

ROOTED IN THE DARK OF THE EARTH: BAVARIA'S PEASANT-FARMERS AND
THE PROFIT OF A MANUFACTURED PARADISE

by

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(Under the Direction of John H. Morrow, Jr.)

ABSTRACT

Pre-modern, agrarian communities typified Bavaria until the late-19th century. Technological innovations, the railroad being perhaps the most important, offered new possibilities for a people who had for generations identified themselves in part through their local communities and also by their labor and status as independent peasant-farmers. These exciting changes, however, increasingly undermined traditional identities with self and community through agricultural labor. In other words, by changing how or what they farmed to increasingly meet the needs of urban markets, Bavarian peasant-farmers also changed the way that they viewed the land and ultimately, how they viewed themselves — and one another. Nineteenth-century Bavarian peasant-farmers and their changing relationship with urban markets therefore serve as a case study for the earth-shattering dangers that possibly follow when modern societies (and individuals) lose their sense of community by sacrificing their relationship with the land.

INDEX WORDS: Bavaria, Peasant-farmers, Agriculture, Modernity, Urban/Rural Economies, Rural Community

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INTRODUCTION

I. The Profit of a Manufactured Paradise

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In the years before the First World War, in spite of the gradual expansion of Bavaria's industrial sector, a culture of small-farming continued to dominate the Bavarian economy.¹ Even after the war, as Benjamin Ziemann points out, "the wartime and post-war experiences by no means led to a radical break with traditional values and perceptions... Most people in fact fell back on the 'traditional sources of stability' within rural society, such as the peasant family, religiosity and subsistence farming."² Where Ziemann is probably correct — the war did not cause a cataclysmic break from traditions in rural Bavaria — one should not assume that the 'traditional sources of stability' of rural Bavarians were somehow unchanging. Even before August of 1914, despite their opposition or indifference to Prussian-dominated national interests, enough economic and political change had occurred in rural Bavaria to suggest that the peasantry's traditional sources of stability did not go unaffected. This becomes increasingly evident if one focuses in on the husbandry of Bavarian peasant-farmers and how their relationship with the land changed during the course of the 19th century.

¹ Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany 1914-1923*, trans. by Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 15.

² Ibid., p. 273. With the war behind them, Bavaria's agricultural communities believed that they could simply return to the world of agriculture as they had known it before the war. Likewise, many ex-soldiers "sought to return to civilian normality as quickly as possible," happy that they could "again devote themselves peacefully to their accustomed activities." See p. 212, 217.

Recent scholarship on German peasantry and provincial identities, though very good, has often overlooked or failed to adequately stress the role of agriculture in forming those identities.³ “Not only do economics and its laws write the history of families,” writes Regina Schulte, “family relationships also determine the history of the land.”⁴ Considering that agriculture defined the daily routine, economy, and landscape of the Bavarian peasantry, one should not be surprised if it also played a significant role in shaping their identities. Thomas Jefferson famously believed that agriculture shaped the independent farmer in a very specific way. “Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens,” he wrote toward the end of his life. “They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds.”⁵

However, it is difficult to say whether 19th-century Bavarian peasant-farmers understood agriculture as liberating. Neither should one assume that their frequent interactions with the land bred a culture of environmental respect. Considering a general lack of evidence that could prove otherwise, one might easily conclude that Bavaria’s peasantry regarded agriculture as oppressive; *they* did not choose to maintain a symbiotic relationship with the land; rather, the need to survive

³ Moray McGowan provides a little taste of this issue’s complexity. In respect to Bavarian identity, he writes that “perceptions of Bavarian identity are a complex mixture of actual socio-economic and cultural characteristics, Bavarian self-images, and the projections of nonnatives. Among the recurrent elements are: a conservatism whose obstinacy can be subversive; a Catholicism entrenched in values and language even of the region’s atheists; the often noted, if rarely defined “*tragischer Gestus*” of the Bavarian dialect; a distrust, despite Bavaria’s significant modern industries (e.g. BMW or Audi), of modernity and modernization, interwoven with a particular version of the ancient polarity of the country and the city, which has much to do with Bavarian identity’s strong association with peasantry.” Taken from Moray McGowan, “‘Der Stadt ist der Metzger’: The Crisis of Bavarian Peasant Identity in Franz Xaver Kroetz’s *Bauern Sterben*” (*German Studies Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1. (Feb., 1996), pp. 29-40), p. 29.

⁴ Regina Schulte, *The Village in Court: Arson, Infanticide, and Poaching in the Court Records of Upper Bavaria, 1848-1910*, trans. by Barrie Selman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 10.

⁵ Quoted in Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996)p. 144. Interestingly, according to Anna Bramwell, the Bavarian *Bauernvereine* elected Jefferson as an honorary member in 1810. See Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Richard Walther Darré and Hitler’s Green Party* (Abbotsbrook, Bourn End, UK: Kensal House, 1985), p. 7.

forced them into the ‘drudgeries of husbandry.’ Regina Schulte again, quoting Rainer Beck, perhaps puts it best:

Because it is the land that supports the peasant economy, the life of the peasants stands in an indissoluble relationship with nature. This is not however, a relationship of subordination. The peasant’s relationship with nature is one of dialogue, consisting of work in and on nature, and it is reciprocal. “It is a peculiarity of agricultural production that it depends on a combination of man’s work and the natural forces of growth. The form this combination takes is not haphazard, because farming, the way the peasant intervenes in nature and wrests from her what she will not surrender of her own free will, the way in which he ‘tames’ her, is itself dependent on nature.”⁶

In other words, as long as the comforts, tools, and infrastructure of a modern market economy remained beyond the peasant-farmer, necessity *obliged* them into a nurturing relationship with the land regardless of whether they wanted it or not.⁷ Indeed, so many generations had passed their existence toiling away in the dirt, that most could have hardly conceived of a community that existed beyond the limits of the soil. For this reason, peasant-farmers in Bavaria often reacted with indifference toward the national and international politics of 1918, the conclusion of peace talks in May of 1919, and Bavaria’s revolutionary upheavals of that same year.⁸ By 1923, however, they did not ignore the demands of markets if they wished

⁶ Regina Schulte, *The Village in Court*, p. 9.

⁷ Arguably, this forced symbiotic relationship produced a familiarity with the landscape that would have safeguarded “a human intelligence of the earth that no amount of technology can satisfactorily replace.” Furthermore, a close relationship with the land would have clarified peasant-farmers’ inescapable bonds to one other. See Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, p. 43. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, in his epic study of the French village of Montaillou, provides a vivid picture of how illiterate agrarian societies, for example, passed their culture on to subsequent generations: “If the peasants had no access to schools, how was their culture handed down? First of all, through work performed in common. The boys dig the turnips with their father and the girls would reap their corn with their mother. As they all laboured together, the older people would talk to the youngsters. Tongues were equally active around the family board... This obliged them to take responsibility and exercise their memories.” Taken from Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 214.

⁸ Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, p. 217. Ziemann provides several quotes that display the attitude of rural Bavarians after the First World War. The Miesbach district authority, wrote in the fall of 1921, that “the peasants tell me at every opportunity that all that matters at the moment is ensuring domestic peace, quiet and order and that we must wait until the economy has recovered and become stronger before deciding which type of state is best.” During the French takeover of the Ruhr, “the three southern Bavarian district chiefs were all regretfully forced to conclude that the ‘country folk [looked on at] the events apathetically’ and were interested solely in the

to survive.⁹ Similarly, where Bavarian soldiers of both world wars may have shown an aversion to “the logic of modern, industrial war,” they completely failed to realize how a continued acceptance of market capitalism and modern methods of agriculture held open the doors of drastic change.¹⁰

It is probable that most Bavarians, including the peasant-farmers of rural Bavaria, failed to completely understand or foresee the negative impact that the First World War would ultimately have on their identities as independent, Bavarian peasant-farmers. Neither did they understand how the war only accelerated the process of urbanization and industrialization that had been underway for decades; a process that slowly but surely, if not insidiously, separated them from a more organic way of life that had necessitated a *cultivation of the land*; and in its stead, left behind the promises of a mechanized progress that encouraged an *exploitation of the land*.¹¹ Even the backwater peasant-farmers of rural Bavaria could not escape contact with the

fact they were likely to drive up the prices of agricultural produce.” Taken from *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, p. 239 and p. 240.

⁹ See Robert Moeller, *German Peasants and Agrarian Politics, 1914-1924: The Rhineland and Westphalia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 139-143. In reference to the Rhineland and Westphalia, Moeller writes that “peasant farms had remained intact” during the immediate postwar years and that “high land prices had not resulted in a market flooded by peasant owners eager to make paper profits” which “suggests that the constant demand for all agricultural products may actually have sustained marginal producers, retarding both their departure from the agricultural sector and any tendency toward the concentration of landholdings.” See p. 140.

¹⁰ For the sake of clarity, in this case, “the doors of drastic change” refers to what Roger Griffin defines as “the anarchy and cultural decay allegedly resulting from the radical transformation of traditional institutions, social structures, and belief systems under the impact of Western modernization” which eventually gave way to “a diffuse cultural force” evident in the aesthetics of the time period and also in the “numerous personal projects and collective movements” which hoped to establish an alternative to modernity, “a healthier social and ethical basis for society, or... an entirely new socio-political order.” See Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 54-55.

¹¹ W.R. Lee writes that, “Industrial growth in most Western European economies in the 19th century was frequently accompanied by a substantial rise in population and domestic demand for agricultural products was bound to rise on the same account. Unless foreign supplies could be relied upon, the domestic demand had to be supplied in the long-term by a smaller proportion of the total work force and a diminishing percentage of the available capital. To this extent, modernization of agriculture was essential, indeed pivotal to the whole concept of economic growth.” Taken from W.R. Lee, *Population Growth, Economic Development and Social Change in Bavaria, 1750-1850* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 108. In regard to cultivation and exploitation of the land: this dichotomy does not infer that pre-modern peasant-farmers enjoyed a mystical relationship with the land that moderns have since lost and should by implication regain. As Peter Pulzer puts it: “it is possible to be, one and at the same time, an organic

structures and mechanisms of a global, industrial-capitalist economy that had expanded so tremendously during the years of the *Kaiserreich*. Neither did they necessarily want to escape.¹²

“By the later 1880’s,” Ian Farr writes, “peasant-farmers in Bavaria found their household incomes squeezed, on the one hand, by declining price levels, and, on the other, by rises in the levels of taxation, the cost of non-family labour and mortgage indebtedness.”¹³ Farmers did not react to this set of circumstances by getting off of the grid. Rather, when opportunity permitted, they willfully and strategically continued to participate beyond their local economy; and for the sake of self-preservation, Bavarian peasant-farmers increasingly collectivized their interests.

Bauernvereine multiplied exponentially, beginning particularly in the 1890’s. Besides providing an assembly point for the political voice of Bavaria’s peasantry, these collectives usually served as credit unions for members who could not otherwise secure loans from larger banks.

Furthermore, they and other enterprising groups often purchased expensive farming machinery which members could subsequently share for a fee. Collectives also provided points of contact with middle-men who could transport and/or sell the goods of rural Bavaria in urban markets.

farmer and a nasty piece of work.” That being said, one should also keep in mind that incredibly harsh and often uncontrollable circumstances pushed subsistence farmers into a relationship with the land that *demand*ed nurturing. If they wished to survive, they could not exploit the land as later agriculturalists, freed from subsisting solely off of their land, would do. For more on this topic, see Albert Howard, *The Soil and Health: A Study of Organic Agriculture* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006). Pulzer quote taken from his review of Anna Bramwell’s biography of Darré found in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 410 (Jan., 1989), pp. 264-265.

¹² In regard to David Sabeen’s work, Mark Finlay writes that “Sabeen explicitly rejects the assumptions that agricultural innovation began primarily on large estates and that agricultural change can be understood by surveying publications of the agricultural press. Rather, Sabeen makes clear that internal and immanent circumstances caused Neckarshausen’s farmers to reform. In the face of local population pressure, labor demands, and a tradition of partible inheritance schemes, peasants had no time or inclination to wait for advice from elite estate owners or authors of agricultural manuals. On their own, they expanded cattle populations, switched from permanent pasturing to stall feeding, and cultivated new marketable crops.” See Mark Finlay, “New Sources, New Theses, and New Organizations in the New Germany: Recent Research on the History of German Agriculture” (*Agricultural History*, Vol. 75, No. 3. (Summer, 2001), pp. 279-307), p. 287. This reaction falls into line with what Jürgen Habermas calls “the need for reassurance” which stems from, to quote Roger Griffin, “our unique consciousness of time, and sense of vulnerability,” which induces the need to find “alternative shelter.” Both quotes taken from Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, p. 69.

¹³ Ian Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria, 1880-1914: ‘State-Help’ and ‘Self-Help’ in Imperial Germany” (*Rural History* (2007), vol. 18, 2, 163–182), p. 166.

In short, by the turn of the century, Bavarian peasant-farmers had adapted and organized. However, contrary to what they might have believed, peasant-farming communities could not interact with a global capitalist system without being somehow affected by that system. Where the relations between urban and rural had always been a two-way street, by the end of the 19th century, the scales began to tip dramatically in favor of the urban producers.¹⁴ This showed in how Bavarian farmers reacted to urban demands. But because farming was their way of life, the demands of new and expanding markets affected the way that peasant-farmers farmed *and* how they lived: it changed what they farmed; it changed how they farmed; and it also changed how they ultimately viewed the land; and, most importantly perhaps, it changed how they viewed themselves — and one another.

Since modern societies continue to adapt to specifically modern circumstances that are often shaped and instigated by rapid technological innovations, a study of Bavarian peasant-farmers and their relationship with modernity — how they changed, what changed them, and what happened because of that change — is a theme that should echo as strikingly current. The changing relationship between urban and rural societies and their economies, specifically, between Bavaria and Munich, reveals how peasant-farmer identities shifted beginning in the late-19th century. However, one should understand that this changing relationship, which obviously favored urban interests, was symptomatic of a greater problem. New machines and more economic opportunity did not just make life “easier” for Bavaria’s peasant-farmers; it completely supplanted the roots of everyday peasant life, the roots of a culture that had historically revolved around an economy of necessity. Universal order, “the Chain of Being” as defined by the

¹⁴ Mark Finlay reminds his audience of works such as Werner Rösener’s *Einführung in die Agrargeschichte* (Darmstadt: Primus, 1997), that have turned away from popular conceptions of the medieval city as “islands of civilization;” when in fact, as scholars have pointed out, long-lasting relationships have always existed between “urban craftsmen, lawyers, soldiers, merchants, and their rural clients.” See Mark Finlay, “New Sources,” p. 284.

bounds of nature, collapsed into the dreams of a manufactured paradise — as served up by the cold machines of “human intelligence and industry.”¹⁵

As previously stated, the First World War only accelerated a process that had long been underway in Bavaria. Bavarian peasant-farmers of the *Kaiserreich* may have believed that they could remain small-farmers, secure their best interests, *and* participate in the greater system of capitalism and markets. However, the fact that they (and others like them) slowly bought into a system that would consequentially transform their way of life, shows that they did not quite understand the ramifications of their participation.¹⁶ To quote Rudolf Steiner, the early-20th century founder of anthroposophy and one of the few contemporary proponents of biodynamic agriculture,

One could say that the tragedy of the present is that countless people obstruct their insight into actual necessities with illusions as to what is worthy of this striving. Thoroughly outdated party lines shed a dense mental fog over these vital necessities. These views result in all manner of unrealistic and impracticable tendencies. What they actually undertake is hopelessly utopian, while they dismiss as utopian suggestions that come from actual life experience.¹⁷

¹⁵ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, p. 55.

¹⁶ Writing in the 1920's in support of the use of electricity in Bavarian agriculture, Hugo Max Graf von und zu Lerchenfeld auf Köfering und Schönberg, a typical booster of progress, still understood the ramifications of poor soil cultivation: “Only the most careful management and constant renovation of the soil can make it possible for modern farming in the old countries where the soil has been under cultivation for centuries to compete with world production. Such intense cultivation involves heavy expense and threatens to raise prices of agricultural products beyond the prices of world markets. Only extreme human economy in the use of human labor can offset the cost of fertilization...” To solve this problem, Lerchenfeld suggests that electricity, not more environmentally sensitive farming methods, would come to the help of the beleaguered peasant-farmer “most efficiently.” Taken from Hugo Lerchenfeld, “The Use of Electricity in Bavarian Agriculture,” (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 118, Giant Power. Large Scale Electrical Development as a Social Factor. (Mar., 1925), pp. 47-49), p. 47.

¹⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of the Social Organism*, trans. by E. Bowen-Wedgewood and Ruth Mariott (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1985), p. xx. Where Steiner is often remembered for his positive impact on bio-dynamic agriculture and education, one should at least be aware of his association with the occult and more specifically, Ariosophy, “a diagnosis of the ills of Modernity based on a theory of evolution conceived in Manichean terms as an ongoing battle between healthy and evil forces operating in an invisible metaphysical realm, a clash of cosmic cultures;” and the “mazeway synthesis” required to underwrite a philosophy that could include “Blavatsky’s belief in the Aryans as humanity’s root race with other strands of esotericism, extreme German nationalism, and a rabid hatred of the Jews.” See Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, p. 138.

By supposedly dancing with the devil, Bavarian peasant-farmers, like so many other agrarians, opened themselves up to what later apocalyptic environmentalists would deem modernity's compounding versions of pleasure and disease; pleasures and diseases that would grow intensely hot and more cataclysmic than the wildest dreams of any prophet who, rattled by the modern world, aptly predicted destruction.¹⁸

What follows is a three-part study on the modern understanding of landscape as it relates to community through the act of agriculture. Part one focuses on identifications with nature, community, and agriculture as understood by modern intellectuals and German conservationists. Part two then deals with the difficult topic of German peasant-farmers and the role that agriculture actually played in shaping their identity as peasant-farmers by first examining the literature of Jeremias Gotthelf, a mid-19th century author of peasant literature, and then the letters and travel literature of the early *Auswanderung*. Both of these sources, though problematic in their own ways, also provide a rare glimpse into the *Heimat* ideals of peasant communities and how the land often shaped these ideals. Finally, part three hones in on Munich, the Bavarian countryside, and a few examples of the socio-economic mechanisms that separated Bavarian peasant-farmers from their traditional identifications to agriculture. As the study of a city and the landscape that supported it, hopefully, it succeeds in fleshing out, if only partially, the changing dynamic of the urban/rural relationship in late-19th century Bavaria.

¹⁸ Many people associated with environmental movement in post-World War II Germany, particularly several writers, adopted a very apocalyptic tone in their work. One famous and humorous book by Günther Schwab, titled *Dance with the Devil* uses Satan as the progenitor of all environmental decay. Raymond Dominick writes, "as the story opens, one of Satan's human agents (who happens to be an American) had spirited away three of his European friends for an audience with the Devil. Satan schemed to seduce these visitors into helping him with his dastardly designs. To that end, he laid out before his guests his grandiose plan to poison 'everything man needs for his existence: the air and the water, human food and the soil from which it grows. I poison animals, plants, the countryside, all of nature,' he boasted. He also aimed at the 'destruction of all values that help maintain life.'" Taken from Raymond Dominick, *The Environmental Movement in Germany: Prophets and Pioneers, 1871-1971* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 153.

Studying the changing relationship between the urban and rural spheres should not just stir up nostalgic longings for a simpler time. Rather, a study of this kind can hopefully shed light on **A)** the connection between the changing relationship of man and nature and then, **B)** the changing relationship between man and his fellow man. The two are connected.¹⁹ In the case of Bavaria, one finds that a mass debasement of nature, encouraged by an economic system of exploitation, preceded Bavarian participation in that economic system. Furthermore, one must recognize that these changes did not just happen; a society of former agriculturalists did not just begin to devalue nature overnight. Rather, specific socio-economic means and apparatuses, i.e. industrial slaughter houses, railroads, and intensive farming techniques, came into existence and then encouraged Bavarian peasant-farmers to surrender their sustainable relationship with the landscape.

In sum: Pre-modern, agrarian communities typified Bavaria until the late-19th century. Technological innovations, the railroad being perhaps the most important, offered new and exciting possibilities for a people who had for generations, identified themselves in part through their local communities and also by their labor and status as independent peasant-farmers. These new and exciting changes, however, increasingly undermined traditional modes of identification with self and community through agricultural labor. In other words, because they changed how or what they farmed to increasingly meet the needs of urban markets, Bavarian peasant-farmers also changed the way that they viewed the land and ultimately, how they viewed one another.

¹⁹ Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus saw a clear connection between man and his relationship with nature and the subsequent interrelationships of man. In the words of Gropius, architecture was to dynamically meet “the rapid increase in our means of locomotion, and the consequent readjustment of the old coefficient of time as the factor of distance, [which] has begun to break down the frontiers between town and country.” Subsequently, the disunity of modern cities could only be solved by rationally planning residential communities around work, education, and recreational centers. Taken from Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, trans. by P. Morton Shand (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1968), pp. 99-100; 110-111.

Bavaria, her peasant-farmers, and the city of Munich therefore serve as a case study of the earth-shattering dangers that possibly follow when modern societies (and individuals) lose their sense of community by sacrificing their relationship with the land.

PART ONE

II. Intellectuals and the Unsettling of Europe

The problem once solved, the brown god is almost forgotten

By the dwellers in the cities — ever, however implacable.

Keeping his seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder

Of what men choose to forget.

— T.S. Eliot

Not until after the First World War did intellectuals begin to piece together the role that nature, and man's interaction with nature, played in history.²⁰ According to Donald Worster, this "new history" began with the German historian, Karl Wittfoegel, who attempted to pick up where Marx had left off in explaining why a capitalist society never formed in China. Marx, coming close to the truth, believed that the answer lay "in the advanced water systems built by Asians to provide irrigation for their arid lands; from that base a distinct form of society had evolved in China, India, and the Near East."²¹ However, Marx, like most other scholars of the Industrial Revolutions, did not see nature as anything more than "a passive landscape in which

²⁰ This is not to say that thinkers missed the boat entirely in regard to the dialectic between man and nature. To quote Raymond Dominick, "Flickerings of ecological insight occasionally sparked and flared in the writings of German thinkers throughout the early 1800s, and their frequency and sophistication increased with the passage of time. Already at the beginning of that era, in his scientific writings, Goethe asserted a unity between man and nature almost to the point of complete identity... A few decades later, in his enormously popular work *Cosmos*, Alexander von Humboldt likewise stressed the overriding unity and harmony of Nature. In particular, he emphasized the interconnectedness and mutual influence of all parts of this whole, including man, on each other." Taken from Raymond Dominick, *The Environmental Movement in Germany: Prophets and Pioneers, 1871-1971* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 36. What these thinkers did not really grasp was the role of nature in history, in directing and shaping the will of man, states, and societies... and man's dependence upon nature for survivability. But then, these men did not conceive of man as being able to damage nature to the extent that they eventually would during the Industrial Revolutions and the 20th century.

²¹ Donald Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 33.

human labor toiled and created.”²² Wittfoegel, however, himself a scholar of Chinese studies, argued that

the fundamental relation underlying all social arrangements... is the one between humans and nature. Out of that bedrock interaction comes much of what historians seek to understand: economy, law, political power, social conflict, and so forth. Ignore that interaction, and we have lost the means to explain in the deepest sense what makes history.²³

In other words, nature did not passively sit by as the subject of man’s toil. Rather, Wittfoegel believed that “people are forever struggling with the land in an ongoing ecological dialectic.”²⁴. As people interact with nature, nature alone does not change; people change as well.

Albert Howard, a government scientist from Shropshire who spent most of his years working in India, landed upon a similar conclusion. Howard, whose best known books include *An Agricultural Testament* (1940) and *The Soil and Health* (1947), believed that man could only endure so long as his agriculture was “analogous to the process of nature.”²⁵ This meant that man and his agriculture, in order to balance out and survive, would have to mimic “the processes of growth and the processes of decay” inherent in nature.²⁶ To quote Wendell Berry,

The interaction, the interdependence, of life and death, which in nature is the sources of an inexhaustible fecundity, is the basis of a set of analogies, to which agriculture and the rest of human economy must conform in order to endure, and which is ultimately religious, as Howard knew: “An eastern religion calls this cycle the Wheel of Life... Death supersedes life and life rises again from what is dead and decayed.”²⁷

In short, to survive, man would have to conform to the pulse of nature. Again, the dialectic.

²² Worster, *The Wealth of Nature*, p. 33.

²³ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁵ Taken from Wendell Berry’s introduction to: Albert Howard, *The Soil and Health: A Study of Organic Agriculture* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006), pp. xiv-v.

²⁶ Taken from Berry’s introduction, p. xv, in ref. to Albert Howard, *An Agricultural Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 4

²⁷ Howard, *The Soil and Health*, p. xvii.

Sadly, the Second World War and her daughter, the Cold War drove the words of men like Howard and Wittfoegel underground.²⁸ The unheard of prosperity heralded by mechanical and chemical technology in modern agriculture effectively laid the foundations of policies in Europe and the United States that would drive and shape agriculture for the next fifty years. Whatever remained of an organic agriculture “survived only on the margin,” practiced by farmers of “admirable independence and good sense and also by some authentic nuts.”²⁹ Indeed, there seemed no limit to what technology could accomplish “in the halcyon days of 1951” and the old way of doing business, arrogantly weighed in the balance of modern production, fell to the wayside.³⁰ Jules B. Billiard, writing for the *National Geographic* in 1970, says it all: “in a single lifetime United States agriculture has advanced more than in all the preceding millenniums of man’s labor on the land.”³¹

However, what struck José Bové the most during a childhood visit to America in the 1950s, “was the complete rupture between town and country... There was no contact between the two worlds.”³² Max Weber, writing over thirty years earlier in an essay titled “Capitalism and Rural Society in Germany,” stated that “only when capital... begins to monopolize the land to a great extent, will a great rural social question arise in the United States, a question which cannot be cut with the sword, as was the slave question.”³³ It would seem then that by the 1950s, in light of Bové’s testimony, that Weber’s prediction had come true — that capital had come to monopolize U.S. agriculture. Few people, however, noticed the “great rural social question”

²⁸ See Worster, *The Wealth of Nature*, pp. 33-34.

²⁹ Howard, *The Soil and Health*, p. xiv.

³⁰ Worster, *The Wealth of Nature*, p. 135.

³¹ Taken from Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, p. 60.

³² José Bové and François Dufour, *Food for the Future: Agriculture for a Global Age*, trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005), p. 10.

³³ Max Weber, Stephen Kalber, ed., *Max Weber: Readings and Commentary on Modernity* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 145.

described by Bové. The soothing prosperity of a booming, post-war economy ensured that few lost any sleep over the passing of small, rural farming communities.³⁴

Because agricultural trends in Bové's Europe largely mimicked those of the United States, regardless of where one stood in respect to the Iron Curtain, farms continued ever rapidly toward consolidation, increased mechanization, and rationalization. Indeed, as the cold war intensified, the superpowers, more and more, began to see their respective agricultural sectors as just another arm of the state and their military might.³⁵ According to Bové: "in this mirage, farming was to be no more than a by-product of an automated industry quoted on the Stock Exchange" a set of circumstances which only "cut [citizens] off from reality" and "kept [them] in ignorance of rural life."³⁶ Looking around today, one finds similar circumstances: being cut off, few people realize or care "that the rural population grows thinner on the ground, and the 'desertification' of the countryside proceeds apace. The soil is denuded, the water supply polluted, and the intensively reared animals are weaker and less protected against epizootic diseases."³⁷ In their ignorance, modern societies are essentially pissing in their own well.

Granted, environmental conditions in and around one's community should concern any responsible citizen. The modern citizen's general ignorance of local environmental conditions, though alarming, points to a deeper problem. For Donald Worster, the most adequate explanation for what has become a distinctly modern, violently apathetic attitude toward one's own environment stems from how modern people see themselves in relation to their

³⁴ Donald Worster writes, "Back in the halcyon days of 1951, when the United States was entering its golden years of wealth and power and proclaiming that this was the American Century, there seemed no limit to what we could do with nature. Were some climates too hot? We could air-condition them. Were some too cold? We could thaw them out or raise tomatoes under glass. Were some too dry? We could, through hydraulic engineering, make them over into a veritable Eden of delights" (Worster, *The Wealth of Nature*, p. 135).

³⁵ Berry quotes former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, who once referred to food as a weapon. See Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, p. 36.

³⁶ Bové and Dufour, *Food for the Future*, pp. 2-3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

environment.³⁸ They do not understand how their lives interact with nature nor how their lives depend upon it. Neither do they understand how their habits of consumption affect nature.³⁹ Logically, if A abuses B, it is because A believes that B is fit to be abused or, even worse perhaps, A does not care whether B is abused. One can extend this argument to human relationships as well. In other words, the way people treat one another reveals what they think about them.⁴⁰

If it is true that all ethics, to paraphrase Aldo Leopold, rest upon the premise that the individual belongs to a community of interdependent parts, then naturally, it is in a community's best interest to reduce the friction between those interdependent parts, whether they be nature or people.⁴¹ In short, people should love their neighbors. However, if people do not know their neighbors; or if neighbors do not see their fates as bound together; or if one neighbor cannot empathize with or understand the needs of another, then the community members in question are less likely to live in a spirit of community or genuinely care one way or the other.⁴² Personal

³⁸ Worster, *The Wealth of Nature*, p. 8.

³⁹ Berry writes that "When people do not live where they work, they do not feel the effects of what they do. The people who make wars do not fight them. The people responsible for strip-mining, clear-cutting of forests, and other ruinations do not live where their senses will be offended or their homes or livelihoods or their lives immediately threatened by the consequences." Taken from *The Unsettling of America*, p. 52.

⁴⁰ In respect to similarities between man and the landscape, Rudolf Steiner writes that "the human being might be compared to a natural landscape. One cannot cultivate and manage an expanse of land without considering its different aspects. The nature of each part must be studied so that one can learn what it might produce." Taken from Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of the Social Organism*, trans. by E. Bowen-Wedgewood and Ruth Mariott (New York: Anthrosophic Press, 1985), p. 5.

⁴¹ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991), p. 371.

⁴² To quote Steiner again: "The proper nurture of a socially sound community *requires* individuals who, through their own experience, have acquired intimate knowledge of the various branches of life, and *who have cultivated within themselves the ability to explain their experience to those who need to know*" (author's emphasis added). Taken from *The Renewal of the Social Organism*, p. 4.

relationships of some degree are therefore key to building community. The more meaningful relationships within a community, the tighter the bonds of that community.⁴³

This detour into post-World War Two environmental and economic conditions has a point: it shows how far western societies moved away from pre-modern agricultural conditions before they began to understand how deeply modernity had shifted man away from his relationship with the landscape through agriculture.⁴⁴ Furthermore, pre-modern citizens and subjects, bound inexorably to the land, would have typically known more about the people that lived in their midst. Most pre-moderns, when compared to their modern counterparts, would therefore have had a different understanding and sense of community and identity in respect to that community. Ferdinand Tönnies's classic text, *Community and Civil Society*, first published in 1887 at the height of the second Industrial Revolution, engages with these issues of community and identity exactly. Tönnies, disenchanted with the industrial and urban trappings of modernity, believed that "the traditional culture of households, villages and small-scale civic communities was dying... being inexorably swept away by the rise of mass-marketing, limited liability, and large-scale business corporations."⁴⁵ For this reason, his work deserves closer examination.

⁴³ Tighter bonds do not equate to an absence of conflict. However, tighter bonds of relationship, vice loose bonds or no bonds at all, are more likely to precipitate reconciliation in the face of conflict.

⁴⁴ As post-World War II German conservationists began to show alarm about proliferating threats to human health and survival, Dominick writes that they abandoned "during the upsurge of environmental concern in the latter 1950s, a new awareness of the global nature of the environmental predicament helped undermine the old nationalistic use of *Naturschutz*. In this new atmosphere, apocalyptic preaching became the predominant kind of environmental pleading. Paired with the new holistic perception of environmental issues and arguments, the fear for human survival helped propel *Umweltschutz* to a permanent position near the top of Germany's national agenda." See Dominick, *The Environmental Movement in Germany*, p. 225. Also, see chapter five of the same book for more details on the radicalization of conservation movements in Germany.

⁴⁵ Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, trans. by Jose Harris and Margaret Hollis (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. xiv.

In Tönnies own words, three elements meld together among people to form a sense of community. He first refers to a community of blood, a “primal unity of existence” as defined by the possibilities of intermarriage amongst community members. This then develops into a community of place, “which is expressed first of all by living in close proximity to one another.” The final developmental stage of community, the community of spirit, entails an understanding amongst community members, that they work “together for the same purpose.” Any aggregate of people who have ever successfully combined these three elements into a working whole, succeeded to the “truly human community in its highest form.” In summation, Tönnies defines community as any situation where “human beings are bound together in an *organic* fashion by their inclination and common consent.”⁴⁶

Tönnies goes on to divide inclination and common consent, or the will, into two types. On the one hand, he sets up the natural or essential will, those forces of necessity which drive people into communities in the first place.⁴⁷ Tönnies compares these communities of necessity to organs because “as a unit, an organ exists only in relation to the unity of a larger organism and cannot be separated from it without losing its own qualities and powers.”⁴⁸ In other words, a healthy organic community strives for both internal and external balance between individual members and other communities, again, for the sake of necessity. Because necessity rests at the

⁴⁶ Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, pp. 27-8.

⁴⁷ Man desires community, Tönnies writes, out of a desire for pleasure. See Tönnies, p. 101. One obtains pleasure more readily, i.e. one’s passion for life, the desire for nourishment, or the desire to reproduce, by submitting to a community. Ultimately, man submits to a community because he realizes that the benefits of a community outweigh the demands of a community, regardless of the will that glues that community together. See Tönnies, p. 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

heart of relationships within communities of the essential will, more intimate relationships between community members follow.⁴⁹

Opposed to this essential will, Tönnies sets up the arbitrary, calculative, or rational will. By definition, communities that tend toward the arbitrary will are less likely to foster intimate relationships between its members because most relationships, particularly those beyond the scope of family, are simply relationships of convenience. To demonstrate, Tönnies states that communities founded on an arbitrary will take on the characteristics of a piece of equipment, which

is similar in substance to all other materials and is nothing more than a particular pile of stuff which can be reduced to imaginary atomic units and pictures as a certain arrangement of these. Its identity lies merely in its form, and this is discerned only by considering the sort of use or purpose to which it can be put. It can be passed from hand to hand and be used by anyone who knows the rules of how to use it. Its individual and separate existence is complete up to a point, but it is a mere dead object because it does not maintain or reproduce itself, but simply wears out. Similar items can be reproduced merely by the same external input of labor and mind that created the first one --- they are copied from its pattern, or from the pattern on which it was itself modeled”⁵⁰

Communities of the arbitrary will may successfully deliver pleasure and comfort to each individual more efficiently but then at the cost of dehumanizing individuals and separating them from one another for the sake of specialization.⁵¹ Hence, because so many individuals of a community remain unknown to one another, these same individuals tend to commodify their

⁴⁹ As a comparison, members of military units often form very intense bonds of comradeship because they see each member as a contributor to the whole. If a person does not contribute, they become outcasts.

⁵⁰ Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, p. 133.

⁵¹ Ortega y Gasset rails against specialization, citing it as the cause of a new barbarism: The reason that modern man has managed to cultivate so much progress, he writes, “lies in what is at the same time the great advantage and the gravest peril of the new science, and of the civilization directed and represented by it, namely, mechanization... For the purpose of innumerable investigations it is possible to divide science into small sections, to enclose oneself in one of these, and to leave out of consideration all the rest... The work is done under one of these methods as with a machine, and in order to obtain quite abundant results it is not even necessary to have rigorous notions of their meaning and foundations. In this way, the majority of scientists help the general advance of science while shut up in the narrow cell of its hive, or the turnspit in its wheel.” Taken from José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), p. 111.

neighbors (and their labor) rather than seeking out meaningful relationships through which one could properly channel talent. The value of the individual subsequently declines in the mind of each individual. Furthermore, as each individual becomes less aware of the other now less valuable individuals' needs, a community's propensity for destruction and self-destruction only increases.⁵²

To recall, Tönnies wrote *Community and Civil Society* largely because he believed that the modern metropolis had shifted unhealthily toward the arbitrary will. He did not believe that the city and a sense of community mutually opposed one another. The natural will, albeit diminished, *could* survive in towns or cities, as it historically had, so long as distinguishing characteristics of the family survived.⁵³ "Living in families," Tönnies writes, "is the usual basis of the Community way of life... The village Community and the town can themselves be regarded as large families, the various clans and kinship networks forming the basic organisms of the common body; the guilds, corporations and offices are the tissues and organs of the town."⁵⁴ However, when a community reaches the size of a modern metropolis, a phenomena first made possible by the unique technological innovations of the modern era, those familial bonds tend to tear and snap, more so than what one might experience in more traditional communities. Only in the market place do relationships endure, very specific relationship based

⁵²Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, p. 260. Naturally, each will has its own positives and negatives and ideally, communities (or societies) should strive for balance between the two wills. To upset the balance either way, given the circumstances, could lead to the destruction of that community. External forces (i.e. hostile neighbors) are more likely to dominate or destroy communities that tend toward the natural will; conversely, internal forces (i.e. poverty, moral decay) will likely destroy communities that tend toward the arbitrary will.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 251.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 254.

around the trade of commodities, providing the means through which people can know one another on the most rudimentary (and often exploitive) level.⁵⁵

Tönnies logically extended his theories of communal and inter-communal relationships to the relationship between the urban and rural, two *types* of community that, though very different, have historically fed off of one another symbiotically. Self-sufficient rural communities, having procured enough food to sustain life, often traded their surpluses to urban communities, communities whose ends revolved around the specialization of producing services and/or goods. Because this type of relationship is historically typical and mutual, “we may thus assume,” Tönnies writes, “that in any links between town and country a spirit of brotherly sharing and cheerful giving lives on to some extent.” Furthermore, the possibility exists that “such a relationship is regarded as good and right; it is maintained by many ties of kinship and friendship quite apart from the business of exchanging goods, *and* [author’s emphasis added] people share the common centers of market-places and shrines.”⁵⁶ In other words, opposition between rural and urban communities is not inherently inevitable. Rather, both types of communities are man-made, communal structures of distinct purpose that can and did survive off of one another.

During the course of the 19th century, this symbiotic relationship between urban and rural began to break down in industrialized and industrializing countries.⁵⁷ Tönnies, for one, recognized this, pinning the death of traditional cultures of small-scale civic communities on mass-marketing and large-scale business corporations.⁵⁸ But Tönnies did not necessarily

⁵⁵ Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, pp. 257-258.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵⁷ Albert Howard, writing in the 1930s, stated that the result of industrialization “has been inevitable. The hunger of the urban populations and the hunger of the machines has become inordinate. The land has been sadly overworked to satisfy all of these demands which steadily increase as the years pass.” Taken from Howard, *Soil and Health*, p. 59.

⁵⁸ Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, pp. xiv, 259.

recommend a course of action beyond vague assertions that the state “as the faculty of ‘reason’ in Society, should really decide to destroy *Gesellschaft* or at least to transform and renew it.”⁵⁹ Besides a fear of international socialism, that ascendant culture of the masses that he feared would one day destroy *Germanic* civilization, Tönnies did not explain, though he linked them together, how the process of industrialization and urbanization ultimately changed the culture and character of individuals who belonged to modernizing societies. He did not see how the land had always served as the glue that kept communities together. He did not see how a loss of relationship with the land forced industrializing societies to come undone — unglued from identities that rested in traditions of the past.

As so many observers have noted over the years, modern, typically urban communities, tend to provide few avenues through which people may establish meaningful personal relationships. Traditionally, people secured the bonds of fellowship (as opposed to mere acquaintance) through a common economy of survival. Agriculture, for example, the science of cultivating the soil and gathering up the fruits of that soil, both crops and livestock, had always played a central role in the economy of survival. This continues to be true today, whether people realize it or not. However, disconnected from the land, surprisingly perhaps, people have also become disconnected from one another. And where disconnectedness has led to a general ignorance of immediate ecological conditions, it has also given rise to ignorance of — or indifference toward — the social, economic, and spiritual conditions of one’s own community. Increasingly fragmented, individualized, and separated from the traditional means of identity and purpose, modern man’s tendency toward insecurity, identity crisis, and melancholy should therefore come as no surprise. As Oskar Kokoschka put it, “Isolation compels every man, all

⁵⁹ Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, p. 256.

alone like a savage, to invent his idea of society... This solitude swallows us in its emptiness.”⁶⁰

For the sake of comfort, moderns such as Kokoschka traded in their exposure to the hard realities of life (as expressed in a subsistence economy) for the despairing fragmentation and loneliness characteristic of the modern consumer.

Of course, one can easily question whether Oskar Kokoschka accurately represented the collective psyche of modern Europe or whether he reveals anything about modern society today. Kokoschka was hardly alone however in noticing the psychological repercussions that followed man’s presumptions on an inevitable progress that more often than not, veiled the realities of death.⁶¹ “And yet this attitude,” writes Philip Aries, “has not annihilated death or the fear of death. On the contrary, it has allowed an old savagery to creep back under the mask of medical technology... The belief of evil was necessary to the taming of death; the disappearance of the belief has restored death to its savage state.”⁶² In his earlier works, Max Weber, like so many of his contemporaries, also took the inherent goodness of human progress for granted. But then, later in life, Weber acquired a much more disenchanted view of progress. In the vocation lectures, delivered during and after the First World War, Weber asks whether modern man has “a

⁶⁰ Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), p. 363.

⁶¹ The relationship between culture and traditional (non-mechanized) agriculture rests, again, on an understanding of limits. Where death in general reminds us of our own mortality, it also reminds us of our inescapable relationship with the very soil that we humbly require to survive. Technological innovation (in agriculture and elsewhere) increasingly separates man, both physically and mentally, from an understanding of his own limitations. Understanding that we are limited by a certain order of sustainability promotes responsibility. To therefore break from an acceptance of human limits is no escape at all; and to promote a culture that exists beyond the cycle of death and life, that promotes man to absolute sovereign of self and the universe, is nothing short of a lie. In regard to death and modern man, Philippe Aries writes: “we ignore the existence of a scandal that we have been unable to prevent; we act as if it did not exist, and thus mercilessly force the bereaved to say nothing. A heavy silence has fallen over the subject of death. When this silence is broken, as it sometimes is in America today, it is to reduce death to insignificance of an ordinary event that is mentioned with feigned indifference. Either way, the result is the same: Neither the individual nor the community is strong enough to recognize the existence of death.” Quoted passage taken from Philippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. by Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), pp. 613-614.

⁶² Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, p. 614.

greater knowledge of the conditions of life... than has the American Indian or Hottentot?"⁶³ He answers in the negative. By replacing the historical cycle of death and life with an idealized form of infinite progress, modern man lost touch with mortality. Citing Leo Tolstoy (and keeping the destruction of the First World War in mind), Weber believed that "civilized man" had lost his purpose because death no longer had meaning. To quote Weber:

Abraham, or some peasant of the past, died 'old and satisfied with life' because he stood in the organic cycle of life; because his life, in terms of its meaning and on the eve of his days, had given to him what life had to offer; because for him there remained no puzzles he might wish to solve; and therefore he could have 'enough' of life. Whereas civilized man, placed in the midst of the continuous enrichment of culture by ideas, knowledge, and problems, may become 'tired of life' but not 'satiated with life.'⁶⁴

Similarly, in his essay titled "Man in History and Nature," Erich Voegelin linked modern man's melancholy to the revival of antiquity in 16th-century Europe. Rediscovering the texts and ideas of the ancient world was "experienced as the opening of a world of civilizational wonder, but it was also experienced, with increasing penetration, as a deadweight on the will to live in the present."⁶⁵ Ironically, the discovery of "superior civilization" in the words of ancient documents turned aspirations toward a future hope constructed in opposition to antiquity.⁶⁶ Carl Schorske found a similar break from history in his attempt to understand the *Zeitgeist* of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Investigating the historical development of modern social thought, literature, art, and architecture, he found that each of these fields of study had, "in the interest of a restricted and purer functioning in the areas of language and logic," broken the ties "both to history in general

⁶³ Weber, Kalberg, ed., *Max Weber*, p. 322.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁶⁵ Eric Voegelin, James L. Wiser, ed., *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, vol. Twenty-three: History of Political Ideas, vol. V/Religion and the Rise of Modernity* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1998), p. 135.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

and to the discipline's own past."⁶⁷ The weight of history did not just give birth to progress. By the 19th and 20th centuries, it impeded it.⁶⁸

Intellectuals such as 16th-century humanists and latter-day artists and scholars like Kokoschka and Schorske were not alone in experiencing this break from a weighty past. The burgeoning age of industrialization and mass-production ensured that everyone would come into contact with the moral frontier presented by a modern world demanding "new patterns of interpersonal relationship."⁶⁹ Technology had made the collectivizing potential of *both thought and action* a manifest reality. Therefore, to quote David Roberts:

Although the components could be shuffled in various ways, it seemed that some combination of will, commitment, courage, discipline, leadership, expertise, mobilization, and organization could afford the new mode of collective action necessary in light of the new sense of the human relationship to history... At the same time, the new forms of action might necessitate going beyond conventional morality, bound with assumptions about the human place in the world that were coming to seem outmoded.⁷⁰

To understand this break from history among intellectuals, one may begin by studying a radical intellectual like Nietzsche, if one so chooses.⁷¹ Something more than Nietzsche's break from history, however, primed *all* of the subjects and citizens of early-20th-century Europe to

⁶⁷ Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, p. xx.

⁶⁸ Wendell Berry refers to this process of separating oneself from history and tradition as "the colonization of the future." To quote Berry, "What has drawn the Modern World into being is a strange almost occult yearning for the future. The modern mind longs for the future as the medieval mind longed for Heaven. The great aim of modern life has been to improve the future --- or even just to *reach* the future, assuming that the future will inevitably be 'better.'" Taken from Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, p. 56.

⁶⁹ Norman H. Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), p. 13.

⁷⁰ David D. Roberts, *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth-Century Europe: Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 163. In reference to fascism, modernity, and the inter-war years, Roger Griffin writes that "inter-war Europe cannot be understood without taking into account the wide-spread conviction that the upheavals of contemporary history were the death throes of the modern world under the aegis of Enlightenment reason and liberal capitalism... In the immediate aftermath of the First World War not just the avant-garde, but millions of 'ordinary people' felt they were witnessing the birth pangs of a new world under an ideological and political regime whose nature was yet to be decided." Taken from Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 9.

⁷¹ For Carl Schorske, linking intellectual trends to the time periods that produced them came easily enough "— until Nietzsche." Taken from *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, p. xix.

accept the break from history and tradition; something much more pervasive than the likes of Nietzsche, pushed people to search for new identities. What created this desire for “new modes of action?” In short, before people could search for new identities, they had to be shed of the old; and it just so happens that many people, structures, and mechanisms willingly assisted in this process of modernization.⁷²

In some places, well into the mid-19th century, ninety-five percent of the people still worked in agriculture under a variety of conditions, from serfdom to yeomanry.⁷³ Most people rarely left their provincial communities. Literacy rates and dialects and patois also varied, depending on the time and place, nonetheless reducing a rural inhabitant’s ability to interact beyond the local community. Likewise, primitive traditions and religious practices remained common, organically tied to the conditions of place. In regard to France, but probably applicable to most of Europe, Eugen Weber writes that “indeed, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that vast parts of nineteenth-century France were inhabited by savages.”⁷⁴ Savages or not, one cannot stress enough the role that local traditions, autarkies, landscapes, and economies played in shaping the lives of pre-modern Europeans. As long as communications remained primitive, so too did a common knowledge of the outside world. Where people may have understood little of the outside world, they did, however, have a much more intimate knowledge of their immediate

⁷² C.S. Lewis writes in *That Hideous Strength*, “Dreams of the far future destiny of man were dragging up from its shallow and unquiet grave the old dream of Man as God. The very experience of the dissecting room and the pathological laboratory were breeding a conviction that the stifling of all deep-set repugnances was the first essential for progress.” Quoted in *The Unsettling of America*, by Wendell Berry, p. 50.

⁷³ Jerome Blum, “Fiction and the European Peasantry: The Realist Novel as Historical Source” (*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 126, No. 2. (Apr. 8, 1982), pp. 122-139), p. 122.

⁷⁴ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1976), p. 3. Johann Michael von Loen (1694-1776), a writer whom “Goethe had revered in his youth,” wrote that “the peasant is brought up in complete ignorance like a mere animal. He is plagued continually with feudal services, running messages beating up game, digging trenches and the like. The countryman today is the most wretched of all creatures.” Quoted in W.R. Lee, *Population Growth, Economic Development and Social Change in Bavaria, 1750-1850* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 108.

surroundings because, ultimately, circumstances forced them into more frequent interaction with their local environments.

Intellectuals of *fin-de-siècle* Europe and America, such as Tönnies, understood that **A)** technological developments, markets, industrialism, and every other conceivable ill of the modern era undermined traditional communities. They also picked up on **B)** the general angst that came as a result of these phenomena. What they missed — and intellectuals would not begin to pick up on this until after the Second World War — was the most important variable: **C)** the unifying role played by nature, the land, and agriculture in forming the identities of most pre-modern Europeans.⁷⁵ Where intellectuals may have seen vaguely, that people's lives had "sped up" and fallen apart, they often failed to recognize the "tangible, material forces" that separated people from the land, from their communities, from traditional identities, and ultimately from one another. These intellectuals did not understand, that by viewing nature dichotomously — as something that man conquers, controls, and exploits — modern societies removed themselves from the equation of natural balance. To quote William Cronon:

The urban-rural, human-natural dichotomy blinds us to the deeper unity beneath our own divided perceptions. If we concentrate our attention solely upon the city, seeing in it the ultimate symbol of "man's" conquest of "nature, we miss the extent to which the city's inhabitants continue to rely as much on the nonhuman world as they do on each other."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ To quote William Cronon, freedom from nature "was also a kind of prison, a retreat from the sources of value that gave human life a larger meaning: closeness to neighbors, a sense of rootedness in the soil, a feeling of belonging, faith in something larger than the self or the merely human. In the city, even amid all the crowds and the human artifacts, one stood curiously alone." Taken from *Nature's Metropolis*, p. 16.

⁷⁶ Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, p. 18.

III. The Failures of *Naturschutz* in Imperial Germany

*So, Rock, I join the common fray,
To fight where Mamman may decree;
And leave to crumble as they may,
The broken flutes of Arcady.*

— E.A. Robinson

Imperial Germany did not suffer from a lack of people who showed concern for the deteriorating conditions of their nation's landscape. Disparate in their political convictions but united even by the vaguest of concerns over *Naturschutz*, nature conservationists nonetheless "had a hard time perceiving" environmental problems, "perhaps because the anthropocentric deterioration of the environment differed in fundamental respects from other challenges humankind had confronted before."⁷⁷ Indeed, conservation

directly contradicted the lessons of collective human experience from those many millennia when civilization struggled to protect itself from the overpowering forces of nature. The conservation crusade required the adoption of a revolutionary new vision, one that would see Nature neither as a menace nor as a trove of inexhaustible resources but rather as a fragile life-support system.⁷⁸

Without that vision, conservationists remained to fight an uphill battle against capitalists on the one hand, who appealed to "the prevalent worldview that demanded development and growth and downplayed environmental damage as a reasonable price for the rewards of progress;" and the apathetic, who did not see environmental damage as a serious concern at all.⁷⁹ Examining

⁷⁷ Raymond Dominick, *The Environmental Movement in Germany: Prophets and Pioneers, 1871-1971* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5. Dominick writes that, if those who opposed developers and polluters "were politically unimportant and if they worked solely within the bureaucratic system, they had no chance for success. "There conditions that could increase their prospects for victory were: 1) a clear demonstration that a potentially offending industry contradicted the uses which the surrounding region traditionally had been put; 2) objections from wealthy and well-connected

the battlefields of conservationism in Imperial Germany provides a picture of both those who claimed to protect nature and, on the other side, those who wanted to exploit it for the sake of profit. More importantly, however, one begins to better understand how nature was typically viewed, regardless of where one stood on the fighting lines.⁸⁰

One can trace most of the failures of early German conservationism back to conservationists' own impractical view of the landscape. For example, reasons for protecting nature usually included nature's "recreational and restorative powers," the moral and scientific cost of losing already endangered species, that "a devastated countryside undermined patriotic allegiance to the homeland," workers' efficiency dropped off when pollution undermined public health, and "moral obligations to future generations."⁸¹ As previously stated, not until after the Second World War did anyone make more holistic arguments that included economics, ethics, and aesthetics as critical and indivisible parts of a single argument.⁸² Until then, opponents of the conservation movement in Germany picked environmentalists apart. Moreover, until conservationists discovered the magnitude and implications of environmental degradation — the threat to human survival — they rarely overcame the other voices of protest in an era defined by protests.

people; and 3) large-scale public protests against the disruptive innovation." Taken from Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 43.

⁸⁰ Before the First World War, the Bavarian government declared that "by no means will economic interests be sacrificed" for conservation endeavors. "On the contrary, [the state conservation commission] will see to it that the idealist interests will be recognized without their interfering with economic goals." Clearly, economic and environmental goals were not one and the same thing. Quote provided by John Alexander Williams in Thomas Lekan and Thomas Zeller, eds., *Germany's Nature: Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), p. 186.

⁸¹ Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 7. William Cronon criticizes such attempts at conversation because "our nostalgia for the more 'natural' world of an earlier time when we were not so powerful, when the human landscape did not seem so omnipresent, encourages us to seek refuge in pastoral or wilderness landscapes that seem as yet unscarred by human action. Convinced of our human omnipotence, we can imagine nature retreating to small islands — 'preserves' — in the midst of a landscape which otherwise belongs to us." Taken from William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, p. 18.

⁸² Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 40.

Several notable episodes of environmental protest popped up in Bavaria before the First World War. Where these cases shed light on environmental concerns that existed in pre-war Bavaria, they also show exactly how conservationists' protests failed. The protests surrounding the Walchensee and the Kochelsee hydro-electric project serve as a case in point. Beginning in 1908 with a design competition sponsored by the Bavarian government and hydroelectric industry, engineers set out to transform the Walchensee and the Kochelsee, two Alpine lakes, into a dam and reservoir. Because the Walchensee rested over two hundred meters higher than the neighboring Kochelsee, and a rock cliff one kilometer wide separated them, planners decided that they could convert these lakes into a source of electricity with "only two man-made improvements," namely:

1) a tunnel bored through the cliff that would feed water to a set of generators at its lower end, down by the Kochelsee, and 2) some way to replace the water as it flowed out of the upper Walchensee. Nature had arranged for the latter requirement too. Only three kilometers away from the Walchensee rushed the headwaters of the Isar River. The engineers saw that they could divert a portion of this flow into the Walchensee with relative ease.⁸³

In 1910, the Bavarian legislature selected a proposed design and appropriated the necessary funds to begin building. However, at about the same time, protesting locals pointed out several problems with the design. In a petition signed by thirty-four residents, they voiced concern that the Isar's water would pollute the heretofore hypertrophic Walchensee, thus altering the biotic quality of the water and the region. Furthermore, when the Isar froze in the winter, it would no longer replenish the waters of the Walchensee while drainage would continue, producing an eyesore on the winter shoreline. The *Burgermeister*s from villages along the upper Isar showed concern as well. In a separate complaint, they claimed that the diverting the river

⁸³ Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 45.

would “ruin tourism in their towns and leave the river transport business in their region high and dry.” Furthermore, “with the Isar reduced to an impotent trickle, where would their sewage go?”⁸⁴

By 1912, conservation societies began to reinforce those complaints already lodged by locals. Diverse in outlook and divided by various concerns, groups such as The Isar Valley Society, founded by Munich architect Gabriel von Seidl, had evolved enough since the early days of German conservation that they understood the toll that industrialization and urban sprawl took on the landscape.⁸⁵ As early as 1906, the society began to voice concern over the Walchensee and Kochelsee project through their annual newsletter. At about the same time, the Isar Valley Society began “coordinating its fight against the Walchensee with other private groups under the umbrella of a recently created Bavarian state conservation agency,” known as the State Committee for the Care of Nature.⁸⁶ In both 1907 and 1910, the committee sent reports to the Bavarian minister of the Interior that severely criticized the Walchensee and Kochelsee project without rejecting it entirely. Both reports called for design revisions that would reduce the damage caused to the environment, including “a reduction of about fifty percent in the flow to be extracted from the Isar River and a reduction of the seasonal fluctuation in the level of the Walchensee from approximately sixteen meters to five meters.”⁸⁷

Surprisingly, before the outbreak of the First World War, the government had taken the suggested design changes into consideration and began to incorporate them into their plan. In

⁸⁴ Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 46.

⁸⁵ The Isar Valley Society appears to have been one of the more progressive organizations that came out of the conservationist camp. Unlike the Alpine Society, “which also focused its attention the mountains of Bavaria,” the Isar Valley Society concerned itself with more than just exploring “natural treasures.” Rather, they had “completed the evolution to an explicitly *Naturschutz* purpose.” Taken from Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 48.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 47-48; p. 49.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 51.

other words, the Isar Valley Society, the State Committee for the Care of Nature, and local residents had all bound together successfully in opposition to both political and urban/industrial powers. Unlike so many other organizations, such as the Society for the Care of Public Health, which had broken up over various issues and disbanded in 1911, the various conservationists who had battled against the Walchensee and Kochelsee project banded together and won.

A new set of circumstances then wiped all of their progress away:

In 1917, while the public was preoccupied by events on the battlefield, the state gave the electricity utility permission to start construction at the Walchensee within three months after the end of the war. In December 1918, even as Germany suffered the shock of revolution and the other hardships that accompanied military defeat, the opportunistic and ever-vigilant electric company seized the moment and began building. The establishment of the soviet republic and the civil war that erupted in Bavaria in the spring of 1919 slowed progress a bit, but the system still was completed and began generating electricity in 1923.⁸⁸

Opportunity and necessity had changed the situation; or, to quote Rudolf Steiner again, a set of circumstances had changed the situation so that “countless people obstruct[ed] their insight into actual necessities with illusions as to what is worthy of this striving.”⁸⁹

As one might expect, taming nature did not always work out as the engineers planned either. For example, water engineers in the nineteenth century “decided to tame the rivers and train them to remain in their beds as obedient servants to human needs.”⁹⁰ Where residents of earlier centuries had accepted flood patterns and where shippers had “accepted the inevitability of seasonal interruptions of their trade by the dangerous high waters of spring and by the

⁸⁸ Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 51. Dominick continues this story: “With some of their suggestions incorporated into the final design, this outcome was not a total defeat for the defenders of Nature. But despite their enormous investment of energy and effort, neither did they win a victory. Worse still... the electric utility later would renege on the concessions to conservation that it made at the time of the Second Empire. The sad history of this project would show all too clearly the general principle that land and resources lost to development are lost forever while those temporarily spared remain in permanent peril” See Dominick, p. 51.

⁸⁹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of the Social Organism*, trans. by E. Bowen-Wedgewood and Ruth Mariott (New York: Anthropic Press, 1985), p. xx.

⁹⁰ Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 36.

grinding low waters of low summer and autumn, by the nineteenth century, competition from the railroads led the shippers to clamor for year-round navigability.” Cutting and shortening the aforementioned Isar river, for example, reduced its average width by half and “sandbars, meanders, and other irregularities” disappeared.⁹¹

At first, it seemed as if the alterations had achieved their purpose: navigability improved, permanent settlements along the river could crouch safely behind the levees “that now guarded the riverbank,” and reclaimed land could now turn to agricultural uses.⁹² But then, “all too soon, a crown of unfortunate consequences congregated and began to tug at the sleeve of society.” In short, numerous ecological problems became incredibly evident. To quote a lengthy passage from Dominick,

Local farmers began to notice that the absence of flood waters and the rich alluvial soil they carried decreased the fertility of their farms. As orchards withered and died, the fruit growers discovered to their dismay that the deeper river beds had lowered the regional water table so severely that the countryside threatened to become a steppe. Fishermen complained that the rectification of river beds, the grading, scouring, and securing of river banks, and the dredging of river bottoms had destroyed the breeding grounds for fish. With considerable irony, other commentators concluded that even in one of its two primary purposes, the control of flooding, stream regulation had contributed to exactly the opposite result. An expert report prepared for the government at the turn of the century documented this lesson, blaming recent flooding on the misguided attempt to speed every drop of rainwater on its way to the sea. According to this report, the accelerated flow upstream had propelled increased sediment downstream, which frustrated efforts to deepen the bed and thus made overflow more likely. In addition, the overly rapid outpouring of all the tributaries circumvented the spongelike absorption of rainwater by the woodlands and farms upstream. In these ways, ill-conceived human actions created a roaring torrent from rainfalls that, before regulation, would have caused no problem at all.⁹³

⁹¹ Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 37.

⁹² Ibid., p. 37.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

A water engineer, writing in 1913, put it rather well when he wrote that “Every radical attempt to replace natural conditions with unnatural [ones] ultimately always will be severely avenged.”⁹⁴

The pattern of exploitation that affected the Isar river, the Walchensee, and the Kochelsee did not stop there. Not every attempt to defend nature failed as abjectly either. The history of German forestry, for example, is replete with situations where capitalist organizations teamed together with conservationists in such a way that produced healthy and responsible results.⁹⁵ And, perhaps more than most, German culture included a long tradition of *Naturschutz*, not to mention a romantic identification with nature. Because “nature conservationists,” to quote Thomas Lekan, “found nature more readily in their backyards,” *Heimat* organizations could propose

that each landscape, be it national, regional, or local, reflected centuries of interaction between an area’s human inhabitants and their natural environment, ideally producing a ‘middle ground’ in which human agriculture and industry emerged organically from the existing local contours of the homeland.⁹⁶

Given the circumstances of the interwar period, however, whatever progress German conservationists made in their ideologies fell prey to the larger ideologies of great politics. Where conservationists began to find avenues into politics before the First World War, cataclysmic circumstances pushed their concerns into the clouds of obscurity or into the welcoming arms of the National Socialists. A greater capacity for destruction followed, smoothed under a language of conservation that dressed the windows of destructive intent. The “new appreciation for nature,” an appreciation that did not take into account man’s responsibility toward nature and the suicidal results that followed careless, ignorant husbandry of the land, only

⁹⁴ Dominick, *The Environmental Movement*, p. 38.

⁹⁵ See Franze Heske, *German Forestry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938).

⁹⁶ David Blackbourn and James Retallack, *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-Speaking Central Europe, 1860-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 185.

encouraged an objectification of the land. “Nature in the modern age thus divided into two separate and exclusive spheres that precluded the possibility for real reconciliation. Preservation and extinction emerged as elements of one and the same process within the unfolding logic of modern civilization.”⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Lekan and Zeller, eds., *Germany's Nature*, p. 179.

PART TWO

IV. Agriculture and the Identity of Bavarian Peasant-farmers

*Of all the arts farming is the greatest; without it there would be no businessmen, no poets and no philosophers.
Only that which is produced from the soil is true wealth.*

— Frederick the Great

Though Germany's rural communities dwindled rapidly throughout the late 19th century, in the decade preceding the First World War, about fifty percent of all Germans still lived in villages with 5,000 or less inhabitants. A majority of these people still relied on farming as their primary means of existence. In some West German regions, such as Lower Bavaria, as much as 70 percent of the population continued to participate in agriculture.⁹⁸ However, unlike the eastern parts of Germany, where an agricultural proletariat persistently farmed the estates of Prussian *Junkern*, over two-thirds of Bavaria's peasants owned and farmed their own land.⁹⁹ Again, Bavarian peasant-farmers shared in a relationship with the land that was remarkably different from their eastern counterparts and again, this begs the question: why did they so easily forsake this relationship? However, before one can even begin to answer this question or explore the depths of peasant-farmers' identification with the land, understanding the historical circumstances of the peasant-farmers may prove helpful. Where sections five and six will focus on particular case studies that can possibly shed light on our understanding of peasant identities,

⁹⁸ Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany 1914-1923*, trans. by Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 15.

⁹⁹ Ian Farr, "Farmers' Cooperatives in Bavaria, 1880-1914: 'State-Help' and 'Self-Help' in Imperial Germany" (*Rural History* (2007) 18, 2, 163–182), p. 166.

the remainder of this section will provide a brief overview of Bavarian trends in land tenure, agriculture, and community and how they possibly shaped the identity of peasant-farmers.

At least until the 1930s, German *national* identity embraced federalism and thrived on provincial particularisms. It was an infusion between local patriotism and national patriotism. For most Germans, little difference existed between the two. In her book, *A Nation of Provincials*, Celia Applegate shows how use of the word *Heimat* corresponded to what Karl Phillip Moritz describes as an image of “homey tranquility and happiness... which is contained in the lovely sound of the German word *heim*.”¹⁰⁰ And yet when *Heimat* was placed in a national context, it was being applied to an abstract context. Therein lies the beauty.

Heimat has never been a word about real social forces or real political situations. Instead it has been a myth about the possibility of a community in the face of fragmentation and alienation. In the [post-World War II] era, *Heimat* has meant forgiving, and also a measure of forgetting. Right up to the present, it has focused public attention on the meaning of tradition and locality for the nation itself. The survival and transformation of *Heimat* reveal to us the struggle to create a national identification out of the diverse materials of a provinciality rooted in society.¹⁰¹

But was this the world of 19th century farmers in western Germany? Did they feel a particular need to be a part of something larger than their immediate communities? Was this a result of their interactions with an insidious modernization? Or was it all just coincidence? Ultimately, one must come to terms with identity as these independent peasant-farmers understood it. For them, identification with the German nation, *das Deutsches Volk*, was intricately coupled with an association with the land, local community, and provincial identities.

¹⁰⁰ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 7.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 19. Hans Rempel describes *Heimat* as “the land of one’s youth, the land of one’s first love, the land of unclouded happiness, but also the land of one’s first experience of suffering and disappointments.” Taken from Hans Rempel, *Aufstieg der Deutschen Landschaft: das Heimerlebnis von Jean Paul bis Adalbert Stifter* (Lahn: Mittelhessische Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft, 1964) p. 28.

More than any other group, small landowners benefited tremendously from Bavaria's move toward secularization in the early years of the 19th century. To quote W.R. Lee,

the Secularization of ecclesiastical estates in the Bavarian Gau, for example, as in many other areas of Bavaria, produced a considerable increase in the general fluidity of landed holdings. By 1825 the annual average number of applications in Bavaria for the right to sub-divide land had risen to 1,500. The removal of customary inheritance charges on land involved in mutual exchanges also provided an additional incentive for improvements in the primary sector. Furthermore legislative acts openly encouraged the general restructuring of rural holdings, and a commission sent to the Landgericht Munich in 1804 actually proposed the sub-division of houses in order to further agricultural reform and to allow a higher rate of new settlement in the existing villages and local Gemeinde.¹⁰²

Land distribution trends continued in this direction for the remainder of the century with subdivision increasing substantially in the 1880's and 90's.¹⁰³ All of this of course came at the expense of large tenements, resulting in a much more egalitarian society than what had existed before 1803. "By the mid-19th century," Lee continues, "the rural population as a whole, could be described as being moderately well-off."¹⁰⁴

While these circumstances benefited the peasant-farmers of Bavaria, when compared to other parts in Germany, it also slowed down the development of both a market economy and industrialization. For the most part, Bavaria would have to wait until the 1880's for the infrastructure and demands of a market economy to begin to change the binding conditions of an

¹⁰² W.R. Lee, *Population Growth, Economic Development and Social Change in Bavaria, 1750-1850* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 115.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 119. Lee later writes that "the law of 1826 to some extent facilitated the direct conversion of traditional seigneurial dues of peasants holding from the state" with the general intent of leaving "the peasant in sole possession of the land and by providing a greater degree of seigneurial security to encourage the process of reform and improvement in the primary sector." Taken from Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 176.

¹⁰⁴ From Lee again: "By 1882, for example, the average amount of land per family in Upper Bavaria stood at 9.3 hectares, substantially above that in Lower Bavaria (8.2 hectares) and the Palatinate (7.9 hectares), with the highest density of medium-sized holdings located near Munich, in Starnberg and Wolfratshausen. Indeed by the end of the 19th century 58.2% of all rural holdings belonged to the broadly-defined middle stratum within rural society, with holdings varying between two and twenty hectares in size (or between 7 and 65 Tagwerke). The redistribution of land, which had been initially facilitated by Secularization and the abolition of the traditional Hoffuss system had led in the final analysis to the emergence of a substantial class of medium-sized holdings." Taken from Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 120.

early-modern economy and society. Animal husbandry, for example, expanded rapidly in the late-19th century to meet the demands of urban market and railroads facilitated this new kind of relationship.¹⁰⁵ Until then, however, the slow development of a market economy in Bavaria reinforced the “subsistence element within Bavarian agriculture” and capital and credit therefore remained relatively unavailable to peasant-farmers throughout the first half of the 19th century.

¹⁰⁶ In sum: small farming remained small.¹⁰⁷ Bavarian farmers rarely raised a surplus of grains, livestock, or other agricultural commodities that they could sell on the open market. Because of this, until the 1850’s, the seigneurial and state apparatuses of Bavaria primarily attempted to raise taxes through direct taxation on the land, vice indirect taxes of customs and excises.

Peasants therefore continued to pay the lion’s share of all taxes in Bavaria. This only further hindered growth and/or improvements in Bavaria’s primary sector.¹⁰⁸ Despite reforms on certain internal dues, internal taxes also remained high enough throughout the first half of the 19th century to stifle what few entrepreneurs lived within Bavaria’s borders.¹⁰⁹ Not only did Bavaria’s system of taxation ensure that small-farmers remained small and out of capital, “the merchant class and nascent industrialists” would also have to wait until the second half of the century to find viable markets in which they could sell their goods.¹¹⁰ A predominance of rural

¹⁰⁵ Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 177.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 120-121; pp. 183-203. Lee later compares agricultural development in Bavaria to other regions in Germany. Mecklenburg, “where an extensive manorial demesne was supported economically by a large number of small-holders and landless labourers, who made up the work force for the larger estates... was praised in official reports in Bavaria for its rapid introduction of mixed-farming and a wide variety of new crops, and was regarded as an example of what could perhaps be achieved in the electorate.” Taken from Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 122-123.

¹⁰⁷ To quote Pankraz Fried, in 19th century Bavaria, “the production of estates over one hundred acres never accounted for more than 1%” of Bavaria’s total production. Taken from Max Spindler, ed., *Handbuch der Bayerischen Geschichte, vierter Band: Des Neue Bayern, 1800-1970* (Munich: C.H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1975), p. 755.

¹⁰⁸ Lee, *Population and Growth*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁹ At the end of the 18th century, registered merchants and traders “still only constituted 3.6% of the urban professional class” in Bavaria. Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 247.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 248-250.

craft production only further hindered the expansion of Bavaria's urban industrial base. In 1790, for example, the seventy industrial or manufacturing businesses that existed in Bavaria employed an average of twenty workers each, or "approximately 0.12% of the entire population."¹¹¹

Because self-sufficient local economies met the needs of local markets and locally oriented craft and agricultural production absorbed Bavaria's excess labor, urban industrial growth stagnated in the first half of the 19th century.¹¹²

One finds a similar situation in neighboring Württemberg. Even though a local council in the village of Kiebingen, reacting to population growth, complained in 1842 that,

the largest part of the population is sustained by farming, day-laboring and the customary crafts, partly in the village, and partly nearby... Many young people, even children, have to try to earn a living by working in more distant regions.¹¹³

In regard to working in "more distant regions," Wolfgang Koschuba points out in his study of this community that only about ten percent of Kiebingen's population ever worked outside of the village at one time, typically engaged in craft or agricultural production, not industrial manufacturing. Interestingly, in the case of Kiebingen, this number held fast up until 1914, despite the advent of the railroad and the growth of industrial manufacturing.¹¹⁴ Apparently, in a community where "the essential criterion of economic and social independence" was bound to

¹¹¹ Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 356.

¹¹² "In 1840 Upper Bavaria included 12,941 families with small-holdings, and only a mere 5,253 small-holders who were without land and would therefore have been dependent on agricultural labouring to a far greater extent than their immediate counterparts. However within this total were also included families whose main source of income would have come from craft production and the size of the group of peasants solely dependent on labouring employment would therefore have been much less than even this figure would suggest." Taken from Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 153.

¹¹³ Richard J. Evans and W.R. Lee, ed, *The German Peasantry: Conflict and Community in Rural Society from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 246-247.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

the ownership of land, the “old self-sustained method of production” remained a viable option for most village inhabitants.¹¹⁵

This phenomenon serves as good illustration of the power of family, kinship, and community. To quote Koschuba:

Until 1871 the fixed village nexus had been mandatory, as all social security claims and the rights to citizenship and marriage were restricted to the home village. Now a rural existence appeared much more as a possibility than a necessity, as a question of deciding for or against the home village... Here at least one knew the rules and laws of everyday life as the whole way of conflict. One had learned to discover and uphold one's place in it, one's little freedoms and identity.¹¹⁶

In his study of German villages, Utz Jeggle states that, “The peasant village constituted not only a form of settlement but also a way of life, which characterized society in southwest Germany alongside urban artisan culture well into the industrial era.”¹¹⁷ To reiterate: ties to local community were strong throughout Germany. In the overwhelmingly rural regions of southwest Germany, however, peasant-farmers found a greater personal responsibility, certainly more responsibility than an eastern serf, in seeing to the survivability and prosperity of the local community.

Obviously, the bonds of community did not overcome every obstacle. Looking over the quality of life in Bavaria's pre-modern villages, one finds much to be desired. Formal education in the rural areas, for example, varied from decent to non-existent.¹¹⁸ Though literacy rates would improve dramatically by the late-19th century, in 1783, roughly half of Bavaria's

¹¹⁵ Evans and Lee, *The German Peasantry*, p. 261. As late as 1934, Kaschuba writes that “a Nazi economic statistician praised this ‘Kiebingen’ attitude with admirable frankness: ‘And so in Württemberg the factory worker is not proletarianised, but has remained as a healthy country-dweller, rooted to the soil as a smallholder. What one is trying to achieve elsewhere with ‘suburban housing estates’, the creation of a stable worker, who does not become dependent with the onset of unemployment, is to a large extent already existent in Württemberg.’” Taken from Evans and Lee, *The German Peasantry*, p. 241.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 263.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 267.

¹¹⁸ Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 339.

population could neither read nor write.¹¹⁹ If one looks at the statistics collected on two of Bavaria's large estates, Massenhausen and Thalhausen, as late as the 1840's, forty to fifty percent of the inhabitants were still illiterate. Mortality rates also varied tremendously in the first half of the 19th century, conforming on average to the United Nations adult life-table for the period covering the first half of the 19th century: forty years.¹²⁰ Treatment of women and children would have rarely met modern standards either.¹²¹ A decline in voluntary contributions to churches and a significant rise in illegitimate conceptions¹²² contrasted with steady church attendance.¹²³ Variable cases of poverty, malnutrition, and disease constantly threatened the livelihood of rural inhabitants.¹²⁴

Where the peasant-farming family may have enjoyed a remarkable amount of freedom from distant lords, they could not always escape the lords of squalor. That being said, one can also easily see why a human being would have required necessity to remain in a marriage to the land and to local communities. Few today would willingly subject themselves to such misery: the drudgery of living and farming for a pittance, knowing full well that chaos might wash it all away tomorrow.¹²⁵ Judging from the relative ease by which Bavaria's peasant-farmers relinquished their duty to nurturing the soil, one might conclude that they fundamentally

¹¹⁹ Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 344.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 57.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 282-285. For example, Lee points out that "children under the age of five seldom received the attention of a qualified medical practitioner prior to the last fatal illness. By and large little energy and even less money was devoted by the family to the saving of children's lives." See p. 82. In regard to women, one source claimed "that wife-beating was far commoner than the ill-treatment of horses." Furthermore, the "customary year of mourning following the death of a wife was seldom observed. Of the 105 cases examined on the Massenhausen estate... 53.3% witnessed a remarriage before three months had elapsed following the burial of a previous spouse." See pp. 283-284.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 302, 307-310.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 301.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 318-336.

¹²⁵ Guido Scharrer writes that "in the first half of the 19th century, the economic ambitions of the farmer still depended largely upon the conditions of nature." Taken from Michael Henker, et al., *Bauern in Bayern: von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Verlag Friedrich Pustet), p. 202.

understood their relationship with the soil as burdensome; that they had their eyes fixed on the hope of some other glory; and that they were prepared to be shed of this particular marriage at the slightest invitation.¹²⁶

When small land holdings no longer supported an extended family, for example, younger members of the family, particularly men, began to look beyond the community for employment and opportunity.¹²⁷ Again, the bonds of community did not always keep people from moving on.¹²⁸ Between 1816 and 1817, a series of bad harvests, culminating with the residual damage left over from the Napoleonic wars, pushed approximately 70,000 residents of Baden and Württemberg to emigrate to America. Granted, hard times were nothing new to the south/southwestern regions of Germany. In the recent past, however, if people had emigrated, they had gone east to Poland, Russia, or Austria. In moving east, these emigrants knew that they would likely surrender both their culture and their unique brand of autonomy.

By the early 19th century a new trend in emigration began to grow popular. Judging from the 1816-17 *Auswanderung*, one finds that the idea of going to America had hardened into reality. Decreasing cost and more efficient modes of transportation opened up, for the first time, a world of new opportunities for peasant-farmers previously sentenced to starvation, begging, or emigrating to the East. They had, for the first time, the viable option of going to the New World.

¹²⁶ "The idea of fidelity," writes Wendell Berry, "is perverted beyond redemption by understanding it as a grim, literal duty enforced only by willpower... To be faithful merely out of duty is to be blinded to the possibility of a better faithfulness for better reasons." Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, p. 120.

¹²⁷ Farr, "Farmers' Cooperatives in Bavaria," p. 168.

¹²⁸ "The man that is still strongly attached to his homeland and its circumstances" writes Peter Marschalck, "and can still find his livelihood there, his nourishment, will hardly be inclined to leave his land. Only when his inner attachments to a homeland are somehow lost, will he entertain the thought of emigration. This requires new circumstances that can and must affect him, that set him in motion... This is why political and religious repression, social mischief and a particular desire for bettering one's particular circumstance are useful in helping us understand the cause of emigration, and to ascertain different qualitative 'premises.'" Taken from Peter Marschalck, *Deutsche Überseewanderung im 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur soziologischen Theorie der Bevölkerung* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1973), p. 52.

Emigrant letters from America, and the travel literature that heavily influenced their decision to emigrate, reveal much about the ideals of peasant-farmers. Land as a common bond played a decisive factor in attracting emigrants to America. Similarly, examples of 19th century peasant literature can also shed some light on peasant-farmers and their relationship with the land and to one another. However, literature as evidence, whether it is peasant literature or travel literature, provides numerous obstacles for the historian. Much of the peasant literature written in the 19th century, for example, smacks of romantic nostalgia; to this day, German literary circles often classify it as *trivallliteratur*. But, in the words of Lilian Furst, peasant literature was not just another variant of German regionalism. Rather, it had become “a serious literary genre and another strain of German realism.”¹²⁹ Furthermore, if one sifts through literature keeping in mind that all historical evidence is ultimately tainted by someone’s opinion, then the works of several notable authors and less notable emigrants can potentially yield rich evidence.

Where section six of this study will deal more specifically with the *Auswanderung*, section five will focus specifically on the works of the Swiss writer, Jeremias Gotthelf (1797-1854), an interesting personality who intentionally wrote “from within and about” rural society. Though Gotthelf was himself Swiss, he found tremendous popularity among literate audiences throughout the German-speaking world. More importantly, and for the sake of understanding the identity of Bavarian peasant-farmers, Gotthelf described a Swiss peasant society that shared much in common with Bavarian farmers.¹³⁰ Choosing to write in a distinct realist style, Gotthelf

¹²⁹ Clayton Koelb and Eric Downing, eds., *German Literature of the Nineteenth Century, 1832-1899* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), p. 54.

¹³⁰ One should certainly be aware of the possible differences between Swiss and Bavarian peasant-farmers, i.e. confessional differences, while keeping in mind however, the common bond that they shared with the land. As Jerome Blum points out, writers of peasant literature, regardless of nationality, definitely believed that they could find something in the rural hinterland that remained untouched. Where earlier writers had always characterized rural inhabitants as bumpkins, later writers, realizing their own separation from the communal and agrarian identities of

specifically centered his work on “the small happenings, tragedies, and heroisms of humble life rather than on the impact of public social and political issues.”¹³¹ For this reason, he is unique as a writer and record keeper of rural existence, especially in regard to German peasant-farmers. One can only hope that a focused examination of these small happenings, tragedies, and heroisms of the humble life as revealed in Gotthelf’s fiction and the literature of the *Auswanderung* can shed more light on the Bavarian peasant-farmer’s identification with an agricultural, communalist *Heimat*.

rural life, exalted the peasant out of some need to define virtue “quite independent from of any actual virtue which observation might reveal.” Taken from Jerome Blum, “Fiction and the European Peasantry: The Realist Novel as Historical Source” (*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 126, No. 2. (Apr. 8, 1982), pp. 122-139), p. 124. It is also worth remembering, that both Swiss and Bavarian farmers experienced the effects of the Industrial Revolution at about the same time.

¹³¹ Koelb and Downing, *German Literature*, pp. 54-55.

V. Der Bauernspiegel: Understanding the Peasant-farmer's *Heimat* Through the Lens of Jeremias Gotthelf's Peasant Literature

Fictions are the bridges for discovering facts.

— Dora Peale

Born in 1797 in the canton of Berne, Switzerland, Albert Bitzius published his first novel, *The Farmer's Mirror*, in 1836 under the pseudonym Jeremias Gotthelf. According to H.M. Waidson the book became an instant success in the city of Berne because of its “scandalously frank exposure of country conditions.”¹³² No peasant himself, Gotthelf began to write novels and short stories while serving as the Protestant pastor in the Swiss village of Lützelflüh, also in the canton of Berne, with the purpose of ministry in mind. Being a minister, Gotthelf also filled the positions of parish registrar as well as the parish's chief educator, positions which provided the energetic man ample opportunity to throw himself “heart and soul into the social work of the parish.” In this way, he gained an intimate knowledge of rural existence, work, language, and customs.¹³³ Gotthelf therefore had the closest of working-relations with the protagonists of his subject, more so than any other German writer. For the historian, reading Gotthelf provides a rare opportunity to glimpse, albeit imperfectly, into 19th-century peasant life.

¹³² H.M. Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf: An Introduction to the Swiss Novelist* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 16.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Joseph Burkhalter, an intimate friend and self-educated peasant who in part inspired Gotthelf as to the dignities of country life, wrote about Gotthelf, saying that “he made many house-to-house visits, and knew how to gain the confidence of the people right away. He always had a lot of questions to ask, and often received the most naïve replies which gave him a deep insight into the people's inmost thoughts. If he had been in a house two or three times he knew the disposition of the house right down to the kitchen cupboard and all the family business down to the smallest detail. In this way he acquired that thorough knowledge of the life of the people to an extent no previous writer dealing with ordinary folk had.” See Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, p. 9.

Frustrated by his notoriously poor preaching skills, Gotthelf — the dedicated pastor — began to write fiction as a way of reaching his flock.¹³⁴ Even after his novels became popular throughout most of the German-speaking world, Gotthelf continued to write realist stories about people whose lives were “organically connected to the age-old practice of husbandry,” hoping that rural audiences would recognize themselves in his stories.¹³⁵ Of course, this underlying purpose produced a contradiction that Gotthelf never really resolved: although peasants regularly read Gotthelf’s more practical contributions to almanacs, they did not overwhelmingly read his fiction.¹³⁶ To quote Roy Pascal, “his own parishioners seem only to have been obscurely and resentfully aware that their parson was using them somewhat ruthlessly as his

¹³⁴ Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, p. 16. Gotthelf explains that he wrote because he felt “hemmed in and kept down on all sides.” To a distant cousin, he wrote that “I could express myself nowhere in free action... You must realize now that that a wild life was moving within me which no one suspected the existence of, and if a few expressions forced their way out of my mouth, they were taken as mere insolent words. This life had either to consume itself or to break forth in some way or other. It did so in writing... How I came to writing was on the one hand an instinctive compulsion, on the other hand I really had to write like that, if I wanted to make any impression on the people.” Taken from Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, p. 17.

¹³⁵ To quote Robert Godwin-Jones and Margaret Peischl: “The people portrayed” in Gotthelf’s stories “are simple and unassuming; their lives typically revolve around the same events --- sowing and harvesting, trips to market, buying and selling farm animals. The repetition of these events often makes them into motifs having both an external function and a symbolic value. Farmers’ lives are marked by and are dependent upon attention to the regularly recurring phenomena of nature; thus their lives, much more so than is the case with city dwellers, revolve around predictable, cyclical events. Taken from Robert Godwin-Jones and Margaret T. Peischl, *Three Swiss Realists: Gotthelf, Keller and Meyer* (New York: University Press of America, 1988), p. 3.

In reference to peasants and their ability to read, Eda Sagarra provides some helpful references in her textbook on 19th-century Germany. “On the eve of the [19th century], the reorganized German book trade scored its first modern commercial successes with works of popular enlightenment.” One of these books of “resounding commercial success” was *Noth- und Hülfsbüchlein für Bauersleute* (Little Book to Aid and Help Farming Folk) by Rudolf Zacharias Becker. This particular book on farming was an “interesting phenomenon, because it was launched with what we might call today a modern mass advertising campaign. Subscriptions were invited and some 28,000 received before the work was published in 1788... By 1800, the publishers “had disposed of the extraordinary figure of 400,000 copies, many of them distributed by the authorities as school readers. Becker’s book on farming “became of the “best-known books in the German language.” Taken from Eda Sagarra, *Germany in the Nineteenth Century: History and Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 138.

¹³⁶ Roy Pascal, *The German Novel* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1956), p. 105. Waidson writes that “the peasant-farmer’s reading was mostly limited to the Bible, the Psalter and the ‘Kalender’, or almanac... A compilation of assorted short pieces of instruction and entertainment for humbler readers, their most original contributions were short stories and poems, while much their space was devoted to household recipes and tips for farmers, or references to local events of the year; the whole had an atmosphere of good-natured, easy-going piety, though all fundamentally controversial issues were avoided.” Gotthelf would make attempts at raising the quality of the almanacs with which he associated, including more “ambitious politico-cultural programmes.” See Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, pp. 121-122.

‘material’, while he was read above all by the educated classes.” Nonetheless, Gotthelf’s work never descended into syrupy parochialism; he continued to make “vicious digs at Germans, at the educated, at liberals” while always attaching moral lessons to his works.¹³⁷

As literature and as historical evidence, Gotthelf’s constant moralizing injures his works more than anything else. As literature, it gets in the way of character developments and rhythm; at times, Gotthelf takes a break from the story line to digress into a sermonette and often, his characters come across two-dimensionally.¹³⁸ Sadly, Gotthelf’s moralizing distorts what are otherwise realistic pictures of peasant life; and the historian who reads Gotthelf for evidence must remember that Gotthelf did not write about peasants because he wanted to explore who they were, their agriculture, or the realities of a rural existence. Rather, Gotthelf used his intimate knowledge of rural peoples to paint convincingly realistic pictures that ultimately served as a vehicle for his moral agendas.

As a pastor (and theologian), Gotthelf chiefly interested himself in “the practical work of a parish priest.”¹³⁹ He did not involve himself in the intellectual wranglings of theological controversies, though he was familiar with them, because he saw little good in pursuing them. Gotthelf boiled his religion down to very practical tenets: that God reveals himself in the Bible and life “and that true religion arises from a study of both.”¹⁴⁰ Gotthelf subsequently criticized those who placed too much emphasis on spiritual explorations as well as those who practiced no spiritual exploration at all. The themes of Gotthelf’s novels therefore follow with a complicated

¹³⁷ Pascal, *German Novel*, p. 105.

¹³⁸ Roy Pascal states that hardly has Gotthelf begun a story “than the digressions come, thick and fast, often ponderous and violent. The narrative of his greatest novel, *Anne Bäbi*, is distressingly interrupted, in the second volume, by a series of long digressions; for instance, the account of the birth of a child is held up by thirteen pages on the whole duties of a midwife, while a little later there is a thirty-page digression on the relative functions of doctor and parson.” See Pascal, *German Novel*, p. 106.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

expression of the spiritual in the material. The role of agriculture is paramount for Gotthelf because “moral qualities,” to quote Pascal again, “are exactly mirrored in the farm, the family and the village community.”¹⁴¹

However, unlike most other authors of peasant-literature, Gotthelf avoided indulging in the townsman’s “appreciation of the countryside as picturesque.” In fact, his stories feature very few natural descriptions.¹⁴² One could say the same thing about his descriptions of people; his peasants’ admiration for the land seldom digresses from a utilitarian appreciation or the belief that God manifests his goodness through an abundance provided by the land.¹⁴³ Similarly, Gotthelf often equated a character’s ability as an agricultural laborer to his or her moral compass. For example, over the course of two novels, Gotthelf uses husbandry to illustrate the spiritual growth and decline of the novels’ protagonist. According to the critics Robert Godwin-Jones and Margaret Peischl, the protagonist, named Uli,

goes off to sell a cow four times; in each sale his honesty or treachery in dealing with the buyer or his master represents a stage in Uli’s development as a budding master farmer and as a morally responsible human being. Such events act as milestones in the character’s development and illustrate how naturally and intimately the action and the intent in Gotthelf’s novels are tied to the farm setting.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Pascal, *German Novel*, p. 110.

¹⁴² Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, pp. 16, 25. Waidson gives us an example of Gotthelf describing a natural setting, using an excerpt from *Der Besuch auf dem Lande*: “Züsiwyl was not romantically situated, the landscape was not varied, no mountains were to be seen, the streams did not murmur or babble, they slunk morosely, almost dejectedly, through the plain; but the meadows were lush, the woods fine, the soil good, the farmer who worked the soil rich.” Taken from Waidson, p. 25. Gotthelf’s unusual approach to natural descriptions show to some degree, that Gotthelf set the peasantry apart from urban people by their work and their utilitarian approach to everything. He did not use the vivid descriptions of landscape and community to exoticize his subjects.

¹⁴³ An excerpt, taken from *Zeitgeist und Bernergeist* is typical of Gotthelf’s depictions of the peasant-folk: “Benz was not sentimental, he was a Bernese peasant-farmer. These live faithfully and hardworkingly with nature, rather like sensible husbands with their wives; it is common knowledge that husbands seldom get sentimental about their wives; and if they are sensible, they are more pleased with their virtues than their beauty. But when Benz stood still, leaning on his stick and looking out over the view, his eyes watered and big tears rolled slowly down. ‘And all that without God!’ said Benz...” Taken from Waidson, p. 25.

¹⁴⁴ Godwin-Jones and Peischl, *Three Swiss Realists*, p. 4.

Gotthelf repeatedly used agriculture as a means to showcase the moral fiber of his characters. However, did Gotthelf use agriculture to construct a sense of home and being for his characters? If so, how did agriculture define their identity? Gotthelf's own wooden sense of morality — that hard work and diligence can overcome the difficulties of life; that God ultimately blesses upright men and women with prosperity — comes across very clearly in his published writings.¹⁴⁵ Also, whenever he compares rural people to urban people, evidently Gotthelf believed that the particularities of agricultural existence kept farmers more humble and upright. For example, Gotthelf begins *Hans Joggeli, the Rich Cousin* with a group of farmers duping a loud-mouthed braggart, a butcher from the nearby city, a man whom Gotthelf describes as full of “youthful city arrogance”, “narrow-minded,” and “with each passing day, despite all modern education, more and more narrow-minded”:

A young butcher from the city was arguing with several farmers. The butcher had a large dose of city pride in him and an even larger dose of wine. This was a condition which the farmers found most appropriate for playing a peculiar game with him, one which farmers, with their in-born icy nerves, play with consummate skill... The butcher had been carefully guided into bragging about his riches...¹⁴⁶

It is difficult to assess how closely Gotthelf's opinions may have reflected the opinions of the peasants he called neighbors and to what degree Gotthelf indeed falls prey to simplistic nostalgia. “Notions of paradise,” writes John Gillis, “are found in virtually all cultures, and they usually contain certain common elements.” Generally, they all express a “sense of longing

¹⁴⁵ For example, in *Hans Joggeli, the Rich Cousin*, after Hans has died, the judge who discloses his will reveals to a stunned audience that Hans has left his very successful dairy farm to two distant cousins, a man and a woman who have worked faithfully and diligently for him; who have not just tried to squirrel money out of him. Appropriately, the two cousins are also in love with one another and long to be married. With the dairy farm, they can pursue their dreams. To quote the last paragraph of the book, “That's the way it was and it worked out for the best, for things are still going well at the Dairyrich Farm today. Vanity, pride and idleness have not found a home there, rather love and truth, industry and piety are the four stars which shine undiminished brightness over the Dairyrich Farm and will never set” Taken from *Hans Joggeli, the Rich Cousin*, included in Godwin-Jones and Peischl, *Three Swiss Realists*, p. 79. One can find similar examples in most of Gotthelf's novels and stories.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

focused on a place or time where plenitude, freedom, peace, and immortality are imagined to exist.”¹⁴⁷ Harry Patin writes that “the nostalgia for paradise is among the most powerful nostalgias to haunt human beings.”¹⁴⁸ At times, a very noticeable sentimentality oozes from Gotthelf’s prose. With some exception, Uli and Anne Bäbi being notable exceptions, one can easily recognize which characters are bad and which characters are good; there is little in-between.¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, Gotthelf’s descriptions of rural, communal living have a ring of truth about them, particularly since he does not avoid describing even the most base situations.¹⁵⁰ As previously mentioned, Gotthelf seldom wrote romantically about natural landscapes.

Furthermore, according to H.M. Waidson, Gotthelf idealized his peasants as frequently as he

¹⁴⁷ John Gillis, *Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), p. 67.

¹⁴⁸ Gillis, *Island of the Mind*, p. 67. Gillis adds to this that “the idea of paradise had not existed before the Neolithic agricultural revolution and the urban civilization it produced. Hunter-gatherer societies do not produce visions of paradise because they do not exhaust the bounty of nature itself. It was only when agrarian peoples used up the forest lands that the idea of paradise emerged to represent what had been lost.”

¹⁴⁹ To quote Michael Parkinson, “Much incident in the novels is built up, as we shall see, out of attitudes so common, familiar and comprehensible that they can be called clichés of human behavior. Taken from Michael Parkinson, *The Rural Novel: Jeremias Gotthelf, Thomas Hardy, C.F. Ramuz* (Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 1984), p. 139. Roy Pascal adds to this that “the underlying purpose of Gotthelf’s art is to reveal the typical. His tales are designed as typical events, typical problems, and these again are ordered according to the actual standing of the persons: the wealthy peasant, the small farmer, the labourer, the innkeeper. Often indeed, he is unduly sweeping in his summation of individuals under classes, and at times he gives maids and servants, innkeepers, religious sectaries, lawyers, and townsfolk only the general abstract characteristics of a disliked type.” See Roy Pascal, *The German Novel*, p. 129.

¹⁵⁰ In *Der Bauernspiegel*, Gotthelf describes the death of Anneli in childbirth in two pithy sentences: “About what now came I must be silent. Finally I saw the pieces of my child, finally Anneli sank back exhausted by a loss of blood.” In *Leiden und Freuden eines Schulmeisters*, Gotthelf describes one man’s meditation on faith: “And if someone had wanted to console me with religious faith, like that old innkeeper’s wife of H. when she dropped a two gallon flagon of spirits and tore her hairs and complained to Heaven and Hell and someone spoke to her of earthly rubbish and religious faith, I too would perhaps have answered like her: ‘I shit on your bloody faith!’” Other examples of Gotthelf’s brusque tone include descriptions of lunacy, a character dying during the birth of an unwanted child, two women who lose their lives due to excessive drinking, a woman who descends into prostitution as a result of excessive drinking, and children who are diseased and deformed. All quotes taken from H.M. Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, p. 65. *Die Schwarze Spinne*, in particular, competes with modern horror novels in its descriptions of the grotesque, including a spider that crawls forth from within the face of a woman. However, Parkinson also points out that Gotthelf includes an “appreciation or enjoyment of stark or even crude literary effects, both serious and comic. In *Uli der Knecht* and *Die Käserei* a total of three characters become covered in manure, an affect which has been too coarse for the sophisticated palates of some critics.” See Parkinson, *The Rural Novel*, p. 137.

denigrated them. Gotthelf did not attempt to paint peasants as saints. He wanted them to seem human.

Recalling his views of urban folk, Gotthelf did believe that peasant-farmers represented stability. Gotthelf lived during a time when Switzerland underwent something like an agrarian crisis, a crisis that other European nations would feel as the 19th century progressed.

Conservative small-farmers, distrustful of newer agricultural methods, typically held onto their trusted ways of farming. However, this proved problematic as large land-holders embraced more mechanized methods of farming. Those who did not or could not modernize often experienced bankruptcy. On the other end of the spectrum, those who did modernize often experienced unheard-of prosperity.¹⁵¹

Gotthelf, like the peasants he lived with, connected prosperity directly to the land, taking for granted that his most prosperous characters owned their own means of production.

Prosperity withstanding, the more admirable characters were those who worked with their hands.¹⁵² For Gotthelf, the independent peasant-farmer came closest to leading an ideal life and the laborer who aspired to own his own farm (or marry someone who did), walked the path toward righteousness.¹⁵³ Hard work linked wealth and family tradition together and ultimately

¹⁵¹ Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, p. 28. Waidson goes on to point out that the Swiss exportation of cheese “increased fortyfold during the nineteenth century.” Improved transportation methods opened up new markets for Swiss cheese manufacturers.

¹⁵² In *Hans Joggeli*, the rich city cousin who happens to be a trader in cattle, tries to buy cattle from Hans. Hansli, the cousin, is obviously a less-than-ideal type and corresponds easily to Gotthelf’s stereotypical distrust of urbanites. Hansli is solely interested in swindling his cousin Hans. At the novel’s end, Gotthelf bluntly exposes Hansli, describing him as conniving, “every inch the self-made gentleman, brutish and simple-minded, yet covered with whitewash, and insolent and sly when it came to money matters.” Taken from *Hans Joggeli*, included in Godwin-Jones and Peischl, *Three Swiss Realists*, p. 75.

¹⁵³ On the uniqueness of farmers, Ernst Bloch writes, “While the small farmer has, at least nominally, property devoted to the means of production, the large farmer still operates, unlike the industrial capitalist, by working with his hands. In this way agriculture provides a view into an older, astonishingly stable economy that, despite the efforts of capitalization, is absent from the movement toward grain factories.” Taken from “Hebel, Gotthelf, und bäurisches Tao”, in Bloch’s *Gesamtausgabe*, IX (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1965), pp. 365-84 (p. 366). Wendell Berry writes that, “A competent farmer is his own boss. He has learned the disciplines necessary to go

created a simple ethic by which farmers could live. The farmer who owned his own land garnered the respect of those in his community. Those farmers who could not manage their farm appropriately, those who had to mortgage their properties or who failed to keep their servants and laborers in line, lost standing in the eyes of others.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, a loss of independence due to mortgages or bankruptcy, a loss of independence based in the land, was one of the greatest of disasters.¹⁵⁵

But just as Gotthelf seems to take for granted the fact that small farmers usually owned their own means of production, neither does he seem to question the role that agriculture plays in the formation of peasant culture. Though Gotthelf readily criticizes people who live in urban areas, he never really explains the source of his criticism. He acknowledges that people in the cities have more access to education and that they often have more opportunity to make money than those who live in rural areas. He also holds onto the conviction that those who live in the cities are typically lax in their morals. Again, however, Gotthelf never really ventures forth an explanation as to why these assumptions might be true, whether a lack of common work has atomized a community into an amalgam of individuals.

Though rural novels seldom describe “the manual activities of farming itself,” Gotthelf’s novels certainly explore the rich variety of satisfaction that rural inhabitants find in the patterns and rhythms of their work.¹⁵⁶ According to Gottfried Keller, a later admirer of Gotthelf,

ahead on his own, as required by economic obligation, loyalty to his place, pride in his work. His workdays require the use of long experience and practiced judgment, for the failures of which he knows that he will suffer. His days do not begin and end by rule, but in response to necessity, interest and obligation. They are not measured by the clock, but by the task and his endurance; they last as long as necessary or as long as he can work.” Taken from *The Unsettling of America*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁴ For example, in *Die Käserei in der Vehfreude*, the villagers are amazed that Felix, “heir to the wealthiest farm in the district,” would want to marry Änneli, whose family has mortgaged their farm.

¹⁵⁵ Waidson, *Jeremias Gotthelf*, pp. 29-30.

¹⁵⁶ Parkinson, *The Rural Novel*, p. 115.

“description and action are never separate in Gotthelf’s work.”¹⁵⁷ As previously stated, Gotthelf almost always describes nature in practical terms, being in agreement with what he considered to be the peasant’s utilitarian appreciation of the land. “A peasant,” writes Gotthelf, “observes on a journey only the practical things — not the landscape or tints, but the corn, beans, flax and hemp.”¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, Gotthelf shows how practical things — the work of the peasants — lies at the root of their community, giving them purpose to live, grow, and die together.

In what is perhaps his best novel, and certainly the most bizarre, *The Black Spider*, Gotthelf provides an excellent example of how a community coexists, individual’s dreams tying together with the aspirations of the collective. Though Gotthelf usually set his stories, much like Charles Dickens, in very realistic circumstances, in this case, Gotthelf ventures forth into the realm of fable, creating fantastic events within a realistic setting. Having set the stage, Gotthelf’s narrator, an old man, begins to tell other family members the story of how their community once nearly succumbed, because of their sins, to the wiles of Satan and a homicidal demon-spider. The story begins with the men of the village, who find themselves at the mercy of an unjust tyrant. Having just finished the construction of the tyrant’s castle, he then orders the men to dig up a grove of beech trees and transplant them to the vicinity of the castle, which rests at the top of a mountain. The men attempt to reason with the lord, arguing that they have been away from their farms for too long and that their women and children will go hungry. The lord will hear nothing of it however, and chases the men from his company, ordering them to finish the job within the month.

¹⁵⁷ Pascal, *The German Novel*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

On the road home, the distraught peasants meet up with a dark woodsman. The woodsman, as it turns out, is Satan himself. Before revealing his identity though, he offers to assist the peasants with their task. When he names the price, one unbaptized child, the peasants realize the woodsman's true identity. They flee, fearful for their lives and souls while the echoing sound of the woodsman's laughter appropriately chases after them. At first, they resolve that they will not accept the woodsman's offer. After the first day's work, however, they realize that they will be unable to complete the task of replanting the beech tree grove. Distraught, they consider returning to the woodsman. While they balk, one of the village women, named Christine, an outsider and a "terribly forceful woman," chides the men for failing at their work. The woodsman then conveniently reappears, once again frightening off the men but grabbing hold of Christine. The woman is of course fearful now but then she is strangely attracted to the woodsman, while still believing that she can outwit him. Christine agrees to his proposal, stating that she cannot be held responsible for what the men ultimately decide. The woodsman buys the woman's promise and as a sign of agreement, he kisses Christine on the cheek, a kiss that will ultimately ensure that the peasants keep their end of the agreement.

From this point the story descends into the realm of grotesque horror, culminating with a spider that forms on Christine's face, on the very spot where the woodsman kissed her. Having accepted the woodsman's assistance, the peasants promptly refuse to keep their end of the bargain. But before they can celebrate the completion of their task, Christine, whose face has burned ever since the woodsman kissed her, goes into labor pains. A horde of tiny spiders then materialize from the spot of the black spider. The spiders proceed to kill all of the peasants' cattle as well as the cattle of their lord. The lord once again threatens the peasants, blaming them for this catastrophe. To avoid further harm, the peasants then decide, collectively, to hand over

the next child born to anyone in the village. The story grows more outrageously monstrous and there is little need in recounting it. Collective action, however, stands out clearly in the actions of the peasant villagers. Repeatedly, they suffer, act, and decide as a community. Ultimately, they prevail as a community.

In the less outrageous tale, *Uli the Farm Hand*, one again finds examples of a common striving, a common work, creating a sense of community. Before setting off to become the new overseer of a farm, Uli's former boss, Johannes, explains to him how he should proceed if he wishes to earn the respect of those who will work for him. "Be patient and calm yourself," he exclaims. "Begin slowly, take the helm little by little, do all you can yourself, speak pleasantly, and try to bring them around gradually or at least some one your side... Then when you know how you stand, and if things don't get any better, sail into them..."¹⁵⁹ In short, Johannes explains to Uli, and to the reader, that Uli's new boss, Hans Joggeli, will measure Uli's competence by his ability to manage the workers into a cohesive unit. Again, Gotthelf makes the now familiar link between prosperity and, in this case, the collective work of a farm community. Luckily for Uli, he succeeds in cobbling together a working farm and his new boss, Hans, praises him for it.

George Homans, in his study *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century*, writes that "in the absence of a great contemporary novel about the husbandmen, we cannot follow them into the intimate life of their homes."¹⁶⁰ For German-speaking peasants from the 19th century, Gotthelf is that novelist. Obviously, the bonds of kinship proved very strong for peasant families

¹⁵⁹ Taken from *Uli der Knecht*, found in Kuno Francke, ed. *The German Classics of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Masterpieces of German Literature, Translated into English* (vol. 8) (Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company, 1913-1914), p. 203.

¹⁶⁰ Barbara A. Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. vi.

in Gotthelf's Switzerland, just as they bind families together to this day. Undoubtedly, kinship played an important role in the lives of villagers who, more often than not, found themselves related to many of their neighbors. But what, beyond kinship, could bind a community of peasants together? In many of Gotthelf's novels, as in *The Black Spider*, one finds the collective labor of peasants drawing them tightly together. Indeed, their survival depends upon cooperation.¹⁶¹ As Roy Pascal points out, "a co-operative cheese factory may not seem promising material for a novel, and in *The Cheese Factory* Gotthelf does not shirk factual description of its working."¹⁶² What one finds, when reading about the labor of the peasants, is much more than a description of their labor. One finds them working together:

[Gotthelf's] account of the co-operative contract, the choice of a site, the making of the cheeses, the daily delivery of the milk, the tensions between the cheese-maker and the peasants; the passionate discussions in each home, the buying and selling of cows, the inquisitiveness over other people's deliveries, the watering of the milk, the highlights of the sale of cheeses and the share-out at the end of the season, all these make a drama of fascinating intensity and often uproarious humour.¹⁶³

The presence of intense drama and uproarious humor implies conflict: the inevitable conflict of human natures rubbing against other human natures, the world, and in the case of *The Black Spider*, even the devil himself. That being said, community does not relinquish Gotthelf's characters from the responsibility of individual agency or, as Kierkegaard feared, from the realization of individual growth. *The Black Spider* alone provides one with enough examples of individual agency. Though living and working closely together does not drive out an individual's propensity for selfish ambition, collective striving does provide a way for individuals to know their neighbor. Spiders and devils aside, the most common form of

¹⁶¹ Parkinson writes that "the themes of acceptance and exclusion, isolation and belonging, can hardly be separated from the rural novel... a presentation of rural characters in a rural environment, of a network of relationships between man and world." See Parkinson, *The Rural Novel*, p. 34.

¹⁶² Pascal, *The German Novel*, p. 131.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 131.

collective striving for peasant-farmers would have been their *agricultura*, a constant warring with the earth, the raw conditions of subsistence-living, which would have driven peasants into the arms of one another.

Having looked into the world of small peasant-farmers through the lens of Gotthelf's literature, one comes away knowing that the lens is clouded. Examples abound of work drawing people together; prosperity and morality closely linked to the land and work; independence closely linked to the land. Gotthelf paints a complicated picture of a people who struggle with the earth, attempting to work with, not always against nature. His narratives are also very problematic as evidence, especially because of the way in which moralizing shaped his stories. And, though Gotthelf paints brilliant pictures of an agricultural *Heimat*, his novels and stories prove frustrating when trying to understand the role agriculture might play in forming this *Heimat*. Gotthelf *begins with the assumption* that agricultural life is the ideal way of life and then explores, either directly or indirectly, the numerous ways in which he thinks one finds satisfaction in rural labor. Gotthelf, more often than not, assumes that agriculture provides people with a more honest way of earning their keep in this world without explicitly stating *how* agriculture shapes their existence or *why* agriculture would be better in spite of its obvious difficulties. But why should we expect Gotthelf to *tell* us about the positive or negative aspects of an agrarian existence when in fact, he attempts to *show* us what an agrarian life looks like? The reader, of either Gotthelf or this essay, must decide whether an agrarian life provides any advantages; whether submission to the constraints of agriculture could provide us with a solution to the destructive and entropic tendencies of modern existence. In his comparative study of rural novels, Michael Parkinson writes that the "study of the values of earlier cultures, as mediated

through literature as well as through history, is likely to alert us to things lacking in our own.”¹⁶⁴

Then, we also know that earlier cultures can alert us to the advantages of our own culture.

Gotthelf wrote *The Black Spider* as an allegory about good and evil. When the villagers accepted the woodsman’s offer, they had to pay a heavy price. Turning Gotthelf’s allegory to questions of agriculture and one’s relationship with the earth, one should be wary of any “easy” solutions to the difficulties of living in this world, keeping in mind that every action sways in the balance of equal reaction. For life to persist according to the constraints of this world, to quote Wendell Berry again, one must first recognize that “the interaction, the interdependence, of life and death, which in nature is the source of an inexhaustible fecundity, is the basis of a set of analogies, to which agriculture and the rest of human economy must conform in order to endure.”¹⁶⁵ Most peasant-farmers may not have faced Satan in their daily routines. They did face the earth. They did face themselves. Most did not have the option of circumventing the constraints of an agrarian life. They had no choice. They had to submit to this, their *Heimat*.

¹⁶⁴ Parkinson, *The Rural Novel*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ Albert Howard, *The Soil and Health: A Study of Organic Agriculture* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006), p. xvii.

VI. Garden of Plenty: The *Amerikamythos* and the *Heimat* of Emigrating Peasant-farmers

‘Heimweh’ the Germans call this pain; it is a beautiful word, it means ‘longing for one’s home.’

— Primo Levi

Thousands of peasant-farmers emigrated from Germany in the first half of the 19th century.¹⁶⁶ Where each individual *Auswanderer* would have had his or her own reason for leaving — economic opportunity, adventure, escape — most did not necessarily equate emigration with a rejection of Germany as their homeland. Rather, many hoped to settle and recreate what they understood to be their *Heimat*. By the mid-19th century, millions of Germans lived in the United States and, surprisingly perhaps, most would have still identified themselves as Germans.¹⁶⁷ For this reason, and ironically perhaps, the *Auswanderung* helps us to understand the *Heimatliebe* of Bavaria’s peasant-farmers and how it compared to German nationalism. Specifically, studying the *Amerikabild* formed by letters and travelogues, one discovers that peasant-farmers placed a high value on community and agriculture. Furthermore, they never equated their emigration with a rejection of Germany. Rather, they believed that they were simply reestablishing a German *Heimat* based on agriculture and a continued need for community as they had always understood it in Germany.

¹⁶⁶ Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration 1816-1885* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 47. “The Auswanderung of 1830-45 was, with exception of certain northern areas, decidedly a movement of what may be called the lower middle class: neither great landowners nor harvest hands, but small farmers who cultivated their own land; not apprentices, nor unskilled labor, nor great merchants, but independent village shopkeepers and artisans; next to no one from the larger towns and cities. They were people who relied upon their own skills and wished to do so in the future, who had property that could be turned into cash; they traveled on their own resources. The principle means of production was agriculture.”

¹⁶⁷ Into the early 20th century, German-Americans tended to still live in German communities, read German publications, associate in German clubs, and attend German churches; even my mother, a modern German immigrant who has lived in the U.S. for over forty years, still considers herself German. For more see, Brent O. Peterson, *Popular Narrative and Ethnic Identity: Literature and Community in Die Abendschule* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).

Because most 19th-century German emigrants seemed so disengaged from a growing interest in pan-German nationalism, their mobility created quite a stir, unsettling many politicians and intellectuals concerned with the negative effects of the *Auswanderung*.¹⁶⁸ Beginning in the 1830s, intellectual and political elites saw this mass emigration as a criticism of Germany's backwardness. Subsequently, the *Auswanderung* provided one of many reasons for elites to further agitate for unification and liberalization. Scholars increasingly published articles and books on the *Auswanderung* and what could possibly be its root cause. Most recognized the problem of overpopulation; but then they refused to believe that anything other than the "laws and structure of society" were ultimately responsible for driving out "the poor German," a people that "has almost always been the slave and the plaything of foreigners."¹⁶⁹ German diets pressed their governments to do something: to at least control or direct the mass emigration or, at the most, ensure that emigrants retain their German identity and their use to the German nation.¹⁷⁰ This rumbling only added to the general perception that German governments were inadequate, the economic policies self-destructive, all in need of an overhaul if not a revolution.

Furthermore, German nationalists believed that a liberal national government could better manage the country in accordance with the will of the people; a national government could better

¹⁶⁸ Walker aptly quotes H. Scherer: "we have joy indeed in the fact that such national interests, or, if you will, national prejudices are growing, that in many German hearts there dawns a morning which, however threatened by clouds, will not cheat *our future of brilliant sunlight* (my emphasis added), and that multitude of issues in which there was once no interest or only fragmentary interest are now everywhere the objects of united purpose and energy. But if we are not to lose thousands and thousands of countrymen by the *Auswanderung*, if they are to be bound to the homeland not only in mind and in heart but by solid material interest, if our commerce is to expand its direct connections with overseas lands and make our industry productive and fruitful: to these ends a degree of control and direction of the *Auswanderung*, and an official participation, are necessary." Taken from Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, p. 122.

¹⁶⁹ Quote taken from *Der Deutsche Auswanderer* (1847); as quoted in Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, p. 123.

¹⁷⁰ Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, p. 126.

protect the people from the circumstances that pushed them overseas.¹⁷¹ So long as Germany failed to economically and politically unify, so long as Germans remained “backward,” Germans would continue to leave. “Now or never!” proclaimed the *Deutsche Auswanderer* in 1848:

Now no Bundestag remains to block our efforts... In its place soon a mighty Parliament will stand, in which no bought, idle counts, no arrogant barons will sit, none of those men who rest content beside warm stoves, on soft cushions, to repeat the adage, “Stay in the land and make an honest living:” no, a Parliament... of men who have laid their fingers on the wounds of the people, and who earnestly mean to anoint them with healing balsam.¹⁷²

Realistically, the *Auswanderung* may have had little to do with German nationalism but German nationalists nonetheless answered the *Auswanderung* with a cry for unification, liberalization, and a restructuring of German government.¹⁷³ Nationalist rhetoric abounded in regard to the *Auswanderung* — “we are losing *our Volk!*” was the cry — but what nationalists and imperialists both failed to understand (or did not care to understand) was how and on what emigrants formed *their* conceptualization of German nationalism, indeed, their *Heimat*.¹⁷⁴ In fact, German

¹⁷¹ To quote Mack Walker: “The German emigrant was, in a popular metaphor, *Staatenhumus* --- dung for other people’s fields. And the world, in consequence, looked upon the *Auswanderer* with contempt because he was German, because behind him stood no great state whose prestige and power commanded respect... Unless Germany became a world power, of Germans united in the defense, or rather in the creation of their own dignity and their own purposes, in a nation whose influence would be felt wherever the German tongue was spoken, so that the tongue might be a mark of confidence and pride, not of inferiority and humiliation.” See Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, p. 132).

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁷³ Jerry Schuchalter writes that, “America was more than an escape from adversity. On a symbolic and ideational level it became a means of defining Germany’s place in the world, describing her own state of affairs at home, and assigning value to her institutions and cultural production.” Taken from Jerry Schuchalter, *Narratives of America and the Frontier in Nineteenth Century Germany Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 194.

¹⁷⁴ Mack Walker: “The *Auswanderer* despaired of his future in Germany, and the reformer anticipated his. This difference between the causes of the *Auswanderung* and the causes of the attempted revolution fades if we generalize them almost to the point of insubstantiality: a disgust with what Germany seemed to be, and a rejection of it, colored all features of German society in the eye of the beholder. But even in terms so broad and yet so intimate as these, the difference remains the same: the *Auswanderer* fled change and the future; the revolutionary politicians acted in their name. Respecting such things as economic advance and social mobility their attitudes were almost exactly opposite.” See Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, p. 130. For a comprehensive analysis of *Heimat*, see Peter Bickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002). Many other scholars have explained German nationalism as an idea in which loyalty to *Heimat*, local community, does not contradict one’s loyalty to the nation. For more, see Celia Applegate’s *A Nation of Provincials*, Alon Confino’s *The Nation as Local Metaphor*, and Abigail Green’s *Fatherlands*.

nationalism as intellectual and political elites understood it, differed substantially from how peasant-farmers understood it.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars marked the beginning of the *Auswanderung*. Bavaria and the other West German states, because of their proximity to France and the historical balancing act that they had often played between continental powers, suffered in particular from the turbulent political and social unrest of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. Mack Walker describes this region as one in which “Political, social, and ethical standards and reference points had been subjected to the fluctuating influence of fluctuating authority.”¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the war’s end spelled deflation in war-time economies.¹⁷⁶

Often, there was not enough food or work for soldiers returning home to West German states. British manufactured goods flooded into the war-starved continent, undermining the traditional cottage industries that had often supplemented household economies. To make matters worse, a series of bad harvests culminated in famine in 1816 and 17. Years of war had sucked up what capital or reserve food stores that rural communities may have set aside to meet such problems. Mechanisms designed to alleviate food shortage, broken down by the war, could no longer meet the demands of the hungry:

Devices for stabilizing food supplies and prices had been ruined: state magazines were empty, and prewar laws requiring communities to maintain stored grain reserves had been ignored. Nor were individuals likely to store food when the tax collector or commissary might turn up at any moment. In 1815, the Württemberg peasant paid well over half his produce into state treasuries or magazines.¹⁷⁷

Many farmers in southwest Germany, particularly those in Württemberg and Baden, began to believe that their only alternative to starving was to leave for greener pastures. Many headed

¹⁷⁵ Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 14-17.

East in search of employment opportunities. But as opportunities in these areas dried up, they began to look around for other places to land. Desperate, local officials pointed their subjects to America.¹⁷⁸

But the *Auswanderung*, as Mack Walker puts it, “was not merely a matter of cold economic or population policy.”¹⁷⁹ Certain cultural influences played a major role in shaping the imagination of peasant-farmers, drawing them away from their communities. A more complete understanding of the *Auswanderung* (and indeed, any historical study) should be fleshed out by a more rounded understanding of what motivates people into taking particular courses of action:

The conscious motives of individuals may be very different from objectively observed, mechanical causation within societies, especially when the individuals seek reasons other than prosaic, visible environmental factors; and in more than one sense the images in men’s minds and the dramatis personae with whom they had peopled their worlds were more real and more important than the view which any statistical analysis can provide... Inevitably, when it came to the *Auswanderung*, the image of America strongly influenced the image of the homeland; the direct “motives” of the *Auswanderung* came from the interaction of both images.¹⁸⁰

Peasant-farmers usually found this “interaction of both images” in the same place that any other German found it: among the letters of acquaintances who had already emigrated, in the popular *Amerikaromanen*, or the promotional advertisements for companies who stood to benefit off of emigrants.

James Goodrich begins his introduction to Gottfried Duden’s *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America* by focusing on the source of this literature:

Many of the promises of American life owed their origin and longevity to a host of American promoters. Agents representing land companies, steamship lines, railroads,

¹⁷⁸ “South Germans passing through Cleves told officials there that the wealthy people of their native districts had advised them to go to America, where there was overabundance.” Taken from Walker, *Germany and the Emigration*, p. 19).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

state governments, and manufacturing interests flooded Europe, distributed enticing literature, and influenced many Europeans to emigrate to the New World.¹⁸¹

As important as Americans were in promoting themselves, as Goodrich point outs, one cannot overlook the impact of non-Americans, foreigners who “contributed immeasurably to the prevailing image of America as a land of opportunity.”¹⁸² Judging from the popularity of travel literature in Germany and the number of Germans who traveled to America and wrote about their experiences, Germans were particularly interested in the exercise of expounding upon America.¹⁸³ Combing through period newspapers and guides for potential emigrants, one finds, for example, advertisements and announcements for reading clubs that extended as far as the village level.¹⁸⁴ Marcus Hansen provides a vivid description of what these meetings may have looked like:

Popular interest in [travel literature] was greatly abetted by the ubiquitous village reading clubs. Although not unknown elsewhere in Europe, these organizations were most characteristic of Germany. The sponsor was generally a local minister who steered the discussion away from controversial religious and political topics and, in order to give the gathering an air of respectability, limited smoking to one or two pipes and drinking to a single glass of beer. Usually each member purchased one book each season or subscribed to a periodical. At the weekly meeting in the inn or the parish schoolroom the first part of the program consisted of reading chapters from some chosen work, after which followed a free exchange of opinions. Since history and travel formed the bulk of the material, America tended to be the center of interest.¹⁸⁵

In other words, if interested parties, even in a tiny village, wanted to know more about America, they were not limited to reading books. Chances were good that they could approach

¹⁸¹ Gottfried Duden and James W. Goodrich, ed., *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America: and a Stay of Several Years Along the Missouri (During the Years 1824, '25, '26, and 1827)*, trans. by George H. Kellner, Elsa Nagel, Adolf E. Schroeder and W.M. Senner (Columbia: State Historical Society of Missouri and University of Missouri Press, 1980), p. vii.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. vii.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

¹⁸⁴ For an example list of newspapers and guide books, see Hansen's endnotes on p. 335. Peter Marschalk also provides a list of *Auswanderungszeitungen* on p. 19 of *Deutsche Überseewanderung im 19. Jahrhundert*. A list of existing *Auswanderungsvereine* from 1833-1850 can be found on p. 21.

¹⁸⁵ Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration 1607-1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. 149.

other people who knew more about America. They could read newspapers. They could join clubs and discuss America. They could read the letters of people who had already emigrated. None of this should be taken as a slight against the power and influence of travel literature. Between 1815 and 1850, over fifty works were published by Germans describing their experiences in America; most of these books painted a favorable picture.¹⁸⁶ What one should see is that popularized accounts of America were everywhere in Germany in the first half of the 19th century.¹⁸⁷ The rural regions of southwestern Germany were no exception to this phenomenon.¹⁸⁸

Letters from America quite possibly played the most significant role in enticing Germans to emigrate. To quote Marcus Hansen:

Though the authority of printed matter was great, it paled before that of the personal letter... Contents so safeguarded could be nothing but the truth. The arrival of such a letter was not merely a family but a communal affair. Neighbors assembled, the schoolmaster was pressed into service, and the letter was read amidst a silence that bore eloquent testimony to the profound interest. Often copies were made and sent to other communities. The spirit of these missives was overwhelmingly encouraging, partly perhaps because the emigrants usually postponed writing until they had surmounted the initial difficulties.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Paul C. Weber, *America in Imaginative German Literature in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 160.

¹⁸⁷ Harold Jantz reminds us that, "the myth of America cultivated in Europe is a psychological reality far more important to the European than the so-called truth about America, that Europe is much more influenced by its image of America than by America itself." Jantz highlights a few of these idealizations in his essay "The Myths about America: Origins and Extensions." His list includes: the idealization of the primitive, the European understanding of civilization (read: progress) and its "natural, westward" movement, and the almost irrational belief that *Amerika* was everything Europe was not: a land of hope. See Alexander Ritter, ed., *Deutschlands literarisches Amerikabild: Neuere Forschungen zur Amerikarezeption der deutschen Literatur* (Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlag, 1977), pp. 37-49.

¹⁸⁸ Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration*, pp. 148-50. "Narratives," writes Brent Peterson, "whether published in calendars, pamphlets, or the penny press — provided an alternative to the models of identity that were traditionally transmitted orally or through the example of local figures of authority. The growing significance of narratives was the result of changes in the technology of printing, in the scope of public education, in the degree of literacy, and consequently in the size of the potential reading public, which for the first time in human history made truly popular literature possible." Peterson, *Popular Narrative*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁹ Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration*, pp. 152-154.

These letters did not usually settle for a mere description of America either. They often included appeals for others to emigrate as well, especially if they were young and could afford the trip.

For example, a letter from Josef Riepberger written to his family in Schneeberg, Bavaria, openly advises younger Germans to move to America:

Dear Brother, I also want to know how things are with our sister, whether or not she wants to come to America. If she cannot come, she should see to it that her sons come here, as all craftsmen are very much in demand, if they know their trade, especially butchers. And if they are a bit thrifty, they can manage to have their parents come over in two years. If Nannchen from Bremhof should come to America, she would be better off than in Germany.

It is all up to you. I advise all young people to come to America. Their fortunes are ten times better off than in Germany. However, people at the age between 45 and 50 years, who have no children they can rely on, should stay at home in Germany. I thank God a hundred times that I could come to America for I make more money than in Germany and the thought of returning to Germany never comes to mind. My children also do not want to return.¹⁹⁰

John Bauer, who emigrated from Baden in 1854 during the peak of the early *Auswanderung*, wrote two years later to his brother-in-law that, “I have already thought a thousand times what a joy it would be to see you again, only circumstances have never yet permitted it. In fact, I believe that if I were to live again for a shorter time in Germany, I would long for America again.”¹⁹¹ One finds similar words from Wilhelm Stille, an emigrant farmer from Westphalia, writing in 1834: “And whether I will come again [to Germany] I don’t know myself, and if I’d learned a trade like Buddmeier, I’d never want to see Germany again.”¹⁹² Two years later, Stille still thinks enough of America to encourage young people to emigrate there:

It’s a great pleasure for us to hear the gospel preached as well as in Germany, but I wouldn’t tell any family to come here just because of that, except young people, for it’s hard to travel as a family and it costs quite a lot, and when you first come to this country you don’t know the language and face an uphill climb, that’s why many people take a

¹⁹⁰ Don Heinrich Tolzmann, “A German Immigrant Letter from Cincinnati, 1841,” *The Palatine Immigrant* 20, no. 4 (1995), pp. 200-215.

¹⁹¹ Kamphoefer, *News from the Land of Freedom*, p. 156.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

long time to get over their trip. But when they've been here for a while and get a feel for freedom, and see the good crops growing here and all without manure, and that the land is so easy to work, then they think differently, then they feel sorry for their friends who are still in Germany, and spending all day from early morning to late evening working to pay their taxes, and having to eat such bad food, not even meat every day, and here even three times a day, and all sorts of dishes that I can't write about very well.¹⁹³

What may have further enticed potential émigrés was the knowledge that an acquaintance could help in acclimating them into American society, providing them with connections, employment, and other forms of assistance. There were several large groups of Germans who moved to America en masse, such as the Adelsverein who attempted to settle in Texas or religious groups such as the Mennonites, Jews, or Old Lutherans who moved to America in search of religious freedom. However, German emigrants typically traveled to America as “families and individuals, perhaps accompanied by a few friends and neighbors but without common funds or a larger organizational framework.”¹⁹⁴

Described as “chain migration,” these small groups usually came with the intent of meeting up with family or acquaintances who had already made the trip and settled in the United States.¹⁹⁵ This is further seen in the ways that German communities formed in America. For example, in 1860, one-twelfth of all emigrants from Brunswick who settled in the United States lived in one county in Missouri.¹⁹⁶ According to Walter Kamphoefner, Ladbergen and Westerkappeln, two villages in Westphalia, could claim “daughter villages in rural Ohio and Missouri, respectively”¹⁹⁷ Many of the Germans who moved to Jackson, Mississippi, could be

¹⁹³ Kamphoefner, *News From the Land of Freedom*, p. 69.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 9; Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration*, p. 156.

¹⁹⁶ Kamphoefner, *News From the Land of Freedom*, p. 9.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

traced back to the Principality of Waldeck. Albany, New York could similarly claim a large population of Württembergers.¹⁹⁸

In a few cases, German emigrants read about areas that were predominantly settled by Germans. August and Carl Blümner, two highly educated emigrants from Berlin, chose their destination using Gottfried Duden's accounts of Missouri and moved to Warren County, an area heavily settled by German peasant-farmers.¹⁹⁹ Looking through Wilhelm Stille's letters, one finds that he too intended to join acquaintances upon arrival in the United States.²⁰⁰ Again and again, the desire to maintain community appears in these letters. Central to this community, was the land.

What exactly were Germans (or other Europeans for that matter) reading about America and what was it they expected to find once they arrived? To quote Marcus Hansen again, "Europeans learned that America was a land of labor, but they also learned that there was work for all, particularly for the man who could handle a spade, the mason who could lay bricks, the carpenter who could erect a frame."²⁰¹ There was work to be had by all. Women and children were not excluded either. The pay was usually good, there was an abundance of land at cheap prices, the material for building was inexpensive, taxes were low, there was no compulsive military service, there was no censorship, no enforced school attendance "to deprive a parent his child's services,"²⁰² and perhaps most of all, there were plenteous amounts of food. "The messages sent across the Atlantic," writes Hansen,

¹⁹⁸ Kamphoefer provides two excellent maps, one of Germany and the other of the United States, both in 1870, showing where large populations of Germans in the U.S. originated. See pp. 4-5 and 13-15 for additional examples.

¹⁹⁹ Kamphoefer, *News from the Land of Freedom*, p. 96.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 156.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 159.

spoke a vivid language: the peaches and apples rotting in the orchards of Ohio were more ‘than would sink the British fleet’; the average farmer left ungleaned in his fields enough wheat to ‘keep a whole parish’; and kind-hearted housewives wished ‘that the poor people in England had the leavings of their tables, that goes to [Americans’] dogs and hogs.’²⁰³

Whether any of this was always true is inconsequential — Europeans in general and the peasant-farmers of the early *Auswanderung* specifically, believed it. One did not have to know anything about America to have an opinion about it. As Mack Walker puts it, the German romantic “liked American space, Indians, history, and political theory; he was disgusted by American rawness, materialism, and practical politics.”²⁰⁴ They were enamored. Unlike the popularized adventurers of the late-19th century who searched the jungles of deepest Africa, German emigrants to America did not move into the spectacle to hover above it, soak it in, and then return to Europe to exploit hungry audiences. They wanted to become a part of the spectacle that they read about.

European adventurers, of course, were not restricted to the late-19th century. In the first half of the century, as previously stated, many German “scientists” traversed the United States and later published their *Reisebilder*.²⁰⁵ Their accounts revealed the political and social life of Americans to a popular German audience; they provided a break down “of their character, manners and customs, of religion and education, commerce and agriculture, of American landscapes and American cities.”²⁰⁶ These books were widely popular among all classes of people and only added to the national discourse on *Amerika*. “The common conversation in Germany, in the most remote forest hut as well as in the middle-class dwelling, centered about

²⁰³ Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration*, pp. 157-158.

²⁰⁴ Walker, *Germany and the Migration*, p. 58.

²⁰⁵ Weber, *America in Imaginative German Literature*, pp. 102-103.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

America” writes Julian Schmidt. “The only book... that could be seen in the hands of a farmer’s man or gentleman, was a book about America.”²⁰⁷

Though most of the *Amerikaromanen* and their authors have since faded away into obscurity, writing about America was a lucrative business throughout the nineteenth century. The output of the most notable early writers was impressive, some of them reaching as many as fifty volumes of various substance.²⁰⁸ All of this literature was readily available, appearing in magazines and newspapers and ultimately ending up on the discount rack, even alongside other pirated and ill-translated adaptations. In addition to their popularity, critics respected many of these writers, especially Charles Sealsfield, and much of their work often found its way into respectable literary journals.²⁰⁹

There are several common themes that run through these early novels but above all, their authors saw themselves as educators, “explorer-intellectuals” who could reveal with authority “the mysteries of the New World” to their *Biedermeier* audiences. *Bildung* is indeed the dominant theme; one becomes a more complete being by moving to America.²¹⁰ The hook however, the one myth that really attracted early emigrants to America, was a persistent conceptualization of a natural abundance. This popular genre of literature only helped to shore up the German’s image of American prosperity, coupled with available land and autonomous

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 104. Also see Julian Schmidt’s, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von Leibniz bis auf unsere Zeit* vol. V (Berlin: Hertz, 1878), p. 271.

²⁰⁸ To provide a better sense of how much these writers produced, Schuchalter summarizes the output of a few of them: “Friedrich August Strubberg (1806-89), who employed the pseudonym Armand, published ‘a corpus of almost fifty novels.’ Balduin Möllhausen (1825-1905), as Horst Dinkelacker writes, published at a dizzying rate from 1857 to 1905, a panoply of novels, novellas, short stories, causing Dinkelacker to declare Möllhausen’s achievement to be ‘a slightly overlooked.’ Otto Ruppius (1819-1864) had fifteen volumes of his work published with the Theodore Knorr publishing house in Leipzig. Even Charles Sealsfield (1793-1864), despite his twenty-one years of literary silence, has managed to have twenty-four volumes of his fiction and travel books published with Olms in the most recent complete edition of his works.” Taken from Schuchalter, *Narratives of America*, p. 1.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

²¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

republican virtues. In reference to Friedrich Strubberg's novel, *Karl Scharnhorst*, published at late as 1865, Jerry Schuchalter points out that,

The quest for a new community embodying the virtues of *Biedermeier* hearth becomes the dominant movement of the novel. Following the narrative commonly found in emigration literature, the virtuous German family, threatened with destitution in Germany, discovers prosperity and well-being on the frontier outside the pale of European civilization and civility.²¹¹

“It was the land which attracted all the discontented, whether they fled prosecution or persecution, justice, poverty, or even boredom.”²¹² Land was the big pull of the early *Auswanderung* and the peasant-farmers of Western Germany were well aware of the opportunity that land could afford them.

Gottfried Duden had perhaps the most direct impact on the *Auswanderung*. Many emigrants used his book, *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America* as a literal handbook on what to expect in the United States. Thousands read his descriptions of pastoral farmland and weighed the advantages of moving to the United States.²¹³ Duden, despite the fact that he did not actually himself farm, provided a breakdown and comparison of why agriculture in the U.S. was so much more advantageous.

The great difference between German agriculture and the local type can be summarized as follows. (1) In Germany the land is expensive due its capital value and the state taxes; labor, however, because of the dense population, is very cheap. In the areas west of the Allegheny Mountains, the reverse is true. The land is very cheap and the labor expensive. From this it follows that a very careful utilization and cultivation of the soil, which in Germany is absolutely necessary, would be wasted here. (2) The farm buildings cost very little here. (3) The breeding of livestock (including horse breeding) can be left

²¹¹ Schuchalter, *Narratives of America*, p. 10. Schuchalter goes on to quote a section of Strubberg's novel, which is revealing: “The practical self-sufficient life was predominantly described in all of them, and the farmer was essentially described, as functioning alone as much as possible. He had to evaluate every circumstance of his life by himself and had to know how to help himself and to this end, be familiar with the various different trades in case there was no one else to help.”

²¹² Hammond, *American Paradise*, p. 51.

²¹³ “Millions find such vast space in the wonderful plains and valleys of the Missouri and Mississippi, and a nature, long-forgotten by the residents, awaiting the agents of change.” Taken from Schuchalter, *American Narratives*, p. 195.

almost entirely to nature. (4) In Germany fences are built to enclose the cattle, horses, hogs, and so forth; in America to keep them out of the fields — a simple result of the different relationship between pasture land and cultivated fields... (5) In erecting the fences, here again the material is not expensive but the labor all the more. In Germany, the opposite is true. (6) Fertilization of the fields where the soil is of first or second quality is entirely unnecessary...²¹⁴

The point is clear. “Utilization of the soil will always remain the main object, and it is the greatest mistake to deprive oneself of the means required for this purpose.”²¹⁵

The ownership of land not only meant economic opportunity but also economic autonomy and freedom, a way of life most peasant-farmers would have been familiar with. After all, freedom from the land is not freedom. It is freedom from “the sources of value that gave human life a larger meaning: closeness to neighbors, a sense of rootedness in the soil, a feeling of belonging, faith in something larger than the self or the merely human.”²¹⁶ Freedom from the land, for peasant-farmers, would have constituted a break with their conceptualization of *Heimat*.²¹⁷ But in America, they believed that a devotion to *Heimat* could continue. Not only were there already large communities of German settlers there to help ensure this — there was also land that they could farm, land upon which they could reconstruct an improved and

²¹⁴ Duden, *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America*, p. 184.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 185.

²¹⁶ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991), p. 16. Duden certainly recognized the relationship between ownership of land and freedom. To quote Schuchalter again: “... In Duden's America there is ‘there is no difference between townsfolk and countryfolk,’ and ‘every business has the same rank.’ In brief, as Duden himself writes, ‘the unity of spirit and nature’ is achieved ‘when man a man cares for his own fields.’” See Schuchalter, *Narratives of America*, p. 195.

²¹⁷ Peter Bickle writes that “What was called *Heimat* in premodern society structure — primarily one's own homestead (fields, house, livestock, extended family with hierarchical role and labor divisions) — provided, for that time at least, a low ontological level of anxiety. It provided means for survival and knowledge of one's place in a society where survival was basic. *Heimat* belonged to those who could share in this structure through property relations (marriage, inheritance). See Bickle, p. 77-78 and 100-101. Most peasant-farmers, even into the 19th century, would have still lived in a relative state of early modern circumstances. For more on the economic state of peasant-farmers in the 19th century, see W.R. Lee's *Population Growth, Economic Development and Social Change in Bavaria, 1750-1850*.

idealized *Heimat*.²¹⁸ For Duden and those who read his work, “the unity of spirit and nature” could only be achieved “when man cultivates his own acres.”²¹⁹

Land plays a similarly central role in the writings of Charles Sealsfield, the mysterious renegade monk turned writer. For Sealsfield, America’s success and prosperity was directly linked to the land. So too were its Republican ideals.

“The garden of Pennsylvania” becomes the seat of the republican idyll, while Philadelphia and then London become the centers of corruption and tyranny. In this allegorical pattern, then, Morton [one of Sealsfield’s characters] symbolizes America --- an America caught between its allegiance to its yeoman republican past and the temptations of the new world of commercial capitalism --- the world towards which Sealsfield and other exponents of the republican ideal were so ambivalent.²²⁰

To quote Sealsfield himself,

A sea-coast of three-thousand miles, excellent harbours, important rivers rising and emptying themselves into its territory, a rich virgin soil, a temperate climate, a population composed of the descendants of the first nation in the world, the sciences of the ancients, the experience of modern times transplanted into a new and susceptible soil, and both united to the most liberal constitution that has ever existed, were certainly well-employed and well-directed, afforded reasons to anticipate future greatness.²²¹

So long as land remained available in the United States, there would remain a “solid yeomanry” to bar the doors against feudal nobility and commercial gentry. Sealsfield, like Frederick Jackson Turner, believed that the closing of America’s frontier meant the end of plentiful land prospects and would be the end of the “virtuous republic,” that utopian model and foil to Old World absolutism:

Indeed, Sealsfield’s adherence to the ideal of the virtuous republic, along with his invocation of the “myth of exodus” from a moribund Europe to a regenerate America in a

²¹⁸ It is worth quoting Schuchalter again: “But America was more than an escape from adversity. On a symbolic and ideational level it became a means of defining Germany’s place in the world, describing her own state of affairs at home, and assigning value to her institutions and cultural production.” See Schuchalter, *Narratives of America*, p. 194.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 95.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 91.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 88.

Garden of Plenty, places him within the tradition of the first half of the nineteenth century when the republican ideal was regarded as real alternative to absolutism in Europe. Further, the *Amerikamythos*, which, in fact, idealized immigration, was the most obvious solution to the problem posed by the resurgence and reaction and its attendant conflicts.²²²

So long as land was available in America, it would provide for the *Volk ohne Raum*. Until then, peasant-farmers would continue to look to America for “regeneration and escape from the misery of overpopulation and landlessness.”²²³

²²² Ibid., p. 100.

²²³ Schuchalter, *Narratives of America*, p. 195.

PART THREE

VII. Prosperity and the Land

The devil has many nets, crude ones for crude souls, finer ones for finer souls.

— Sebastian Haffner

Writing in the 1930's for the journal, *Economic Geography*, University of Washington professor and geographer Hubert Bauer believed that Bavaria's "economic branches have been able to spread and intergrow with the rest of Germany and of neighboring countries... largely due to the sound root-system which anchors it to a native vigorous soil."²²⁴ In short, Bavaria's economic prosperity linked directly to the conditions of her soil. Of course, one can hardly speak of "a native vigorous soil" in respect to this period without nervously drumming up thoughts of Richard Walther Darré and the supposed "healing properties" often associated with 'blood and soil.'²²⁵ But even before the First World War, much less the 1930s, judging from the way in which Bavarian peasant-farmers reacted to the conditions of urban markets, one might conclude that their priorities resembled more the virtues of market capitalism rather than the virtues defined by an economy of sustainability. As one might expect, environmental conditions particular to Bavaria shaped the type of agriculture that followed, "from mountain pastures of the

²²⁴ Hubert Bauer, "Economic Adjustments in Bavaria" (*Economic Geography*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (Jul., 1930), pp. 257-277), p. 257.

²²⁵ Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 270. According to the National Socialists and German Nature Conservationists alike, peasants, indeed the *Volk* themselves somehow derived from "this tie to the soil," the reputed virtues of "steadfastness, courage, diligence, honesty, and loyalty, to name a few." Furthermore, these lofty virtues of the soil "could not be shared by rootless, nomadic peoples, like the Jews." See Raymond Dominick, *The Environmental Movement in Germany: Prophets and Pioneers, 1871-1971* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 87. To quote the German journalist Kurt Tucholsky, pre-1933 naturism "started out green and ended bloody red." Taken from Thomas Lekan and Thomas Zeller, eds., *Germany's Nature: Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), p. 183.

southern Alps, mainly devoted to livestock, to the grain-growing plains by the lower reaches of the Inn.”²²⁶ However, new environmental factors, namely those created by the supply and demand of 19th-century urban markets, such as Munich, began to overshadow the traditional environmental limits of farmers and thus significantly change their habits and culture.²²⁷

By the late-19th century, in order to keep up with the demands of urban markets and to avoid being sunk by debt, Bavarian peasant-farmers began to alter their traditional system of cultivation.²²⁸ Theoretically, this meant that peasant-farmers would have to either acquire more labor and/or abandon the three-field system of cultivation. Because rural Bavaria chronically lacked a labor force necessary to produce on par with industrializing agriculture, farmers in Bavaria were more likely to abandon the ancient three-field system. This decision to intensify had its own consequences. Not only did it require a certain break from the rhythms of nature, specifically, constant cultivation required more fertilizer.²²⁹ This became even more evident to the average peasant-farmer as wholesalers appeared on the scene with imported manure and as substitute methods of enriching the soil became more widely advertised. Even so, Bavarian

²²⁶ Regina Schulte, *The Village in Court: Arson, Infanticide, and Poaching in the Court Records of Upper Bavaria, 1848-1910*, trans. by Barrie Selman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 18. For a brief description of agricultural production as it relates to physiographic differences in Bavaria, see Bauer’s article “Economic Adjustments in Bavaria,” pp. 261-265. The first chapter of Max Spindler, ed., *Handbuch der Bayerischen Geschichte, vierter Band: Des Neue Bayern, 1800-1970* (Munich: C.H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1975) also provides a description of Bavarian geography.

²²⁷ In regard to the consumer demands of urban markets, Stadtrat Levin writes, “in the smaller and medium-sized cities, the sellers today still are chiefly producers from the neighborhood; but in the larger cities this is no longer so. Here generally the producers in the neighborhood of the cities cannot keep up with the growth of demand caused by the increase in population, especially as increased building deprives local producers more and more of land.” Therefore rural producers from farther a field stepped in to fill the demands. See Stadtrat Levin, “Wholesale Terminal Markets in Germany and Their Effect on Food Costs and Conservation” (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 50, Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution. (Nov., 1913), pp. 153-165), p. 155.

²²⁸ W.R. Lee, *Population Growth, Economic Development and Social Change in Bavaria, 1750-1850* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 126. In regard to peasant debt, Timothy Guinane writes that “land reform and emancipation had created a free but undercapitalized peasantry, and the agricultural price declines of the 1880’s and later left some holdings overburdened with mortgage debt.” Taken from Timothy Guinane, “Cooperatives as Information Machines: German Rural Credit Cooperatives, 1883-1914” (*The Journal of Economic History* Vol. 61, No. 2. (Jun., 2001), pp. 366-389), p. 369.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130. Lee writes that “the most extensive fall in acreage of fallow in Bavaria was not to take place until later in the 19th century.”

peasant-farmers by and large avoided these two methods, relying instead on their own cattle as the primary means of manure production.²³⁰

For this and reasons of diversification, as early as the early-19th century, peasants realized that if they wanted to survive they would have to invest more in rearing stock and pull existent cattle from the pastures and stall-feed them.²³¹ This kind of intensification had an immediate and direct impact on the culture of peasant-farming communities. The redistribution of common lands serves as one example of this change. Where in earlier times, villagers had used the commons for a variety of purposes, many communities began to pillage the resources of the commons for additional profit. In earlier times, common forest lands had provided “kindling, building wood, beechnuts, acorns, grass, and oakbark for tanning.”²³² Garden plots in the commons had provided produce for those who had no land. Some communal lands served as

²³⁰ W.R. Lee, *Population Growth*, pp. 126-128. Lee states, “In the period 1870 to 1920, for example, over 50% of the registered increase in agricultural productivity in Germany as a whole was attributed to the application of artificial or substitute manure. In Bavaria, however, the introduction of alternative types of manure had been particularly retarded.” Bavarian peasant-farmers chose to rely on the manure of their animals. Ian Farr points out that peasant-farmer cooperatives “were responsible for perhaps a quarter of the trade in fertilizers” in the late 19th century. Taken from Ian Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria, 1880-1914,” p. 163.

²³¹ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 170. Robert Moeller writes that “the emphasis of most agricultural economists in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany was on the necessity to diversify production. For west German peasants, specialization never meant exclusive concentration on one branch of production. In fact, such concentration was seen as excessively risky. The farm was pictured as an organic unit in which all branches of production were interrelated. Decisions about production of livestock were never made independently of decisions about the use of arable. Patterns of mixed-farming --- livestock production, particularly cattle, alongside grain crops and root crops --- had long prevailed in the Rhineland and Westphalia, and were variants of the improved three-field rotation. This system, known throughout western Europe by the end of the eighteenth century, established itself as common practice in these west German regions... Rising urban demand for livestock products in the second half of the nineteenth century simply meant that the function of livestock changed: cows were no longer important solely as producers of manure but became important as sources of meat and dairy products as well. As agricultural economists put it, the cow ceased to be a means to an end and became an end in itself.” See Robert Moeller, “Peasants and Tariffs in the Kaiserreich: How Backward Were the Bauern?” (*Agricultural History*, Vol. 55, No. 4. (Oct., 1981), pp. 370-384), pp. 376-377. In regard to the growing size of cattle populations, David Sabeen writes that the village of Neckarhausen “progressively abandoned horses and increased the cattle herd. (Between 1710 and 1873, the horse population dropped from 72 to 8, whereas cattle increased from 147 to 566 and pigs from 12 to 127).” David Sabeen, *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 54.

²³² Sabeen, *Neckarhausen*, p. 55.

pasture for “communal livestock herds and for the village bulls” and others as orchards.²³³

However, as David Sabeau shows in the village of Neckarhausen, villagers increasingly deforested the woods of common lands to construct cattle stalls. With most of the village livestock resting in cattle stalls, common lands that had served as pasture or a source of wood increasingly fell under cultivation during the course of the 19th century as villages leased common properties out for additional profit.

As in Westphalia and the Rhineland and in the village of Neckarhausen in Württemberg, Bavarian peasant-farmers increased their livestock holdings in direct response to demands of urban markets.²³⁴ The rise in meat consumption for the city of Munich corresponds to this general trend. From 1844 to 1855, the consumption of meat “increased from 17 to 18 kilogram per head, remained steady in 1855-67, and rose to 53 kilograms in 1907. Taking into account the growth of the population, the demand thus rose by 28.54 percent in 1840-55 and by 442.36 percent in 1855-1907.”²³⁵ By 1913, over a quarter of the meat that entered Munich traveled there by road from the *immediate* countryside.²³⁶ The remainder came by rail from Bavarian farms farther a field.

Farmers also met sky-rocketing milk consumption in Munich with sky-rocketing production. In the Allgäu, “a part of Bavarian Swabia which formed the most intensive dairying region in Germany... soil, landscape and climate and good rail links to Munich” guaranteed a prosperous growth in that region’s dairy sector.²³⁷ Increased meat and dairy production and

²³³ Sabeau, *Neckarhausen*, p. 55.

²³⁴ Robert Moeller, “Peasants and Tariffs in the Kaiserreich,” p. 373.

²³⁵ Carl Gschwendter, “Die Entwicklung der Münchener Fleischpreise seit Beginn des 19 Jahrhunderts und ihre Ursachen” (*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 75, No. 7. (Jun., 1912), pp. 756-757), p. 756.

²³⁶ Clyde Lyndon King, “Municipal Markets” (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 50, Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution. (Nov., 1913), pp. 102-117), p. 103.

²³⁷ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 177.

falling grain prices did not necessarily hinder the production of traditional grain crops either.²³⁸ Indeed, emphasis on the cultivation of grains “remained consistent well into the 1880’s, constituting over ninety percent of the sown arable in Bavaria,” and many peasant-farmers, particularly those with larger estates, depended upon grain-production for survival.²³⁹ As cities like Munich continued to experience rapid population growth, the problem of feeding townspeople only intensified.²⁴⁰ Bavarian peasant-farmers rushed in to fill the apparent need of urban markets but in doing so, they had to sacrifice traditional methods of farming.

By continuing to meet urban demands, the Bavarian peasant-farmers proved themselves susceptible to the “widely held sentiment that falling agricultural income could be mitigated by expanding the area of production.”²⁴¹ As early as 1853 to 1863, for example, grain production began to shift significantly toward wheat and barley and away from rye and oats, again, matching urban demand and prices.²⁴² Appetites for cheap potatoes pushed potato production up as well; from the middle of the century to the turn of the century, potato production expanded into about 10% of Bavaria’s total agricultural production.²⁴³ Considering Bavaria’s beer industry, hops too found an early popularity amongst some peasant-farmers as “the proper means through which a man can quickly grow rich.”²⁴⁴ As late as the 1930’s, an observer could still say of Bavaria that “bread grains are grown everywhere.” Furthermore, “numerous flour mills are,

²³⁸ Again, Robert Moeller shows that in the Rhineland and Westphalia, increased investments in cattle did not necessarily precipitate a decreased output of agricultural products. For example, grains were often used to feed cattle and pork. Robert Moeller, “Peasants and Tariffs in the Kaiserreich,” p. 373.

²³⁹ Lee, *Population Growth*, p. 177; Robert Moller, ed., *Peasants and Lords: Recent Studies in Agricultural History* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), p. 120.

²⁴⁰ Marjata Hietala and Tanja Vahtikari, eds., *The Landscape of Food: The Food Relationship of Town and Country in Modern Times* (Helsinki: Finnish Literary Society, 2003), p. 10.

²⁴¹ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 168.

²⁴² Max Spindler, ed., *Handbuch der Bayerischen Geschichte, vierter Band: Des Neue Bayern, 1800-1970* (Munich: C.H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1975), pp. 732-733.

²⁴³ Spindler, ed., *Handbuch der Bayerischen Geschichte, vierter Band*, p. 733.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 734.

therefore, distributed all over these agricultural districts, ranging from the modest old type mill, sufficient for local needs, to the gigantic modern milling plant supplying the populous urban centers.”²⁴⁵

In order to maintain a competitive level of production, Bavaria’s peasant-farmers needed capital and more readily available credit more than ever before. Low grain prices from the 1880’s until the first decade of the twentieth century did little to help farmers with their credit slump.²⁴⁶ Contrasting “significantly with an increase in financial outgoings,” most farmers in the late 19th century found themselves wallowing in a financial lurch.²⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the Bavarian government and its district officials reacted to these circumstances by blaming the peasant-farmers for their own stupidity.²⁴⁸ Surprisingly perhaps, the Bavarian government actually noticed the potential damage that intensification affected on peasant-farmer economies. They rightly admonished farmers for their use of fertilizers, arguing “that a more rational use of natural manure would produce substantial increases in arable yields.” Furthermore, the “continued concentration on the cultivation of grain” could only lead “to a relative shortage of land devoted to fodder crops, which meant that too little stock, and with it natural sources of

²⁴⁵ Bauer, “Economic Adjustments in Bavaria,” p. 266.

²⁴⁶ Robert Moeller, ed., *Peasants and Lords in Modern Germany* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), p. 120.

²⁴⁷ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” pp. 167-169. Besides increased expenses for mechanizing, Bavarian peasant-farmers still suffered from steep taxes levied on rural producers. “In addition,” to quote Farr, “many Bavarian peasants were still paying levies imposed on their predecessors during the peasant ‘emancipation’ (Bauernbefreiung), and some were even paying for obligations which had supposedly been abolished without compensation. In 1898 587,494 of the 839,380 farmers in Bavaria (excluding Palatinate) were paying annuities which totaled over fourteen million Marks. A further six to seven million Marks per year were being raised from a range of minor village and church levies which had not been abolished in 1848; although the proceeds were relatively minor they all contributed to a situation in which rural inhabitants were paying an annual sum in excess of twenty million Marks in post-feudal obligations.” Finally, many farmers were plagued “by the increasing levels of indebtedness on peasant holdings, much of it the result of the speculation in agriculture property which had accompanied the mid-century boom, when land had been purchased and resold for sums which rarely corresponded to the level of return which could have been realized from it.”

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 169.

fertilizer, was retained by peasant-farmers.”²⁴⁹ In the long run, intensification would only damage the peasant-farmers’ source of nourishment.

However, “this insistence by officials” writes Ian Farr, “that peasant-farmers should help themselves may help to explain why the Bavarian government was rather tardy in ensuring a suitable source of credit.”²⁵⁰ Other than insults, the government did little to stop or curb the moving trend toward agricultural intensification. Neither did they identify or address the demand and supply of urban markets as the source of that problem. Either way, peasant-farmers perceived the acute lack of credit available to them; they also understood their precarious economic situation. Where peasant-farmers could avoid outright starvation, to compete in a very competitive market, to avoid going under, they had to change their methods of farming. To do this, besides additional fertilizer, they desperately needed capital to expand production during a time when traditional sources of credit, such as banks, would not usually loan to peasant-farmers.

In the face of a chronic shortage of funds, by the late-19th century, peasant-farmers began to collectivize their resources. Where independent credit cooperatives first appeared in Lower Franconia in the late 1870’s, by the early 1890’s, they were spreading rapidly throughout the state. Between 1894 and 1896, the Bavarian federation of agricultural loan associations (*Landesverbandlandwirtschaftlicher Darlehenskassenvereine*) exploded in membership, jumping from 134 affiliations to 1,154. If one includes the unaffiliated cooperatives, membership in Bavaria hovered around 115,000. By 1903, that number had doubled again.²⁵¹ Where the rising popularity of cooperatives certainly reflected an increase in political activity among peasant-farmers, this trend also shows how they reacted to economic innovations in the late-19th

²⁴⁹ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 169.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 170.

²⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 172-173.

century.²⁵² As Farr puts it, “[cooperative] expansion could not have taken place if there had been a persistent peasant resistance to such innovations.”

In many cases, communities *did* regard cooperatives with understandable skepticism at first, “especially in communities which enjoyed only limited access to the main lines of communication.” In short, the more isolated communities tended to avoid initiatives in collectivization, considering the “variety of challenges” that collectives presented to “customary practices, as well as to individual and collective sentiments.” But then, improving communications and the success of the cooperatives only eroded resistance as the doubts of peasant-farming communities evaporated and farmers learned to appreciate the advantages of cooperative management.²⁵³

Besides more available credit, cooperatives also appealed to peasant-farmers by offering services, including “rental schemes for heavy and expensive machinery” which would otherwise have remained beyond the means of peasant-farmers. Looking at the figures again, the number of competitive steam-threshing cooperatives, for example, doubled between 1890 and 1902.

²⁵² Besides Farr’s oft-cited article, for more on the very important aspect of political activity among cooperatives, see Robert Moeller, *German Peasants and Agrarian Politics, 1914-1924: The Rhineland and Westphalia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

²⁵³ Specifically, Farr points out that “every member of a *Raiffeisen* cooperative had to share in the unlimited liability for all the commitments and obligations of the association and its creditors. Although potentially risky, this type of liability proved extremely workable, especially if the activities of any one association were confined to a natural social unit such as a village or parish. The personal circumstances of a debtor could thus be assessed. Loans were only made to members of the cooperatives, and normally, for a relatively short period to encourage regular repayments and sensible deployment of the credit given. Security for a loan was guaranteed by another individual standing surety. The problems which usually accompanied transactions between individuals were eliminated by the mediating role of the cooperative. The submission of a balance sheet to every annual general meeting of the association helped to guarantee financial probity and prevented reckless speculation with the cooperative’s assets. Given these provisions, considerable trust had to be vested in those responsible for the cooperative’s day-to-day operations... It would scarcely have been surprising, then, if it took peasant some time to be convinced of the viability, effectiveness and reliability of a cooperative’s operations.” Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” pp. 175-176.

Individual membership in these organizations tripled to over 16,000 in the same time period.²⁵⁴

Returning to the dairy prospects of the Allgäu region, cooperatives such as the Allgäu Dairy Association, whose membership jumped from 257 in 1887 to 5,576 in 1909, ensured that farmers met the hygiene standards of urban markets by implementing the necessary improvements in technology.

The rise in cattle-breeding cooperatives corresponded to the growing popularity of cattle-breeding among peasant-farmers who not only needed more fertilizer, but understood the advantages in selling meat to urban markets. Here too, inexperienced farmers who looked to find advantages in the market discovered that they could turn to cooperatives for assistance. Not only could cooperatives make “arrangements for the collective purchase of seed, fertilizer, machinery and other farm requirements,” they could also “employ skilled buyers and exploit the potential for large discounts on bulk orders.”²⁵⁵ And as farmers’ interests became more market-oriented they grew simultaneously dependent on middle-men to ensure that their produce made it to market.²⁵⁶ Expectedly, cooperatives provided assistance in this area as well, securing for “their participants cheaper freight costs” which “enhanced the selling prices and reduced unnecessary overheads.”²⁵⁷

The numbers, once again, prove the popularity of cooperative trading. Between 1896 and 1898, specialized cooperatives, credit unions, the district committees of the Agricultural

²⁵⁴ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 175. Also see Michael Henker, et al., *Bauern in Bayern: Von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1992), p. 208.

²⁵⁵ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 175.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 176. Stadtrat Levin, writing in 1913, points out that “as a general thing it does not pay the producers of the less immediate neighborhood to attend the market personally, and so arise middlemen, who buy the products in the country and offer them on the market. Out of this trade of the middlemen little by little a wholesale business has arisen, which has been extended to the entire country and foreign lands, for provisioning the larger cities has become of more and more importance, even an essential factor. Therefore there will be found at the large markets middlemen and wholesalers as well as producers.” Stadtrat Levin, “Wholesale Terminal Markets in Germany and Their Effect on Food Costs and Conservation,” p. 155.

²⁵⁷ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 175.

Association, and a variety of non-affiliated local groups contributed a 4.5 million Mark increase in the value of collective purchases “while the value of agricultural produce sold cooperatively rose from 2.2 to 6.3 million Marks.” In 1902, the overall trade of grains, and the procurement of fertilizers, feed and machinery exceeded 42 million Marks, a 260 percent increase in four years. Obviously, as Farr points out, “when compared to the disadvantages of selling locally, the drawbacks and expense incurred by reliance on middle-men were probably compensated for by the prospect of earning a better return in a wider market.”²⁵⁸

Obviously perhaps, efficiently feeding wider markets did nothing to sate the demands of those who only saw profit in continued expansion. The growth of cooperative activity in rural Bavaria suggests that peasant-farmers willingly made dramatic changes in their economy for the sake of making a higher profit. But where Hubert Bauer could directly link Bavaria’s economic prosperity to the conditions of its soil, changing conditions in the urban market places of Bavaria were what ultimately instigated changes in the economy and culture of the Bavarian countryside; and as the 19th century progressed, urban markets only expanded production and improved their means of distribution, intent on matching both the growing demand of urban consumers and the supply of rural providers.²⁵⁹

By the late-19th century, for example, at least twenty German cities had constructed more modern market halls where urban residents could purchase groceries. Designed with

²⁵⁸ Farr, “Farmers’ Cooperatives in Bavaria,” p. 176.

²⁵⁹ For more on traditional urban grocery markets, see Han-Jürgen Teuteberg’s essay, “Cultivation, Markets, and the Rise of Vegetable Consumption in German Towns, 1850-1913,” found in Hietala and Vahtikari, *The Landscape of Food*, pp. 30-46. Stadtrat Levin also provides an interesting list of what vendors could legally sell in German markets under the regulation of Title IV of the *Reichsgewerbeordnung*: “The use of markets as well as buying and selling in them is open to everyone with equal facilities. Articles of sale at the weekly markets are: 1) Natural products in their raw state with the exception of the larger animals. 2) Manufactured articles which are products in immediate connection of agriculture, forestry, gardening, fruit-raising or fish-culture, or as incidental occupations of the country people of the neighborhood or by daily wage-laborers, except intoxicating drinks. 3) Fresh provisions of all sorts.” See Levin, “Wholesale Terminal Markets in Germany and Their Effect on Food Costs and Conservation,” p. 154.

convenience and practicality in mind, these new markets “kept away heat, rain, cold and even dust, were centrally heated, illuminated and ventilated... had their own water supply and cleaning service” and included in their designs, “artificial refrigeration techniques [that] made the preservation of highly perishable food possible.” Opened in 1912, Munich’s 9000 square meter *Großmarkthalle* epitomized the design and utility of modern market halls. Residents and city-leadership alike prided themselves on a structure that cities around Europe and even the United States praised and wanted to emulate.²⁶⁰ Tellingly, for the sake of convenience, railroad tracks ran right up to the actual structure of the *Großmarkthalle*. The *Großmarkthalle*, however, was only one of several large markets that rural Bavaria supplied with wares. Beyond groceries, Munich’s booming brewing industry and the modern, municipal slaughterhouse, the *Schlacht- und Viehhof*, played important roles in the economy of the city and the consumption of agricultural goods. In all of these cases, railroads were of course critical to supply and distribution, underwriting and interconnecting the prosperity of both rural and urban markets.

However, railroads did more than just annihilate time and space for the convenience of consumers and producers. More importantly, they also introduced a gradual annihilation of identities once associated with that space. To quote Robert Schivelbusch, places “lost their old sense of local identity, formerly determined by the spaces between them”; And where places lost their identity, so too did the people. “The isolation of localities,” to quote Schivelbusch again, “which was created by spatial distance, was the very essence of their identity, their self-assured and complacent individuality... Thirty years later... that kind of consciousness was

²⁶⁰ Friedrich Prinz and Marita Krauss, *München — Musenstadt mit Hinterhöfen: Die Prinzregenzzeit, 1886-1912* (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1988), p. 187.

unrealistic.”²⁶¹ Because people could so easily travel to or from a place, because their attachments to place became less grounded, places began to lose their unique value, becoming in the minds of farmers and speculators alike, a commodity almost as fluid as the grain that passed through elevators of the Great Midwest.²⁶² Where connectivity transformed the way in which people understood their relationship with a place, it also changed the relationship between urban and rural spheres. And waiting on the other end of the railroads were the various socio-economic mechanisms particular to the city — the market-halls, the breweries, the slaughterhouses — which slowly facilitated rural communities in their abandonment of traditional agriculture for the competitive promises of a market-oriented world.

Specifically, pre-modern and early-modern Munich had simply served as an important outpost in the salt trade and as the capital of Bavaria. Modern Munich, however, metamorphosed into the “combustion point for political, economic, cultural, and social life of the surrounding countryside,” serving as the climax and exemplary through which “little communities defined their own character.”²⁶³ By the turn of the 20th century, Munich, along with Augsburg and Nuremberg, had become Bavaria’s most important industrial centers. Besides having the largest population of these three cities, Munich also served as the *Residenzstadt* of the Wittelsbach family and a chief receiver of their largesse. That being said, the city’s economic shift toward industrialization did not sustain Munich’s population boom

²⁶¹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1986), p. 38.

²⁶² To quote Cronon again: “The elevators [of the Midwest] effectively created a new form of money, secured not by gold but by grain. Elevator receipts, as traded on the floor of ‘Change, accomplished the transmutation of one of humanity’s oldest foods, obscuring its physical identity and displacing it into the symbolic world of capital.” Taken from *Nature’s Metropolis*, p. 120.

²⁶³ Richard Bauer, ed., *Geschichte der Stadt München* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992), p. 307.

alone.²⁶⁴ The long traditions of art and education drew quite a few people to the city. Growth naturally required infrastructure as well, regardless of what source ignited the city's economic swell, and infrastructure required laborers. By 1900, over fifty percent of Munich's residents came from within the kingdom of Bavaria. Of that number, three-fourths came from the communities of the Bavarian countryside. Most of the young men searched for employment as day-laborers or as workers in one of the city's factories; women usually entered domestic service.²⁶⁵ Where many of these people moved to the right side of the Isar to the districts of Au, Haidhausen, and Giesing, or to the newer industrial sectors to the north, appropriately, a number also searched for housing near the city's central rail station (*Hauptbahnhof*) located in the Westend.²⁶⁶

Clearly, the construction of railroads — the iron veins and arteries of a modern state — played a large role in the modernization of Munich and Bavaria. The Bavarian government, the same government that so quickly admonished peasant-farmers for their use of manure, took an early lead in the construction of rail lines within the state. In 1844, the state took over the Munich-Augsburg line under the auspices of the newly organized Royal Bavarian State Railway (Königlich Bayrischen Staatseisenbahn), laying the cornerstone for their state-controlled network of rail lines. Though the state government would continue to encourage the construction of private lines for special purposes, they would eventually take control of all the major lines, regarding "the railways as analogous to the postal service, a public institution under governmental aegis in which employees would wear Bavarian uniforms, drive Bavarian engines

²⁶⁴ In 1846, Munich's population totaled approximately 126,00 residents. By 1871, the population had jumped to almost 193,000. By 1900 it surpassed 500,000. Statistics on Oberbayern taken from *Die Gemeinden Bayern nach dem Gebietsstand 25. Mai 1987: Die Einwohnerzahlen der Gemeinden Bayerns und die Änderungen im Bestand und Gebiet von 1840 bis 1987. Heft 451 der Beiträge zur Statistik Bayerns* (Munich, 1991).

²⁶⁵ Bauer, *Geschichte der Stadt München*, p. 308.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 309-310.

(from the Maffei locomotive plant near Munich), punch Bavarian tickets, and speak with a strong Bavarian accent.”²⁶⁷ Following the takeover of the Munich-Augsburg line, the state proceeded by constructing several other lines between Bavaria’s major cities. By 1854, they managed nearly 1000 kilometers of track.²⁶⁸ By 1900, not only had the rail lines grown to 8,000 kilometers, indeed, the *Staats-Eisenbahn* accounted for 39 percent of the state’s revenue, “thereby enabling the regime to finance its bureaucracy, retire its debts, and ease the growing burden of providing increased salaries and pensions for its employees.”²⁶⁹

Meanwhile, Munich became both the center of the railroad industry in Bavaria and also the kingdom’s most important transportation and distribution hub. Indeed, the *Eisenbahner*, those who worked for the railway, became one of the largest groups of workers in Munich as the city’s population continued to soar.²⁷⁰ The Royal Bavarian Railways did more than just help in bringing twelve thousand new residents to Munich every year however.²⁷¹ They also played a vital role in *sustaining* the population of the city and Bavaria as a whole.²⁷² As the century

²⁶⁷ Allan Mitchell, *The Great Train Race: Railways and the Franco-German Rivalry, 1815-1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), p. 45.

²⁶⁸ Günther Scheingraber, *Die Königlich Bayerischen Staatseisenbahnen: Ihre Lokomotiven und Wagen in Wort und Bild* (Stuttgart: Franck’sche Verlagshandlung, 1975), p. 7.

²⁶⁹ Rainer Fremdling, Ruth Federspiel, and Andreas Kunz, *Statistik der Eisenbahnen in Deutschland, 1835-1989* (Sankt Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1995), pp. 132-133; Mitchell, *The Great Train Race*, p. 223.

²⁷⁰ Friedrich Prinz and Marita Krauss, *München — Musenstadt mit Hinterhöfen: Die Prinzregenzzeit, 1886-1912* (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1988), p. 127. Allan Mitchell writes, “Although exact calculations are admittedly impossible, one must also attempt to conceive of this remarkable expansion [in railroad construction] in terms of the people involved: the hundreds of individuals — executives, employees, workers, miners — whose lives were thrust into the maelstrom of industry, all of whom needed to be housed, clothed, and nourished. Ideally, then, our account should go on to analyze the statistics of growth in the building trades, the textile industry, and agriculture. But this exercise is best left to the econometricians. Whatever their reckoning, they would surely agree that railways in every instance played a stellar role, whether in the more rapid distribution of cement and wood, of wool and cotton, or of wheat and wine.” Taken from Allan Mitchell, *The Great Train Race*, p. 57.

²⁷¹ Prinz and Krauss, *München*, p. 12. For the numbers of people transported annually by the Königlich Bayerischen Staatseisenbahn, see tables provided by Scheingraber, *Die Königlich Bayerische Staatseisenbahn*, pp. 384-387. For the Ostbahn, which was taken over by KBS in 1875, see pp. 388-389. Tables and numbers for the Pfälzische Ludwigsbahn and other smaller railways in Bavaria are also provided on subsequent pages.

²⁷² Stadtrat Levin points out that “the markets in the larger cities often provide not only for their own population, but are also forwarding centers for the cities in their neighborhood whose markets they supply with wares. Such forwarding centers are scattered over all Germany. Here and there the markets have grown to have such an

progressed, the KBS transported ever-growing volumes of freight. In 1870, for example, they moved approximately two million tons of commodity goods, accruing a revenue of 23 million marks for the transportation of commodities alone. Thirty years later, they moved over twenty-one million tons of commodity goods and an additional four-hundred thousand ton of cattle, taking in over a billion marks for these services.²⁷³ By comparison, in 1900, they took in half as much on the sale of passenger tickets, moving over 45 million passengers.

Only a few examples are necessary to link the growth of markets back to the railroads. Predating Munich's *Großmarkthalle* by three decades, railroad branch lines connected directly to the Munich's municipal modern slaughterhouse, the *Schlacht- und Viehhof*, which the city opened in 1878. Before the construction of the *Schlacht- und Viehhof*, only two small slaughtering facilities had existed in Munich. Thereafter, under the auspices of regulating hygiene standards; convenience and expediency ensured that the city's modern slaughterhouse sat directly on the rail lines.²⁷⁴ Similarly, Munich's many breweries also embraced *Industrialismus* to meet the demands of a growing market. Gabriel Sedlmayr's Spaten-brauerei, for example, exported 6,500 barrels of beer in 1860/61. In 1872/73, they exported 66,500 thousand barrels.²⁷⁵ With both the breweries and the slaughterhouse, the railroads assisted in supplying the exponentially necessary agricultural products. Bavaria's farmers, the suppliers who fed these machines, willingly adapted and obliged.

exceptional importance that on account of their position they have become chief storage and exchange places for special articles and send these articles to all parts of the interior. Hamburg is such a center for oversea articles, Munich for wares from south European lands." Taken from Stadtrat Levin, "Wholesale Terminal Markets in Germany and Their Effect on Food Costs and Conservation" (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 50, Reducing the Cost of Food Distribution. (Nov., 1913), pp. 153-165), pp. 156-157.

²⁷³ Scheingraber, *Die Königlich Bayerische Staatseisenbahn*, pp. 500-503.

²⁷⁴ Canan-Aybüken Aybar, *Geschichte des Schlacht- und Viehhofes München* (Munich: Institut für Hygiene und Technologie der Lebensmittel tierischen Ursprungs der Tierärztlichen Fakultät der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 2005), pp 183-185; p 67; p. 84.

²⁷⁵ Wolfgang Behringer, *Die Spaten-Brauerei, 1397-1997: Die Geschichte eines Münchner Unternehmens vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1991), p. 179.

Like the *Großmarkthalle*, the designers of the *Schlacht- und Viehhof* followed a plan of rationalization that ensured maximum efficiency for suppliers, producers, and consumers alike. Besides proximity to the rail lines and a built-in marketplace, using Dresden's *Markthalle* as an example, Munich's *Schlacht- und Viehhof* included insulated storage spaces that protected animals and allowed for them to remain overnight. Likewise, the necessary equipment for feeding and watering the animals was included. Unsold animals would continuously return to the market until a buyer purchased them. By 1880, the *Viehhof* could house approximately 900 animals within its walls with additional room outside that provided an additional 570 individual spaces. This number did not include the small-*Viehhof*, which provided additional space for approximately 2,500 pigs.

For slaughtering, animals were herded into one of six buildings — three for large livestock, two for small livestock, and one for pigs — where hundreds of butchers stationed in individual cells worked on carcasses.²⁷⁶ Apparently the system worked. In 1872, before the construction of the *Schlacht- und Viehhof*, Munich's butchers slaughtered between 560 and 865 large livestock per week. In the same year, they slaughtered anywhere between 400 and 1300 small livestock per day. In 1872 and 1873, approximately 46,000 and 51,500 pigs were slaughtered for the market.²⁷⁷ In 1879, the first year after the *Schlacht- und Viehhof* opened, the municipal slaughterhouse took in a total of 315,000 animals. Of that number, it slaughtered 298,000. By 1914, they took on 825,000 animals, slaughtering 706,000.²⁷⁸ In 1898, after twenty

²⁷⁶ Aybar, *Geschichte des Schlacht- und Viehhofes München*, pp. 66-71. Large livestock included oxen and cattle, bulls and cows. Small livestock generally referred to calves, sheep, goats, deer, and unless otherwise specified, swine. See p. 90. Also, Aybar later points out that 80-90 percent of the large livestock that the Munich slaughterhouse processed came from Bavaria. Roughly 50 percent of the swine came from Bavaria, with the other 50 percent originating in Austria and Hungary. See p. 96.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 73-78.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 98.

years of operation, a steam-operated cool house was constructed to store the ever rising amount of meat that was being prepared. By the turn of the century, only Berlin and Hamburg prepared more meat than the Munich slaughterhouse.²⁷⁹

The Spaten Brewery, one of Munich's major beer manufacturers and one of the largest in Europe, followed a similar trajectory. Flush with profits and with his eye on expansion, Spaten's owner, Gabriel Sedlmayr, purchased a large piece of property in 1851 on the western end of Mars street, located on the edge of the city. Construction of a new *Großbrauerei* began immediately; profits soon followed. During the first year of operation, the new brewery processed 7,778 bushels of malts with the old brewery still processing 2,590 bushels. By the following year, the original brewery had all but shut down, processing only 363 bushels of malts. Meanwhile, the new brewery processed 11,788 bushels, already an increase of the previous year's total malt consumption. By 1854/1855, when the Mars street operation processed 13,713 bushels, Sedlmayr decided to expand production yet again, adding new buildings to the existing Mars street brewery and enlarging the capacity of existing ones. 1864 saw further construction and expansion, with Sedlmayr purchasing additional land south of Mars street.²⁸⁰ After the 1860s, the increase in railroad construction throughout Bavaria saw to it that urban beer production would increase exponentially. By the 1890s, Spaten began to look beyond Bavarian markets, exporting to Britain and the United States not only its beer, but the Oktoberfest experience of dining in a Bavarian Restaurant!²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Aybar, *Geschichte des Schlacht- und Viehhofes München*, p. 96.

²⁸⁰ Behringer, *Die Spaten-Brauerei, 1397-1997*, pp. 182-194

²⁸¹ To quote Behringer, Spaten "went on the offensive" in 1894, opening several pubs in London: "Bavarian Restaurant", "Imperial Restaurant", "Spaten Luncheon Bar", and "Spaten Buffet". Indeed, by 1900, Spaten even had a restaurant on Piccadilly circus. See p. 239.

Though Bavaria's peasant-farmers rarely sold their wares on an international market, one can see how their goods moved from the countryside and into wider markets. Having now traveled rapidly up and down the Bavarian economy, from soil to cattle, from railroads to mechanization and industrial expansion, in conclusion, one should also see how urban prosperity in Munich would have been impossible without the Bavarian peasant-farmers, a class of seemingly changeless people whose methods and way of life appeared to starkly contrast against the modern city. However, to say that the peasant-farmers bogged down in their ancient ways while the city left them behind, would paint an inaccurate picture of the peasant-farmer's experience with modernity.²⁸² Indeed, to say that the peasant-farmers remained virtually changeless during the late-19th century or that they simply resisted change because that is what peasants always did, would lend credence to what Nazi ideologues later claimed about the peasants: that they epitomized a pre-modern ideal of *das Volk* because they remained untainted by modernity by remaining faithful to the soil. On the flip-side, neither did the industrial-capitalist economy of late-19th century Bavaria turn peasant-farmers into the slaves of urban capitalists and consumers. Rather, a more accurate picture, briefly outlined in this chapter, shows how the city as an engine of change engaged with a populace of peasant-farmers-turned-participants; willing participants who adapted for the sake of bettering their own circumstances; all the while underwriting the greater prosperity of urban centers like Munich by their labor with the soil.

Bettering their own circumstances came at a cost however. An English traveler by the name of Arthur Bell, traveling by train into Nuremberg in 1905, noticed that the closer he moved

²⁸² Taken from Donald Schilling, "Politics in a New Key: The Late Nineteenth-Century Transformation of Politics in Northern Bavaria" (*German Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1. (Feb., 1994), pp. 33-57), p. 36.

toward the metropolis, the more it seemed that he was leaving an ancient world and entering an all-consuming fiery furnace of change:

The fields and pastures, the vineyards and hops plantations, undivided by hedges, are enlivened with groups of peasants. Men, women, and children, all equally hard at work, are to be seen toiling in primitive fashion with clumsy agricultural instruments, such as the hand-sickle, long since abandoned elsewhere... On the well kept roads barefoot women walk to and from their little holdings, bending beneath burdens far too heavy for them, or dragging loads of sticks and fodder in handcarts of the roughest description... As the train nears Furth, the premonition of the approaching destruction of all that is primitive and rural becomes ever more accentuated, and it is through a heavy pall of smoke, between rows of unsightly houses, that the final stage of the journey is performed, so that when Nuremberg itself is entered, the mind is to some extent prepared for the shock of finding that much lauded medieval city is, after all, thoroughly modernized.²⁸³

What, again, was the city exactly destroying? According to Bell, it destroyed “all that is primitive and rural.” Walther Darré, among others, would have said virtually the same thing.²⁸⁴ Having now looked at the Bavarian peasant-farmers and how they participated in a system that produced such great change, one can safely say that the modern city alone did not undermine the culture of peasant-farmers. In fact, knowingly or unknowingly, complicit peasant-farmers worked very hard at undermining it themselves.

In the closing chapter of his study of colonial New England, William Cronon points out that Native Americans responded to the threat of encroaching Europeans with a great deal of flexibility, though it was a flexibility “increasingly constrained by colonial dominance.” Bavaria’s peasant-farmers, reacting to the dominance of urban interests in the 19th century, reacted in much the same way. In either case, both groups modified the ways in which they

²⁸³ Schilling, “Politics in a New Key: The Late Nineteenth-Century Transformation of Politics in Northern Bavaria,” p. 36.

²⁸⁴ To quote Adam Tooze, “the great enemies of the Germanic peasantry had always been rootless nomadic elements and the most dangerous of these were the Jews. The modern form of nomadism was the rootless population of the cities.” Therefore, in the mind of the Nazis at least, “the crisis afflicting the German peasantry by the early twentieth century was the result of long-term attack and erosion by rootless Jewish influences.” Taken from Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Viking, 2006), p. 172.

obtained their livelihoods — their interaction with the landscape and with their neighbors — while managing to hold onto their political and cultural identities. By ceasing to live as their ancestors had done, they did not necessarily cease to be Narragansett tribesmen or Bavarian peasant-farmers. However, they did become Narragansett tribesmen and Bavarian peasant-farmers with very different relationships to the ecosystems in which they lived. Ultimately, this *modified* their political and cultural identities, identities that time and memory had woven into the landscape. Therefore they could continue to define themselves as set apart, “people resisting full incorporation into the world of their conquerors,” long after that ceased to be the case; and though “the material conditions which had allowed them to practice their annual journey through the seasons no longer existed,” they themselves remained, “however much their communities and economies had changed with their environment.”²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), pp. 162-164.

CONCLUSION

IX. Rooted in the Dark of the Earth

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

- Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

— Siegfried Sassoon

Hans Grässer, the city planner for Munich, wrote in 1917, that “one must develop a city like one would ponder and know each room of a domestic construction, knowing where one will put the front hall, the living rooms, the pantries, the kitchen, and the utility rooms, etc., and placing the location of a city’s factories similarly.”²⁸⁶ For the city of Munich, and most any German city, this meant putting industries on the outskirts of town on more readily available land, where smoking chimneys would not disturb the carefully maintained picture of a *Kunststadt*.²⁸⁷ To maintain the illusion of beauty and unaffected prosperity, one simply needed to remove from one’s midst that which was ugly, that which was destroying. Similarly, twenty-five years later, the citizens of Munich could ignore the factories of death right up the road in Dachau. By that point, apparently, not only was the “German factory” absorbing the world, to quote one World War One combatant, it was enveloping it in technical perfection and practical skills that encouraged illusion to the highest degree.²⁸⁸

Through the course of the 19th century and into the years preceding the First World War, Bavarian peasant-farmers’ sustainable agriculture slowly but drastically changed. Because they

²⁸⁶ Friedrich Prinz and Marita Krauss, *München — Musenstadt mit Hinterhöfen: Die Prinzregenzzeit, 1886-1912* (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1988), p. 74.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁸⁸ Modris Ecksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), pp. 222-223.

believed that they could escape the drudgeries of work and make a profit through an economy that revolved around illusory and distant markets instead of necessity, Bavarian peasant-farming communities abandoned sustainable agriculture. Where an economy of necessity forced pre-modern and early-modern Bavarian peasant-farmers into a sustainable relationship with the land through agriculture, the economy of markets and capital that peasant-farming communities discovered on the steel rails, transformed that relationship. The degree to which Bavaria's peasant-farmers changed their methods of farming, the degree to which they changed their relationships with the land and urban markets, suggests that they willingly adapted.

Though the railroads provided more immediate access to the wider world, they did not necessarily bring the world 'closer together'.²⁸⁹ Even though people and goods could now travel greater distances in less time, people found themselves more separated from a sense of place than ever before; and hence, according to Ferdinand Tönnies, separated from one another. Paul Fussell, writing about the experience of British soldiers in the First World War, points out the absurdity of proximity that soldiers experienced in the trenches. Though they died in the muck of Northern France, home, Britain, was not that distant. Trains, among many other technologies, made that proximity deceptively real. "Just seventy miles from 'this stinking world of sticky trickling earth' was the rich plush of London theater seats and the perfume, alcohol, and cigar

²⁸⁹ Raymond Dominick provides another example in the character of Germany's hydro-electric companies: "Alongside old practices whose damaging consequences intensified, new technologies created completely unprecedented problems. Consider just one battalion in this army of offenders, the electric industry. To produce hydro-electric power, visual splendors like the Walchensee and the rapids of the Rhine at Laufenberg were profaned, and mile after mile of more mundane waterways like the Isar River north of Munich were reduced to straightened canals lined with concrete and punctuated with ugly and obstructing dams. Coal-fired power plants probably did even more damage. Not only did they subject their neighborhoods to unbearable air and noise pollution; the mines that supplied their fuel chewed up the countryside, creating sinkholes, lowering water tables, and devouring vast quantities of clean water. In addition, the industry strung unsightly power lines all across the countryside, disfiguring countless picturesque vistas. And until the electric engineers finally agreed to install insulators on those lines, tens of thousands of birds seeking innocent repose on the wires perished from electrocution." Taken from Raymond Dominick, *The Environmental Movement in Germany: Prophets and Pioneers, 1871-1971* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 78.

smoke of the Café Royal.” One British soldier remarked in his diary, “Hard to believe. Impossible to believe. That other life, so near in time and distance, was something led by different men. Two lives that bore no relation to each other. That was what [all the soldiers] felt, the bloody lot of them.”²⁹⁰

Even though many commentators of modernity, including Tönnies, understood that technology somehow separated people from one another and undermined traditional identities, they did not really understand the key role that the landscape played in creating and sustaining communities; and how modern technology, though often good in its intent, too often separated communities from their crucial relationship with the land. The literature and letters of the *Auswanderung*, and the literature of Jeremias Gotthelf, both point to that crucial relationship with the land and how it shaped the identities of peasant-farming communities and bound them together in the first place. Looking then specifically at Bavarian peasant-farmers and their encounter with modern progress, one finds a class of people who at first shared in a nurturing relationship with the land *and* then how they began to alter that relationship by the late-19th century in an attempt to profit from growing urban markets.

One finds the same logic of profit, not sustainability, guiding Bavaria’s peasant-farming communities through the darkest hours of the First World War. “I’m not going to risk life and limb for the damned Prussians and big capitalists anymore,” one Bavarian soldier wrote in 1917.²⁹¹ Even so, that is exactly what Bavaria’s peasant-farming communities continued to do back home, because, by 1917, they continued to see profits in their participation with a market economy. For this reason, the ‘traditional sources of stability’ that Bavarian peasant-soldiers

²⁹⁰ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 64

²⁹¹ Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany 1914-1923*, trans. by Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 137.

supposedly retreated to by the end of the First World War could not have been the same traditional sources of stability experienced by pre-modern or even early-modern peasant-farmers. The values of peasant-farming communities in 1918 too closely followed the values of market capitalism for that to be true.

Tragically, the soldiers who fought in the First World War found themselves in a new and very specific relationship with the land. It was not, however, a healthy relationship; it was all that they could do to dig ever deeper into the embracing arms of the earth to hide from death. By this point, however, it was too late. Cutting into the earth would not save them; and technology, it seemed, only rained down a more hideous death. “What would you do if the war ended?” one soldier asks another in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Detering, the one farmer amongst the soldiers, replies: “I would go straight on with the harvesting.” “He is worried,” Paul Bäumer, the narrator, explains. “His wife has to look after the farm. They’ve already taken away two of his horses. Every day he reads the papers that come, to see whether it is raining in his little corner of Oldenburg. They haven’t brought the hay in yet.” Ultimately, Detering’s homesickness, his *Heimweh*, gets the better of him — he deserts and is caught attempting to return home. We are left to assume that military justice takes its course.²⁹²

²⁹² Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. by A.W. Wheen (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1929), pp. 84-85.

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