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Abstract:	<p>This dissertation investigates "geological" literature in the 19th century, and aims to describe a poetics of the earth sciences. Focusing on the work of Adalbert Stifter (1805-1868), whose literary experiments translate and transform scientific knowledge, the dissertation argues that the modern scientific approaches to the "history of the earth," primarily meteorology, geology, and biology, present complex and often contradictory narratives. Meteorological contingency, geological "deep time," and proto-ecological environmental thought call into question religious cosmogonies and modern anthropocentrism alike. In Stifter's stories and novels, scientific worlds without humans confront the anthropological conventions of an ordered literary tradition in surprising and productive ways, which may not resolve into a satisfying grand narrative of earth and humankind, but do point to an objective, impersonal tendency in modern literature that is often overlooked. At the same time, as a genre of writing, literary texts demonstrate a capacity for self-reflection that sheds light on the poetic structures of other forms of knowledge, both theoretical and practical. Situating Stifter within a larger discursive context that features authors such as Goethe, A. von Humboldt, C. G. Carus, Lyell, Viollet-le-Duc, Darwin and E. Haeckel, this study addresses epistemological, aesthetic and social issues that are central to 19th-century culture, from the concept of the event and the statistical collection, to the problem of time in the representation of landscape and the role of geology as a model for historical reconstructions, and finally, the problem of life, its genealogy and its milieu.</p>
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