains perpetually in view. This intricate process can only be fully understood when one compares the preface's elaboration of this methodology with the examples of (re-)cognition in "Die Narrenburg" and "Die Mappe." An initial consideration of recognition, reading, and realism in the former will thus help to situate the subsequent analysis of the latter two.

#### **METHODS OF RECOGNITION: THE PREFACE TO *BUNTE STEINE***

In order to grasp the role of recognition and re-cognition within the preface to *Bunte Steine*, some initial summary and contextual remarks are necessary. In addition to sketching out the broad conceptual framework of the preface, this section also puts the text into conversation with lightly anachronistic aesthetic theory, which helps one to appreciate its methodological significance. The notorious internal contradictions pertaining to the status of lawfulness in the scientific vs. moral realms do not vanish altogether, but they do become legible as part of a

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dimension of the operation. "Instead of recognition taking place within the brain (as a result of sensory stimuli and consequently leading to particular behaviors), recognition consists in the actions performed between people in the world." Wiggins, "To Grasp the Minds of Men: Performing Recognition," 17.

sustained effort to delineate a mode of realist reading.<sup>192</sup> Four points should be drawn out from these remarks. First, and most basically, recognition is the organizing principle of the preface. Second, recognition emerges from an attentive mode that emphasizes individual points that make legible a greater whole. Third, recognition sets in motion a re-cognitive reading process that is inextricably intertwined with bodily situatedness. A fourth point, latent within the preface but borne out more fully by the analysis of “Die Narrenburg” and “Die Mappe,” is that this reading process operates both intra- and extradiegetically. Taken together, these four dimensions realize in a specifically nineteenth-century fashion what the Introduction to this study described as the third level of Aristotelean recognition, i.e. the poet’s recognition *qua* reader of the part vs. the whole.

With the preface, Stifter defends his focus on ordinary events, arguing that this approach is attuned to the lawfulness underlying punctual phenomena. The preface is structured around an analogy between science and morality, with the first part focusing on lawfulness in the natural realm. Here, Stifter describes how the scientist, or *[Natur-]Forscher*, gathers data that collectively reveal something otherwise imperceptible. In the second part of the preface, Stifter maps this observational modus onto moral life, describing how the *Menschenforscher* directs his attention to the underlying forces that sustain humankind.<sup>193</sup> In both cases, the observer

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<sup>192</sup> I am expanding here on Ulrich Dittmann’s passing suggestion that the preface prescribes a way of reading. “Indem Stifter kleine Phänomene via Gesetz an das große Ganze bindet, greift er Fragen dichterischer Repräsentanz auf und gibt eine Art Leseanweisung, in welcher Weise die Bedeutung seiner Darstellung zu erschließen sei.” Ulrich Dittmann, “Zur Genese des ‘sanften Gesetzes’ – und noch einmal über Stifter und Goethe,” in *Realismus-Studien: Hartmut Laufhütte zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans-Peter Ecker and Michael Titzmann (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), 110.

<sup>193</sup> The dichotomy is familiar from the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay, though as Paul Fleming notes, the two texts posit disruptive events in opposite terms. “Stifter ends ‘Solar Eclipse’ with a crucial rhetorical question that a decade later will no longer be rhetorical but an expression of disbelief that such a question can even be posed: ‘Why do we notice God’s being less in natural laws,

recognizes [*erkennen*] a totality. As in the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay, human experience (whether affective or moral) exceeds that which is graspable via scientific methods, and the preface tracks Stifter’s efforts to outline the methodology that allows him, as an author, to make this realm of life accessible in his narrative prose.

The first half of the preface straightforwardly describes how the ideal observer attends not to spectacular, singular phenomena like volcanic eruptions, but instead to the lawfulness underlying such events. In so doing, this observer recognizes what is, in Stifter’s estimation, truly great. “[D]er Geisteszug des Forschers [geht] vorzüglich auf das Ganze und Allgemeine [...], und [vermag] nur in ihm allein Großartigkeit zu *erkennen*” (HKG 2,2:10; emphasis added). Stifter illustrates this perceptual attentiveness with an example, describing the work of scientists who measure slight variations in the earth’s magnetic field. When measurements taken across the globe are gathered together, the fluctuations in the data reveal that a magnetic storm has swept across the earth. While the individual scientist remains unable to perceive the entire phenomenon, he or she can identify those elements that are capable of being gathered into a whole. The scientist knows that small, local variations in the earth’s magnetic field, when made globally, reveal the lawfulness of a natural phenomenon, and can thus focus his or her attention

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since they are also his wonders and creations, than when a sudden change, a disturbance of them occurs, where we, filled with terror, suddenly see Him standing before us?’ With the preface to *Multi-Colored Stones*, Stifter radically alters, indeed inverts, this model by unequivocally positing the sublimity of the calculability of the small: from the perspective of the preface, to attribute a solar eclipse’s sublimity to ‘a sudden change’ in natural law (which, it should be noted, isn’t a change or disturbance at all, but calculable) would amount to being fascinated by a ‘special effect’ of nature. Such special effects distract one’s gaze from the true sublimity that can only be revealed in the repeated and largely calculable events of nature.” Paul Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 143.

appropriately.<sup>194</sup> The magnetic storm is, however, only recorded in part. The scientific community collects discrete data points, which, although they reveal a great effect, provide only a partial view of the storm, as manifested in selected locations. The scientists can only approximate the great via the work of collection, for totality is accessible only to the divine creator.

Weil aber die Wissenschaft nur Körnchen nach Körnchen erringt, nur Beobachtung nach Beobachtung macht, nur aus Einzelem das Allgemeine zusammen trägt, und weil endlich die Menge der Erscheinungen und das Feld des Gegebenen unendlich groß ist, Gott also die Freude und die Glückseligkeit des Forschens unversieglich gemacht hat, wir auch in unseren Werkstätten immer nur das Einzelne darstellen können nie das Allgemeine, denn dies wäre die Schöpfung. (HKG 2,2:11)

One gains access to the great via the small, and the great remains only indirectly and partially available.

Stifter next describes turns to the human realm, shifting into normative, ethical discourse.

If the *Naturforscher* seeks to understand universal laws of nature, the *Menschenforscher* attempts to understand the lawfulness that determines ethical behavior.

So wie es in der äußeren Natur ist, so ist es auch in der inneren, in der des menschlichen Geschlechtes. [...] Es gibt Kräfte, die nach dem Bestehen des Einzelnen zielen. Sie nehmen alles und verwenden es, was zum Bestehen und zum Entwickeln desselben nothwendig ist. Sie sichern den Bestand des Einen und dadurch den Aller. Wenn aber Jemand jedes Ding unbedingt an sich reißt, was sein Wesen braucht, wenn er die Bedingungen des Daseins eines Anderen zerstört, so ergrimmt etwas Höheres in uns, wir helfen dem Schwachen und Unterdrückten, wir stellen den Stand wieder her, daß er ein Mensch neben dem Andern bestehe, und seine menschlichen Bahn gehen könne, und wenn wir das gethan haben, so fühlen wir uns befriediget, wir fühlen uns noch viel höher und inniger, als wir uns als Einzelne fühlen, wir fühlen uns als ganze Menschheit. (HKG 2,2:12)

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<sup>194</sup> See here Fleming, 144. “The collective force of the small is simply the access to it. The question then becomes: how does one see the invisible? Just as one cannot see light, one has no eye for magnetic fields. Even though we do not have a ‘corporeal eye’ for such ‘immeasurable events,’ we do have ‘the spiritual [eye] of science, and this teaches us that the electrical and magnetic power acts upon a monstrous stage.’ Empirical vision is, then, ultimately only a means to an end, to a higher form of (mental or spiritual) vision, just as the small only serves a greater end: revealing the whole and universal.”

As Paul Fleming shows, lawfulness here relates both to the individual's self-interest and to society's self-preservational instincts, and thus stands in obvious tension with the universal lawfulness present in the scientific realm.<sup>195</sup> And this is to say nothing of the status of lawfulness as either positive or normative. But the question of the compatibility, or even identity, of these two realms was under intense pressure at the time, especially in the popular periodical press,<sup>196</sup> and the lack of clarity in the preface thus seems more broadly indicative of discursive shifts in the nineteenth century.

Stifter's claim that he is making an analogy ("So wie es in der äußeren Natur ist, so ist es auch in der inneren, in der des menschlichen Geschlechtes") ends up obscuring a much more significant methodological point. While the realms of science and morality are not interchangeable, with the latter disclosing a different type of knowledge than the former, the study of morality can draw methodologically from the study of science. At issue here is the same question of discursive fusion or concatenation familiar from the "Sonnenfinsterniß" essay. Just

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<sup>195</sup> Fleming provides an excellent discussion of the problems with this analogy. See Fleming, esp. 149-54. See also Alfred Doppler, "Schrecklich schöne Welt? Stifters fragwürdige Analogie von Natur- und Sittengesetz," ed. Roland Duhamel et al., *Adalbert Stifters schrecklich schöne Welt: Beiträge des internationalen Kolloquiums zur A.-Stifter-Ausstellung (Universität Antwerpen 1993)*; *Acta Austriaca-Belgica I, eine Koproduktion von: Germanistische Mitteilungen (40/1994) und Jahrbuch des A. Stifter Institutes (1/1994)*, 1994, 11.

<sup>196</sup> The dominant realist medium, namely the popular periodical, played a central role in the dissemination of this discourse. As Gerhart Graevenitz elaborates: "[D]ie Zeitschriften des 19. Jahrhunderts versuchen es noch einmal, die Fülle des 'Anthropischen' in die Anthropologie des ganzen Menschen, in die Einheit von physikalischer und moralischer Natur zurückzuholen. Bedroht ist diese Ganzheit des Menschen vor allem durch das Wissen der neueren Naturwissenschaften, das nicht allein die physikalische Natur des Menschen verselbständigt, sondern sie zudem entanthropomorphisiert. Die Gesetze der menschlichen 'Natur' sind solche der Natur allgemein." Gerhart Graevenitz, "Wissen und Sehen: Anthropologie und Perspektivismus in der Zeitschriftenpresse des 19. Jahrhunderts und in realistischen Texten; Zu Stifters *Bunten Steinen* und Kellers *Sinngedicht*," in *Wissen in Literatur im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Lutz Danneberg and Friedrich Vollhardt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2002), 148.

as Stifter had sought with that text to capture both cognition and affect, so too does he reflect in the preface on the means for rendering two dimensions of experience. The point is not for moral lawfulness somehow to assume the same role as natural lawfulness within a given conceptual framework. Rather, the preface articulates an epistemological mode that *combines the insights from both fields*. As was the case for the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay, here, too, is this concatenation negotiated via recognition. While the essay had considered a speculative medium based on Enlightenment models of recognition, the preface more concretely delineates the relationship between recognition and textual practices. In the end, Stifter will articulate an anthropologically inflected mode of reading that draws from the sciences.<sup>197</sup> But before jumping ahead to the question of reading, it is necessary to dwell on the relation between the part and the whole.

Stifter proposes a moral lawfulness predicated on empathy or compassion. “[E]twas Höheres in uns” exerts itself in response to individualistic behavior and brings about a kind of collective understanding of humanity. And this collectivity emerges from the scientific methods just elaborated. While the *Naturforscher* studies phenomena that exist outside of him- or herself, gathering individual observations into a meaningful totality (“aus *Einzelnem* das Allgemeine zusammen trägt”), the *Menschenforscher* participates more directly in this process. That is, human individuals (“Einzelne”) stand in for the scientist’s data points, with their experience of

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<sup>197</sup> This mode of reading is very much in line with that promoted by popular periodicals. As Graevenitz notes, citing an 1853 issue of *Die Gartenlaube*: “Die illustrierten Zeitschriften und Familienblätter wollen ein Simultanbild aus Bildern des Entferntesten und Nahen zusammensetzen. Das ‘zusammengesetzte Gesamtbild’ ist ihr publizistisches Programm. Es manifestiert sich in den großen, aus Einzelansichten zusammengestellten und ornamental gerahmten Bildseiten, den arabesken Simultanbildern und es hat seine Entsprechung im Erkenntnisprogramm der Zeitschriften. Wer die vielen Bilder und Texte betrachtet und liest muß selbst Zusammenhänge leisten [...]. [...] Durch Bilder und bild-analoge Anschauungsformen soll der Zusammenhang des Wissens sichtbar werden.” Graevenitz, 152.

communality (“wir fühlen uns als ganze Menschheit”) assuming the role of the magnetic storm. The individual operates here as both observer and observed. Common to both spheres is a movement from discrete particulars to some common thread that unites them. In the human as in the scientific realm, at stake is the recognition of some higher principle. “Wenn in diesen Bewegungen das Gesez der Gerechtigkeit und Sitte *erkennbar* ist, wenn sie von demselben eingeleitet, und fortgeführt worden sind, so fühlen wir uns menschlich verallgemeinert, wir empfinden das Erhabene” (HKG 2,2:13). The operation proceeds according to scientific (or scientific) methodology, but because it is self-directed, the recognition of the great necessarily involves an element of *self-recognition*. If moral lawfulness – however understood – is recognizable (“erkennbar”), then the individual will feel him- or herself as part of a social collective. At the same time, the individual does not simply dissolve into the collective. The recourse here to the sublime (“wir empfinden das Erhabene”) underscores precisely the triumph of each individual’s cognitive faculties.<sup>198</sup>

This general summary has brought out a seemingly trite point – after all, any human science necessitates overlap between observer and observed. However, Stifter’s formulation comes at a decisive point in the histories of both science and aesthetics, and a brief foray into nineteenth-century science and aesthetic theory helps illustrate how the analogy between science and morality is at least partially realizable within the realm of literature. Stifter’s emphasis on the

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<sup>198</sup> For more on Stifter’s treatment of the sublime, see Leigh Ann Smith-Gary, “Extreme Measures: Domesticating the Sublime in German Realist Literature” (Doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 2012), esp. 23-40; Michael Minden, “Stifter and the Postmodern Sublime,” in *History, Text, Value: Essays on Adalbert Stifter; Londoner Symposium 2003*, ed. Michael Minden, Martin Swales, and Godela Weiss-Sussex (Linz: Adalbert-Stifter-Institut, 2006), 9–21; Hans Dietrich Irmischer, “Phänomen und Begriff des Erhabenen im Werk Adalbert Stifters,” *Vierteljahresschrift des Adalbert-Stifter-Instituts des Landes Oberösterreich* 40, no. 3/4 (1991): 30–58.

self-recognition of the *Menschenforscher* recalls nineteenth-century scientific practices, which emphasized self-experimentation and informed new models of observation.<sup>199</sup> From the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, what Jonathan Crary terms the camera obscura model of vision, had held sway.<sup>200</sup> This conceptual model posited the subject and object of observation as distinct, but with the discovery that the body actively produces visual sensation, this model was supplanted by that of so-called “subjective vision.”<sup>201</sup> The aesthetic consequences were profound, as one suddenly had to account for the fact that the visual perception of reality was mediated entirely by the retina. So-called projection theory proposed that the retinal image somehow had to be externalized or projected outward in order to make possible any understanding of “external” reality.<sup>202</sup> In aesthetics, the metaphor of projection was used to explain the experience of the beautiful in terms of the growing understanding of human physiology.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Jutta Müller-Tamm, *Abstraktion als Einfühlung: Zur Denkfigur der Projektion in Psychophysiologie, Kulturtheorie, Ästhetik und Literatur der frühen Moderne* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2005), 71–98.

<sup>200</sup> Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 27–66.

<sup>201</sup> Crary, 67–96.

<sup>202</sup> “Die in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts heftig umstrittene Projektionstheorie besagte, daß, weil wir von der Außenwelt selbst keine Kenntnis haben, sondern nur Empfindungen auf der Netzhaut kennen, ein psychischer oder physiologischer Mechanismus angenommen werden muß, der die Empfindungen aus dem Körperinneren nach außen versetzt.” Müller-Tamm, *Abstraktion als Einfühlung*, 99.

<sup>203</sup> Empathy aesthetics responded to breathtaking advances in the field of optics, drawing on work by figures like Goethe, Jan Evangelista Purkinje, Johannes Müller, and Hermann von Helmholtz, whose ideas Stifter likewise took up in his prose. For an extended discussion of Stifter’s works in relation to scientific developments, see Brodersen, “Die Wirklichkeit im ‘Hohlspiegel der Sinne.’” While Brodersen treats the relevant scientific developments at length, she does not consider the subsequent theorization of projection. She does, however, refer to the metaphoric projection of the body into space, describing the enlargement of microscopic bodily processes onto landscapes (202-85).

Central here was the new field of empathy aesthetics [*Einfühlungsästhetik*], the first treatise of which was Robert Vischer's 1873 *Ueber das optische Formgefühl*. While the text appeared after Stifter's death, the two were working within a similar intellectual tradition, and a comparison helps to illuminate some of the anthropological and aesthetic dimensions of the preface to *Bunte Steine*.<sup>204</sup> Briefly, Vischer elaborates the experience of aesthetic pleasure in terms of sensory perception, delineating a formal symbolic process that involves the displacement [*Versetzung*] of the self into an external object.<sup>205</sup> He begins his account by describing the pleasure generated by certain types or configurations of objects. At a basic level, certain objects induce pleasure because they mimic the form of the human body: The sensation [*Empfindung*] of round objects, for instance, is pleasing because they have the same shape as the human eye.<sup>206</sup> The more active act of imagining [*sich etwas vorstellen*], too, is governed by a similar symbolic process. One might dream of an overhanging bay on a house because one's head hangs off the side of a bed.<sup>207</sup> In fantasies, too, that which is imagined is formed according to one's bodily situatedness. "Ganz wie im Traumleben markire ich mir auf blosse

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<sup>204</sup> Philip Ajouri makes a passing association between realist epistemology and empathy aesthetics. "Richard Brinkmann hatte bereits 1958 festgestellt, daß im Realismus 'die tatsächliche Wirklichkeit erst recht eigentlich problematisch geworden ist' und eine 'Subjektivierung der Wirklichkeit' nach sich zieht. Dieser Vorgang läßt sich also auch im Bereich der Ästhetik festmachen. Dies wird an der Entwicklung des Naturschönen als objektiver Kategorie hin zur Einfühlungsästhetik, in der Schönheit vom Subjekt ausgeht, hinlänglich deutlich." Ajouri, *Erzählen nach Darwin*, 178.

<sup>205</sup> Vischer derives this model in part from Karl Albert Scherner's 1861 *Das Leben des Traums*, which describes "wie der Leib im Traum auf gewisse Reize hin an räumlichen Formen sich selber objektiviert. Es ist also ein unbewusstes Versetzen der eigenen Leibform und hiemit auch der Seele in die Objektsform." Robert Vischer, *Ueber das optische Formgefühl: Ein Beitrag zur Ästhetik* (Leipzig: Hermann Credner, 1873), vii, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044108132788;view=1up;seq=5>.

<sup>206</sup> Vischer, 9.

<sup>207</sup> "Ich kann z.B. von dem gefährlich überhängenden Erker eines Hauses träumen, weil mir der Kopf an der Seite des Bettes herunterhängt." Vischer, 13.

Nervensensationen hin eine feste Form, die meinen Körper, dieses oder jenes betroffene Organ bedeutet. [...] Die Art nun, wie sich die Erscheinung aufbaut, wird zu einer Analogie meines eigenen Aufbaus; ich hülle mich in die Grenzen derselben wie in ein Kleid.”<sup>208</sup>

This process takes on an affective dimension when the object in question is another human being. It is here that subject and object most fully intersect, and this is the result of “der pantheistische Drang zur Vereinigung mit der Welt.”<sup>209</sup> It is here that the similarities to Stifter become strikingly apparent.

Indem ich abstrakt denken und mich als untergeordneten Theil eines untrennbaren Ganzen begreifen lerne, expandirt sich mein Gefühl zum Gemüth. Und so werde ich von einer persönlichen Schädigung oder Genugthuung in so fern im Gemüth erregt, als dieselbe wie eine Schwächung oder Bekräftigung der Weltharmonie aufgefasst werden kann. Der Glückseligkeitstrieb entdeckt das einzige Wundermittel, sich zu befriedigen, in der Sorge für das allgemeine Wohl der Menschheit. So steigen wir von der simplen Selbstliebe zur Geschlechts- und Familienliebe (Racegefühl) und von dieser zur absoluten Nächstenliebe, Menschenfreundlichkeit und zum Pathos des Staatsbewusstseins empor.

[...] Ich fühle mich selbst in mir oder in einem andern Ich, aber nur als einen würdigen Repräsentanten der ganzen Gattung.<sup>210</sup>

While there are irrevocable differences between Vischer and Stifter’s models (pantheism vs. Catholicism, affect vs. morality), both elaborate a similar notion of collectivity. Vischer, like Stifter, describes the response to a personal affront (“persönliche[] Schädigung”) in collective terms. Vischer’s use of “Gemüth” roughly correlates with Stifter’s “etwas “Höheres in uns” here – the individual responds ethically to a violation in the “Weltharmonie” (Vischer) or “Menschheit” (Stifter). Vischer, like Stifter, will connect this collective feeling to various social

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<sup>208</sup> Vischer, 15.

<sup>209</sup> Vischer, 28.

<sup>210</sup> Vischer, 28–29.

and political entities, from the family unit to the state.<sup>211</sup> In short, it is the individual's capacity for empathy that makes collective constructs possible.

Empathy, finally, has important consequences for artistic production. The artist, in Vischer's account, presents his or her *own* imaginative processes, but in an idealized, aestheticized way. "Indem er [der Künstler] den instinktiven und reflektirten Massstab der menschlichen Normalität auf das Objekt überträgt, schildert er in Allem den vollkommenen Menschen, in Allem seine eigene Miene, wie sie von der illusionären Pracht der Welt *verklärt* ist."<sup>212</sup> Vischer uses here the single most important aesthetic term associated with poetic realism: *verklärt*. The work of transfiguration, or *Verklärung*, is what makes poetic realism *poetic*, what establishes the *literariness* of realist works. Stifter's comments in the preface about the artistic features of the works gathered in *Bunte Steine* are very much in line with this notion of transfigured interiority. As he remarks at the beginning of the preface: "Wenn etwas Edles und Gutes in mir ist, so wird es von selber in meinen Schriften liegen; wenn aber dasselbe nicht in meinem Gemüthe ist, so werde ich mich vergeblich bemühen, Hohen und Schönes darzustellen, es wird doch immer das Niedrige und Unedle durchscheinen" (HKG 2,2:9). The great is something apparently present *within* Stifter that appears in externalized form within his texts. As will become clear, his narrative prose highlights this process via the metaphor of projection that empathy aesthetics would later promulgate.

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<sup>211</sup> "Dieses Gesez liegt überall, wo Menschen neben Menschen wohnen, und es zeigt sich, wenn Menschen gegen Menschen wirken. Es liegt in der Liebe der Ehegatten zu einander [...] in der Arbeitsamkeit, wodurch wir erhalten werden, in der Thätigkeit, wodurch man für seinen Kreis für die Ferne für die Menschheit wirkt, und endlich in der Ordnung und Gestalt, womit ganze Gesellschaften und Staaten ihr Dasein umgeben, und zum Abschlusse bringen" (HKG 2,2:13).

<sup>212</sup> Vischer, *Ueber das optische Formgefühl*, 38. Emphasis added. He states this more succinctly several pages prior: "Ich möchte meinem Mitmenschen zeigen und wiederholen, was in mir vorgeht, was mein Vorstellungswille im Objekte thut. Die eigentliche Reaktion des Phantasiewillens beruht also in der *Nachahmung*" (36).

But what does all of this mean for Stifter's poetics and aesthetics? He goes to great lengths to lay out the analogy between science and morality, and only at the very end of the text, almost as an afterthought, does he make note of the fact that he is prefacing a collection of stories. "Da ich in dieser Vorrede in meinen Ansichten über Großes und Kleines so weit gegangen bin, so sei es mir erlaubt zu sagen, daß ich in der Geschichte des menschlichen Geschlechtes manche Erfahrungen zu sammeln bemüht gewesen bin, und daß ich Einzelnes aus diesen Erfahrungen zu dichtenden Versuchen zusammengestellt habe" (HKG 2,2:16). Stifter's poetic "experiments" are gathered together, just like data points, and, according to his preceding comments, should make perceptible a totality in the same way as the instruments of his *Naturforscher*. But what kind of totality? What is one expected to glean from the raw data of moral life?

Because reality is not replicable in full, the author must focus on individual units of study, depicting the world "Körnchen nach Körnchen." In terms of genre, one can think of Stifter's "experiments" as exemplary case studies.<sup>213</sup> The point is not simply to amass large quantities of data, but rather to focus on the individual units that, taken together, reveal the moral lawfulness that governs human behavior.<sup>214</sup> In contemporary parlance, one might describe this as toggling between close and distant reading.<sup>215</sup> One cannot possibly read or write everything –

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<sup>213</sup> See here Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity*, 155. "Because there probably cannot be a truly statistical literature – one that aggregates a vast pool of data – Stifter's literary *practice*, therefore, approaches Büchner and Grillparzer in 'penetrating the feelings of the obscure.' The desired outcome of this investment in the ordinary is, however, not to trace the thread of hermeneutic understanding but to present exemplary figures drawn from putatively ordinary life." For more on the genre and history of the case study, see Chapter Four.

<sup>214</sup> "Stifter's preface does not display an interest in individual phenomena per se, whether great or small, but rather in what subtends but is ultimately exterior to both. The collective force of the small is simply the access to it." Fleming, 144.

<sup>215</sup> As Nicolas Pethes shows, the case calls for a "big data" approach in the vein of what Franco Moretti terms distant reading. Moretti initially defined distant reading thusly: "[W]e know how

thus the focus on the individual “Körnchen” – but one must assemble these units in such a way as to make legible a bigger pattern within the data. The experimental setup that would govern this process remains unarticulated, and it is not clear how one determines which “Körnchen” to focus on. Stifter simply ignores this dimension of the methodology he proposes, emphasizing instead the process of gleaning a whole from individual (apparently pre-selected) parts.<sup>216</sup>

With this new methodology, Stifter tackles a very old problem: the relationship between the part and the whole within literature, which finds expression in chapter 17 of Aristotle’s *Poetics* as a category of recognition. To recall, Aristotle recommends 1) that the poet *qua* reader imaginatively immerse him- or herself in individual episodes and 2) that the poet *qua* reader strive to recognize the general plot-structure, i.e. that he or she differentiate the whole from the parts. These two impulses are in tension with one another already in Aristotle. And while Stifter does not completely solve the problem, he does present it in a new light. Via the mode of

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to read texts, now let’s learn how *not* to read them. Distant reading: where distance, let me repeat it, *is a condition of knowledge*: it allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems.” Nineteenth-century literary works, Pethes argues, already incorporated this methodology, deploying archival structures and thematizing the processing of large quantities of textual materials. Nicolas Pethes, “Serial Individuality: Eighteenth-Century Case Study Collections and Nineteenth-Century Archival Fiction,” in *Distant Readings: Topologies of German Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Matt Erlin and Lynne Tatlock (Rochester: Camden House, 2014), 117, 120–23; Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *New Left Review* 1 (February 2000): 57. For a concise overview of the shifts in the meaning of “distant reading,” see Tobias Boes, “The Vocations of the Novel: Distant-Reading Occupational Change in Nineteenth-Century German Literature,” in *Distant Readings: Topologies of German Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Matt Erlin and Lynne Tatlock (Rochester: Camden House, 2014), 262–67.

<sup>216</sup> Or perhaps this doesn’t even matter, if, as Fleming suggests, the data simply organize themselves. Reading Stifter through the lens of statistical thought, he proposes that a large enough sample size will necessarily reveal an underlying lawfulness, namely the normal distribution. “[T]here is [...] another way of seeing the gentle law: to view to gentle law as analogous to statistical probability, in which a large enough field of data performs the awe-inspiring feat of organizing itself into a coherent, normal distribution.” Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity*, 146.

corporeal projection inherent to empathy aesthetics, Stifter's readers immerse themselves within the work *while* experiencing themselves as part of a greater whole. Recognition in this case relates not to plot-structure, but rather to the underlying lawfulness that the plot-structure strives to convey.

First, this framework requires that the reader re-enact the experiences of the protagonists. This is already suggested with the epistemological distinctions between the work of the *Naturforscher* and that of the *Menschenforscher*. If the *Naturforscher* seeks knowledge about something, e.g. a magnetic storm, the *Menschenforscher* seeks to acquire both discursive and experiential knowledge. Or, to borrow a distinction Hermann von Helmholtz would later elaborate in a different context, what is (for Stifter) at issue in science is *Wissen*, in morality both *Wissen* and *Kennen*.<sup>217</sup> The point of reading Stifter's prose is not (just) to learn something about the world, but to experience the act of knowing in the same way as the protagonists.<sup>218</sup> In this manner, the reader repeats the type of knowing performed by the protagonists, with the depicted

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<sup>217</sup> Helmholtz, "Die neueren Fortschritte in der Theorie des Sehens," 92–93. For more on the salience of this distinction in the nineteenth century, see Çelik Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, 27–61. Finally, for a more detailed discussion of this epistemological framework, see the Introduction.

<sup>218</sup> Stifter would take this problem up in more detail in *Der Nachsommer*. Risach, explaining to Heinrich the order in which Gustav studies various subjects, frames the distinction between the natural and the human sciences as one of experiential knowledge. "Die Naturwissenschaften sind uns aber viel greifbarer als die Wissenschaften der Menschen, wenn ich ja Natur und Menschen gegenüber stellen soll, weil man die Gegenstände der Natur außer sich hinstellen und betrachten kann, die Gegenstände der Menschheit aber uns durch uns selber verhüllt sind. Man sollte meinen, daß das Gegentheil statthaben solle, daß man sich selber besser als Fremdes kennen solle, viele glauben es auch; aber es ist nicht so. Thatsachen der Menschheit ja Thatsachen unseres eigenen Innern werden uns, wie ich schon einmal gesagt habe, durch Leidenschaft und Eigensucht verborgen gehalten oder mindestens getrübt" (HKG 4,1:220-21). Holub offers a helpful gloss on this passage. "Only if we would become facts that could be examined and studied through a scientific procedure, only when we become objects for each other, only when, drained of passion and drives, we begin to resemble the aesthetic automatons of *Der Nachsommer*, does the human species reach the apex of Risach's natural order." Holub, *Reflections of Realism*, 94.

act of recognition [*erkennen*] becoming, via the act of reading, re-cognition [*wiedererkennen*]. This repetitive re-cognition occurs via the corporeal mode of empathy elaborated above. The protagonists within Stifter's stories relate to texts in ways that can only be described as projective, with the works they write serving as a medium for the externalization of interiority. Via a remarkably consistent metaphoric repertoire, Stifter encourages the same process of projection within his own readers. Because the narratives draw conspicuous attention to the fact of mediation, because they foreground the reader's own body, the constructed nature of re-cognition is continually in view. In this manner, the conceptual framework for Stifter's poetics and aesthetics reflects the tension at the heart of poetic realism, namely the dialectic between poeticity and realism. Second, in Stifter's works, this mode allows the individual to experience communal belonging. His narratives are preoccupied with questions of genealogy, and this communal whole is more often than not a familial construct. In sum, Stifter merges the two levels of poetic/readerly activity that were distinct in Aristotle. *It is the individual's imaginative, corporeal immersion within the work that reveals the greater familial whole.* Thus, readerly re-cognition – whether undertaken by Stifter as a reader of his own works, or the extradiegetic reader of Stifter's text – realizes within a specifically nineteenth-century scientific framework Aristotle's prescriptions for recognition.

This method of re-cognition finds pronounced expression within Stifter's narrative prose. One of the richest examples occurs in "Die Narrenburg," which embeds this method of re-cognition within a scene of anagnorisis that throws into relief the mimetic logic that undergirds realism as such. This text demonstrates *intradiegetically* how the recognition of the part/whole manifests itself in a character's relationship to a communal, genealogical reading and writing practice. "Die Narrenburg" also posits recognition as contingent upon spatial metaphors linked

with projection. “Die Mappe,” by intensifying these spatial metaphors, reveals how both Stifter and his *extradiegetic* readers are in turn implicated in this same process.

### **READING AND RECOGNITION: “DIE NARRENBURG”**

“Die Narrenburg” tells the story of the natural scientist Heinrich and his incorporation into the foolish Scharnast family. Centuries prior, Hans von Scharnast had stipulated in his testament that each heir must 1) write his or her<sup>219</sup> complete life story, from which his or her descendants could learn, and 2) read and learn from the life stories of all of his or her ancestors, which are preserved in the castle’s archive. While the reading and writing requirement was intended to weaken the family’s propensity toward foolishness, it ends up having quite the opposite effect. One summer day, Heinrich – tellingly described already at the beginning of the narrative as a bit of a fool – arrives in town and discovers the castle while exploring the area and collecting natural artifacts. After conversations with the locals, Heinrich begins to suspect that he may be the long-sought heir, and he tours the castle – the *Burg Rothenstein* – together with his friend Robert. The tour – really a homecoming – is punctuated by a scene of recognition. Wandering through the castle’s portrait gallery, Heinrich sees his own likeness in a painting. Legally binding proof of his heritage eventually follows, and Heinrich begins to write his own life story and read one of his ancestor’s autobiographies. Through the mode of knowing

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<sup>219</sup> The Stifter scholarship suggests that only men are able to inherit, but the text indicates otherwise. “Seine [Hanns von Scharnasts] Burg Rothenstein sammt Zugehör an Unterthanen, an Jagd-, Fisch- und Berggerechtigkeit solle sich in gerader Linie immer auf den ältesten Sohn forterben; *ist kein Sohn da, auf Töchter*, und in Ermangelung dieser auf die älteste Seitenlinie und so fort” (HKG 1,4:321; emphasis added). While no female heirs are ever actually mentioned in the narrative, the testament does seem to allow for their existence. Cf. Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 137; Michael Titzmann, “Text und Kryptotext: Zur Interpretation von StifTERS Erzählung ‘Die Narrenburg,’” in *Adalbert Stifter: Dichter und Maler, Denkmalpfleger und Schulmann; Neue Zugänge zu seinem Werk*, ed. Hartmut Laufhütte and Karl Möseneder (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1996), 336, 346.

suggested by the preface to *Bunte Steine*, Heinrich recognizes his own familial totality, and, through the prescribed reading and writing practices, re-cognizes it again in mediated form.<sup>220</sup>

In order to draw out the realist significance of the recognition scene, it is first necessary to consider how the narrative posits the relationship between life and literature. Already the Scharnast family tradition associates intradiegetic reality a little too closely with metadiegetic reality. Instead of using reading and writing as an opportunity for measured self-reflection, the Scharnasts mirror the behaviors recorded in their ancestors' autobiographies. The testament

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<sup>220</sup> Sigrid Weigel reads “Die Narrenburg” alongside the discursive shift from the concept of “Geschlecht” to that of “Generation.” She also notes that the term *Ahnen* began to refer in the nineteenth century to bourgeois, and not just noble lineages (156). Heinrich, first presumed a bourgeois subject, becomes aware of his noble heritage, after which point he marries a bourgeois subject and starts a family, thereby ensuring the continuity of the line. As Weigel puts it, “Die Wiederbelebung des erstorbenen Geschlechts durch das Naturwesen, die Frau aus dem Volke bzw. die ‘neue Art’, entspricht der Umbesetzung des Leitbegriffs Geschlecht von der Beziehung für ein Adelshaus in ein durch sexuelle Konnotationen der Fortpflanzungsfunktion aufgeladenes Konzept, wie er sich gleichzeitig in der Enzyklopädie niederschlug” (157). Sigrid Weigel, *Genea-Logik: Generation, Tradition und Evolution zwischen Kultur- und Naturwissenschaften* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006), 145–61. Depictions of familial tradition and writing practices in “Die Narrenburg” and “Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters” have been explored extensively. Britta Herrmann observes that family as an “Ordnungswort” assumes prominence in the nineteenth century through various social institutions and academic fields, as well as literature. She reads Raabe’s “Die Akten des Vogelsangs” and Stifter’s “Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters,” “Die Narrenburg,” and “Nachkommenschaften” within this context, and shows how the written word and the act of writing create stable familial structures via narrative prose. While I make a similar claim, I go beyond Herrmann’s account by connecting the construction of a familial/literary totality to the motif and operation of recognition within Stifter’s poetics and aesthetics. Ann Elizabeth Reidy likewise considers this sociological context in her discussion of “Die Narrenburg,” arguing that certain writing practices, like the keeping of a *Familienchronik*, made it possible for historiographical praxis to extend beyond academe. Finally, Cornelia Blasberg gives an overview of familial structures in Stifter’s texts, which she reads through structures of descendance and repetition. See Britta Herrmann, “Verweigerte Ich-Ausdehnung, historische Kontinuitätsbildung und mikroskopierte Wirklichkeit: Familienroman im 19. Jahrhundert,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 84, no. 2 (2010): 186–208; Reidy, “Histories of Realism,” 44–46; Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition*, 27–80.

inadvertently encourages this behavior, since it couples legal existence with textual practices.<sup>221</sup>

“Wer eine von diesen Bedingungen nicht erfüllen könne oder wolle, der wird betrachtet, als sei er [...] gestorben, und dasselbe geht auf seinen [...] Nachfolger über. [...] Bei wessen Tode sich der Fall ereigne, daß man von ihm gar keine Lebensbeschreibung in dem rothen Steine finden könne, der wird als gar nicht geboren betrachtet, also ist auch seine ganze Nachkommenschaft nicht geboren” (HKG 1,4:321-22). In the eyes of the law, the individual who cannot uphold the oath is treated as non-existent, as either deceased or as never having been born.

The overlap between life and text also finds expression in the villagers’ attitude toward literature, which is rendered in distinctly romantic terms. Heinrich falls in love with Anna, the *lesesüchtige* daughter of the local innkeeper. Her best friend Thine’s nurse had told them fantastic tales when they were young, and the women’s interest in stories persists mightily. During a midnight rendezvous, in which Heinrich and Anna confess their love for one another, Anna makes repeated reference to Heinrich’s resemblance to familiar literary figures. “[W]enn mein Vater auf die Bücher Thrinens schmälte, und sagte, es sei lauter Narrheit in ihnen, und wenn ich es auch schon selber zu glauben anhob, so war mir doch dazumal – – – aber das ist zu lächerlich. – – ’ / ‘Nun, Anna, nun?’ / ‘Es war mir öfters, als seid ihr in einem solchen Buche gestanden, und daraus in unsern Garten getreten” (HKG 1,4:347). Anna’s beloved fairy tales contain, in her father’s judgment, utter foolishness. Like the Scharnasts, Anna is apt to

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<sup>221</sup> “Im Zentrum beider Erzählungen steht also die Verschriftlichung des Lebens, in einer Weise, die als charakteristisch für die Selbstbegründung des Subjekts im 19. Jahrhundert gelten kann. Sowohl in der *Narrenburg* als auch in der *Mappe* geht es offensichtlich um die Legitimation des Lebens durch die Schrift, wird Identität an eine aus der Schrift abgeleitete Genealogie geknüpft.” Jutta Müller-Tamm, “‘Alles nicht zu Ende, alles falsch...’: Allegorie und Erzählstruktur in Stifters ‘Narrenburg,’” *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 17, no. 3 (2007): 563.

understand life via texts, and thus describes Heinrich as a literary figure who, in a moment of romantic metalepsis, has inexplicably stepped out of the pages of a book and into her life.<sup>222</sup>

Heinrich, too, sees reality textually, drawing on the metaphor of the book of nature to describe his apprehension of the world. ““Siehe, das ist so: Wie du in deinen Büchern liesest, so bin ich bestimmt, im Buche Gottes zu lesen und die Steine, und die Blumen, und die Lüfte und die Sterne sind seine Buchstaben”” (HKG 1,4:350). Heinrich later posits his natural scientific proclivities as analogous to Anna’s readerly fervor, when, thinking of his beloved, he equates their favored objects of study. ““O du süßes, unerforschtes Märchen der Natur, wie habe ich dich immer und so lange in Steinen und Blumen gesucht, und zuletzt in einem Menschenherzen gefunden!”” (HKG 1,4:357). Underlying this somewhat strained comparison is an analogy between the scientific and the utterly human. The fairy tale of nature is but the mysterious, by Anna and Heinrich yet-unstudied phenomenon of romantic love. Even Heinrich’s relationship to the mysterious *Narrenburg* is depicted in book-like terms. Based on discussions with the townspeople, Heinrich suspects that he might in fact be a descendant of the family, but he is wary of revealing this information to Anna. ““– – nein es ist zu fabelhaft; ich getraue mir es selber nicht zu glauben – –”” (HKG 1,4:351). The possibility that he might indeed be descended from the Scharnasts is so improbable – so *fabelhaft* – as to fit in one of Anna’s beloved tales.

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<sup>222</sup> “Die Pointe dieses Dialogs besteht ja gerade darin, dass Anna mit ihrer naiven, aber nicht unmittelbaren Sicht der Dinge *Recht* hat: Heinrich *ist* ihr Prinz, er ist der Ritter, der sie heiraten wird, er ist – wie es in der Erzählung heißt – der Nachkomme ‘romantischer Vorfahrer’. Die fiktionale Wirklichkeit präsentiert sich mithin als Verkörperung romantischer Literatur; und das ist schließlich der entscheidende Effekt dieses narrativen Arrangements: Dichtung und Wahrheit kommen programmatisch zur Deckung.” Müller-Tamm, 569. For more on the relationship between Stifter and literary tradition, specifically in “Die Narrenburg,” see Marcus Hahn, *Geschichte und Epigonen: 19. Jahrhundert/Postmoderne, Stifter/Bernhard* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2003), 293–310; Katharina Grätz, *Musealer Historismus: Die Gegenwart des Vergangenen bei Stifter, Keller und Raabe* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006), 104–38; Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 210–11.

While the presence of a mysterious, decrepit castle might initially evoke any number of romantic texts, as in “Abdias,” Stifter disrupts and refigures the lingering romantic worldview. Importantly, the diegetic slippage suggested in the preceding passages is spatialized. More specifically, the imaginative structure itself is externalized, such that the protagonists’ conceptual frameworks for understanding life and literature are made physically manifest. In other words, one finds already at this stage evidence of the kind of projection elaborated above. One Sunday, when the surrounding blue flax fields (another nod to romanticism) are in full bloom, Heinrich and his friend Robert, the town clerk and husband of Thrine, visit the castle. The entrance is hidden, the door indistinguishable from the surrounding walls, but after Robert makes their presence known to the castellan, a gateway suddenly appears. “[M]an [hörte] ein seltsames Aechzen und Knarren in der Mauer, und zum Erstaunen des Wanderers schob sich ein Stück derselben gleichsam ineinander, und es wurde die dunkle Mündung eines Pfortchens sichtbar, darinnen, wie in einem Rahmen eine große Gestalt stand” (HKG 1,4:364). The castellan Ruprecht emerges as though in a picture frame,<sup>223</sup> instructing Heinrich and Robert to go straight to the green hall, which, the reader soon learns, contains the family portrait collection. The men then pass through the frame and enter the complex.

When the door closes behind them, Heinrich and Robert appear to be inside an almost fairy tale-like world. They are distanced from the village and its inhabitants and are sequestered inside the strange castle complex. As Heinrich remarks: ““Mir ist es, *wie in einem uralten*

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<sup>223</sup> Tove Holmes makes a similar observation. Her analysis shows that the images within the narrative contain a temporality that Lessing had denied to the medium. Ruprecht’s apparent emergence from a frame will be mirrored in the later scene in the portrait gallery, where images of long-dead individuals assume a heightened temporal presence. Tove Holmes, “Literary Images: Viewing and Visuality in German Realism” (Doctoral thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 123.

*Märchen, alles so wunderbar, als läge die Fichtau gar nicht unten*, in der ich doch gestern noch war” (HKG 1,4:368; emphasis added). Ruprecht too, who seems to mistake Heinrich for a member of the Scharnast family, is described in similar terms: “de[r] *märchenhaft alte*[], blödsinnige[] Mann” (HKG 1,4:377). The language here recalls the diegetic slippage Anna had described to Heinrich, but the process is no longer strictly imaginative. By applying corporeal descriptors to a variety of objects, the narrative underscores the projective externalization at work here. As Ruprecht describes the Scharnast’s texts: ““Die Bücher, so in dem Gewölbe dieses rothen Steines sind, [...] reden nur zu Leuten, die aus dem Blute unsrer Grafen stammen, und jeder Tropfen ist aufgeschrieben, der seit siebenhundert Jahren aus einem ihrer Herzen rann, und keiner darf die Schrift lesen, der nicht ein Kind desselben Geschlechtes ist”” (HKG 1,4:375).<sup>224</sup> Manifestations of the metaphorical *Herzensschrift*, the autobiographies are (figuratively) written in blood and speak to their recipients. This language echoes the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay, where Stifter had associated the aurally apprehended *Herzensschrift* with affect rather than cognition. Here, Stifter extends the metaphor and embeds it within a discourse of biological inheritability: the Scharnasts are infected with the foolish blood of their ancestors, which spreads via their autobiographies.<sup>225</sup> Importantly, the narrative relates this bodily fluid to space. As Christian Begemann suggests, the *Burg Rothenstein*, named after its red cliff surroundings, has soaked up

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<sup>224</sup> In the *Journalfassung*, Ruprecht is described as ““eine Chronik [...], in der nur die Blätter durch einander geworfen sind”” (HKG 1,1:349), and later as “ein lebendiges, redendes Buch” (HKG 1,1:363). These brief descriptors, which evoke the epigraph that will be added to the *Studienfassung*, are excised from that version. There, book-like characteristics are attributable only to members of the Scharnast family.

<sup>225</sup> See here Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 243–44; Christian Begemann, “Das Verhängnis der Schrift,” in *Adalbert Stifter, Die Narrenburg*, ed. Christian Begemann (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1996), 136–37.

the blood-ink of all its residents.<sup>226</sup> Just as the readerly apprehension of the autobiographies is restricted to members of the Scharnast family, so too is physical movement within the castle grounds partly limited. The last heir, Christoph, had sealed the entrances to the newer buildings, forbidding them from being opened before his return or, in the event of his death, only permitting them to be opened by the new heir. Thus, Heinrich and Robert's very entry into the castle already hints toward a potential familial relation.

Already Heinrich's suspicions about his heritage are described in terms of interiority/exteriority. "Heinrich konnte seine *äußerste* Erschütterung nicht bergen, und der Gedanke, der *in seinem tiefsten Innern* saß, die fast unglaubliche Ahnung, die ihn hieher geführt, die Ahnung, die er nicht einmal seinem Freunde zu offenbaren gewagt, schien sich hier an dem Wahnwitz eines alten Mannes zu verkörpern und zu offenbaren" (HKG 1,4:380; emphasis added). Ruprecht, for his part, speaks to Heinrich as though his heritage were self-evident, and seems to mistake him for the long-deceased Sixtus II. Confused though his speech might be, his remarks seem to strike a nerve. Indeed, during the tour, Heinrich struggles to prevent the outward expression of his thoughts. "Heinrichs Herz war tief und ahnungsvoll erregt. Er mußte sich einige Male die Hand über seine Augen legen, um sich zu sagen, wo er sei, und um dem Andern *sein Inneres zu verbergen*" (HKG 1,4:382; emphasis added).

This interior/exterior framework is further tied with the genealogical context, as indicated by Heinrich's response to the portrait of Julius Scharnast, which he views inside the gallery.

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<sup>226</sup> Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 243; Begemann, "Das Verhängnis der Schrift," 138. The castle grounds could be considered another example of what Brodersen describes as "Körperlandschaften" in Stifter's works, which she describes as landscapes that magnify bodily processes. "Indem der Körper in den Raum einer Landschaft metaphorisch hinausprojiziert wird, kann das Subjekt *faktisch* in den eigenen Körperraum eintreten" (234, emphasis in original). See Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne,'" 208–14, 233–63.

“Heinrich erschrak; denn wenn es wahr ist, was ihm ein gesendeter Zufall erst kürzlich geoffenbaret, wenn er ein später Sprosse all dieser Männer ist, so war es dieser Jüngling Julius, durch den der Strom in sein fernes abgelegenes Heimatthal geleitet wurde, daß er selbst nun heute, nach mehr als anderthalb Jahrhunderten, ein verschlagener, unbeachteter, letzter Tropfen desselben, vor der reichen Quelle stehe, aus der er kam” (HKG 1,4:384-85). With the image of the river, the narrative presents the family as a living totality.<sup>227</sup> Heinrich is but a drop of the river that Julius had long ago directed into his valley, the river from which Heinrich’s branch of the family grew. The metaphors evoke, of course, the Scharnasts’ texts, which preserve every last drop (“jeder Tropfen”) of familial blood. The liquid metaphors are also more broadly representative of Stifter’s conception of the poetic process. In his 1848 essay “Über Stand und Würde des Schriftstellers,” he posits the relationship between the author and the reader in similar, genealogically coded terms, and also evokes the dichotomy between interiority and exteriority.

Wenn es wahr ist, daß sich die Seele ihren materiellen Körper nach ihrer Eigentümlichkeit selber baut, so baut sie sich jenen anderen Körper, den der Rede und Schrift, noch viel mehr, so daß sie in jedem Theilchen und Faserchen sitzt und herausleuchtet. ‘Die ganze Innerlichkeit eines Menschen ist es zuletzt, welche seinem Werke das Siegel und den Geist aufdrückt.’ [...] Diese unwillkürliche Selbstoffenbarung des Innern in einem Werke zeigt auch recht klar das gänzliche Auseinanderfallen eines Werkes, in dem keine solche Innerlichkeit zu offenbaren war. [...] Nur was als

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<sup>227</sup> Begemann offers a helpful gloss on the significance of rivers in Stifter’s *Wien und die Wiener* essays, which I believe extends to most, if not all of Stifter’s works: “Stifters Ströme repräsentieren zwar das ‘Leben’, doch das Leben des Ganzen und als Ganzes, ein Abstraktum also, und dieses Leben kann für das Individuum gleichbedeutend sein mit dem Tod, mit seinem Untergang als Individuum, mit Selbstverlust.” Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 19. Reidy reads the liquid metaphors in “Die Narrenburg” in terms of historical discourse and social structures. “Though generations separate him [Heinrich] from any direct connection to the Scharnast line, his tenuous link to this historical origin is enough to restore him to a position of aristocratic privilege. The genealogical discourse of history in *Die Narrenburg*, steeped in the language of natural ‘Quellen’ and ‘Ströme,’ serves both to enforce social class structures and simultaneously render the origin of those structures ‘organic.’” Reidy, “Histories of Realism,” 53–54.

lebendiger Strom aus der Einheit einer lebendigen warmen Seele quillt, kann wieder Leben erzeugen und fortwirken machen. (HKG 8,1:37-38)

The words on the page express the *Innerlichkeit* of the author. The involuntary self-disclosure that is part and parcel of textual production in turn transmits a vital force to the recipient. In Stifterian terminology, the authorial river of fecundity flows into the reader's heart and makes it possible for the text to live on.<sup>228</sup> And, as the subsequent scene shows, it is via recognition (and re-cognition) that this link between author and reader is established.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Britta Herrmann draws out this process in her reading of “Die Narrenburg” and “Die Mappe,” showing that the texts join authorship and family. “Beides, die biologische und die literale Vererbung schaffen auf ihre eigene Weise Nachkommenschaften. Mit dem Kreisen um Chroniken, Familienarchive und Genealogien verweisen StifTERS Texte zwar auf die Diskrepanz dieser beiden Arten, Verwandtschaften zu stifTEN – die rein physische Fortpflanzung reicht offenbar nicht aus. Sie markieren aber gerade deshalb ein Bedürfnis, Biologie und Schrift ineinander zu übersetzen und auf diese Weise das Konzept ‘Familie’ als eines der Dauer und der Kontinuität zu begründen” (204). Herrmann, “VerweigerTE Ich-Ausdehnung,” 195–206. I engage with Herrmann's reading in more detail in the subsequent section.

<sup>229</sup> Stifter repurposes a formulation from the “Sonnenfinsterniß” essay when describing the last group of portraits. “Erst gegen das Ende, bevor der ganze Bilderreigen abbrach, gleichsam wie der letzte Glanzblitz einer erlöschenden Flamme, saß noch eine Gruppe, welche Auge und *Ahnungsvermögen* jedes Beschauers an sich riß ” (HKG 1,4:385-86; emphasis added). The reference to the men's “Ahnungsvermögen” of course prepares the reader for the subsequent recognition, and the repetition of the *Ahn-* root links the epistemological structure with the familial [*Ahnen*] context. The corresponding passage from the essay describes the disappearance of the last glimmer of light, i.e. the moment just preceding divine revelation, in almost identical terms: “nicht anders, als *wie der letzte Funke eines erlöschenden Dochtes*, schmolz eben auch der letzte Sonnenfunken weg [...] deckend stand nun Scheibe auf Scheibe – und d i e s e r Moment war es eigentlich, der wahrhaft herzzermalmend wirkte – das hatte Keiner *geahnet* – ein einstimmiges ‘Ah’ aus Aller Munde, und dann Todtenstille, es war der Moment, da Gott redete, und die Menschen horchten” (PRA 15:10-11; emphasis added). This intertext offers one explanation for the secularized religious language in the narrative, which otherwise seems somewhat out of place. Helmut Müller-Sievers explores the links between *Ahnen* and *ahmen* in a different context. He suggests that anagnorisis in literary works circa 1800 results from internally generated, rather than externally appended signs, with literature ultimately staging the work of *Ahnen ahnen*. “Wenn man nämlich dichtend erweisen kann, daß die Anagnorisis nicht künstlich von außen kommt und den Text begrenzt und beendet, sondern im Innern generiert und überwunden wird, fällt die vormals unüberwindlich scheinende Grenze, die die Literatur von der Nicht-Literatur trennt. Und um dieser Kampagne zum Erfolg zu verhelfen, darf die Anagnorisis nicht länger zufällige Auffindung von Zeichen sein, sondern muß zur ahnenden Antizipation eines je schon Gewußten werden.” Müller-Sievers also argues that anagnorisis around 1800

The narrative finally arrives at the fateful moment of recognition. Years prior, Ruprecht had secretly arranged for Sixtus II's portrait to be painted, and he is eager to show off the finished product to its apparent inspiration.

[Ruprecht] drückte gegen eine Feder, und zum Erstaunen der Männer sprang der Serpentin los – und in das Krachen mischte sich das triumphirende Kichern und Lachen des Greises. Sie sahen nun, daß der Stein bloß auf eine Kupfertafel gemalt war, daß sich diese völlig umlege, und noch ein Bild entblöße, das sie vorher gedeckt hatte. Es war ein Männerbild, und im Serpentine unten stand: 'Sixtus II.'

Allein das Bild war das Heinrichs Zug für Zug, nur in fremden Kleidern.

[...]

Robert war zum Aeußersten betroffen. Er hatte bisher die zwei Andern begleitet, wie Einer, der bloß Merkwürdigkeiten anschaut, nun aber wußte er plötzlich nicht mehr, woran er sei – – zwar ein Gedanke, blitzschnell und abenteuerlich, schoß durch sein Gehirn, aber er war zu lächerlich, als daß er ihn nicht sogleich hätte verwerfen sollen – nur fragend blickte er gegen den Freund. Dieser aber, der ebenfalls die Sache zu fassen begann, war Anfangs todtenblaß, dann allmählich flammend roth geworden; – der stummen Frage des Andern aber konnte er eben so wenig eine Antwort geben. Bloß der wahnwitzige Greis war der einzige, der völlig klar war [...]. (HKG 1,4:390-91)

The uncovering of the portrait recalls the opening of the hidden entrance to the castle grounds.

What appears to be a solid surface is moved to reveal something hidden; the mechanistic

“Krachen” of the false stone mimics the “seltsames Ächzen und Knarren” of the gate. If the opening of the gate had heralded Heinrich's movement into a literary world, the opening of the false stone marks the culmination of this movement. Heinrich's physical presence in the literary world is heightened to such a degree that he finds himself *as* one of the Scharnasts who is depicted in an image. The moment collapses the distinction between image and reality. But as the text indicates, the images already contribute to this effect. Just as the Scharnasts copy their ancestors' recorded deeds, so, too, are their portraits copies of other portraits. “Vorzügliche Gemälde waren alle, obwohl sie augenscheinlich viel später gemalt wurden, als die Urbilder

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reflects a discursive shift in the concept of “generation,” as epigenesis began to supplant preformationism. Müller-Sievers, “Ahnen ahnen: Formen der Generationerkennung in der Literatur um 1800,” 169.

lebten, aber wahrscheinlich nach vorhandenen, wenn auch schlechten Originalen” (HKG 1,4:383). The compulsion to collect the portraits of every single family member presumably meant that some paintings had to be commissioned long after the depicted individuals had died. But the individuals are already inscribed within an imagistic discourse, existing not as people but as “Urbilder.”<sup>230</sup> Each descendant is only a copy, an *Urbild* destined to be copied in turn.<sup>231</sup> Heinrich, then, as the copy of Sixtus II., literalizes this logic.

The language in the above passage also recalls a key moment from earlier in the narrative, when Anna had described her impressions of Heinrich as a figure from one of her beloved fairy tales. Hesitant to communicate her ideas, she had framed them as silly (“so war mir doch dazumal – – – aber das ist zu lächerlich. – –’ [...] ‘Es war mir öfters, als seid ihr in einem solchen Buche gestanden, und daraus in unsern Garten getreten”). In this scene, Robert, beholds Heinrich and the portrait and grapples with a similar impression (“– – zwar ein Gedanke, blitzschnell und abenteuerlich, schoß durch sein Gehirn, aber er war zu lächerlich, als daß er ihn nicht sogleich hätte verwerfen sollen –”). As was the case for Anna, Robert, too, is hesitant, resistant to the fantastical ideal that his friend has, in a way, stepped out of a portrait.

Heinrich has physically enacted the diegetic slippage that characterizes his (and others’) romantic conceptions of literature, while in a romantic setting. But this is not a mere replication of literary tradition. Rather, the emphasis on Heinrich’s *embodiment of a literary model* – another Heinrich, no less – points toward the same type of Jakobsonian defamiliarization treated

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<sup>230</sup> See on this point Holmes, “Literary Images: Viewing and Visuality in German Realism,” 129.

<sup>231</sup> This lack of any kind of *Wirklichkeitsbezug* is what characterizes the Scharnast’s foolishness. Recall Stifter’s description of realism and idealism, quoted in the preceding chapter: “Wie bloßer Realismus grobe Last ist, so ist bloßer Idealismus unsichtbarer Dunst, oder Narrheit.”

in Chapter One.<sup>232</sup> Significantly, his response is limned in corporeal terms. The blood drains from his face, only to rush back, and he is unable to respond to his friend’s questioning gaze. Only the (*Blut-*)*Strom* reveals the vital force of genealogical continuity coursing through his veins.<sup>233</sup> The passage is interrupted by a series of dashes. Stifter’s idiosyncratic orthography notwithstanding, the dashes, as in “Abdias,” mark an absence, here, of language. Robert’s “stumme[] Frage” is directed to Heinrich via a gaze, but Heinrich is incapable of providing an answer. Even once the two recover from their initial shock, language is still inhibited. “‘Bin ich auch nicht Sixtus,’ antwortete Heinrich, ‘so bin ich doch einer von Diesen da – – ich bitte dich,

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<sup>232</sup> I am expanding here on Müller-Tamm’s treatment of the story as a literary allegory. As she writes in relation to Anna, “Die literaturgeschichtlich signifikante, über sich hinaus weisende Konstruktion der individuellen Entwicklung Annas fungiert dabei gewissermaßen als Index des Allegorischen, als Marker für die poetologische Anlage des Ganzen. Die Erzählung situiert sich damit selbst in der Geschichte der Literatur: Auf das phantasmatische oder fiktional Romantische der Märchen und Ritterbücher, mit Schmerz und Sehnsucht aufgenommen, folgt die selbstverständliche, erfüllte *Wirklichkeit* des Romantisch-Poetischen: als Heinrichs Entdeckung seiner Herkunft, die Heirat der Wirtstochter mit dem Grafen, das glückliche Leben der Familie auf dem Rothenstein – oder auch, wie man übersetzen darf: Auf Tieck und Eichendorff folgt Adalbert Stifter. Anna erscheint in diesem Zusammenhang als personifizierte Dichtung [...]. Ihr Weg ist der Weg der Literatur: von der romantischen Poesie zur *Wirklichkeit* des Poetischen.” Müller-Tamm, “‘Alles nicht zu Ende, alles falsch...,’” 569. One could also read the story, as Begemann does, as structured around the contrast between nature and culture. See Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 210–41.

<sup>233</sup> Heinrich’s physical response – the change in his countenance from white to red – not only recalls one of the narrative’s intertexts, namely the Grimm’s *Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot*, but also replicates physical responses in generations prior. For more on the Grimm intertext, see here Müller-Tamm, “‘Alles nicht zu Ende, alles falsch...,’” 566. Joseph Metz draws out a much deeper significance to this imagery, connecting it to racial and inner-colonial discourse in the Habsburg Empire. See Joseph Metz, “Austrian Inner Colonialism and the Visibility of Difference in Stifter’s ‘Die Narrenburg,’” *PMLA* 121, no. 5 (October 2006): 1475–92. For more on color imagery throughout the narrative, particularly on the opposition between red/green, see Erich Burgstaller, “Zur künstlerischen Gestalt von Adalbert Stifters Narrenburg,” *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 12, no. 2 (May 1976): 89–108; Erika Tunner, “Farb-, Klang- und Raumsymbolik in Stifters *Narrenburg*,” *Recherches Germaniques* 7 (1977): 113–27. Finally, for more on physiognomy in Stifter’s works, see Christian Begemann, “Das ‘Titelblatt der Seele’: Stifters Gesichter und das Dilemma der Physiognomik,” in *Figuren der Übertragung: Adalbert Stifter und das Wissen seiner Zeit*, ed. Michael Gamper and Karl Wagner (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2009), 15–43.

frage jetzt nicht, mir ist Alles sonnenklar, nur zittert jeder Nerv in mir. Ich werde dir Alles – Alles enthüllen, frage nur jetzt nicht” (HKG 1,4:392).

This type of linguistic inhibition also belongs to the mode of experiential, corporeal knowing Helmholtz would gloss as *Kennen*. Though already discussed in the Introduction, it is worth quoting Helmholtz again.

Wir kennen einen Menschen, einen Weg, eine Speise, eine riechende Substanz, das heisst wir haben diese Objecte gesehen, geschmeckt oder gerochen, halten diesen sinnlichen Eindruck im Gedächtniss fest und *werden ihn wieder erkennen*, wenn er sich wiederholt, *ohne dass wir im Stande wären uns oder anderen eine Beschreibung davon in Worten zu geben*. [...] Aber es ist nicht direct mittheilbar, wenn nicht die betreffenden Objecte zur Stelle geschafft, oder deren Eindruck anderweitig nachgeahmt werden kann, *wie zum Beispiel für einen Menschen durch sein Portrait*.<sup>234</sup>

In Helmholtz’s account, mimetic representations of objects are capable of re-producing the type of knowing inaccessible to language. A portrait, for instance, can generate the same kind of knowledge as the person depicted therein: by viewing the object or its medial representation, one has a visual impression that corresponds with an impression held in memory. In Stifter’s narrative, the sight of Sixtus II’s portrait corresponds with Heinrich’s memory of his own appearance, thus leading to the decidedly corporeal, non-linguistic *Wiedererkennen*. In Aristotelean terms, this moment encapsulates the first and second levels of recognition: Heinrich identifies himself in the portrait, i.e. recognizes the image *as* an image of himself, and the scene is a textbook example of anagnorisis. Heinrich is shocked speechless upon viewing the portrait, and this recognition will be combined with a *peripeteia*, as he experiences a change in circumstances, ascending from the bourgeoisie to the nobility.

The recognition scene concludes with Ruprecht re-covering the portrait. It disappears back into the wall, apparently for the last time. “Zum letzten Male wollen wir es schließen,

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<sup>234</sup> Helmholtz, “Die neueren Fortschritte in der Theorie des Sehens,” 92–93.

Erlaucht, daß es nach Kurzem offen strahle vor den Augen aller Menschen, und auf ewige Zeiten. O, ich habe euch gleich gekannt’, fügte er zufrieden lächelnd hinzu, ‘da ihr heute Einlaß verlangt!’ – Mit diesen letzten fast heimlich gesagten Worten drehte er den Kupferdeckel wieder herum, und fügte ihn ein, so daß keine Spur blieb, wo er sich früher geöffnet’’ (HKG 1,4:393). When he closes the cover and puts it back into position [*einfügen*], it is with the knowledge that this rigid border will soon disappear. With his offhand, additive comment [*hinzufügen*], he reveals that he had immediately recognized the subject of the portrait he had secretly commissioned. Ruprecht’s apparent misrecognition is not only confirmed as the opposite, but the passage here links this process with Heinrich’s official incorporation into the Scharnast family – another kind of *fügen* – that will soon transpire.<sup>235</sup>

Thus ends the text’s treatment of recognition. However, the *dénouement* is postponed, as the narrative turns to the question of re-cognition. After all, the moment of recognition is only significant to the extent that it enables Heinrich to enter into the Scharnast textual tradition. Once Heinrich and Robert exit the castle grounds, they discuss what had happened within the strange romantic world. Heinrich explains that he had visited the castle only with a hunch about his heritage, and that he had written to his mother to ask the name of his ancestor. Even though Heinrich has now seen his likeness in the portrait gallery, the recognition is not yet of any consequence, for there is no legal proof of his heritage. After a few days have passed, Heinrich receives a reply from his mother, and his response replicates that in the portrait gallery. First, Anna tells him that the letter has arrived. “Anna [*lief*] *hochroth* aus dem Gassengärtchen herbei, und sagte zu ihm: ‘Seit Morgen liegt schon ein Brief an euch in des Vaters Stube; Thrinens

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<sup>235</sup> Tellingly, the picture will again mimic the castle gate, which is made visible after Heinrich’s assumption of his position within the Scharnast family. “[D]as vermauerte Thor [*hielt*] nun wieder gastlich seine Wölbung offen” (HKG 1,4:408).

Syndicus hat ihn mit einem eigenen Boten gesendet.’ / Heinrich *entfärbte sich* bei dieser Nachricht, und Beide, *ohne sonst ein einzig Wort zu sagen*, gingen wieder auseinander” (HKG 1,4:406; emphasis added). Once he reads the letter, which confirms that he is indeed a descendant of Julius Scharnast and explains where the relevant documentation is located, his countenance again changes color: “Heinrich legte den Brief wieder zusammen, und *war er bei dessen Entfaltung blaß gewesen, so wurde er nun nach dessen Lesung flammend roth*” (HKG 1,4:407). Heinrich’s reaction is split over two moments. First, the paleness/flush is divided between him and Anna, and points to a future familial union. Second, after reading the letter, Heinrich experiences (corporeally coded) recognition *again*, this time in a differently mediated form.

Heinrich will begin to re-cognize his ancestors’ texts once he assumes his rightful place within the Scharnast family line. However, the narrative throws a wrench into this seemingly straightforward process, for the first text that Heinrich reads, namely the autobiography of Jodokus (the brother of Sixtus II.), in fact repudiates the family textual practices. Jodokus disavows the reading/writing requirement in its prescribed form because he believes it *fails* to generate recognition, and he proposes instead an alternative model that would absent itself from familial continuity and thus avoid the need for recognition altogether. Rather than associating knowledge with the experience of familial communality (as was Heinrich’s experience in the portrait gallery), Jodokus’ text emphasizes individuality. However, Jodokus is unable to uphold his own prescriptions, and one is left wondering why this lengthy excerpt is included in the narrative. However, when viewed together with Heinrich’s experience in the gallery, the excerpt proves itself generative of yet another level of recognition, namely one that extends to the extradiegetic reader of Stifter’s own narrative.

Frustrated by both life and the lack of insight in his ancestors' texts, Jodokus had traveled to Northern India, a stand-in for Eden.<sup>236</sup> Jodokus soon meets a pariah named Chelion – described by Ruprecht as the “‘Apfel des Paradieses’” (HKG 1,4:390) –, whom he marries and with whom he returns to Europe. After his brother, Sixtus II., seduces Chelion, Jodokus resolves to poison her. While he decides at the last minute not to follow through with his plan, he is guilt-ridden by his transgression of moral law. Chelion eventually dies, and after Jodokus grows old, he burns their home to the ground. The episode determines Jodokus' relationship to reading and writing and to tradition more broadly.<sup>237</sup> While he acknowledges that his attempts to undo his transgression are unsuccessful,<sup>238</sup> he nevertheless clings to the idea that it could somehow be forgotten. Jodokus thus lays out an alternative model of tradition that would permit and even encourage the destruction of not just his, but any and all recorded deeds.

Jodokus' autobiography is reproduced in part within the narrative, and the excerpt opens with little fanfare. Heinrich turns the pages until he comes to his bookmark and picks up where he had left off.

‘Und darum kann ich euch keinen Dank haben, Ubaldus und Johannes, und Prokopus und Julianus – und wie ihr heißet; denn der Dämon der Thaten steht jederzeit in einer neuen Gestalt vor uns, und *wir erkennen ihn nicht, daß er einer sei, der auch schon euch erschienen war* – und eure Schriften sind mir unnütz. Jedes Leben ist ein neues, und was der Jüngling fühlt und thut, ist ihm zum ersten Male auf der Welt: ein entzückend Wunderwerk, das nie war, und nie mehr sein wird – aber wenn es vorüber ist, legen es die

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<sup>236</sup> As the *Journalfassung* reads: “‘Ich wollte das Weltmeer umarmen, ich wollte die riesenhaften, unschuldigen Pflanzen Gottes in fremden Zonen sehen; die Natur, die keusche Tochter Gottes, wollte ich anblicken in der Gestalt, ehe die Menschen mit ihr buhlen und sie schänden; – darum ging ich nach dem Himalaia und Kaschemir’” (HKG 1,1:387). Titzmann notes that biblical exegeses located Eden either in Armenia or Northern India. Titzmann, “Text und Kryptotext,” 349. Additionally, as Grätz points out, India was a site of romantic-era “Ursprungssehnsüchte.” Grätz, *Musealer Historismus*, 124.

<sup>237</sup> As Grätz demonstrates, Jodokus' conception of tradition draws heavily on Herder. Grätz, *Musealer Historismus*, 119–23.

<sup>238</sup> As the *Studienfassung* reads: “‘Ich habe jahrelang das Uebermenschliche versucht, daß Alles wieder sei, wie früher, allein es war vergebens’” (HKG 1,4:424-25).

Söhne zu dem andern Trödel der Jahrtausende, und es ist eben nichts als Trödel; denn jeder wirkt sich das Wunder seines Lebens aufs Neue.’ (HKG 1,4:410; emphasis added)

While the (extradiegetic) reader does not yet have any context for these remarks, they provide a general commentary on the state of the familial reading and writing practices. Jodokus argues that the requirement is of no benefit because recognition is absent from the act of reading. Each generation is forced to relive and record their worst deeds, but because this “Dämon der Thaten” continually appears in a new form, no one recognizes it and thus no one learns from the mistakes of previous generations. This is essentially the same critique that the opening pages of the story had raised. The Scharnasts are meant to engage with the texts and reflect upon their own lives, but fail to make this transition, instead imitating what they have read. Here, the necessary type of recognition is further specified. It is not just that one must recognize one’s own deeds: one must recognize oneself *in relation to others*. One must be able to identify one’s own demons *as* the same demons in someone else’s life, and one must do so via the act of reading. In short, one must be able to re-cognize. But because this does not currently transpire, Jodokus views the texts as nothing more than junk, hold-overs from the past that bear no perceptible relation to the subject in the present.

While this criticism is directed toward the reception of the autobiographies, Jodokus also condemns their composition and asserts that an individual’s life cannot possibly be captured in writing. “‘Was ich hier schreibe, bin nicht ich – mich kann ich nicht schreiben, sondern nur, was es [das Wunder seines Lebens] durch mich that’” (HKG 1,4:410). Jodokus soon argues that the various remnants of the individual’s life – and not just the autobiography – must be obliterated.

‘[W]as Bilder, was Denkmale, was Geschichte, was Kleid und Wohnung des Geschiedenen – wenn das Ich dahin ist, das süße schöne Wunder, das nicht wieder kommt! Helft das Gräschen tilgen, das sein Fuß betrat, die Sandspur verwehen, auf der er ging, und die Schwelle umwandeln, auf der er saß, daß die Welt wieder jungfräulich sei, und nicht getrübt von dem nachziehenden Afterleben eines Gestorbenen. Sein Herz

konntet ihr nicht retten, und was er übrig gelassen, wird durch die Gleichgültigkeit der Kommenden geschändet. Gebt es lieber dem reinen, dem goldnen, verzehrenden Feuer, daß nichts bleibe, als die blaue Luft, die er geathmet, die wir athmen, die Billionen vor uns geathmet, und die noch so unverwundet und glänzend über dir steht, als wäre sie eben gemacht, und du thätet den ersten, frischen, erquickenden Zug daraus.’ (HKG 1,4:411)

One must erase the traces of the previous generations, since the remnants of previous life are useless when the individual no longer exists to give them meaning. Furthermore, the preservation of such remnants does nothing but violate the deceased. Whatever remains will be desecrated, and one must work to ensure that the world is restored to its original state, untainted by such hold-overs from the past. The destruction of the past enables one to return to the prelapsarian world that knows no sin. In other words, destroying the traces of the past allows one to return to a virginal world not yet tainted by recognition.<sup>239</sup>

This rejection of recognition is ultimately unsuccessful. Jodokus never takes any actions to abolish the reading and writing requirement, though he does in his *Sündenfallgeschichte* recommend that his descendants burn the autobiographies and blow up the archive. “‘Ich thäte es selber, aber mir schaudert vor meinem Eide. Kannst es aber auch du nicht thun, so vergiß doch augenblicklich das Gelesene, daß sich die Gespenster all ihres Thuns nicht in dein Leben mischen und es trüben, sondern daß du es lieber rein und anfangsfähig aus der Hand deines Schöpfers trinkest’” (HKG 1,4:412).<sup>240</sup> In other words, he is unable to put an end to familial

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<sup>239</sup> Jodokus, in other words, is attempting to undo the damage that resulted from carnal knowledge by de-deflowering the world. For more on the paradoxical epistemology surrounding the recognition of virginity, see Wild, *Theater der Keuschheit - Keuschheit des Theaters*.

<sup>240</sup> Begemann notes that some of Jodokus’ language bears remarkable similarities with Nietzsche’s *Genealogie der Moral*. Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 214. There are also clear resonances with “Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben,” where Nietzsche criticizes the tendency to focus on history at the expense of living. Take, for instance, the unhistorical animals Nietzsche describes at the beginning of his text: “Er [der Mensch] wundert sich aber auch über sich selbst, das Vergessen nicht lernen zu können und immerfort am Vergangenen zu hängen: mag er noch so weit, noch so schnell laufen, die Kette läuft mit. Es ist

reading and writing because the communal bond between the many generations of authors and readers is simply too strong. Jodokus' text ends with evidence that he has faithfully written until his dying days, with his very last word betraying the persistent significance of his family.

‘– – ach, ich sehne mich nach meinem Sohne.....

Bei diesen Worten brach das Manuscript ab, und keine Zeile stand weiter auf dem Pergamente. Nur unten am Rande des letzten Blattes stand von fremder Hand: ‘† (gestorben) einundzwanzig Tage nach dem Worte: Sohne.’

Ach – und so muß ja jede dieser Rollen enden [...]. Wenn der Mann dachte: ‘morgen oder übermorgen schreibe ich wieder,’ so war er morgen oder übermorgen krank, und die andern Tage darauf todt!

Heinrich stand auf, und wischte sich mit der Hand über die Stirne. Eine Schrift hat er nun gelesen. Er sah deutlich nun auch schon das Kreuz von fremder Hand auf seinem letzten Blatte stehen, und dabei: ‘gestorben nach dem Worte....’ – welches Wort mag es wohl sein? etwa ‘Gattin’? oder ein anderes, oder eines im Wörterbuche, auf das man jetzt gar nicht denkt?! (HKG 1,4:426-27)

The roles of parchment are all written under the sign of death, yet it is this sense of human finitude that calls forth reflection on familial continuity: Heinrich's last word could well be “Sohne,” if not “Gattin.” Alternatives scarcely come to mind. In fact, continuity is inscribed onto the final page as part of the process of archivization. Some other party will have to mark the fact of death, a marginal “†” that memorializes the deceased for eternity and that calls upon the next heir to take the reading and writing oath. Even if Heinrich concurs with Jodokus that the reading

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ein Wunder: der Augenblick, im Husch da, im Husch vorüber, vorher ein Nichts, nachher ein Nichts, *kommt doch noch als Gespenst wieder* und stört die Ruhe des späteren Augenblicks. Fortwährend löst sich ein Blatt aus der Rolle der Zeit, fällt heraus, flattert fort – und flattert plötzlich wieder zurück, dem Menschen in den Schooss. Dann sagt der Mensch ‘ich erinnere mich’ und beneidet das Thier, *welches sofort vergisst und jeden Augenblick wirklich sterben*, in Nebel und Nacht zurücksinken und auf immer erlöschen *sieht*. [...] Deshalb ergreift es ihn, *als ob er eines verlorenen Paradieses gedächte*, die weidende Heerde oder, in vertrauter Nähe, das Kind zu sehen, das noch nichts Vergangenes zu verläugnen hat und zwischen den Zäunen der Vergangenheit und der Zukunft in überseliger Blindheit spielt.” Friedrich Nietzsche, “Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben,” in *Die Geburt der Tragödie; Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen I-III (1872-1874)*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, vol. 3.1, Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 244–45. Emphasis added.

and writing requirement is “keine gute Einrichtung” (HKG 1,4:427), he is destined to uphold it, as his own potential last words already indicate.

What, then, are the consequences for realist reading and writing? While it might seem strange for the narrative to devote so much space to Jodokus’ ineffectual critique, the inclusion of this material underscores the centrality of genealogy to Stifter’s conception of reading, writing and recognition, and it lends credence to the bodily sitedness that informs these practices. First, even if he rejects the premise of the reading and writing requirement, Jodokus indicates that *recognition is necessary* if these textual practices are to be of any benefit. Second, his critique of the writing requirement indicates that this practice, which is predicated on the attempt to capture the entirety of one’s life in text, necessarily fails. Third, his warning to his readers not to allow the autobiographies to take too much hold on their lives heeds the rules of information management in the modern era. One cannot possibly read and remember everything, so one must *forget*: ““vergiß doch augenblicklich das Gelesene.””<sup>241</sup> A connection to the part/whole relationship in the preface to *Bunte Steine* seems eminently plausible here. One should not – cannot – focus on the parts at the expense of the whole. It is only by recognizing the whole – in this case, commonalities between one’s own way of life and that of one’s ancestors – that one can benefit personally from reading. The trick, then, is *not* to immerse oneself too deeply within these texts, instead to read distantly.

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<sup>241</sup> Gotthart Wunberg suggests that this condition of forgetting is what enables anagnorisis. “Die *ästhetische Wahrnehmung* funktioniert [...] aus der *Dialektik von Vergessen und Erinnern*. Vergessen scheint nicht institutionalisiert, sondern nur sozialisiert: als Verdrängung (d.h. als lebensnotwendig). Erinnerungsspuren sind das Einzige, worüber das Subjekt verfügt. Das Phänomen heißt *Wiedererkennen, Anagnorisis*; sein Paradigma: die Narbe des Odysseus.” Gotthart Wunberg, *Wiedererkennen: Literatur und ästhetische Wahrnehmung in der Moderne* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1983), 24. Emphasis in original.

“Die Narrenburg” only offers veiled clues as to what form this reading method might assume. However, Heinrich’s experience remains instructive. As the *living embodiment* of his ancestor, he recognizes himself as part of the Scharnast family. It is his physical resemblance to a portrait, which, combined with his physical experience of the space of the castle, undergirds this moment. Because the spatial metaphors already interpellate him as a Scharnast, recognition is all but guaranteed. Heinrich will also heed Jodokus’ warning to re-cognize this moment by reading his forebearers’ autobiographies. In other words, he will strive to *repeat* the moment of recognition<sup>242</sup> gradually and in an approximatory fashion through the work of collection/reading.<sup>243</sup> This process of re-cognizing not only works to make sense of prior experience, but also necessitates that Heinrich partake in the act of collection by contributing his own text to the archive. What is more, if one considers “Die Narrenburg” to be Heinrich’s own

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<sup>242</sup> Reidy points out that the connection between reading and the divine is anticipated by Heinrich’s activities as a *Naturforscher*. ““Wie du [Anna] in deinen Büchern [Fabelbüchern] liesest, so bin ich bestimmt, im Buche Gottes zu lesen und die Steine, und die Blumen, und die Lüfte und die Sterne sind seine Buchstaben – wenn du einmal mein Weib bist, wirst du es begreifen, und ich werde es dich lehren” (HKG 1,4:350). As Reidy remarks: “The production and manipulation of text and language are associated with God and nature. In a gesture of dual deferral, the natural and the divine are established as absolute authorities granting extra-personal legitimacy to textual representation. Just as nature is to be understood as ‘textual,’ so too, is text to be understood as ‘natural.’” Reidy also argues that reading in the archive is depicted as an act of “religious veneration.” Reidy, “Histories of Realism,” 58–59, 70.

<sup>243</sup> Müller-Tamm’s claim that “Die Narrenburg” represents Heinrich’s own text – a piece of literature, which in contrast to the autobiographies, can be brought to a conclusion, would seem to preclude the continuation of the reading and writing requirement. Müller-Tamm’s argument is based on the *Journalfassung*. This is in part a point of methodological divergence, but I do agree with Arburg that the narrative as a whole points toward a sense of openness. As he describes the revised *Studienfassung*: “Das tatsächlich letzte Wort im Text der *Narrenburg* bestätigt diese Unabschließbarkeit des Lebens in der Schrift – und zwar auch und gerade in jener der Literatur: es lautet: ‘werden.’” As the final section of this chapter shows, Stifter’s own writing process is emphatically open-ended. See Müller-Tamm, ““Alles nicht zu Ende, alles falsch...,”” 565–66. Hans-Georg von Arburg, “Neues von der Narrenburg? Stifters Architekturen zwischen Historismus und Neuem Bauen,” in *Figuren der Übertragung: Adalbert Stifter und das Wissen seiner Zeit*, ed. Michael Gamper and Karl Wagner (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2009), 132 (fn 52).

autobiography (and there is good evidence for this<sup>244</sup>), then Jodokus' instructions apply to more than just the protagonist. That is, the reader of "Die Narrenburg," as the reader of Heinrich's autobiography, is implicitly incorporated into the same genealogy. In the manner of the *Menschenforscher*, the extradiegetic reader will somehow re-cognize the experience of familial totality depicted in the text, with the recognition scene throwing into relief the necessary preconditions. Stifter will devote greater attention to the methods of re-cognition in "Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters." This narrative, which presumes recognition, indicates how readerly re-cognition transpires. By expanding the spatial metaphors from "Die Narrenburg," "Die Mappe" illustrates how the body of the extradiegetic reader is implicated by the text.

#### **READING AND RE-COGNITION: "DIE MAPPE MEINES URGROßVATERS"**

Like "Die Narrenburg," "Die Mappe" is concerned with the production and reception of written documents, as well as the relationship of the individual to familial tradition. After the narrator in the frame narrative discovers his great-grandfather's (a.k.a. the Doctor's) journal, he devotes himself to deciphering and transmitting their contents to his own readers. As mentioned earlier, the Doctor's reading and writing techniques involve exactly that dimension of

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<sup>244</sup> See Müller-Tamm, "Alles nicht zu Ende, alles falsch...," 565. Müller-Tamm notes a shift from first- to third-person narration in the first version of "Die Narrenburg" and argues that Heinrich is in fact the narrator of the story. "Die Pointe dieser Konstruktion besteht genau in dem zu erschließenden *Wechsel* vom Ich-Sagen – der Form des autobiographischen Berichts, wie sie die Papierrollen der Scharnasts kennzeichnet – zur Er-Erzählung: Eben diese Form der Selbstdistanzierung ist der entscheidende Schritt, der den *Narrenburg*-Text, Heinrichs Text, von dem seiner Vorfahren unterscheidet und der es ermöglicht, dass die verheerende Gesetzmäßigkeit des testamentarisch verfügbaren Aufschreibemodells durchbrochen wird. In der *Narrenburg* geht es also nicht einfach um ein misslingendes Aufschreibemodell oder um die Legitimation des Subjekts aus der Schrift, sondern um die Entgegensetzung von Aufschreiben und Dichten, von Autobiographie als subjektiv-unmittelbarem Schreiben und Dichtung als Form der Selbstdistanzierung."

recognition that Jodokus had missed in “Die Narrenburg.”<sup>245</sup> In contrast to the foolish Scharnasts of that text, who read without recognition, the Doctor in “Die Mappe” re-reads his texts and re-evaluates past experiences, which he enters into his journal in the form of essays and case studies.<sup>246</sup> In other words, both texts depict similar types of reading and writing, even if the results are wildly different. In order fully to understand the two texts together, especially in terms of the role of re-cognition, one must consider the intergenerational dynamics in “Die Mappe.” That is, how are texts transmitted across generations, and how does the reader engage with a text that is not his or her own? How does reading help the individual to *re-cognize* and to enter into tradition? Focusing only on the activities of one generation is limited in the same way as the practices Jodokus critiques: in order to have a significance outside of the author’s own time and space, the texts must be (re)read, and the reader must recognize within them something about his or her own life or self. This holds not just for the depicted readers, but also for those reading Stifter’s own works. As will become clear, the text draws on a rich repertoire of spatial and corporeal metaphors to implicate the reader within its genealogical framework. Empathically – corporeally – entering the text makes it possible for the reader to experience him- or herself as part of a familial whole.

“Die Mappe” is uniquely positioned to clarify the reading and writing methods that follow from this model. Beyond its thematic focus on textual practices, “Die Mappe” underwent

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<sup>245</sup> The scholarship frequently compares the results of reading and writing in the two stories. The trouble in “Die Narrenburg,” according to Begemann, lies not so much in the writing process, which, he argues, might well be therapeutic for the authors, but in the reading process, which infects the recipients with foolishness. The therapeutic reading process in “Die Mappe,” by contrast, necessitates that the author and self-same reader compare past and present. See Begemann, “Das Verhängnis der Schrift,” 138–39.

<sup>246</sup> For more on the history of case studies and on the role of case studies within “Die Mappe,” see Nicolas Pethes, *Literarische Fall-Archive: Zur Epistemologie und Ästhetik seriellen Erzählens am Beispiel von Stifters Mappe* (Berlin: Alpheus Verlag, 2015).

extensive editing at the hands of its author. “Die Mappe” was first published serially in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* in 1841-42 (hereafter version one) and then in revised form as part of the *Studien* collection in 1847 (hereafter version two).<sup>247</sup> Stifter returned to the text in 1864 (hereafter version three) and again in 1867 (hereafter version four), both times with the intention of publishing a two-volume edition of the text, but it remained unfinished at the time of his suicide in 1868. “Die Mappe” is widely acknowledged as self-reflexive,<sup>248</sup> and as Ulrike Landfester has convincingly shown, it operates as an expression of *Traditionsstiftung*, with the author serving as a *Stifter* or founder.<sup>249</sup> This insight, along with Nicolas Pethes’ recent work on the medial context of “Die Mappe,” raises the question as to what extent Stifter’s own textual practices inform the narrative’s self-reflexivity.<sup>250</sup>

The editorial practices depicted in the frame narrative of “Die Mappe,” together with selected archival materials and Stifter’s correspondence with his publisher, Gustav Heckenast, indicate that the author in and of “Die Mappe” operates as a specific type of nineteenth-century editor, namely a *recensor*, who gathers together and critically examines individual texts and text components with the aim of (re-)constructing a textual archetype. This procedure – yet another negotiation of the part/whole relationship – comprises two distinct processes and brings with it a whole host of aesthetic consequences. First, there are two types of editing at stake: *recensio*, which resembles the act of assembly and publishing [*Herausgeben*], and textual emendation,

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<sup>247</sup> Unless otherwise noted, I cite from version two, which is generally considered to be the most complete and authoritative.

<sup>248</sup> In the *Journalfassung*, the Doctor’s last name is “Fundator” (Latin for *Stifter*); in the fourth version, the editor-narrator’s wife, like Stifter’s, is named Amalia.

<sup>249</sup> Ulrike Landfester, “Der Autor als Stifter oder *Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters*,” in *Stifter-Studien. Ein Festgeschenk für Wolfgang Frühwald zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Walter Hettche, Johannes John, and Sibylle von Steinsdorff (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), 101–24.

<sup>250</sup> Pethes, *Literarische Fall-Archive*.

which is here subordinated to the former. Second, multiple readers, writers, and editors are implicated in this model: those depicted within Stifter's "Mappe"; Stifter as a reader, writer, and editor of his own work; Stifter's editors; and the implied readers of Stifter's works.<sup>251</sup> These various levels all converge within "Die Mappe," where these readers, writers, and editors recognize a familial totality in which they themselves participate.<sup>252</sup>

The textual practices – both those depicted and those undertaken – adhere to the same corporeal framework and involve the parsing of the part/whole relationship. Recalling again the Aristotelean model, the poet *qua* reader immerses him- or herself within the individual episodes and recognizes the general plot-structure. In Stifter's works, the two processes occur simultaneously: Individuals immerse themselves in an imaginative, corporeal way in a text, and

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<sup>251</sup> Stifter's literary production occurred of course within a broader editorial context. He published in journals nearly all of the stories that would later appear in revised form in *Studien* and *Bunte Steine*. Furthermore, Stifter worked as an editor himself. In 1841, he took over as editor of the collection *Wien und die Wiener* [1841-44]. Together with Johann Aprent, who would later edit a posthumous collection of Stifter's works, Stifter assembled the *Lesebuch zur Förderung humaner Bildung* [1854], which they attempted unsuccessfully to have approved for use in the school curriculum. For an overview of the latter work, see Moriz Enzinger, "Adalbert Stifters 'Lesebuch': Ein vorläufiger Bericht," *Vierteljahresschrift des Adalbert-Stifter Instituts des Landes Oberösterreich* 12 (1963): 18–35.

<sup>252</sup> I am building here upon Herrmann's argument that the family (in "Die Mappe" and in the nineteenth-century *Familienroman* more generally) is *constituted by textual reception*. This occurs both intra- and extradiegetically. "Je nach Fassung der *Mappe* gilt es [...], aus dem Konvolut eine Chronik oder auch einen Roman erst herauszupräparieren – sei es durch einen fiktiven Herausgeber, durch den textinternen Leser und Erzähler oder aber durch den textexternen Rezipienten. Auf diese Weise entsteht dann potentiell eine Genealogie und Teleologie namens 'Familie', in welcher der Lesende sich selbst als gegenwärtigen und vorläufigen Zielpunkt verorten kann." Further: "Stifters genealogische Poetik [...] verweist [...] auf die Möglichkeit einer Fortpflanzung in der Schrift, die als rezeptionstheoretisches Konzept zu verstehen ist [...]. [...] Ist der Autor der Erzeuger des Textes, avanciert der Leser als dessen Stellvertreter nun zum Archivar oder philologischen Hüter des Textes. Der Leser kann sich aber zweitens zugleich als Stellvertreter jenes 'Sohn[s] und Erbe[n]' begreifen, an den sich die Schriften der *Narrenburg* wenden. Anders als die für die biologischen Nachfahren bestimmten Aufzeichnungen des Archivs steht das Lederbuch damit für eine meta-physische Reproduktion in der Schrift: Es ist der zufällige Leser, der aufgrund der Lektüre zum Erben und Nachkommen wird." Herrmann, "Verweigerte Ich-Ausdehnung," 201, 203.

this enables them to experience a sense of belonging within a familial whole. However, as a result of the corporeal discourse at play in Stifter's oeuvre, the poet and the extradiegetic reader assume distinct roles within this process. As discussed in the preceding sections, authorship involves the projective externalization of interiority. The reader who engages with the text is thus confronting someone else's externalized being. Stifter's spatial metaphors interpellate the reader in such a way as to demand his or her projective movement into the text, and thus *into* the author's externalized, textualized interiority.<sup>253</sup> This means that the narrative simultaneously emphasizes outward (authorial) and inward (readerly) projection. Over the four versions of "Die Mappe," the metaphors are gradually intensified, with each version accentuating this projective movement to a greater degree. This corporeal re-cognition exemplifies the methodology outlined in the preface to *Bunte Steine* and demonstrates the degree to which the externalization of interiority determines Stifter's realist aesthetics.<sup>254</sup> But before turning to the narrative's treatment of authorial and readerly re-cognition, it is first necessary to clarify Stifter's working process.

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<sup>253</sup> That the relationship between individual/collective is text-based is not a peculiarity of Stifter's works. Rather, it is characteristic of what Nicolas Pethes identifies as archival structures in nineteenth-century literature. Drawing on the example of the *Bildungsroman*, he notes: "The *Bildungsroman*, instead of depicting the education and development of 'the subject' as an autonomous entity, constantly reflects on the fact that individuals are part of a collective in the same sense in which medical or legal cases are part of a series." Pethes, "Serial Individuality: Eighteenth-Century Case Study Collections and Nineteenth-Century Archival Fiction," 122. A movement inward can also be found in the familial structures in "Die Narrenburg." As Begemann argues: "In einem geradezu systematischen Geflecht von Anbindungen über das Blut, die Körperzeichen und das Recht (Adoption) sammelt Heinrich in seiner Person alle 'Nebenlinien' und alle Randständigen der Familie ein, die sich im Zwist von dieser abgespalten hatten, und hebt damit die chronische Entzweiung der Familie auf [...]. Gerade als ein solcher Inbegriff der familialen Peripherie aber rückt Heinrich [...] in die Position Christophs ein, des letzten legitimen Erben. Die Peripherie wird zum Zentrum. So steht der Naturforscher in einer schillernden Zwischenstellung zwischen Nichtidentität und Identität mit der Familie, zwischen ihrem Außen und ihrem Innen." Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*, 219.

<sup>254</sup> The following analysis takes as a model Michael Fried's study on the realist painter Adolph Menzel (1815-1905). Fried offers a rich account of the artist's profoundly corporeal works, which, in contradistinction to the French tradition, emphasize the bodily situatedness of both

Stifter's editing practices are documented extensively in his letters to his publisher and close friend, Gustav Heckenast. Beyond his overambitious writing plans, his frequent requests for money, and his excuses for taking longer than planned to submit his manuscripts, Stifter's letters depict in exquisite detail his need to revise his writings. Only the final polish, or "die letzte Ausfeile," stands in the way of artistic perfection (PRA 18:89; February 3, 1852).

However, the final polish is never truly final, and not even Stifter's published works are safe from his critical eye. As he writes to Heckenast, "Hat doch Göthe seine Iphigenia 5 Mahl abgeschrieben. Gebe Gott, daß ich mit mancher meiner schon gedruckten Arbeiten es einmahl auch so machen kann. Welche Glätte welche Durchsichtigkeit, welche Feile!!" (PRA 18:91;

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artist and viewer, via, for instance, multiple viewpoints that force the angle of the viewer's gaze continuously to shift, or via the depiction of objects that retain imprints of the human body. As Fried puts it, "Menzel's enterprise [...] involved countless acts of imaginative projection of bodily experience [...]; put more strongly, the viewer of Menzel's work [...] is repeatedly invited to perform feats of imaginative projection not unlike those that gave rise to the paintings and drawings in the first place" (13). The coincidence of the viewer's with Menzel's gaze helps to think through the position of the reader in Stifter's works. As the following two sections show, the reader is, in a sense, interpellated via appeals to his or her corporeality. It is this emphasis on bodily situatedness that brings reader and author into close association and provides a way for the reader to gain access to the author's *Innerlichkeit*. My intention is not to brush aside the obvious differences between paintings and literary texts, but rather to suggest that both Menzel and Stifter are responding to similar intellectual currents in different media in remarkably similar ways. Menzel, Fried shows, appeals to multisensory, rather than merely visual experience, which resonates with Stifter's reception of sensory perceptual discourse. Arguing against Crary's account of the autonomization of sight in the nineteenth century, Fried maintains that "Menzel is repeatedly at pains to bring together different or even clashing sensory modalities," e.g. sight and sound or sight and touch (63). Treatises on empathy aesthetics frequently thematize architecture, and it is the experience of the body in space, Fried argues, that makes it impossible to describe projection in purely visual terms (62). While multisensory experience operates differently in Menzel's works than in Stifter's, both push back against the prevailing narrative that underscores the dominance of sight to the exclusion of the other senses. Empathy aesthetics, then, provides a framework for understanding how an artist- or author-specific multisensory *modus* informs the experience of the work of art. Stifter, I show, highlights movement in space, whether imaginative or physical, drawing out the projective movement central to empathy aesthetics. Michael Fried, *Menzel's Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

February 7, 1852). Obsessive polishing results in a cleanliness and purity of form characteristic of Goethe's *Iphigenie* that – God willing – will eventually emerge in Stifter's works.

While Stifter remarks here on his desire to revise already published works, the composition of each work is itself characterized by repeated revision. He outlines this process in an 1861 letter to Heckenast, noting that only after working out in his head what he intended to write would he put pen or pencil to paper. Editing then allowed him to gather the various components in such a way as to approximate the conceptual whole.<sup>255</sup>

Die Arbeit meiner Bücher ist so: Zuerst Hauptidee im Gedanken, 2. Ausarbeitung von Einzelheiten im Gedanken 3. Abriß von Einzelheiten Sätzen Ausdrücken Szenen auf lauter einzelnen Zetteln mit Bleistift. (Hiezu müssen die erlesensten Stunden benützt werden) 4. Textirung mit Dinte auf Papier. 5. Durchsicht dieser Textirung nach einiger Zeit mit viel Ausstreichungen Einschaltungen etc. 6. Durchsicht der Durchsicht nach geraumer Zeit. Verschmelzung mit dem Ganzen. Reinschrift. (PRA 20:45; December 21, 1861)

While the letter refers to Stifter's composition of *Witiko* [1865-1867], this working process appears to extend to his other works, including earlier publications like *Bunte Steine* or *Der Nachsommer* [1857].<sup>256</sup> Although Stifter repeatedly notes in his correspondence that he would first formulate the main idea for a story in his head, only steps 4-6 can be verified with the extant

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<sup>255</sup> Smith-Gary suggests that Stifter's writing practices, as described in this letter, replicate the mode of scientific collection described in the preface to *Bunte Steine*, but she does not pursue this comparison further. Smith-Gary, "Extreme Measures," 40. Brodersen briefly considers Stifter's textual collections, specifically the *Studien* collection, and connects it to Stifter's desire to revise his works. "Der Begriff 'Studie' meint [...] wohl nicht etwas, werkästhetisch Unfertiges, sondern etwas auf die Realität bezogen Vorläufiges. [...] Das Projekt der *Studien* erkennt damit eine vorläufige Qualität von Realismus (und Realität) an, das aber dennoch Anspruch auf Gültigkeit erhebt, insofern seine Bestandteile 'Bausteine' einer zukünftigen Realität sein werden. Was Stifter also abliefern will, ist eine Sammlung partieller und revidierbarer Annäherungen an die Wirklichkeit. Zugleich spielt der Autor aber auch mit dem Eindruck eines unbearbeiteten Zusammentragens verschiedener Materialien als minimales Ordnungsprinzip seiner Texte." Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne,'" 89–90.

<sup>256</sup> See Walter Hettche's commentary in HKG 2,3:25-28 and HKG 4,4:37-41.

archival material.<sup>257</sup> Nevertheless, his working process can be reconstructed in general terms.<sup>258</sup>

After putting pen to paper and writing several relatively complete pages (step 4), Stifter would begin to edit (step 5).<sup>259</sup> He made notes (“Vormerkungen”) about his intended revisions on separate pieces of paper, in some cases on excised manuscript pages.<sup>260</sup> Stifter made his revisions either directly on the manuscript pages or transferred the improved text to a new page, discarding the originals (so-called “abgelegte Blätter”),<sup>261</sup> which were sometimes repurposed for use in journals. The various emendations were all made in the service of the clean copy (step 6), which allegedly emerged after the “Durchsicht der Durchsicht” and the fusion of the various components into a whole. However, even the manuscripts sent to the typesetter contained corrections,<sup>262</sup> and it appears that Stifter never captured the original idea to his own satisfaction. The “Durchsicht der Durchsicht” thus marks the (open) end of the writing process, as Stifter continually strove for perfection.

This perfectionism is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in “Die Mappe,” and the correspondence with Heckenast reveals not only Stifter’s desire to improve the text, but also indicates how he envisioned its future reception.<sup>263</sup> As he writes to Heckenast after the publication of version two of “Die Mappe”:

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<sup>257</sup> See HKG 2,3:26 and HKG 6,4:49.

<sup>258</sup> The overview provided here derives from Hettche’s commentary to *Bunte Steine*. Stifter’s working process on his *Studien* collection, including the original journal versions of these stories, is less well documented. While Stifter’s work on versions three and four of “Die Mappe” has been reconstructed in detail, the fact that neither was finished means that they do not offer a representative picture of the genesis of Stifter’s texts, from conception to publication.

<sup>259</sup> HKG 2,3:26.

<sup>260</sup> HKG 2,3:26.

<sup>261</sup> HKG 2,3:26-27.

<sup>262</sup> HKG 2,3:27.

<sup>263</sup> Blasberg argues that the correspondence with Heckenast is part of a larger strategy of authorial self-staging for a posthumous readership, and that this institutes a genealogical relationship. Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition*, 81–102. For another account of Stifter’s self-

Das Abscheulichste aber ist, daß ich es in mir empfinde, daß ich das Ding so machen könnte, wie ich es wollte, daß es mir in Haupt und Herzen liegt, greifbar, darstellbar – und wenn ich so die freundlichsten geweihtesten Stunden darauf verwenden würde, so würde es sich zusammen finden, einfach, klar, durchsichtig und ein Labsal, wie die Luft. Der Leser würde in dem Buche fort gehen zwischen allbekannten geliebten Dingen, und sachte gebannt und eingezirkelt werden, so wie man im Frühlinge in warmer Luft in allseitigem Keimen in glänzender Sonne geht, und glücklich wird, ohne sagen zu können, wodurch man es geworden. (PRA 17:209; February 16, 1847)

Stifter has an idea of the whole (step 1) that he has been unable to approximate on the page. If only he could devote the choicest hours to the text (i.e. “die erlesensten Stunden” from step 3), the individual components of “Die Mapped” would come together (step 6), and the perfected text, like Goethe’s *Iphigenie*, would be clear, transparent, and refreshing (“ein Labsal, wie die Luft”). as a clear and transparent entity. These descriptors at last begin to make sense: The text should envelop the reader and impart a sense of bliss. It is an atmospheric space through which the reader can wander, passing between familiar, beloved objects.

This type of movement through a confined space proves central to the narrative itself, where it features prominently *as a method of textual reception*. This is suggested already by the epigraph, which is drawn from Hegesippus’ loose translation of Flavius’ *De bello Judaico* and which accompanies all four versions of “Die Mapped”<sup>264</sup>: “Dulce est, inter majorum versari habitacula et veterum dicta factaque recensere memoria” (HKG 1,5:10). [“It is a delight to dwell in the homes of our forefathers and to reflect in memory upon their words and deeds.”<sup>265</sup>] One pleasantly reviews the words and deeds of one’s ancestors – “recensere memoria” – within their home, a process that evokes the “allbekannt[e] geliebt[e] Ding[e]” described in the letter to

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staging within his letters, see Alfred Doppler, “Adalbert Stifters Briefe als Dokumente der Selbstdarstellung,” in *Stifter und Stifterforschung im 21. Jahrhundert: Biographie – Wissenschaft – Poetik*, ed. Alfred Doppler et al. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2007), 1–12.

<sup>264</sup> Moriz Enzinger, “Der Vorspruch zur ‘Mappe meines Urgroßvaters,’” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Adalbert Stifter* (Wien: Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1967), 380.

<sup>265</sup> I am grateful to Eunice Kim for her assistance with this translation.

Heckenast and that raises the question of the individual's place in tradition. The opening chapter of "Die Mappe" develops this idea further.

Mit dem an der Spitze dieses Buches stehenden lateinischen Spruche des seligen, nunmehr längst vergessenen Egesippus führe ich die Leser in das Buch und mit dem Buche in mein altes fern von hier stehendes Vaterhaus ein. [Der Spruch] [...] fiel mir [...] immer wieder ein, wenn ich so in den Räumen meines Vaterhauses herum ging; denn das Haus stak voll von verschiedenen Dingen unserer Vorfahren, und ich empfand wirklich, in den Dingen herum gehend, die seltsamliche Freude und das Vergnügen, von denen Egesippus in seinem Spruche sagt. [...] Ja ich denke oft jetzt schon, da ich selber alt zu werden beginne, mit einer Gattung Vorfreude auf jene Zeit hinab, in der mein Enkel oder Urenkel unter meinen Spuren herum gehen wird, die ich jetzt mit so vieler Liebe gründe, als müßten sie für die Ewigkeit dauern [...]. Aber er [der dunkle ermattende Trieb des alten Herzens, das so süße Leben noch über das Grab hinaus zu verlängern] verlängert es nicht; denn so wie er die ausgebleichten geschmacklosen Dinge seiner Vorgänger belächelt und geändert hatte, so wird es auch der Enkel thun, nur mit dem traurig süßen Gefühle, mit dem man jede vergehende Zeit ansieht, wie er noch die Andenken eine Weile behalten und beschauen. (HKG 1,5:11-12)

The reader is invited into the childhood home of the narrator, who, when he walks among the familiar objects, feels the bliss described both in the epigraph and in Stifter's letter to Heckenast.

The narrator repeatedly emphasizes the corporeal experience of space – "wenn ich so in den Räumen [...] *herum ging*," "in den Dingen *herum gehend*." The model of tradition described here likewise emphasizes this physical dimension: one walks in the footsteps of one's ancestors, just as one's descendants will do ("unter meinen Spuren *herum gehen*").<sup>266</sup> The engagement with the past, however, necessitates that these "Spuren" be modified. As Landfester argues, the opening chapter provides instructions for precisely this type of *productive reception*.<sup>267</sup> One lays

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<sup>266</sup> Sabine Schneider makes a similar observation. See Sabine Schneider, "Vergessene Dinge: Plunder und Trödel in der Erzählliteratur des Realismus," in *Die Dinge und die Zeichen: Dimensionen des Realistischen in der Erzählliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Sabine Schneider and Barbara Hunfeld (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 167.

<sup>267</sup> Landfester, "Der Autor als Stifter," 106. "[L]egitimiert durch die Tradition antiker Textbearbeitung im Zeichen der von Egesippus beschworenen 'memoria', führt sich die *Mappe* in ihrem seit der Buchfassung mit 'Die Alterthümer' überschriebenen ersten Kapitel als Anweisung zur produktiven Rezeption 'alterthümlicher Dinge' ein."

traces in the face of death, as a way of outlasting one's own life, and yet these physical remnants, "eigentlich Trödel" (HKG 1,5:13), will gradually be destroyed.<sup>268</sup> Before one erases the traces of the past, however, one will admire the remnants, which have suddenly transformed from "geschmacklos[e] Dinge" to "Andenken." It is the appreciation of the past, the drive to retain its traces, that distinguishes this model of tradition from that proposed by Jodokus in "Die Narrenburg." Here, there is an impulse to preserve, to make the past legible before it succumbs to the ravages of time and the limits of memory.

This model of tradition is ubiquitous in Stifter's works and owes much to nineteenth-century historicism.<sup>269</sup> Throughout Stifter's stories, characters respect the past while simultaneously adapting and modifying its insights. Not infrequently does this inform characters' engagement with material objects. In *Der Nachsommer*, for instance, the restrained reverence for the past informs the construction of furniture. "Wir suchten selbständige Gegenstände für die jezige Zeit zu verfertigen mit Spuren des Lernens an vergangnen Zeiten" (HKG 4,1:99). Neither is the corporeal experience of space unique to "Die Mappe." For example, "Granit" from the *Bunte Steine* collection notably links movement in space to narration. But what distinguishes "Die Mappe" from its various counterparts is the degree to which it ties productive reception and corporeality to textual materiality. If anything, the tendency to read Stifter's works in semiotic terms<sup>270</sup> makes it necessary to consider the unique role of *textual* objects within his conception of tradition, and "Die Mappe" is exceptionally well-suited to address this material dimension.

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<sup>268</sup> As Schneider summarizes: "Die traurig sanfte Dichtung des Plunders [...] mündet in eine heroische, wiewohl tautologische Geste der Vergeblichkeit." Schneider, "Vergessene Dinge," 174.

<sup>269</sup> For more on this, see esp. Grätz, *Musealer Historismus*, 138–77.

<sup>270</sup> See esp. Begemann, *Die Welt der Zeichen*.

The most obvious example of materially determined tradition is the narrator's treatment of the Doctor's journal, but the link to textual practice is hinted at already in the epigraph with the phrase "recensere memoria." In stemmatic criticism, a practice attributed to Karl Lachmann,<sup>271</sup> *recensio* refers to the comparison of manuscript variants and the subsequent construction of a stemma, which lays out the manuscripts' genealogical relations to one another. The stemma, in turn, enables one to reconstruct the original textual archetype. In essence, the clarification of manuscript kinship relations allows individual variants to join together, and the reconstructed archetype in turn grants significance to any individual variant only insofar as it enables this process. This is not to insist that Stifter is translating stemmatic criticism into literary form (though he does engage with contemporary philological debates in *Witiko*),<sup>272</sup> but rather illustrates that Stifter's model of familial tradition, especially his conception of the relationship between the part and the whole, resonates with roughly contemporaneous textual praxis.

As in "Die Narrenburg," textual practices and familial tradition are couched within liquid metaphors. Here, these metaphors help to indicate the relationship between the part and the whole. For instance, the memory of the Doctor is described thus: "Von der Art und Weise des

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<sup>271</sup> Sebastiano Timpanaro shows that what came to be known as "Lachmann's method" was a product of numerous textual critics and that Lachmann himself did not utilize the method with much rigor or consistency. Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, trans. Glenn W. Most (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>272</sup> See Cornelia Herberichs, "Grenzen des Wissens: Übertragung mittelalterlicher Historiographie im *Witiko*," in *Figuren der Übertragung: Adalbert Stifter und das Wissen seiner Zeit*, ed. Michael Gamper and Karl Wagner (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2009), esp. 145-48. A debate raged among nineteenth-century philologists over the authorship of the *Nibelungenlied*. Both Lachmann and Jakob Grimm claimed that epics were composed by authorial collectives, while others argued in favor of specific authors. Anton von Spaun (a personal friend of Stifter's) attributed the text to Heinrich von Ofterdingen, while Franz Pfeiffer attributed it to Ritter Kürnberger. As Herberichs demonstrates, Stifter depicts all three competing claims in *Witiko*, both by directly referencing the authors in question and by deploying specific verse forms, but ultimately leaves the question of authorship unresolved.

Doctors [...] haben sich nach seinem Tode noch lange die Bruchstücke im Munde der Leute erhalten; aber die Bruchstücke schmolzen wie Eisschollen, die im Strome hinab schwimmen, zu immer kleineren Stücken, bis endlich der Strom der Ueberlieferungen allein ging, und der Name des Geschiedenen nicht mehr in ihm war” (HKG 1,5:12-13). The fragments of the great-grandfather’s life are “Bruchstücke” that, like ice floes, melt into the river of tradition until they are no more.<sup>273</sup> Inheritance via the liquid whole appears elsewhere in “Die Mapped,” where the narrator speaks of “der goldene Strom der Liebe, der in den Jahrtausenden bis zu uns herab geronnen” (HKG 1,5:17), or his desire to marry and have children: “da endlich die Zeit eingetreten war, in der der Mensch die Sehnsucht hat, den sachte vergehenden Lebensstrom in holden Kindern wieder aufquellen zu sehen, mochte es ein liebes Weib mit meinem Herzen wagen” (HKG 1,5:21).

This desire for familial continuity drives the narrative, with the narrator’s wedding serving as an inciting incident.<sup>274</sup> His mother cannot attend the wedding, so he and his bride visit. One day, the narrator ventures into the attic and finds a chest containing old family documents, schoolbooks, and the like. He eventually comes across a large book comprised of individual, unbound notebooks, with the page numbers marked in red ink on the white pages. Most of the pages are empty, and the margins of some of the notebooks are cut, with ribbons drawn through the openings to seal the sections shut. He realizes that this is the second volume of the Doctor’s

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<sup>273</sup> Stifter refers to “Die Mapped” itself in the same terms. As he writes to Heckenast: “Lassen wir nun dieses Bruckstück, wie es ist, als eine *Studie* in den Studien stehen.” (PRA 17:209; 16.2.1847)

<sup>274</sup> Herrmann reads this as indicative of a broader link in the story between writing and familial continuity. She notes that the Doctor writes on the first page of his journal that it shall function as a substitute for wife and children, and that the intra- and (implied) extradiegetic readers of “Die Mapped” are incorporated into this genealogy via the act of textual reception. Herrmann, “Verweigerte Ich-Ausdehnung,” esp. 203-4. For a treatment of family and text in “Die Mapped,” see Thomas Wirtz, “Schrift und Familie in Adalbert Stifters ‘Mapped meines Urgrossvaters,’” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 115, no. 4 (1996): 521-40.

journal. After additional searching, he finds the first volume of the journal, which he remembers his father reading. He opens it and makes another discovery: “ich fand nehmlich viele zerstreute Blätter und Hefte in dem Buche liegen, die sämtlich die Handschrift meines verstorbenen Vaters trugen” (HKG 1,5:26). Version three of Stifter’s “Mappe” specifies that the father’s writings are tucked into the inner portion of the Doctor’s journal (“in dem Innern dieses Buches,” HKG 6,1:21), and this odd detail is indicative of a broader shift in the narrative.

The spatially and temporally determined progression from the great-grandfather to the father, from the exterior of the journal to the material contained within, indicates an inner temporal tension within Stifter’s conception of tradition. The memory of the great-grandfather is in danger of fading, but so too is the memory of the father. Newer members of the family always take over their predecessor’s places, and over the four versions of “Die Mappe,” the memory of the father gradually begins to overtake that of the great-grandfather.<sup>275</sup> While the father’s documents find no mention in version one of “Die Mappe,” in the subsequent versions the narrator reads through his father’s writings before the Doctor’s journal. In version two of “Die Mappe,” he keeps his father’s documents secret from his family, but in the subsequent versions shares the discovery, which generates more interest from his family than the Doctor’s journal. His mother asks him to read to the family from his father’s writings, and the narrator then offers – of his own accord – to do the same with the Doctor’s journal.

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<sup>275</sup> Most scholarship on “Die Mappe” points out that the narrator takes the place of his great-grandfather, and that there are a proliferating number of readers within the text. My approach differs by showing the intergenerational dynamics of this model of tradition and by highlighting the increasing significance of interiority. For representative accounts, see Herrmann, “Verweigerte Ich-Ausdehnung,” 203–5; Blasberg, *Erschriebene Tradition*, 40–41; Grätz, *Musealer Historismus*, 154–59, 166; Landfester, “Der Autor als Stifter,” 108; Friedbert Aspetsberger, “Die Aufschreibung des Lebens: Zu Stifters ‘Mappe,’” *Vierteljahresschrift des Adalbert-Stifter Instituts des Landes Oberösterreich* 27 (1978): 33–35.

This generational overtaking plays out most intensely on a spatial level: What was apparent within the journal manifests itself in the spaces of the house.<sup>276</sup> Just as the opening of the narrative suggests, the reading process is equivalent to bodily movement through space and among objects. But before the father and great-grandfather come to compete for their own remembrance, there exists an original spatial order that is already associated with a kind of projective response.

Da der Vater noch lebte, durfte von des Doctors Habschaften nichts verrückt werden, da er ihn hoch verehrte und fast ausschließlich immer in einem ledernen Handschriftenbuche desselben las, welches Buch aber später ganz abhanden gekommen war. In jener Zeit stand der alte Hausrath *noch wie eine eiserne Chronik umher; wir Kinder lebten uns hinein, wie in ein verjährtes Bilderbuch*, dazu der Großvater die Auslegung wußte, und erzählte, er, der der eigentlichste lebendigste Lebensbeschreiber seines Vaters des Doctors war. (HKG 1,5:18; emphasis added)

The narrator and his siblings engage with the Doctor's possessions as though they were books into which they project ("wir Kinder lebten uns *hinein*, wie in ein verjährtes Bilderbuch"). This inward movement is further accentuated in version three of "Die Mappe." There it is specified that the Doctor's objects are in the *inner room* of the house, which the children are permitted to enter: "Die Geräte des Doctors standen zumeist *in dem inneren Zimmer*, in welchem der Vater sich hauptsächlich aufhielt, und da wir Kinder sehr häufig *zu ihm hinein* durften, so lebten wir uns in diese Dinge wie in ein verjährtes Bilderbuch *hinein*" (HKG 6,1:12; emphasis added).

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<sup>276</sup> For more on the connection between space, text, and memory, see Schneider, "Vergessene Dinge," 167–68; Wirtz, "Schrift und Familie," 529–31; Stefan Gradmann, *Topographie/Text: Zur Funktion räumlicher Modellbildung in den Werken von Adalbert Stifter und Franz Kafka* (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag A. Hain, 1990), 96–116. Schneider also notes the presence of various shrines within shrines, with the house forming the outermost layer, but does not consider the spatial changes across the four versions of the text. Additionally, by connecting spatial and bodily interiority with *textual* interiority, I am expanding and modifying Brodersen's conception of Stifter's "Körperlandschaften" (202). She likens depictions of precipitation in the "Eisgeschichte" in the embedded narrative to "Körperströme" and argues that the landscape presents an ailing body. Brodersen, "Die Wirklichkeit im 'Hohlspiegel der Sinne,'" 239–45.

After the narrator's father dies, his mother remarries, and his new step-father disrupts this spatial, textual, and familial order. He moves the Doctor's possessions to the back room of the house, and in version one of "Die Mappe," the Doctor's journal is lost. In the subsequent versions, the Doctor's possessions are replaced with new objects, and the location of the formerly empty back room shifts. In version two of the narrative, it faces the garden ("gegen den Garten," HKG 1,5:20); in version three, it is down the hall and in front of the grandparents' apartment ("über den Gang weg vor der Wohnung der Großeltern," HKG 6,1:14); finally, in version four, the room has migrated to behind the grandparents' apartment ("hinter der Wohnung der Großeltern," HKG 6,2:12). Over the course of the four versions of "Die Mappe," the step-father moves the objects further outward, to a back room that moves progressively further away from the inner room.

The frame narrative ultimately depicts the narrator's attempts to restore his original kinship relations via text and to recuperate this lost interior space.<sup>277</sup> That is, the narrator's homecoming necessitates that he re-cognize his family as it once was. Over the four versions of "Die Mappe," the narrator's reception of the Doctor's journal, already an imitation of his father's behavior, increasingly revives the latter's memory. While sitting in an outer room of the house at the Doctor's desk, which has been given to him as a wedding present, the narrator reads the Doctor's journal and indirectly engages with another wedding accoutrement, namely his father's wedding coat. In versions two through four, the narrator describes a chest that stores his ancestors' wedding clothes, which the family would occasionally take out and admire. As

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<sup>277</sup> In versions three and four, the narrator and his wife actually stay in the inner room. As version three reads: "Auf die Erinnerung des Stiefvaters [!] wurden wir in die Stube geführt, in der einst die Doctorgeräthe gestanden waren, und es wurde uns gesagt, daß diese Stube für uns eingerichtet worden sei" (HKG 6,1:16).

version two reads: “ Des Vaters langer röthlicher Brautrock [...] hatte schon das Schicksal, daß er zerschnitten wurde; denn als der Vater todt war, und ich in die Abtei studieren ging, da wurde für mich ein neues Röcklein daraus gefertigt” (HKG 1,5:15). The description is modified in version three. “Mein Vater hatte an seinem Hochzeitstage einen rothbraunen Rok [...]. Von dem Tuche des zu des Vaters Hochzeitsanzuge war viel zu viel gekauft worden, und ich erhielt, als der Vater todt war und ich in die Abtei in die lateinische Schule mußte, von dem Reste ein Sonntagsröcklein ” (HKG 6,1:10). As Katharina Grätz points out, the later versions of the narrative are focused more intensely on the preservation of objects,<sup>278</sup> a change that also applies here. In version two, the coat is cut up to make the narrator a coat, while in version three, there is extra material available for the same. While the narrator has presumably since outgrown his “Röcklein,” the projective reading process still enables him to wrap himself in this garment once more. (Recall Vischer’s description of *Einfühlung*: “Die Art nun, wie sich die Erscheinung aufbaut, wird zu einer Analogie meines eigenen Aufbaus; ich hülle mich in die Grenzen derselben *wie in ein Kleid.*”) The father’s coat, reddish in version two, becomes reddish brown, i.e. the color of dried blood, in version three, the same version in which the father is brutally crushed to death by a cart. The Doctor’s journal, however, preserves the vibrancy and vitality of this bodily fluid. The narrator describes, for instance, “der wohlbekannt rothe Deckel” (HKG 1,5:26), “die rothen Seitenzahlen” (HKG 1,5:26), and “die brennend rothen Titel” (HKG 1,5:29). By projecting into the book, the narrator can, then, bring his father back to life.

This temporal and spatial movement transpires, finally, on the page itself. As the narrator reports on his editorial efforts in the afterword to version two of “Die Mappe”:

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<sup>278</sup> Grätz, *Musealer Historismus*, 161–68. She also argues that any creative impulses vanish from the final version of the text: conservation, and not creation, determine the narrator’s relationship to tradition.

So weit habe ich, der Urenkel, aus dem Lederbuche des Doctors ausgezogen [...]. Es ist noch recht viel übrig; aber das Lesen ist schwer. Oft ist kein rechtes Ende, oft deutet sich der Anfang nur an, manchmal ist die Mitte der Ereignisse da, oder es ist eine unverständliche Krankengeschichte. [...]. Oft waren ganze Abtheilungen in das fahle Eisenokergelb geschossen, indessen oft Randbemerkungen aus späteren Zeiten mit dem glänzendsten Schwarz dastanden, wie übermüthige Ansiedler und Anbauer, welche die armen Ureinwohner fast zu verdrängen strebten. Auch ist die Handschrift oft sehr schwer zu entziffern. (HKG 1,5:232)

The narrator details here the arduous process of gathering together individual textual components into a readable whole. The handwriting (“schlecht aus lateinischen und deutschen Buchstaben gemischt” (HKG 1,5:26), just like Stifter’s) is barely legible, the ink faded, and the content strange. Despite these difficulties, the narrator is committed to transmitting the text in its totality. “Ich habe noch recht viel zu erzählen, und werde es in der Zukunft thun, wenn ich es zu Ende geziffert, und ausgezogen habe” (HKG 1,5:232). Reading here, as in “Die Narrenburg,” involves the *Zusammenlesen* of individual elements in order to reveal the great, here, the totality of the Doctor’s (recorded) life. The *Schriftbild*, however, is subject to the force of time. The ink in some sections is faded, while newer marginal notes in gleaming black ink threaten to overtake the older portions of text. The intrusion, though, much like the step-father’s entry into the narrator’s family, is not fully successful or destructive. The marginal notes, which Stifter likens to textual colonizers, only strive – *almost* – to push out the natives in the body of the text.<sup>279</sup>

This movement, furthermore, will never come to an end. The marginal notes in Stifter’s own manuscripts were incorporated into (relatively) clean copies of the individual pages, and moved from the outer to the inner portion of the *Schriftbild*. Newer additions would always be made, and what began as a marginal note was always in danger of being overtaken. The great-

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<sup>279</sup> As Pethes notes, the colonial metaphor is readable in terms of the original publication context of “Die Mappe” – the *Wiener Zeitschrift* printed portions of the narrative alongside ethnographic observations. Pethes, *Literarische Fall-Archive*, 38.

grandfather might not have rewritten clean copies of his journal entries, but he, too, saw no conclusion to the writing process.<sup>280</sup>

Allen Anzeichen nach war der Doctor schon achtzig Jahre alt, als er den zweiten Band seiner Lebensmappe machte und vorrichtete – und dennoch machte er diesen Band so dick, wie den ersten, ja er hatte sogar um zwei und fünfzig Seiten mehr, und alle waren sie zum Voraus schon mit rother Dinte eingetragen. Wie viele Blätter aber blieben leer, wie wenige Hefte waren beschrieben, und wie hingen an den letzteren noch die alten Siegel, weil er, damit ich seinen eigenen Ausdruck gebrauche, früher fort gemußt, ehe er sie hatte öffnen können. (HKG 1,5:234)

The reading process, too, is unfinished business. Not enough time had elapsed for the great-grandfather to read all of the entries before his death (indeed, the writing process precludes this possibility), so the last group of entries remains sealed.

This open-endedness extends beyond the material confines of the great-grandfather's journal, reaching the readers of version two of "Die Mappe." As the narrator reports in the afterword: "Mein Großvater hat erzählt, daß der Doctor, als er sehr alt war, [...] oft an seinem kunstreich geschnitzten Schreibgerüste, auf das er in seinem langen Leben so viel gelegt und gestellt hatte, daß er am Ende selber kaum Platz hatte, gesessen war, und in einem großen Buche gelesen habe, von dem rothe und blaue Siegel niederhingen" (HKG 1,5:233). The Doctor, who sits at his desk and reads his journal, is nearly pushed out by the various objects he has accumulated over the years. The *Schriftbild*, in other words, manifests in the inner room. While the readers of Stifter's works would not have had access to the Doctor's (or Stifter's) manuscripts, with their colonizing marginalia, they were presented with a vignette at the beginning of the third volume of the *Studien* collection, where version two of "Die Mappe"

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<sup>280</sup> Stifter's "Tagebuch über Malerarbeiten" was left similarly unfinished. He kept this journal from February 5, 1854 to August 24, 1867 and used it to record the precise amount of time spent on specific tasks, listing in columns the month and day, start and end times, the object of study, and the total amount of time spent. Nearly half of the journal contains only empty columns, still waiting to be filled in. (National Library of the Czech Republic, Sign. 238).

appeared (Figure 7). The great-grandfather sits at his desk with his journal, but, having run out of room, is forced to turn to the side. He holds the journal at an awkward angle and opens the pages toward the viewer of the image, as though inviting the reader *hinein*.



Figure 7. The vignette to volume three of Stifter's *Studien* collection. Adalbert Stifter. *Studien*. Vol. 3. Pest: Heckenast, 1847. Courtesy of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Sign. Res/P.o.germ. 2042 f-3, pg. 9, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10925965-9.

The ever-increasing movement inward continues beyond the confines of the narrative, leading eventually into the author's own body.<sup>281</sup> "Die Mappe" laid dormant for nearly two decades, and then in 1864, an ailing Stifter began to work on it again. What he had once referred to as "eine heillose Geschichte" (PRA 17:208; February 18, 1847) now had a salubrious effect.

Da ich mich immer mehr fand, griff ich noch zu einem Heilmittel, das alle Heilerfahren verdammt hatten, dessen labsalbringende Wirkung ich aber recht gut kannte – Dichten. [...] Ich konnte nicht am Witiko arbeiten, da bin ich eben in erschütternden Auftritten, und sie fordern Kühnheit und Frische; aber an die Mappe des Urgroßvaters ging ich, (Sie wissen, daß die ein eigenes Werk werden soll) und schrieb sie mit Benutzung des Alten neu. Seit 3 Wochen arbeite ich daran, und mein Glaube an diese liebevolle Arznei hat mich nicht getäuscht, mein Herz wußte, was ihm mangelte, und ging zu dem rechten Borne, Gesundheit zu trinken. (PRA 20:180-81; February 12, 1864)

Editing "Die Mappe" brings exactly that "labsalbringende Wirkung" Stifter had described as the objective of the narrative ("ein Labsal, wie die Luft"). Not only this – the *recensio* of the text becomes a liquid *Heilmittel*, or a means of making the corpus whole or complete.<sup>282</sup>

The embedded narrative of "Die Mappe" depicts, of course, a form of therapeutic writing, and one is tempted to identify Stifter with the figure of the Doctor, who likewise finds solace in the writing process. But one can go much further than this. It is the bodily situatedness of the writer and the reader that makes such an identification possible and that governs projective reading. This becomes clearest when one considers a journal Stifter kept while working on version three, which he entitled "Mein Befinden."

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<sup>281</sup> In some sense, this is already anticipated by the embedded narrative, which is of course interior to the frame narrative. As Landfester shows, the embedded narrative repeatedly connects writing and skin. For instance, the Doctor's journal contains parchment pages and his "Approbationsurkunde" is written on the same material. Additionally, soon after his neighbor encourages him to keep a journal, the Doctor is called to a patient with a grotesque skin wound. Finally, the Doctor's friend Eustachius keeps his papers in a suitcase made of *Dachshaut*. See Landfester, "Der Autor als Stifter," 118–20.

<sup>282</sup> See *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, s.v. "heilen," accessed July 10, 2017, [woerterbuchnetz.de](http://woerterbuchnetz.de). "7) heilen, ganz machen..." For more on the significance of *Heilen* within "Die Mappe," see Landfester, 103–5, 119–24.

Stifter kept this journal from April 19, 1864 to April 10, 1865, upon the advice of his doctor. He used it to chart his observations about various physical and psychological symptoms, which relate overwhelmingly to what he ate and what his feces looked like. He then reviewed and color-coded the text, underlining and circling words or phrases and making lines in the margins in either red or blue pencil which indicated negative and positive symptoms, respectively.<sup>283</sup> Some of the recurring negative terms include “ängstlich,” “unruhig,” “Unruhe,” “kleinmütig,” “Kleinmuth,” and “Unbehagen,” while the positive descriptors are fairly vague, with variations on “wie gesund” appearing most frequently.<sup>284</sup> Days where Stifter experienced both positive and negative symptoms are marked with both colors, sometimes with one color accentuated more strongly. Some of the entries are more heavily annotated than others, and the types of annotations also vary. The final entry, for instance, is supplemented with three blue marginal marks, four blue lines, and two blue rectangles, and describes an apparently delightful day: “Wie vollkommen ganz gesund. Breiartiger Stuhl reichlich” (Figure 8).

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<sup>283</sup> For an overview of this journal and the recording techniques, see Alois Hofman, “Entstehung,” in *Adalbert Stifter: Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters; Faksimileausgabe der Dritten Fassung* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1987), 19–20.

<sup>284</sup> Adalbert Stifter, “Mein Befinden,” April 19, 1864-April 10, 1865, Sign. 240, National Library of the Czech Republic, Prague. For a partial transcription of the entries, albeit without reference to the color-coding or other marginalia, see PRA 25:335-39.

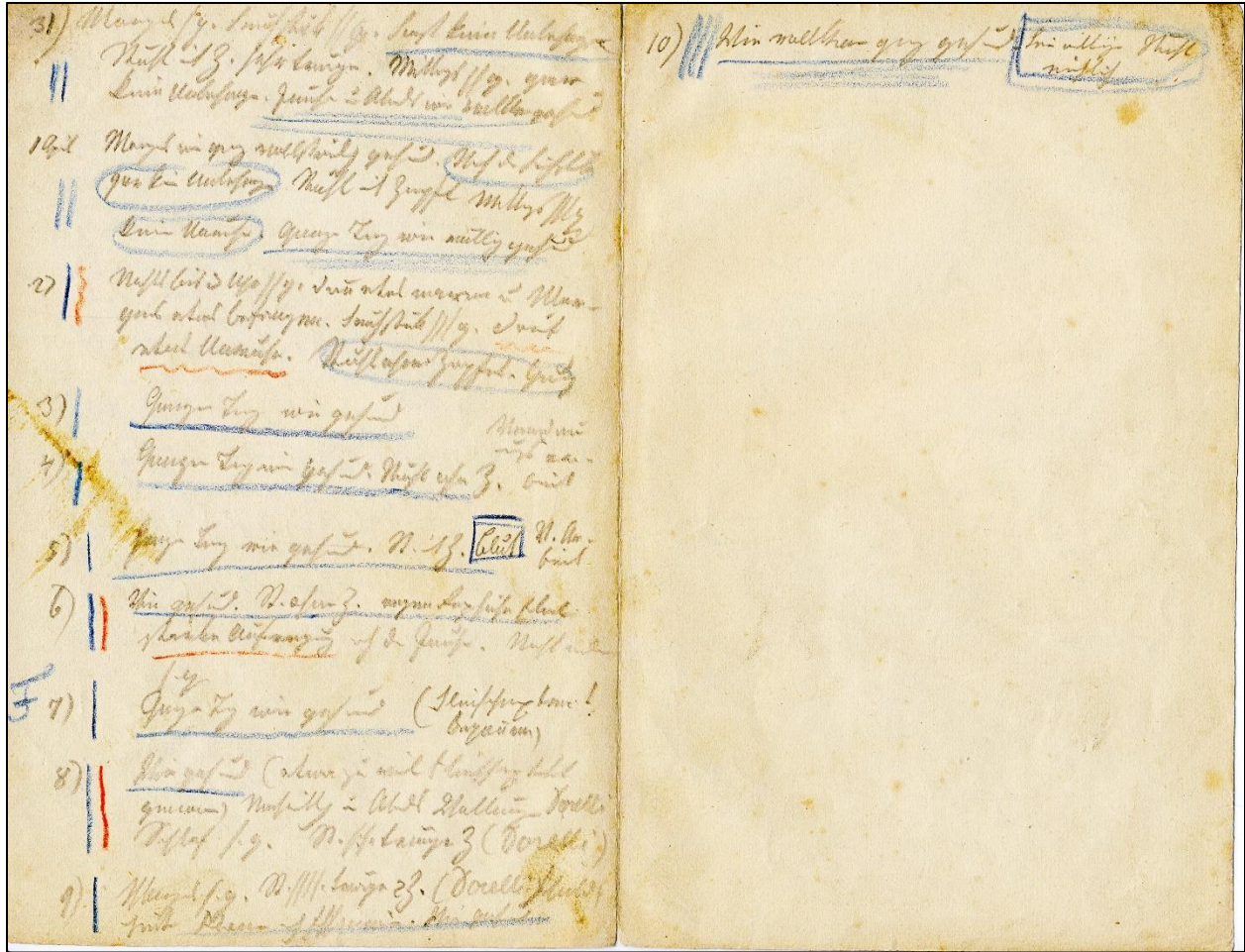


Figure 8. The final two pages of the journal “Mein Befinden.” The observations here range from 31 March – 10 April 1865. Courtesy of the National Library of the Czech Republic. Sign. 240

It is not entirely clear why Stifter annotated the chronicle of his digestive processes with such zeal, but the techniques he deployed in the journal offer insight into his work on “Die Mappe.” At the material level, two of the journal’s extant six pages were excised from “Die Mappe” manuscript (Figure 9, Figure 10). At a methodological level, Stifter is consistent in *how* he documents the details of various processes. Elsewhere in the journal, he underlined his symptoms in the appropriate colors and then summed up the number of positive and negative days (Figure 10). This numeric recording method was a defining feature of Stifter’s writing (and

painting) process.<sup>285</sup> He maintained a series of journals where he recorded the length of his manuscripts and calculated how many printed pages his handwritten texts would yield. These journal pages, too, occasionally consisted of excised manuscript pages. In the “Seiten- und Bogenrechnungsbuch für ‘Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters’” (1864; see Figure 11), formed in part from pages excised from “Die Mappe” and “Nachkommenschaften” [1864], Stifter listed the date, the page number of the handwritten pages, the corresponding sheet number, the corresponding page number of the printed pages, and the number of letters,<sup>286</sup> which were related as follows: “1 Bogen = 24 Seiten / 1 Seite = 966 Buchstaben.”<sup>287</sup> These calculations likely facilitated Stifter’s editing. He could compose and rework his manuscripts with their typesetting already in mind, and as long as the changes he introduced did not disrupt the number of pages or sheets, he could presumably continue emending his text until the last minute.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> See, for example, his “Tagebuch über Malerarbeiten” (National Library of the Czech Republic, Sign. 238; reprinted in PRA 14:343-50.

<sup>286</sup> HKG 6,4:29.

<sup>287</sup> Adalbert Stifter, “Seiten- und Bogenrechnungsbuch für Die ‘Mappe meines Urgroßvaters,’” February 5, 1854-August 24, 1867, Sign. 238. National Library of the Czech Republic, Prague.

<sup>288</sup> In November 1864, for instance, he describes how this practice helped him to re-cast the text: “Von dem Kummer können Sie sich keine Vorstellung machen, den es macht, etwas unvollständig, d.h. bewußt unvollständig aus der Hand zu geben. Wie hätte ich denn sonst die Mühe übernommen, den 1.ten Bogen der Mappe, alle Buchstaben zählend, wieder so um zu gießen, wie ich es that” (PRA 17:182; November 16, 1846). Landfester points out that Stifter is describing here a *Druckfahnenkorrektur* – he rewrote the first sheet but made sure the length was unchanged. Landfester, “Der Autor als Stifter,” 104.

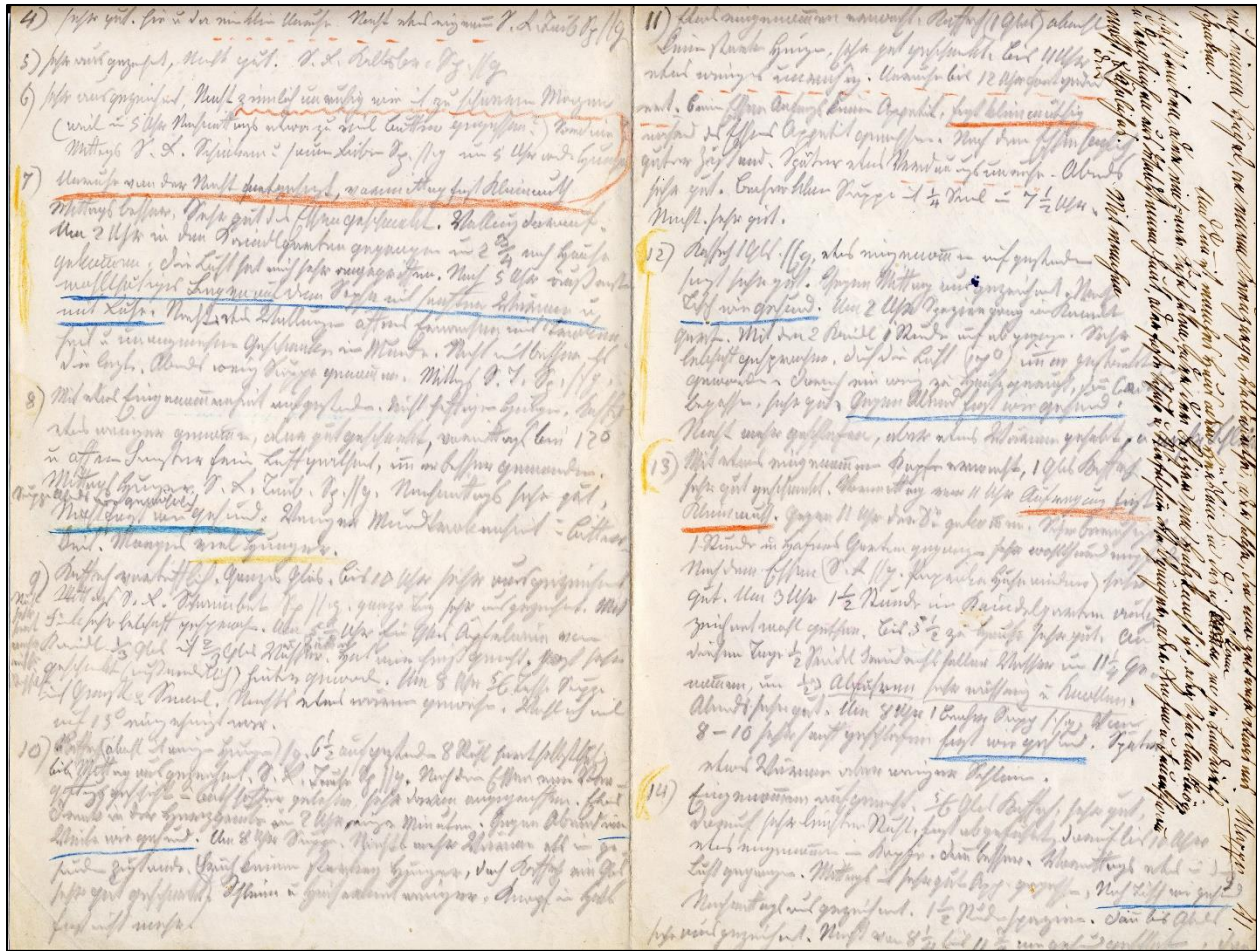


Figure 9. “Mein Befinden.” Stifter’s observations from 4 – 14 May 1864. The vertical text written in ink on the right side of the right page is material from “Die Mappe.” The two texts overlap in several places. Orange-ish markings appear in several locations, and seem to serve the same purpose as the red markings. Courtesy of the National Library of the Czech Republic. Sign. 240.



	Ordnung	Rechnung	Leipzig	Mit	Leipzig
Die Mappede meines Urgroßvaters. I. Band.	Ubrakung	20 <sup>(315)</sup>	2	15	247
	Salmun	22	—	5	272
	3	24	—	7	798
	4	26	—	7	32
	5	30	—	14	216
	6	34	—	12	198
Die Mappede meines Urgroßvaters. II. Band.		3½	4	13	797
	7	35	—	2	156
	8	36	—	3	644
	9	37	—	4	404
	11	38	—	1	14
	12	38	—	3	774
	38	5	4	857	

Figure 11. An excised page from “Die Mappede,” repurposed for use in the “Seiten- und Bogenrechnungsbuch für ‘Die Mappede meines Urgroßvaters.’” The journal itself consists of 7 pieces of paper, folded in half. Two of the pages are discarded from “Die Mappede,” three from “Nachkommenschaften.” Courtesy of the National Library of the Czech Republic. Sign. 216.

Beyond the material and methodological overlap between “Die Mappe” and “Mein Befinden,” the two also intersect conceptually. While Stifter’s designation in the journal of red as negative and blue as positive appears somewhat arbitrary, one cannot overlook the fact that red and blue pencils are the tools of choice for editors worldwide. What is more, red and blue play a significant role in “Die Mappe.” First, the Doctor possesses red and blue “Arzneigläser” (HKG 1,5:18)<sup>289</sup> and seals the pages of his journal with red and blue ribbons. The color choice is not incidental. In version two, he chooses red and blue ribbons because his future wife, whose initial rejection of him necessitated the therapeutic writing in the first place, wore ribbons of the same color.<sup>290</sup> In the other three versions, red and blue ribbons are used to bind the writings of the Doctor’s friend, Eustach. The latter’s love letters are bound with blue ribbon, his “Hirngespinnste,” i.e. works of fiction – two packets of which the Doctor is instructed to deliver to a publisher –, with red. Bodily and textual interiority, both of which are inextricable from procreative desire, are thus tied together. Finally, the relationship between inner and outer continues to exert its influence here. Medicines are contained *within* red and blue vessels. The red and blue ribbons decorate the *outside* of the body, the *margins* of the book, and the *exterior* of collected pages. If the “übermüthige Ansieder und Anbauer” from version two of “Die Mappe” represented overzealous, gleaming black marginal notes infringing upon the bodily autonomy of the text, the gleaming black marginalia become secondary in “Mein Befinden”; the

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<sup>289</sup> Version one makes no reference to the bottles. Version three also contains a description of red and blue bottles, and version four contains a description of red, blue, and yellow bottles.

<sup>290</sup> Schneider briefly discusses the displacement from body to text here, relating the wife’s white dress with its red and blue ribbons to the white pages of the Doctor’s journal with its red and blue seals. Schneider, “Vergessene Dinge,” 172–73.

red and blue marginalia have now encroached upon the interior of the text, editing a corpus in need of a *Heilmittel*.<sup>291</sup>

The foregoing discussion only briefly considered the final version of “Die Mappe.” In many cases, the fourth version resembles the third, but it differs from its predecessors in one major way: notably lacking are descriptions of bodily movement through space. The opening paragraph, for example, only describes the visual contemplation of familiar objects, not the act of *Herumgehen* within the family home. The prominent *hinein* deixis in the description of the chronicle-like inner room, drawn out particularly in version three, vanishes. Whether additional archival materials or biographical information can resolve these inconsistencies remains uncertain. Given the bodily situatedness of reading and writing in the preceding versions, one might speculate that the immobility within “Die Mappe” could well be indicative of the immobility of the author.<sup>292</sup> Stifter was at this time (1867-68) desperately ill and rarely left his bed during the last two months of his life.<sup>293</sup> Perhaps version four was so overcome by Stifter’s symptoms that projective reading was no longer possible – only the visual contemplation of the page could transpire. What remains more certain are the parallels and interdependencies between

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<sup>291</sup> Pethes reads the last two versions of “Die Mappe” as exemplary of medical narration. He shows that the Doctor’s observations resemble those recorded in patient journals, a type of medical narrative that emerged in the seventeenth century and that was still used in Stifter’s time. “Mein Befinden” might also be understood within this context. Pethes, *Literarische Fall-Archive*, 45–52. For more on the medical context of “Die Mappe,” see the commentary in HKG 6,4:161-90.

<sup>292</sup> Blasberg argues that since each version of “Die Mappe” postulates the relationship between the narrated and ostensibly edited “Mappe” differently, each version occupies a unique position within Stifter’s oeuvre. While I focus primarily on material practices, I ultimately make a similar case. See Cornelia Blasberg, “‘Wer bin ich bisher gewesen?’ Identität als Problem in Adalbert Stifters *Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters*,” in *Ordnung – Raum – Ritual. Adalbert Stifters artifizieller Realismus*, ed. Sabina Becker and Katharina Grätz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007), 101–24.

<sup>293</sup> Martin Swales and Erika Swales, *Adalbert Stifter: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 4.

the earlier versions of Stifter's "Mappe" and the techniques involved in its composition. With each return to the text, Stifter consistently implicated the body of the reader in the work of productive reception, narrating his own work as *recensor*.

## (IN)CONCLUSION

Taken together, "Die Narrenburg" and "Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters" lay out a model of reading and (re-)cognition that realizes the theoretical concerns elaborated in the preface to *Bunte Steine*. While "Die Narrenburg" shows intradiegetically how recognition encourages a mode of collective reading and writing that enables one to experience oneself corporeally as part of a familial whole, "Die Mappe" illustrates the specific reading and writing techniques that make extradiegetic re-cognition possible. In both cases, the act of reading joins together author and reader in a genealogical continuum, with each seeking to parse the relationship between the part and the whole. Furthermore, both texts draw from the same spatial and corporeal metaphors to posit the act of reading as contingent upon the reader's bodily situatedness. This methodology guides Stifter's own writing practices and extends to the imagined reception of his works. Just like the Doctor in "Die Mappe," so, too, does Stifter invite the reader into his texts. By replicating the same mode of knowing depicted intradiegetically, the extradiegetic reader re-cognizes kinaesthetically the familial totality within the text.

The very last page of the very last version of "Die Mappe" will also bring the reader into the position of Heinrich from "Die Narrenburg," who reads the sign of death – "†" – at the end of his ancestor's manuscript and reflects on his own future legacy. Johann Aprent, who collaborated with Stifter and edited a posthumously released collection of the latter's works, describes Stifter's final days as follows: "Wenige Tage vor seinem Tode ließ er sich noch das Manuskript des unvollendeten zweiten Bandes der 'Mappe', mit deren Umarbeitung er sich seit ihrem

Erscheinen und noch während dieser Krankheit beschäftigt hatte, reichen, blätterte darin, und legte es endlich mit den Worten aus der Hand: ‘Hier wird man schreiben: Hier ist der Dichter gestorben.’”<sup>294</sup> Written under the sign of death, this final inscription promises an afterlife for Stifter’s works via their continued reception. The reader – whether the executor of Stifter’s estate, whether the reader of his narratives – is interpellated into a genealogical relationship with Stifter himself and is thus called upon to continue the work of re-cognition.

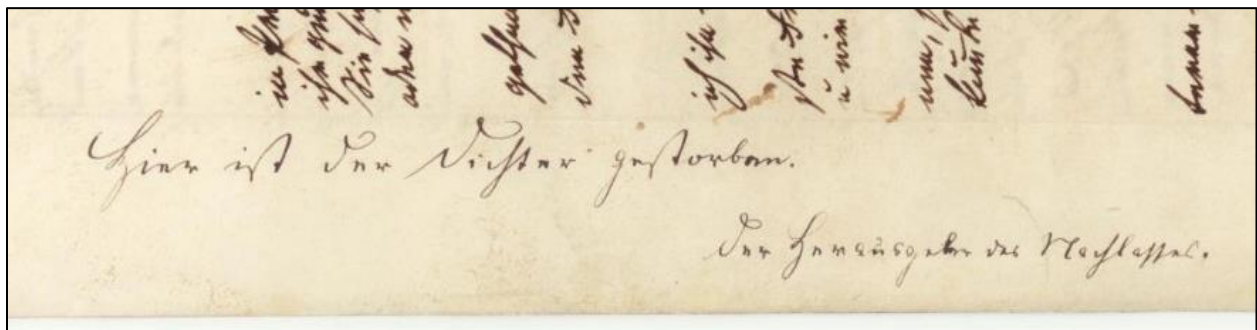


Figure 12. The last page of the last version of “Die Mappe.” The inscription reads: “Hier ist der Dichter gestorben. / Der Herausgeber des Nachlasses.” Courtesy of the National Library of the Czech Republic. Sign. 213, Folder “F4 letzte Fassung.”

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<sup>294</sup> Johann Aprent, *Adalbert Stifter: Eine biographische Skizze*, ed. Moriz Enzinger (Nürnberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1955), 94, 113.

## Part II | Gottfried Keller

### 3. Epistemologies of (Im)mediacy Narrative Refractions of Recognition in “Die Geisterseher”

In his seminal 1853 essay “Unsere lyrische und epische Poesie seit 1848,” Theodor Fontane proposed a likeness between realist authors and Pygmalion. “Vor allen Dingen verstehen wir *nicht* darunter [unter ‘Realismus’] das nackte Wiedergeben alltäglichen Lebens [...]. [...] Das Leben ist doch immer nur der Marmorsteinbruch, der den Stoff zu unendlichen Bildwerken in sich trägt; sie schlummern darin, aber nur dem Auge des Geweihten sichtbar und nur durch seine Hand zu erwecken.”<sup>295</sup> The realist author, uniquely able to recognize the artwork sleeping within the marble block, awakens and transfigures the raw material of bare reality. Rather than simply viewing reality, the realist actively, haptically shapes it, elevating it beyond its prosaic confines.

At the same time as Fontane was accounting for the emergent realist aesthetic by drawing a comparison to one of the great classical myths, Gottfried Keller, still hard at work on *Der grüne Heinrich*, began developing a set of Galatea novellas. This project ended up becoming not one, but two independent works: *Sieben Legenden* [1872] and *Das Sinngedicht* [1881].<sup>296</sup> The latter centers on the scientist Reinhart, who, one summer day, begins to feel pain in his eyes from the strain of his experiments (the narrative here quotes Goethe’s *Farbenlehre*<sup>297</sup>). He ponders the various things his eyes enable him to view, particularly the human form, and soon rushes out of his laboratory (“die Studierstube eines Doctor Fausten, aber durchaus ins Moderne, Bequeme

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<sup>295</sup> Fontane, “Unsere lyrische und epische Poesie seit 1848,” 240–41. For more on the poetic realist import of Fontane’s Pygmalion comparison, see the Introduction.

<sup>296</sup> For more on the development of these projects, see the commentary in SW 6:895-96.

<sup>297</sup> SW 6:976-78.

und Zierliche übersetzt,” HKKA 7:9) and into his attic, where he grabs a dusty volume from the Lachmann edition of Lessing’s works, opening it to find a Logau aphorism: “Wie willst du weiße Lilien zu roten Rosen machen? / Küß eine weiße Galathee: sie wird errötend lachen” (HKKA 7:13). Determined to give his strained eyes a rest, Reinhart turns the epigram into an anthropological experiment. He ventures into the world and attempts unsuccessfully to provoke simultaneous laughter and blushing by kissing several women. His experiments fail, but only until he encounters the obstinate Lucie (a.k.a. *Lux.*) After regaling each other – and Lucie’s uncle – with a variety of Pygmalion-like tales that comprise the embedded novellas, Reinhart and Lucie fall in love. While listening to a shoemaker sing one of Goethe’s early poems, they finally share a kiss that finally produces the intended results, and the cycle culminates in their recognition of the congruence between literature and their own lives.

Keller’s *Sinngedicht*, like the works by Stifter treated in Part I, is concerned with the status of knowledge in both the scientific and the moral realms, and it underscores the types of knowledge and the means of knowledge production available to each. The events of the frame narrative are set in the 1850s, just before the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* [1859], referenced in the very first sentence of the cycle.<sup>298</sup> Wolfgang Preisendanz draws out the epistemological significance of this allusion, arguing that Reinhart’s exit from his laboratory into the realm of humanity, his *failed* experiments, prove that literature – more

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<sup>298</sup> “Vor etwa fünfundzwanzig Jahren, als die Naturwissenschaften eben wieder auf einem höchsten Gipfel standen, obgleich das Gesetz der natürlichen Zuchtwahl noch nicht bekannt war, öffnete Herr Reinhart eines Tages seine Fensterläden” (HKKA 7:9). Based on a reference in the tenth chapter, Preisendanz determines that the events in the frame narrative occur sometime between 1852 and 1860, the year the German translation of Darwin appeared. Wolfgang Preisendanz, “Gottfried Kellers ‘Sinngedicht,’” in *Wege des Realismus: Zur Poetik und Erzählkunst im 19. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1977), 182.

specifically, storytelling – makes available a type of knowledge inaccessible to the sciences.<sup>299</sup> By contrast, Annette Keck’s more recent work on the cycle emphasizes the points of connection between the two realms.<sup>300</sup> In general, one can say that Keller, like Stifter, posits a reading method that draws on insights from the sciences but makes available knowledge in excess of that garnered by science alone. Again, like Stifter, Keller’s methodology is indebted to the nineteenth-century publishing context. *Das Sinngedicht* was first published in Julius Rodenberg’s *Deutsche Rundschau*, which printed a wide assortment of both literary and scientific texts. As Daniela Gretz has shown, major debates concerning monism and Darwinism raged in the periodical: By presenting Reinhart as a monist caricature, Keller takes a clear stance within this discourse.<sup>301</sup> *Das Sinngedicht* is also an excessively *literary* text, as the three aforementioned Goethe references indicate, and this quality, too, reflects the original publishing context, as periodicals compiled texts on a whole range of topical materials.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Preisendanz, esp. 200-201.

<sup>300</sup> Keck shows that this is evident already in Reinhart’s selection of the Lachmann Lessing edition (a *critical* edition), as well as the genre of epigram. She argues that Lessing’s conception of the epigram as comprising two parts (“Erwartung und Aufschluss”) manifests the same “Wissensstruktur” as an experiment. Annette Keck, *Buchstäbliche Anatomien: Vom Lesen und Schreiben des Menschen. Literaturgeschichten der Moderne* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 168.

<sup>301</sup> Daniela Gretz, “Ein literarischer ‘Versuch’ im Experimentierfeld Zeitschrift: Medieneffekte der ‘Deutschen Rundschau’ auf Gottfried Kellers ‘Sinngedicht,’” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 134, no. 2 (2015): 207. Gretz’s account contributes in a significant way to the understanding of scientific discourse within the cycle and builds upon earlier work by Gerhard Kaiser and Gerhart Graevenitz: Gerhard Kaiser, “Experimentieren oder Erzählen? Zwei Kulturen in Gottfried Kellers *Sinngedicht*,” *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 45 (2001): 278–301; Graevenitz, “Wissen und Sehen.”

<sup>302</sup> “Auch wenn Keller sich also bei der Wahl der mehr oder weniger gesicherten konkreten Stoffe und Quellen seiner einzelnen Binnenerzählungen bei kanonischen Autoren der Weltliteratur bedient, liegen der thematischen wie diskursiven Universalität deren spezifischer Zusammenstellung erstens die thematischen Vorlieben des Mediums Zeitschrift und zweitens dessen von Meyer herausgearbeitetes stilistisches ‘Variationsprinzip’ zugrunde.” Gretz, “Ein literarischer ‘Versuch’ im Experimentierfeld Zeitschrift,” 211.

Keller's propensity for writing literature styled upon other literature is, of course, a mainstay of his realist literary production.<sup>303</sup> When describing in a letter to Paul Heyse the apparent lack of realism in *Das Sinngedicht*, Keller offered his now famous programmatic statement on the privileged position of poetry.

Auch die Geschichte mit dem Logauschen Sinngedicht, die Ausfahrt Reinharts auf die Kußproben kommt ja nicht vor; niemand unternimmt dergleichen, und doch spielt sie durch mehrere Kapitel. Im stillen nenne ich dergleichen die Reichsunmittelbarkeit der Poesie, d.h. das Recht, zu jeder Zeit, auch im Zeitalter des Fracks und der Eisenbahnen, an das Parabelhafte, das Fabelmäßige ohne weiteres anzuknüpfen, ein Recht, das man sich nach meiner Meinung durch keine Kulturwandlungen nehmen lassen soll.<sup>304</sup>

Keller claims that he eschews depicting social and political changes, focusing instead on the stable parable- or fable-like structures that persist across the whole of literary history. With the political term *Reichsunmittelbarkeit*, which designated a status of direct subservience to the Kaiser, Keller is proposing a distinctly literary, i.e. *poetic* type of realism. In Keller's formulation, *Unmittelbarkeit* is, paradoxically, profoundly mediated. As he puts it, poetry's immediacy inheres in its links to other poetry, specifically the parable or fable. Literature does not disavow external reality, but instead derives its beauty from a whole interlinked tradition of mimetic representation. Rather than making recourse to some original, to reality as such, literature presents itself as a representation of a representation, self-aware of its own, quasi-Platonic distance from the real thing.<sup>305</sup> In other words, poetry is *reichsunmittelbar* because of its (im)mediate links to other poetry.

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<sup>303</sup> See esp. Downing, *Double Exposures*, 91–128.

<sup>304</sup> GB III.1:57. (27 Juli 1881)

<sup>305</sup> The status of realism in *Das Sinngedicht* is very similar to that in *Sieben Legenden*, which Eric Downing views as exemplary of Keller's re-tellings of extant stories. As he writes regarding that cycle: "On the one hand, Keller's realism depends upon the generic trappings of his representation corresponding with some 'original' of the legends, and certainly far more fittingly than their previous, in some sense opposite generic trappings, which need to be shed for the disguised reality or truth to be exposed. The realism requires the repetition that mimetically

The poetic realist qualities of *Das Sinngedicht* are indebted to one intertextual strand in particular: the Pygmalion/Galatea myth. Linked already via Reinhart's reception of the Logau aphorism with the act of reading, the myth – and its various modern transformations – foregrounds recognition and artistic reception. As will become clear, Galatea's vivification leads her to recognize the points of contact between herself and her surroundings, between life and art. And as Inka Mülder-Bach points out, the myth and its various transformations have consistently emphasized Pygmalion's receptive, rather than his creative activity.<sup>306</sup> What is ultimately at stake in the Pygmalion/Galatea complex is, then, the individual's response to the imbrication of life and art. Keller will present the Pygmalion-esque recipient as transfixed by the work of art, but he soberly counteracts this response by introducing something like a "reality principle," emphasizing the medial effects that generate this response. The astounding number of recognition scenes in *Das Sinngedicht* show the characters – themselves voracious readers – absorbed by texts, only to realize that the perceived overlap between their life and literature is contingent upon mediality.<sup>307</sup> In this way, the cycle draws from a range of literary (and literary historical) discourse to present itself as a self-reflective narrative about poetic realist reading.

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equates the new representation with the earlier 'reality.' On the other hand, this original reality is understood to be not 'really' there, to be instead itself a fiction reproduced out of a fiction and reproduced as a fiction." Downing, *Double Exposures*, 96.

<sup>306</sup> Inka Mülder-Bach, *Im Zeichen Pygmalions: Das Modell der Statue und die Entdeckung der "Darstellung" im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998), 8. "Gewiß, der Pygmalion der *Metamorphosen* ist ein Bildhauer. Aber schon Ovid hat für den Prozeß der künstlerischen Arbeit nicht mehr als zwei Verse übrig. Der Akzent seiner Erzählung liegt ganz auf der sinnlichen, imaginativen und amourösen Aneignung der Statue: auf dem Staunen und Begehren, dem Sehen, Fühlen, Küssen und Umfassen. Wo die Figur Pygmalions im 18. Jahrhundert von Interesse wird, bleibt diese narrative Vorgabe weitgehend bewahrt. Nicht Begriffe eines autonomen Künstlertums werden an ihr entwickelt – dafür stehen andere, mächtigere mythologische Gestalten wie Prometheus zur Verfügung –, sondern Modelle der Kommunikation zwischen Text und Leser, zwischen Werk und Betrachter."

<sup>307</sup> By focusing on the epistemological dimensions of this process and tracing out their implications for poetic realism more broadly, I am expanding upon what the scholarship has long

The following chapter focuses on the most overtly literary of the embedded narratives within *Das Sinngedicht* – and the one least represented in the scholarship –, namely “Die Geisterseher.” As the title already indicates, Schiller’s unfinished novel *Der Geisterseher* [1787-89] plays an important intertextual role.<sup>308</sup> Schiller was one of, if not the most important

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identified as a central feature of Keller’s works, namely that his characters view reality in *literary* terms. As Klaus Jeziorkowski puts it: “Die Personen des ‘Sinngedichts’ sind generell dadurch gefährdet, daß sich zwischen sie und die Realität Literatur stellt, daß sie literarisiert handeln, denken, leben, sich den Zugang zur Wirklichkeit verbarrikadieren durch das Buch. Sie haben ein Buch vor dem Kopf. Sie sehen nicht die Realität selbst, sondern machen sich ein von Lektüre geprägtes Bild von ihr.” Reinhart only succeeds in realizing the Logau epigram, so Jeziorkowski, once he forgets about it. Klaus Jeziorkowski, *Literarität und Historismus: Beobachtungen zu ihrer Erscheinungsform im 19. Jahrhundert am Beispiel Gottfried Kellers* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1979), 105. I disagree with Jeziorkowski that the final scene involves a “forgetting” of literature, which would imply some kind of direct access to reality. After all, the realization of the epigram occurs against the backdrop of *another* work of literature, namely a Goethe poem. Jeziorkowski contends that Goethe’s work is unique in that, unlike other literature Keller cites, it in fact reveals, rather than obscures reality (“Durch seine Vermittlung kommt die Realität stärker zur Geltung,” 107). However, this fails to resolve the problem of mediation. In my view, reality for Keller – and in poetic realism more generally – is *never* unmediated. Gail Hart’s account of reading in Keller’s works likewise informs this study, though our points of emphasis differ. Hart argues that Keller’s depictions of reading negotiate the status of life vs. literature, but she is more interested in a broad shift in Keller’s works, “from his early suspicion of literary fictions, seen as mediators and manipulators of desire and behavior, to his later, more playful attitude toward fictions – which he himself manufactures.” Moreover, she views depictions of reading against the backdrop of didacticism. “[R]eaders do tend to recognize themselves in the beautiful fictions they read, and Keller *hopes* that they will be inspired by this recognition to narrow the gap between their real circumstances and the idealized fictional models presented to them – in other words, that they will *imitate* literary fictions. This vision of (real) reader-response [...] may or may not represent a conviction on Keller’s part – but it certainly represents the occasional *wish* of any author with a social mission. [...] / Whereas much imitation of literature occurs in Keller’s novels and novellas, this imitation is invariably presented as folly [...]. The message is, I will argue, neither ‘*do imitate*’ nor ‘*don’t imitate*’ [...]. Rather than enforcing social norms via the encouragement or frustration of the instinct for imitation, these books within books and reading heroes are part of a less literal (and more quixotic) project of defining or identifying the borders between fiction/fantasy and life – borders which the mind crosses freely, giving rise to the main and ubiquitous issue of Keller’s fiction, that of imagination and its conflict with social reality.” Hart, *Readers and Their Fictions*, 9, 12–13.

<sup>308</sup> Other sources include Goethe’s *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*, Kleist’s *Das Bettelweib von Locarno*, Hoffmann’s *Der Elementargeist* and *Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde*, and Stifter’s *Die drei Schmiede ihres Schicksals* (HKKA 23.1:422). The cycle

intellectual influences on Keller, and his Gothic novel is likewise concerned with the differentiation of reality and artifice.<sup>309</sup> For instance, in its famous magic lantern scene, the characters are shocked by two ghostly apparitions, whose appearance is only partially explained by the technical apparatus. Keller's "Die Geisterseher" similarly contends with an artificially constructed "reality." The embedded narrative comprises a story Lucie's uncle tells about his youth. Two men are in love with the same woman and, unable to choose between them, she sets up an experiment: Dressing up as a ghost, she "haunts" them in the middle of the night and selects the man who reacts appropriately. The ultimately failed suitor is completely taken in by the illusion and is unable to come up with a rational explanation for the events. The successful suitor manages to touch the ghost's face, which he soon realizes is merely a mask covering the woman's face. He recognizes underneath the disguise the woman he loves, and the two are immediately engaged. The woman later tells both men how she went about creating the illusion, and any supernatural events, it seems, are explained away. The retrospective undoing of a seemingly fantastic event offers something like a realist counterweight to some of the text's romantic motifs,<sup>310</sup> but the status of realism in the text is further complicated by the narrative

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more generally responds to Karl Immermann's *Der neue Pygmalion* [1825] and Berthold Auerbach's "Die Frau Professorin" [1843] (SW 6:919-27).

<sup>309</sup> For more on the status of Gothic realism within this work, see Roger Lüdeke, "Gothic Truth and Mimetic Practice: On the Realism of Schiller's *Geisterseher*," *European Romantic Review* 28, no. 1 (2017): 40. "This type of realism [...] evidently gains all its attraction by depicting events and actions supposed to be impossible as 'real' and, conversely, assumed unrealities as 'possible.'"

<sup>310</sup> Philip Ajouri sees Hildeburg's retrospective clarification as reflective of Enlightenment ghost stories. "Nicht nur, dass es in *Die Geisterseher* eben nicht wirklich spukt, sondern dass der scheiternde Versuch des Marschalls, die Erscheinung aufzuklären, sowie die natürliche Aufklärung des 'Spuks' durch Hildeburg ausführlich und mit detektivischer Lust beschrieben werden, ist als Kommentar zu Hoffmanns Erzählung zu verstehen, in der die Gespenstererklärung gerade als besonders unpoetisch und langweilig bezeichnet wurde. Keller nähert sich hier der aufklärerischen, natürlich erklärten Geistergeschichte an, die er freilich auch aus zweiter Hand, nämlich durch Schillers *Der Geisterseher* kennenlernen konnte." Philip

mechanics. Keller repeatedly blurs the boundaries between diegetic levels, and, with this quasi-romantic structure, allows his characters to slip back and forth between reality and (literary) fantasy. Yet these moments evince a heightened attention to media and materiality. By foregrounding the means by which such diegetic fusion occurs, Keller draws attention to the artificiality of this familiar structure.<sup>311</sup> Thus, when the characters recognize the congruence between reality and literature, they become aware of their mediated knowledge of the world. Finally, by continually highlighting diegetic slippage within the recognition scenes, Keller posits a mode of reading that extends beyond the confines of his narrative and describes the very way in which his own narrative prose is consumed.

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Ajouri, "Vom unerklärbaren Übernatürlichen zur unerklärten Natur: Gottfried Kellers *Die Geisterseher* und sein romantischer Prätext, E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde*," in *Realism and Romanticism in German Literature, Realismus und Romantik in der deutschsprachigen Literatur*, ed. Dirk Göttsche and Nicholas Saul (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2013), 285. Ghost stories, Peter von Matt notes, are themselves especially apt for exploring conceptions of reality. "Den Kern des Vorgangs bildet die schockartige Unsicherheit, ob das offizielle Wirklichkeitsverständnis denn überhaupt Geltung habe oder nicht. Das heißt: für die Dauer dieses Zustandes wird die Verbindlichkeit dessen, was Wirklichkeit heißt, aufgehoben." Or later: "Wenn nämlich dieser phantastische Zustand im schockhaften Zweifel an der Verlässlichkeit der Welt überhaupt besteht, in der plötzlichen Einsicht, Wirklichkeit sei nicht gegeben, sondern vorgegeben, dann muß die Analyse dieses Zustandes *in jedem Fall den spezifischen Wirklichkeitsbegriff des Autors zum Vorschein bringen*." Peter von Matt, "Aus der Geschichte der Geistergeschichte: Gottfried Kellers Auseinandersetzung mit der phantastischen Literatur," in *Das Schicksal der Phantasie: Studien zur deutschen Literatur* (München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1994), 211, 213. Emphasis in original.

<sup>311</sup> Ajouri makes a similar observation, but he views the metalepses as indicative of a fragility within Keller's notion of realism. "Diese kritische Wendung gegen die Romantik, wie sie in der Gespensterszene deutlich wird, wird konterkariert von Formen der Illusionsbrechung, die ihrerseits aus dem Formenvorrat der Romantik stammen. Diese Metalepsen sind eben aufgrund ihrer (latent) illusionsbrechenden Wirkung ein Problem für realistisches Erzählen. Sie werden letztlich von der Frage hervorgerufen, ob sich die zunehmend zufällig erfahrene Wirklichkeit, auf die doch wahrheitsgemäß referiert werden soll, (versöhnlich) erzählen lässt." This study, by contrast, argues that this tension is in fact more broadly representative of poetic realism. Ajouri, "Vom unerklärbaren Übernatürlichen zur unerklärten Natur," 294–95.

## PYGMALION, SELF-RECOGNITION, AND THE READER

While Keller's novella cycle clearly reflects nineteenth-century discourse, a brief detour through several of his literary and philosophical predecessors helps to clarify the type of receptive activity *Das Sinngedicht* endorses. Rousseau's 1770 *Pygmalion*, a so-called lyrical scene, serves as an important reference point for Keller, in part because it is one of the earliest texts to associate Galatea with the Pygmalion myth.<sup>312</sup> In Rousseau's version, Galatea comes to life, and the scene famously culminates in self-recognition:

GALATEA, *touches herself and says.*  
Me.

PYGMALION, *enraptured.*  
Me!

GALATEA, *touching herself again.*  
It is Me.

[...]

GALATEA, *takes several steps and touches a piece of marble.*  
This is me no more.

[...]

*Galatea approaches him and looks at him.*

*He gets up precipitously, reaches out his arm, and looks at her with ecstasy.  
She puts a hand on him; he shudders, takes her hand, carries it  
to his heart, then covers it with ardent kisses.*

GALATEA, *with a sigh.*  
Ah, still me.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the statue remains unnamed. It is likely that Keller was familiar with Rousseau's lyrical scene, as a discussion of the performance was printed in the same volume of the text from which Keller derived material for another embedded narrative in *Das Sinngedicht*. See here SW 6:980.

<sup>313</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Pygmalion," in *Letter to D'Alembert and Writings for the Theater*, vol. 10, *The Collected Writings of Rousseau* (Hanover/London: University Press of New England, 2004), 235–36.

Galatea touches and recognizes herself before turning her attention elsewhere. Next touching a piece of marble – the same material from which she was created – she identifies it as *not* herself. Finally, she touches Pygmalion and recognizes *herself* (“Ah, still me”). There arises here an identificatory union between artwork and artist that transcends the boundaries of media. The marble block remains just that, while Galatea emerges into life, becoming, finally, like her creator.

Rousseau’s treatment of self-recognition derives in part from the debates on sensory perception that surrounded Molyneux’s problem, which was discussed in Chapter One. The words that Rousseau’s Galatea speaks are taken from Condillac’s 1754 *Treatise on the Sensations*,<sup>314</sup> which offered a variation of the Molyneux question and considered the types of knowledge afforded by the individual senses. Condillac imagines a marble statue devoid of any sensation and asks what kind of knowledge it would acquire were it granted each sense, one by one.<sup>315</sup> He considers the type of knowledge made available by each sense in isolation and from the interplay of all the senses. It is the acquisition of touch that makes possible self-recognition, in the sense that the statue can discern, for the first time, the internal and the external, self and other.

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<sup>314</sup> “The statue learns to know its body and to recognize itself in all its component parts, because as soon as it places its hands upon one of them, the same sentient being replies in some way from one to the other: *this is myself*. As it continues to touch itself, everywhere the sensation of solidity will represent two things which exclude one another, and which at the same time are contiguous, and everywhere the same sentient being will reply from one to the other: *this is myself, this is still myself!*” Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Treatise on the Sensations*, trans. Geraldine Carr (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, School of Philosophy, 1930), 88.

<sup>315</sup> “[W]e imagined a statue constructed internally like ourselves, and animated by a mind which as yet had no ideas of any kind. We supposed the marble exterior of the statue to prevent the use of its senses, and we reserved to ourselves the right to open them at will to the different impressions of which they are susceptible.” Condillac, xxx–xxxii.

While Rousseau would diverge from Condillac in important ways,<sup>316</sup> both consider the concatenation of different medial and sensory registers. Condillac examines the relation of the individual senses in relation to one another, and Rousseau's lyrical scene brings together a variety of representational modes. As Mülner-Bach describes it: "Der Erfolg des Stücks beruhte nicht zuletzt auf einer Erweiterung des Arsenal's theatralischer Zeichen und ihrer neuartigen Kombination zu einem Gesamtkunstwerk aus Pantomime, Bühnenbild, Instrumentalmusik, Intonation und Wort. Rousseau multipliziert die Zeichen allerdings nur, um sie nach und nach zum Verschwinden zu bringen und in dem Prozeß dieses Verschwindens eine Bewegung der Interiorisation zu gestalten."<sup>317</sup>

Echoing this intellectual historical lineage, Keller's "Die Geisterseher" depicts a range of media and sensory modalities, only to reject them and foreground its own narrative structures and its own textual materiality. *Das Sinngedicht* is organized around the motif of linguistic concealment and revelation, which likewise derives from the Pygmalion myth. If in the classical models the vivification of Galatea is presented as an act of unveiling, Keller adapts the motif for linguistic expression, more specifically, for narration.<sup>318</sup> Throughout the cycle, characters

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<sup>316</sup> Mülner-Bach argues that Rousseau's displacement of self-recognition onto Galatea's haptic experience of Pygmalion makes possible his turn to the imaginary. "In dieser Verschiebung wird das 'toucher' den *philosophes* gleichsam entwendet und zur Metapher einer Transparenz, in der die haptische Sensation des eigenen Körpers nur noch als idealisiertes Modell der imaginativen Selbstaffektion überlebt." Inka Mülner-Bach, "Autobiographie und Poesie: Rousseaus *Pygmalion* und Goethes *Prometheus*," in *Pygmalion: Die Geschichte des Mythos in der abendländischen Kultur*, ed. Mathias Mayer and Gerhard Neumann (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 1997), 281.

<sup>317</sup> Mülner-Bach, *Im Zeichen Pygmalions*, 94.

<sup>318</sup> For more on this point, see Gerhard Neumann, "Der Körper des Menschen und die belebte Statue: Zu einer Grundformel in Gottfried Kellers *Sinngedicht*," in *Pygmalion: Die Geschichte des Mythos in der abendländischen Kultur*, ed. Mathias Mayer and Gerhard Neumann (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1997), 574. "Gegen das darwinistische Modell natürlicher Evolution wird Erzählen hier als Konzept der Partnerwahl, als Möglichkeit der Animation des anderen in Geltung gesetzt: Sprach-Inszenierung als Identitäts- und Alteritäts-Inszenierung durch Novellen-

struggle to express (or conceal) their true feelings as they attempt to get to know one another.<sup>319</sup> In the end, the cycle aims at self-recognition, at Reinhart and Lucie identifying themselves as the subjects of Logau's aphorism. In this manner, Keller adapts the myth from its sculptural context and specifies the role of the myth for prose.

The significance of the Pygmalion myth for realism is hard to overstate. While the comparison Fontane draws between the realist writer and Pygmalion might be somewhat tired, the Enlightenment source material offers a conceptual underpinning for the realist project. In *Das Sinngedicht*, the extradiegetic reader identifies with the protagonists in same way that they identify with those from the next nested diegetic level. When the protagonists are shocked into awareness that this cross-diegetic identification has occurred, the extradiegetic reader, too, becomes aware of his or her own imaginative slippage into the diegesis. This is not, however, a grand innovation on Keller's part, but rather yet another borrowing, for the identificatory process at work here is likewise central to the Enlightenment source texts. In a prefatory section to his *Treatise*, Condillac advises his own reader to identify imaginatively with the statue. "[I]t is most important for him [the reader] to put himself in imagination exactly in the place of the statue we are going to observe. He must enter into its life, begin where it begins, have but one single sense when it has only one, acquire only the ideas which it acquires, contract only the habits which it contracts: in a word he must fancy himself to become just what the statue is."<sup>320</sup> The hypothetical statue, too, experiences a kind of sensory identification. In perceiving objects through a given

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Erzählen, indem das 'gedichtete Leben' zum Medium der Realisation (man ist versucht zu sagen: der 'Redaktion') von Belebung gemacht wird – somit ein Akt der 'Prosopopöie,' der Erzähl-Animation als Form der Belebung des Unbelebten."

<sup>319</sup> This is something Preisendanz explores at length in his seminal essay. See Preisendanz, "Gottfried Kellers 'Sinngedicht.'"

<sup>320</sup> Condillac, *Treatise on the Sensations*, xxxvii.

sense, it *becomes* those objects. “When a sound strikes its ear it will become the sensation which it experiences. It will be like the echo of what Ovid said: *sonus est qui vivit in illa*; it is the sound which lives in it. And thus we can transform our statue, at will, into a noise, a sound, a symphony.”<sup>321</sup> Condillac describes not just mere identification, but a kind of imaginative, transference across and transmutation of bodies and media.

While these Enlightenment texts certainly echo in Keller’s *Sinngedicht*, it is important to underscore the ways in which he updates this corporeal and medial discourse for the nineteenth century. The Logau aphorism is interested specifically in visually “readable” bodily signs like laughter and – especially – blushing, which were discussed at some length in *Deutsche Rundschau*. As Gretz notes, Darwin’s 1872 *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* – which explores both phenomena – served as the major reference point for Wilhelm Wundt’s “Ueber den Ausdruck der Gemüthsbewegungen” [1877] and F.V. Birch-Hirschfeld’s “Ueber den Ursprung der menschlichen Mienensprache mit Berücksichtigung des Darwin’schen Buches über den Ausdruck der Gemüthsbewegungen” [1880], which appeared in the journal.<sup>322</sup> In Darwin’s account, blushing serves as an index of self-attention and extends to moral conduct.<sup>323</sup> Moreover, Darwin describes blushing as concomitant with linguistic and cognitive confusion.<sup>324</sup> (In other

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<sup>321</sup> Condillac, 47.

<sup>322</sup> Gretz, “Ein literarischer ‘Versuch’ im Experimentierfeld Zeitschrift,” 205.

<sup>323</sup> “*The Nature of the Mental States which induce Blushing*. – These consist of shyness, shame, and modesty; the essential element in all being self-attention. Many reasons can be assigned for believing that originally self-attention directed to personal appearance, in relation to the opinion of others, was the exciting cause; the same effect being subsequently produced, through the force of association, by self-attention in relation to moral conduct. It is not the simple act of reflecting no our own appearance, but the thinking what others think of us, which excites a blush.” Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 325.

<sup>324</sup> “Most persons, whilst blushing intensely, have their mental powers confused. [...] Persons in this condition lose their presence of mind, and utter singularly inappropriate remarks. They are

words, within this context, blushing is already associated with the linguistic disruption common to moments of recognition.<sup>325</sup>)

While these articles might be scientific in nature, they are not entirely divorced from the artistic context. Wundt, for instance, argues that Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* offered insight into the very scientific phenomena that contemporary scientists seem to overlook.

Wie das sinnliche Gefühl durch die innere Gemüthsbewegung geweckt wird und mit ihr wächst, so richtet sich hinwiederum die Gemüthsbewegung an den starken sinnlichen Empfindungen empor, die ihre Ausdrucksbewegung begleiten. [...] Schwerlich würde ein Mensch im Stande sein, mehrere Stunden lang einer Gemüthsbewegung Ausdruck zu geben, die er gar nicht besitzt, wenn es nicht auch hier sich geltend machte, daß der Ausdruck selbst die Gemüthsbewegung herbeiführt. [...] Die Psychologen der Schule haben diese Wechselwirkung des sinnlichen Gefühls und der inneren Gemüthsbewegung kaum ihrer Aufmerksamkeit gewürdigt. Aber einem so tiefen Kenner der menschlichen Natur, wie Lessing, ist sie nicht entgangen.<sup>326</sup>

Wundt goes on to quote from the third piece in Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, in which the author describes how an actor can best bring about the desired *moral effect*. The actor should not just recite the words from memory ("die richtige Accentuation ist zur Not auch einem

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often much distressed, stammer, and make awkward movements or strange grimaces." Darwin, 322.

<sup>325</sup> For more on this, see the Introduction.

<sup>326</sup> Wilhelm Wundt, "Ueber den Ausdruck der Gemüthsbewegungen," *Deutsche Rundschau* XI (April/Mai/Juni 1877): 127–28, <https://books.google.com/books?id=yCeZwIijAIUC>. Georg Braungart cites this material, which Begemann in turn cites in an essay on Keller's "Kleider machen Leute." To my knowledge, the Wundt/Lessing connection has not been explored in relation to *Das Sinngedicht*. See Georg Braungart, *Leibhafter Sinn: Der andere Diskurs der Moderne* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), 55–56; Christian Begemann, "Ein weiter Mantel, doktrinäre Physiognomisten und eine grundlose Schönheit: Körpersemiotik und Realismus bei Gottfried Keller," in *Methodisch reflektiertes Interpretieren: Festschrift für Hartmut Laufhütte*, ed. Hans-Peter Ecker (Passau: Wissenschaftsverlag Rothe, 1997), 340. Begemann's argument relates to "reading" physiognomic signs. My focus here, as in the other chapters of this study, lies on medially specific reading practices. This is to say, "reading" the body is fundamentally different than reading a book, as the latter is better positioned to offer insight into nineteenth-century media. For more on the ways in which the understanding of the body is indebted to specific reading and writing techniques, see Keck, *Buchstäbliche Anatomien*, esp. 160–63.

Papagei beizubringen”<sup>327</sup>) but should also convey outward an inner emotive state. The naive actor, Lessing writes, can essentially fake it until he makes it.

Ein solcher Akteur soll z.E. die äußerste Wut des Zornes ausdrücken; ich nehme an, dass er seine Rolle nicht einmal recht versteht, dass er die Gründe dieses Zornes weder hinlänglich zu fassen, noch lebhaft genug sich vorzustellen vermag, um seine Seele selbst in Zorn zu setzen. Und ich sage; wenn er nur die allergrößten Äußerungen des Zornes, einem Akteur von ursprünglicher Empfindung abgelernt hat, und getreu nachzuahmen weiß – [...] wenn er, sage ich, nur diese Dinge, die sich nachmachen lassen, sobald man will, gut nachmacht: so wird dadurch unfehlbar seine Seele ein dunkles Gefühl von Zorn befallen, welches wiederum in den Körper zurückwirkt, und da auch diejenigen Veränderungen hervorbringt, die nicht bloß von unserm Willen abhängen.<sup>328</sup>

Or as Wundt puts it: “Lessing hätte vielleicht richtiger noch sagen können: er wird ein Zorniger nicht nur scheinen, sondern es wirklich sein.”<sup>329</sup> With the blurring between *Schein* and *Sein*, one is firmly in Kellerian territory. But for all the attention he devotes to Lessing in *Das Sinngedicht*, Keller is not unequivocally adapting his insights on theater. Rather, the modern critic can locate Keller somewhere between Lessing and Brecht: temporarily fusing appearance and reality, only to draw attention to this procedure, he defamiliarizes the illusory effect of art.

All of these materials, taken together, give a sense for the excessive number of discourses *Das Sinngedicht* participates in (and this is without even considering the truly absurd number of intertextual references that permeate the cycle). Again, this is part and parcel for the “Reichsunmittelbarkeit der Poesie” so central to Keller’s style. But it is also possible to understand this excess, too, as indebted to Enlightenment treatments of Pygmalion. Keller does not separate these discourses as cleanly as Condillac separates the senses, but his concatenatory mode shows how they operate in concert. Keller’s cycle, in other words, obeys discursively an Enlightenment logic.

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<sup>327</sup> Lessing, “Hamburgische Dramaturgie,” 197.

<sup>328</sup> Lessing, 198–99. Quoted in Braungart, *Leibhafter Sinn*, 56.

<sup>329</sup> Wundt, “Ueber den Ausdruck der Gemüthsbewegungen,” 128. Emphasis in original.

What, then, is the status of the reader in all of this? First, part of reading Keller involves being able to recognize the discursive and literary traditions from which he draws. That is, one needs to recognize that he is self-consciously presenting himself as unoriginal.<sup>330</sup> One need not recognize every single reference, allusion, or direct quotation, but one does need to recognize the underlying concatenation of materials. In other words, recognition is not just about recognizing reality, but recognizing the literary sources that undergird our very understanding thereof. Second, reading necessitates that one recognize life as distinct from art. Within the story, characters are absorbed into and then distanced from the diegesis. Third, because the depicted act of reading involves identification (and distanciation) *across* diegetic levels, the model readily extends to the extradiegetic reader of Keller's own works, who is forced to confront his or her absorption and distanciation from the narrative. In short, *Das Sinngedicht* serves as an exemplary model of poetic realist reading.

In terms of the Aristotelean model elaborated in the Introduction, Keller's works – like Stifter's – bring together all three levels of recognition, though in *Das Sinngedicht*, these levels cannot be so neatly disentangled. The recognition inherent to mimetic pleasure, the recognition scene, and the poet *qua* reader's differentiation, via imaginative immersion, of the part vs. the whole, all operate concurrently. The recognition scenes involve the characters' distanciation from their imaginative immersion within a world defined by its concatenation of literary models. That is, the recognition scenes (level 2) involve the characters' identification of reality within a literary world (level 1), which necessitates that they – and the extradiegetic reader – immerse

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<sup>330</sup> This is more broadly symptomatic of the so-called epigones writing after 1832, though *Das Sinngedicht* is an extreme example. For more on the emergence of epigonality as a positive aesthetic category, see Burkhard Meyer-Sickendiek, *Die Ästhetik der Epigonalität: Theorie und Praxis wiederholenden Schreibens im 19. Jahrhundert; Immermann – Keller – Stifter – Nietzsche* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2001).

themselves within a variety of literary sources and parse from them the red thread that lends these sources a significance within the plot-structure (level 3). While this third level is reflected *within* the diegesis, it also extends to the extradiegetic reader of *Das Sinngedicht* as well as Keller, as a reader of his own work.

#### **MEDIATED (MIS-)RECOGNITION: “DIE GEISTERSEHER”**

“Die Geisterseher,” the tenth chapter in *Das Sinngedicht*, features one of the most important recognition scenes in the cycle: For the first time, the metadiegetic events exert direct, concrete influence on the characters within the intradiegetic level, and this influence becomes apparent in a moment of recognition. At the beginning of the chapter, Reinhart and Lucie chat with her uncle, who appears for the first time in the preceding chapter. Earlier in the cycle, Reinhart had found himself on the uncle’s estate and, unable to continue his travels right away, spent the night after sharing stories with Lucie. He is introduced to Lucie’s uncle the following morning, who he soon realizes is an old friend of his parents. Reinhart tells a story (the embedded narrative in chapter nine), which Lucie now criticizes because the female character seems to lack any will of her own. “[E]in sanftes Wollschäfchen mehr auf dem Markte! Diesmal handelt es sich noch um die Nutzbarkeit einer guten Wirtschafterin, und wir müssen gestehen, Sie haben das Thema fast wie ein Kinder- und Hausmärchen herausgestrichen!” (HKKA 7:176). After this nod to the Brothers Grimm, the uncle jumps in with a story of his own. He describes how he had befriended a fellow university student who went by the nickname Mannelin, a calm and collected *Kantianer* who was something of his opposite. Both fell in love with a young woman named Hildeburg, who nicknames the uncle “Marschall” and Mannelin “Kanzler.” With the Wars of Liberation sweeping across the German territories and her two suitors leaving to fight, she decides to leave her choice to fate and declares that she will marry whichever man

returns home alive.<sup>331</sup> Should neither return, she vows to remain unmarried. It appears at first that fate has decided on the match with the uncle, but Mannelin, having erroneously been reported as dead, soon returns as well. The three spend time at Hildeburg's family's new home, a stately, allegedly haunted house acquired cheaply from a fleeing Frenchman. The uncle is shocked when he sees the apparent poltergeist that haunts the home, and Mannelin encounters the same ghost the following night. However, the latter sneaks up behind the figure and touches its face, only to find a wax mask covering the face of Hildeburg. This discovery seals the match, and the two immediately become engaged. Hildeburg then explains in detail to both men how she created the illusion. The story soon concludes, and the uncle reveals that Hildeburg is in fact Reinhart's mother and the Mannelin his father.

The tale picks on the experimental logic from the frame narrative. While "Die Geisterseher," like the other narratives in the cycle, depicts a "Partnerwahl," here, the figures are inverted. Instead of presenting a male protagonist's efforts to educate and refine a woman, the narrative focuses on the woman's manipulations of her male suitors. By testing, with scientific rigor, the men's ability to differentiate reality from literary fantasy, she provokes in the men the kind of recognition more commonly associated with her own gender. This typically Kellerian inversion<sup>332</sup> turns the Pygmalion motif in on itself, for her suitors, so Gerhard Neumann, are forced to confront their own projected fantasies of women.<sup>333</sup> In this way, the narrative becomes self-reflective, drawing attention to the male fantasies undergirding the cycle's central motif.

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<sup>331</sup> Neumann notes that the Darwinian context feeds into the narrative, with the partner selection operating according to the "survival of the fittest." Neumann, "Der Körper des Menschen und die belebte Statue," 573.

<sup>332</sup> See Chapter Four for more on Keller's propensity for inversions of this nature.

<sup>333</sup> "In den *Geistersehern* verdichtet sich eine zentrale Komponente des Kellerschen Pygmalionismus: das Moment der erfundenen, phantasierten, imaginierte und fingierten

The recognition scenes are embedded within a framework of error. Or rather, the numerous *misrecognitions* demand correction in a way that recalls the experimental logic of the frame narrative. Beliefs, like hypotheses, are subject to corrections and modifications, with rational explanations for one's experience of reality superseding naïve first impressions. When the novella culminates with Reinhart's recognition of the characters as his own parents, the text playfully evokes a structure common from romanticism, namely a merging of diegetic levels. The story and reality are for Reinhart one and the same. However, the narrative goes to great lengths to emphasize how such diegetic fusion is possible, reflecting upon the methods of sustaining the illusory effect of art. Keller's cycle replicates the structure of established novella collections, dating back to Boccaccio, where protagonists in the frame narrative tell one another the stories that comprise the embedded tales. Beyond this narrative mediation, the events of Keller's "Die Geisterseher" are themselves profoundly mediated, and not just in intertextual terms. Via repeated emphasis on *layered* materials and media – paper, inlays, masks, which are linked with text, image, and sculpture, respectively – the narrative links its own structure with the materiality of the depicted media.

The uncle begins by meditating on the nature of error and regret, explaining why some memories persist more strongly than others. It is especially those instances where one fails to do or say something that cause pangs of regret. "Wir lieben die Wahrheit und verhehlen sie aus blödem Hochmut, oder auch aus einer Anwendung von Mutlosigkeit das einzige Mal, wo es notwendig für uns war, sie zu sagen" (HKKA 7:178). In other words, acts of inadvertent linguistic concealment lead one to err. The motif of concealment of course gestures back to the

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Galathee und die Funktionalisierung dieses männlichen Projektionsaktes im sozialen Geschehen: als Erweckungsmuster." Neumann, "Der Körper des Menschen und die belebte Statue," 574.

veiled Galatea, and, as Preisendanz notes, serves as the connective tissue linking all the narratives in the cycle.<sup>334</sup> The uncle's narrative should, on the whole, be viewed as an attempt to correct one such error of misrecognition, to generate recognition before it is too late. The uncle will tell of a variety of (mis)recognitions, all of which lead up to Reinhart's recognition of his own parents in the story. Despite his sudden appearance in the cycle, the uncle assumes a key role, provoking in Reinhart and Lucie the very recognition he had failed to attain.

The uncle's narrative begins with a series of visual misrecognitions. After the war, he travels out to Hildeburg's family's newly acquired estate, but the people he knows so well initially take him for a stranger. Neither the servant who greets him, nor her parents, recognize him immediately, though Hildeburg had immediately identified the man she saw from her window. "Hildeburg [trat] in den Saal, die allein mich von einem Fenster aus erkannt hatte [...]. / Ich vergesse niemals die Erscheinung, wie sie mir entgegentrat. Wie ein weißes Tuch so bleich war das Gesicht, das Auge träumerisch erschreckt und auf dem Munde doch ein Lächeln des Wiedersehens, das aus dem Herzen kam, blasse Trauer und errötende Freude, mehrere Sekunden lang sich jagend: es war kein Zweifel, sie hielt den armen Mannlein für tut und mich für gekommen, mein Recht geltend zu machen!" (HKKA 7:187-88). This moment accomplishes two things: first, the descriptions of Hildeburg's face – pale and then flushed with joy – evoke the Galatea complex from the Logau aphorism. However, while the uncle immediately assumes that he has returned in time to claim his bride, the fact that these two expressions are present in oscillation suggests a certain degree of ambivalence. Second, the other characters'

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<sup>334</sup> "[E]r [der Onkel] führt eine Reihe von Beispielen an. Sie zeigen alle, wie es im Leben unter Menschen zum Unstern werden kann, wenn etwas nicht und nicht rechtzeitig zur Sprache kommt, unaufgeklärt oder verhohlen bleibt, einen falschen Anschein entstehen läßt. In diesen einleitenden Bemerkungen des Onkels wird also gleich wieder der rote Faden sichtbar, der alle Binnengeschichten durchzieht." Preisendanz, "Gottfried Kellers 'Sinngedicht,'" 192.

misrecognitions establish Hildeburg's privileged epistemological position. The servant and Hildeburg's parents of course misidentify the uncle, but his account of the events betrays his own propensity for misrecognition, which soon manifests itself once more.

Als ich eines schönen Nachmittags auf den Landsitz hinausritt [...], eilte mir aus dem Hause ein fröhliches Menschenpaar entgegen: Hildeburg, welche einen preußischen Infanterieoffizier, oder mein Freund Mannelin, der das Fräulein Hildeburg an der Hand führte; *ich konnte in der Ueberraschung nicht erkennen, welches von beidem der Fall war*. Meine erste Empfindung war die Freude über *das unverhoffte Wiedersehen*, die zweite ein Gefühl der Zufriedenheit über die Herstellung des früheren Zustandes zwischen den drei Personen, womit wenigstens für den Augenblick der quälende Zweifel beseitigt wurde. [...]

Mannelin vollends war *unverkennbar* glücklich und zufrieden, die Dinge so zu finden, da er schon gefürchtet haben mochte, zu spät zu kommen. (HKKA 7:190; emphasis added)

The uncle is initially unable to determine whether the man on Hildeburg's arm is some unfamiliar Prussian officer, or the Prussian officer who happens to be Mannelin. The uncertainty immediately changes into joy as soon as recognition transpires, and the uncle describes Mannelin as unmistakably [*unverkennbar*] delighted to have arrived in time. Moreover, the "unverhoffte[s] Wiedersehen" can be understood both as the proper identification of the officer as Mannelin and as an implicit reference to Johann Peter Hebel's famous story of the same name, which centers on a magisterial recognition scene. Hebel's story tells of the reunion between an old woman and her long-dead fiancé, whose body is recovered from a mine. Having lain in vitriol for fifty years, the body is exceptionally well preserved, and the fiancé looks exactly as he did on the day he disappeared. In Keller's story, the reference serves to underscore the return of the prior dynamic between the three parties.

The uncle's propensity for viewing reality in literary terms also informs the first haunting. After discussing the allegedly haunted house while drinking copious amounts of punch (a conspicuously Hoffmann-esque setup), the uncle retires to bed, and is suddenly awoken by a loud crash. A cold breeze wafts through the room, and his blanket is somehow jerked away. In a

reversal of the sensory shift in Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, he jolts up to hear – and then to see – a female figure shuffling across the room. Like the characters in two of the most important intertexts for the narrative – Hoffmann's *Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde* or Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* –, the uncle is completely taken in by the spectacle. He sits immobilized in bed, watching as the figure makes her way to the desk in the room. She unlocks and opens the lid, removes a drawer, and sticks her hand into the opening. "Ich höre dort abermals ein Schlüsselchen umdrehen und sehe die Gestalt ein zweites verborgenes Fach hervorziehen, aus welchem sie hastig ein Paket nimmt, es öffnet und ein darin liegendes Paper entfaltet, in welchem ein drittes enthalten ist, das sie wiederum auseinanderschlägt. Dies alles sah ich im Zwielight des Mondes, der durch das Fenster scheint" (HKKA 7:196-97). The triplicate concealment (desk, drawer, secret drawer) is replicated in the packet itself, which contains a paper within a paper. In other words, the ghost is interested in the innermost object in the narrative's matryoshka-like configuration of space. This adds a spatial component to the layered mediation that defines the cycle (Logau-Lessing-Lachmann) and the spatial tripling reflects the love triangle between the three friends.

If the moment is initially mediated via *literature*, the focus soon shifts to textual *materiality*. Even though the moon provides the only source of light, the ghost begins a rather precise operation, erasing text from the document with a knife. The passage continues:

Und weiter sah ich deutlich, wie die alte Frau ein anderes Lädchen zieht, ein Etwas aus demselben nimmt, das ein Radiermesser sein muß; denn sie bückt sich tiefer auf das aufgeschlagene Papier, das jetzt einen stattlichen Foliobogen darstellt, und liest darin, liest, nachdem das Gespenst eine Brille aufgesetzt hat, einen veritablen Nasenklemmer! Jetzt setzt sie den Finger auf eine Stelle und fängt an, etwas auszuradiieren. Obgleich sie mir den Rücken zukehrt, erkenne ich doch jede Bewegung. [...] [S]ie bläst das Abgeschabte weg, hustet wie ein alter schwindsüchtiger Notarius publicus, bläst wieder, fährt mit dem Finger über die radierte Stelle und schabt abermals. Endlich scheint die Arbeit gelungen zu sein; ein niederträchtiges, kurzes, heiseres Gelächter mit hi hi hi! dringt mir durch Mark und Bein, und ohne mich rühren zu können, denke ich doch: Hier

ist einstmals ein Vertrag gefälscht, ein Geburtsrecht, ein Erbe, ein Lebensglück gestohlen worden! (HKKA 7:197)

While the scene up to this point had emphasized ever smaller objects – from desk to drawer to packet to paper – the unfolded document, “ein[] stattliche[r] Foliobogen,” now expands outward. That is, the inward shrinkage is countered with movement in the reverse. This oppositional pairing is reflected in the gender-bending descriptions of the female ghost, who is likened to a sickly male notary. In line with Keller’s other female writers who operate like men,<sup>335</sup> the ghost, the uncle suspects, is forging a document. The necessary precision would be nigh impossible in such a dark setting, and the ghost determines when she is done erasing on the basis of what she *touches*, not what she *sees*, concluding with terrible laughter.

The act of erasure appears, then, to be a performative gesture meant to enthrall and terrify the spectator. The uncle views the spectacle from his “altertümliches Himmelbett, das von allen vier Seiten dunkle Umhänge umgaben” (HKKA 7:194). The bed curtains function as a kind of theatrical *Vorhang*, spatially separating the ghost/performer from the spectator. The curtains hang on all four sides of the bed, and the entire surrounding room thus becomes a stage. Moreover, the uncle narrates alternatively in the present and preterite tenses, switching from sentence to sentence. The description of the ghost’s movement is one of the longer consecutive passages in the present tense and transmits a greater sense of immediacy to the listeners. If the present tense enables a more absorptive listening experience, the recourse to the preterite suddenly undoes this, rendering the events as past. In other words, the temporal structuring of these events betrays the propensity for both absorption and distancing.

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<sup>335</sup> See Chapter Four for a discussion of female forgery in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe.”

This paradigm will find subtle expression within an additional medial register. The following morning, the uncle inspects the room to figure out what exactly transpired during the night. After discovering that his door remains locked from the inside, he examines the desk.

Die Schreibkommode war am Tage ein ganz gemütliches Möbel. Auf dem Pultdecke oder der Klappe war von buntem Holze eine Landschaft eingelegt. Aus einem See ragte eine Insel mit einem Schloß, und auf dem Wasser saßen zwei Herren mit langen Perücken und kleinen Dreieckhütchen in einem Nachen und schossen auf Enten. Im Vordergrund standen ein paar ruinierte Tempelsäulen, unter welchen ein dritter Herr mit hohem Rohrstocke tiefsinnige promenierte; alles so idyllisch und unverfänglich als möglich. Was mich aber am meisten wunderte, war ein Schlüssel, der ruhig im Schlosse stak, während ich doch deutlich den Schlüsselbund klirren und den Schlüssel des Gespenstes umdrehen und ausziehen gehört hatte. Ich machte die Klappe auf und sah die Schublädchen, zog eines nach dem andern auf, aber alle waren leer, kein Radiermesser und nichts. Auch das geheime Fach fand sich mit seinem Schlüsselchen, es war auch leer, und ich hatte doch das Paket und die Papiere gesehen. (HKKA 7:199)

The medial register suddenly shifts as the uncle describes the image on the desk's hatch. The image appears to be an idyllic landscape, but several features stand out. For one, the image is comprised of colored, inlaid wood, and reflects extremely delicate handiwork – much like the handiwork required to forge a document solely by erasure. The fact that the image is inlaid, rather than painted, allies this medium with the layered contents from within the desk.<sup>336</sup> The narrative suggests a semantic contagion<sup>337</sup> across diegetic levels, when the uncle's focus moves

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<sup>336</sup> Ursula Amrein contends that the image itself reflects the uncle's own pursuit of Hildeburg. Briefly, so Amrein, the castle or *Burg* in the background stands in for Hilde-Burg, the two hunters in the middle ground represent the uncle and Mannelin, and the ruins in the foreground reflect the former's ruined existence. Ursula Amrein, *Augenkur und Brautschau: Zur diskursiven Logik der Geschlechterdifferenz in Gottfried Kellers "Sinngedicht"* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), 210–11.

<sup>337</sup> I am adapting this phrase from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who describes the "metonymic contagion" of the veil within the English Gothic novel, where "the pallor, attenuation, insentience once proper to the veil, then shifted to the veiled figure," infect other characters as well. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (New York/London: Methuen, 1986), 149, 148. This model of contagion strikes me as particularly apt for an analysis of Keller, given his indebtedness to Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* and his extended engagement with (un)veiled Galatea figures. Roger Lüdeke, drawing on Sedgwick's work, notes the "contagious mimesis" within Schiller's work. Lüdeke, "Gothic Truth and Mimetic Practice," 47.

from the depicted castle to the desk's lock, from one *Schloss* to another. His attention moves from the rural scene depicted in the image to the material surroundings – in other words, in an echo of the absorptive/distanziatory model of realist reading, from the *representation* to the *material context* in which it is quite literally embedded.<sup>338</sup> Yet when the uncle opens the desk, the document and eraser are nowhere to be found, and there is no evidence indicating that the strange events indeed occurred. In other words, the narrative introduces here another layer of concealment. Or rather, it conceals the fact of concealment, with the document, once sheathed by six other layers of material, vanishing.

This re-concealment is countered, at least in part, by the laying bare of the illusion that occurs during the subsequent haunting. The uncle appears visibly shocked when he meets his friends the following morning. After he explains what transpired, during the night, Mannelin vows to spend the night in the same room. The haunting is largely the same, and the uncle briskly narrates the event. Mannelin reads until midnight, gets bored with waiting, falls asleep, and is then awoken by the ghost, who proceeds exactly as she had the previous night. While she erases the document, Mannelin sneaks up behind her and patiently waits for her to finish. In contradistinction to the uncle, he is not taken in by the spectacle. The bed curtains, which had spatially defined the theater-like room in the prior haunting, here find no mention, and the uncle narrates in the preterite, thus indicating that the theatrical illusion had failed to take hold. Calmly

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<sup>338</sup> This supports and expands at a material level Amrein's claim that the image is representatively self-reflexive of Keller's narrative techniques. "[E]benso wie sich die Einlegearbeit auf dem Möbel in allegorisierender Form auf die erzählte Handlung bezieht, wird das Möbelstück selbst zur Allegorie für das spezifische Erzählverfahren Kellers, das den erzählten Handlungsverlauf immer wieder durch bildhafte Episoden unterbricht, die in zusammenfassender und kommentierender Funktion auf das erzählte Geschehen Bezug nehmen und darin der Einlegearbeit auf dem Möbelstück vergleichbar sind, das nicht zufällig eine 'Schreibkommode' (11, 225) ist." Amrein, *Augenkur und Brautschau: Zur diskursiven Logik der Geschlechterdifferenz in Gottfried Kellers "Sinngedicht,"* 211.

maintaining his grip on reality, Mannelin grasps the ghost and feels a warm body under his fingers. “[D]a sie sich jetzt in seinen Armen hin und her wand und mit dem Leichengesicht nahe kam, faßte er unerschrocken die im Monde glänzende schreckliche Nase und behielt eine abfallende Wachsmaske in der Hand, während Hildeburgs feines Gesicht zu ihm emporlächelte. Leider küßte er es sogleich zu verschiedenen Malen und an verschiedenen Stellen” (HKKA 7:204). Once again, there is a kind of semantic contagion. If the ghost’s “Nasenklemmer” in the first haunting had emphasized the figure’s writerly activity, here, the nose (“die [...] glänzende schreckliche Nase”) becomes the (haptic) contact point between literary-inspired fantasy and reality. As is the case in Rousseau’s *Pygmalion*, the emphasis here lies on the spectator’s (Mannelin’s) corporeal embrace of the woman. Removing the mask, which operates just like Galatea’s veil, Mannelin reveals the very real woman underneath the ghostly illusion.

Hildeburg soon tells both men why and how she dressed up as a ghost to haunt them, going into detail about the elaborate technical operations required. (This, too, is familiar from Schiller’s *Geisterseher*.) The uncle’s recapitulation of these procedures offers another example of semantic contagion across diegetic levels.

Ich will nicht weitläufig beschreiben, wie schlaue sie alles angestellt; wie sie den Knall einfach dadurch hervorgebracht, daß sie auf dem Boden über dem alten Zimmer einen wackeligen leeren Schrank mittels einer Hebelstange umgestürzt, ihn freilich nachher nicht mehr aufrichten konnte, weshalb auch in der zweiten Nacht die Detonation unterblieb; wie aus einem verborgenen Vorraume das Heizloch eines ehemaligen Ofens in das Zimmer ging und von einem verschiebbaren Felde des Holzgetäfels verdeckt war, das Gespenst aber eben dort durchkriechen und hinter den Bettvorhängen hervorschlüpfen konnte; wie sie die Bettdecke mittels eines Schnurgeschlinges wegziehen konnte, das in den Falten der Gardinen versteckt hing; wie sie den kalten Durchzug verursachte, indem sie im besagten Vorraume ein nach Norden gehendes Fenster sperrweit öffnete, im Zimmer aber schon vorher den oberen Flügel eines nach Osten gehenden Fensters aufgetan hatte, so daß im Augenblicke, wo sie das alte Ofenloch frei machte, die Luft durchstrich; wie sie den Charakter der Gespensterrolle mit merkwürdiger Phantasie ausstudiert, und zwar in der größten Schnelligkeit: das erklärte sie uns jetzt Schritt für Schritt, damit ja kein Zweifel übrig blieb [...]. (HKKA 7:205-6)

Even the uncle's apparently abbreviated description of Hildeburg's methods is extensive, each clause of his one-sentence summary exploding with detail. In a classic example of preterition, he claims to not want to explain how the effects were created but lists with remarkable precision each element of the illusion, "Schritt für Schritt." Preterition is not only a rhetorical device, but also a term in Roman Law that refers to the omission of an heir from a will.<sup>339</sup> By listing in detail the very facts he claims to avoid, the uncle recapitulates *rhetorically* the event at the center of the haunting, namely the removal of text from a very specific type of document ("*ein Vertrag [...], ein Geburtsrecht, ein Erbe, ein Lebensglück*").<sup>340</sup> In other words, by recounting the events in this manner, the uncle transfers the scene of erasure onto the level of narration. Notably, Hildeburg offers no explanation for the erased document, and the inlaid image receives no mention. The role of these media remains, for the time being, mysterious.

The uncle finishes telling the story, and the conclusion brings about another moment of recognition. "Wissen Sie, wie sie eigentlich hieß? Denn Hildeburg wurde sie nur von Mannelin und mir genannt, wenn wir am dritten Orte von ihr sprachen. Sonst aber hieß sich Else Morland, später Frau Professorin Reinhart und wird demnach Ihre Frau Mutter sein! Lebt sie noch? Und wie geht's ihr?" (HKKA 7:207). The uncle had already established that he was friends with Reinhart's parents, but the fact that everyone went by nicknames makes this retrospective revelation possible.<sup>341</sup> Reinhart suddenly realizes that his own existence was contingent upon his

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<sup>339</sup> OED Online, s.v. "preterition," accessed 4 March 2019, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/150978>.

<sup>340</sup> Gerhard Kaiser reads the scene of erasure as pertaining more directly to the uncle: it is his own "Lebensglück" that Hildeburg erases. Gerhard Kaiser, *Gottfried Keller: Das gedichtete Leben* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel Verlag, 1981), 532.

<sup>341</sup> The uncle explicitly mentions his relationship to Reinhart's parents in the preceding chapter. And before beginning the story of his youth, he casts a knowing glance at Reinhart: "Er warf noch einen aufmerksam forschenden Blick auf Reinharts Gesicht" (HKKA 7:177).

mother's experiment,<sup>342</sup> and he experiences a moment of self-recognition not unlike the sort the uncle has just finished describing. What is more, his self-recognition is marked by that telltale sign of blushing.

Auch Reinhart saß jetzt in nicht angenehmer Ueberraschung und war ganz rot [...]. Ein paarmal während der Erzählung des alten Herren hatte es ihm vorkommen wollen, als ob es sich um Bekanntes oder Geahntes handle; doch war das vorübergegangen, wie man oft nicht merkt oder nicht erkennt, was einen am nächsten angeht. Zu der seltsamen Entdeckung trat ein noch seltsamerer Eifer der Selbstsucht, als er bedachte, wie nahe die Gefahr gestanden habe, daß ein anderer als sein Vater die Mama bekommen hätte, und was wäre alsdann aus ihm, dem Sohne, geworden? [...] Nun, Gott sei Dank, war es wenigstens seine Mutter und Sein Vater! Es hätte können schlimmer ausfallen! Wie denn schlimmer, Du Dummkopf? Gar nicht wäre es dann ausgefallen! (HKKA 7:207)

Just as the uncle was unable to recognize someone close to him (Hildeburg), so, too, does Reinhart fail to identify his own parents in the story. After all, the narrator notes, with proto-Brechtian insight, the things that are most familiar are most difficult to recognize. What is more, the uncle's misrecognition is what made Reinhart's own life possible. The brief slip into free indirect discourse ("Wie denn schlimmer, Du Dummkopf?") also suggests another parallel between Reinhart and the uncle *as narrators*.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> See here Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 533. "Der experimentierfreudige Naturwissenschaftler ist das Produkt eines weiblichen Experiments, das mit Männern als Versuchskaninchen durchgeführt wurde, wobei sich die Frau als der bessere Experimentator erwies. Reinhart wollte Gefühle experimentell begründen, um ihnen nicht ausgeliefert zu sein. Seine Mutter machte *das* Experiment, von dem ihr Gefühl ihr sagte, daß es ihrem Gefühl rechtgeben werde."

<sup>343</sup> Ajouri notes the self-reflexive register of the haunting scenes, arguing that Hildeburg leaving her decision to chance serves as an indicator of both reality and fictionality. "[Hildeburgs Radiertätigkeit] versinnbildlicht metaleptisch das Schreiben der Geschichte selbst. Der Zufall in der Geschichte, also vor allem das Losverfahren der Gespensterprobe, lässt sich schließlich nur genau so erzählen, wie es in der erzählten Welt stattgefunden hat. [...] [D]er Zufall in *Die Geisterseher* ist nicht nur ein Realitätsindikator, sondern auch ein Fiktionssignal. Es ist Kellers eigenwillige Art, ohne das 'ewige Literaturdichten' Darstellungsprobleme des literarischen Realismus zu thematisieren. Die Literarizität der Geschichte, verstanden als das, was die Erzählung von der Realität unterscheidet, wird in Hildeburgs Gespensterauftritt allegorisch dargestellt." Ajouri, "Vom unerklärbaren Übernatürlichen zur unerklärten Natur," 290–91.

This connection will soon develop further, as “Die Geisterseher” concludes with a scene of reading and narration. Reinhart is unable to continue his travels that night, so he selects at random a book to read from Lucie’s collection. Because his eyes are still healing from his scientific efforts, he chooses a book with large print (“mit großem Druck,” HKKA 7:210) and then walks through the surrounding woods. This typographic emphasis soon finds metaphorical expression in the descriptions of Reinhart’s state of mind.

Dort bemächtigte sich seiner immer mehr ein *gedrücktes* Wesen [...]. Nicht nur die vernommene Kunde von den ganz ungewöhnlichen Jugendthaten seiner Mutter, die Anwesenheit eines Liebhabers und Rivalen seines Vaters, sondern auch der ungebührlich wachsende *Eindruck*, den Lucie auf ihn machte, verwirrten und verdüsterten ihm das Gemüt. Das waren ja Teufelsgeschichten! Der Verlust seiner goldenen Freiheit und Unbefangenheit, der im Anzuge war, wollte ihm fast das Herz *abdrücken*. (HKKA 7:210; emphasis added)

Reinhart is dismayed by the various “Teufelsgeschichten” in his life, and this descriptor, too, gestures to the vanished document at the center of these events. During the second haunting, his mother had diligently erased the document, “so geschäftig wie der Teufel” (HKKA 7:203), and thus emerges in multiple ways as the authorial figure of recent events. The book with large type commands no attention, and the “Druck” migrates from the pages to his psyche. The semantic contagion recalls that in the uncle’s description of the inlaid image on the desk, with its two different *Schlösser*. But these various interconnected strands only come together later that night, when Reinhart finally opens the book.

Das Buch mußte seinerzeit fleißig gelesen worden sein, da es zum zweiten Male gebunden worden. Denn viele Blätter klebten von der Farbe des bunten Schnittes zusammen, und als Reinhart zwei solche von einander löste, lag ein Blättchen altes Papier dazwischen mit vergilbter Schrift bedeckt. An einem Junimorgen des Jahres 1732 schrieb eine Dame in französischer Sprache an eine andere: ‘Liebste Freundin! Lesen Sie die artige kleine Geschichte, die ich hier angestrichen habe! Guten Tag! Ihre getreue Freundin J. Morgens 9 Uhr.’ Dies Briefchen mußte der Buchbinder, der den neuen Einband gemacht, nicht gesehen haben, denn es war mit eingebunden und seither von keinem Auge mehr erblickt worden. Daneben war in der That eine halbe Seite des Buchtexes mit Rotstein angestrichen, der sich auch auf dem gegenüberliegenden Blatte

abgedruckt hatte, so dass Reinhart nicht wußte, welche der beiden bezeichneten Stellen galt. Dennoch wunderte ihn, was an jenem Junimorgen vor hundert und zwanzig oder mehr Jahren die verschollene Dame so piquierte, daß sie das Buch der Freundin schickte. Er las daher auf beiden Seiten und fand eine allerdings seltsame Heiratsanekdote, die ohne Zweifel das war, was die zwei Damen beschäftigt hatte. Das Histörchen gefiel auch Reinharten, und weil er doch keinen Schlaf verspürte, spann und malte er den größten Teil der Nacht hindurch das Geschichtchen aus und nahm sich vor, es vorzutragen, sofern nochmals eine Erzählerei stattfinden sollte. (HKKA 7:212-13)

While the book was once read over and over, it appears to have not been touched since it was rebound. Once again, the narrative presents a set of layered materials. The edges of the pages have been recolored, and some still stick together. When Reinhart detaches two pages, he finds another paper tucked inside, which has been bound along with the remainder of the text. The accidentally bound note indicates the reader's response to the anecdote on the pages it divides. The note, tucked in between these two pages, separates the original and the imprint, functioning as a material barrier between the mirrored annotations. The reader in 1732 had marked one page with red pencil, which smeared on to the facing page, such that it is unclear which page was originally marked and which only serves as a kind of copy of the markings. A material expression of the migratory descriptors, the red pencil ("der sich [...] *abgedruckt* hatte") sticks to the facing page much in the way that the print metaphors ("Druck") had adhered to his psyche ("Der Verlust seiner goldenen Freiheit und Unbefangenheit [...] wollte ihm fast das Herz *abdrücken*"). Finally, the red pencil on the white page renders *in material, book form* the events of the Logau aphorism, namely Galatea turning from white to red. Taken together, one finds something akin to Condillac's medial embodiment, here, Reinhart narratively *becoming* the text he seeks to realize.

But for all the attention given to the materiality of the book, the details seem scarcely to matter. Reinhart reads both pages and finds somewhere on them an anecdote he can develop into a more elaborate story, which comprises the next embedded narrative. But this is not to reduce

the description of the marked-up pages to a mere reality effect, à la Bathes. Having penetrated the exterior of the book, Reinhart can enshroud himself within the fictional world. If his initial opening of the book represented his transformation into the medium, his own authorial creativity allows him to refigure himself – already a Pygmalion figure – simultaneously as Galatea, veiled by the various unspecified flourishes he adds to the anecdote.<sup>344</sup> In this way, Reinhart becomes, like his mother, decidedly androgynous.

“Die Geisterseher” occupies a central position within *Das Sinngedicht* because of its treatment of recognition. Although Reinhart has spent a considerable amount of time attempting to realize the Logau aphorism, it is not until he recognizes himself as the product of a story that he fully grasps what is at stake with his endeavor.<sup>345</sup> But despite the pivotal role of the story within the cycle, it seems to raise almost as many questions as it answers.<sup>346</sup> The haunting is the central event that decided Reinhart’s very existence, but it is only ever explained in part. The document at its center simply vanishes from the narrative. No explanation is given for its disappearance, and its contents remain a mystery. Neither is the inlaid image given any more attention. These absences, though, are perhaps additional allusions to Schiller’s *Geisterseher*, which, as Peter Erickson has shown, draws much of its aesthetic force from its deployment of innumerable “Leerstellen” that activate the reader’s imagination.<sup>347</sup> That the concluding chapter

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<sup>344</sup> Hart also suggests that Reinhart appears as a Galatea figure. “It is, in fact, Reinhart who is transformed and enlivened through contact with Lucie, who thaws his cold, scientific exterior and encourages or inspires an appreciation of the ‘menschliche Dinge’ that he had consigned to his attic.” Hart, *Readers and Their Fictions*, 108.

<sup>345</sup> The fifth chapter, where Reinhart first meets Lucie, is titled “Herr Reinhart *beginnt* die Tragweite seiner Unternehmung zu ahnen” (HKKA 7:29; emphasis added).

<sup>346</sup> As the fourth of seven embedded narratives, “Die Geisterseher” is structurally at the center of the cycle. For this reason alone, both Kaiser and Ajouri attribute to it a key role. Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 530; Ajouri, “Vom unerklärbaren Übernatürlichen zur unerklärten Natur,” 262.

<sup>347</sup> Peter Erickson, “Religious Conversion in the Late German Enlightenment: Goethe, Schiller, and Wieland” (Doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 2014), 243–44.

of *Das Sinngedicht* features Lucie's tale about her own conversion to Catholicism only serves as another echo of this intertext.<sup>348</sup> The point, then, is that Keller's narrative generates the same type of receptive mode as Schiller's text. The reader has no idea what Reinhart actually reads, what Hildeburg actually erases, or what the point of the image is, but these absences are themselves imaginatively generative, grabbing the (extradiegetic) reader's attention. And as will become clear, this effect derives from a shared medial context.

### FICTION AND BUREAUCRACY: KELLER'S DOODLES, PART I

Schiller's "Leerstellen," so Erickson, are indebted to the original periodical publication context of *Der Geisterseher*, with its cliffhangers all but guaranteeing that his readers would stick around for the next installment.<sup>349</sup> And it is the serialization of the novel that seems to have gripped Keller. In 1880, when he was laboring on the second version of *Der grüne Heinrich*, he wrote to Theodor Storm to express his frustration with editing his magnum opus. "Der bloße Gebrauch von Blaustift und Schere wäre das Einfachste und Glückliche gewesen; allein es wird ja gar nichts Fragmentarisches mehr gelitten [...]. Das war vor hundert Jahren doch anders. Ein

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<sup>348</sup> This narrative features a prominent reference to Schiller's *Wallenstein*, and Jeziorkowski reads Lucie's Catholicism within this context. (Surprisingly, he does not take up *Der Geisterseher* in his study.) Without disputing this interpretation, I would suggest, even if it is not as intertextually present as *Wallenstein*, that *Der Geisterseher* is nevertheless evoked with this final narrative. Jeziorkowski, *Literarität und Historismus*, 75–77.

<sup>349</sup> Erickson, "Religious Conversion in the Late German Enlightenment," 244. Additionally, as Gretz notes, Schiller's text concatenates a variety of discourses and themes in a similar manner as Keller, which she attributes to the periodical context. "Schillers 'Der Geisterseher' wird ebenfalls nicht nur in dessen Zeitschrift 'Thalia' publiziert, sondern entspricht mit der Mischung von Geisterbeschwörung und Intrige genau dem medien-spezifischen *Faible* für Merkwürdiges, Unglaubliches, Kurioses, Spannendes und Kriminelles. Dieses bestimmt zudem mit heldenhaften Eroberergeschichten, ethnographischen Beschreibungen exotischer Wilder und zahlreichen biographischen Skizzen und Lebensbildern nicht nur das Repertoire der 'Deutschen Rundschau' im Allgemeinen, sondern wird in komprimierter Form auch von Kellers 'Sinngedicht' bedient." Gretz, "Ein literarischer 'Versuch' im Experimentierfeld Zeitschrift," 211.

Goethe durfte den ‘Wilhelm Meister’ liegen lassen, ein Schiller den ‘Geisterseher’ ganz abbrechen, ohne so geplagt zu werden, und man vergnügte sich an dem, was da war.”<sup>350</sup> Keller envies Goethe and especially Schiller for their ability simply to abandon their texts. It would have been easiest for him to excise the unsatisfactory portions of *Der grüne Heinrich* and leave his readers with the remainder, but alas, there is no longer an audience for fragments. The work must be complete. *Der grüne Heinrich* bears obvious formal and generic resemblance to *Wilhelm Meister*, but the reference to *Der Geisterseher* seems in this context less apt. To be sure, the text remained unfinished and is thus adequate for Keller’s comparison, but this letter was written while he was preparing *Das Sinngedicht* for publication in *Deutsche Rundschau*.<sup>351</sup> In this regard, the reference to Schiller’s *Geisterseher* reads more like a reference to Keller’s “Geisterseher,” awaiting serialization. The reference is important, since it underscores the status of the fragment as something that points to its own eventual completion. The serial fragment – because it is serial – never exists in isolation.

This shared periodical context, which emphasizes the *completable* fragment (as opposed to the unfinished novel or, say, the self-contained romantic fragment), helps to explain the vanished document (presumed a legal document) and the inlaid landscape image at the center of Keller’s “Geisterseher.” And this via recourse to yet another context: Keller’s professional writings as *Staatschreiber*, a position he held from 1861 to 1876. Part of his duties involved

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<sup>350</sup> GB III.1:449 (13.6.1880)

<sup>351</sup> Keller had agreed in 1878 to publish *Das Sinngedicht* in *Deutsche Rundschau*. A note from fall 1880, which lists old Germanic names, including Hilteburg and Mannlein, suggests some degree of conceptualization of “Die Geisterseher.” On October 30, 1880, Keller sent the first part of the manuscript to Rodenberg. He sent the section featuring “Die Geisterseher” on February 26, 1881. See HKKA 23.1:14-15.

keeping protocols of meetings, and he kept several notebooks to aid him in this process.<sup>352</sup> After taking notes, he composed a rough draft, and a clerk would produce a final, expanded clean copy.<sup>353</sup> While Keller indeed recorded the necessary information in the notebooks, these documents also contain a variety of doodles, among which are a number of framed landscape paintings (see Figure 13 and Figure 14). While the contributors to the critical commentary view these drawings as unrelated to Keller's artistic activity, in that he never ended up painting these scenes,<sup>354</sup> there is no denying a degree of formal overlap.

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<sup>352</sup> For an overview of these notebooks, see HKKA 29:126-44. These remarks are necessarily somewhat provisional, since I am working from the commentary in the HKKA and selected reproductions. I have not had the chance to view these documents in person.

<sup>353</sup> HKKA 29:133.

<sup>354</sup> "Trotz gewissen bei den einfachen und unspezifischen Landschaftssujets unvermeidlichen vagen Übereinstimmung mit Motiven, die Keller als Maler behandelte, ist eine Funktion dieser Zeichnungen als Vorstudie oder Entwurf zu geplanten Bildern oder zu einem der wenigen Aquarelle aus dieser Zeit nicht anzunehmen. Es handelt sich wohl einfach um einen Zeitvertreib." (HKKA 29:128)

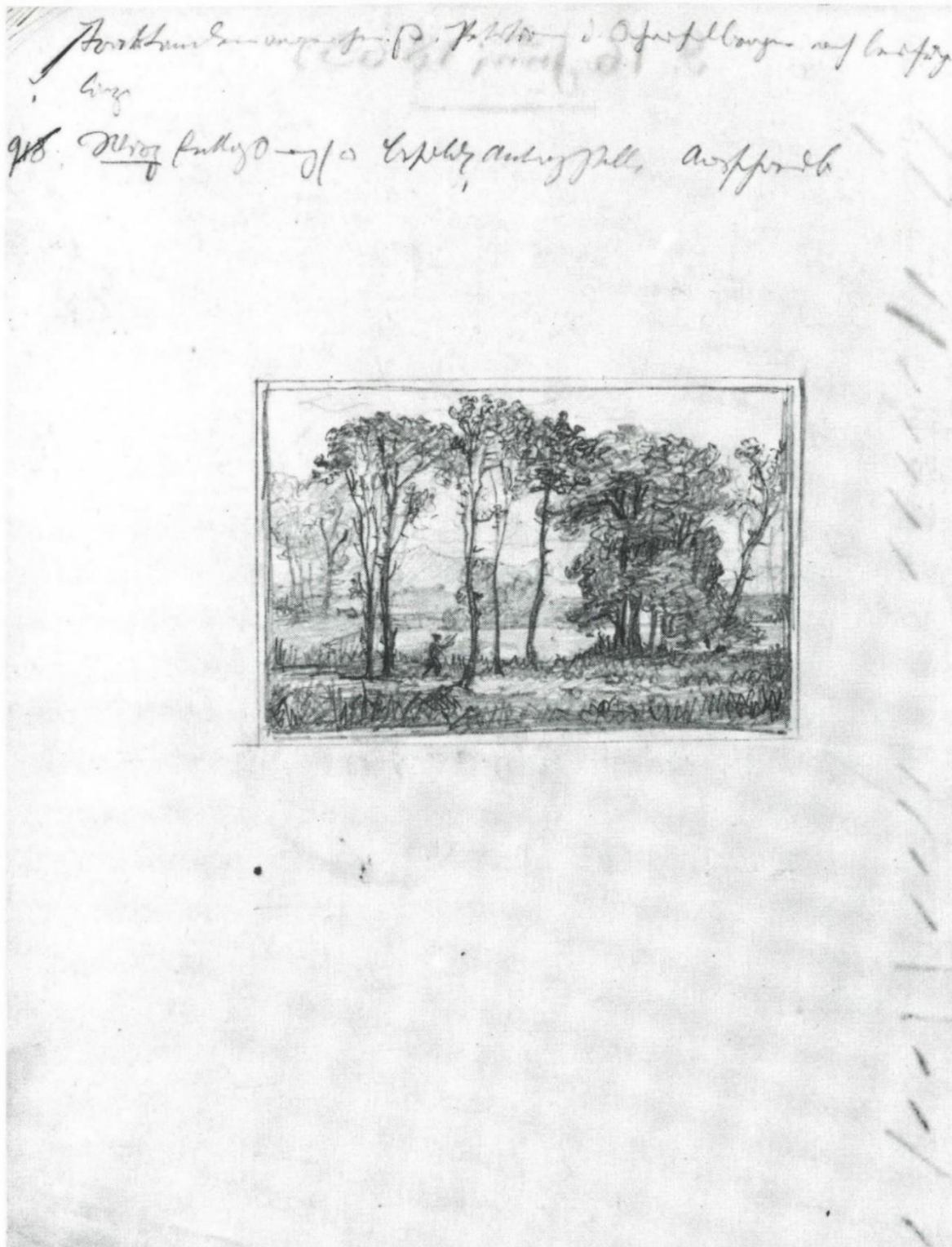


Figure 13. A page from Keller's protocol notebook [16 June 1863].  
Reproduced from Bruno Weber, *Gottfried Keller: Landschaftsmaler* (Zürich: Verlag Neue  
Zürcher Zeitung, 1990), 132.

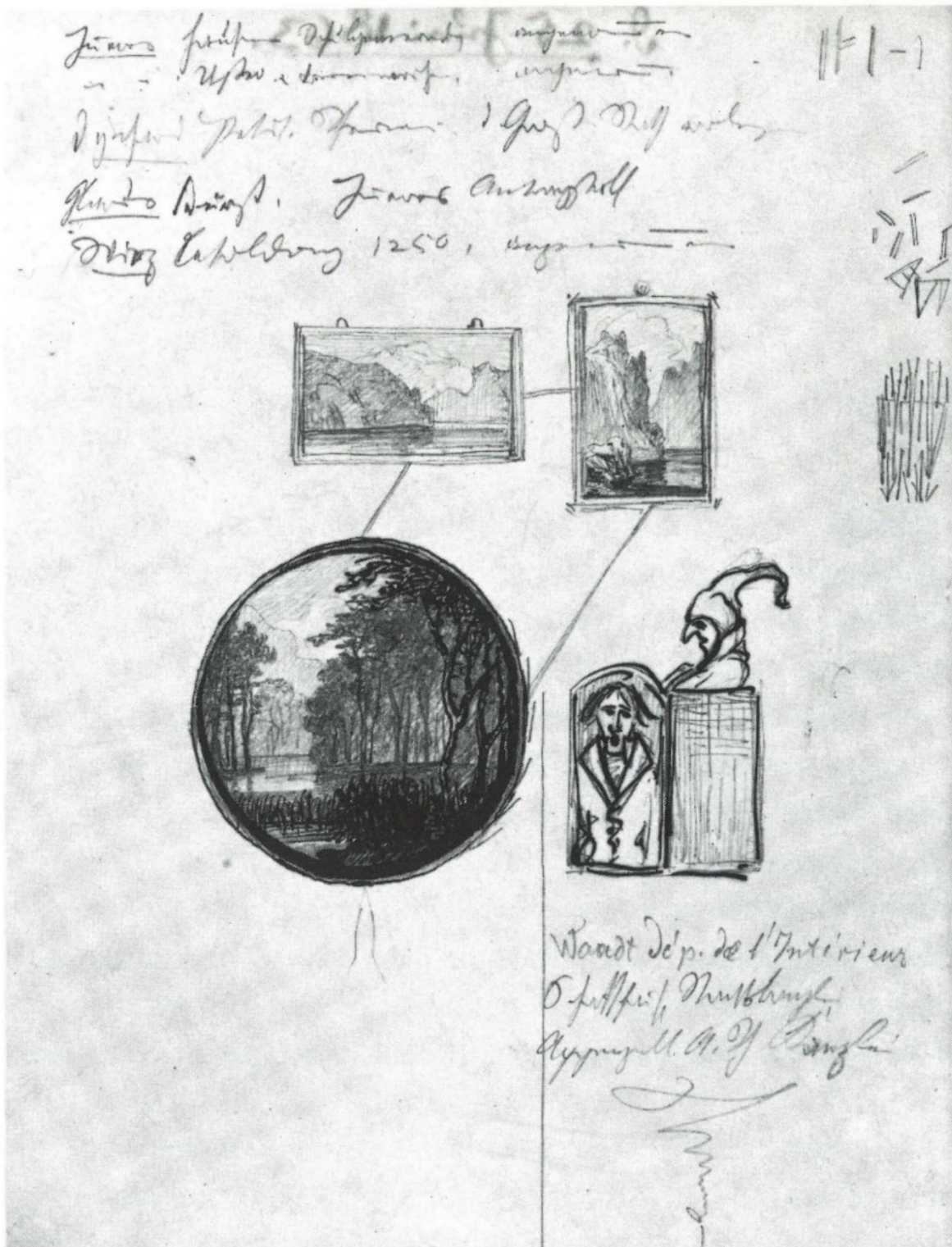


Figure 14. A page from Keller's protocol notebook [25 June 1863].  
 Reproduced from Bruno Weber. Gottfried Keller: Landschaftsmaler (Zürich: Verlag Neue  
 Zürcher Zeitung, 1990), 132.



Figure 15. “Aussicht vom Zürichberg auf See und Alpen” [1880]. 350 mm diameter. Reproduced from Bruno Weber. Gottfried Keller: Landschaftsmaler (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1990), 125.

The depicted landscapes in Figure 14 and Figure 15 are quite different, but it is striking that Keller would choose the same tondo format for each. Whether the sketch ended up serving as the basis for a realized painting is ultimately irrelevant: At issue is less the content of the image than its formal conceptualization. The doodles are striking because of their completeness, because they look like the kinds of works Keller actually painted. In these notebooks, he sketches out not rough ideas, but rather finished, framed paintings, already hung on the wall. In short, they stand in tension with the typical conceptualization of the sketch as a decidedly provisional form.<sup>355</sup> Furthermore, while the framed paintings might exist as self-contained

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<sup>355</sup> See on this point Mirjam Schaub, “Skizzieren,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch des Mediengebrauchs*, ed. Heiko Christians, Matthias Bickenbach, and Nikolaus Wegmann

wholes, the three paintings in Figure 14 are connected and, like Keller's framed and serialized narratives, are linked with others.

This is not to suggest, though, that Keller only sketched out complete ideas. Another page even contains blank canvases, also hung on the wall (see Figure 16). Between the two blank canvases is a skeletal-like face in profile, looking toward the left. The two blank canvases evince a fundamental openness: they have yet to be painted, but at the same time, framed and hung, are complete in their own incompleteness. It is as if they are petrified in their nascent state and will never achieve the completion granted to the large framed canvas on the page. Taken together, these two sets of images – the completed and the perpetually incomplete – veer away from the fragmentary. There is no middle ground, no work-in-progress: the artwork exists only as completed or never begun. In this way, the figure in between the two blank canvases seems to gesture to the spectrality of the blank page, serving, perhaps, as a ghost of literary pasts,<sup>356</sup> pleading for completion.<sup>357</sup>

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(Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 524. “Die Skizze selbst erscheint als Inbegriff des Provisorischen, ein notwendiges Durchgangsstadium ohne eigenen, bleibenden Wert.”

<sup>356</sup> Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf takes the figure to be either death or the devil. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, *Die Melancholie der Literatur: Diskursgeschichte und Textfiguration* (Stuttgart/Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1997), 429.

<sup>357</sup> The blank surface was not insignificant in Keller's own life. While he had long since given up his professional aspiration to become a painter, opting instead for a career as a writer, he still painted on occasion. In 1887, Keller explained to his acquaintance Marie Bluntschli why a black picture frame, enclosing only a blank piece of cardboard, hung on the wall. Apparently he had intended to paint a landscape, but never got around to it: “‘Wenn ich's dahin stelle,’ – sagte er, indem er die Rahme gegen das Licht drehte, – ‘ist die Beleuchtung nicht schlecht. Ich will sehen, ob ich nicht doch dazu komme.’” Despite these intentions, the framed cardboard remained blank and was visible from Keller's deathbed in 1890. Marie Bluntschli, *Erinnerungen an Gottfried Keller* (Bern: Verlag A. Francke, 1940), 16; Bruno Weber, *Gottfried Keller: Landschaftsmaler* (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1990), 130–31. Weber also cites another account, according to which the frame contained a blank canvas, rather than blank cardboard.

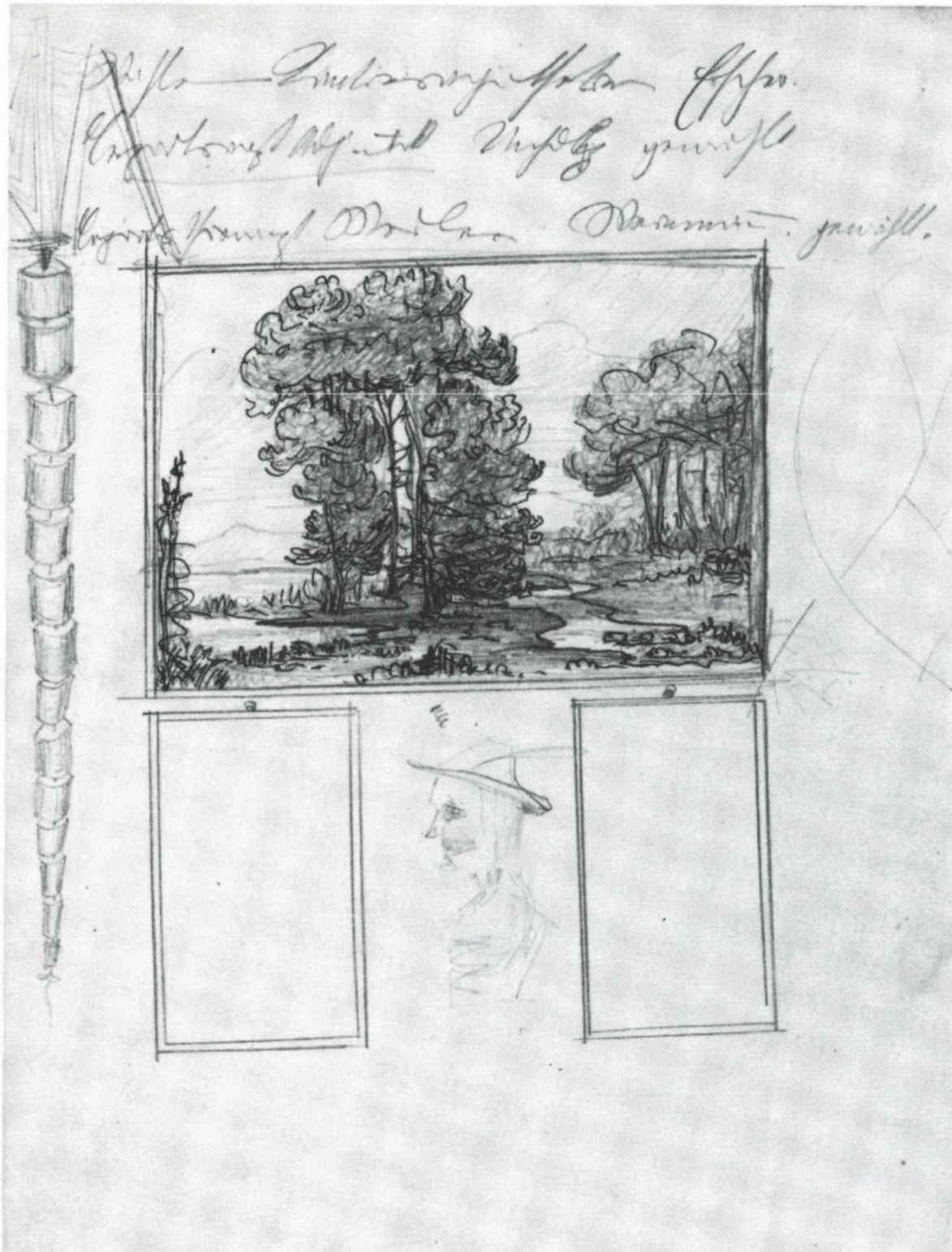


Figure 16. A page from Keller's protocol notebook [11 August 1863].  
Reproduced from Bruno Weber. Gottfried Keller: Landschaftsmaler (Zürich: Verlag Neue  
Zürcher Zeitung, 1990), 133.

The doodles in the protocol notebooks offer insight into Keller's conception of realism and from there into the status of the document and image within "Die Geisterseher." As a medium, the protocol occupies a somewhat precarious position. On the one hand, it is intended, as an official record, to document and preserve words and actions. On the other hand, the protocol never captures everything, and the omissions and deletions can be just as revealing as the actual contents.<sup>358</sup> Or as Michael Niehaus puts it, "Das Protokoll ist kein transparentes, neutrales Medium, sondern konstruiert eine Wirklichkeit."<sup>359</sup> The presence of doodles within Keller's notebooks, then, reveals several things at once. First, and most basically, the notebook pages contain at least two separate types of material: official notes, plus the consciously artistic doodles, whose level of detail makes it difficult to brush them aside as marginalia, as the nonsensical scrawls of a bored clerk. The notebooks reveal, then, two separate demands on Keller's attention: art and bureaucratic officialdom. Second, this raises the question as to whether the eventual protocols might lack information that Keller did not write down while he was otherwise occupied with doodling. In other words, the reality that the protocol presents might be partially contingent upon Keller's artistic distraction. (To be fair, one need not doodle absent-mindedly, and it stands to reason that Keller was able to pay attention and record what he heard while drawing. And one can certainly zone out *without* doodling.) In short, the notebooks reveal the sheer contingency by which reality – here, official, bureaucratic reality – is constructed, and, with the presence of the doodled paintings, suggest that art can interfere with reality.

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<sup>358</sup> See here Michael Niehaus, "Protokollieren," in *Historisches Wörterbuch des Mediengebrauchs*, ed. Heiko Christians, Matthias Bickenbach, and Nikolaus Wegmann (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 463–81.

<sup>359</sup> Niehaus, 479.

These basic features of the notebooks are echoed within “Die Geisterseher.” Recall the strange characterization of Hildeburg’s ghostly activities as those of a notary (“[S]ie bläst das Abgeschabte weg, hustet wie ein alter schwindsüchtiger Notarius publicus, bläst wieder, fährt mit dem Finger über die radierte Stelle und schabt abermals”). A notary, much like a protocol writer, is tasked with *recording*, not *erasing*.<sup>360</sup> And within the narrative, this moment of erasure lies at the center of a *constructed reality* governed by the rules of fiction. And what better way to emphasize this than presenting an artistic image alongside (or within) such a document? In this way, the inlaid landscape image and the strange document work in concert to suggest the artificial reality at the heart of nineteenth-century literature.

The notion of fragmentariness clarified by the protocol notebooks also clarifies the paradigm of recognition within *Das Sinngedicht*. In the recognition scenes, the characters come to knowledge about the constructed nature of reality, but these scenes, which are generated by intra- or metadiegetic author figures, enable another kind of recognition. To recall once more the third level of recognition in Aristotle, the poet *qua* reader attends to both part and whole by immersing him- or herself within the work and by stepping back to recognize the plot-structure that links the various episodes. The fragment, as it features in Keller’s works, enables exactly this kind of movement between part and whole, because, by virtue of its medial context, it can only be understood in relation to the whole. This is to say: the individual episodes within *Das Sinngedicht* must be understood in relation to the overarching plot-structure. To be sure, one can make this claim for many novella cycles. However, *Das Sinngedicht* does not so much present a

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<sup>360</sup> “Der entscheidende Gegenbegriff zu *protokollieren* ist ‘streichen’. Er ist besonderer Weise geeignet, die Aporien vor Augen zu führen, die der Textsorte Protokoll zugrundeliegen. Was tut derjenige, der aus einem Protokoll etwas streicht, was er zuvor protokolliert hat? [...] Wird die Streichung *sichtbar* [...], so hat es den Anschein, als könnten Tatsachen per Federstrich nachträglich in Nicht-Tatsachen verwandelt werden.” Niehaus, 476.

series of stand-alone novellas – à la *Die Leute von Seldwyla* – but rather a set of narratives that are so interwoven with each other that they demand to be read in relation to the whole to which they collectively speak. Even the individual episodes within “Die Geisterseher” open up onto the broader plot-structure of the cycle and provoke this level of readerly recognition: Hildeburg creates an intricate illusion that leads to Reinhart’s very existence; the uncle’s narration of his absorption into (and subsequent distancing from) this illusion spurs Reinhart to tell another story of his own, which comprises the next embedded narrative. All of the embedded narratives, taken together, bring Reinhart and Lucie closer together, which finally leads them to realize the Logau aphorism. In other words, the reader of *Das Sinngedicht* must understand Hildeburg’s actions, the uncle’s story, and Reinhart’s story as part of an interlinked series of events that ultimately generate recognition.

## CONCLUSION

Before this final recognition transpires, the narrative presents one more *misrecognition*, which establishes yet another link between “Die Geisterseher” and the general plot-structure. At the beginning of the final chapter, Reinhart complains to Lucie’s uncle about the “satirische Pfeile” (HKKA 7:293) she shoots at him with a story she tells, and the uncle explains that Reinhart has misread the situation. While Reinhart’s stories have idealized a certain type of woman, he has ignored the person right in front of him.

‘Und merken Sie denn nicht, dass es weniger schmeichelhaft für Sie wäre, wenn sich die Lux gleichgültig dafür zeigte, daß Sie für allerhand unwissende und arme Kreaturen schwärmen, zu denen sie einmal nicht zählen das Glück oder Verdienst hat?’  
Ob Reinhart als Gelehrter schon so unpraktisch oder als junger Mann noch so unkundig oder blind war, genug, er hatte diese Seite der Sache noch gar nicht bedacht und errötete über den Worten des Alten ordentlich von der inneren Wärme, die sie ihm verursachten. ‘So geht es,’ sagte er mit unmerklicher Bewegung; ‘wenn man immer in Bildern und Gleichnissen spricht, so versteht man die Wirklichkeit zuletzt nicht mehr und wird unhöflich.’ (HKKA 7:293-94)

Like Lucie's uncle, who is absorbed into a literary world, Reinhart, too, is more apt to focus on stories than reality. His sudden blushing not only indexes the realization of his error, but also associates him once more with Galatea. What is more, he frames his own misrecognition is framed as an act of linguistic concealment, of speaking "in Bildern und Gleichnisse" that obscure reality.<sup>361</sup>

Keller soon manages to squeeze in one last embedded narrative. Reinhart leaves the estate without acting on his feelings for Lucie, only returning in the fall to join his parents, who have since reunited with their old friend. Reinhart asks Lucie to borrow a book and she ends up telling him about her conversion to Catholicism, the first mention of which evokes yet more blushing. "Als Reinhart die Sprecherin etwas verwundert ansah, setzte sie *errötend* hinzu: 'Ich bin nämlich katholisch!' / 'Darüber brauchen Sie doch nicht zu erröten!' meinte Reinhart, den eine solche Verschiedenheit der Konfession eher belustigte als betübte. Sie verstand seinen freien Sinn, *wurde aber jetzt ganz rot* und sagte mit unwillkürlichem Niederschlagen der Augen: 'Ich bin nicht katholisch geboren, ich bin es geworden!'" (HKKA 7:300-301; emphasis added). Lucie tells her story and is relieved by Reinhart's generous reaction. "'Sehen Sie, nun bin ich erst ganz von der verwünschten Heimlichkeit befreit. Wie schwierig ist es, einen Beichtvater zu finden, wie man ihn braucht! *Aber wollten Sie nicht lesen?'*" (HKKA 7:323; emphasis added). Reinhart, instead of reading, has heard Lucie's confession, in both senses of the term. Tellingly,

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<sup>361</sup> Or as Preidendanz puts it: "Damit sind diese Erzählungen als solche selbst ein Beispiel, ein Bild oder Gleichnis dessen, was in ihnen immer wieder Motiv ist: Beispiel dafür, wie sich der Mensch verummmt, verhehlt, verbirgt, verschließt, wie er sich in den Anschein hüllen, wie er sich besonders im Sprechen entziehen oder vorenthalten kann." Preidendanz, "Gottfried Kellers 'Sinngedicht,'" 194.

Reinhart then decides to enjoy *reality*, and he and Lucie go for a walk.<sup>362</sup> However, neither experiences *unmediated* reality, for the “Bilder und Gleichnisse” continue to exert their force. While outside the shoemaker’s shop, Reinhart and Lucie hear him singing Goethe’s “Mit einem gemalten Bande” and, finally, share a kiss that causes Lucie to blush and laugh. ““Bei Gott jetzt haben wir doch Ihr schlimmes Rezept von dem alten Logau ausgeführt! Denn daß es mich gelächert hat, weiß ich, und rot werde ich hoffentlich auch geworden sein. [...]’ / ‘Freilich bist Du rot geworden, teure Lux,’ sagte Reinhart, ‘wie eine Morgenröte im Sommer! Aber auch ich habe wahrhaftig nicht an das Epigramm gedacht, und nun ist es doch gelungen! Willst Du mir Deine Hand geben?’” (HKKA 7:329). Reinhart wastes no time getting to business, and the cycle closes with his and Lucie’s engagement.<sup>363</sup>

Storytelling, so Preisendanz, occupies a privileged epistemological position relative to the sciences in that it is uniquely able to account for the causal structure present in the Logau aphorism.<sup>364</sup> However, as the foregoing analysis has shown, storytelling in *Das Sinngedicht* draws from a range of discourses, *including* science. The linguistic unveiling at stake in the cycle

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<sup>362</sup> Jeziorkowski suggests that Lucie’s tale already enacts a change of this sort. “Daß Lucie dieses Stück Autobiographie so selbstkritisch Reinhart erzählen kann, ist die Überwindung des rückwärts gewandten Empfindsamkeitswesens, das Abtun auch des empfindsamen Autobiographienkultus durch vertrauensvolles, auf den richtigen Partner gerichtetes Erzählen eigenen Schicksals. Literatur wird durch Realität und ‘Leben’ ersetzt.” Jeziorkowski, *Literarität und Historismus*, 77.

<sup>363</sup> For more on this ending, see Hart, *Readers and Their Fictions*, esp. 112. “This is the first ‘du’ that has fallen between them, and it appears to be a quotation of the conspicuously repeated line from the shoemaker’s song: ‘Reiche frei mir deine Hand’ (H 2:1186). The sequence of enactments should not be overlooked. The ‘Blick’ from ‘gemalten Band’ precedes the fulfillment of Logau’s epigram, which is then followed by Reinhart’s ‘Goethean’ request for Lucie’s hand. The Goethe poem thus encloses Logau’s lines in this sequence of imitative gestures and presents and novel (and idiosyncratic) instance of literature within literature (within literature).”

<sup>364</sup> Preisendanz, “Gottfried Kellers ‘Sinngedicht,’” 201. “Keine allgemeine Gesetzmäßigkeit, sondern allein das, was uns inzwischen erzählt worden ist, bildet den Faden zwischen Ursache und Wirkung dessen, was bei diesem ‘errötend lachen’ in die Sphäre der moralischen Dinge fällt.”

draws of course from Pygmalion, but the diverse intertexts informing Keller's treatment of the myth pick up on both Enlightenment and realist debates about epistemology. *Das Sinngedicht*, finally, posits realist knowledge acquisition as a distinctly medial affair.

This epistemological and medial framework would inform many of Keller's works, and *Das Sinngedicht* can be viewed as but one of the many rich examples in terms of its relationship to intellectual history. But blushing – one of the privileged signs in the story – is also more broadly indicative of Kellerian recognition. As an index of shame, blushing, to speak with Neumann, is the sign of the fall.<sup>365</sup> And this, as Gerhard Kaiser notes, is already present within the Logau aphorism: “Logau stellt in einer seinen Zeitgenossen ohne weiteres durchsichtigen Blumenallegorie die Scherzfrage, wie man eine Jungfrau (=weiße Lilie) zur Frau (=rote Rose) macht: durch Küssen (und so weiter).”<sup>366</sup> The recognition of the virginal Galatea – an instance of carnal knowing – necessarily translates into the recognition of her fall.<sup>367</sup> And it is this very paradigm that would serve as the guiding motifs in Keller's arguably most famous novella cycle – *Die Leute von Seldwyla*. This book forms the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>365</sup> “Erröten ist das Sündenfall-Zeichen des ‘Erkennens’, des Wissens wie des Begehrens. Keller stellt es ins Zentrum seiner erzählenden Erörterung der Liebesformel in der europäischen Tradition: mitten zwischen die Prozesse der Natur und der Zivilisation.” Neumann, “Der Körper des Menschen und die belebte Statue,” 588.

<sup>366</sup> Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 506. The scene of simultaneous laughing/blushing is preceded by a somewhat obscene depiction of Lucie and Reinhart freeing a snake from a crab.

<sup>367</sup> See here Wild, *Theater der Keuschheit - Keuschheit des Theaters*.

4.  
Self-Recognition and the Mirror of Realism  
“Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe”

Gottfried Keller’s “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” published in the second volume of *Die Leute von Seldwyla* (1874), appears at first glance to be little more than a glib lampooning of the nineteenth-century publishing world.<sup>368</sup> The novella takes aim at the dilettante writers who see in the booming periodical industry an opportunity for fame, ridiculing their plagiarism and general incompetence. Early in the story, a minor character, the waiter and former writer Georg Nase, recalls his entry into and subsequent exit from the world of letters. While working in a coffee house, he had become acquainted with a group of writers and decided to join their ranks. Reversing the letters in his last name, he entered the literary world as George d’Esan and published both blatantly plagiarized and empty, self-reflexive prose about writing. Nase’s/d’Esan’s literary career ended unspectacularly, not because his plagiarism came to light or because anyone hesitated to print texts of such dubious quality, but because he independently arrived at an insight about his suitability for the vocation. After receiving a modest inheritance, he discarded his shabby, writerly clothes and donned an elegant new outfit. As he retrospectively relays this moment to a man in his inn: “Als ich mich aber, dergestalt ausgeputzt, im Spiegel besah, fiel es mir wie Schuppen von den Augen; ich fand mich plötzlich zu gut für einen Schriftsteller, dagegen reif genug für einen Oberkellner in einem Mittelgasthofe und suchte demgemäß eine Anstellung” (HKKA 5:106). In the mirror, d’Esan – phonetically similar to the

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<sup>368</sup> The text was first published in the *Deutsche Reichs-Zeitung* in 1865. Keller had likely sent the story to his publisher, Eduard Vieweg, in 1860, who then printed it in the *Deutsche Reichs-Zeitung* in 1865 without notifying him. Keller began revising the text in 1871 (HKKA 21:36).

French *dessin*, or image – is reversed back to its mirror image.<sup>369</sup> The mirror reflection provides an opportunity for Nase critically to reevaluate his previous actions, and having recognized his true vocation, he abandons his literary aspirations.

This scene, as superficial as it might be, proves exemplary for Keller's rendering of recognition and its role in his form of realism. It contains two elements central to classic conceptions of anagnorisis, both of which will inform subsequent recognition scenes in the text. First, Nase reflects *retrospectively* on the sudden rush of insight, narrating his experience to a third party – in this case, a gentleman in his inn who is horrified by a gathering of drunk dilettante writers announcing their intention to initiate a new Sturm und Drang period.<sup>370</sup> Second, the moment of recognition is *repetitive* in the sense that it reveals something that was already known: Nase was, and is again, a waiter.<sup>371</sup> Furthermore, the self-reflexivity of the scene hints at

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<sup>369</sup> Nicholas Saul and Hans-Joachim Hahn both identify here an internal reference to “Kleider machen Leute.” See Nicholas Saul, “Poetic Legitimacy after 1848: Keller, Feuerbach, and the Mirror of Nature,” *Oxford German Studies* 40, no. 3 (2011): 311–12; Hans-Joachim Hahn, “Die ‘Tücke des Objekts’ - ein Strukturmerkmal in den Seldwyler Novellen?,” in *Gottfried Keller, Die Leute von Seldwyla. Kritische Studien – Critical Essays*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hahn and Uwe Seja (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 57. Ladislaus Löb sees Nase as representative of the other protagonists in the novella, as well as those elsewhere in Keller's works, who struggle to find a fitting vocation. Ladislaus Löb, “‘Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe.’ A Story of Human Vocation,” *German Life and Letters* 20, no. 1 (1966): 13–24. Karin Tebben notes a parallel between Nase and Heinrich Lee: “Der Kellner erkennt, indem er sich selbst im Spiegel anblickt, das Verfehlen der *eigenen* Realität, des eigenen sozialen Ortes. Und er erkennt, dass die äußere Realität geeignet ist, die Selbsttäuschung aufrecht zu halten. Damit teilt er das Schicksal des Grünen Heinrich. Doch im Gegensatz zu diesem gelangt der Kellner zur Einsicht, dass seine Stellung in der Welt nicht die eines exaltierten Mächtigenkünstlers ist, sondern die eines Kellners – und allein unter kritischer Betrachtung der eigenen Möglichkeiten Entwicklung stattfinden kann.” Karin Tebben, “Schillers Schatten: Entwurf einer Poetik in Gottfried Kellers Novelle ‘Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,’” *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 49 (2005): 312.

<sup>370</sup> Retrospective narration frequently accompanies anagnorisis. See Cave, *Recognitions*, 22–23. For more on this, see the Introduction.

<sup>371</sup> “‘Ana-gnorsis’, like ‘re-cognition’, in fact implies a recovery of something once known rather than merely a shift from ignorance to knowledge.” Cave, 33. For more on this, see the Introduction.

the broader generic and period-specific implications of Keller's satire. Like his *Kellner*, Keller writes about writing,<sup>372</sup> and – in accordance with the conventions of satire – takes material from others: he lifts the descriptions of the new Sturm und Drang period, for instance, from *Teut: Jahrbuch der junggermanischen Gesellschaft* (1859) in which such a project was announced.<sup>373</sup> In order for the satire to function, the reader must of course be able to recognize within the work specific features of reality: here, ridiculous people generating ridiculous literature. “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” also picks up on early, proto-realist forms of satire, which both critically juxtaposed the real with the ideal and conceived of the satirical text as a mirror held up to the reader.<sup>374</sup> Moreover, the recognition scenes in Keller's novella demand that the

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<sup>372</sup> Numerous commentators have pointed out this play on words. See Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 367; Christian Rakow, *Die Ökonomien des Realismus: Kulturpoetische Untersuchungen zur Literatur und Volkswirtschaftslehre 1850-1900* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 219; Jochen Hörisch, *Kopf oder Zahl: Die Poesie des Geldes* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1996), 110.

<sup>373</sup> Karl Pörnbacher, “Nachwort,” in *Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1968), 84–86; Rätus Luck, *Gottfried Keller als Literaturkritiker* (Bern: Francke, 1970), 55..

<sup>374</sup> See Lynne Tatlock, “The Process of Recognition in Satire and Realism: The Prefaces of Seventeenth-Century Novels as Guide to Author-Intention,” *Colloquia Germanica* 18, no. 3 (1985): 238–47. Tatlock notes that the latter half of the seventeenth century “is the time to which some scholars trace the origins of realism in German prose narrative” (239), and indeed, the mirroring motif and the operation of recognition operate remarkably similarly in Keller and in the texts she examines. Tatlock notes that satire and realism are “by no means mutually exclusive” and delineates some of the differences and points of intersection (239). “All satire, whether it deals with types or individuals, has in common with realism the fact that its effectiveness depends finally on the ability of readers to recognize the allusion to the real world. It differs from realism insofar as a *critical* comparison to an ideal world is also implicit in satire, not just a presentation of the real world as the reader knows it” (239-40). Keller's 1882 essay “Ein bescheidenes Kunststreichen” offers insight into his conception of the real vs. the ideal. The essay is focused on the visual arts, but its claims apply equally well to literature. Ursula Amrein offers the following helpful gloss on the program Keller describes therein: “Keller [schreibt] der Malerei die Aufgabe zu, das Reale und das Ideale zur Deckung zu bringen. Ihre Gegenstände sind der Natur nachgebildet, ohne diese bloß abbildend zu imitieren. Vielmehr geht es darum, die dargestellten Objekte in ihrem Wesen zu erfassen, sie auf ihre innere Wahrheit zu durchleuchten.” Ursula Amrein, “Verschriftete Bilder: Gottfried Kellers Bildpoetik im Prozess der Säkularisierung,” in *Schreibprozesse*, ed. Peter Hughes, Thomas Fries, and Tan Wälchli (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2008), 61. Christine Anton observes that “das Erkennen und Verkennen realen Daseins und idealer Scheinrealität” forms the basic problem in the *Seldwyla*

extradiegetic reader reflect upon the conditions for a literature that depends upon a repetition of this reality.

“Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” is split in two halves: a literary satire and what is frequently read as a “Läuterungsgeschichte” thereof.<sup>375</sup> The novella opens with a description of Viggi (Viktor) Störteler, a merchant from Seldwyla with literary aspirations, who contributes dilettantish material to popular periodicals. After drinking and conversing with other dilettantes in Nase’s inn, Viggi returns home determined to do his part to launch the new Sturm und Drang and assumes the roles of Bodmer and Lavater, “um die reisenden neuen Klopstocks, Wieland und Goethe zu empfangen und aufzumuntern” (HKKA 5:106). He fails to recruit additional *Stürmer und Dränger* from amongst the Seldwyla populace and soon redirects his literary ambitions, developing a Kleistian “Erziehungsplan” (HKKA 5:111) to transform his long-suffering wife, Gritli, into his muse. These efforts, too, are unsuccessful, and Viggi then decides he will achieve literary fame with a published collection of love letters. He forces Gritli to correspond with him while he is away on business, but she secretly outsources her half of the exchange. Copying Viggi’s letters and signing her own name to them, she sends them to her smitten neighbor Wilhelm, in whom she has no romantic interest but who responds with appropriately gushing prose. Gritli then copies and sends these letters back to Viggi, who is delighted with the project’s success. But like all Viggi’s literary efforts, this one, too, ends in disaster after he finds the letters Gritli and Wilhelm had exchanged. The fraud comes to light and the couple gets divorced. The second half of the novella focuses on Wilhelm, who changes

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novellas, but she does not delineate this process further. Christine Anton, *Selbstreflexivität der Kunsttheorie in den Künstlernovellen des Realismus* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 170. Hahn briefly examines anamnesis in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” but seems to use the term as a synonym for catharsis. Hahn, “Die ‘Tücke des Objekts,’” 54, 58–60.

<sup>375</sup> The earliest such reference appears to be in Pörnbacher, “Nachwort,” 87.

careers, establishes a new life for himself outside of Seldwyla, and becomes mature and virtuous. Over time, Gritli and Wilhelm fall in love, thus proving the originally fraudulent letters retrospectively authentic. Viggi and his new wife, Kätter Ambach, perpetuate the fraud by expanding the letter exchange and presenting themselves as the sole addressers and addressees.

While the older scholarship tends to criticize the novella for its seemingly disjointed structure,<sup>376</sup> more recent approaches have highlighted points of unity between the text's two halves.<sup>377</sup> Despite this corrective, the medial context of the first half generally still receives the most attention.<sup>378</sup> The following remarks likewise emphasize the structural unity of "Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe," but focus on the way in which mediality and epistemology intersect in the text's recognition scenes and how these scenes reflect the central concerns of Keller's realism. In the first half of the novella, Viggi reads and recognizes his own letters, and this scene leads to the public exposure of the fraud. In the second half of the novella, the private, retrospective authentication of the letter exchange transpires after a series of visual encounters between Wilhelm and Gritli that culminate in Wilhelm's self-recognition. Taken together, the

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<sup>376</sup> See, for instance Barry G. Thomas, "The Function of the Eyes in Gottfried Keller's 'Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe,'" *Monatshefte* 66, no. 1 (1974): 48. and Luck, *Gottfried Keller als Literaturkritiker*, 583 n174.

<sup>377</sup> See, for instance, Julia Augart, "Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe: Zur Austauschbarkeit von Identität, Geschlecht und Gefühl im Medium Brief," in *Gottfried Keller, Die Leute von Seldwyla. Kritische Studien – Critical Essays*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hahn and Uwe Seja (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), esp. 210; Erika Swales, *The Poetics of Scepticism: Gottfried Keller and Die Leute von Seldwyla* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 151–54; Roy C. Cowen, "Reading Keller's *Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe*," *Pacific Coast Philology* 34, no. 1 (1999): 72–79. Cowen breaks down the events in the text into five sections, which, he suggests, recalls "the symmetry of the five-act dramatic structure advocated by Gustav Freytag in his *Technik des Dramas*" (77). Viggi's recognition scene would, in this system, occur during act three. While I think Cowen is right to emphasize the symmetry of the text, I do not see sufficient evidence to indicate that Keller was playing with dramatic form.

<sup>378</sup> See esp. Günter, *Im Vorhof der Kunst*, 125–35. and Bernhard Siegert, *Relais: Gesckicke der Literatur als Epoche der Post, 1751-1913* (Berlin: Verlag Brinkmann & Bose, 1993), 138–46.

two halves of the novella render recognition (*anagnorisis*) as a reading practice (*anagnosis*) that generates knowledge about the congruence of reality and literature.<sup>379</sup> Furthermore, the recognition scenes in the second half of the novella *replicate* features of the recognition scenes in the first half and give the text a sense of coherence it otherwise seems to lack.

As Chapter Three demonstrated, Keller's realism refracts a range of literary discourses. This chapter shows that the modes of recognition presented in "Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe" are tied especially to nineteenth-century epistemology and media, specifically to the anthropological recognition that would be promulgated by the genre of the case study. The following remarks begin by clarifying these models and illustrating their role within the two prefaces to the *Seldwyla* cycle. After showing that "Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe" exemplifies the poetological impulses of the prefaces, the chapter concludes with a discussion of some of Keller's personal doodles, which indicate that the blurring of art and life apparent in the novella's recognition scenes influenced his creative process.

#### **GNOTHI SEAUTON: EPISTOLARITY, SELF-RECOGNITION, AND KELLER'S REALISM**

From roughly 1856 to 1873/74, Keller kept a brief list of key terms and themes for the second volume of the *Seldwyla* cycle (HKKA 21:417-23). The final entry on the front side of the page, written in ink and crossed out in pencil, reads "die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe. Briefsteller"

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<sup>379</sup> Here, as elsewhere in this study, I use the term reading to refer to the engagement with written or printed words. There is, of course, overlap between reading and viewing practices – especially in poetic realist texts, which are notoriously interested in visual media – and it is not always possible to draw a clear line between the two processes. Indeed, the recognition scene in the latter half of "Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe" is in fact indebted to Wilhelm's reception of a particular book comprising both text and image. Such intermediality notwithstanding, the overlap between reading and recognition in poetic realist texts is notable because the intra- and extradiegetic readers are engaging with the same types of media and coming to similar insights into mimetic literature.

(HKKA 21:418-419).<sup>380</sup> While the term “Briefsteller” had originally designated a person composing letters – and Viggi and Wilhelm are both referred to as such (HKKA 5:124, 138) –, by the end of the seventeenth century it had come to refer to an instructional book on letter writing.<sup>381</sup> A typical *Briefsteller* would include sample letters appropriate to a variety of situations, as well as general rules of style and mechanics.<sup>382</sup> Eighteenth-century *Briefsteller*, like Christian Fürchtegott Gellert’s 1751 *Briefe, nebst einer praktischen Abhandlung von dem guten Geschmacke in Briefen*, proposed that letters should imitate oral conversation.<sup>383</sup> This style soon came to dominate literature, particularly in the Sturm und Drang.<sup>384</sup>

Karl Philipp Moritz, for example, would contend in his 1783 “Anleitung zum Briefschreiben” that “der Werth eines Briefes [besteht] darinn [...], daß er ein getreuer Abdruck von der eignen Wendung in den Gedanken, und in dem mündlichen Ausdruck eines jeden sey.”<sup>385</sup> The medial metaphor (“Abdruck”) was common at this time: Jürgen Habermas notes that

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<sup>380</sup> Karl Pörnbacher claims that “Briefsteller” was a working title for the novella, but he does not cite any supporting documentation. I do not believe that the evidence in the HKKA necessarily supports this interpretation. See Pörnbacher, “Nachwort,” 81.

<sup>381</sup> Reinhard M.G. Nickisch, “Briefsteller,” in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Klaus Weimar, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), 257–58. For a reading of the novella that takes into account the history of epistolarity, see Augart, “Zur Austauschbarkeit und Identität, Geschlecht und Gefühl.”

<sup>382</sup> Nickisch, “Briefsteller,” 257, 258.

<sup>383</sup> “[Ein Brief] vertritt doch die Stelle einer mündlichen Rede, und deswegen muß er sich der Art zu denken und zu reden, die in Gesprächen herrscht, mehr nähern, als einer sorgfältigen und geputzten Schreibart. Er ist eine freye Nachahmung des guten Gesprächs.” Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, “Briefe, nebst einer praktischen Abhandlung von dem guten Geschmacke in Briefen,” in *Roman, Briefsteller*, ed. Bernd Witte et al., *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989), 111.

<sup>384</sup> Albrecht Koschorke, *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr: Mediologie des 18. Jahrhunderts* (München: Fink, 1999), 192.

<sup>385</sup> Karl Philipp Moritz, “Anleitung zum Briefschreiben,” in *Briefsteller*, ed. Albert Meier and Christof Wingertzahn, vol. 9, *Sämtliche Werke* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2008), 10. Emphasis added. The accompanying *Briefsteller* (1793) was originally slated to appear with Johann Friedrich Vieweg, whose son Eduard would become Keller’s publisher. See the commentary in Karl Philipp Moritz, *Briefsteller*, ed. Albert Meier and Christof Wingertzahn, vol. 9, *Sämtliche*

the eighteenth century conceived of the letter as an “Abdruck der Seele” and that particularly successful letters were commonly referred to as “zum Drucke schön.”<sup>386</sup> These were no throw-away expressions and did much more than indicate the translation of intimate private discourse into the public sphere. As Elliot Schreiber remarks, such language “suggest[s] that the subject was popularly conceived among the bourgeoisie as that which is capable of producing imprints of itself in print.”<sup>387</sup>

For Moritz, this notion of the self extended beyond models of epistolarity and informed his anthropological project, represented by his journal *ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ oder Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde als ein Lesebuch für Gelehrte und Ungelehrte*, the first volume of which appeared the same year as the “Anleitung zum Briefschreiben.”<sup>388</sup> Already the title, which includes the Delphic maxim “Know thyself” (gnothi seauton), indicates that the *Magazin* aimed to generate self-knowledge via self-recognition, a process Moritz described in more detail upon announcing the program:

[W]elch ein wichtiges Werk für die Menschheit könnte dieses werden! das wäre noch der einzige Weg, wie das menschliche Geschlecht *durch sich selber mit sich selber bekannter werden*, und sich zu einem höhern Grade der Vollkommenheit emporschwingen könnte, so wie ein einzelner Mensch durch Erkenntnis seiner selbst vollkommener wird. [...] *Das würde alsdann einmal ein allgemeiner Spiegel werden, worin das menschliche Geschlecht sich beschauen könnte.*<sup>389</sup>

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Werke (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2008), 468. My discussion of Moritz draws heavily on Elliot Schreiber’s analysis of the *Magazin*. See Elliott Schreiber, *The Topography of Modernity: Karl Philipp Moritz and the Space of Autonomy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 131–53.

Schreiber references the same passage from the “Anleitung” on pg. 136.

<sup>386</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, 2nd edition (Neuwied am Rhein/Berlin: Luchterhand, 1965), 61.

Referenced also in Schreiber, *The Topography of Modernity*, 135.

<sup>387</sup> Schreiber, *The Topography of Modernity*, 135.

<sup>388</sup> Schreiber, 136.

<sup>389</sup> Karl Philipp Moritz, “Aussichten zu einer Experimentalseelenlehre,” in *Erfahrung, Sprache, Denken*, ed. Horst Günther, vol. 3, Werke (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1981), 90. Referenced also in Schreiber, *The Topography of Modernity*, 132.

Whether or not Moritz ultimately held to this notion of selfhood,<sup>390</sup> the stated aspirations of the *Magazin* are important for several reasons. First, Moritz proposes here an anthropological program of self-recognition that relies upon the production and consumption of printed material. By reading collected case studies, the individual could become more familiar with his or her own self. The collected texts would serve as a mirror for humankind, thus extending self-knowledge to society more broadly. Second, Moritz's case studies blur the boundaries not only between science and literature, but also between reality and literature. This is due in part to the institutional status of psychology in the eighteenth century, which drew its material from both reality and works of literature.<sup>391</sup>

This conception of the case would find particular resonance in the nineteenth century, not least because the booming periodical press would encourage the composition and dissemination of case studies or case-like texts.<sup>392</sup> In fact, Moritz's contemporaries drew on a different notion of the *Fall* as *Vorfall* to conceptualize the relationship between literature and reality in such a way that paved the way for poetic realism. Lessing, for instance, would formulate in his theory of the fable an emerging understanding of literature as based upon external reality: "Ich will nicht sagen, die moralische Lehre werde in der Fabel durch eine Handlung ausgedrückt; sondern

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<sup>390</sup> Schreiber contends that the self, in Moritz's view, is ultimately unknowable. "In contrast to Habermas's portrayal of the rise of the bourgeois public sphere, and with it the discipline of psychology, Moritz problematizes the notion that the privacy of the self can be genuinely experienced. The self, according to Moritz, is private even to oneself." Schreiber, *The Topography of Modernity*, 132.

<sup>391</sup> "Insofern die Psychologie am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts zwar empirische Methoden erprobt, aber noch nicht als wissenschaftliche Disziplin institutionalisiert ist, kann ihr ein empirischen Darstellungsformen orientierter Roman [e.g. *Anton Reiser*] ebenso als Fallbeispiel dienen wie diejenigen Berichte über psychisch mehr oder weniger auffällige Individuen, die Moritz im *Magazin* veröffentlicht." Nicolas Pethes, *Literarische Fallgeschichten: Zur Poetik einer epistemischen Schreibweise* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2016), 57–58. For a discussion of Moritz's role in the development of the literary case study, see Pethes, 55–73.

<sup>392</sup> Pethes, *Literarische Fallgeschichten*, 22, 31–34.

ich will lieber ein Wort von einem weitem Umfang suchen und sagen, der allgemeine Satz werde durch die Fabel *auf einen einzeln Fall zurückgeführt*.”<sup>393</sup> It is in precisely these terms that Keller would describe the relationship between reality and literature at the beginning of “Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe”: “Diese Geschichte zu erzählen, würde eine müßige Nachahmung sein, wenn sie nicht auf einem wirklichen Vorfall beruhte, zum Beweise, wie tief im Menschenleben jede jener Fabeln wurzelt, auf welche die großen alten Werke gebaut sind” (HKKA 4:74).<sup>394</sup> Keller uses the term “fable” in a different sense than Lessing, who is interested in the Aesopian genre, but the point is that both describe the rootedness of literature *in reality*.<sup>395</sup>

This is not to claim, however, a direct line between Keller’s realism and eighteenth-century (or even earlier) conceptions of the case. Keller’s rendering of the relationship between reality, literature, and self-recognition would also be refracted through an important nineteenth-

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<sup>393</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, “Abhandlungen zur Fabel,” in *Werke 1758-1759*, ed. Gunter E Grimm, vol. 4, *Werke und Briefe* (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997), 368. Emphasis in original. “Das ist natürlich nicht der Fallbegriff der Wissenschaftstheorie, sondern die [...] allgemeinere Semantik von ‘Vorfall’. Gerade durch diese Auffassung unterstreicht Lessings Bestimmung aber ein neues Literaturverständnis, das die Literatur nicht mehr an vorgegebenen abstrakten Ideen ausrichtet, sondern ihre Beziehbarkeit auf die empirisch konkrete Wirklichkeit fordert.” Pethes, *Literarische Fallgeschichten*, 28.

<sup>394</sup> For a discussion of this opening and its implications for realist literary production, see Downing, *Double Exposures*, 92–93. “Keller presents his tale as simultaneously a repetition of Shakespeare’s earlier drama and of a contemporary actual occurrence (*wirklicher Vorfall*), each of which is in turn conceived as itself a repetition of an original *Fabel*. [...] Thus, his tale derives its realist quality from its retelling both of the ‘actual event’ and of the reality that constantly reveals itself as a repetition of an *Urfabel*.” For a detailed discussion of the title and the opening passage, including the edits Keller made to the novella’s opening passage, see Holub, *Reflections of Realism*, 103–8.

<sup>395</sup> While the events of “Romeo und Julia” are grounded in an empirically verifiable event, not all of Keller’s works are tied to real cases. In fact, his use of adages elsewhere in the *Seldwyla* cycle – including in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” – will bring his “Fälle” more in line with the exempla literature from which Lessing sought to distance himself. See Rainer Nägele, “Keller’s Cellar Vaults: Intrusions of the Real in Gottfried Keller’s Realism,” in *Rethinking Emotion. Interiority and Exteriority in Premodern, Modern, and Contemporary Thought*, ed. Rüdiger Campe and Julia Weber (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 189. Pethes, *Literarische Fallgeschichten*, 28.

century thinker: Ludwig Feuerbach, with whom he studied in 1848/49 in Heidelberg.<sup>396</sup> Briefly, Feuerbach argues in his major anthropotheological work, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, that God is nothing more than a mirror reflection of man: “*Die Religion ist die Reflexion, die Spiegelung des menschlichen Wesens in sich selbst. [...] Gott ist der Spiegel des Menschen.*”<sup>397</sup> The proper, i.e. anthropological, understanding of religion thus implies self-knowledge, for the encounter with an object – whether God or something else – reveals one’s own self. “An dem Gegenstande wird daher der Mensch *seiner selbst* bewußt: Das Bewußtsein des Gegenstands ist das *Selbstbewußtsein* des Menschen. Aus dem Gegenstande erkennst du den Menschen; an ihm *erscheint* dir sein Wesen: Der Gegenstand ist sein *offenbares* Wesen, sein *wahres, objektives* Ich. [...] Auch der Mond, auch die Sonne, auch die Sterne rufen dem Menschen das *Γνώθι σαυτόν* [*gnothi seauton*] zu.”<sup>398</sup> In viewing theology properly, i.e. as anthropology, one recognizes God as a mere projection of human qualities.<sup>399</sup> In other words, one experiences self-recognition.

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<sup>396</sup> I am expanding here on Nicolas Saul’s work on Keller and Feuerbach. Saul proposes that Keller deploys mirroring motifs and structures in an effort to generate anthropological self-knowledge. I work from this basic premise and underscore the medial bases of this cognitive process. See Saul, “Poetic Legitimacy after 1848,” esp. 312-15.

<sup>397</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, ed. Werner Schuffenhauer, vol. 5, *Gesammelte Werke* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973), 127. Emphasis in original.

<sup>398</sup> Feuerbach, 5:34. Emphasis in original. For a comparison of Feuerbach’s conception of the subject/object relationship with the metaphor of projection in empathy aesthetics (discussed in Chapter Two), see Müller-Tamm, *Abstraktion als Einfühlung*, 163–72.

<sup>399</sup> Feuerbach frames this recognition in suggestive medial terms. “Aber freilich für diese Zeit, welche das Bild der Sache, die Kopie dem Original, die Vorstellung der Wirklichkeit, den Schein dem Wesen vorzieht, ist diese Verwandlung, weil Enttäuschung, absolute Vernichtung oder doch ruchlose Profanation; denn heilig ist ihr nur die Illusion, profan aber die Wahrheit.” Or later: “Was als *Abdruck, Bild, Ähnlichkeit, Gleichnis* von der Religion und Theologie bezeichnet wird, dürfen wir nur als die *Sache selbst, das Wesen, das Urbild, das Original* erfassen.” Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 5:20 (n1), 131. In many ways, this encapsulates the dichotomy between *Schein* and *Sein* that runs throughout Keller’s works. For a discussion of these categories in relation to Feuerbach and Rousseau, as well as references to some of the major scholarship on the issue, see Mark Lehrer, “Keller’s Anthropological Realism: The Scientific Underpinnings of the Early Prose,” *The German Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (Autumn 1987): 567–81.

The scholarship has long identified Keller's frequent use of mirrors and mirroring at the motivic and structural levels as both indebted to Feuerbach and emblematic of Keller's works, and already Walter Benjamin would comment on the prominent motif.<sup>400</sup> "Eine Spiegelwelt ist die Welt der Kellerschen Schriften – freilich auch darin, daß irgend etwas in ihr von Grund auf verkehrt, rechts und links darinnen vertauscht ist. Während das Tätige, Gewichtige in ihr scheinbar unangetastet seine Ordnung währt, wechselt das Männliche ins Weibliche, das Weibliche ins Männliche unmerklich hinüber."<sup>401</sup> Benjamin's pronouncement is only the most famous, and a long tradition of scholarship has shown that Keller uses mirroring not in the service of a kind of naïve mimesis, but in order to invert categories like the male and female, human and animal, original and copy.<sup>402</sup>

But the mirroring motif also holds broader significance for recognition. Because Keller inverts concepts like original and copy, the category of mimesis is destabilized.<sup>403</sup> The consequences for recognition are subtle: If that first level of Aristotelean recognition ('This individual is a So-and-so') depends on identifying something *as a copy of an original*, the inversion of these categories means that one has to identify *the original of the copy*. Rather than generating a reality effect, the omnipresence of the copy instead draws attention to its own artificiality, i.e. to its status *as copy*. To recall, Aristotle describes recognition and mimesis as

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<sup>400</sup> See esp. Saul, "Poetic Legitimacy after 1848."

<sup>401</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Gottfried Keller," in *Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. II.1, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), 291.

<sup>402</sup> See Paul Fleming, "Der Schmerz des Realismus: Der Körper in Kellers *Spiegel, das Käzchen*," in *Organismus und Gesellschaft: Der Körper in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des Realismus (1830-1930)*, ed. Christiane Arndt and Silke Brodersen (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2011), 73.

<sup>403</sup> Downing refers throughout his study to "chiastic mimesis," which is a particularly apt way of describing Keller's transformation of the principle. Downing, *Double Exposures*.

mutually constitutive: we find an object pleasing when we recognize it as a representation. But when this type of recognition is absent, the object is only capable of producing pleasure vis-à-vis its representational means, e.g. workmanship. Keller, by inverting the categories of original and copy, *joins these two processes together*. Because the copy paradoxically *precedes* the original, the representational means are foregrounded from the outset. Thus, by recognizing something as an original of a copy, instead of the other way around, we become aware of a work's constructed nature *and* experience a reality effect.

The recognition scenes in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” involve just this type of inversion. And beyond reflecting Feuerbachian and Enlightenment models of recognition, the novella illustrates the broader significance of recognition within one of the nineteenth century's most prominent generic forms.

### **SELDWYLA'S *FALLGESCHICHTEN***

The *Seldwyla* cycle as a whole, Nicholas Saul notes, has a mirrored structure, with the novellas from volume two picking up on the motifs from their counterparts in volume one.<sup>404</sup> This feature extends further to the untitled prefaces to each volume, each of which reflects upon the (non-)representative status of the city of Seldwyla within Switzerland and the novellas collected within the cycle. In the preface to volume one, Keller describes some of the unique characteristics of Seldwyla and its residents. Although the city derives its wealth from the surrounding forests, this prosperity does not extend to the Seldwylans themselves. “[D]ies ist

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<sup>404</sup> Saul, “Poetic Legitimacy after 1848,” 311. “[T]he mirror device features in Keller not only at the micro- or subtextual level. At the macrolevel it is a major structural feature of the entire collection *Die Leute von Seldwyla*. Thus Keller takes enormous pains to ensure that the tales in each half of the collection, despite the eighteen-year difference in their gestation, mirror each other precisely in motif and meaning around the axis of parts one and two.”

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” (HKKA 4:7). This economic precarity is exemplified by young Seldwylian men who carry out “eine[n] trefflichen Schuldenverkehr[.]” (HKKA 4:8) but are unable to achieve lasting prosperity. “[S]o wie einer die Grenze der besagten blühenden Jahre erreicht, wo die Männer anderer Städtlein etwa anfangen erst recht in sich zu gehen und zu erstarken, so ist er in Seldwyla fertig; *er muß fallen lassen* und hält sich, wenn er ein ganz gewöhnlicher Seldwyler ist, ferner am Orte auf als ein Entkräfteter und *aus dem Paradies des Kredites Verstoßener*” (HKKA 4:8; emphasis added). Reaching maturity in Seldwyla involves falling, failing, going bankrupt: *fallieren*.<sup>405</sup> Expelled from financial paradise, these Seldwylians give up their credit-based profession, with some serving as mercenaries or going on adventures abroad, and others learning how to perform menial work at home. The collected *Fallgeschichten* gathered under the title *Die Leute von Seldwyla* thus serve as a retrospective accounting of the *Schulden* of the fallen and bankrupt.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> The term appears once in the first preface (HKKA 4:10) and repeatedly in the novellas. See also Jörg Kreienbrock, “Das Kreditparadies Seldwyla: Zur Beziehung von Ökonomie und Literatur in Gottfried Kellers *Die Leute von Seldwyla*,” in *Gottfried Keller, Die Leute von Seldwyla. Kritische Studien – Critical Essays*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hahn and Uwe Seja (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 132. “Dieses Fallieren ist der Fall des Einzelnen aus dem Paradies des Kredits, in welchem er sowohl schuldig als auch unschuldig war.”

<sup>406</sup> Kreienbrock differentiates the Seldwylian fall from the biblical fall on the basis of a different form of temporality. “Kredit als ein Versprechen auf die Zukunft wird nicht mehr gewährt. [...] Zeit als das entscheidende Medium, in dem sich Mehrwert aber auch Verlust entfalten können, ist den Fallierten entzogen. Im Gegensatz zum Sündenfall der Bibel – die einen Fall in die Zeit, d.h. die Sterblichkeit darstellt – fallen die Ruinierten Seldwylas aus der Zeit heraus. Ihrer Existenz am Rande mangelt es an Zukünftigkeit, ihr Schicksal ist ein seltsames, das sich auf kein Ziel hinbewegt. Sie sind unwiederbringlich aus dem Paradies der unschuldig Schuldigen ausgeschlossen.” Kreienbrock, 133. While I agree that the fallen Seldwylians are forever expelled from economic paradise, I do not believe that they are utterly dissociated from a sense of futurity. In fact, it is precisely the *Gefallene* who are given an afterlife of sorts in prose, with their fates recorded as *Fallgeschichten*.

After providing a detailed accounting of Seldwyla's economy and its inhabitants' enthusiasm for politics, which grows in inverse proportion to the amount of circulating capital, Keller goes on to claim that these features of the populace are not, in fact, reflected in the subsequent novellas. "Doch nicht solche Geschichten, wie sie in dem beschriebenen Charakter von Seldwyla liegen, will ich eigentlich in diesem Büchlein erzählen, sondern einige sonderbare Abfälle, die so zwischen durch passierten, gewissermaßen ausnahmsweise, und doch auch gerade nur zu Seldwyla vor sich gehen konnten" (HKKA 4:12). The tales are mere "Abfälle" – scraps, waste<sup>407</sup> – that lack exemplary status. And yet, the collected novellas reflect the very features Keller claims to eschew. In other words, the fact that the depicted events are only possible in Seldwyla makes the "Abfälle" both exceptional *and* representative, i.e. paradoxically representative and representatively paradoxical *Fallgeschichten*.<sup>408</sup> That is, they are case studies *par excellence*.<sup>409</sup>

By the time volume two is published, Seldwyla itself has changed drastically, and thus the collected tales assume a new status. First, however, Keller addresses the reception of the first volume. "Seit die erste Hälfte dieser Erzählungen erschienen, streiten sich etwa sieben Städte im Schweizerlande darum, welche unter ihnen mit Seldwyla gemeint sei" (HKKA 5:7). If one takes

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<sup>407</sup> "In the first instance the term of course suggests deviations from the norm, and in this sense the telling of events 'die so zwischendurch passierten, gewissermaßen ausnahmsweise' places the cycle firmly within the German novella tradition. But for the German reader there are disconcerting overtones to 'Abfälle' which suggest that the stories are no more than waste products." Swales, *The Poetics of Scepticism*, 63.

<sup>408</sup> See here Kreienbrock, "Das Kreditparadies Seldwyla," 117. "Gottfried Keller erzählt in den einzelnen Novellen keine charakteristischen Geschichten, nichts Typisches, sondern im Gegenteil das Untypische, die Ausnahme, das Abfällige. Und doch gerade in diesem Irregulären und Abseitigen beweist sich die Einzigartigkeit Seldwylas."

<sup>409</sup> For more on the paradoxical status of the case, see Susanne Lüdemann, "Literarische Fallgeschichte: Schillers *Verbrecher aus verllorener Ehre* und Kleists *Michael Kohlhaas*," in *Das Beispiel: Epistemologie des Exemplarischen*, ed. Jens Ruchatz, Stefan Willer, and Nicolas Pethes (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007), esp. 208-9.

Keller at his word, the readers of volume one, in line with Lessing, insist upon identifying literature with reality. In response, he claims that Seldwyla itself is representative of all cities in Switzerland, and even those beyond its borders. “Weil er [der Verfasser] aber schon eine Heimat besitzt, die hinter keinem jener ehrgeizigen Gemeinwesen zurücksteht, so suchte er sie dadurch zu beschwichtigen, daß er ihnen vorgab, es rage in jeder Stadt und in jedem Tale der Schweiz ein Türmchen von Seldwyla, und diese Ortschaft sei mithin *als eine Zusammenstellung solcher Türmchen, als eine ideale Stadt* zu betrachten” (HKKA 5:7; emphasis added).<sup>410</sup> Seldwyla, here, is a composite of every Swiss city, a representative collection of these cities’ characteristics. In other words, Seldwyla is an assemblage of cases, rather than a case in and of itself.

This contrived concession to the reader comes to assume truth value, for Seldwyla has indeed lost the very features that made it unique. Or rather, the rest of the world has become Seldwyla.<sup>411</sup>

[S]ein sonst durch Jahrhunderte gleich gebliebener Charakter [hat sich] in weniger als zehn Jahren geändert [...] und [droht] sich ganz in sein Gegenteil zu verwandeln [...]. Oder, wahrer gesagt, hat sich das allgemeine Leben so gestaltet, daß die besonderen Fähigkeiten und Nücken der wackeren Seldwyler sich herrlicher darin entwickeln können, ein günstiges Fahrwasser, ein dankbares Ackerfeld daran haben, auf welchem gerade sie Meister sind und dadurch zu gelungenen, beruhigten Leuten werden, die sich nicht mehr von der braven übrigen Welt unterscheiden (HKKA 5:8).

The tales collected in volume two do not, however, reflect this representativity. Since Seldwyla has ceased to exist as such, Keller has compiled tales that reflect Seldwyla as it once was. “[Die Seldwyler] sehen, wie gesagt, schon aus wie andere Leute; es ereignet sich nichts mehr unter ihnen, was der beschaulichen Aufzeichnung würdig wäre, und es ist daher an der Zeit, in ihrer

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<sup>410</sup> See here Kreienbrock, “Das Kreditparadies Seldwyla,” 125. “Seldwyla ist undefinierbar, es hält sich an keine Grenze, bordet über. Es ist genau diese beständige Grenzüberschreitung, welche es dem Leser schließlich nicht mehr erlaubt, zwischen Ausnahme und Regel, Innen und Außen, Besonderem und Allgemeinem zu unterscheiden.”

<sup>411</sup> Kreienbrock also points out this particular reversal. See Kreienbrock, 126.

Vergangenheit und den guten lustigen Tagen der Stadt noch eine kleine Nachernte zu halten, welcher Thätigkeit die nachfolgenden weiteren fünf Erzählungen ihr Dasein verdanken” (HKKA 5:10). This “Nachernte,” something like the “Abfällsel” to the “Abfällsel” comprising volume one, thus assumes marginal status, an imperfect reminder of something irretrievably past. The tales preserve the exceptional status of Seldwyla, where the exception was the rule, before the exceptional ceased to exist as such.<sup>412</sup>

Importantly, the second preface links the question of exemplarity versus representativity to the reception of the first volume of the *Seldwyla* cycle. The collection of *Fallgeschichten* thematizes its own reception, and thus suggests a link between reading and recognition. The invoked readers of Keller’s cycle, so convinced that the texts reflect events in their exceptional towns that Keller proclaims Seldwyla’s universality, perceive the identity of literature with their own reality. Just as Moritz’s readers recognized themselves in the “allgemeiner Spiegel” of his collected case studies, and Feuerbachian anthropotheologians see themselves reflected in the objects they observe and conceptualize, so too do Keller’s readers perceive themselves within Seldwyla. This is a cornerstone of Keller’s works, so many of which feature protagonists who struggle to differentiate literature from reality.<sup>413</sup> The following remarks specify the medial

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<sup>412</sup> “Keller berichtet im zweiten Band von einer unwiederbringlichen Vergangenheit; er stellt nicht das gegenwärtige Wirtschaftssystem Seldwylas dar, sondern dessen vergangene Existenz als zur Regel gewordene Ausnahme. [...] Der charakteristische Einzelfall verliert seine Spezifität und damit seinen literarischen Wert [...]. Kommt es zur Nivellierung von Einzelfall und Norm, Ausnahme und Regel, von Spezifischem und Charakteristischem, kommt es zum Ende des Erzählens. Die Schilderung Seldwylas, die das Allgemeine im Besonderen darstellen soll, muß leer laufen, wenn die Differenz Seldwylas zu seiner Umwelt eingeebnet ist und die sonderbaren Abfällsel nicht gerade nur in Seldwyla vor sich gehen konnten.” Kreienbrock, 127.

<sup>413</sup> See on this point esp. Hart, *Readers and Their Fictions*. Hart examines the propensity of Keller’s characters to imitate literature and puts pressure on the tendency in the older scholarship to treat Keller’s works as didactic. “Rather than enforcing social norms via the encouragement or frustration of the instinct for imitation, these books within books and reading heroes are part of a less literal (and more quixotic) project of defining or identifying the borders between

parameters according to which Keller's protagonists confront the congruence between literature and reality, and they unfold the epistemological ramifications of this process for his realism.

### **“DIE MIßBRAUCHTEN LIEBESBRIEFE”**

Of all the stories in the *Seldwyla* cycle, “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” is the only one focused on the nineteenth-century literary marketplace.<sup>414</sup> It provides the clearest picture of how the economics of publishing intersect with Keller's aesthetics and poetics and illustrates in exemplary fashion how the extradiegetic and intradiegetic readers recognize the congruence of reality and literature. Despite its apparent superficiality and Keller's own characterization of it as one of his lesser works, “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” offers the kind of insight into Keller's own overarching aesthetics and poetics generally garnered from more substantive works like *Der grüne Heinrich*.<sup>415</sup> This is due in large part to the self-reflexive context of the novella.<sup>416</sup>

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fiction/fantasy and life – borders which the mind crosses freely, giving rise to the main and ubiquitous issue of Keller's fiction: that of imagination and its conflict with social reality” (13). Hart suggests that Keller's depictions of readers and literature change over time and that he gradually “regard[s] imaginative creativity as a positive value – a position he reaches only after coming to terms with his own literature's incapacity for influencing errant readers” (16). For didactic approaches to the topos of reading within Keller's works, see Siegfried Mews, “Zur Funktion der Literatur in Kellers *Die Leute von Seldwyla*,” *The German Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (May 1970): 394–405. and Heinrich Richartz, *Literaturkritik als Gesellschaftskritik: Darstellungsweise und politisch-didaktische Intention in Gottfried Kellers Erzählkunst* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1975).

<sup>414</sup> For an excellent reading of the novella in terms of the aesthetic demands of the nineteenth-century literary marketplace, see Silvia Serena Tschopp, “Kunst und Volk: Robert Eduard Prutz' und Gottfried Kellers Konzept einer zugleich ästhetischen und populären Literatur,” in *Kunstautonomie und literarischer Markt: Konstellationen des Poetischen Realismus*, ed. Heinrich Detering and Gerd Eversberg (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2003), 13–30.

<sup>415</sup> In an 1860 letter to Vieweg, Keller described the text as “eine von den unbedeutenderen” (HKKA 21:498).

<sup>416</sup> In his reading of Georg Nase's self-reflexive writing, Siegert argues that Keller criticizes autoreferential (i.e. modern) literature. “Keller denunziert eine Autoreferentialität, die der Literaturwissenschaft inzwischen als Merkmal moderner Literatur gilt; er inkriminiert die Dummheit einer Verdoppelung, in der das Schreiben sich selbst zum Gegenstand nimmt.” Siegert, *Relais*, 141. This interpretation fails to take into account the work of humor and irony in

The story takes as its starting point Viggi's participation in the rapidly expanding periodical industry.<sup>417</sup> While eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century periodicals appealed to an educated, elite audience, periodicals in the second half of the nineteenth century were consumed by a much broader readership seeking entertainment.<sup>418</sup> Family magazines like *Die Gartenlaube* – to which Viggi subscribes (HKKA 5:98) – featured a wide range of material and appealed especially to a female readership.<sup>419</sup> Technical innovations made printing both cheaper and quicker, and generous honoraria meant that authors were no longer dependent upon a system of patronage and could in fact make a living by writing.<sup>420</sup> This, in turn, opened the doors to countless aspiring writers.<sup>421</sup>

Although Viggi operates within the nineteenth-century literary marketplace, he bases much of his reality upon eighteenth-century literary discourse. Most obviously, he envisions achieving literary fame with a genre that had already reached its pinnacle.<sup>422</sup> Even though Viggi is an untalented writer, one of the major reasons his efforts fail so spectacularly is that he lives

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the novella. While Keller's derision toward certain modes of literary production is obvious, the various autobiographical references scattered throughout the text indicate that Keller is engaging in light self-parody. Already the motivic overlap with other novellas in the *Seldwyla* cycle suggests, as Erika Swales puts it, that "Keller discreetly questions the processes of his own poeticisations." Swales, *The Poetics of Scepticism*, 150.

<sup>417</sup> For an overview of the nineteenth-century periodical press, see Helmstetter, *Die Geburt des Realismus*, 47–65.

<sup>418</sup> Helmstetter, 47–65.

<sup>419</sup> Helmstetter, 76–77.

<sup>420</sup> Helmstetter, 56, 35.

<sup>421</sup> "Auf ihren 'tausend grauen Blättern', wie Kellers Umschreibung des Rotationsdruckerzeugnisses ist, entsteht eine Literatur nicht von unverwechselbaren, weil individuellen Autoren, sondern von Schreibern, die so beliebig austauschbar sind wie ihre Pseudonyme. Sie produzieren eine Standardliteratur für ein Medium, dessen Kapazität aufgrund seiner Reproduktionsgeschwindigkeit derart groß ist, daß es von vornherein auf eine Unersetzlichkeit von Autoren – wie einen Goethe zu dem einen Goethe gemacht hat – verzichten muß." Siebert, *Relais*, 140.

<sup>422</sup> For more on this context, see Augart, "Zur Austauschbarkeit und Identität, Geschlecht und Gefühl," 200–201.

life as though it were literature, assuming, for instance, the roles of Bodmer and Lavater to revive the Sturm und Drang. This blurring of external reality and literature forms the cornerstone of “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” and not just in the first half of the novella.<sup>423</sup> Wilhelm, too, struggles to negotiate the boundary between life and literature, and is likewise overly eager to treat the two realms as interchangeable. Both characters relate to texts in ways that mirror each other, and notably, both characters reflect aspects of Keller’s working process or biography. This self-referentiality in turn sets the stage for the subsequent recognition scenes.

Viggi is established already early in the novella as a Keller-like figure when he undergoes a makeover of sorts as part of his transformation into a writer. He grows his hair out, grows a pointed beard, and begins wearing fake glasses, effectively becoming a Keller look-alike.<sup>424</sup> He then tries to become a realist writer, using life as fodder for literature.<sup>425</sup> While out on a walk, he jots down several ideas:

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<sup>423</sup> Kaiser describes the focus of the story as the “Herstellung von Kunst aus Leben.” Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 362. Rolf Selbmann similarly points out the parody of the “falsch verstandene Alternative zwischen Literatur und Wirklichkeit.” Rolf Selbmann, *Gottfried Keller: Romane und Erzählungen* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2001), 88.

<sup>424</sup> SW 4:791 and Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 367.

<sup>425</sup> Christian Rakow argues that Viggi’s writing lacks the “Kontextbezug” characteristic of poetic realist texts: Viggi takes reality and transposes it into a genre-specific form, generating here material suitable for use in a “Handelsnovelle” and elsewhere for use in “Räuberscenen” (HKKA 5:108). “Viggis Literarisierungstendenz gerät in Widerspruch zur beobachteten Umwelt. Die Gewalttat, mit der er seine Dorfgeschichte aufpeppen will, ist eben nicht aus dem dörflichen Kontext, in dem er sich befindet, abgelesen, sondern bleibt genreliterarische Projektion. Sinnbildlich flieht das Bauernmädchen, als Viggi zu schreiben anfängt. Viggis Poesie des abstrakten Zeichens lebt von der Tilgung der Umwelt. Ebendarin unterscheidet sich sein Projekt vom poetisch realistischen Verfahren. War dort die Funktionalität des Zeichens stets nur unter der Bedingung der Motiviertheit (und Re-Motiviertheit) über einen metonymisch herzuleitenden, außerliterarischen Kontext garantiert, so streicht Viggi [...] gerade diesen Kontextbezug.” Rakow, *Die Ökonomien des Realismus*, 228–29. See also on this point Tschopp, “Kunst und Volk,” 28. “Um ein Kunstwerk entstehen zu lassen, bedarf es eines Zusammenspiels von objektiver, durch die natürlichen und gesellschaftlichen Gegebenheiten präjudizierter Erfahrung und subjektivem, künstlerischem Gestaltungswillen, das Wirklichkeit und Ideal in Einklang bringt [...]. Eine Auffassung, welche die Relation zwischen Kunst und Realität als

Dann blieb er vor einem eingerammelten Pflock stehen, auf welchen irgend ein Kind eine tote Blindschleiche gehängt hatte. Er schrieb: ‘Interessantes Detail. Kleiner Stab in Erde gesteckt. Leiche von silbergrauer Schlange darum gewunden, gebrochen im Starrkrampf des Todes. Ameisen kommen aus dem hohlen Innern hervor oder gehen hinein, Leben in die tragische Scene bringend. Die Schlagschatten von einigen schwanken Gräsern, deren Spitzen mit rötlichen Aehren versehen sind, spielen über das Ganze. Ist Merkur tot und hat seinen Stab mit toten Schlangen hier stecken lassen? Letztere Anspielung mehr für Handelsnovelle tauglich. NB. Der Stab oder Pflock ist alt und verwittert, von der gleichen Farbe wie die Schlange; wo ihn die Sonne bescheint, ist er wie mit silbergrauen Härchen besetzt. (Die letztere Beobachtung dürfte neu sein.)’ (HKKA 5:108-9)

While Viggi’s “Studien” (HKKA 5:110) are typically read as a parody of Adolf Widmann’s “Detailrealismus,”<sup>426</sup> they also resemble Keller’s notes in his own *Studienbücher* on potential material for his paintings.<sup>427</sup> For Viggi, such notes would serve as the basis for a “Handelsnovelle,”<sup>428</sup> a term that has two meanings. A novella is of course a literary genre (e.g. a novella about trade) and it is also the legal term for an amendment (e.g. a law retrospectively

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Oppositionsverhältnis bestimmt und die Kunst in idealistischem Sinne als weltenthobenen Bereich versteht, blendet aus, was das Fundament schöpferischer Tätigkeit bildet. Sie erzeugt Literatur, die, wie Viggis Briefe an seine Frau belegen, substanzlos ist und sowohl den präntierten ästhetischen Anspruch als auch die intendierte kommunikative Funktion verfehlt.” While I am in partial agreement with these assessments, the matter is complicated by the fact that many of Keller’s texts, which are written from other works of literature, lack the “Kontextbezug” Rakow misses in Viggi’s studies. For more on the significance of this for Keller’s realism, see Downing’s exemplary analysis of the “Eugenia” tale from *Sieben Legenden*. Downing, *Double Exposures*, 91–128.

<sup>426</sup> Pörnbacher, “Nachwort,” 82–83; Tebben, “Schillers Schatten,” 312; Löb, “A Story of Human Vocation,” 16; Cowen, “Reading Keller’s *Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe*,” 73.

<sup>427</sup> SW 4:792 and Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 360–62. One of Keller’s *Studienbücher* contains, for example, a list of objects and ideas to paint (HKKA 16.1:368-375).

<sup>428</sup> HKKA 5:108, 109. Christian Rakow is right to identify Viggi’s writing practice as “generic projection” that is so focused on literariness that it ignores reality. Rakow, *Die Ökonomien des Realismus*, 228–29. “Viggis Literarisierungstendenz gerät in Widerspruch zur beobachteten Umwelt. Die Gewalttat, mit der er seine Dorfgeschichte aufpeppen will, ist eben nicht aus dem dörflichen Kontext, in dem er sich befindet, abgelesen, sondern bleibt genreliterarische Projektion. Sinnbildlich flieht das Bauernmädchen, als Viggi zu schreiben anfängt. Viggis Poesie des abstrakten Zeichens lebt von der Tilgung der Umwelt. Ebendarin unterscheidet sich sein Projekt vom poetisch realistischen Verfahren. War dort die Funktionalität des Zeichens stets nur unter der Bedingung der Motiviertheit (und Re-Motiviertheit) über einen metonymisch herzuleitenden, außerliterarischen Kontext garantiert, so streicht Viggi [...] gerade diesen Kontextbezug.”

regulating trade).<sup>429</sup> Mercury, god of poetry and commerce, would be an apt figurehead for either.<sup>430</sup>

The mercurial “Handelsnovelle” is similarly important to Wilhelm’s understanding of reality. Like Keller, Wilhelm enthusiastically reads mythological texts, and the novella makes veiled references to Vollmer’s *Vollständiges Wörterbuch der Mythologie aller Nationen*, an alphabetical and illustrated compendium of gods and goddesses from numerous mythological traditions that Keller took with him to Munich in 1840.<sup>431</sup> Wilhelm, a naïve young schoolteacher, is prone to falling in love but is too shy to pursue anyone seriously. Instead, he draws on his mythological knowledge to worship women imaginatively from afar.

So lebte er in seinem Herzen wie ein Pascha und alles Schöne, was Kaffee trank und Strümpfe strickte oder auch müßig ging, gehörte ihm. Dies doch einigermaßen leichtfertige Wesen wissenschaftlich zu begründen oder zu beschönigen war der gute Wilhelm auch *vom Christentum abgefallen* und, obgleich er des Sonntags in der Kinderlehre vorsingen mußte, wo er immer aufs neue den Katechismus erläutern hörte, einer wahrhaft heidnischen Philosophie zugesteuert. Alle Götter und Göttinnen der Mythologieen, welche er gelesen, rief er ins Leben zurück und bevölkerte damit sich zur Kurzweil die Landschaft; je nach der Stimmung des Himmels, der über Seldwyla hing, war er entweder Germane, Grieche oder Indier und behandelte seine Weiber heimlich nach der Art dieser Landsleute. Nur wenn das Wetter gar zu graulich, sein Brot gar zu

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<sup>429</sup> See *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, s.v. “Novelle,” accessed 6 January 2019, [woerterbuchnetz.de](http://woerterbuchnetz.de).

<sup>430</sup> Cf. Tebben, “Schillers Schatten,” 313. “Keller macht deutlich, dass das von der Lebenswelt gebotene Material nicht von sich aus literaturfähig ist (‘Kleiner Stab in Erde gesteckt.’) und es auch nicht dadurch wird, dass es in eine ‘Kunstsprache’ gekleidet wird (‘schwanken Gräsern’). Eine auf diese Weise implizierte Metaphorik ist nicht nur bedeutungslos, sondern lächerlich (‘Ist Merkur tot?’).”

<sup>431</sup> The 1865 version of the novella included a direct reference to Vollmer, but the references in the revised version are slightly obscured (SW 4:780). Keller’s packing list is reproduced in Hans Wysling, ed., *Gottfried Keller. 1819-1890*, 2nd ed. (Zürich, München: Artemis, 1990), 75. Wysling elsewhere recommends interpretative caution, commenting on the packing list: “Das bekundet wohl nichts als den Willen, sich bei der Besichtigung antik-mythologischer Darstellungen in den Münchner Museen orientieren zu können.” The presence of direct references in the early draft of the novella seem to me to warrant a more liberal reading. See Hans Wysling, “Und immer wieder kehrt Odysseus heim: Das ‘Fabelhafte’ bei Gottfried Keller,” in *Gottfried Keller: Elf Essays zu seinem Werk*, ed. Hans Wysling (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1990), 157.

knapp und nirgends ein freundliches Frauenauge zu erblicken war, blies er zuweilen alle diese Götter auseinander und behauptete bei sich selbst, zu einem solchen Leben brauche man gar keinen Gott. (HKKA 5:116; emphasis added)

Wilhelm falls from Christianity and brings pagan deities back to life in order to worship women according to the given tradition, whether Germanic, Greek, or Indian.<sup>432</sup> The type of deity he resurrects – or whether he resurrects any at all – is wholly contingent upon his external circumstances, like the weather, the availability of food, or the mere physical presence of women. That is, Wilhelm imagines into reality material he has read and viewed, unless reality is too unforgiving. Yet the moment reality coincides with his literary-mythological predilections, Wilhelm reverses his religious practices. After he receives Gritli's first letter, he is suddenly converted back to Christianity and offers a prayer of thanksgiving. “[A]ber mitten im Gebet brach er kleinlaut ab, da ihm einfiel, daß der Handel doch nicht ganz zum Beten eingerichtet sei, und er bedauerte fast, daß er so unvorsichtig den christlichen Gott seiner Kindheit wieder eingesetzt hatte, der nicht so lustig mit sich umspringen ließ, wie die Alphabetgötter aus seinen Wörterbüchern” (HKKA 5:119). Gritli's apparent interest in him makes this imaginative process superfluous and brings about a conversion of sorts. The transposition of text/image into reality now has no place, and Wilhelm exchanges his old gods for the Christian God.<sup>433</sup> However, he quickly realizes that his prayer is inappropriate, since “der Handel,” i.e. his presumed budding relationship with Gritli, belongs to the real world, rather than the literary. Whereas Viggi saw fit

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<sup>432</sup> The neglect of reality in favor of worshipping an image recalls the myth of Narcissus, with the obvious difference that Wilhelm is not admiring his own image. One might also draw a parallel with *Faust*, who, in the *Hexenküche*, falls in love with the image he sees in a mirror (!). My thanks to Christopher Wild for pointing out this similarity.

<sup>433</sup> Löb is correct to view the conversion with skepticism: “This does not mean that Feuerbach's pupil, Keller, is trying to preach Christian faith; from beginning to end he treats Wilhelm's conversion with a slightly skeptical mixture of respect and irony.” Löb, “A Story of Human Vocation,” 22.

to use the absence of a mythological deity as fodder for a “Handelsnovelle,” Wilhelm appears to abandon his textual models and adhere to the *Handel* or exchange alone.

The exchange of love letters initiates the economic and sexual “Schuldenverkehr” in the novella<sup>434</sup> and invokes three different figures from Vollmer: Mercury/Hermes (poetry and commerce), Aphrodite (love), and their child Hermaphroditus.<sup>435</sup> Keller’s oeuvre is full of gender-bending figures, and “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” offers only one of many such examples.<sup>436</sup> Much of the humor of the letter exchange derives from the subversion of gender roles: two men write love letters to each other while thinking they are writing to a woman, while the woman writes like a man (“wie ein Kanzlist,” HKKA 5:126) in order to perpetuate the fraud.<sup>437</sup> Even Viggi’s planned titled for the exchange (“Kurtalwino, Briefe zweier

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<sup>434</sup> For more on the intertwinement of these discourses in the nineteenth century, with a focus on their role in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” see Hörisch, *Kopf oder Zahl*, 96–112.

<sup>435</sup> The Sleeping Hermaphroditus sculpture from the Borghese collection is pictured in Vollmer. The Borghese Gladiator of course plays a central role in *Der grüne Heinrich*. See W. Vollmer, *Vollständiges Wörterbuch der Mythologie aller Nationen. Eine gedrängte Zusammenstellung des Wissenswürdigsten aus der Fabel- und Götter-Lehre aller Völker der alten und neuen Welt* (Stuttgart: Hoffmann’sche Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1836), Tafel XXXXI.5.

<sup>436</sup> Kaiser points out a parallel between “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” and “Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster,” but many additional comparisons are possible. Kaiser, *Das gedichtete Leben*, 363. For a rich survey of androgyny in Keller’s works, see Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 207–28. For a detailed discussion of transvestism in “Eugenia,” see Downing, *Double Exposures*, 100–128. Augart downplays the gender-bending in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” suggesting that in the letters, “die geschlechtliche Determinante nicht ins Gewicht fällt.” Augart, “Zur Austauschbarkeit und Identität, Geschlecht und Gefühl,” 211.

<sup>437</sup> Media historical treatments of the novella emphasize Gritli’s position relative to those open to women in the Kittlerian discourse networks of 1800 and 1900. See here Siegert, *Relais*, esp. 142–43; Günter, *Im Vorhof der Kunst*, esp. 129–30. Siegert argues that the “hermaphroditism” in the text is an effect of medial developments. Because the letter exchange is removed from the intimate sphere and addressed to a public, women assume a position in the discourse network previously restricted to men. Since women are able to produce *printed*, rather than merely handwritten texts, it is impossible to determine if a text was authored by a man or woman (143–44).

Zeitgenossen,” HKKA 5:127), is a composite of male and female pen names: Viggi uses the pen name Kurt vom Walde and forces Gritli to use the name Alwine.<sup>438</sup> Keller also famously described Adolf Stahr and Fanny Lewald, a notorious fixture in Berlin literary salons and the inspiration for Viggi and Kätter,<sup>439</sup> in decidedly Aristophanic terms, referring to them in a letter as “das vierbeinige zweigeschlechtige Tintentier.”<sup>440</sup>

As Catriona MacLeod argues, the omnipresent androgyny and transvestism in Keller’s works reflects the polymorphism of his narratives, which cite from a wealth of literary discourses and “[involve] a kind of literary-historical cross-dressing.”<sup>441</sup> This discursive polymorphism reverberates throughout “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe.” Viggi will attempt to achieve literary fame with an androgynous pseudonym, Wilhelm switches effortlessly between pagan and Christian modes of worship,<sup>442</sup> and Gritli operates within both the commercial realm of exchange and the domain of love. Even the letters themselves operate within multiple registers. Viggi is so committed to the idea of purely literary letters that he requires Gritli to note banal daily occurrences on extra pieces of paper that can easily be excised from the compiled manuscript.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> MacLeod argues that this is one example of Viggi’s “literary commodification” of androgyny. MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity*, 214. Hörisch points out that the names already provide a somewhat distorted picture of reality: “Viktor/Viggi/Kurt vom Walde schreibt Gritli/Alwine/Wilhelm.” Hörisch, *Kopf oder Zahl*, 107.

<sup>439</sup> Pörnbacher, “Nachwort,” 83.

<sup>440</sup> MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity*, 210, 213. GB 2:154; 6 March 1856.

<sup>441</sup> MacLeod, 224. MacLeod refers here to *Sieben Legenden*, but the point holds for much, if not all, of Keller’s work.

<sup>442</sup> MacLeod identifies an example of this type of polymorphism in “Die Jungfrau als Ritter” in *Sieben Legenden*. She argues that the Virgin Mary in this tale “is the ultimate cross-dresser, migrating between heaven and earth, between Christianity and paganism, between chastity and eroticism, yet possible only as a poetic fiction.” MacLeod, 226.

<sup>443</sup> Günter points out that this practice in fact nullifies the letters’ relation to sensibility. “Viggi [verordnet] eine säuberliche Trennung zwischen zur Literatur bestimmten Liebesbriefen und privater Korrespondenz und setzt damit das charakteristische Merkmal des empfindsamen Briefes – die Aufhebung der Unterscheidung von öffentlich und privat, allgemein und intim – außer Kraft.” Günter, *Im Vorhof der Kunst*, 128. Tschopp sees this as another example of Viggi’s

Thus, as Julia Augart suggests, the letters simultaneously operate at an aesthetic and a real level.<sup>444</sup> (The irony, as the scholarship frequently points out, is that the only truly “literary” text, Gritli’s notably poetic realist description of the “Schorenhans,” whose witty comments help him procure a free meal, is written on one of these extra, removable pages.<sup>445</sup> While Gritli hopes Viggi will be able to submit the story to one of his “Unterhaltungsblätter” (HKKA 5:123), he promptly rejects this idea and chastises his wife for writing a long letter that requires extra postage.)

Such hybridity emerges forcefully in descriptions of the letters. While the letters exchanged between Gritli and Viggi are the same as those exchanged between Gritli and Wilhelm, barring minimal edits,<sup>446</sup> the respective exchanges are embedded within wholly distinct medial and discursive registers.

In einer Nachschrift bemerkte Viggi: ‘Ich habe mit Vergnügen gesehen, daß Spuren von vergossenen Thränen zwischen Deinen Zeilen zu sehen sind (wenn Du nicht etwa den Schnupfen hattest!). Aber gleichviel, ich trage mich jetzt mit dem Gedanken, ob solche Thränen zwischen den Zeilen bei einer allfälligen Herausgabe im Druck nicht durch einen zarten Tondruck könnten angedeutet werden? Freilich, fällt mir ein, müßte dann wohl die ganze Sammlung facsimiliert werden, was sich indessen überlegen läßt.’ Wilhelm schrieb dagegen in einem Briefe: ‘O liebes Herz, es ist doch traurig, so unerbittlich getrennt zu sein und immer mit der schwarzen Dinte zu sprechen, wo man

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practice of severing “wirklicher und dichterisch evozierter Erfahrung.” Tschopp, “Kunst und Volk,” 25.

<sup>444</sup> Augart, “Zur Austauschbarkeit und Identität, Geschlecht und Gefühl,” 204.

<sup>445</sup> See Günter, *Im Vorhof der Kunst*, 133. “[Es gibt] keine Innerlichkeit und keine psychologische Erklärung, vielmehr folgt sie [die Schorenhans-Erzählung] ganz den Prinzipien des poetischen Realismus. Die ‘kleine närrische Geschichte’ ist eine von denen, die das Leben selbst schreibt, deren ideale Schönheit aber erst unter der verklärenden Hand eines Dichters zum Vorschein gelangen kann.” See also on this point Tebben, “Schillers Schatten,” 326; Rakow, *Die Ökonomien des Realismus*, 221, 229.

<sup>446</sup> Although Gritli initially makes only “d[ie] nötigen Veränderungen” (HKKA 5:119), she gradually begins to assume a more active role in editing the correspondence. In addition to changing the types of salutations, she removes passages like that quoted below, “welche sie nach ihrer Meinung besonders angingen” (HKKA 5:125). As Augart suggests, Gritli’s correspondence with Wilhelm gradually becomes authentic. See Augart, “Zur Austauschbarkeit und Identität, Geschlecht und Gefühl,” 209–10.

das rote Blut möchte reden lassen! Ich habe heute schon zweimal einen frischen Bogen nehmen müssen, weil mir Thränen darauf gefallen sind, und soeben konnte ich einen dritten nur dadurch retten, daß ich schnell die Hand darauf legte. Wenn Du mich nur ein wenig liebst, so verachtest Du mich nicht wegen dieser Schwachheit!' (HKKA 5:125).

While the exaggerated emphasis on tear-stained correspondence evokes discourses of intimacy from the era of *Empfindsamkeit*, the two men respond to the texts in very different ways.<sup>447</sup>

Viggi's interest lies less in the words than in the composite image of text and tears of passion (hopefully not mere sniffles). Inspired by the visual impression his wife's letter makes, he proposes a facsimile edition of the entire exchange. If Viggi is preoccupied with the potential *Abdruck* via modern methods of technological reproduction, Wilhelm is attuned to the sentimental letter as the "Abdruck der Seele."<sup>448</sup>

The exposure of the epistolary fraud puts an end to Gritli's androgynous writing practices. Viggi happens upon Wilhelm's archive of letters from Gritli (i.e. copies of his own

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<sup>447</sup> See Tebben, "Schillers Schatten," 314. "Gritli hört die Stimme des Herzens oder vielmehr des Begehrens wohl und tilgt paradoxerweise gerade jene Passagen aus Wilhelms Briefen, die als intime Selbstentäußerung dem Liebesbrief eigentlich seine Daseinsberechtigung verleihen." For more on the context of intimacy, see Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 61. For more on eighteenth-century conceptions of intimacy and liquidity, see Koschorke, *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr*. Jin Yang points out that Gritli's tears are evoked by Wilhelm's letters but leave their mark on the copies she sends to Viggi, and thus span textual reception and production. This is yet another example of the letters' hybridity. See Jin Yang, "Inflationärer Schriftverkehr: Zum Motiv der Liebesbriefe in Gottfried Kellers Novelle Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe," *Literaturstraße: Chinesisch-deutsches Jahrbuch für Sprache, Literatur und Kultur* 15 (2014): 138.

<sup>448</sup> See here Siegert, *Relais*, 142. "Viggi [will] die Briefe Gritlis gleich faksimilieren lassen. Das heißt aber nichts anderes, als die intime Handschrift der Briefe den Lettern des gedruckten Buchs gleichzusetzen. [...] Anders als Gritli, die sich aus der Wortkunst Wilhelms eine authentische Liebe übersetzt, behandelt Viggi alle Briefe als Postkarten: sie sind von vornherein an eine Öffentlichkeit adressiert."

It should also be noted that Wilhelm mimics the outmoded style of the letters he receives. "[Das Briefchen schien ihm doch etwas kurios und thöricht geschrieben zu sein. 'Ach!' sagte er lächelnd vor sich hin, 'auch bei einem geschenkten Herzen heißt es: dem geschenkten Gaul sieh' nicht ins Maul! Ich will die Antwort in ihrer Weise schreiben, da sie es so liebt und versteht!'" (HKKA 5:118)

letters), and slowly realizes that he has been exchanging passionate love letters with his neighbor. His discovery of the letters comprises the beginning of the novella's second recognition scene. In contradistinction to Nase's experience in front of the mirror, recognition (*anagnorisis*) for Viggi transpires through the act of reading (*anagnosis*) and throws into relief his conception of the relationship between literature and reality. Strolling home from the extended business trip that had facilitated the composition of the letters, Viggi works on composing a new "Studie" ("eine 'Wanderers Heimkehr,'" HKKA 5:127), coming up with the aforementioned title for the letter exchange and incorporating it into a melody, which Wilhelm overhears.

Es war Wilhelm, welcher sich auf den ersten Ton von Herrn Störtelers Gesang erhob und davoneilte. Dafür setzte sich dieser an seinen Platz, als er eine dicke Brieftasche dort liegen sah, die jener offenbar vergessen. 'Was hat,' sagte er, 'dieser Hungerschlucker im Freien zu thun anstatt seine Schulhefte zu mustern? Was Kuckucks hat er hier für ein Archiv bei sich gehabt?' Und ohne weiteres öffnete er das Bündel und fand die Unzahl Briefe Gritlis, welche, obschon auf feines Postpapier geschrieben, doch kaum zusammenzuhalten waren. Er machte sogleich den ersten auf; denn, dachte er, wer weiß, welch' interessantes Geheimnis, welche gute Studie hier zu erbeuten ist! Der Brief fing an 'wenn sich zwei Sterne küssen' u.s.f. Er besah die Handschrift genauer, es war die seiner Frau. Er that den zweiten Brief auf, den dritten, es waren seine Briefe, er fing von hinten an und stieß genau auf den letzten, welchen er geschrieben, alle waren zierlich abgeschrieben und an den Schulmeister adressiert. (HKKA 5:127-28)

Wilhelm's archive becomes another one of Viggi's spoils, i.e. raw material he can adapt into literature. Unconcerned with anything but the letters' literary potential, Viggi sits down and begins to peruse the documents. Wilhelm and Viggi, the interchangeable addressees of Gritli's letters, become here physically interchangeable: Viggi takes Wilhelm's place under the tree and takes possession of the letters Gritli had sent to the latter. The convoluted substitutions mean that Viggi assumes Wilhelm's role as addressee. However, he re-reads and re-cognizes his own letters, which are written in Gritli's handwriting. The "gute Studie" he hopes to loot from reality is nothing more than his own ongoing attempt to do just this.

While Viggi identifies his own letters and realizes that his wife has perpetrated a fraud, full self-recognition is delayed until he realizes that his own reality has become literary. After reading the letters, he rushes home, promptly locks Gritli in the cellar, opens her desk, and finds her collection of letters from both men. Shocked anew, Viggi frantically reexamines the letters and is faced with incontrovertible proof of the fraud. After lamenting the end of his literary masterpiece, Viggi rants about his wife to the empty room.

‘O ich begreife es ganz, aber ich fasse es nicht! – Wer jetzt als ein Fremder, Unbeteiligter diese schöne Geschichte betrachten könnte, wahrhaftig, ich glaube, er könnte sagen, er habe einen guten Stoff gefunden für – ’

Hier brach er ab und schüttelte sich, da eine Ahnung in ihm aufging, daß er nun selbst der Gegenstand einer förmlichen Geschichte geworden sei, und das wollte er nicht, er wollte ein ruhiges und unangefochtenes Leben führen. – ‘Wo ist meine Ruhe, meine Fröhlichkeit,’ sagte er, ‘nur bewegt von leichten Geschäftssorgen, die ich spielend beherrschte? Dies Weib zerstört mir das Leben, nach wie vor; ich hielt sie für eine Gans; sie ist auch eine, aber eine Gans mit Geierkrallen!’

Er lachte und rief: ‘Eine Gans mit Geierkrallen! das ist gut gesagt! Warum fallen mir dergleichen Dinge nicht ein, wenn ich schreibe? Ich werde noch verrückt, es muß ein Ende nehmen!’ (HKKA 5:130)

After proclaiming the potential literary use of the whole affair, Viggi pauses, having finally identified himself as a figure therein. Only someone distanced from the events in question (“ein Fremder, Unbeteiligter”), unable to identify with the given figures, would be able to transform this material into literature. If his literary creations up to this point had simply imitated other models, like sentimental letters, this moment marks the point when his own reality could become literature. This recognition of the repetition of reality leads to crisis. Viggi immediately distances himself from literary production and expresses a desire to resume a quiet life as a businessman, appearing, like Georg Nase, to abandon his literary ambitions for his true vocation as a merchant. In other words, he privileges *Handel* over the literary *Handelsnovelle*.

While Nase was able to gain lasting insight from his moment of self-recognition, and reflect retrospectively upon the moment, Viggi experiences no growth of this sort.<sup>449</sup> That is, he fails to apply any of the insights about literature and reality to his own writings. The self-recognition he experiences is superficial at best, since he fails to see Gritli's writing practices as a reflection of his own unoriginality and dilettantism. Indeed, midway through expressing his desire to return fully to the world of commerce, Viggi lapses back into his literary modus, deeming his wife "eine Gans mit Geierkrallen," an absurd formulation he saves for use in their later divorce proceedings. Unable to deal with further such reflections ("es muß ein Ende nehmen"), he leaves Gritli locked in the basement and goes out to eat. Even after the pair is divorced, Viggi never acknowledges his own culpability in the affair, and remains committed to the type of dilettantish writing that caused his troubles. In fact, he gives up his learned profession entirely so as to devote himself fully to literature.

Wilhelm, meanwhile, is expelled from paradise once the epistolary fraud comes to light. The revelation of the fraud, as well as its aftermath, are described in bluntly lapsarian terms. Wilhelm and Gritli are referred to repeatedly as sinners (HKKA 5:134, 138, 148); Viggi locks Gritli in an *apple* cellar as soon as he discovers Wilhelm's letters; the local girls taunt Wilhelm with the following song: "Schulmeisterlein, Schulmeisterlein, / Des Nachbars Aepfel sind nicht Dein!" (HKKA 5:147). True to the Seldwylian practice of *fallieren*, a result of

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<sup>449</sup> See here Löb, "A Story of Human Vocation," 16. "Like the waiter Georg, the businessman Viggi renounces the middle-class profession that would be his true vocation for the sake of a misguided pursuit of literature; unlike Georg, he fails to realize his error and persists in his fruitless endeavour till it ruins him." Augart likewise underscores Viggi's culpability. "Er [Viggi] erkennt zwar, dass der Briefwechsel mit den Konventionen einer persönlichen Briefkommunikation bezüglich der Erweiterung um einen weiteren Schreiber und dem Austausch von Identität und Geschlecht der Schreiber bricht, aber nicht, dass dies durch seinen Plan des poetischen Briefwechsels sein Verschulden ist und er selbst eine Täuschung inszenierte." Augart, "Zur Austauschbarkeit und Identität, Geschlecht und Gefühl," 204.

“Schuldenverkehr,” Wilhelm leaves the city after the local pastor, head of the school board, ensures that he is not reappointed to his teaching position. He is soon hired by a textile worker who has turned to agriculture. Wilhelm, who grew up in a farming family, takes extremely well to the work. Like countless other fallen Seldwylans before him, Wilhelm “lernt dann nachträglich arbeiten” (HKKA 4:9). If before he had been preoccupied with literature, he focuses now on the real world, exchanging Vollmer’s *Mythologie* for the book of nature.<sup>450</sup>

[D]er Wald war jetzt seine Schulstube und sein Studiersaal, wenn auch nicht in großer Gelehrsamkeit, so doch in beschaulicher Anwendung des Wenigen, was er wußte. Er belauschte das Treiben der Vögel und der andern Tiere, und nie kehrte er zurück, ohne Gaben der Natur in seinem Reisigbündel wohlverwahrt heimzutragen, sei es eine schöne Moosart, ein kunstreiches, verlassenes Vogelnest, ein wunderlicher Stein, oder eine auffallende Mißbildung an Bäumen und Sträuchern. Aus einem verfallenen Steinbruche klopfte er manches Stück mit uralten Resten heraus von Kräutern und Tieren. Auch legte er eine vollständige Sammlung an von den Rinden aller Waldbäume in den verschiedenen Lebensaltern, indem er schöne viereckige Stücke davon, mit Moosen und Flechten bewachsen, herausschnitt oder sinnig zusammensetzte, die Nadelhölzer sogar mit den glänzenden Harztropfen, so daß jedes Stück ein artiges Bild abgab. [...] Nur nichts Lebendiges heimste er ein; je schöner und seltener ein Schmetterling war, den er flattern sah [...] desto andächtiger ließ er ihn fliegen. (HKKA 5:152-53)

Physical labor is balanced by spiritual or intellectual activity, with nature providing abundant material for study and contemplation.<sup>451</sup> If Wilhelm had once prayed to the Christian deity to give thanks for “die gute Gabe einer Liebsten,” he now glorifies the “Gaben der Natur.” Wilhelm views living creatures with religious veneration (“andächtig”), collecting only dead objects. He brings home mosses, nests, stones, and other objects that simply strike his interest.<sup>452</sup> At the

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<sup>450</sup> Tebben reads Wilhelm’s development through the lens of Schiller’s *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*. While her analysis focuses on the manifestations of the *Stoff-* and *Formtriebe*, an additional parallel might be made with Schiller’s use of the epistolary form. See Tebben, “Schillers Schatten,” 317–19.

<sup>451</sup> Böning identifies here a resonance with reform pedagogical developments promoted by Rousseau and Pestalozzi (SW 4:802).

<sup>452</sup> This is another example of mirroring in the novella. “Hatte Störteler mühsam Rinde und Moos zu beschreiben versucht, so beschäftigt sich Wilhelm mit Steinen, Rinde und Moosen, weil er sie schön findet, weil er sich an ihnen freut und an ihnen lernen will.” Pörnbacher,

same time, he manages to put together a complete collection of bark samples from all tree species in various stages of growth, each one of which presents a pleasant image (“ein artiges Bild”). The description of the tree bark samples as images recalls Wilhelm’s earlier propensity to revivify Vollmer’s “Alphabetgötter.”<sup>453</sup> Now, however, instead of trying to transfer literary-mythological images into reality, he creates a collection of images culled directly from the real world.<sup>454</sup>

Wilhelm’s apparent maturity is, however, precarious. Temptation lies in wait with the end of the harvest season, since he has increased time for imaginative speculation. “[A]ls er so da saß auf den sonnigen Hügeln, beim Getön der Herdenglocken und die Stadt im goldenen Herbstrauch liegen sah, tauchte die Gestalt Gritlis immer deutlicher wieder empor, fast nach dem

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“Nachwort,” 91. Tschopp draws here a contrast between the types of knowledge the two men seek. “Anders als Viggli richtet Wilhelm den Blick nicht nur auf die Oberflächenstruktur der kreatürlichen Welt, sondern dringt in ihre Tiefen vor, anders auch als dieser zielt er nicht auf ein letztlich verständnisloses Abbilden von Fragmenten natürlicher Phänomene, sondern auf deren umfassende Erkenntnis.” Tschopp, “Kunst und Volk,” 27.

<sup>453</sup> Wilhelm’s bark collection also evokes a type of natural “book” collection that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the xylotheque or *Holzbibliothek*. Such collections comprised wooden boxes shaped like books, which opened to reveal specimens (leaves, berries, etc.) from the same tree species. The spine of these “books” was formed by bark. Writing of Carl Schildbach’s xylotheque, Jean Paul criticized the inability of such collections to preserve life (i.e. Wilhelm’s stated aim): “das Buch ist vom Holze, z.B. des Lorbeerbaumes, darin sind dessen Blüten, die Rinde, der Same und die Blätter, kurz, dem Gewächse fehlt nichts als das – Leben; so aber ists ein Buch.” Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, ed. Florian Bambeck, vol. V.III, Werke. Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 41. For an excellent discussion of Carl Schildbach’s xylotheque, in relation to Jean Paul’s criticism thereof, see Alice Goff, “The *Selbst Gewählter Plan*. The Schildbach Wood Library in Eighteenth-Century Hessen-Kassel,” *Representations* 128 (Fall 2014): 30–59.

<sup>454</sup> The dissociation of these images from life recalls Viggli’s literary efforts. Swales argues that Wilhelm’s decorations operate as “substitutes for lived experience” and thus echo Viggli’s artificial letters. She also notes the description of Wilhelm’s home as “fast so bunt und zierlich wie ein Albumblatt” (HKKA 5:152) and argues that his “sense of the natural is thus made to merge disconcertingly with the mass-produced conventions of almanac representations.” Swales, *The Poetics of Scepticism*, 153. Tschopp cites the same and later passages to point out “jene Überblendung von Natur und Kunst an, welche den ästhetischen Kernsatz der Novelle konstituiert.” Tschopp, “Kunst und Volk,” 27.

Sprüchworte: ‘Müßiggang ist aller Laster Anfang!’ (HKKA 5:156-57). The same proverb appears in the preface to volume one of *Die Leute von Seldwyla*, where it is used to explain the prevalence of strange happenings in the city. As quoted in part above: “In einer so lustigen und seltsamen Stadt kann es an allerhand seltsamen Geschichten und Lebensläufen nicht fehlen, da Müßiggang aller Laster Anfang ist. Doch nicht solche Geschichten [...] will ich eigentlich in diesem Büchlein erzählen” (HKKA 4:12). Wilhelm risks not only returning to his old mode of life, but of becoming a representative Seldwylan, that is, reflecting so well the shortcomings of the local citizenry that his “Lebenslauf” is too representative to be included in the collection of tales.

The depictions of Wilhelm’s struggle to avoid falling a second time pick up on his interest in images gleaned from nature and absent of life, e.g. his tree bark samples, which substitute for the images gleaned from Vollmer that require imaginative work in order to be imbued with life. The natural images combine with the act of imaginative representing and are evoked through a series of one-sided visual encounters between Wilhelm and Gritli that culminate in the retrospective reevaluation (and reevaluation) of the letter exchange.<sup>455</sup> If the recognition scene in the first half of the novella had centered on Viggi’s sudden insight, via the act of reading, that he might become a character in a work of literature, the visual encounters in the second half lead to a figurative re-reading of the letter exchange that severs the texts from their literary context and plants them firmly in reality.

The first visual encounter comes not long after Wilhelm’s imaginative foreboding on the hill. Upon returning home one afternoon for lunch, he espies someone from afar, whom he

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<sup>455</sup> Thomas points out the recurring visual vocabulary in these scenes and argues that “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” places particular emphasis on visual experience. Thomas, “The Function of the Eyes in Gottfried Keller’s ‘Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe,’” esp. 50-53.

believes to be Gritli. “[E]r [entdeckte] plötzlich eine zierliche Frau, welche unter dem Vordache stand und in die Ferne hinaussah. Er war kaum noch zweihundert Schritte entfernt und glaubte Gritli zu erkennen. Heftig erschreckend stand er still und sagte: ‘Was will sie hier? Was sucht sie da?’” (HKKA 5:157). Wilhelm hides and watches the woman, now described as an apparition, or “Erscheinung” (HKKA 5:157), the same descriptor used after Gritli had delivered her first letter.<sup>456</sup> Wilhelm goes back to his herd and returns later in the evening, and the apparition is gone. However, his prior tendency to translate literature into reality reemerges with full force.

Der Engel mit dem feurigen Schwert war abgezogen vor der Pforte. Wilhelm betrachtete alles wohl, das Fenster und die Treppe, und fand alles, wie es gewesen, still und unverfänglich. Doch seine Ruhe war dahin, wenngleich er nicht einmal bestimmt wußte, ob es Gritli gewesen sei.

[...] [D]ie Erscheinung kehrte nicht wieder. Dafür bevölkerte sich der ganze Berg mit ihrem Bilde, auf Weg und Steg trat es ihm entgegen und guckte ihm durch die runden Scheiben [...]. (HKKA 5:157-58)

Gritli – or the person Wilhelm takes to be Gritli – is likened to the cherub guarding Eden, who is referenced in Vollmer.<sup>457</sup> While the sword-wielding cherub seems to warn against romance (if not prevent it altogether), its disappearance initiates Wilhelm’s return to his prelapsarian way of being. If the cherub in the Bible had prevented Adam and Eve from returning to Eden *after* their fall, the figure here – having vanished from Wilhelm’s doorstep, allows him to return. Once more ensconced within his isolated home, he is back in paradise, and thus capable of *falling again*. If Gritli’s apparent affections had heralded his reconversion to Christianity and subsequent fall from grace, the imaginative represencing of her image risks repeating the fall once more. In other words, the vanished cherub enables that originary form of recognition. And just as Wilhelm had, prior to his first fall, imaginatively populated his surroundings with his

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<sup>456</sup> “Wilhelm schaute ihr nach, wie einer, der eine Erscheinung sah” (HKKA 5:117).

<sup>457</sup> Vollmer, *Mythologie*, 532.

alphabet gods, he now imaginatively populates his environs with Gritli's *image*.<sup>458</sup> Notably, this transpires after Wilhelm begins work as a herder, whose patron is none other than that uniquely Seldwylan god: Mercury.

The next encounter likewise emphasizes the mediation of reality and maintains the emphasis on imagistic discourse. Wilhelm has in the meantime gained a reputation for being “ein[] halbe[r] Weise[r] und Prophet[]” (HKKA 5:158), and receives all manner of visitors who want his advice and assistance. Gritli is intrigued, and she and her friend Aennchen decide to visit in disguise. Wilhelm is less than enthused to see the two “Pilgerinnen” (HKKA 5:161) who interrupt his study of natural images: “Wilhelm saß über einem großen Buche mit *Pflanzenbildern*; er war nicht sehr erfreut über die frühe Störung, zumal er zwei frische *Weibsbilder* ankommen sah” (HKKA 5:161; emphasis added). The narrative further emphasizes the mediation of reality, syntactically equating the botanic images in Wilhelm's book with the very real women before him. While Aennchen rambles about all manner of things, Gritli stands quietly and takes in her surroundings.

Sie beschaute eifrig Wilhelms sonderliche Behausung, welche inwendig noch märchenhafter aussah als von außen. [...] Die Fenster waren herrlich gefroren; *jedes der runden Gläser zeigte ein anderes Bild*, eine Landschaft, eine Blume, eine schlanke Baumgruppe, einen Stern oder ein silbernes Damastgewebe; es waren wohl hundert solcher Scheiben, und keine glich der anderen, gleich dem Werk eines gotischen Baumeisters, der einen Kreuzgang baut und für die hundert Spitzbogen immer neues Maßwerk erfindet. (HKKA 5:162; emphasis added)

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<sup>458</sup> Importantly, the descriptors here replicate the earlier descriptors of this imaginative process: Wilhelm had represented the gods and goddesses “und *bevölkerte damit sich* zur Kurzweil die Landschaft,” and now represents Gritli in the same way: “Dafür *bevölkerte sich* der ganze Berg mit ihrem *Bilde*.”

Wilhelm's home assumes for Gritli near-religious status, with the frozen window panes providing close to a hundred images, so variable as to evoke Gothic architectural decorations. The religious, the natural, and the erotic thus begin to join in the form of the image.

Wilhelm's imagistic predilections soon come to the rescue. Although Wilhelm appears to Gritli to have achieved a state of grace and maturity, she fears he could turn once more into a smitten fool. She and Aennchen thus decide to put him to the test, which involves Aennchen trying to seduce him. Wilhelm successfully resists temptation, but only by imaginatively resurrecting Gritli's "Erscheinung" once more. "Zugleich sah er Gritli im Geiste auf der Treppe vor dem Häuschen stehen und dann sitzen. [...] [E]r [fuhr] zurück und entzog damit plötzlich und unerwartet seinen Mund dem Kusse, den Aennchen eben darauf absetzen wollte. Er starrte ins Blaue hinaus und sah immer deutlicher Gritlis vermeintliche Gestalt, wie sie still vor seiner Thür saß und auf ihn zu warten schien" (HKKA 5:173-74). Wilhelm recalls Gritli's presumed visit and imagines her once more sitting in front of his door. Staring into the distance ("Er starrte ins Blaue hinaus"), he mirrors Gritli's gaze from that fateful day ("eine zierliche Frau, welche [...] in die Ferne hinaussah"). Wilhelm's imaginative practice thus becomes his saving grace, and Aennchen is able to inform Gritli that Wilhelm has passed the test.

Wilhelm's replication of the gaze, together with his repetitive and retrospectively directed imaginative efforts set the stage for his reunion with Gritli and their mutual re-cognition of the epistolary exchange. Their reconciliation is gradual and begins with a chance encounter inscribed within the same imagistic discourse. After Aennchen's visit, Wilhelm is overcome with yearning for Gritli and decides he needs some distance from his surroundings. However, he runs into Gritli while departing.

Er kannte den Schritt und lauschte ihm einige Augenblicke, eh' er aufzuschauen wagte. Schon warf die Morgensonne den leichten Schatten eines Schleiers auf den glänzenden

Weg, dicht unter seine Augen; der Florschatten umflatterte ein paar rund gezeichnete Schultern. Wilhelm war plötzlich wie in ein Fegefeuer gesteckt und bemerkte dennoch in aller Verwirrung, daß der wohlklingende Schritt fast unmerklich zögerte. Endlich blickte er in die Höhe und sah Frau Gritli nahe vor sich, welche ihrerseits errötete und verlegen lächelnd vor sich hinsah. Beide Personen beschleunigten in der Verwirrung ihren Gang und eilten sich vorüber, wahrscheinlich um sich nie wieder zu treffen. Da zog Wilhelm doch noch seinen Hut und Gritli erwiderte den Gruß mit einer raschen Verbeugung. Wie an einem Drahte gezogen sah jedes zurück, stand still und wendete sich mit mehr oder weniger langsamer Bewegung; endlich schossen sie zusammen wie zwei Hölzchen, die auf einem Wasserspiegel dahintreiben, und stehenden Fußes gingen sie eilig nebeneinander fort. (HKKA 5:175)

In a moment that recalls a recognition scene in Book 1 of the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas recognizes his mother, Venus, in part by her stride,<sup>459</sup> Wilhelm first recognizes Gritli by her gait. In keeping with the image-based mythological represencing derived from his reception of Vollmer (which naturally references Venus), Wilhelm next views Gritli's figure cast as *image* upon the ground. He notes the shadow of her veil and the way the shadows of flowers frame her roundly *drawn* ("gezeichnete") shoulders. Shocked and confused by her presence, he nevertheless notices that Gritli has paused or slowed. Finally, he glances up from the image and sees the actual Gritli, who stares straight ahead. After passing one another, both turn around, slowly, before shooting together like two sticks driven by a current. (The strange emphasis on the physical turn will become clear later on.)

The narrative soon switches, yet again, from the mythological to the Christian register. As was the case for Wilhelm's initial reconversion, the shift here, too, is prompted by the congruence of divine imagery from Vollmer with Gritli's physical presence. Wilhelm and Gritli walk through the forest, eventually coming to "eine kleine Lichtung, die von hohen Föhren

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<sup>459</sup> Aeneas' recognition of Venus is, however, visual, rather than aural: "On this she turned away. Rose-pink and fair / Her nape shone, her ambrosial hair exhaled / Divine perfume, her gown rippled full length, / And by her stride she showed herself a goddess. / Knowing her for his mother, he called out / To the figure fleeting away [...]" Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (Vintage Classics: New York, 1990), 18.

eingeschlossen war, deren Kronen sich in einander bauten” (HKKA 5:176). The description of this “cathedral-like”<sup>460</sup> clearing echoes the description of Wilhelm’s home, where the collected natural artifacts resemble the decorations in a Gothic cathedral. As was the case for Wilhelm’s home, the clearing becomes a setting for negotiating the status of a romantic relationship. The clearing contains the grave of a Celtic warrior Wilhelm had found during one of his strolls through the forest, and after he tells Gritli about the grave, she replies: “‘Wo mag wohl seine Frau liegen? Gewiß nicht weit!’ ‘Das kann man freilich nicht wissen!’ antwortete Wilhelm lachend, ‘vielleicht liegt sie auf einem Schlachtfelde in Gallien, vielleicht auf einem andern Berge in dieser Gegend, vielleicht hier ganz in der Nähe, und vielleicht hat er gar keine gehabt!’” (HKKA 5:176).

The Celtic warrior’s marital status is never resolved, and the odd inclusion of the grave in the story seems to serve little other function than to emphasize epistemological uncertainty regarding romantic bonds.<sup>461</sup> Indeed, the conversation about the grave sets up the ensuing discussion and reevaluation of the epistolary affair in which Wilhelm confronts his uncertainty about his relationship to Gritli. First, however, there is a lengthy awkward pause in which Wilhelm looks wistfully at Gritli: “er sah die schöne Frau vor sich, wie man in *die frühlingsblaue*

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<sup>460</sup> Thomas describes the clearing as “cathedral-like” and notes that the imagery foreshadows Wilhelm and Gritli’s later wedding, which is held under trees. Thomas, “The Function of the Eyes in Gottfried Keller’s ‘Die missbrauchten Liebesbriefe,’” 51.

<sup>461</sup> Cf. Günter, *Im Vorhof der Kunst*, 133. Although Wilhelm had long since found the grave, he kept it secret. Günter sees this as emblematic of the fundamental tension in the text between privacy and publicity. “[E]s ist gerade der Verzicht auf eine Veröffentlichung seiner Entdeckung, die in der Erzählung besonders betont wird: ‘Eigentlichkeit’, so die Botschaft, gedeiht nicht im öffentlichen Raum, sie wird nur errungen durch den heroischen Verzicht auf Publizität.” While I agree with Günter that Wilhelm’s secrecy stands in contrast to Viggi’s desire for publicity, I am not sure that the descriptions of the grave are necessary for that purpose. After all, Wilhelm has already left Seldwyla to live in isolation, and his discovery of the grave seems to me redundant, if its sole purpose is to underscore privacy and secrecy. To my mind, the significance of the grave lies in its concealment of knowledge and familial relations.

*Ferne* sieht, in die man nicht hinein kann” (HKKA 5:177; emphasis added). The language here merges the descriptions of Gritli’s gaze when she first visited Wilhelm’s home (“eine zierliche Frau, welche [...] *in die Ferne hinaussah*”) and of Wilhelm’s gaze when he reimagines this visit (“Er starrte *ins Blaue hinaus*”). Even though Wilhelm is in the actual presence of Gritli, the language suggests that his imaginative mode still dominates, and that he cannot yet embrace the real, as opposed to the ideal, mediated Gritli. However, once Wilhelm experiences self-recognition, he overcomes this obstacle.

After Gritli mentions that she had thought of visiting Wilhelm, he thinks he might have bumbled into another romantic debacle. “Er brachte deswegen nur ein mißtrauisches und kurzes ‘Warum?’ hervor und *glaubte sich mit heißen Wangen einer neuen Komödie ausgesetzt*. Sie aber sagte: ‘Ich wollte Sie gern fragen, ob Sie mir noch zürnen wegen der Geschichte mit den Liebesbriefen?’” (HKKA 5:177; emphasis added). In a moment that recalls Viggi’s recognition of himself as a literary subject, Wilhelm recognizes that he, too, might be an unwitting participant in another comedy. His uncertainty finally vanishes after he and Gritli discuss the fateful apparition that had appeared on his doorstep. “[Er] fragte, ob sie nicht einmal eines Mittags im Herbste schon vor seinem Häuschen gewesen sei? ‘Hast Du mich also doch gesehen?’ erwiderte sie und bejahte seine Frage. Er erzählte ihr das Abenteuer und offenherzig auch dasjenige mit der Frau Aennchen und wie *nur die Erinnerung an jenen Anblick*, da Gritli auf seiner Treppe gesessen, ihn *vor dem Abfalle* bewahrt habe” (HKKA 5:179; emphasis added). Gritli’s visit is mentioned yet again, and the narrative again emphasizes that Wilhelm’s memory of Gritli as the cherub before Eden had prevented another fall. The repetition of this information is important for several reasons. Wilhelm is able retrospectively to reevaluate the moment, and the conclusive identification of Gritli with the apparition validates his recourse to imaginative,

bookish representing. Like Nase, Wilhelm reflects on past events, relating them to another party. Finally, Wilhelm's reevaluation of his reading practices allows him to experience – *as reality* – what he had previously imagined into being from the pages of a book.

The love letters that brought about this transformation gradually disappear from view. Wilhelm and Gritli are given a happy end: they marry and have children, and their family prospers. Viggi and his new wife Kätter, meanwhile, fall into penury. The novella concludes thus: “Viktor Störteler aber und seine Kätter waren samt jenen Liebesbriefen, welche sie aus Hunger und Not doch wieder hergestellt, auf sich bezogen und unter vielem Gezänke vermehrt hatten, längst vergessen und verschollen.” (HKKA 5:180) Never having fallen in the Seldwylian sense, Viggi continues to (re)produce literature, and he and Kätter produce a copied version of a copied letter exchange that had copied other letter exchanges.<sup>462</sup> These efforts are met with neither riches nor fame, and Viggi and Kätter are lost to posterity. Utterly irrelevant to Wilhelm and Gritli, who have nothing to do with the nineteenth-century literary marketplace, the love letters become *Abfall*.<sup>463</sup>

What, then, is the status of literature in Seldwyla? The mere copying of reality into literature results for Viggi in the embrace of literature at the expense of a comfortable bourgeois

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<sup>462</sup> Viggi and Kätter remain childless and, so MacLeod, “succeed only in reproducing more and more of the laughable love letters, in an image that links aesthetic sterility with the picture of a monstrously androgynous union of man and wife. Viggi has fallen victim to his own literary cliché of androgynous perfection, culled from German novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.” MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity*, 215. Hörisch notes that the name Kätchen is made masculine (Kätter), and describes Kätter and Viggi as a “Männerpaar.” Hörisch, *Kopf oder Zahl*, 109.

<sup>463</sup> Siegert attributes this status already to the original letters Gritli copies: “[E]rst durch die Verarbeitung ihrer originalen Handschriften zu Abfall erhalten die beiden Männer ihr ephemeres Sein (als Schriftsteller der eine, als Liebhaber der andere) aus der Zirkulation zugestellt. Das Original, die authentische Handschrift, ist schon beim Kauf der Briefmarke Makulatur – sein Verschwinden ist Bedingung dafür, daß die Literaturproduktion läuft.” Siegert, *Relais*, 143.

existence. For Wilhelm, copying in the other direction, i.e. of literature into reality, results in the renunciation of literature in favor of a bourgeois reality.<sup>464</sup> It is via their relationship to *texts* that these characters recognize the congruence of literature and reality, and it is these moments of insight that lend the chaotic narrative a sense of cohesion. Although Keller would outline elsewhere a realist program that disavowed such naive imitation, proposing instead an art predicated on *Verklärung*, the novella itself seems only to define the “proper” understanding of art *ex negativo*.<sup>465</sup> However, the novella does hint toward the criteria for proper literary production in its rendering of Viggi’s literary failures, which, ironically, inspire the production of quality literature.

One of the reasons Viggi’s efforts to recruit *Stürmer und Dränger* fails is because he ends up becoming the subject of the townspeople’s own creative products. “Wo er wußte, daß einer ein Histörchen in den Kalender geschickt oder einige spöttische Knittelverse verfaßt hatte, die einzige Litteratur, so in Seldwyla betrieben wurde, da strebte er ein Mitglied für die Sturm- und Drangperiode zu erwerben. Allein so bald die wackeren Leute seine Absichten merkten und seine wunderlichen Aufforderungen verstanden, machten sie ihn zum Gegenstande ihres Gelächters und neuer Knittelverse” (HKKA 5:107). Later, after he and Kätter are married, their antics again spur the townspeople to creative folk-literary production.

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<sup>464</sup> For more on this, see Tschopp, “Kunst und Volk,” 29. “So glücklich der Ausgang der *Mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe* auf den ersten Blick auch erscheint, bleibt die utopische Dimension der vielfältig beschworenen Einheit von Kunst und Leben evident.” Tschopp continues, arguing that none of the characters represent “das Ideal einer gleichermaßen künstlerischen und in der gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit wurzelnden Dichtung. Das Konzept einer harmonischen Verbindung von Poesie und Realität erweist sich letztlich als Projektion.” Cf. Anton, *Selbstreflexivität der Kunsttheorie in den Künstlernovellen des Realismus*, 185.

<sup>465</sup> See esp. the essays “Am Mythenstein” (1861) and “Ein bescheidenes Kunstreischen” (1882). For a discussion of the former in relation to “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” see Tschopp, “Kunst und Volk,” 22–23, 28.

Für Jahre waren sie mit neuem Lachstoff versehen; doch benahmen sich die abgefeimten Schlingel mit der äußersten Vorsicht, um das Vergnügen zu verlängern, und es entstand daraus eine neue Uebung, nämlich einen tollen Witz vorzuschieben und scheinbar über diesen zu lachen, wenn die Mundwinkel nicht mehr gehorchen wollten. Es wurde stets ein Vorrat solcher Schwänke in Bereitschaft gehalten, vermehrt und verbessert und gedieh zuletzt zu einer Sammlung von selbständigem Werte. Es gab Seldwyler, Handwerker und Beamte, welche Tage, ja Wochen über der Erfindung und Ausfeilung eines neuen Geschichtchens zubringen konnten. Schien der Schwank gehörig durchdacht und abgerundet, so wurde er erst in einem Kneipchen probiert, ob die Pointe die rechte Wirkung thäte, und je nach Befund, oft unter Zuziehung von Sachverständigen, nochmals verbessert, nach allen Regeln eines künstlerischen Verfahrens. Wiederholungen, Längen und Uebertreibungen waren strenge verpönt oder nur statthaft, wenn eine besondere Absicht zu Grunde lag. (HKKA 5:145)

Viggi and Kätter are so ridiculous as to entertain the townspeople indefinitely, but such ruthless pleasure can be drawn out further if they supplement their jokes with unrelated anecdotes, or “Geschichtchen[.]” Laughter is deferred, transferred to a new object. What emerges is a practice of collective composition in which all manner of Seldwylans, from craftsmen to civil servants, participate. Experts (“Sachverständige[.]”) are consulted, and the creations are edited to ensure they have the intended effect (“die rechte Wirkung”) and appropriate form: repetitions, lengthy passages, or exaggerations are permitted only in exceptional cases. The creations expand into “eine[.] Sammlung von selbständigem Werte,” a collection of humorous tales that seems not unlike those gathered in the cycle *Die Leute von Seldwyla*.

Whether Keller’s own novella adheres to these criteria is debatable, and there is little to indicate that it underwent any kind of collaborative revisions. But as a work of satire, it follows the same rules as the Seldwylans’ parodic “Knittelverse” that ridicule a literary dilettante. And like the “Geschichtchen[.]” the novella certainly does more than lampoon: its second half consists of invented material that helps to extend the basic joke in the text: that literature can become reality. Whether or not this self-reflexive novella adequately illustrates what poetic realist literature *is*, as opposed to what it *is not*, at the very least it raises the question of its

possibility.<sup>466</sup> Characters recognize the congruence of literature and reality, and in such a way that they confront the epistemological paradoxes implicit in poetic realist literature. This *Fallgeschichte*, in other words, brings the intradiegetic reader to self-knowledge and requires the extradiegetic reader to reflect upon the conditions that make such knowledge possible.

Moreover, Keller uses “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” as a way to come to terms with his own lack of originality. His novella, like Georg Nase’s writings about writing, is but another venue for him to reflect upon his own practices, as well as literary production more broadly. As he writes to Hermann Hettner in 1854:

Ich lese auch den Rabelais zum ersten Male und bin frappiert, wie viele literarische Motive und Manieren, welche man so gewöhnlich für nagelneu oder von einer gewissen Schule herstammend ansieht, schon seit Jahrhunderten vorhanden sind, ja wie man eigentlich sagen kann, alle wirklich guten *Genres* seien von jeher dagewesen und nichts Neues unter der Sonne. [...]

Viele Witze und Motive, Fabeln, Anekdoten usf. werden von den Volksschichten gepflegt und gehandhabt, kommen in die Mode in Bauern- wie Studentenkneipen, Werkstätten und Marktplätzen, verschwinden hier und tauchen dort wieder auf und schwimmen in der Luft umher. Nun kommt so ein Originalgenie und glaubt wunder was zu tun, wenn er unmittelbar an der Mutterbrust der Natur liege, aus der ‘lauteren Volksquelle’ schöpfe, und wie die Ausdrücke alle heißen, wenn er hinuntertauche in die Tiefe des immer neuen Volksgemütes und Stoff da sammle, wo die ‘Salonmenschen’ nicht hinkommen. Er schreibt sich also derlei Witze hinter das Ohr und bringt sie als nagelneu und urkräftig glücklich zum Drucke, während dieselben schon vor Jahrtausenden vielleicht längst in klassischen Gedichten aufgeschrieben wurden.<sup>467</sup>

Keller’s adaptations of innumerable fables and myths in his works are thus self-consciously *unoriginal*, but, Hans Wysling suggests, reflect the historicity of literature itself.<sup>468</sup> By including

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<sup>466</sup> Cf. Tebben, “Schillers Schatten,” 326–27. Tebben contends that “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” is a poetological text in which Keller critically promotes a program of Schillerian aesthetics.

<sup>467</sup> GB 1:398-99 (26 June 1854). Emphasis in original

<sup>468</sup> Wysling quotes from the same letter to Hettner, and writes: “In jeder Bearbeitung erhält das ‘Fabelhafte’ zeitgenössisches Kolorit, und mehr als das: Das Neue setzt sich in präzise-historischer Eigenheit von allen seinen Vorformen ab und macht so die Geschichtlichkeit von Literatur sichtbar.” Wysling, “Und immer wieder kehrt Odysseus heim,” 155.

a detailed description of folk-literary production in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” Keller illustrates a source of apparent “originality” for poets, which nevertheless likely repeats something that the ancients had long since preserved in literary form. Moreover, no matter how original the Seldwylans’ creations might be, they are, in the end, indebted to Viggi’s unskilled imitation of past literary tradition, i.e. the Sturm und Drang. “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” is but a case study of literary derivativeness. By showing how a Keller-esque writer (Viggi) can indirectly generate fables and how a Keller-esque reader (Wilhelm) can read myths into reality, Keller turns his own aesthetic and poetic concerns into a *Vorfall* fit for consumption as a *Fallgeschichte*, inciting the extradiegetic reader to recognize the underlying conditions of his realist prose.

#### **KELLER’S CIRCULATING ABFÄLLESEL**

The central conceptual framework of “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” – a polymorphic rendering of self-recognition – reverberates throughout Keller’s works. A brief examination of several materials that offer insight into the genesis of the novella indicates not only an additional self-reflexive context for the depicted events, but more importantly demonstrates that recognition is the key to understanding the blurring of life and literature in Keller’s oeuvre. The details of Keller’s own literary production, particularly his tardiness in submitting manuscripts and his resultant financial struggles, are well documented in the HKKA. Rather than recapitulating the details of the composition of Keller’s works, this section turns instead to a series of objects – two documents comprising text and image, the cover of a notebook, and a landscape painting – that shed light on the structure of “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe.” These materials are deeply biographical and reflect Keller’s recurrent struggles to find romantic love. During his Heidelberg years (1848-50), he fell in love with Johanna Kapp, the daughter of a local professor, but her

affections were directed to the significantly older and married Ludwig Feuerbach.<sup>469</sup> And while in Berlin (1850-55), he fell for Betty Tendering, the sister-in-law of his publisher, Franz Duncker, but this relationship, too, was ill fated. While these biographical details appear at best tangential to the foregoing discussion, Keller recorded his fondness for these women in a way that draws out the epistemological and medial import of “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe.”

Two strange documents, the so-called *Berliner Bogen*, survive from Keller’s five years in the city.<sup>470</sup> The two sheets, essentially large doodling surfaces, preserve Keller’s unrequited love for Betty Tendering and indicate a childlike obsession with her name and initials. The *Großer Bogen* (Figure 17-Figure 20) contains, beyond the various iterations of name and initials (“Betty Betty Betty Betty Betty,” “B B B B B B B,” or “B T”), literary quotations and drawings.<sup>471</sup> The *Kleiner Bogen*, less densely packed, features mainly the initials “B T.” and contains fewer sketches (Figure 21, Figure 22). While it is impossible to offer any kind of comprehensive interpretation of these documents, the scholarship and commentary have shown that they reflect Keller’s shift from painting to writing<sup>472</sup> and reference works composed around the same time, like *Der grüne Heinrich*.<sup>473</sup> The *Berliner Bogen*, as strange written records of love, are equally

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<sup>469</sup> For more on this relationship, as well as Keller’s literarization of Kapp in *Züricher Novellen* and *Das Sinngedicht*, see Ursula Amrein, “Atheismus – Anthropologie – Ästhetik: Der ‘Tod Gottes’ und Transformationen des Religiösen im Prozess der Säkularisierung,” in *Der grüne Heinrich: Gottfried Kellers Lebensbuch – neu gelesen*, ed. Wolfram Groddeck (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2009), 127.

<sup>470</sup> The scholarship sometimes refers to these documents as the “Berliner Schreibunterlagen.” However, as the critical commentary points out, it is highly unlikely they were used as such. (HKKA 30:497, n4)

<sup>471</sup> See HKKA 30:497-517 for selected transcriptions and descriptions.

<sup>472</sup> See here Monika Kasper, “Vom Malen zum Schreiben: Gottfried Kellers Berliner Schreibunterlage,” in *Schreibprozesse*, ed. Peter Hughes, Thomas Fries, and Tan Wälchli (München: Fink, 2008), 77–99.

<sup>473</sup> The commentary notes that some of the inscriptions on the *Kleiner Bogen* refer to Heinrich Lee and to Dortchen Schönfund (HKKA 30:523).

well positioned to illuminate aspects of “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe.” For one, they derive from the same period in which Keller became acquainted with Stahr and Lewald, the models for Viggi and Kätter. More importantly, they feature several important motifs that would assume central significance in the novella.

First, however, a note on doodling as a practice. Doodling is both a familiar and utterly strange medial phenomenon. Situated somewhere between drawing and writing, doodling is generally understood as a lesser form of writerly or artistic production, reflective of absent-mindedness, distraction, or even artistic failure.<sup>474</sup> Psychologizing interpretations are never far off, and it is nearly impossible to look at Keller’s obsessive writing and rewriting of Betty Tendering’s name and initials and not jump to conclusions about his state of mind. But this tendency to extrapolate *from* doodles is, as Friedrich Weltzien notes, a characteristic effect of the form. Doodles always throw into relief their own referentiality, maybe pointing to something beyond the page, but maybe not.<sup>475</sup> In this way, doodles become something of a Rorschach test for the critic, who, in attempting to make sense of the marks on the page, necessarily approaches them through the lens of some external discourse or material. The number of possible interpretations of Keller’s doodles is somewhat open-ended, especially when one considers the sheer size of the sheets. But what makes these doodles special is that they in fact prescribe the way they are meant to be read. And this reading method in turn shows how the doodles reflect the pressing poetic and aesthetic issues of the day.

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<sup>474</sup> Friedrich Weltzien, “Kritzeln,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch des Mediengebrauchs*, ed. Heiko Christians, Matthias Bickenbach, and Nikolaus Wegmann (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 383.

<sup>475</sup> Weltzien, 384.

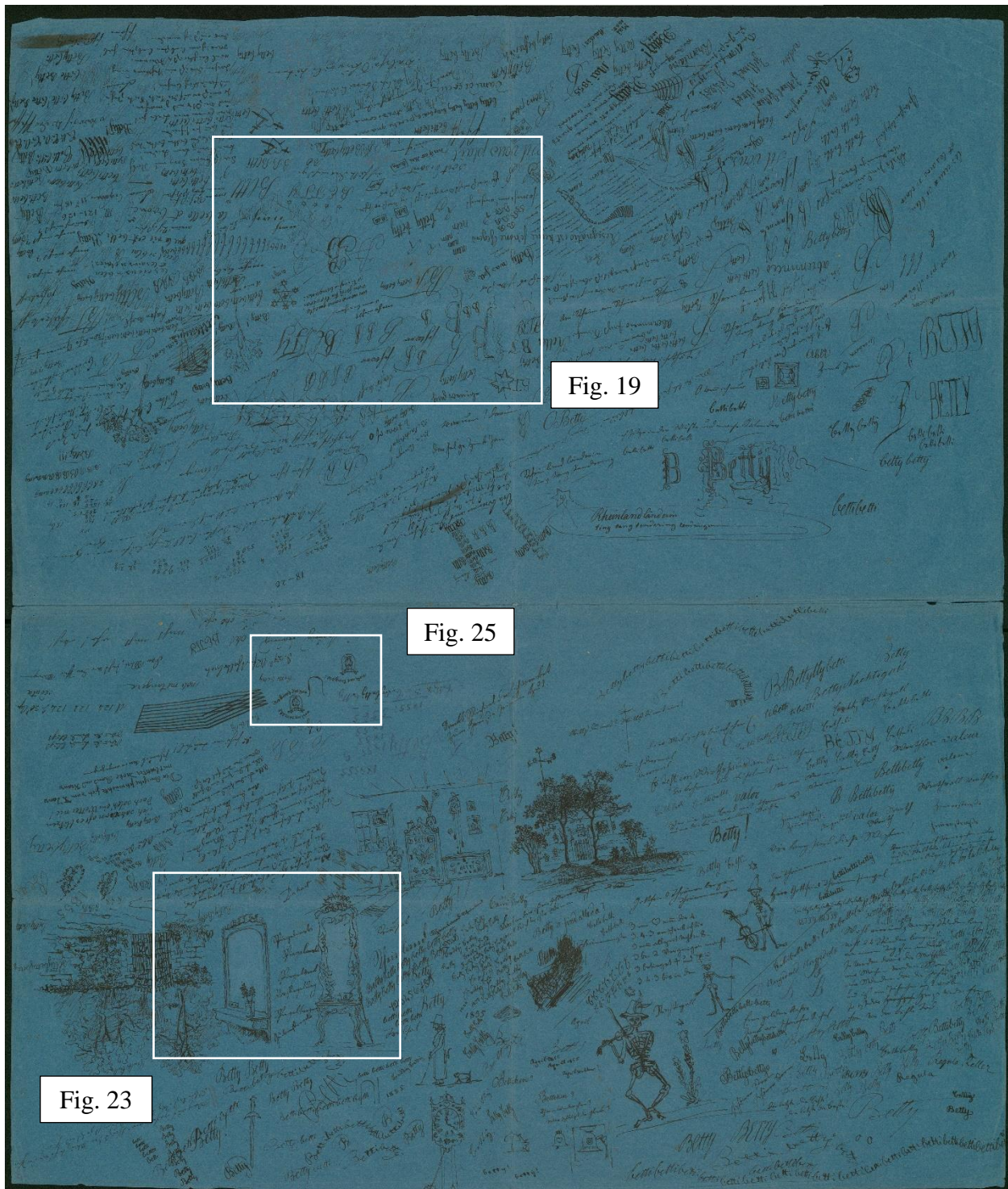


Figure 17. The front of the “Großer Berliner Bogen.” The document is 65.8 x 55.5 cm.  
<http://www.e-manuscripta.ch/doi/10.7891/e-manuscripta-16073>

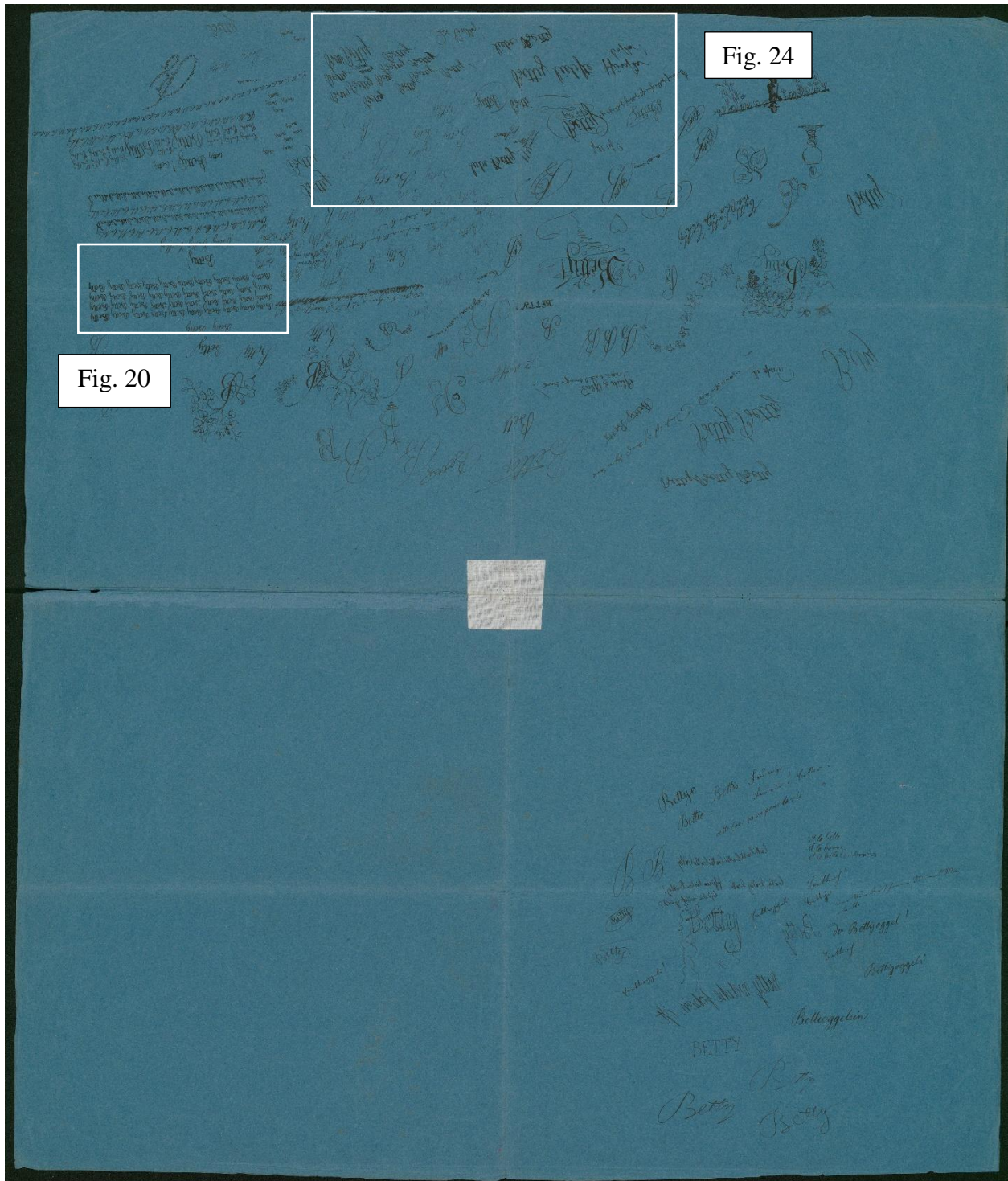


Fig. 20

Fig. 24

Figure 18. The back of the “Großer Berliner Bogen.” (<http://www.e-manuscripta.ch/doi/10.7891/e-manuscripta-16073>)







Figure 22. The back of the “Kleiner Berliner Bogen” (HKKA 30, scan of enclosed reproduction)

One of the most prominent images on the *Großer Bogen* is a pair of mirrors, each of which mirrors the other in simple ways (Figure 23). While the top of each mirror frame bears the name “Betty,” the objects on the mirrors and their attached shelf or table reference both Keller and Tendering. Inserted into the mirror frame on the left is a small card that bears the initials “G.K.” – this is one of the few places (if not the only place) on the document where Keller’s own initials appear.<sup>476</sup> The mirror frame on the right is filled with similar, though illegible cards. Below these cards rests a cup imprinted with a large “B.” The cup sits in the same position as a small vase of flowers on the shelf of the left mirror. While the two mirrors are positioned at slightly different angles, both are directed to the left. The perspective is such that a viewer gazing into either mirror would have to stand to the left and face right. By contrast, the figures on the rest of the document and the overwhelming majority of those in Keller’s notebooks face in the reverse direction.<sup>477</sup>

The document also features a section of mirrored handwriting (Figure 24), an orthographic reversal that recalls the reversal of letters (Nase-Esan) early in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe.” These doodles also achieve visually the conflation of image and text suggested by the writer’s (d’Esan’s) mirror image (*dessin*). Although the words are immediately legible (yet more iterations of “Betty”), the presence of mirrored handwriting prescribes a specific reading

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<sup>476</sup> The document does, however, contain several self-portraits. See Weber, *Gottfried Keller: Landschaftsmaler*, 98.

<sup>477</sup> Kasper reads this directedness toward the left as indicative of retrospection, which brings about distance and thus self-knowledge. “Der linke Bildrand gilt in der Graphologie einerseits als Raum der Vergangenheit und andererseits als Ich-Raum, so dass die Köpfe und die gezeichneten Gegenstände, die nach links ausgerichtet sind, gleichsam auf das Unwiederbringliche zurückblicken, das aber gerade dadurch, dass es nicht mehr zurückgeholt werden kann, die Distanz herstellt, die das Ich braucht, um ein Bewusstsein von sich zu haben und um über die Möglichkeit dieses Bewusstseins verfügen zu können.” Kasper, “Vom Malen zum Schreiben,” 85. Kasper notes that the text on the document is generally directed upward and to the right (90).

method. One can read the text by holding a mirror at an angle to the document: to the right of the word, facing left, such that one looks to the right, into the mirror, assuming a position similar to that required of the implied viewer of the depicted mirrors. The reverse is also possible: one can hold a mirror to the left of the word, facing right, such that one looks left into the mirror, thus assuming the same position as Keller's left-facing figures. The viewer either replicates the facial position of the depicted figures or assumes the position of the implied viewer of the mirrors. What is more, the left-facing figures are positioned at the same angle as the absent *mirror image* of the implied viewer of the mirrors.<sup>478</sup> But the two possible positions have different effects. When replicating the gaze of the depicted figures, the viewer, in a way, identifies with the figures. When replicating the gaze of the implied viewer of the mirror, one remains at a certain distance. The viewer is implicated by the image, but there is no depicted figure with which one can immediately identify.

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<sup>478</sup> My thanks to Eric Miller for pointing this out.



What emerges here is the same type of oscillatory identification present in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe.” Recall, for instance, Viggli’s discovery of the fateful letters and his initial recognition of himself *as a literary character* and then his sudden rejection of this insight. Or Georg Nase, who identifies so strongly with his improved mirror reflection that he abandons literature altogether. Or Wilhelm, who is caught between identifying with his alphabet gods and remaining distanced from his literary models. Or, finally, Wilhelm’s mirroring of Gritli’s gaze, which precedes their embrace of what was once a literary fiction. At stake in all these cases are two processes: an absorptive impulse, whereby the characters slip from their reality into literature, and a distanciation, whereby they disavow the illusionary effect of art. In recognizing the congruence between reality and art, the characters – as well as the viewers of Keller’s images – are drawn into the reality *within* the work of art but become aware of its constructed nature. In other words, they recognize both the work’s *poetic* and its *realist* impulses.

Beyond the mirror motif, the *Großer Bogen*, like “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe,” simultaneously alludes to both Christian and mythological discourse. One section of the document features two lyres, and the beginnings of a third, surrounded by three iterations of the same inscription: “noli me tangere” (Figure 25). The quotation is from the Gospel of John and marks one of the most important recognition scenes in the New Testament, when Mary Magdalene recognizes Jesus after the resurrection (HKKA 30:510). Mary sees two angels inside the tomb and explains to them that she is looking for her Lord. “Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rab-bo’ni!’ (which means

Teacher).”<sup>479</sup> The strange mention of Mary turning around twice (verses 14 and 16), combined with the actual moment of recognition, sheds light on Keller’s own recognition scenes. In particular, the first mutual encounter between Wilhelm and Gritli begins to make more sense when viewed within this biblical context. The heightened attention to the two figures’ physical turns (“Wie an einem Drahte gezogen sah jedes zurück, stand still und wendete sich”), combined with their reluctance to embrace, seems to reflect the *noli me tangere* moment.

The lyres alongside the *noli me tangere* inscription also hold mythological significance and likewise illuminate moments in the novella. Apollo, the god of poetry – and associated with the lyre – had attempted to seduce the nymph Daphne, who transformed into a tree to escape his advances. Wilhelm’s methodical gathering of tree bark cuttings thus appears in a new light, as a reflection of a thwarted romance. A second mythological reference is also implicit in the doodles. Hermes, the most prominent alphabet god in “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” invented the lyre. He also played a role in the development of the Greek alphabet. As Robert Graves relays it: “The Three Fates or, some say, Io the sister of Phoroneus, invented the five vowels of the first alphabet, *and the consonants B and T*; Palamedes, son of Nauplius, invented the remaining eleven consonants; and Hermes reduced these sounds to characters.”<sup>480</sup> The most prominent “Alphabetengott” from “Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe” thus joins with the Christian God.

Lyres and the inscription *noli me tangere* also appeared on the cover of Keller’s *Heidelberger Zeichnungsmappe* (1849).<sup>481</sup> While the cover might not be plastered with

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<sup>479</sup> John 20:14-16. Revised Standard Edition.

<sup>480</sup> Robert Graves, *Greek Myths* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1958), 182. Emphasis added.

<sup>481</sup> See HKKA 30:510, HKKA 31:209-10. Bruno Weber suggests that the figure to the right of the word “Johanna” (see Figure 26) is Keller himself. Weber, *Gottfried Keller: Landschaftsmaler*, 95.

innumerable iterations of the same name or initials, it does feature one name. To the right of the lyres, one can make out in the name Ioanna/Johanna (see Figure 26), a reference to one Johanna Kapp.

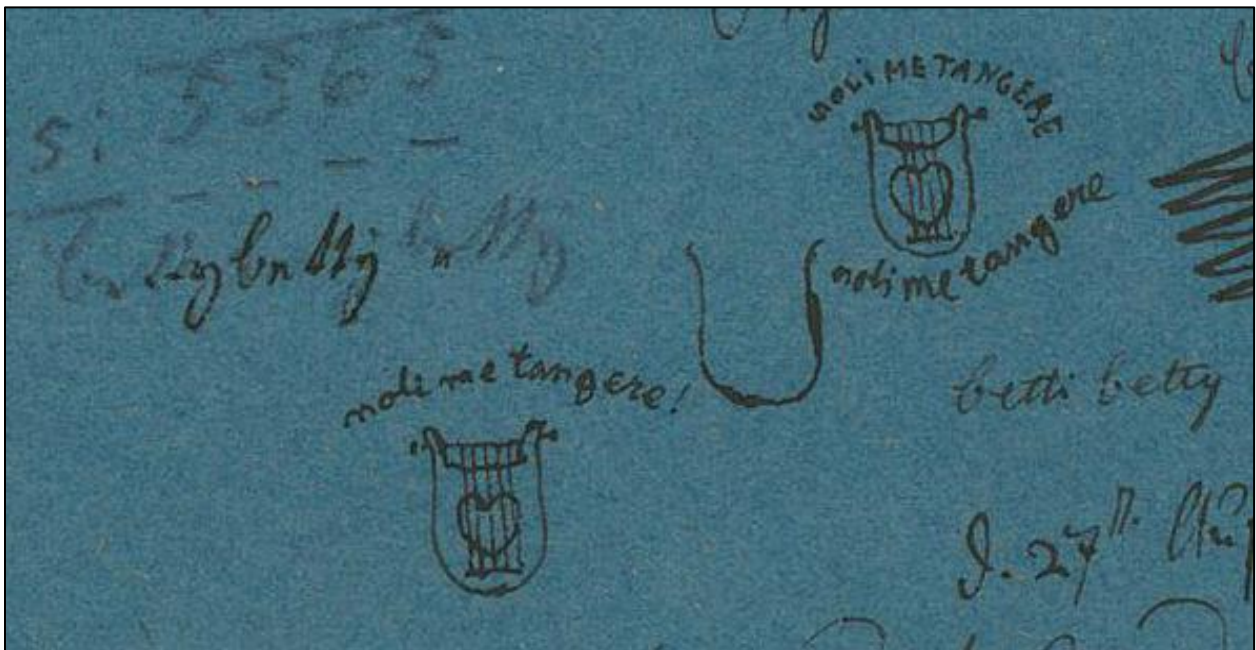


Figure 25. The front of the "Großer Berliner Bogen," detail view.

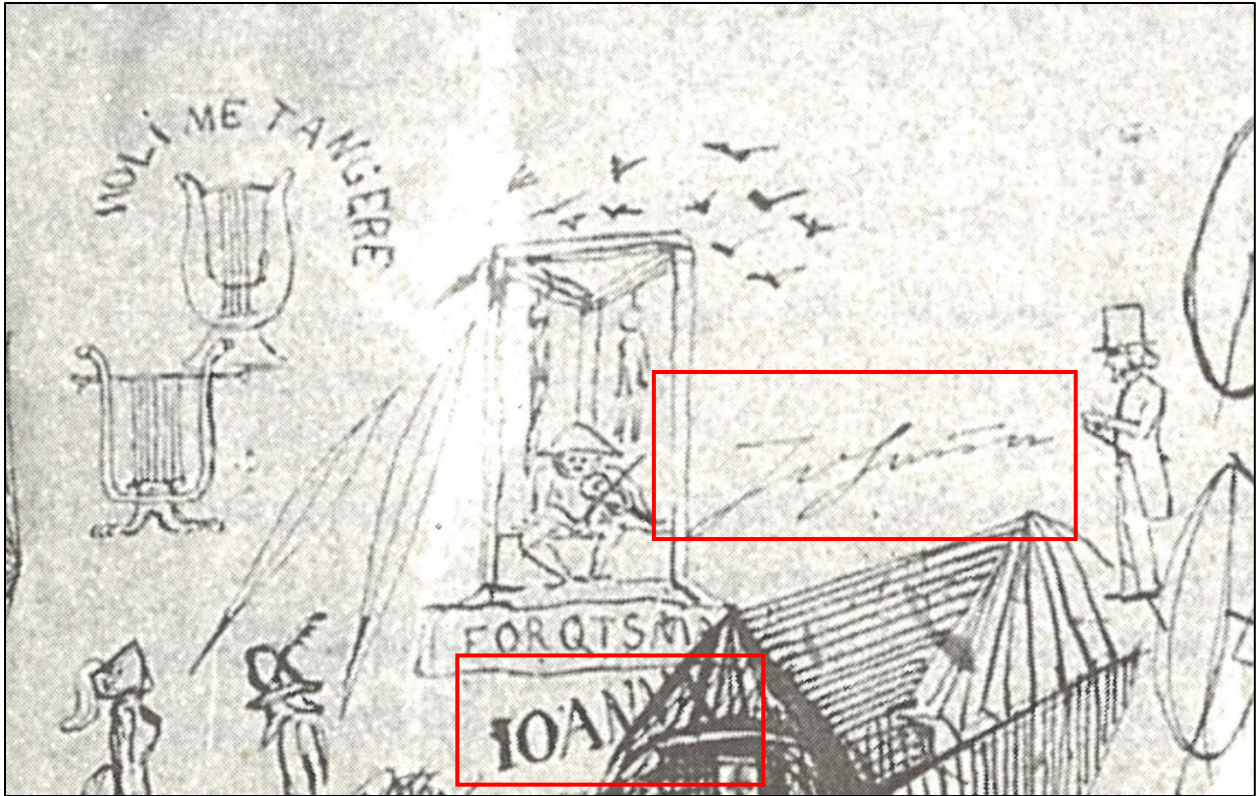


Figure 26. From the Heidelberger Zeichnungsmappe (HKKA 31:210)

Kapp had a part in the reception, as it were, of one of Keller's paintings, namely the 1849 *Ideale Baumlandschaft* (Figure 27).<sup>482</sup> Keller gave this painting to Bernhard Fries, who in turn gave it to Kapp, who cut part of the painting away.<sup>483</sup> After Kapp died in 1883, Keller received the disfigured painting back. A single full tree, with unnaturally serpentine branches, remains intact in the foreground.<sup>484</sup> A few tree trunks are visible, but presumably most of the trees have been excised. One cannot help but recall Wilhelm's tree bark cuttings or Viggli's plan to excise Gritli's

<sup>482</sup> This painting is occasionally contrasted with the *Berliner Bogen*. See, for example, W.G. Sebald, *Logis in einem Landhaus: Über Gottfried Keller, Johann Peter Hebel, Robert Walser und andere* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1998), 123–26.

<sup>483</sup> For a brief overview, see Wysling, *Gottfried Keller. 1819-1890*, 173.

<sup>484</sup> One is reminded here of Heinrich Lee's tendency to paint unnatural-looking trees instead of accurately replicating the trees he saw in nature. For more on the significance of trees within Keller's texts and paintings, see Kasper, "Vom Malen zum Schreiben," 83–84.

poetic realist narrative from his manuscript. But the painting offers an additional clue as to the significance of these excisions. The cuts themselves are irregular, inconsistent, with only one identifiable shape in the negative space: perhaps an angel, perhaps a cherub.<sup>485</sup> The indeterminate figure, perhaps not even present in the original, promises as an angel, salvation, and as a cherub, announces humankind's utter fallenness. The shape of this figure also echoes that of one of the remaining, and very strange tree branches, and seems in this way to evoke the tree of knowledge, whose fruits bring about *the* recognition in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The image never stabilizes, but the oscillation not just between the two figures, but also between the negative and positive space, is, perhaps, the point. Imagination and reality are in constant exchange, and the recognition of this flux, of one's mediated understanding of reality is precisely what is at stake in poetic realism.

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<sup>485</sup> Elena Agazzi identifies the shape as an angel in her analysis of W.G. Sebald's use of the painting in *Logis in einem Landhaus*. Elena Agazzi, "W.G. Sebalds verstörende Idyllen in seiner Dichtung und seinem Prosawerk," in *Idyllik im Kontext von Antike und Moderne: Tradition und Transformation eines europäischen Topos*, ed. Nina Birkner and York-Gothart Mix (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 319.



Figure 27. Gottfried Keller. *Ideale Baumlandschaft*, 1849, Watercolor; pen and brushwork over pencil, 33.6 x 47.5 cm (underlay 33.9 x 47.5 cm), <https://www.swissbib.ch/Record/309249465>.

The image assumes greater significance when viewed in the context of the *Seldwyla* cycle, which frames mediated recognition as the recognition of one's own fallenness. In this context, "Die mißbrauchten Liebesbriefe" emerges as a poetic realist *Fallgeschichte* that presents recognition (*anagnorisis*) and reading (*anagnosis*) as its principle concerns. The apprehension of written or printed material serves as the basis of self-knowledge, and this self-knowledge in turn reveals one's relationship to realist texts. These realist texts are in turn understood as refractions of older literary models. The point, though, is that one must be able to recognize these models, whether as objects of satire or of homage. The poetic and the realist impulses of poetic realism, finally, are not so much in tension with one another as simply mirror reflections.

## Coda

### Wilhelm Raabe and Recognition at the End of Poetic Realism

In an essay on Wilhelm Raabe's *Altershausen* [1902<sup>486</sup>], Eva Geulen explores a reception-oriented notion of anagnorisis, namely the recognition inherent to the "Selbstrückblick." Looking backward into the past, the individual identifies him- or herself *as* the person he or she has become. "[E]rst im Rückblick wird die Figur, die sich vorher als einzelmenschliche nicht kannte und sich auch nicht als solche identifizieren ließ, sich und dadurch auch anderen als die bekannt, die sie im Laufe der Zeit geworden sein soll."<sup>487</sup> *Altershausen*, Geulen argues, which is organized around the "Selbstrückblick," shares a structure with many nineteenth-century realist narratives, among them Keller's "Pankraz" (*Die Leute von Seldwyla*) and Stifter's "Turmalin" (*Bunte Steine*), but represents the decline of this narrative type. However, she suggests that the fact that such narratives are still capable of generating the affective response inherent to anagnorisis means that the operation holds significance for literary history. "Die Moderne erkennt sich in dem wieder, was sie nicht (mehr) ist oder sein kann. [...] [W]enn sich das um Anagnorisis herum organisierte Erzählschema in den Literaturgeschichten fortsetzt, könnte das auch ein Hinweis sein, daß man es in der Anagnorisis mit einer gewissermaßen überzeitlichen Dimension allen Erzählens [...] zu tun hat."<sup>488</sup> This notion of the "Selbstrückblick" is helpful in contextualizing the role of recognition not just at the end of the nineteenth century, but also at the end poetic realism more specifically. Examining the operation

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<sup>486</sup> Raabe abandoned the text in 1902, and it was only published posthumously in 1911 (BA 20:483).

<sup>487</sup> Geulen, "Anagnorisis statt Identifikation (Raabes *Altershausen*)," 427.

<sup>488</sup> Geulen, 447.

from the perspective of the period's end thus allows the critic to parse some of its most important features. Rather than simply looking back at the preceding chapters and summarizing their claims, these brief remarks contextualize those findings via a discussion of another of Raabe's novels: *Das Odfeld* [1888].

It is November 4, 1761, and the Seven Years' War rages on. The evening before French troops arrive at Kloster Amelungsborn, the schoolmaster Noah Buchius strolls past the eponymous Odfeld and watches as innumerable ravens swarm above the field and, presaging the next day's battle, viciously fight one another.<sup>489</sup> Buchius picks an injured raven off the ground and brings it back with him to his ascetic dwelling. After dispensing advice to a servant couple and his former student, Thedel von Münchhausen, Buchius opens a portentous book: Theodor Kampf's 1728 *Der wunderbare Todes-Bote*. The following morning, after narrowly avoiding being hanged by the freshly arrived French troops, Buchius ventures back out to the Odfeld, where he encounters the servant couple, Münchhausen, and Münchhausen's beloved. They wait out part of the battle in a cave, before Scottish troops come upon them. Eventually they reach their intrepid leader, Duke Ferdinand von Braunschweig. While Münchhausen rides off into battle, Buchius and his other companions head home, and, en route, come across Münchhausen's corpse. They finally reach the cloister, which, as anticipated, has been plundered. But when Buchius returns to his isolated cell, he finds that it has been untouched – from the outside, at least. Upon unlocking the door, he finds that the raven has wreaked havoc: his archaeological treasures lie in pieces, and the bird has eaten part of *Der Todes-Bote*. While dodging the

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<sup>489</sup> Raabe refers to the birds as both ravens and crows, though, as Eric Downing notes, the distinction seems hardly to matter. Eric Downing, "No Direction Home: Wilhelm Raabe's *Das Odfeld* and the Archaeology of Identity," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 82, no. 1 (2008): 69.

increasingly irate bird flapping about the room, Buchius is forced finally to open a window, and the *Todesbote* flies out into the world.<sup>490</sup>

The text shares a number of superficial features with those discussed in the preceding chapters by Stifter and Keller, from the apocalyptic imagery, to Buchius' propensity for collecting, to Buchius and Münchhausen's shared tendency to speak in literary quotations and to understand reality *literarily*. But while Stifter and Keller incorporate these elements into their recognition scenes in a way that reflects the epistemological and medial conditions of poetic realism, Raabe includes them in moments of disrupted recognition that question the very status of the period.

*Das Odfeld*, above all else, is concerned with a failed *nostos*. If, to return once more to that *Urszene*, Odysseus' *nostos* had hinged upon a recognition that followed a defamiliarization, in Raabe's text, one finds only the defamiliarization. Buchius' room has been destroyed from within, and his precious collections lie in ruins. This is just one example of the novel's making unfamiliar of the familiar, for the text persistently blurs the boundaries between self and other,

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<sup>490</sup> Albrecht Koschorke notes that the narrative perverts all possible motifs associated with the tale of Noah's ark. "Die Welt außerhalb der Zelle ist keine neuerstandene Schöpfung, sondern ein Schlachtfeld, das mit Leichen bedeckt ist. Die Arche des Magisters Noah Buchius enthält nicht die lebendige Schöpfung noch einmal, bereit zu einem neuen Anfang der Welt, sondern eine verwüstete Ordnung von Zeichen. Noah schickt den Raben nicht, sondern der Rabe erzwingt seinen Ausbruch. Der Rabe soll keine Botschaft zurückbringen (Botschaft des Lebens), sondern er soll eine Botschaft aus der Arche hinaustragen (Botschaft des Todes). Ihm folgt auch nicht, wie in der Bibel, die Taube. Es findet kein Friedensschluß zwischen Gott und den Menschen statt, dessen Zeichen der Regenbogen ist." Albrecht Koschorke, "Der Rabe, das Buch und die Arche der Zeichen: Zu Wilhelm Raabes apokalyptischer Kriegsgeschichte *Das Odfeld*," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 64, no. 3 (1990): 547.

native and foreign, *heimlich* and *unheimlich*.<sup>491</sup> But most importantly for this study, this feature of the text is already reflected within its recognition scenes, three of which deserve singling out.

The first: Luisa, the servant girl, is in possession of a silver button from Duke Ferdinand. A classic *symbolon*, the button promises the future, mutual recognition of both parties. ““Es hat keiner was gehabt, und da her er sich diesen Knopf vom Rocke gerissen und ihn mir vom Pferd gegeben und gesagt: Den bringe mir nach Braunschweig auf das kleine Mosthaus, wenn wir zwei heil durch dieses Elend kommen!”” (BA 17:54). When the group later comes upon the Duke, Luisa immediately displays the button and asks for help. Although the Duke indeed recognizes the button and, mostly as a result of Buchius’ deference, offers to have his men transport the group part of the way home, the *symbolon* fails to achieve its full signifiatory effect. The Duke, generous to a fault, not only lacks the matching button (“Er hat im Laufe seines Lebens nicht bloß die silbernen Knöpfe von seinem Uniformsrock weggegeben; er hat auch wohl den Rock selber verschenkt,” BA 17:181), but he forgets to give Luisa back her button, thus foreclosing on the possibility of any future recognition in the safety of Braunschweig.

The second: This failed recognition is repeated almost immediately. While Buchius recognizes the Duke, his hero, the latter is again unable to reciprocate. “[D]er Magister Buchius [...] sah seinen Heros im Felde und im Leben, sah zum erstenmal seinen guten, seinen großen, seinen guten Herzog Ferdinand von Bevernschen Aste, und – er war auch aus Bevern, und es warm ihm kein Zweifel, daß sie beide aus *einem* Neste waren und sich an den Federn erkennen mußten, wenn – sie bloß Zeit dazu hatten” (BA 17:187). The chaos of the battle leaves no time for recognition. The telltale dash, which in Stifter and Keller had marked linguistic absence

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<sup>491</sup> See Downing, “No Direction Home.” and most recently Eric Downing, “Caves, Collections, Classics: Displacement in Wilhelm Raabe’s *Das Odfeld*,” *The Germanic Review* 94, no. 1 (2019): 1–15.

during the moment of recognition, signifies in Raabe the very absence of the operation. Like Luisa's *symbolon*, this sign, too, is drained of its power.

The third: after the group comes across Münchhausen's body, they emit cries of shock and distress. While this might seem like a straightforward recognition scene – they have, after all, identified their friend – they soon discuss their own *nostos* in a way that destabilizes the moment.

‘Nach Hause!’ murmelte Magister Buchius.  
‘Ja, nach Hause!’ rief Knecht Heinrich [...]. ‘Ein schönes Nach-Hause für alles, was heute hier um den Ith herum gern nach Hause möchte aus Frankreich, England, Bückeberg und dem Hessischen, Braunschweig und allem, was sonst so zu uns ortsangeborenem deutschen Volke gehört. Herr Magister, lieber Herr Magister, da haben der Herr Junker doch wieder ihren Willen gekriegt. Die wollten immerdar nur von Hause weg – von Schulen und von Hause weg – und sie haben einen sanften Tod gehabt, liebster bester Herr Magister, und brauchen sich nicht mehr zu sorgen wie wir andern, was ihnen zu Hause für den Abend aufgehoben ist [...].’ (BA 17:205)

Münchhausen, who has died on the Odfeld with a smile on his face, has experienced a homecoming, but, paradoxically, because he has realized his ambition of *leaving* home. He and his fellow soldiers are forever at home *away* from home, and this homecoming in death brings them the peace denied to those who remain and have only the vaguest ideas of what awaits them at home.

Buchius' return to his destroyed cell thus marks the culmination of these preceding scenes, and not just because these moments are all linked with a homecoming. Rather, as Albrecht Koschorke notes, the portentous raven's destruction of the portentous book indicates that the realist representative logic within the text has crumbled.<sup>492</sup> The *Todes-Bote*, understood

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<sup>492</sup> Koschorke, “Der Rabe, das Buch und die Arche der Zeichen,” 548. “In der bürgerlichen Romantradition ist das Buch um Buch ein stehendes Motiv, es dient als Geheimnisspeicher, seine Öffnung am Ende hat den Charakter einer Revelation, die rückwirkend ein klärendes Licht auf die Romanhandlung wirft. Raabe folgt dieser Tradition und bricht zugleich mit ihr. Sein in Buchius' Zelle hineingetragenes Totemtier vernichtet die, sei es noch so unsichere und

as both the book Buchius reads, the *Rabe* that destroys the book, and Raabe himself, sends a message into the world of realism's end.<sup>493</sup>

Recognition, as Aristotle describes it in the *Poetics*, depends on a straightforward mimetic logic. For recognition to be possible, a representation must be identifiable as such. Only then can one recognize something *as* something. But when the accepted means for representing reality begin to shift, recognition no longer functions in the same way. Put differently: with new paradigms of representation come new forms of recognition. As this study has shown, the operation of recognition shifts over the nineteenth century in ways that reflect the emergence and decline of poetic realism.

Part I demonstrates that Stifter's early realist works draw from romantic and Enlightenment configurations of recognition, as well as nineteenth-century science, to promulgate a model of realist recognition that emphasizes the bodily situatedness of author and reader alike. By drawing on the sensory perceptual discourse that emerged from Molyneux's Problem, Stifter posits recognition as emerging from the fusion of two registers of sensory experience. His narrative prose struggles to reconcile the scientific with the human, and this attempted synthesis not only derives from Enlightenment recognition, but it also demands that the extradiegetic reader practice a mode of re-cognition that resembles the type of activity theorized within the new field of empathy aesthetics. Stifter's poetic realist recognition, then,

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allegorische, Abbildbarkeit der Welt. [...] Als Ergebnis der Erzählung wird die Unmöglichkeit einer epischen Repräsentation der Welt Ereignis. [...] Solche Sprengtexte kennzeichnen das Ende des epischen Realismus.”

<sup>493</sup> For more on the Rabe/Raabe word play, see Downing, “No Direction Home,” 69–70. “[D]er Rabe,” also serves as a signatory emblem for the singular author himself, who persistently insists on asserting his particular personality into the far from neutralized (or indifferent) depiction of events; certainly the crow or raven that Buchius brings back into his room, and that ends up destroying both his museum and library in its efforts to escape, is as much a figure for this unruly author as for his more passive protagonist.”

transforms prior poetic models and incorporates the newest theories of the way one gains knowledge about reality.

Part II illustrates that Keller's recognition scenes revolve around the differentiation of life and literature. Like Stifter, Keller emphasizes a mode of discursive synthesis that derives from Enlightenment responses to Molyneux's Problem. However, rather than focusing on sensory perception, he deploys this synthetic mode in his embrace of prior literary models. By drawing conspicuous attention to the numerous intertexts within his works, he foregrounds the highly poetic quality of his realism. Moreover, because Keller presents reality as a copy of literature, and not the other way around, his recognition scenes show that the very way one gains knowledge about reality is, in fact, profoundly mediated.

Raabe's texts, finally, with their backward glances and failed *nostoi*, affirm the centrality of recognition to self-conceptions of the period's epistemologies and representational strategies, but only in the process of their disappearance. Raabe's realism, like Keller's, is exceedingly poetic, with his characters likewise recognizing the overlap between life and literature, but his texts reflect an awareness of the epochal shift about to occur. Or rather, the epochal shift already taking place. *Das Odfeld* was published in 1888 and *Altershausen* in 1911, a year after the author's death and just one year before Franz Kafka penned "Das Urteil." The chasm between Raabe and Kafka could hardly be greater. And yet, Raabe's thwarted homecomings, his defamiliarization of what is *heimlich*, seems naturally to give way to Kafka's magnificently uncanny narratives. The refraction of Odysseus' scar in "Das Urteil," finally, is but the afterlife of realist recognition.

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