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**Contextualizing A Motif: Late Nineteenth Century Portrayals of the
German Poacher-Hero**

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German Poacher-Hero**

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Abstract

Contextualizing A Motif: Late Nineteenth Century Portrayals of the German Poacher-Hero

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This thesis focuses on the anachronistic poacher-hero figure in late nineteenth-century German literature. Historian Hobsbawm has suggested that the symbolic endurance of “noble robber” figures (of which we can view poacher-heroes as a subset) takes place in an ideal imaginary “stripped” of the “local and social framework” (2000, 143). My thesis shows, in multiple examples across multiple genres, that in fact the poacher-hero is uniquely available for re-contextualization and renewal of social relevance, even under changed social and economic circumstances. The poacher-hero is not only a device for making statements about the past, but also for expressing claims on the future. It is perhaps this dynamism that makes the poacher-hero excellent carrier for different kinds of social critique as well.

In my first chapter, I give a brief historical overview of the period and the motif. In the second chapter, I show how the poacher and his rural context are brought into contact with urban, imperial themes. In the chapter I read two novels, *Der verlorene Sohn*

(*The Prodigal Son*, 1884-1886) and *Quitt* (*Even*, 1890), and the play *Waldleute* (*Forest People*, 1896) thematically to show how upward social mobility is associated with and adapted to the poacher figure.

In the third chapter of the thesis, I examine narrative strategies and their employment in the construction of a socially critical viewpoint in *Der verlorene Sohn* and *Quitt*. I show how both high and low literary works, intended and written for different audiences, achieve similar results in their positioning of the poacher-protagonist through different narrative structures. This convergence shows the malleability of the societal frame for the poacher-hero. Finally, in the fourth chapter, I show regional adaptations of the motif, by examining different versions of a folk ballad “Das Jennerweinlied” (“The Jennerwein Song”).

This thesis furthermore shows how study of a motif can be used to bring together a diverse group of roughly contemporary texts. Viewing these texts in relationship with one another brings into question the scholarly focus on certain texts at the expense of others.

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Introduction: Contextualizing a Motif

Poaching or illegal hunting is criminally prosecuted as a violation of property laws in Germany. However, many objections to such prosecution are based on a diametrically opposed perspective which sees hunting as a universal right: what grows freely in nature is there for us to take freely.¹ The tension between these two perspectives expresses a class tension that became urgent in the nineteenth century in German-speaking Central Europe, as the privileged aristocracy (and their hunting rights) began to decline and as the emancipation of the serfs, transition to capitalist agriculture, and rapid industrialization transformed rural society.

Like Robin Hood, the noble robber, the poacher is at once a symbol of anti-feudal resistance and lower class solidarity, and also an object of identification for the educated middle and upper classes. The poacher's social meanings became more and more complex in the late nineteenth century, as the society and laws that created him were gradually transformed and replaced. The purpose of this thesis is to explore how the poacher-hero was transformed, and how he was re-purposed to fit the context of Imperial Germany, 1871-1900.

My thesis answers the questions: how is the poacher-hero still a relevant literary motif for social critique after hunting privilege (its historical and social conditioning

¹ In this way, poaching belongs to a broader constellation of forest crimes that included gathering wood, cutting down trees and harvesting fruit. It also fits into a broader context of crimes that were common in rural areas due to relative lack of policing, such as smuggling.

circumstances) dissolved? What factors contribute to this endurance? What shifts did this require? I argue that these shifts reflect both changing times and regional preferences and that by looking at motifs across multiple genres, we can get a sense for what is relevant in literature of a time, beyond the borders of literary periods and registers.

In chapter one, I give a brief historical overview of the period and poaching. I draw on the work of historian Hobsbawm on social bandits and suggest that the symbolism he proposes for this historical phenomenon is analogous to that of its literary incarnations. In chapter two, through close reading of three texts, *Der verlorene Sohn* (*The Prodigal Son*, 1884-1886), *Waldleute* (*Forest People*, 1896), and *Quitt* (*Even*, 1890), I argue that the currency of the poacher-hero during the Imperial era is supported through the displacement of urban and imperial questions of social justice into rural, nostalgic space and onto the figure of the poacher. The works I examine in chapter two represent different genres and styles of authorship: *Der verlorene Sohn* is a serial novel written anonymously by Karl May, *Waldleute* is a play written by Carl Hauptmann, and *Quitt* is a novel, initially published in a family magazine, written by Theodor Fontane. My reading shows how motifs cross genres, and how diverse such motif realizations can be.

In the third chapter, I examine the narrative strategies used in *Der verlorene Sohn* and *Quitt* to create a socially critical perspective through close-reading. I argue that the poacher motif contains a social critique; that formal differences such as strategies of narrative voice and structure and changes in register are in fact insignificant when we examine how the poacher figure is positioned and consistently deployed in the context of

social critique. Across genres, then, we can view the poacher figure as one consistently associated with critique of the societal status quo.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I examine a popular folk ballad from the era, “Das Jennerweinlied.” The song fits into a lament genre that thematizes the death of a poacher at the hands of a forester. I show how the text is thematically adapted to two distinct worldviews – to its place of origin (Upper Bavaria), and to a wider urban audience in dissemination in other parts of Germany.

Motif histories are often seen as problematic because of their potential to render author, genre, and nationality— in short, the historical world— secondary to thematic elements of works. Studying motifs across genres offers a perspective that lowers borders between high and low, rural and urban, ballad and novel. However, it also offers more possibilities for articulating and understanding these borders. This approach offers the ability to survey a broader cross-section of literary variety. I examine the motif of the poacher-hero across a series of works written in between 1871 and 1900. In this, I pay particular attention to how the poacher-hero is re-contextualized to fit the new era, and the textual strategies for calling up both the old meaning of the poacher (as resistant freedom fighter) and altering that meaning (to citizen in early capitalist, Imperial Germany).

If we view motif research as a diachronic project, uncovering how a particular motif has changed over time, this thesis has the potential to show that changes in motifs take place over time, and that the process is a gradual, hybrid one. It is impossible to identify a discrete point in time where one meaning becomes wholly obsolete, and

another replaces it. Acknowledging the historical connotations of a motif as it is brought forward in time gives us the opportunity to observe the interactions between new and old and further offers the possibility to register how motifs influence aspects of themes, narrative perspective, as well as how motifs take on slightly forms in different locales of distribution.

The only literary study to deal primarily with poaching as a motif is Jhy-Wey Shieh's '*Kommt ein Wilderer dem Förster ins Gehege...*' It focuses primarily on erotic facets of the poacher in literature and the conflict between poacher and forester, with the stated goal of creating a niche for the poacher and poaching in motif research (11). However, Shieh also refers to historians Hobsbawm and Eckardt in the introduction of his work, predicating his study on Hobsbawm's distinction between the social bandit and the common criminal and Eckardt's similar distinction between the poacher and the common criminal.² The major problem Shieh identifies as preventing an earlier formation of this niche is the literary-historical evaluation of poacher stories within the framework of criminal and robber genre novels (*Räuberromane*) (19).

The major reason Shieh puts forth for separating poaching stories from this genre framework is what he regards as the poacher's unique "Sozialleistung," which aligns the figure with Hobsbawm's social bandit more than with criminals (20). According to Hobsbawm, the defining characteristic of the social bandit is that his crimes are sanctioned by the community to which he belongs. Shieh's analysis depends on drawing

² See Eckardt 141.

a clear distinction between typical criminals and the socially rebellious poacher. This distinction is blurry and depends on the local and social context.

The way Shieh focuses in on the erotic thematic of the motif as the feature distinguishing it from *Räuberromantik* does not serve to elaborate on the distinction between social bandit/poacher and *Räuber*. By including works Shieh did not³ and by emphasizing the social bandit definition as a criterion for identifying the poacher-hero, my thesis has more to say about the motif as a device for broader social critique, as well as highlighting its connections to ideas about justice and social mobility.

THE POACHER-HERO IN LITERATURE

The texts this thesis examines were not produced in isolation. There is a long tradition of writing about bandits, robbers, and poachers. Robin Hood, for example, is one of the most renowned fictional examples of the noble robber. Ballads about him began to be recorded in the thirteenth century, and his name and stories are still well known today. The fact that Robin Hood is fictional rather than historical seems almost necessary to his longevity as a figure of the popular imagination. In Germany there is no fictional equivalent. However, there are many well-known works which incorporate the theme of community-sanctioned crime or social banditry. This section considers the multiple streams of literary imagination surrounding the poacher-hero prior to and roughly contemporary with the four works the thesis examines.⁴

³ Shieh analyzes *Quitt*, but not *Waldleute*, *Der verlorene Sohn*, or “Das Jennerweinlied.”

⁴ In this section, I focus primarily on literary texts. However, many other types of texts thematized the poacher and his crimes. Legal texts, forestry and hunting handbooks, and journalistic texts testify to the poacher’s presence in public non-literary discourses. Hölzl’s book covers and evaluates relevant works for wood theft.

Prior to the German Imperial era, poacher-heroes primarily appear in one of two literary roles: either they functioned as minor characters serving to flesh out the reality and atmosphere of a rural setting, or they were stylized as outlaws (and sometimes as heroes) in sensational *Räuberromantik*-style popular literature.⁵ For the latter, Schiller's earlier *Die Räuber* and *Verbrecher aus Verlorener Ehre* were likely extremely influential. The authors' backgrounds and sources often played a role in determining how the forest-criminal motif was deployed.

In most literature, poachers remain in the margins. Poacher figures share some of this literary function with other kinds of bandits: pirates, wood thieves, smugglers.⁶ Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's novella *Die Judenbuche* (*The Jew's Beech*, 1842), for example, uses the motif of organized wood theft to give depth and dimension to the story of a village boy's development from child to murderer. Following his crime, the protagonist flees the country, but returns 28 years later. Upon his return, he commits suicide at a beech tree the parish's Jewish community purchased and inscribed to commemorate the death of the Jewish man he murdered. A hallmark of the novella is its ambiguity; the reader can never be certain of the identity of the main character, nor of who is actually guilty of what crime.

In fact, through the recurring element of wood theft, Droste's novella seems to indict the whole community as guilty. She uses the motif of forest crime— organized wood theft and smuggling which lead to murder— to reveal a community level of guilt

⁵ Shieh's book is able to encompass a greater temporal span, and this overview can be supplemented by his selection of works. However, I include works like *Das Gemeindegeld* and *Die Judenbuche* because of the way they thematize community-sanctioned rural property crime, whereas Shieh does not include them.

⁶ Hölzl's assesses *Waldfrevel* in late nineteenth-century belletristic, for example, as a minor motif. "Die Belletristik des 19. Jahrhunderts machte die Forstfrevler und Holzdiebe nicht zu zentralen Figuren ihrer Texte. [...] Ähnlich wie in Webers *Freischütz* fungieren die Forstfrevler in vielen anderen Dramen, Romanen und Erzählungen des 19. Jahrhunderts als *stock characters* – Nebenfiguren, die, wenn überhaupt nur mit flachen Charakterzügen ausgestattet, nicht den Plot vorantreiben, sondern für den atmosphärischen Hintergrund zuständig sind." (416-417)

and immorality. The works I examine share central themes with Droste's novella: guilt and redemption, destiny, and a narrative perspective that focuses on social conditions.⁷ However, the poacher, smuggler, and wood thief take center stage in the stories which are the focus of this thesis.

Droste wrote very much from the perspective of the Catholic nobility of Westfalen to which she belonged; her novella takes a pedagogical point of view.⁸ The village community's failure to respect the local nobleman's property rights, evidenced by the communal sanction of wood theft, also disturbs the possibility for harmony and solidarity among the villagers. Droste's novel implies that if they are able to condone stealing from the nobleman's forest, the villagers are also able to condone stealing from each other. The nobleman and his wife, peripheral characters in this story, are portrayed as distant benefactors – the crimes committed against their property do not seem to touch them; the only victims in the novella are the characters and the village community.

Works like Droste's were, however, not limited to the era before 1871. Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's novel *Krambambuli* (*Krambambuli*, 1883) also includes poaching and wood theft as dimension-giving motifs. Though contemporary with the works I examine, Ebner-Eschenbach shares Droste's pedagogical perspective. Ebner-Eschenbach was also a daughter of the Catholic rural nobility. However, she lived in central Austria. There was a different, slower timeline for industrial and social development in the Moravian and Bohemian countryside, where Ebner-Eschenbach lived. Because of this

⁷ Fontane's novel *Quitt* (1890) touches on death as penance, belief in destiny, and other topics which make it an excellent work to compare with *Die Judenbuche*. Ulrike Horstmann-Guthrie's 1989 short article "Fontanes Kriminalerzählungen und Droste-Hülshoffs *Die Judenbuche*" accomplishes this.

⁸ Donahue's 1999 article "'Ist er kein Jude, so verdient er einer zu sein': Droste-Hülshoff's *Die Judenbuche* and Religious Anti-Semitism." shows how her pedagogical message functions on a framework of anti-Semitism.

lag, it makes sense that she shares some of the sentiments of an author who wrote four decades before her.

Like Droste's *Die Judenbuche*, Ebner-Eschenbach's works focus on members of the rural lower class as protagonists. In *Krambambuli*, a huntsman named Hopp and his second-hand dog, Krambambuli, take center stage. The dog is so loyal to its old master that it takes weeks for Hopp to train the dog to obey him. Eventually, the enforcement of hunting laws becomes entangled with personal injury and honor: Krambambuli's former owner kills the head forester, Hopp's boss. Hopp happens to meet the man in the woods and discovers the fact that he is the murderer. Hopp's dog refuses his commands to attack its former master. The thematic parallel between the dog's situation and that of the rural lower classes in the transition to empire is remarkable and complicated, but not one that builds up the poacher as a heroic figure.⁹

For Ebner-Eschenbach, poaching is a part of the rural scene.¹⁰ Ebner-Eschenbach's works primarily illustrate how regulation of hunting and forest products were a flashpoint in rural class relations. In *Krambambuli*, we see some of the themes that will be touched in the works I examine more closely: the nuances of the opposition between the forester and poacher – is it personal or is it official? – and the question of who is really in the right and who ought to be heeded. Although Ebner-Eschenbach's works were roughly contemporary to the other works I examine, she does not resuscitate the poacher as a symbol of social resistance.

⁹ For more on sociohistorical readings of *Krambambuli*, see Roszbacher, Karlheinz. "Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach: Zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Sozialgeschichte am Beispiel von *Krambambuli*." *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur (mit Geographie)*. 24 (1980): 87-106.

¹⁰ This is also much the case in earlier *Dorfgeschichten*, such as Berthold Auerbach's collection *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten (Black Forest Village Stories, 1843)*, which features a story "Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange" ("Tonele with the Bitten Cheek"). In the story, a hunter's attraction to a village girl culminates in murder out of jealousy. Poaching is only something that is alluded to in the story. Here it seems to serve a double purpose: as a landmark for village life, but also as a metaphor for attraction and conquest.

Another theater piece that is roughly contemporary with the works I examine is *Der Biberpelz* (*The Beaver Pelt*, 1893). This Gerhart Hauptmann play works extensively with a motif of poaching.¹¹ In the opening scene of the play, a poached deer is strung up in the family home and comically concealed from untrustworthy visitors, then eventually sold to the smuggler Wulkow. The play is a socially critical comedy that follows the successes of the central character, Mutter Wolffen, in stealing and re-selling a beaver pelt. She triumphs in the end by bamboozling the petty bureaucrat to whom the beaver pelt's rightful owner has made accusations.

The hustling ways of Mutter Wolffen are presaged in the way that poachers connect to hopes for upward social mobility in the works I examine, but she represents a new and modern figure.¹² Her urban milieu and lack of connection to nature or to property-owning distances her from the context of the social bandit and from the poacher-hero. Her crime is unsanctioned, and the size of the community, rather than its solidarity helps to conceal it. Poaching is one in a series of complicated and illegal economic strategies the Wolff family uses to cope with their poverty. Mutter Wolffen is an entrepreneur, whereas the poachers I am interested in are, in some ways, throwbacks to the era of social banditry.

As mentioned briefly above, the setting in *Der Biberpelz* prevents its inclusion in this thesis. The play is set in a busy and populous area with access to shipping boats on the Spree. The setting is in a *Vorort* of Berlin, and the location is underscored by the Berlin dialect the characters speak. Although Fontane's *Quitt* brings a Berlin bureaucrat and his family into his novel, they are tourists in the picturesque mountains of Silesia.

¹¹ In fact, I treat a play about a poaching conflict written by Gerhart Hauptmann's brother Carl in the third section of this thesis.

¹² She reappears in Hauptmann's sequel to *Der Biberpelz* as Frau Fielitz, having married a cobbler. The play is a tragicomedy entitled *Der rote Hahn* (*The Red Rooster*, 1901). Frau Fielitz worries herself to death over her biggest swindle yet, burning down her own house to obtain fire insurance money.

Der verlorene Sohn also ventures into a city that is probably Dresden. However, in all of the works the village setting is important: the rural setting is in dialogue with an earlier era, just as the device of the poacher-hero is.

There are many other works that might be prudent to mention here that deal with hunting or with encounters between urban and rural culture.¹³ The poachers in all of the novels I examine are rural heroes. Authors used them to symbolize the freedom of life outside the city and an idealized spirit of resistance from a bygone era. But in the late nineteenth century, we also find that poachers are adapted in specific ways to the new context of the late nineteenth century, adaptations which can help us understand the cultural significance of the poaching motif after the hunting regulations were gone.

This introduction has set the stage for exploration of the poacher-hero as a motif. In the first chapter, I set out the defining elements of the motif and its historical background. The chapter following the historical background opens up some of the thematic issues and adaptations made within the motif, and shows how social issues of urban, colonial and industrial spaces are displaced onto the rural countryside and the figure of the poacher.

¹³ Stifter's *Brigitta* (*Brigitta*, 1844) comes to mind, as do the works of Peter Rosegger (1843-1918).

Chapter 1: Historical Overview

DEFINING THE POACHER-HERO MOTIF

The significance of Hobsbawm's work on banditry to our understanding of poaching is evident in the frequency with which it is cited by historians working on crime and German rural life.¹⁴ In the late 1960s, Hobsbawm coined the term "social bandits" to describe what he understood as the universal social phenomenon of "robbers not regarded as criminals by public opinion" (13). Hobsbawm's definition of banditry thus implies the importance of local context and community in the creation of the social bandit. It also assumes a solidarity among rural lower classes which creates a general public opinion opposed to legal authority.

Hobsbawm details the societal contexts that favor banditry, suggesting that times of social and economic crises predispose a society to banditry. He hypothesizes further that certain cultural and traditional features can pre-condition banditry. For example, he notes that banditry is especially likely to flourish among pastoralists,¹⁵ as well as among

¹⁴ See Krauss, Eckardt, and Girtler for examples.

¹⁵ The term "pastoralists" describes societies which are centered on raising and keeping livestock, such as sheep or cattle. Pastoral communities in German-speaking Central Europe included rural populations in the Alpine region, where the land could not support extensive farming.

societies in which blood feuding, or revenge killing, is a traditional method of conflict resolution between aggrieved parties (14).

The social bandit's "political program," as such, is not explicitly revolutionary. The social objective of the bandit, according to Hobsbawm, is to "correct and avenge cases of injustice, and in doing so apply a more general criterion of just and fair relations between men in general, and especially between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak" (21). Often the social bandit's crimes and worldview are linked to past or traditional concepts of authority and fairness. In some cases, the connection is even made to Biblical ideas. An example of this style of thinking in relationship to hunting rights can be found in folk songs and peasant petitions for reform dating back to the sixteenth century which cite the Biblical notion of Adam's superiority and stewardship over all beasts as justification for universal hunting rights.¹⁶

The enduring importance of the social bandit for Hobsbawm lies in the literary discourse and mythology surrounding him. Hobsbawm writes, "[...] what remains when we strip away the local and social framework of brigandage: a permanent emotion and a permanent role. There is freedom, heroism and the dream of justice." (113) As Hobsbawm suggests, in literature, the social bandit opens up a space for evaluation of fairness in society. At the same time, this figure provides a location for fantasies about exceeding, transcending and changing the limits and rules of society. However, my thesis shows how the "permanent emotion" and "permanent role" is constantly being re-contextualized to fit its new circumstances.

¹⁶ Eckardt points out that in the sixteenth century, dissemination of Reformation ideas helped to spread this objection to hunting regulation; certain passages from Luther that Eckardt calls "rein geistlich gemeint" were "von den Bauern aufgegriffen und auf ihre weltliche Nöte bezogen; das Festhalten am alten Recht konnte sich mit dem Streben nach göttlicher Gerechtigkeit verbinden" (33).

Hobsbawm's book treats the phenomenon of the social bandit generally, with an emphasis on southern Europe and the Balkans, where bandit activity continued into the twentieth century. With regard to Germany, Hobsbawm draws several conflicting conclusions about the status of banditry. He points out Germany's *Kleinstaaterei*, which persisted up into the late nineteenth century, as a factor favorable to banditry because areas of multiple borders hindered the pursuit and capture of bandits (16). However, Hobsbawm limits Western Europe's era of banditry to the years between 1500 and 1800 (19).

Further, Hobsbawm has some ambiguity in his arguments that makes his "social bandit definition easy to expand and extend, but difficult to refine and limit. For example, when discussing the social bandit, Hobsbawm claims that popular opinion created "noble robber" figures out of men who were, in fact, mere criminals.¹⁷ Here he seems to contradict himself, because if the social bandit is always defined by his local roots and local good opinion, is not any criminal who receives this social sanction a social bandit?

I have chosen to use Hobsbawm's definition as a broad basis for identifying poacher-hero figures in German literature. As the brief historical overview that follows this definition will show, poaching has always been an act sanctioned by some social classes and criminalized by others. The communal sanctioning of behavior criminalized by the authorities aligns the poacher with Hobsbawm's social bandit. This communal sanction of crimes in the name of social equality and contrarian understandings of what constitutes property is at the heart of the literary motif as well.

¹⁷Hobsbawm: "Nevertheless, criminal robbers cannot be simply excluded from the study of social banditry. In the first place, where for one reason or another social banditry did not flourish or had died out, suitable criminal robbers might well be idealized and given the attributes of Robin Hood, especially when they concentrated on holding up merchants, rich travelers, and others who enjoyed no great sympathy among the poor. Thus in eighteenth-century France, England and Germany celebrated underworld characters like Dick Turpin, Cartouche and Schinderhannes substituted for the genuine Robin Hoods who had disappeared from these countries by that time." (32)

HISTORY OF HUNTING AND POACHING IN GERMANY

In the following historical overview, I give a brief summary of the centuries of hunting regulation prior to the nineteenth century, but focus primarily on reform in hunting regulation that took place during and immediately following the Revolutions of 1848. This background information shows the persistent historical character of poaching as an act of social banditry.

Over the centuries, the status of poaching as an offense reflected the social structure of the time, especially in rural areas. From the earliest Middle Ages onwards, hunting was a privilege reserved for the nobility in German-speaking central Europe. Initially this privileged group was made up of a feudal warrior-caste of rulers. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, German aristocracy had long been hereditary, entrenched and regionally powerful. Hunting was the right of the nobility and secured to their class.

Poachers, then, came from the rural lower classes, whose rights to hunt were restricted in ways that determined their land use (fencing, gathering wood), their rights (to bear arms, to keep certain animals), and their diet. The criminal status of poaching reflects the political, social and material disenfranchisement of the rural lower classes in Europe from feudal times until the beginning of the nineteenth century (Cf Ruehs). In turn, hunting regulation reflects the dominance of the nobility and its ability to dictate and to control the lifestyle of the poor and un-propertied.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the close of an era in which hunts were conducted as spectacle and excess. Through most of the eighteenth century, the example of the court at Versailles prevailed. During single hunts thousands of game animals might be driven into closed off arenas, where hunters shot from a pavilion,

watched by the members of the court (Eckardt 52-53). Sometimes animals would be driven through elaborately constructed bodies of water, hedges or cliffs to heighten the spectacle of their struggle to escape the dogs used to drive them (54). This style of hunt required huge numbers of game and hunting personnel. Workers were usually drawn as unpaid laborers from the region's peasantry.

The year 1812 marks one of the last large hunting festivals in this style in Germany, held at Bebenhausen by the King of Württemberg Friedrich (1806-1816). Court painter Johann Baptist Seele and the writer Friedrich von Matthison both made renderings of the event; the commissioning of such records was important for communicating the reputation of the court's entertainments (55). We can therefore view this time period as one in which hunting privilege caused extreme privation for the rural lower classes. Maintaining game in such numbers meant that farmers suffered damages to their crops. Driving thousands of game animals to constructed hunting arenas required the unpaid labor of hundreds of people. We can see in this the interlocking nature of the social and environmental impact of the regal hunt, and also how the memory of the injustice of noble hunting excess might persist. Hunting privilege, therefore, must be seen as a part of a system of oppression. That hunting rights have been at the center of popular unrest heightens the resonance between poaching activity and political and social rebellion.

According to historian Ries, "Mißverachtung der herrschaftlichen Vorrechte auf Wald und Wild" had been part of the pattern for peasant uprisings since the Reformation-era Peasants' War of 1525 (264).¹⁸ Whether and in how far poaching should be understood as resistant activity is under debate among historians (Cf Hiller 56-65, Eckardt 126-141). The undeniable connection of poaching to subsistence and to the local

¹⁸ See also Eckardt 33f.

economy makes it inadvisable to view it as solely political. The resistance character of poaching seems to come out of court records of trials, and it is primarily from the perspective of the civil society and legal authority that poaching can be interpreted as rebellion or protest. In examining the nineteenth-century reform of hunting law, we must remember the long history of hunting privilege and how it was bound to and reflected social status over several centuries.

Scholars who work on poaching specifically are few and far between. Historians who deal with the topic touch on it as a dark side or counterpart to hunting and hunting law or as a specific category within a broader context of rural crime. Because poaching is seen in close relationship with hunting law and rural crime, the high historical point of hunting law reform is the time period where we encounter the greatest detail, insight and scholarly engagement with the topic of poaching. In the nineteenth century, this high point is 1848 and the years immediately following. Lack of broad geographical coverage is also an issue in the scholarship because of the fact that hunting law was locally administered and varied from state to state.

The scholarly engagement with the 1848 hunting reforms is nuanced and complicated in its purview, whereas the first three decades of unified Germany, the era of the texts I examine, are relegated to an era of broadly defined contrast, a time in which hunting was legal following the unrest and reform of 1848. What we can draw from the histories that focus on the mid-nineteenth century revolution is a general picture of change in the countryside: there was legal reform in many areas, including hunting law, but reform did not go far towards improving the situation of the rural poor.

The 1840s were a decade of distress in Germany, including widespread famine during the years 1846-7. Popular unrest began in the spring of 1848. Revolutionary activity in Germany was diffuse and de-centralized. Its catalyst was the overthrow of

King Louis Philippe in the February Revolution in France (Fulbrook 117). Mary Fulbrook's description of the revolution briefly characterizes the variety of revolutionary activity in Germany:

In the face of widespread peasants' insurrections, artisans' riots and liberal pressures, rulers all over Germany rapidly made concessions in a panic attempt to ward off the feared threat of worse disturbances. (117)

The outcomes, too, were various. Most German states did away with noble hunting privilege in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions. The revolution in the countryside was different from the revolution in the cities, and had a regionally particular character that was, in part, determined by types of peasant land ownership. Historian Jonathan Sperber distinguishes three types of peasant land ownership in Europe in 1840 (10-11). Because German-speaking countries of the time were so politically and geographically diverse, all three types of land ownership are relevant for the German context.

In Germany "left of the Rhine," the influence of the French Revolution abolished feudal relationships in the last decade of the eighteenth century; anyone could own land, and agricultural laborers worked for compensation and were free to leave their jobs (10-11). In these areas, as well as in north-central Germany, emancipation of the peasantry was complete by 1840. However, the social transition this dissolution caused, along with other economic factors and drought in 1847, had led to pauperism and extreme social stratification among the rural lower classes, which primed these areas for revolt in 1848.

These rural lower classes saw their way of life and existence threatened by the commercialization of private property, the ownership of which was out of their grasp and which necessitated continuing dependence on landlords for work. Their revolt had a current of anti-capitalist sentiment, expressing a wish for return to the secure, if unequal, society of the era that had passed which had guaranteed them certain types of social and economic security. Their anger was not directed against the local nobility, but instead at

large land-owners or village officials. In these areas, property-owning farmers cooperated with state agencies to suppress unrest in the countryside (Ries 268). It was this property-owning class of peasants who had gained greatly through the dissolution of feudal ties. In other areas of Germany, where the emancipation of the serfs was not yet complete, property-owning farmers were revolutionary agents.

In central and southern Germany, the status of peasants with regard to land ownership was mixed: peasants were free to move about and to dispose of the land they farmed; however, they had to pay fees of various kinds to noble landlords, who maintained certain rights over the land their subject-peasants farmed (Sperber 11). This relationship could be ended through a large, one-time cash payment to the nobleman, but this option was not frequently exercised, since money was often not readily available (11). The emancipation of the peasants in these regions was slowed. Intact feudal social and economic structures prevented the transition to modern economic models of agriculture. The main revolutionary figures in these regions were property-owning farmers who stood to gain greatly from the dissolution of feudal holdovers; their targets were primarily the representatives of landed nobility. Eckardt writes of rural uprisings in Baden and Württemberg:

Die Treue zum Landesherren wurde nicht in Frage gestellt, und man ließ den Monarchen hochleben, wenn man standesherrlichen Besitz in Brand steckte, standesherrliche Akten vernichtete oder standesherrliche Beamte mißhandelte.
(236)

The third form of land ownership and agitation is to be found in the far eastern reaches of Prussia and the Habsburg monarchy, where feudalism flourished past 1840. Here, peasants were still serfs; their labor was uncompensated and they had no ownership rights over the land they farmed (11). Prussia's program of agricultural land reform in the

majority of its holdings was particularly beneficial to large land-owners: peasants could be freed of feudal bonds by signing over part of their land. Sperber writes:

While for some ex-serfs this meant that they would become substantial peasant farmers, most were left with small plots of land, insufficient to support their families. To do so, they found it necessary to work as free laborers on their former landlords' large estates. (12)

The Prussian province of Silesia, however, was an exception. It was the only province of Prussia (and northeastern Europe generally) in which the peasant emancipation was slow to arrive (Ries 268), and in which the nobility refused to accept land transfer compensation and reform (Sperber 12). In Silesia both types of insurrection, anti-feudal and anti-capitalist occurred.

Ries acknowledges that the main gain of the 1848 Revolution was the completion of the peasant emancipation and reform of feudal laws (270). However, he acknowledges the rural lower classes and unpropertied as losers in the process. Generally speaking, 1848 merely meant a transition from one type of exploitation to another for the rural peasantry. This is especially true for Silesia where the liberalization halted half-way:

Die Reform der Kommunal- und Landkreisverfassung scheiterte, und die Vormachtstellung der Güter – nunmehr eine ostelbische Besonderheit – wurde wiederhergestellt, die ständische Ordnung noch einmal eingeschränkt. (270)

Silesia, therefore, is a central historical location of conflicted social progress prior to the unification of Germany in 1871.¹⁹

To summarize and conclude, social and legal relationships in the countryside underwent rapid change at mid-century, thanks to the uneven revolutionary uprisings of 1848: in most areas, the last legal remnants of feudalism were dissolved by new legislature. However, these measures mostly benefited land-owning farmers, who were

¹⁹ It is also a central location for literary unrest as well, given the literary adaptations written about the revolt of the Silesian weavers (Heine, Hauptmann). However, the social resistance of certain groups was largely overlooked: Silesian farmers and wood collectors received little literary acknowledgement.

already profiting as new property laws, technology, and capitalist free markets expanded into the country. The un-propertied laborers and tenant farmers in the countryside saw their way of life threatened by the social and economic transitions underway. Their unrest during 1848, in some respects, expressed a wish to return to the stability of the previous era. The mid-nineteenth century and the events of 1848 brought about great change, but also the disappointment of hopes for liberals, for supporters of German unification, and for the rural poor. Hunting rights figured directly into this process.²⁰

By 1871, when the German Empire was formed under a Prussian monarch, the rural landscape was one of generational and regional overlaps. The persistence and endangerment of older lifestyles continued in the face of rapid political, social and technological change. While 1848 marked the final, belated end of feudalism and hunting privilege in Germany and 1871 marked the beginning of the united German Empire, contemporary authors seemed to be preoccupied with the social continuities and discontinuities that stretch across this gap.

In the works I examine in this thesis, the poacher-hero, a figure from the earlier area, appears as a troubled social agent in a variety of literature and texts during the first three decades of the German Empire. In some ways, the poacher figure embodies the social and economic continuities between the old era and the new, however in other ways he is a symbol of the fantasy possibilities the new era might hold: for justice, freedom,

²⁰ In the area of hunting, the example of Prussia's *Nationalversammlung* is typical of how legal reform went all over German-speaking central Europe: for a period of one and a half years following the May meeting of Prussia's legislative assembly, all property owners were given the privilege to hunt on their own property (Kohl 145). However, by the spring of 1850, further reform handed over hunting rights to the discretion of individual communities. Typically, communities instated a system whereby larger property owners could lease rights to hunt (145). This change was preceded by complaints about men accidentally shooting each other and decimation of game populations (145). Legal historian Kohl shows the dramatic decrease of game population in Germany overall between 1840 and 1850 through a variety of statistics, including records kept by gamekeepers as well as records of meat consumption in cities (230-231). Mediation of hunting rights continued to be of importance, even as power shifted from absolute rulers to a bourgeois class of administrators and bureaucrats.

and social advancement. By examining several literary examples, I will shed light on the poacher as a signifier of the struggle against feudal authority and capitalist, industrialist, and imperial hopes for social change.

Chapter 2: The Poacher-Hero and Displacement of Urban Social Issues

In the period from 1871 to 1900, there was sustained interest in the poacher figure in all registers and genres of German literature. The newly-developed mass market *Kolportageroman* is a sign of the times; between 1850 and 1960 in Kosch and Nagl's bibliography, 115 of the lengthy popular serial novels, had poachers, smugglers, and social bandits as their title characters. The majority of these titles were published over a shorter time period, approximately 1870 to 1914 – this timespan also coincides with the peak of *Kolportage* as a publication format. This chapter considers one example of the *Kolportage* genre, but also two more mainstream literary texts: the play, *Waldleute*, and a novel *Quitt*.

The Germany we confront between 1871 and 1900 differs from the mid-century context discussed above. Thanks to the modernization of agriculture, the population was growing at a pace that kept up with waves of emigration away from Germany in the late nineteenth century. However, in 1871, over half of Germany's population still worked in agriculture. The decades following saw gradual decline in this predominance as the development and expansion of industry and mechanization of agricultural tasks pushed more people, especially from the rural lower classes, towards city and factory life. In the 1880s, Germany gained three African colonies, belatedly joining the "Scramble for

Africa.” The country’s status in the world was changing dramatically, along with its social and economic structure.

During this period of expanding horizons, changes were being made to the motif of the poacher-hero, a figure who has his roots in the local community and its relatively closed society. To examine these changes, I turn to two works set in Silesia, Fontane’s novel *Quitt* (*Even*, 1890),²¹ and Carl Hauptmann’s play *Waldleute* (*Forest People*, 1896) both take Silesia as a setting.²² The legacy of Silesia’s local history of social unrest underpins the poaching stories. Finally, I examine a serial novel by Karl May, *Der verlorene Sohn* (*The Prodigal Son*, 1884-1886), which goes further than the other stories in illuminating the connection between rural and urban locales.²³ *Der verlorene Sohn* and *Quitt* taken together also illuminate the new, international German identity because they address the fantasies and realities of colonialism and emigration. I examine formal elements of these works in relation to the poacher motif in the next chapter.

I argue that the major strategy for addressing the changing times through the poacher is by incorporating the problem of upward social mobility and the question of social justice into the motif. I show how social mobility and the persistence of outmoded views are both thematized through the poacher-hero. In *Quitt*, the poacher is a forward-looking individual embedded in a feudal world, or perhaps in a Prussian bureaucracy whose values are indicted as akin to feudalism. In *Waldleute*, the forester is a middle

²¹ The book edition came out in November 1890, although the title page is dated 1891. This was preceded by the publication of a heavily abridged version which appeared in the family magazine *Die Gartenlaube* earlier in 1890.

²² Carl is Gerhart Hauptmann’s brother. At the time that Carl penned *Waldleute*, the two brothers were living in Schreiberau in the Riesengebirge of Silesia. Carl’s play follows three years after Gerhart’s comedy *Der Biberpelz* (*The Beaver Pelt*, 1893), which had its greatest success on stage at the *Deutsches Volkstheater* in Vienna in 1897. Much in *Waldleute*’s style is derivative of that play, transformed into a village tragedy. *Waldleute* also had its first performance in Vienna.

²³ The book came out anonymously with the selling point: “written by the author of *Das Waldröschen*.” May wrote *Waldröschen* under the pseudonym Ramon Diaz de la Escosura.

class man engaged in a compulsive blood feud with the peasants who live in the surrounding villages. This conflict is thematized as an inherited one. The poacher in the play eventually brings an end to the conflict, and offers a possibility for succession – a poaching tragedy leads to a possibility for healing the breach and advancing socially. In *Der verlorene Sohn*, the poacher figures represent ambivalent agents, acting autonomously and doing half-justice as pseudo-vigilantes in their attempts to make a living. Their agency mirrors that of the main character, who attempts to create an environment of fairness, and whose connections to the colonial world make possible an incredible social advancement.

The question of whether social advancement is deserved, a right, or fair is addressed through the anachronistic figure of the poacher, whose disregard for property rights based around the class divide have always been read as a form of protest. In this way, an older figure and its associations are refurbished to address new social questions. For each work in this section, I examine how the authors accomplish this re-construction from a thematic standpoint by closing the distance between the poacher in his village setting and the wider world.

QUITT

Theodor Fontane's novel *Quitt* tells the story of a poacher-hero Lehnert Menz, whose socially-sanctioned crime, poaching, is coupled with ambitions for upward social mobility that are not accepted in his Silesian mountain village. Fontane uses generational differences, local history, and, in the end, disappointed hopes to evoke some of the motif's older connotations as well as its newer ones.

Menz, a wheelwright, murders his local rival, the forester Opitz under ambiguous circumstances: partially in revenge, partially in self-defense. The circumstances that prompt Menz's fatal shot are complicated. The initial chapters of the novel turn around attempts to heal the breach between the two, switching smoothly in alternating chapters between a narrative perspective that focuses on the poacher or on the gamekeeper. Their bad blood stems from the days of their common service in the *Görlitzer Jäger* (the Görlitz Hunters, a unit of soldiers) during the Franco-German wars of 1870-71.

Menz, who proved his bravery in battle and was under consideration for a medal, believes that Opitz, who was his superior, received the medal through political machinations. Opitz takes issue with Menz's popularity in the village, especially with women, as well as with Menz's attitude and beliefs: Menz is a local demagogue for democracy and American-style freedom of speech, and expects equal social treatment with Opitz. Further deepening the bitterness between them is Opitz's denunciation of Menz for poaching, which led to two months in the workhouse for the wheelwright. Leading up to the murder, Fontane chronicles the local pastor Siebenhaar's efforts to reconcile the two. Siebenhaar insists that Menz must show more respect for Opitz's official position, and Menz insists in return that he objects to Opitz as a person.

Siebenhaar's efforts eventually meet with failure: Opitz's hunting dog Diana kills Menz's rooster. Gossip between Opitz's kitchen-help and Menz's mother reveals the depths of the forester's scorn for Menz's attempts to repair relations and defer to his neighbor. Finally, when Menz shoots a hare at the border of his property, Opitz writes a second letter of denunciation to the local nobleman, underscoring the danger Menz represents as an unrepentant repeat poacher (therefore disrespectful of property rights) and as a political agitator.

Following the incident with the hare, Menz is restless: he is worried about his future; he knows he faces another stint in the workhouse, longer than the first. He goes into the woods, takes the rifle and false beard he uses while poaching from their hiding place, and hikes uphill towards a mountain inn where there will be a dance that evening. While wandering in the woods, he allows a stag to pass. When he encounters Opitz on his way, Opitz raises his own gun to kill the disguised Menz. Only the failure of Opitz's trigger gives Menz the opportunity to shoot him.

Opitz dies alone in the forest, but not before he has managed to scrawl out a few words about his last hours and his murderer, whom he cannot identify. It is clear that Opitz died of exposure because he was unable to move, not of the bullet wounds. Village suspicion surrounding the murder falls on Menz, and he flees to the United States, where he falls in with a settlement of Mennonites in the "Indian Territory," after some adventures, including a fortune gained and lost in the California Gold Rush. Menz suffers from a guilty conscience, but he converts to the religion of the Mennonite settlement, prompted by an irrepressible hope that he can start anew and forget his past. Menz also falls in love with the daughter of the Mennonite leader, Ruth Hornbostel.

In order to prove his loyalty and goodness to Ruth's father, Menz makes a series of dramatic rescues that involve self-endangerment and sacrifice. However, when Menz tries to rescue Ruth's brother, Toby, who all believe lost or injured in the wilderness, he dislocates his hip alone on a mountain top and dies of exposure. The last chapters convey Menz's final words (which he wrote in his own blood on a scrap of paper), in which he hopes he has atoned for his guilt, that all is "quit" or even. The novel also reports the reception of news of Menz's death back in his Silesian hometown. Fontane's detailed characterization of Menz and Opitz shows how personal social ambitions are bound up in their conflict, which also has a framework of anti-feudal resistance.

Fontane portrays a generational gap in the perception of poaching, parallel to a generational gap that marks the difference between “die Kriechezeit” (the time of bowing-and-scraping, a negative euphemism for feudalism frequently used by Lehnert) and the present-day of the novel. The elder generation is typified by Menz’s mother, whose feudal manners and mindset are frequently alluded to. Their opinions are invoked as a variant on the traditional concept of what is right. Siebenhaar, the local pastor, sees poaching as the younger generation’s inheritance of the traditional values of their parents, citing the local and social context as the reason:

[...] ich kenne euch und weiß, daß euch allen der Pascher und Wilddieb von Kindheit an im Leibe steckt. Das wird euch so gleich mit in die Wiege gelegt, und so nehmt ihr’s als euer gutes Recht, und wenn ihr einen Grenzer oder Förster über den Haufen schießt, dann ist es nicht Mord, dann ist es Notwehr. (14)

Poaching and smuggling can therefore be viewed as Menz’s inheritance from the era of feudalism.

In contrast, Menz views his feud with the gamekeeper Opitz, as well as the poaching crimes related to it, as personally motivated. Opitz is not fit as an individual for his position of power, Menz contends. He defends his dislike of the forester, saying: “Und was mich angeht, Herr Prediger [Siebenhaar], ich bin nicht gegen das Gesetz, auch wenn ich’s nicht immer halte, ich bin bloß gegen den Opitz, diesen Schuft und Schelm, diesen Saufaus und Menschenschinder” (15). In a fair world, according to Menz, allowances should be made for personal character and motivations. What Siebenhaar sees as a feudal declaration of rights of the oppressed, Menz conceives of as the expression of a kind of meritocracy.

The heart of the problem between Menz and Opitz is that each one stands directly in the way of the other’s ambitions for living out a fantasy of social advancement. Fontane uses the location of their houses and history of their properties to illuminate this

core issue. Lehnert lives with his mother and they are quite poor – the forester’s house sits across from theirs, on the other side of a stream. The house the Menzes live in is described as an “auf einer Stein- und Geröllinsel, inmitten zweier Lomnitzarme gelegene Menzsche Wohnhaus,” “wenig gepflegt” but “doch kastellartig” in its placement: it looks down over the neighboring field and heath, and of course over the forester’s house (48). Furthermore, the land the forester’s house is built on belonged to the Menz family within the lifetime of Lehnert Menz’s parents.

Nichts als Fluß und Fahrstraße trennte beide Gehöfte, deren gesamtes Acker- und Heideland in alten Zeiten ausschließlich Stellmacher Menzsches Eigentum gewesen war, bis man auf dem diesseits der Lomnitz gelegenen Kusselstreifen, eine Försterei gebaut und nur alles *jenseits* des Flusses Gelegene bei den Menzes belassen hatte. Das war jetzt runde dreißig Jahr [...] (48)

The narrator continues, mentioning that the history of the land’s transfer had never caused friction until Opitz became forester.

Opitz wants the old days of feudalism to come again, and he wants to be the authority figure. Opitz’s insistence that villagers treat him with extreme deference based upon his identity as an agent of the local *Gutsherr*, his intense resentment of the “noble purview” of his poorer neighbors’ home, and the targeted way he seeks to get maximum punishment for his neighbor’s poaching crimes suggest a crisis of social class identity at its core. Opitz wants Menz’s land, Menz’s house; moreover, his wishes hint at rapacity for land and arbitrary power that align him with a caricature of a corrupt and misanthropic feudal upper class.

Although embroiled in conflict over land, Opitz and Menz are not so different. Menz’s has hopes for social advancement that, like Opitz’s are unrealistic and portrayed as unfair. Menz’s hopes for upward social mobility hinge on marrying an educated well-traveled woman and on fantasies of emigration; these hopes, like his dislike for Opitz, are closely connected to the notion of personal character. Menz’s ambitions for social

advancement also alienate him from his fellows in the village taverns, as well as from his mother. His mother's attempts to marry him to Opitz's maid, Christine, are in vain. Menz admonishes his mother as follows after she alludes to the possibility:

“[...] Christine ist eine Magd, und eine Magd heirate ich nicht, auch wenn sie drei Sparkassenbücher und eine ganze Linnentruhe hat. Ich versteh' meine Sach' und will in die Stadt gehen und eine Städtische heiraten, die Manieren hat. Und am liebsten will ich in die Welt gehen und gar nicht heiraten; es brennt mir hier unter den Füßen, und wenn es nicht deinetwegen wäre, Mutter, so ging' ich lieber heut als morgen. [...]” (81)

Menz has a not-so-private dream of becoming a cosmopolitan man and, if he must marry, marrying a city-someone with “manners,” just as Opitz harbors the going-back-in-time wish of becoming a feudal lord. Much as Opitz is upset by Menz's too-casual greetings, causing his wife to chide him with, “Du bist nicht sein Vorgesetzter” (46), Menz has too much pride to marry a maid, although his mother sees Christine as an excellent match.

Opitz's wishes for land control and feudal authority come into direct conflict with the more modern hopes and dreams the young wheelwright has for himself. Further, Menz's wishes, especially his wish to emigrate and seek his fortune in the United States, expresses a strong desire to escape the local, the community, the social context within which poaching and smuggling flourish and impoverished idleness is the norm.²⁴ Additionally, Menz's ultimate crime, in murdering his rival, breaks the entrenched expectations of the community which condone poaching and personal grudges. However, this crime also leads to a fulfillment of Menz's dream: he travels to the United States and, before his untimely death, has reason to hope that he will socially advance himself in marriage. The crime also aligns him with the French revolutionary L'Hermite, who, like

²⁴ During the period of the novel, Menz's business as a wheelwright is mentioned as one that is seasonally depressed, and he is depicted as having little work to do. The “seasonal” aspect of work and life in the countryside is further highlighted by the appearance of the Espe family from Berlin, tourists to Silesia who form a framing element in the narrative. Agricultural work is seasonal, but the novel shifts the focus away from farming, showing how other economic factors such as handcrafts like Menz's and tourist travel also follow a seasonal cycle.

Menz, has settled among the Mennonites with a guilty conscience for the murders and mayhem he plotted.²⁵

Fontane shows the conflicting social aspirations at the heart of the conflict between Menz and Opitz. As a result of these ambitions for social advancement, Menz breaks out of the local social bonds that sanction poaching – he transgresses, also theoretically breaking the bonds hindering upward social mobility. However, Menz is plagued by guilt over Opitz’s death, and he dies worried about his own redemption. Menz hopes that he is *quitt*, even, and that his conduct in the United States has atoned for his sins in Germany. Menz has internalized the rigid social strictures of the society into which he was born. The murder which was intended to loose all ties and break all barriers has made them, paradoxically, inevitable and self-enforcing.

Fontane’s novel explores questions of fairness and what individuals deserve in a new societal configuration in a nuanced, but ultimately pessimistic way. His tone is critical of the hindrances faced by people like Menz, made clear by the narrator’s gently satirical remarks about the main characters, as well as his introduction of the touring family of a Berlin bureaucrat whose opinions and values (whether liberal or conservative) are the object of much more exaggerated satire. What is at stake at the heart of the novel is how closely an individual can be aligned with his office as “poacher,” as “forester,” or even as “Geheimrat.” In the end, *Quitt* tells a story about the effects of a society on individuals, and how such effects come to be termed destiny, or even God’s will.

²⁵ L’Hermite is perhaps the most politically meaningful figure in the book. Hans-Heinrich Reuter has already done extensive work comparing Menz and L’Hermite and what their similarities and differences mean. (See “Grundpositionen,” and “Kriminalgeschichte.”) Lowsky’s article “*Quitt* und die Kommunarden” gives a detailed account of background information on possible historical models for L’Hermite, and seeks to connect it to details of Fontane’s life. First and foremost, Lowsky connects the *Quitt* anecdote to Fontane’s actual experiences traveling in France in 1870 as a war news correspondent, during which time Fontane was arrested and jailed for two months (106).

In the novel, the poacher-hero bridges the feudal and the Prussian Imperial. In Lehnert Menz, we also see how he also connects the identity of the peasant farmer (represented by Menz's mother) and the ideological identity of the larger middle class in his ambitions to marry a cosmopolitan wife. Fontane uses Menz to show us the seams and overlaps that undermine these seemingly monolithic divides. Menz, the poacher-hero, embodies the actions and rural heart of the old era at the same time that he carries the urban ambitions of the new. At the same time, Menz's failures and disappointments show more starkly the faults and ruptures in the concept of upward social mobility, and how much upward social mobility depends upon being able to hold onto the idea that there are exceptional cases.²⁶

WALDLEUTE

As in Fontane's novel, the motivation of and atonement for crime are central themes in Carl Hauptmann's play *Waldleute*. However, here the author depicts no elaborate social ambitions, but instead a cycle of social succession. Whether the cycle of succession is positive or negative is a question that the author leaves open. The tragic closure of the circle suggests a hoped-for blending of the forester and the poacher's families.

Also like *Quitt*, the play is set in Silesia, a mountainous border region. Hauptmann makes the setting evident both through references in the text as well as through the accent and vocabulary in which the dialogue is written, much in the style of

²⁶ For example, the picky and conservative Espe's satisfaction with his obviously cheating wife, Geraldine, and his two step-daughters depends on his ability to overlook the truth and re-model it to fit his conception of right and wrong. Menz's attempts to do similarly when he justifies his murder of Opitz are not equally successful. The difference in outcomes we must attribute to the power differential – Espe is a privileged person in a position of power and may do as he likes. Menz, who receives counsel from every side that he must defer to Opitz, does not ultimately have that option.

his brother Gerhart Hauptmann's better known and acclaimed plays. *Waldleute* is one of Carl Hauptmann's earliest plays, and suffers from the derivative style of its writing, as well as from a structure which is weakened by subplots that distract from the main substance of the play.

Despite its deficiencies, the play offers us another insight into poaching, social status, and Silesia. Here we are again confronted by a physically intimidating forester, described as a "bull of a man." The central plot of the play is in the style of *Romeo and Juliet*, depicting star-crossed lovers whose families are feuding. The forester, whose father was killed by a poacher, compulsively kills the poachers he comes across in the forest out of an unquenchable desire for revenge. The two feuding families in the play are the families of the vengeful forester Sender and the inn-keeper Ringel.

The animosity between the two families is centered in the father figures. Forester Sender's father was murdered in the forest by a poacher, and ever since Sender succeeded his father as forester, he has been on a quest for vengeance, killing poachers in the forest as often as he encounters them. Ringel is a dyed-in-the-wool poacher and smuggler. Their opposition, therefore, is obvious. Each man represents a potentially deadly threat for the other.

In fact, the forester imagines himself as part of the forest, remarking to the schoolmaster: "Ihr fühlt nicht, wie sie den Forst bestehlen und bemorden! Ich bin der Forst! Ich fühl's. [...] Ihr pflanzt ihn nicht! Und pflegt ihn nicht! Der *Vater* hat ihn gepflanzt! Ich hab' ihn gepflanzt!" (61).²⁷ The forest is a resource, and the forester feels the crimes done against it as if the forest were his own property, and his own legacy, although he is in fact the representative of a nobleman. In fact, the forester, who lives in

²⁷ Emphasis as in the original.

constant opposition with the foraging and poaching villagers, claims “Der Graf ist viel zu gut!” (66), implying that he is far less lenient than his employer.

Like in *Quitt*, death in the forest is prolonged and frightening. Forester Sender’s memories of his father’s death color his hatred of poachers.

“Habt ihr die Spuren im Boden gesehen – wie er sich hatte an den Bach zerren und krallen wollen – angeschossen, wie er war? – und er in der Sommerglut doch verschmachten mußte, weil der Weg zu weit war – und keine Hilfe kam. – Habt ihr’s damals gesehn? –” (67).

The image is clearly a traumatic one for Sender, whose impulse for vengeance has grown beyond his own control. His day’s work is not complete unless he has shot a poacher. He goes on to describe how he shot his first poacher and the sense of betrayal he felt when he realized it was one of his friends from the *Bergkolonie*. This, we can see, is the beginning of the rift between Sender and the villagers as a group. The fact that the poacher lived after being shot, and continued to poach, adds insult to injury for Sender.

Sender’s daughter, Ida, is in love with Heinrich Ringel. The opening lines of the play suggest the dire consequences of their love, should the forester become aware of it: “Jes’s, Jes’s! Verlecht hot a werklich gar a Gestecke mit Ferschters Idla’n! – Du mein! – Die kinnda was a’laufa – die beeda – wenn’s der Ferschter merkte” (2). The opening scene also makes clear that the mothers and children in both families are not so gravely estranged as the fathers. Frau Ringel remembers a time when Liese (Heinrich’s sister), Heinrich and Ida were all in school, and Ida came to visit the Ringels. However, Liese insists of the forester’s family: “Huchmittig sein se – enner wie d’r andere [...]” (2). Frau Ringel counters this assertion by praising the kindness of Sender’s wife.

Heinrich is a soldier, freshly returned from service which his mother refers to as “das Suldatespiel’n” (3). When Ida attempts to tell her father about their love in the last scene of the second act, Sender is outraged, yelling: “Sag mir’s, das es wahr ist! – daß

meine Tochter zur Wildschützenhure geworden ist!” (72), even as his daughter insists that Heinrich is an honest man. Sender senses betrayal in his daughter’s preferences, just as he feels ultimately betrayed by poachers and wood thieves. In this final exchange of the act, it comes out that Sender has shot Heinrich’s father in the woods, and that Ringel “ist vielleicht schon verreckt” (72).

At Ringel’s burial, Heinrich explains to Ida that his father’s poaching, much like her father’s bloodlust, is compulsive, a passion that he is unable to control, “er *kunnt’s* nee lo’n” (84). Following the funeral, Heinrich, overcome by the impulse for revenge, waits for Sender in the forest and shoots him fatally. After shooting the forester, Heinrich carries him to the Senders’ home, where they meet Ida and the forester’s wife. As Sender lies dying, he creates and proclaims an alibi for Heinrich, essentially rescuing his own murderer. The concept of *quitt sein* emerges here again, as the forester says to Heinrich: “Nicht wahr, Heinrich? – Wir sind nun quitt. – Nicht wahr?” (118). Confronted with death, Sender is overwhelmed with a sense of brotherhood for Heinrich based on their shared experience of coping with a father’s murder.

Sender’s dying wish is that Heinrich marry his daughter, recognizing Heinrich symbolically as his successor as “man of the house.” In fact, the forester’s words imply that Heinrich’s attack is the reason that he is worthy of such succession.

“Ich glaube, ich hatte *geschworen*, mich zu rächen – für meinen Vater! – Ich hab’ meinen Schwur *gehalten*! – [...] *Du* hast deine Sache *gut* gemacht, Heinrich! – [...] Mutter – Das ist dein Sohn! – Er wird euch treu sein! – [...] Er wird nun nicht weiter sündigen! –” (121)

The play does not record the family or Ida’s reaction to her father’s wishes and words. Heinrich’s says that he will go and face his punishment, after which he will hide himself in the mountains to work. He does not believe that Ida and her mother will be able to forgive him the way that Sender was. Heinrich says, “Stille warta wihl ich, eb ihr mir ei

dam Laba au' noch amol verga'n kinnt, wie d'r Ferschter" (123). The emphasis on *dem* in the sentence implies that Heinrich hopes for forgiveness in the next life, or in heaven, if the family cannot forgive him in this one. The invocation of divine justice further complicates the multiple versions of right and wrong that are represented in the play. There is the poacher's right and wrong, the forester's right and wrong, a personal right and wrong – and God, then, has a final word.

Heinrich's dead father and the forester share similarities that ultimately draw them together. Both have a compulsive attachment to the forest. Sender wants to avenge and protect the woods, as well as his father's death, whereas Ringel is addicted to the hunt and to the prosperity that sidelines in poaching and smuggling bring. Hauptmann's play portrays in essential symbolic terms the conflict between the pristine forest of the past and its protector, the forester (appointed by a nobleman, but also succeeding his father in the position), and the advancing and rapacious capital needs for resources, multiple sources of income, and trade with the outside, represented by Ringel. Heinrich's love for Ida is an unsanctioned match, one that amounts to social advancement for him, but degradation for the older system that Sender seeks to preserve. Heinrich's revenge killing shows an understanding of the code that Sender is following, and redeems him in the eyes of the dying man.

In its conclusion, Carl Hauptmann's play suggests that social mobility for deserving young men is the just solution to the class conflict played out in the woods and around the issue of poaching and forestry. However, the conclusion is also ambivalent, since it almost seems to signal the recapitulation of Sender's worldview, with all of its rigidity and bloodthirstiness – Sender's respect for Heinrich's actions contrasted with Heinrich and Ida's horror at the tragic events seems to suggest that, in fact, Sender was an impossible throwback, and that his death is as inevitable as it is desirable. If Heinrich

proves to be a true successor to the forester, the possibility that he might continue the compulsive vengeance-killings that Sender committed still looms.

However, viewed from another angle, Sender's dying sanction of the potential marriage between Ida Sender and Heinrich Ringel seems to offer a possibility to repair relations between the classes and to create an authority and style of stewardship that can be maintained without bloodshed. Forgiveness and social justice might be achieved if the two families can reconcile themselves. The open ending of the play shows how problematic social advancement is, even as it couches such advancement in terms of two opposing worldviews, that of the poacher and that of the forester.

DER VERLORENE SOHN

Perhaps due to its genre and audience expectations, *Der verlorene Sohn* portrays the most straight-forward and heroic social bandit of the three texts. The major theme of the story is justice sought, justice which, as in *Waldleute*, is sometimes indistinguishable from revenge. Because of the length of the novel, its structure is based on clear-cut archetypes and a straightforward division between good and evil. This helps with readability, and also allows readers to re-connect easily to the story over two years of weekly delivery. In the first hundred pages of this lengthy novel, which sets up the tone and the recurrent obstacles of the volumes that follow, the forest is littered with bodies and is, in one way of reading, the site for reversals of reader expectations, in another way, the fulfillment of them. These reversals and fulfillments show how the forest terrain, and the estate of the domineering baron and his noble family, is bound up with urban social issues.

One might object to the inclusion of Karl May's *Der verlorene Sohn* in this thesis, since there is no "edle Räuber" figure in this serial novel. The main character is not a poacher, but a forester's son who has been victimized and framed for a serious crime. This conversation in the text between prison wardens about Gustav, particularly alludes to the heroic identity of the main character:

"So einen Gefangenen vertrauen sie nur dem Wachtmeister selbst an."
"Diesem allein?"
"Natürlich! Mehrere sind dazu nicht nöthig, denn der Brandt ist doch kein Räuberhauptmann." (86)

Monika Evers addresses this issue in her examination of *Der verlorene Sohn* as it fits Ernst Bloch's theoretical conjectures about the social purpose of *Kolportage*. She suggests that May disliked the pure Robin Hood figure, or any sanction of crime, because of his own history of incarceration, writing further that "May weicht der Problematik der Räuber-Gestalt aus, in dem er den Retter Brandt zu einer Art von Gottgesandten ... ummodelliert" (93). However, she acknowledges, "Dennoch ist nicht zu verkennen, daß May trotz aller äußerlichen Umwandlung und Abwandlung der Gestalt dem Vorbild des "edlen Räubers" als Retter immer noch weitgehend nachgab" (94). Gustav repeatedly falls in with an unusual pair of smugglers. All three of these figures, both Gustav and the two smugglers, embody some of the poacher-motif thematic in the commission of socially sanctioned crimes.

The opening pages of the novel are set twenty years before the time period that is narrated in the majority of the novel. The setting is in the Erzgebirge, and is primarily comprised of the castle residence of Baron von Helfenstein, his forester's house, and the village associated with the castle. However, a nearby city, likely Dresden, also becomes part of the setting in the elaborate and secret battle between Franz von Helfenstein, the arch-villain of the novel, and Gustav Brandt, the hero.

At the beginning of the book, the forester and the noble house are preparing to receive a large hunting party. The forester's family is also welcoming home their only son, Gustav Brandt, who has been assigned to work with the police to combat a smuggling ring on behalf of the regional administration. Meanwhile, Franz von Helfenstein, the nephew of Baron von Helfenstein, is growing ever more desperate due to debts of honor.

In this setting, a love triangle is introduced between Gustav, the aristocratic daughter of the castle, Alma von Helfenstein, and Captain von Hellenbach, the betrothed chosen for Alma by her domineering father, Baron von Helfenstein. Though the forests surrounding the residence are associated closely with crime and smuggling throughout the first part of the novel, the three members of this love triangle all walk into woods crawling with bandits with thoughts of love on their mind. When they meet, however, what follows is not a romantic meeting between lovers and rivals, but a scene of murder and manipulation. Franz von Helfenstein, also Alma's cousin, kills the Captain and frames Gustav for his murder.

The love triangle is subverted into a triangle of guilt and knowledge: where criminal is presumed innocent (Franz), the innocent is presumed guilty (Gustav), and the only potential witness did not see and is divided between belief in circumstantial evidence and trust in the man she loves (Alma). The forester's son and policeman falls victim in the very setting where he ought to have authority and competence, not uninterestingly to a grasping member of the nobility.

The narratives of social mobility in the story are linked with urban themes of industrialization and globalization. Gustav, after he escapes from prison with the help of two vigilante poachers, makes a fortune in diamonds in Borneo and Madagascar, the natural resources of exotic colonies, returning to the small residence city in the

Erzgebirge as a rich nobleman. Gustav uses his power and money to work secretly to improve the lives of exploited and impoverished linen weavers and to try to uncover 20-year-old evidence that will prove his innocence.

Franz von Helfenstein, in contrast, gains property and fortune through murder and intrigue, and maintains it by exploiting and blackmailing a network of poor people. The miserable poverty of the families engaged in cottage industry is a symptom of industrialization that is perhaps temporally as well as geographically displaced in the narrative. The fantastic social mobility taking place in the serial novel has its roots in the wilderness space: the foundational events that “set the course” for the hero and villain of the novel take place in the woods, but they also connect directly to tropes that romanticize imperialism and critique industrialization.²⁸

May’s serial novel is plugged almost directly into the mythos of the noble robber as described by Hobsbawm, with two important differences: first, Gustav Brandt works outside of the normal bounds of society, but is at the same time sanctioned and supported by both the criminal justice system as well as the local lower classes. Second, Gustav’s off-camera acquisition of unthinkable riches has not erased the solidarity he feels with the lower classes, but it has erased the class divide between himself and the people he is exacting revenge upon. In this, he has slipped into an ambiguous space somewhere between the social bandit and gentleman robber. Finally, his worldly knowledge, stemming from twenty years abroad in the East Indies, makes him unusual among Saxony’s gentlemen and lower classes alike. Gustav’s experience in the empire sets him

²⁸ The main focus in the novel is on the socially upward trajectory of young male characters. However, there are a few female characters who also aspire to climb socially through marriage, among them Judith Levi, the daughter of a Jewish pawnbroker, and Ella von Helfenstein, the former chambermaid of Alma. Ella achieves marriage to Franz through blackmail, and meets a very pathetic end. Judith ends up in jail for her domineering attempts to woo a writer (who turns out later to be the lost heir of Helfenstein). These examples show that there is clearly a double standard for successful social mobility, and that women’s means for achieving social advancement (unequal marriage, “entrapping” a social better) is viewed negatively.

apart, makes him far superior to his opponents, and marks him out as an appropriate candidate for social advancement. In the case of this novel, the main protagonist is not himself a poacher – however, in the novel’s set-up, he is rescued by a pair of smugglers, whose feelings of solidarity with Gustav prompt their actions.

May’s character description of the smuggling father and son duo, the Wolfs, shows the ambivalent connection between their sense of honor and their crimes. In fact, these characters have the spirit of venture capitalists. The two, father and son, “waren ebenso schlau und vorsichtig, wie unternehmend” (28). They take on smuggling trips that involve the highest risk and reward, but only when they can be reasonably certain of success. They take on the ugly job of murdering Alma von Helfenstein’s brother, the heir, but instead steal the child away to an adopted family. For them, reputation and rumors do not matter. In fact, they are happy to have Helfenstein think they really did murder his infant cousin, although they would never truly commit such a dastardly crime.

When they decide to free Gustav, who is being transported to spend his life in jail, it is out of an extra-legal sense of responsibility, a matter of personal conscience. The son of the pair says to the father:

‘Weißt Du, erst war ich ihm ungeheuer böse, daß er damals der Gesellschaft solchen Schaden gemacht hat, aber er ist mein Schulkamerad und stets ein guter Kerl gewesen, obgleich der ermordete Baron gern einen großen Herrn aus ihm gemacht hätte. Nun werden sie ihn verurteilen und ausknüpfen, unschuldig, wie wir Beide wissen. Das ist doch sehr traurig und wir haben ihn auf dem Gewissen.’
(50)

They have a sense of solidarity with Gustav which has been offended by the Baron’s attempts to give Gustav an education beyond his class, but which endures. Even though they are not honorable, they honor truth and Gustav’s innocence when they help him escape from a prison-bound train.

When Gustav encounters them again after twenty years, his first question (after he has drugged them with a gas bomb) is: “Wie aber reimt es sich zusammen, daß der Schmied [Franz von Helfensteins] Untergebener ist und mich doch gerettet hat?” (630). Gustav encounters them repeatedly in his efforts to combat a group of smugglers headed by the *Waldkönig* (King of the Forest). In fact there turns out to be multiple *Waldkönige*, and the smith Wolf is one of them. However, Gustav remembers the debt that he owes them, and ultimately wins them to his side.

The death of father Wolf is *Kolportage* at its most outrageous; however it also connects the morally ambivalent characters, the poachers and smugglers, to the justice and revenge theme at the core of the serial novel. Wolf, Franz von Helfenstein, and Gustav Brandt are all in a prison office. Franz has denied that he is guilty, and claims everything has been invented; he has also just realized that Gustav Brandt, the Prince of Befour, and the Prince of Misery are all one and the same. Infuriated, Helfenstein lashes out at Brandt, despite being hand-cuffed. However, the smith intercepts Helfenstein with the words:

“Du willst nicht beichten und bekennen. Nun wohl, so sollst Du einen Richter finden, bei dem kein Leugnen gilt! Ich muß sterben. Du hast mich elend gemacht und in den Tod geführt. Wohlan, ich gehe nicht allein. Komm mit.” (2203)

The smith lifts the former Baron in his arms and jumps out the office window. Wolf dies in this attack, and Helfenstein is gravely and very painfully injured. Wolf’s impulsive action has given Helfenstein pain that he deserves, but it has also enabled freedom for Wolf’s son – with his father dead, the son is free to put all the blame on his father in the upcoming trial.

Gustav’s re-appearance twenty years later as the Prince of Befour and the vigilante action he takes on behalf of the poor, disguised as the “Prince of Misery,” shows that he has taken on the moral code of the smugglers and poachers, although his

methods are always secretly sanctioned by the police. The twenty year gap has allowed forester's son Brandt to assume (or even usurp) the role and qualities of an aristocratic man; the only obstacle preventing him from taking up the mantle of nobility he has earned is the undeserved guilt attached to his name. Brandt follows the dictates of his own conscience in righting wrongs and doing justice.

Der verlorene Sohn shows upward social mobility and social justice in one way: as existing only in extremely exceptional cases, like those of Gustav Brandt and the other improbably good protagonists in the novel. For almost everyone else, the race to get ahead in life is on a road made perilous by many obstacles. In the world of *Der verlorene Sohn*, average people cannot make it. However, the rescuer and vigilante Gustav Brandt, as well as the average smuggler Wolf, share a sense of right and wrong and of the necessity of meting out justice to individuals. They are outraged by the unfairness of the social system, and hope to change it by creating a new aristocracy, one that provides social justice for all in a world of colonial riches, Oriental gadgetry, and technological and medical advancement. Gustav Brandt is ultimately created as a Baron at the end of the novel.

CONCLUSION

Displacing contemporary, urban questions of social justice, social mobility, and class conflict onto forest crime and poacher-heroes extends urban Germany's problems into the affective, nostalgic space of the *Heimat* (homeland). Cultivating a rural, regional context for social critique in literature helps foster a German identity rooted in narratives of the rural landscape and feudal authority. Though resistance and vigilante action is a common thread in these works, it is bound up with the idea of social mobility. The actual

chances of social mobility were not great at the time, however, hopes and fantasies about it abounded, and were connected to world travel and industrialization in the German literary imagination.

Of three diverse works, one, *Der verlorene Sohn*, speaks for a utopian restoration of feudalism. *Waldleute* and *Quitt* both speak for the ultimate dissolution of the past. All of the works, however, use the poacher motif in a way that combines notions of the past with hopes for the future. The next chapter will shed further light on this by examining the narrative structure of *Der verlorene Sohn* and *Quitt* in order to look at possible reasons for *Der verlorene Sohn*'s divergent use of the poacher's connection to a feudal worldview.

Chapter 3: The Poacher-Hero and Social Critique

The selection of works in this thesis vary in their authorship, modality, and in their canonicity. Although Carl Hauptmann's work was conventional and geared towards producing theater pieces for middle-class audiences, *Waldleute*'s status as an early and fairly unsuccessful work makes it an atypical and peripheral example of what German literary historians consider "canonical." "Das Jennerweinlied," which will be the focus of the next chapter, and *Der verlorene Sohn* are also outside of the norm.

Fontane is the single great name among the texts I examine. Fontane is viewed in German literary history as exemplifying the late vanguard of the poetic realism movement.²⁹ Detailed description of characters, places and dialogue are hallmarks of his style. He is also known for a witty, ironic narrative voice, which frequently heightens moments of social critique in his novels.³⁰ Contrasting Fontane's narrative strategies with those used in Karl May's *Der verlorene Sohn* sheds light on how formal attributes shape the relationship between high and low. My analysis also shows how the literary distance we perceive between these works is not as large as critics might like it to be. The two works use different narrative strategies to achieve surprisingly similar results, and the poacher-hero motif may be the reason for the similar results.

²⁹ Aust's entry in the Fontane Handbuch, "Kulturelle Traditionen und Poetik," gives a nuanced account of the scholarship on Fontane's position in German literary history. Pages 412-426 focus in particular on Fontane and realism.

³⁰ Nancy Kaiser (1986) suggests that Fontane's narrative realism is not only constituted in such stylistic characteristics, but "more fundamentally in the unfolding of the constitution of social reality and the relative character of its validity" in his texts (91).

Narrative structure, narrative voice, and narrative positioning of the protagonist are the three main areas of formal difference between *Der verlorene Sohn* and *Quitt*. Thematically, the novels are similar: both works extensively thematize the struggles of young men in coping with guilt. Both works locate guilt as a point of internal conflict within the individual as well as a point of conflict between the individual and the larger community. In the case of *Der verlorene Sohn*, for example, guilt is frequently imposed unjustly by society. By the standards of the serial novel, society has no ability to read and impose guilt appropriately. *Quitt* also handles guilt and the possibility for forgiveness and reform as very problematic, life-altering forces.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

First, I will discuss briefly the publishing format of the two works. Next, I contrast the use of a narrative gap in both works. I show how these narrative strategies work towards achieving a socially critical perspective and serve to maintain focus on the central plot issue of guilt.

It will initially be helpful to examine in further detail the material differences between the two texts. *Der verlorene Sohn* stretches over 2,500 pages. It was written in 24-page installments that were printed and sold weekly over the course of two years, beginning in the summer of 1884 and ending in the summer of 1886; 101 installments were published in total. Each issue contained a colored illustration.³¹ At the time that

³¹ Ralf Harder's careful analysis in "Karl May und seine Münchmeyer-Romane" minutely explains the writing conditions of the serial novels over the years May worked for the successful *Kolportage* publisher. May was writing more than one serial work at the same time. Harder shows in detail, for example, how certain minor characters from *Der verlorene Sohn* "migrated" into the serial novel *Liebe des Ulanen* that he was writing simultaneously (167-176). He also explains the narrative timeline, showing how May "gamed" the narrative speed of the novel so that, for example, the installment sold closest to Christmas Day actually contained the narrative's Christmas Day (154ff.) May biographer Wohlgschaft writes about the conditions of May's "Münchmeyer" era with a critical overtone obvious in his chapter headers: "'Kitsch'-Lieferant beim Münchmeyer-Verlag (1882-87): Dranghaftes Schaffen und Rücksicht auf den Lesergeschmack" and

May wrote *Der verlorene Sohn*, he was in the process of completing two other novels simultaneously. The audience that the publishing house targeted with novels like *Der verlorene Sohn* was largely lower class. Publishing conditions were flexible enough that subscribers could pay per installment and could pause and catch-up on their subscription as necessary.³²

Quitt was also published serially, as was common for most works in the nineteenth century. A heavily abridged version of the novel appeared in the family magazine *Die Gartenlaube* just before the novel was published as a single volume. The audience implied by the initial publication was also specific: *Die Gartenlaube* targeted a supra-regional audience made up of the educated middle class and their family members. Audiences for magazines like *Die Gartenlaube* were generally more affluent than the audiences reading serial novels. Clearly, the novels were written with different readerships in mind, but both achieve a socially critical viewpoint with different strategies.

Der verlorene Sohn's form restricted its narrative style in ways that resemble realist narrative strategies. Literary scholar Andreas Graf, for example, observes that May deploys narrative commentary only at the beginning of new scenes or when there has been a change in time, place or characters (203). The text focuses most often on dialogue and short descriptions of action. In part, this focus should be attributed to the pressures of serial writing, even though many Karl May scholars would like to see this as an artistic choice.

feels the need to explain “der Abstieg zur Kolportage” as motivated by economic survival. (183-197). However, Wohlgshaft also provides interesting information about the author's work habits, noting that it took May, on average, 11 months to write one 2,500 page serial novel (184).

³² See Harder for more on the problems of working out publication dates for the printed issues of the novel (156-158).

May and Fontane both include a large gap in the narrative structure of their novels. Important events occur in the gap, which are not narrated. The gap serves to set the focus in each novel on the main character's struggles with guilt. For example, in May's twenty-year gap, the hero's hero, Gustav Brandt, escapes to colonial military service. He travels extensively in Asia and Africa. When the story picks up twenty years later, he is rich, titled, and amazingly skilled. As suggested in the previous section, the events in the gap have allowed forester's son Brandt to assume the role and qualities of an aristocratic man.

The way the narrative submerges the years of work and fortune-seeking in the colonies de-emphasizes the work the main character put into his amazing good fortune. Instead, it emphasizes the struggle Brandt makes to claim his rightful status in his homeland. This process is chronicled in minute detail. The narrative therefore positions his amazing social advancement and bizarrely eclectic skills as self-explanatory developments that the reader can, for the most part, take for granted. The twenty-year gap creates a smooth break between the Gustav Brandt who is fallible (and easily framed by the evil Franz von Helfenstein), and the Gustav Brandt who is a James Bond analog.

Fontane also builds a narrative gap of six years into *Quitt*. In this novel's case as well, this is a strategy for re-focusing on a particular element of the conflict and the true story arc, which is Lehnert Menz's personal struggle with his own feelings of guilt. Unlike May's hero, Fontane's has actually committed a grievous crime. During the six year gap, Menz had been alternately enjoying and regretting the freedom, anonymity, and opportunities that the United States has to offer, from gold prospecting to going bankrupt. Ultimately, the story is not about Menz's migration to the United States, but about his own inability to cope with guilt about committing murder. By eliminating Menz's wandering years and fast-forwarding to his time among a spiritual community of

pacifists, Fontane creates a narrative context for processing feelings of guilt and questions of forgiveness.

The gap also minimizes the narrative importance of the change of setting from Silesian village to the former Indian Territory. The reader comes into the American setting “in media res.” The protagonist Menz is no longer adjusting to or feeling alien in frontier culture. This narrative smoothing of emigration (or perhaps exile, seen in a certain light), allows the reader, along with Menz, to experience Menz’s arrival at the Mennonite outpost as a kind of home-coming and a continuation of the German context, signaled by the German style of the garden as well as the linden blossoms that the Kaulbarges decorate the table with (198-199, 208). However, it also allows the reader to share some of the American’s outsider perspectives, and to reflect on what it is to be German (or more specifically Prussian) as when Ruth remarks:

“[...] die Kaulbarse, besonders aber *er*, wollen alles preußisch machen, und wenn ich denke, daß du nun auch ein Landsmann von ihnen bist, so beschleicht mich eine kleine Furcht, daß wir hier eine preußische Kolonie werden” (208).

The seamless transition from German *Heimat* to German “colony” helps to frame the question of German identity under a critical lens for the reader, even as it also helps to frame the question of Menz’s guilt. Both stories use a narrative gap to maintain focus on guilt as the primary conflict.

NARRATIVE VOICE

Narrative voice also plays a role in positioning the perspective of the story. I have already pointed out how differences in narrative structure re-focus the plot around the issue of guilt in both *Quitt* and *Der verlorene Sohn*. Narrative voice helps determine the relationship between the reader and the text. In *Quitt*, Fontane’s use of narrative voice

positions the reader to reflect on the events of the novel critically and in relationship to real German society. In *Der verlorene Sohn*, the narrative voice is also used to awaken social critique, but it does so not by placing readers outside of the world of novel, but by passing off the novel as a strange but true record of events.

The incredible diversity of characters encountered in *Der verlorene Sohn*, from prison warden to author, seems to suggest that everyone is subject to a system of outrageous and inescapable exploitation. However, amidst this diversity, May points repeatedly to the special place of books within this world. One of the many “prodigal son” figures of the novel is Robert Bertram, alias Hadschi Omanah, a genius poet who is exploited and underpaid by his publisher. Readers love his work, but his publisher lies to him and pays him a pittance. Another example is the way Gustav Brandt’s palatial library turns out to be more than a vault filled with priceless ideas:

Er nahm eines der Bücher heraus und gab es ihr in die Hand. Es wog sehr schwer, und als sie den Band genauer betrachtete, bemerkte sie, daß es kein Buch sondern ein Holzkästchen war.

[...]

Sie öffnete und stieß einen Ruf des Erstaunens aus. Sechs kostbare Bracelets glänzten ihr entgegen, mit Perlen, Rubinen und Smaragden ausgelegt. Sie verschlang den Schmuck förmlich mit den Augen. So kostbare, fremdartige Arbeit hatte sie noch nicht gesehen. (360)

This theme expounding upon the value of books and writing is continued throughout the novel.³³

However, the narrator also makes specific commentary that serves to close the distance between real life and written life, enticing the reader to view the novel’s world as a potential reality.

³³Andreas Graf’s article (“Ja, das Schreiben und das Lesen...”) expands and examines motifs of writing and reading in *Der verlorene Sohn*. He suggests that they contribute to a pedagogical discourse about promoting the value of literacy.

Der gewaltigste der Dichter und Schriftsteller ist -- -- das Leben. Es ist weder von Sheakespeare, Milton und Scott, von Dante, Tasso und Ariost, noch von Göthe, Schiller und Anderen erreicht oder gar übertroffen worden. Das Leben schreibt mit diamantem Griffel; seine Schrift ist unvergänglich, seine Logik unbestechlich, seine Charakteristik von unveränderbarer Treue, seine Schilderung hinreißend und von herzergreifender Wahrheit. [...] (103)

The narrator makes repeated interventions such as the one quoted above to imply that, however outrageous the story might be, it is true. In tandem with the currency and date-immediacy built into the narrative structure,³⁴ these interventions tantalize the reader with the idea that the story is real and that the injustice or the good luck they experience might be similar in degree to the extremes portrayed in the story.³⁵ The narrative positions what happens to the characters as real, as well as deserved and destined (note the words “Logik,” “unveränderbare Treue” and “Wahrheit” in the quotation above). This aspect will be further explored in its relationship to the narrative framing of the protagonists.

Ernst Bloch, in reflecting on Karl May’s *Winnetou* novels and *Kolportage* as a genre, writes:

Colportage has in its interlacings no Muse of contemplation above it, but wishful fantasies of fulfillment within it; and it posits the luster of this wishful imagination not just for distraction or intoxication, but for *provocation* and for *invasion*. That is precisely why colportage is persecuted by the bourgeoisie as dangerous, namely as filth and trash per se; that is above all why colportage is not a quiet calendar story any more, nor a mere romantic novel of chivalry for ordinary people. But it is the wishful dream towards Last Judgment for the wicked, towards glory for the good [...] (161-162)

³⁴ Ralf Harder has dealt extensively with the “timeline” of *Der Verlorene Sohn*, both in terms of actual publication dates and the time period narrated within the text. It seems clear from this work, which shows, for example, how May tweaked narrative speed so that Christmas in the novel coincided with the week of Christmas in the world, that May’s concerns were not exclusively artistic. After the incredible success of his first serial novel, *Waldröschen*, which incorporated up-to-date events and historical persons, May clearly wanted to deliver to reader expectations; his audience was primed for a fictional world that had journalistic marks of currency.

³⁵ Monika Evers’s article suggests that May himself used his writing to project his personal problems onto a fictional world in order to achieve “*Ersatzlösungen*” (88). She also works extensively with Ernst Bloch’s observations about *Kolportageliteratur* as a genre of wish fulfillment. The narrative strategies for closing the gap between narrative and reality that I am describing fit well into Evers’s conception of this novel in particular, and Bloch’s more general thesis.

The proximity between the miserable poverty portrayed in the serial novel, its world of reference, and its reader is a narrative device that makes social critique possible. Making the connections between the narrative world and the real world creates awareness and outrage.

In *Quitt*, I have already shown how the narrative structure creates distance to achieve a similarly critical viewpoint. To support and deepen this distance, the narrative voice in *Quitt* makes no claims about the truth or reality of the story, although the novel is, in some respects, a fictional extension and re-imagination of a true event.³⁶ Descriptive details and the inclusion of notes and letters vouch for the authenticity of the novel without bringing in an explicit narrator's voice. The places are real, the conflict is real, but the characters are wholly Fontane's invention. Narrative commentary is almost completely absent from the novel's pages, except during scenes with the Espes. The narrative voice takes no position on the story, nor on its moral value, instead allowing the conversation of the Espe family to evaluate and provide commentary. Giving the Espes "free reign" strengthens the watching-the-watchers position of the reader.

As mentioned above, *Quitt* was initially published in the family magazine *Die Gartenlaube*.³⁷ The novel was heavily abridged for this publication. The abridgement

³⁶ There are many articles that examine more extensively the novel's relationship to the actual event. Schwerdtner reports an oral history of a local informant talking with Fontane about the incident, and also uses passages from Fontane's letters to his wife to substantiate the oral history. Graf's ("Fontane, Möllhausen...") information contradicts Schwerdtner's oral history, quoting letters that show Georg Friedländer provided Fontane with the material for the novel (164f). Schindler examines the Fontane family's connections to and activities in Silesia as tourists. Reitzig's article attempts to recreate an idea of the actual events that appear in the novel on the basis of court records. The circumstances of the real event, as Reitzig has them, are these: on the 21st of July, 1877, the forester Wilhelm Frey left his house in Wolfshau – his body was discovered one week later, and it was clear he had been shot by a poacher. One of the two main suspects in the case emigrated secretly to the United States (215).

³⁷ See Demetz "Theodor Fontane als Unterhaltungsautor" (195) for further information about Fontane's publication record in family magazines. Demetz holds a somewhat untenable thesis regarding the difference between Fontane's newspaper novels and serial novels like *Schwankende Herzen*, suggesting that narrative continuity, dedication to detail and incremental change separates the artwork from the kitsch (197). Demetz's notion of narrative continuity is exemplified in the way in which *Middlemarch*'s narrative

completely eliminated the framing element that structures the social critique of the novel. This framing element, a family of Berlin tourists whose ridiculousness is dwelt on by the narrative voice, is one of the narrative strategies that separates Fontane's novel from *Der verlorene Sohn*. The Espes' shallow conversation brackets off the events in the hero's life and invites the reader to reflect and question. The Espes' point of view and alien context (upper-middle class Berlin) is also important to the novel because it breaks up what could be viewed as a closed village milieu.³⁸ Finally, by depicting the tourist encounter between bourgeois family and disenfranchised rural poor, Fontane points towards the new German national context after 1871.³⁹

POSITION OF THE PROTAGONIST

In each of the stories, the ultimate fate of the protagonist and his struggle against guilt serves as the culmination of the narrative. Karl May's hero ultimately succeeds in clearing his own name. The head criminal, Franz von Helfenstein, and his hordes of flunkies are finally beaten.

Scholars like Klotz and Evers have consistently pointed out how *Der verlorene Sohn* is essentially a story of patriarchal wish-fulfillment.⁴⁰ However, this only really applies to the major heroes, not the minor characters. The world of the *Kolportageroman*

follows a local election in detail, whereas *Schwankende Herzen* skips the campaign and dwells on the election's results.

³⁸ In contrast, Klotz suggests that one difference between Karl May's narrative picture of the world and that of his predecessors, Sue and Dumas, is that the socio-historical picture is more advanced, depicting the city underworld as well as the provincial world of miners, weavers, and craftsmen. This "more advanced" certainly applies to Fontane's novel as well.

³⁹ *Der verlorene Sohn* focuses in on very high social classes (nobility), the petty bourgeoisie, and the poorest of the poor. There is little room in the story for independent-minded middle-class bureaucrats. The only characters bordering on this description are the evil flunkies of Franz von Helfenstein, the family Seidelmann; the text makes it clear that such characters are wholly dependent on the powers and rights of the evil aristocrat.

⁴⁰ Compare Klotz (94-96), Evers (88-89).

is not completely without its ambivalent figures who receive a more nuanced evaluation: poachers, poor people, and women.

I suggest that this ambivalence in characterization, already discussed above, is actually quite similar to the nuanced characterization seen in Fontane's novel *Quitt*. However, because the ambivalence or ambiguity is limited primarily to supporting characters, rather than heroes, it is easily overlooked. I suggest that what truly creates a separation between the two is how and on what basis the characterization addresses the reader.

As a case study, we can take *Der verlorene Sohn* and its treatment of Judith Levi, the idealistic but lovesick daughter of Salomon Levi and his wife, is punished in the end for her all-out pursuit of Robert Bertram, during which she goes to great lengths to end his affection for Fanny von Hellenbach. However, because her actions were predicated on love, the judge who sentences her to prison gives her a milder sentence. The narrative offers a spectrum of outcomes for characters like Judith – usually they receive punishment, but the integrity of their motivations is recognized. Ultimately, however, we identify with the “prodigal sons” of the story, with Gustav Brandt, Robert Bertram, and the other unjustly prosecuted men whose records are cleared at the end of the novel. Their successes stand as a “schriftlich fixierter Tagtraum” (Evers 88).

Quitt, like *Der verlorene Sohn*, is not only about guilt, but also about wishes, hopes, and redemption. Fontane's narrative allows the protagonist's wish for forgiveness and his hopes for future happiness to be crushed by what seems to be fate, which *Geheimrat* Espe in turn sees as a grave miscarriage of state justice. The reader is left wondering whether Menz's good intentions have truly redeemed him after all. The outcome is provocative, because the reader has been kept at a distance from the events

and because the narrative continually redirects the reader's attention to Menz's guilt and his redemption.

The first section of the novel is organized around the contrast between Menz and his nemesis, the forester Opitz. Alternating chapters switch in between the two characters. The narrative gives us glimpses of them both, in their good moments and in their weak moments. Fontane heaps on the ambivalence in their interactions by refraining from taking an explicit narrative stance. The narrative bombards the reader with opposing information about the two characters from a variety of sources. But ultimately, the reader is left to use his or her own judgment to untangle the different stories. Because of the multiple overlapping storylines and similar end-results (Opitz dies, Menz dies), the reader's task is more to weigh and differentiate the two men and their ambitions, rather than to take the side of one against the other.

CONCLUSION

These two novels are quite different in both the audiences they intend to reach and in the strategies they use in narration, but through narrative structure, voice, and position of the protagonist, they both provoke a critical reaction. Fontane evokes this reaction through distance, whereas May evokes it through immediacy. What both of these narrative approaches show is that the poacher served as a touchstone for social critique in both high and low literature. It also shows that both had different methods of addressing the reader as a critical audience. The revival of this anachronistic figure provided a site for social critique, whether used as a symbol of identification, as in May, or as a symbol of contrast, in Fontane.

Chapter 4: Folk Songs and the Poacher – Regional Adaptations of the Motif

Above, I have examined three very diverse works. In this section, I add a popular folk ballad to the group. Due to the social constituents and conflict involved in poaching, it should not surprise us that the poaching motif has most frequently entered literary texts in the form of popular folk ballads. However, the origin and context of such balladry makes it difficult to evaluate the significance of the texts. These songs, especially the ones about poacher-heroes, typically have a very local context, focused on a particular village. However, I look at a text that managed to travel beyond its home. I argue that its introduction of the soldiering life into the ballad genre gave it a broader appeal than other songs of the genre.

The earliest recorded German “poaching songs” date from 1768. The songs were part of a popular operetta composed by Johann Michael Haydn, “Die Hochzeit auf der Alm” (“The Wedding in the Pasture”) (Hochradner 137-38).⁴¹ At the turn of the nineteenth century, many more songs were recorded as interest in folklore and folk texts

⁴¹ Brother of the more famous composer Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). Pater Florian Reichssiegel (1735-1793) wrote the libretti. “Die Hochzeit auf der Alm” features two milkmaids, Phyllis and Galatea, hiding the poacher Polydor. The milkmaids are in fact the estranged countess and her daughter, and the count’s search for Polydor results in their reunion. Polydor marries Phyllis (Hochradner 137-138). Poaching songs and culture often have a strong erotic component, as well as signifying class structure and privilege.

grew.⁴² Most poaching songs fall into two categories, as suggested by historian Schulte in her examination of the genre: they are either erotic adventure or lament songs (166).

The lament genre revolves around animosity between the village and the game-keeper or forester. The songs recount the death of a poacher at the hands of the game-keeper and the funeral following. Many such texts spread from village to village and were re-written to commemorate local poacher-martyrs.⁴³ Often, words are maintained verbatim, but the poacher's name, his personal information, and place names are changed. The close identification between the village and the dead poacher is declared through the singing of the songs.

Most songs in the lament genre also share a similar structure, with the poacher's violent death in the forest as the turning point of the ballad; the death opens up a space for directing open criticism and scorn towards local authority figures, especially huntsmen and game-keepers.⁴⁴ The closing verses proclaim the righteousness of the poacher's act by aligning him with God's justice and Judgment Day.

This section of my thesis examines a particularly enduring and wide-spread late nineteenth-century example from this genre entitled "Das Jennerweinlied."⁴⁵ Holzapfel's reference work *Liedverzeichnis (Song Register)* shows that the oldest published version of the song appeared in a printed song collection around 1900 (544). However, the text of

⁴² Bourgeois and literary interest in German folk song texts began in the late 18th century; this interest contributed to the published record of folk balladry. The lack of prior written sources makes it difficult to determine whether there was an oral tradition of folk songs about poaching before Haydn's operetta. Danckert's entry on "Liebesjagd" records erotic hunting songs from broadsheets or "Fliegende Blätter" that date to the 16th century (Vol. 2, 703).

⁴³ Schulte likens communal songs and rituals developed around lamented poachers to those developed around local saints (167).

⁴⁴ Compare with Schulte, "[...] it did not necessarily take the recent death of a poacher to unleash the laments' curse on the hunters and gamekeepers. A dead poacher might just be a stylistic device, a prelude to a litany of insults directed at the hunters" (171).

⁴⁵ Kiem Pauli's collection gives it the title "Jennerwein-Wildschützenlied." Janda and Petzoldt call it "X title."

the song commemorates the death of the poacher Georg Jennerwein, an event that took place in 1877. It seems likely that the song was in circulation, either as an oral or written text, prior to the 1900 publication.⁴⁶

To begin, I'd like to present the version of "Das Jennerweinlied"⁴⁷ collected by Bavarian folk song collector Kiem Pauli in 1910:

Es war ein Schutz in seinen schönsten Jahren,
er wurde weggeputzt von dieser Erd,
man fand ihn erst am neunten Tage
bei Tegernsee am Peißenberg.

Auf den Bergen ist die Freiheit,
auf den Bergen ist es schön,
doch auf so eine schlechte Weise
mußte Jennerwein zugrunde gehn!

Auf hartem Stein hat er sein Blut vergossen,
am Bauche liegend fand man ihn,
von hinten war er angeschossen
zersplittert war sein Unterkinn.

Es war schrecklich anzusehen,
als man ihm das Hemd zog aus,
da dachte jeder bei sich selber:
Jäger, bleib mitn Selbstmord z'haus!

Du feiger Jäger, das ist eine Schande,
du erwirbst dir wohl kein Ehrenkreuz,
er fiel mit dir nicht im offenen Kampfe,
weils der Schuß von hint beweist.

Man bracht ihn dann noch auf den Wagen,
bei finstrer Nacht ging es noch fort,
begleitet von seinen Kameraden
nach Schliersee, seinem Lieblingsort.

Dort ruht er sanft, ja wie ein jeder,

⁴⁶ The song may have been published initially in a newspaper. Janda and Notzoldt's not-so-scholarly collection of street ballads suggests that the song had its origins as a *Bänkellied*.

⁴⁷ In Pauli's collection, it is titled *Jennerwein-Wildschützenlied*.

bis an den großen Jüngsten Tag,
dann zeigt uns Jennerwein den Jäger,
der ihn von hint erschossen hat.

Von der Höh gings langsam runter,
denn der Weg war schlecht und weit,
ein Jäger hat es gleich erfunden,
daß er sich hat selbst entleibt.

Und am großen Jüngsten Tage
putzt jeder sein Gewissen und 's Gewehr,
dann marschiern d' Jäger samt die Förster
aufs Gamsgebirg zum Luzifer.

Zum Schlusse Dank noch den Vetranen,
da ihr den Trauermarsch so schön gespielt,
Jäger, tut euch nur ermahnen,
daß keiner mehr von hinten zielt. (140-141)

The song scolds and accuses hunters broadly. Here, the woods emerge as a place for settling scores, where legitimacy of action is seemingly reversed, where the competent and authorized forester is exposed as a coward and the poacher revealed as a brave innocent. Unlike other songs of the genre, the song emphasizes the difficulty of reading Jennerwein's wounded body as well as the appearance of suicide.

The song is based on an occurrence documented in court records. Georg Jennerwein was a forestry worker (*Holz knecht*) shot by a hunter while poaching near the Tegernsee in 1877. The hunter who killed Jennerwein, an old army comrade, shot the body twice more to make Jennerwein's death appear like a suicide (Girtler 287). There is an indication that, in addition to their opposition as hunter and poacher, the two men were rivals in love as well.

The oral mode of the folk song also underscores a symbiotic relationship of the village, its inhabitants and the forest. Through singing of the song, the conflict between poacher and forester in the wilderness is incorporated into the village space and becomes an expression of class solidarity and class conflict. Through the singing of the poacher's

death and the outcry against his unjust victimization by the forester, the poacher's "belonging" in the village is declared (Schulte 169).

The forest crime, symptomatic of a social and legal program that criminalized poverty (Ruehs 34), thus enters the village space. The villagers' relationship to the world and to the representatives of authority (game-keepers and foresters) is mapped in the wilderness space through conventions of crime and policing, punctuated by the death of the poacher. Simultaneously, the forest's centrality for the village is emphasized through the repeated singing of songs about poaching (whether lament songs or adventure songs) and the multiplicity of texts.

This anonymously written, popular song exemplifies a conservative folk perspective that, viewed from one side, rejects sentimentalization; from another perspective, the song text demands it. Here, nature and use of natural resources are directly linked with the social and political demands and expectations of the rural lower class. The relationship between the village and the wilderness is symbiotic, rejecting external regulation. However, at the same time, certain new additions to the identity of the poacher (military service, assertion of individual rights) are undergoing a process of sentimentalization. The "Jennerwein" text's incorporation of these new additions contributed to its widespread appeal.

Two major thematic elements of the Jennerwein song text can be read to suit the context of either a narrowly Upper Bavarian or a larger German audience's needs: first, the allusions to soldiering life; second, the idea of the justice of the second coming. The double-duty the song served, as both "volkstümliche" song and as gritty expression of rural social conditions, is similar to the varied adaptation of the poacher figure for social critique in longer prose works.

THE POACHER-HERO AS A SOLDIER

Poaching songs in general and the “Jennerweinlied” specifically were anything but static. However a theme that is introduced into the genre by the “Jennerweinlied” is that of the poacher-hero as a soldier, and the audience and performers as fellow veterans. In fact, *Quitt*, *Waldleute*, and *Der verlorene Sohn* all contain main characters connected to soldiering life. However, within the genre of poaching lament songs, the soldier-allusions are a feature that makes the “Jennerweinlied” unique.

Although it is quite common for the songs to present the dead poacher’s identity, naming his family, hometown, profession and age, the military service of the forester’s helper and Jennerwein is unusual (Cf Schulte 169). The references to “Ehrenkreuz,” “Kameraden,” “marschieren,” and the final stanza giving thanks to the “Veteranen” point to the context of wider military service. Thus, beyond the village identity inherent in the genre, this song addresses a wider community of German soldiers, subtly opposing them to both huntsman and gamekeepers as well as to the cowardly and dishonorable shot in the back. This innovation can be attributed to the actual facts of the story— the actual Georg Jennerwein was shot in 1877, by a forester’s assistant he had served with during the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71— but it also signals the new national context of Germany post-1871.

Here the honor and duties of soldiering life are opposed to dishonorable killing, but not to the crime of poaching. Wider military service was an important factor in the social transition that gripped the countryside; it resulted in more universal education⁴⁸ and shared experiences. In this way, military service was a force for binding the larger middle classes together. As the poacher-hero makes the transition from village hero to

⁴⁸ Literacy in particular.

German citizen-soldier, his double nature lends him as a device to later authors in the service of social critique, as in the prose works already surveyed.

JUDGMENT DAY

Judgment Day and an invocation of divine justice appear in almost all poaching lament songs, as well as in most versions of the “Jennerweinlied.” The dead poacher and, by extension, the whole village receive vindication on Judgment Day, when God imposes true justice (contrasted with the “just” fulfillment of the forester’s office). The single crime mentioned in the text is the crime of the hunter: shooting from behind and trying to make it look as if Jennerwein had committed suicide. The first line of the second stanza indirectly supports the poacher’s guiltlessness with the declaration: “Auf den Bergen ist die Freiheit!” (Pauli 140). The mountains are a place of perfect freedom and beauty; enforcing the law, and thereby limiting another person’s freedom, is the true crime in this natural place that is beyond and outside of the state.

During the late nineteenth century, the idea of the folk song as a natural, unsullied art form fit into a discourse about rural life which conceived of farmers and rural laborers as part of and closest to this deep, civilization-opposed nature.⁴⁹ This discourse opposing urban lifestyles saw government and law enforcement as part of the “unnatural” civilization. The poacher becomes a symbol of the untarnished and natural character of the folk song and the German countryside. At the same time, he becomes the symbol of a

⁴⁹ Schutte writes: “Seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts jedoch geht die Vorliebe für die Natur immer deutlicher einher mit der Desavouierung von Rationalität und Verstand. Als ‘Naturgesang des Volks,’ als ‘Naturprodukt’ o. a. wurde es zunächst einmal deshalb bezeichnet, weil unter dem Begriff ‘Volk’ vielfach die Bauern verstanden wurden [...]” (40). Schutte quotes two folk song apologists in this passage.

natural and holy order which will eventually mete out ultimate, divine justice. His natural rights are recognized and idealized, at the same time that the text decries their violation.

THE “JENNERWEINLIED” IN PRUSSIA

There is no way to access the original “Jennerweinlied,” so work on it must be predicated on the various versions that were collected and published in different collections beginning in 1900. The oral renditions of the song are something that we can only guess about based on the different written versions. By examining collection methods and printing history of the song, one can begin to understand the depth and breadth of variation within the context of a single song text. Additionally, such a perspective gives insight into the material circumstances that influenced and conditioned textual variation.

Janda and Notzoldt include a variant text of the “Jennerweinlied” in their collection of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century *Bänkelsang* (51-52). The collection does not thoroughly address its specific sources, nor their current status.⁵⁰ *Bänkelsang* is a hybrid genre of print and performance; its practitioners traveled to various locations in cities selling pamphlet literature which were often accompanied by ballads. To advertise their goods, *Bänkelsänger* had images depicting the details of the stories they sold (often grisly or sensational in content). During performance, the singers would point to the images and sing the ballad, usually included at the end of the pamphlet, to attract buyers. The detailed description of Jennerwein’s wounds in “Das

⁵⁰ In fact, their introduction suggests they collected the songs from former *Bänkelsang* singers, as well as from pamphlet remnants from known *Bänkelsang* publishers. Most of these publishers were located in eastern Prussia, in what is today Poland (12).

Jennerweinlied” suggests that it might have adapted well to this type of graphic representation.

Janda and Nötzoldt carve out an entire chapter for ballads about foresters and poachers. They too point to an artifact of high culture as an antecedent for *Bänkelsang* appropriation of the poacher, citing the popularity of the music from Karl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, initially performed in 1821 (46). It is not clear from the book on what material, scholarly basis they categorize “Das Jennerweinlied” as a *Bänkellied*, however the song does have clear thematic and formal affinities with this genre.

The song text that Janda and Nötzoldt reproduce excludes the outraged stanzas of the ballad that allude to suicide, a modification that should probably be attributed to regional religious character. The centers of *Moritäten* publishing were primarily in northeastern Germany.⁵¹ Prussian audiences were primarily Protestant, whereas Upper Bavaria, where Pauli collected his version which was printed in full above, is primarily Catholic. Thus in the cultural context surrounding Pauli’s version, suicide and murder are crimes of equal spiritual gravity. This regional difference explains why Pauli’s version dwells so persistently on the sham suicide and the version in Janda and Nötzoldt does not.

Other small differences abound between these two versions, indicate the lack of importance of local details as the text was transferred to other audiences. The version in Janda and Nötzoldt’s collection changes Jennerwein’s place of burial, although it is still referred to as the poacher’s “Lieblingsort.” Also, since Pauli’s version is collected from an individual as a folk song and not from a professional *Bänkelsänger*, there is no broader context of plying a trade, public performance, or making sales in the case Pauli’s version.

⁵¹ In fact, several of the major publishers were in Frankfurt an der Oder; they also produced and sold pamphlets in Pölsih (Janda and Nötzoldt, 12).

This example illustrates how the different versions can vary from one other, and suggests regional motivations for some of these changes.

CONCLUSION

The changes and growing hybridity traced in the figure of the poacher, provides an excellent ending place for this thesis. Although the analysis made above focuses on the regional adaptation and appropriation of the poacher-hero motif, there is also a connection between the poaching lament genre and the issues of social justice and critique highlighted in the third and fourth chapters. Several studies of poaching songs point to the social resistance character of such folk songs, even going so far as to suggest that poaching lament songs are “action that has hardened into text” (Schulte 176). Schulte writes further:

The singing of the songs at home, in the garden, in the village inn, at village festivals and weddings, is part of the subversive, unceasing reappropriation of nature and poaching. As long as these songs are sung, the game rights of a privileged few remain an unjust law. As long as the singers, peasants and their wives, young men and girls, make up the poaching verses and songs and even dance to them and provoke the authorities with them in the village inn, they keep the wilderness occupied and proclaim their cultural roots. [...] The bourgeois statue book's concept of property is powerless, because by their very nature forests and game, as peasants saw them, could not belong to anyone and could not be treated as commodities. [...] In the mocking, rejoicing, lamenting poaching songs, the Upper Bavarian village and its entire way of life declared its opposition to an order of things set up and ruled over by outsiders. The songs are two things: a revolt against this order, and the proclamation of a liberty that remained 'poached': which the villagers took for themselves. (176-177)

Schulte's view is very narrowly focused on the Upper Bavarian peasantry, where poaching lament songs resonated and dead poachers had hero's cults much like local

saints.⁵² In the larger German national context, the poacher was also a symbol of peasant resistance, but also was being molded into the representative of an anti-feudal value system and interest in individualism that bound the new middle classes together.

The poaching song's productivity, and the way it was adapted to new social and political conditions, suggests its continuing social relevance in the late nineteenth century. It is impossible to isolate oral song traditions from "high" musical culture, and further impossible to isolate either sphere from literary culture. Highlighting overlaps and dialogue between musical and textual modalities show how complicated literature's place in society can be.⁵³ In light of this complicated position, it makes sense to take account of a wide variety of texts to show how the poacher-hero was relied on as a traditional hero of the people, as a new avatar of the larger German society, and finally as a vehicle for creating social critique.

⁵² Schulte notes that the "Jennerweinlied" was sung at hunters funerals into the twentieth century (167). For a very similar view, see Ruehs, "Auch 'böse' Menschen haben ihre Lieder." Ruehs explicit suggestion in her historical introduction that poaching laws were part of a larger legal trend which criminalized poverty is perhaps one of the most interesting points the article makes (34). Her further argument suggests that folk songs thematizing the unrealistic/magical triumph of the poacher over the forester represented "a thematic extension" of the true situation of the lower classes, which as she portrays it was quite dire (56).
⁵³ For further information on such dialogue, Jean Leventhal's monograph *Echoes in the Text* explores Fontane's incorporation of music, especially Wagner, in his *Gesellschaftsromane* (society novels). Leventhal does not, however, include any consideration of the patriotic songs about Silesia or hymns that are referred to extensively in *Quitt*, Fontane's novel about a poacher.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to point briefly to the literary legacy of the poacher-hero. The poacher figure continued to resonate with audiences long beyond the nineteenth century, as do narratives that otherwise portray the perceived clash between urban and rural, national and local.⁵⁴ The periodic revival of the works treated in this thesis also points to the continuing significance of the poacher figure. *Waldleute* enjoyed renewed performances in smaller German theaters in 1937 and 1938, during the Hitler years. Jennerwein, whose 1877 death gave rise to a flurry of literary production, became the subject of a novel again in 1945, immediately following World War II. Jennerwein has also been the subject of multiple film productions, the latest being a made-for-TV movie from 2003. Parts of *Der verlorene Sohn* were produced in the GDR as a miniseries in the late 1980s. Circumstances of the stories' resurrections seem to point to the adaptability of the material to a variety of social and political viewpoints and to the continuing availability of this environmental- and village- based motif for playing out urban social issues. As this thesis has shown, such social issues do not have to be small scale or within the village confines: fiction was quick to adapt the poacher to new national contexts.

⁵⁴ Notable here is Sabine Eschgfäller's article on Otto Rudl's popular "Tiroler Hiesl" stories, which show the simple, *bäuerliche*, *dörfliche* triumphing over the unnecessary complicatedness of the modern world and which were popular from the turn of the century until World War II (334).

Examining this diverse group of texts together would be difficult without the interesting entry-point that study of the poacher-hero offers. In the case of this motif study, it has attempted to synthesize and understand several texts in relation that might not otherwise be brought together. Through their common use of the poacher-hero motif, however, I have found grounds to compare texts of divergent genre, register, and regional origin. This study has not only shown how the different works adapt or change the motif itself, but how they are influenced by the presence of the motif: for example, in their implementation of the motif-inherent element of social critique examined in chapter three.

My thesis has shown how such actualization often opens up ways to contrast or criticize old and new. What the occurrence and recurrence of the poacher motif shows us is that there is an enduring interest in the fairness of the social and economic hierarchy, and that we have a need to couch it in terms of older lifestyles and far-away places. My reading of social mobility and the poacher in *Quitt*, *Der verlorene Sohn* and *Waldleute* in chapter two has shown this. The past and its symbols also serve as points of reference in assessing and criticizing the present, as shown in the analysis of narrative structure and social critique in chapter three. Finally, modifications are sometimes necessary to make localized versions of the motif accessible to broader audiences, as examined in chapter four.

By looking at a variety of texts through the lens of a motif study, we can view a clearer picture of how genres stand in relationship to one another during a particular time period. I have, for example, been able to show similarities and differences between texts taken from all levels of register, which could not otherwise be grouped together. Motifs offer a meaningful framework for interpreting such texts as part of a larger and more diverse community of texts. Questions this thesis has left open include questions of

reception, as well as of adaptations in other genre literature, such as domestic romances and historical novels. The eventual inclusion of visual representations (illustrations and paintings), as well as calendar literature in further exploration of nineteenth-century motifs might also go far in capturing a true picture of a motif's gradual and changing status.

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