

bringen.”⁴ Exact descriptions, concrete details, the “order of things,” an inventory: this characterization of Stifter’s prose has a strong tradition. Among literary critics, Stifter thus attracted a good deal of attention from those interested in phenomenology and empiricism.⁵

In a short, but highly insightful essay on Stifter’s *Naturdarstellung*, Wolfgang Preisendanz invokes this tradition of phenomenological or “ontological” readings, but then quickly puts it aside in order to ask a simple question: what is the narrative *function* of Stifter’s landscape descriptions? Citing a long passage from the novella *Kzensilber*, which describes children hiking to a hill near their home (*der Nußberg*), Preisendanz arrives at the preliminary conclusion that Stifter’s descriptions function as representations not of nature in and for itself, but as representations of the children’s process of observation and recognition: “Stifter thematisiert in seinen Schilderungen die Wahrnehmung als eine autonome Bewußtseinsart mit, seine Naturdarstellung impliziert stets die Subjektivität als die Perspektive, in der Natur als objektive Wirklichkeit erscheint.”⁶ Stifter’s narratives thus do not represent nature (*Naturdarstellung*), but rather catalogue an experience. His descriptions function as an “Index menschlicher Wirklichkeitserfahrung,” an index that privileges not things themselves, but rather a process of recognition that contains at least two moments: first obscurity, then clarity. As Preisendanz argues, stories such as *Der Hagestolz*, *Brigitta*, *Zwei Schwestern*, and

⁴ Helmut Bachmaier, “Nachwort,” in: Adalbert Stifter, *Bunte Steine* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1994) 363.

⁵ Wilhelm Dehn, *Ding und Vernunft*; Hans Dietrich Irmscher, *Adalbert Stifter: Wirklichkeitserfahrung und gegenständliche Dichtung*; more recently, Birgit Ehlbeck, *Denken wie der Wald*.

⁶ Preisendanz, 377.

Kalkstein all follow a narrative model of “fortschreitender Enthüllung” that reminds one “unweigerlich an die analytische Technik des Kriminalromans.” Like the analytic detective novel, which begins with a crime that needs to be “solved,” Stifter’s narratives thus open up a tension between the unknown and the known, and recounts the path from the former to the latter: “Dieser Weg ist es doch, der immer wieder die eigentliche Erzählspannung stiftet.”⁷

In highlighting Stifter’s emphasis on the process of recognition and subjective perspective of his narrators, Preisendanz also situates Stifter’s landscape descriptions historically: against all appearances, Stifter’s landscapes do *not* belong to the epoch of *ut pictura poesis*. Instead, Stifter’s focus on the subjective apprehension of landscape belongs in a Romantic tradition best represented by texts such as Friedrich Schiller’s book review “Über Matthissons Gedichte” (1794), and Jean Paul’s writings on landscape.⁸ Jean Paul, with whom Stifter is often compared,⁹ expresses the crux of this Romantic theory of landscape poetry as follows: “Wir sehen die ganze Natur nur mit den Augen der epischen Spieler.”¹⁰ This principle not only makes the description of nature *interesting*—in a literal sense, we take interest in the character, and hence the setting as

⁷ *Ibid.*, 391. Selge comes to the same conclusion in his analysis of *Die Schwestern/Zwei Schwestern*, 37-48. Cf. also Claudia Albes, *Der Spaziergang als Erzählmodell* (Tübingen: Francke, 1999) 119-164, and Albrecht Koschorke, “Das Buchstabierte Panorama: Zu einer Passage in Stifters Erzählung ‘Granit’.” *VASILO* 38, no. 1/2 (1989): 3-13, both of which address the pedagogical walk through the countryside in *Granit*.

⁸ On Jean Paul’s conception of landscape, see Eckart Goebel, *Am Ufer der zweiten Welt: Jean Pauls ‘Poetische Landschaftsmalerei’* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1999).

⁹ One of the first reviewers of Stifter’s early story *Die Feldblumen*, T.F. Lumau, notes the similarity: “Die Darstellung erinnert zunächst an Leopold Schäfer, noch mehr aber an Jean Paul,” in: Enzinger, 31.

¹⁰ Jean Paul, “Poetische Landschaftsmalerei,” *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (§80), ed. Norbert Miller (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1990) 289.

well, but it also corresponds to the demands of a critical philosophy that emphasizes the importance of subjectivity: “Wie spielt der Mensch mit der Welt um sich und kleidet sie schnell in die Gespinste seines Innern um!”¹¹ Stifter, in turn, will write in *Der Hochwald*: “und doch ist es zuletzt wieder die Seele allein, die all ihre innere Größe hinaus in das Symbol der Natur legt” (*HKGA* 1,1 224).¹²

Preisendanz’s analysis is satisfying because it effectively shows the poetic function of Stifter’s descriptions and thus brings it in line with the predominant poetics of his century, not only Jean Paul, but ultimately Stifter’s realist contemporaries. Understood as subjective or “focalized” descriptions, Stifter’s landscapes resemble the milieus that Erich Auerbach famously identified as the trademark of 19th-century literary realism.¹³ On the other hand, Preisendanz’s reading does little to account for the aberrant quality of Stifter’s extensive descriptions that has left such an impression on most readers. As the critic himself admits, Stifter’s texts— especially after his “Jean-Paulian” early writings—do tend to represent nature in its own right: “In zunehmenden Grad hört die Natur auf, Reflex des Seelischen zu sein, erscheint eine gleichsam ‘entromantisierte’ Natur.” Though he never indulges in such descriptions exclusively, that is, without regard to his literary poetics, Stifter *is* interested in representations of nature itself, “die Schilderung autonomer Naturvorgänge und Naturerscheinungen.”¹⁴ Indeed, works based on such descriptions such as Alexander von Humboldt’s *Ansichten der Natur* (1808) or

¹¹ *Siebenkäs*, I, 3. Cited in Preisendanz, 384.

¹² For more on the symbol of nature, see Hee-Ju Kim, “Natur als Seelengleichnis: Zur Dekonstruktion des Natur-Kultur-Dualismus in Adalbert Stifters *Hochwald*,” in: *Ordnung – Raum – Ritual*, ed. Becker and Grätz (Heidelberg: Winter 2007) 69-100.

¹³ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Tübingen: Francke, 2001) 422-459.

¹⁴ Preisendanz, 387.

Carl Vogel's *Geographische Landschaftsbilder* (1851) occupy an important place in Stifter's library.¹⁵

These works functionalize the concept of landscape for scientific *and* aesthetic purposes. In Humboldt's formulation: "Überblick der Natur im Grossen, Beweis von dem Zusammenwirken der Kräfte, Erneuerung des Genusses, den die unmittelbare Ansicht dem fühlenden Menschen gewährt – sind die Zwecke, nach denen ich strebe."¹⁶ Humboldt views these goals as complementary, and indeed, integral to each other. The unity of nature and the nexus of forces are real, but only the researcher who also "feels" this unity can apprehend them. The *Naturgemälde* not only presents scientific knowledge synthetically, but it is a synthesis, won from the "unmittelbare Ansicht," that first makes the unity of this knowledge apparent. Humboldt is also not alone in his desire for an "aestheticized science" of landscapes:¹⁷ Carl Gustav Carus, author of *Neun Briefe über Landschaftsmalerei* (1831) and *Zwölf Briefe über das Erdleben* (1841), pleads for a new practice of scientific *Erdlebenkunst*,¹⁸ the Austrian geologist Friedrich Simony, a friend

¹⁵ Both literally, see Erwin Streitfeld, "Aus Adalbert Stifers Bibliothek," *Jahrbuch der Raabe-Gesellschaft* 18 (2010): 103-148, and in the fictional library of *Der Nachsommer*, in which Humboldt is the only scientific author named.

¹⁶ A. von Humboldt, *Ansichten der Natur* (Tübingen: Cotta 1808 [Google Books]), V-VI.

¹⁷ Hartmut Böhme, "Ästhetische Wissenschaft. Aporien der Forschung im Werk Alexander Von Humboldts." In *Alexander von Humboldt: Aufbruch in die Moderne*, ed. Ottmar Ette (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001) 17-32.

¹⁸ Karl Möseneder is to my knowledge alone in pointing out the connection between Stifter and Carus, see "Stimmung und Erdleben. Adalbert Stifers Ikonologie der Landschaftsmalerei," In: *Adalbert Stifter: Dichter und Maler, Denkmalpfleger und Schulmann*, ed. Hartmut Laufhütte and Karl Möseneder, (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), 18-57. Möseneder notes how Stifter gives his own landscape paintings titles that indicate a *Stimmung*, 18-19.

of Stifter, will present in 1852 a lecture on “The Importance of Landscape Representation in the Natural Sciences” for the *Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften*.¹⁹

In the early nineteenth century, the concept of landscape thus forms an interface between science and art. Given the importance of landscape in Stifter’s literary texts, it is fair to ask whether *Brigitta* is not actually about the Hungarian *Steppe*, whether *Kalkstein* is not intended as a description of the *Karst*, or *Zwei Schwestern* ultimately a report on the region around Lake Garda. At the same time, the narrative function of the landscape descriptions in these texts points to the difference between a literary and a geographical *Landschaftsbild*. Informed by his own practice as a painter, Stifter’s literary reflections on landscape painting, moreover, highlight the problems and limits associated with the concept of the *Naturgemälde* as a form of representation. These limits take two forms in Stifter’s texts. First, clouds obscure the scientific gaze even as they offer themselves as a new object of study, fascination, and aesthetic representation. Second, the dimension of time, and in particular, the deep time of earth history and the arrested moment of photography, threatens the unity of the landscape and its image. Before addressing these two problems, however, it is first necessary to discuss the relationship between the picturesque feeling or *Stimmung* of the landscape and the emerging scientific study of the atmosphere and the landscape as biological milieu in the 19th century.

¹⁹ Friedrich Simony, “Die Bedeutung landschaftlicher Darstellung in den Naturwissenschaften,” *Sitzungsberichte Der Kaiserlichen Akademie Der Wissenschaften. Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Classe* 9 (1852): 200–207 [www.biodiversity.org]. Möseneder mentions Simony’s lecture, but does not discuss the differences between it and earlier texts by Carus and Humboldt, 37–38.

Stimmungslandschaft

In his book review, “Über Matthissons Gedichte,” (1794), Schiller asks a disarmingly fundamental question about landscape art and poetry: are natural landscapes a suitable subject for art at all? The fact that the Greeks showed little interest in landscape painting does not exactly speak for the genre. In poetry, matters look somewhat better, in so far as landscape at least serves as the setting. Schiller can thus rightly call Homer “großen Maler der Natur” not only for the poet’s portraits of human nature, but also the natural settings of his plots.²⁰ Because of his favorable view of Matthisson’s landscapes, however, Schiller seeks to justify the genre according to the terms of modern theories of art. His essay thus engages key operative distinctions such as form/content, necessity/contingency, subject/object, human/non-human and spirit/letter. In Schiller’s view, natural landscapes present a problem for art because nature falls on the wrong side of these binary pairs:

In demjenigen Naturbezirke, worin der Landschaftsmaler und Landschaftsdichter sich aufhalten, verliert sich schon auf eine sehr merkliche Weise die Bestimmtheit der Mischungen und Formen; nicht nur die Gestalten sind hier willkürlicher und erscheinen es noch mehr; auch in der Zusammensetzung derselben spielt der Zufall eine, dem Künstler sehr lästige, Rolle.²¹

Non-human nature, “unbeseelte Naturmassen,”²² appears formless, or at least insufficiently formed; it appears contingent, at least with respect to the strict order of reason. At the same time, Schiller recognizes not only that the landscape poet/painter

²⁰ Friedrich Schiller, “Über Matthissons Gedichte,” in: *Schillers Werke: Vermischte Schriften Vol. 22*, ed. Herbert Meyer (Weimar: Böhlau Nachfolger, 1958) 265.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 270.

²² *Ibid.*, 266.

makes “die unbeseelte Natur für sich selbst zur Heldin der Schilderung,” but also that all artists and poets must ground their art “auf eine *objektive* Verknüpfung in den Erscheinungen” (my emphasis). Schiller also demands that the “object” (*Gegenstand*) of this art appear as “objektive Wahrheit.”²³ This demand ties landscape art to natural science: not only do they treat the same phenomena, but at least to a certain extent, they do so with the same empirical objectivity.

At this point, however, Schiller’s essay moves in another direction. Because the gap between subject and object, between idea and empirical reality is so great, the artist cannot overcome it by mimesis alone. Instead, the landscape artist and poet requires a “symbolic operation” that would establish a relationship between non-human and human nature: “Es gibt zweierlei Wege, auf denen die unbeseelte Natur ein Symbol der menschlichen werden kann: entweder als Darstellung von Empfindungen oder als Darstellung von Ideen.” These operations align not only with the sentimental poetics Schiller espouses, wherein poetry in general is the art “uns durch einen freien Effekt unsrer produktiven Einbildungskraft in bestimmte Empfindungen zu versetzen,”²⁴ it also leads him to the paradigmatic association of emotion with music. According to Schiller, music can provide a model for landscape representation because its effect is “die innern Bewegungen des Gemütes durch analogische äußere (Bewegungen) zu begleiten und zu

²³ *Ibid.*, 265, 268, 269. In his discussion of landscape art, Schiller has already completed the modern turn in the usage of the distinction subjective/objective, terms that Kant himself continued to employ in a more traditional sense, where “objective” refers to the formal laws of reason, not to empirical “objects.” See Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone 2007) 27-35.

²⁴ Schiller “cites” here—i.e. paraphrases with quotation marks—a central idea from 18th-century philosophical aesthetics (Sulzer, Kant), 267.

versinnlichen.”²⁵ Analogy is the operational mode of this representational practice. The inner and outer “movements” of the soul and inanimate nature, respectively, must be studied individually. Rather than constituting a disadvantage, music’s formal and abstract quality, the fact that its material is only sound (*Schall*), makes it an even more suitable model for abstracting the formal valence from natural images, i.e. light, from its contingent content (the material details of a landscape): “vermitteltst jenes symbolischen Akts [können] die gemeinen Naturphänomene des Schalles und des Lichts von der ästhetischen Würde der Menschennatur partizipieren.”²⁶ In other words, natural phenomena remain rudimentary (*gemein*), but as mere material of sound and light, they readily take on artistic form.

In his praise of one of Matthisson’s poems, Schiller notes how imagination appears “in der schönsten Einstimmung mit der Idee, welche ausgedrückt werden soll.”²⁷ Around the time Schiller writes this essay, the concept of *Stimmung* begins to express, in condensed form, nearly all of the aspects of his argument. Derived from *Stimme*, or “voice,” *Stimmung* originally referred to the act of speaking (similar to *Abstimmung* today). In the early modern period, it became a musical term, meaning the “tuning” or “tune” of an instrument. The 18th century then introduced the metaphor of “heartstrings,” that is, the comparison of the psyche or nervous system to a musical instrument. *Stimmung* thus came to mean “mood” or psychic disposition. If the various derivations of

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 272.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 280.

Stimmung combine expression, music and feeling, the word itself can name the action of combination, “tuning” or accordance—much as Schiller uses it.²⁸

Jean Paul’s *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804) continues on the path set by Schiller, but because his focus is on epic rather than lyric description, he is careful to distinguish between the character’s and author’s feelings. Every landscape must have “ihren eigenen Ton der Empfindung [...], welchen der Held oder die Heldin angibt, nicht der Autor.”²⁹ This distinction places added emphasis on the difference between subjective and objective apperceptions of nature. Because they focus on the feelings of individual characters, Jean Paul’s literary landscapes show themselves to be projections of these feelings, not “objective” qualities of nature. Indeed, it is feeling that makes a landscape coherent in the first place: “[die] poetische Landschaft, welche nur Einzelnes nach Einzelnem aufbreitet, würde das steigende Ganze völlig mangeln und jede Einzelheit unbegleitet und nackt dastehen, wenn nicht ein inneres poetisches Ganzes der Empfindung das äußere erstattete.”³⁰ The landscape may be composed of empirical phenomena, but it is saturated with subjective feeling.

The *Stimmunglandschaft*, the landscape saturated by feeling, soon becomes the predominant mode of landscape painting and description in the early 19th century. It continues to form the foundation for theories of landscape as well. Written between 1815 and 1824, Carl Gustav Carus’s *Neun Briefe über Landschaftsmalerei* thus defines landscape painting as the “Darstellung einer gewissen Stimmung des Gemüthlebens

²⁸ “Stimmung,” in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, ed. Gert Ueding et al. (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1992).

²⁹ Jean Paul, 289.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 289-290.

- (*Leopoldina*). Edited by Dorothea Kuhn and Wilhelm Engelhardt, 11: 244–268. Weimar: Böhlau, 1970.
- Haeckel, Ernst Heinrich Philipp August. *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen. Allgemeine Grundzüge der Organischen Formen-wissenschaft, mechanisch begründet durch die von Charles Darwin reformirte Descendenztheorie*, Vol. 2. Berlin: G. Reimer [biodiversitylibrary.org], 1866.
- Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, Werke in Zehn Bänden Vol. 6*. Edited by Martin Bollacher. Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989.
- Humboldt, Alexander von. *Ansichten der Natur*. Tübingen: Cotta [Google Books], 1808.
- . *Kosmos : Entwürfe einer Physischen Weltbeschreibung*. Edited by Ottmar Ette. Frankfurt a.M.: Eichborn, 2004.
- . “Ueber zwei Versuche den Chimorazo zu Besteigen.” In *Ueber einen Versuch den Gipfel des Chimarazo zu Ersteigen*, edited by Ottmar Ette and Oliver Lubrich. Berlin: Eichborn, 2006.
- Hutton, James. *The Theory of the Earth*. Edinburgh: Transactions of the Royal Society [Google Books], 1788.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der Urteilskraft, Gesammelte Schriften (Akademie-Ausgabe)*. Vol. 5. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1902.
- Keller, Gottfried. *Der Grüne Heinrich: Erste Fassung 1855*. Munich: dtv, 2007.
- Kittlitz, Friedrich Heinrich von. *Vierundzwanzig Vegetations-Ansichten von Küstenländern und Inseln des Stillen Oceans: Aufgenommen in den Jahren 1827, 28 und 29 auf der Entdeckungreise der Kaiserlich Russischen Corvette Senjawin unter Capitain Lütke*. Wiesbaden: Friedrich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung [Google Books], 1850.
- Kleist, Heinrich von. *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*. Munich: dtv, 2001.
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*. Edited by Wilfried Barner. Vol. 5/2. Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985.
- Linnaeus, Carl. *De Oeconomia Naturae*. Uppsala: [Google Books], 1749.
- Littrow, Joseph Johann. *Die Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung in ihrer Anwendung auf das Wissenschaftliche und Practische Leben*. Vienna: F. Beck's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1833.
- Lyell, Charles. *Principles of Geology, Volume I*. Facsimile of the 1st ed. University Of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Mohs, Friedrich. *Die Charaktere der Klassen, Ordnungen, Geschlechter und Arten; oder, Die Charakteristik des Naturhistorischen Mineralsystemes*, Dresden: Arnoldische Buchhandlung [Google Books], 1821.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Die Geburt Der Tragödie : Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen I-IV : Nachgelassene Schriften 1870-1873*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Munich/Berlin: dtv/Walter de Gruyter, 1988.
- Novalis. *Werke*. Edited by Gerhard Schulz. Munich: Beck, 1969.
- Quételet, Adolphe. *Météorologie de la Belgique comparée à celle du globe*. Brussels: Muquardt [Google Books], 1867.
- Quételet, Adolphe. *Sur l'homme et le développement de ses facultés, ou, Essai de physique sociale*. Paris: Bachelier [Google Books], 1835.