THE IMAGE OF THE PEASANT WOMAN IN
SELECTED WORKS OF BERTHOLD AUREBACH AND
JEREMIAS GOTTHELF

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to achieve three objectives: (1) to draw attention to the genre of the "Dorfgeschichte," (2) to examine "Dorfgeschichten" which were highly acclaimed in nineteenth century Germany, but are dismissed by literary scholarship today, (3) and most importantly, to adjust decades of inveterate and misleading critical responses with regard to the writers Berthold Auerbach and Jeremias Gotthelf.

Although Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* were received with great enthusiasm by the literati in nineteenth century Germany, his contribution to the genre is diminished by literary critics and historians today. Some, such as Hermann Boeschenstein, claim that the author "was merely ... sugar-coating the realities of peasant life, while having no real contacts with it." On the other hand, although the majority of Gotthelf's shorter narrative works receive little scholarly attention, the consensus of critical opinion in regard to the author is that he possessed an "unexcelled insight into the peasant's inner life."

On the basis of my close analysis of Auerbach's and Gotthelf's respective texts: *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (1843-1854), and *Kleinere Erzählungen* (1838-1852), I
conclude that literary commentators and historians alike have, consistently, and it appears without independent reevaluation of the authors' writings, driven Auerbach and Gotthelf into two oversimplified categories. The focus of my dissertation, with particular reference to the constellation of female characters in the works of both authors, is to dispute the aforementioned, misguided critical responses.

In the case of Auerbach, I contend that the allegation that the writer sugar-coated his peasants in order to appeal to popular taste is a distorted, indeed a false critical evaluation. I hope to have demonstrated that, contrary to prevalent opinion, the depiction of the woman in Auerbach's works is far from idyllic and sentimental, and, when compared to the historical, social and cultural sources which treat this period, represents a convincing and realistic portrait of the nineteenth century peasant woman. Likewise, I have endeavoured to show that Gotthelf's portrayal of the woman is not as realistic as the critics purport, for instead of presenting the average nineteenth century peasant woman, the latter emerges as a mere composite of extreme good or evil qualities.
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Heartfelt thanks to Professor Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz for her invaluable guidance, and for the many inspiring discussions, which made the writing of this dissertation such a rewarding and enjoyable experience. I also wish to thank Mikael for his constant faith, support and encouragement.
The opening section of my dissertation is divided into three parts of unequal length: introduction, chapter one and chapter two. The first segment of the introduction—Statement of Objective—establishes the context for my analysis. The remaining portions of the introduction are composed of a brief comment on the genre of the "Dorfgeschichte", and a selective survey of feminist criticism. I should note, in this connection, that my own discussion of the literary texts, in chapters three and four, is kept in traditional literary terms, although as will be observed, I examine some areas which are of concern to feminist criticism. Chapters one and two are an historical, cultural overview of the woman in Germany and Switzerland during the nineteenth century.

While the above inter-connected perspectives (feminist criticism and the historical, cultural) could not be closely, and obviously, integrated into my analysis of Auerbach’s and Gotthelf’s texts, it was essential to have investigated these perspectives, and to have them indirectly reflected in my dissertation for the following reasons: the knowledge which their study yielded enabled me to gain a more astute understanding of the literary texts in question,
and helped me mould the material for the main focus of my dissertation, which is an attempt to rectify the misguided critical responses in respect to Auerbach and Gotthelf, as discussed in the following section.
When the first volume of Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* appeared in 1843, it was hailed by the writer, Gustav Freytag, "als 'Erlösung' von der öden Salonliteratur" and acknowledged "als Verbindung von 'hoher' und 'Volksliteratur' zur Nationalliteratur." At approximately the same time, Jeremias Gotthelf was being recognized as "the first and greatest exponent of peasant fiction in German literature."^3

Literary historians and critics alike have long hackled over the issue as to who the "real founders" of the "Dorfgeschichte" were. Regardless of the "victor" the reception which the writers of the "Dorfgeschichte" received was overwhelming, as H.A. Glaser, the literary historian, points out: "Die Literaturkritik war begeistert, das Publikum nahm die neue Kost begierig auf, und Ferdinand Freiligrath sah in den Geschichten den Beginn einer neuen, am Leben gewonnenen Dichtung" (1980, 186).

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2 Karl Gutzkow, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der neuesten Literatur* (Stuttgart: Balz, 1836) 22.

The achievements wrought by the writers of the "Dorfgeschichte" were also significant: "Die Dorfgeschichten-Schreiber traten erfolgreich gegen den Salonroman auf, zeigten daß auch im Bauernleben Poesie und Philosophie zu finden sind, und schufen Edelnaturen im Bauernkittel, die den adelstolzen Salonmenschen ebenbürtig waren." Hermann Boeschenstein credits both Gotthelf and Auerbach, in particular, with evoking widespread interest in the genre: "With the impetus given by Gotthelf and Auerbach regional writing began to spread over the whole of Germany, Austria and Switzerland" (1969, 83).

Given such recognition, at home and abroad, it is noteworthy in the case of Auerbach that his contribution to the "Dorfgeschichte" should be virtually forgotten by scholars and literary commentators today. It is difficult, for instance, to find a complete collection of his Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten (1843-1854). In the research report, which I conducted prior to the submission of my dissertation proposal, I could only obtain, in total, three critical texts from the numerous libraries I consulted in Canada, the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, I consulted the Library of Congress Catalog (International) from 1950 to the present, but I could not uncover a single text on Auerbach in that period. Brief reference is made to the author in texts, such as Die

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deutsche Novelle im 19. Jahrhundert (1970) by Josef Kunz, which deal specifically with the "Novelle" or "Dorfgeschichte" and in some literary histories, but having studied numerous such texts, I found that information pertinent to Auerbach was at best paltry.

In addition, I undertook a thorough search of dissertation theses to see what was available on Auerbach's work - the findings were minuscule. Among them are: Jahresverzeichnis der deutschen Hochschulschriften (1889 - present), Gesamtverzeichnis österreichischer Dissertationen (genesis - present), the List of Higher Degree Theses in Universities of Great Britain and Ireland (1716 - present), the U.S.A. University Microfilms International (1861 - 1989), Canadian Dissertations Abstracts (1947 - present), Union List of Higher Degree Theses in Australian University Libraries (1959 - present) and Abstracts International (1977 - present). I also consulted the MLA International Bibliography (1960-1991), and the Bibliographie der deutschen Sprach - und Literaturwissenschaft (1957-1984), but found very few scholarly articles on Auerbach.

In regard to Gotthelf more research has been conducted by scholars as one might expect from the sheer volume of the author's work, but such research centres largely upon his novels. More doctoral theses have been written on Gotthelf, but considering his reputation the number is still noticeably small. As in Auerbach's case very little
attention has been paid to Gotthelf's "Dorfgeschichten"\(^5\) except in certain texts which are cast specifically in this genre. I also consulted the Library of Congress Catalog for publications on Gotthelf and found that, in the last 30 years, relatively few books dealing with his work have been published (see Works Cited 33-34). Furthermore, I examined the most recent Gotthelf bibliography published in 1983 (see Works Cited) and discovered a dearth of literary investigation in reference to the village tales. Jost Hermand's summary of this situation is accurate: "Mit der bedeutenden Ausnahme von Die schwarze Spinne sind außerhalb der Gesamtdarstellungen Einzelinterpretation von Gotthelfs Erzählungen spärlich" (1967, 273).

This, in my view, is lamentable since, in the first instance, the "Dorfgeschichte" as a specifically German genre\(^6\) has been neglected and underestimated for too long and, secondly, the subject matter, in the case of both Auerbach and Gotthelf's work, deserves notice. Both authors provide a wealth of valuable, and untapped, information concerning the nineteenth century peasantry which is of interest to an increasingly large readership. Not only is the material I intend to explore of interest to the literary

\(^5\) For further explanation of this term in reference to Gotthelf's work, see "Dorfgeschichte" as Genre p. 18.

\(^6\) In 1834, the writer, Theodor Mundt, referred to the German Novelle as a "Deutsches Hausthier" [sic] in Moderne Lebenswirren, Briefe und Zeitabenteuer eines Salzschreibers (Leipzig: n.p., 1834) 156.
scholar, but the keen layman is presented with a realistic\textsuperscript{7} and comprehensive description of the peasant woman, my focus of interest, in nineteenth century Germany and Switzerland. Moreover, in the last five years historians from different continents have begun to turn their attention to the subject of European peasantry (see Works Cited), which indicates an interest, in this field, from various academic disciplines at present.

Gotthelf's literary legacy, his novels such as \textit{Uli der Knecht} (1846), in particular, appear to have withstood the test of time, and literary and cultural historians who are influenced, to an extent, by fluctuations in popular taste and societal values, better than Auerbach's. I will analyze and seek to illuminate the factors which account for this situation in my dissertation, but I would like, at this point, to call attention to one of the major complaints by literary critics in regard to Auerbach, one which has led to decades of unfavourable critical review for the author.

Auerbach and his family moved away from Nordstetten, the Black Forest, where several of Auerbach's

\textsuperscript{7} I am aware that the terms and concepts: "reality", "realism", and "realistic" in reference to literature, are difficult to ascertain, as the scholar Walter Silz remarks: "All literature is realistic, in the sense that it tries to discern and depict the real truth of life. But different ages, and their poets, have differed as to what they considered the 'real things' to be" (15) and further: "The estimation of 'reality' is of course subject to historical shifts ... in our own 20th century, much of reality has become unreal, or suspect as a mere projection of the consciousness" (13).
"Dorfgeschichten" are set, when Auerbach was in his teens and he eventually settled in Berlin at the height of his fame. This has led literary critics such as Hermann Boeschenstein, writing in 1969, to immediately adopt a harsh attitude towards Auerbach and to dismiss him as "a city dweller, an anaemic intellectual" (67) without true knowledge of rural life. E.K. Bennett, the literary critic, condemns Auerbach's peasants as "drawing room peasants, mere projections of a literary mind" and further: "His peasants are turned out so smartly, and are so polished, they have the ideas of an Uhland and an Auerbach and are quite adapted for the world of refinement, but - they are no longer Swabian - they are Swabians transfigured" (1961, 118). And as regards Auerbach's motivation in writing, Boeschenstein claims that "he was merely exploiting a fashion and sugar-coating the realities of peasant life, while having no real contacts with it" (67).

In spite of Auerbach's insistence in 1844: "Ich will fortan für das sogenannte niedere Volk schreiben, unmittelbar für die Bauern; es fehlt ein Mann, der ihrem Herzen Luft macht"8, critics such as E.C. Roedder contend that: "Auerbach wrote for the same general readers of fiction as the then fashionable writers did" (1914, 6). This claim is, in any case, obsolete since as Jürgen Hein remarks

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8 In "Vorreden spart Nachreden", the preface to the 1843 edition of the Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten.
the "Dorfgeschichte", as a genre, was accessible to all social strata:

Die Dorfgeschichte wendet sich an kein bestimmtes Publikum, sondern an den einfach fühlenden und denkenden Menschen überhaupt. Ihr Leserkreis umfasst verhältnismäßig breite Schichten, denn ihre Inhalte sind dem ungebildeten Leser ebenso mühllos verständlich wie dem literarisch gebildeten, d.h., die gesamte Haltung der Dorfgeschichte ist als volkstümlich anzusprechen (1976, 22).

In this connection, E.K. Bennett suggests that Auerbach did not write from the perspective of a rural dweller:

In Auerbach's tales of country life, the point of view is that of the literary man, to whom the incidents and characters are copy, but copy which, as a literary man, he feels must be touched up a little in order to make it really interesting. So he strengthens the sentiment in one place, heightens the dramatic tension in another, underlines oddities of psychology in a third (117-118).
He elaborates further and, in the section which treats Auerbach and Gotthelf specifically, he implies that the latter is the more authentic writer:

Two main types of writers of village stories may be distinguished: the writer who is country born and bred, and though himself not a peasant in the strictest sense of the term, is in such close contact with the life of the peasant that the circumstances of his subject matter are part of his immediate experience; and secondly the town-bred writer, the literary man by profession, who discovers the peasant world as a source of subject matter, which can be drawn upon with fruitful results (119-120).

It appears that both Roedder and Bennett, respectively, overlook the fact that Auerbach grew up in the countryside, and, as the son of a village pedlar, had ample opportunity to gain experience of the rural milieu. Furthermore, unlike Gotthelf who came from a prosperous, established background, Auerbach was subjected to an impoverished upbringing and, thus, had first hand knowledge of the rural poor. Otto Brahm's statement: "Auerbach war ein Dorfkind. Hiermit ist die Kernwurzel seines Dichtens bezeichnet" (7) is, therefore, a more accurate and justifiable appraisal.
As previously stated, Auerbach was hailed in his day as "Initiator der Dorfgeschichte" and enjoyed international fame. There were, however, some who did not share in his praise. For instance, the writer Friedrich Hebbel, a contemporary of Auerbach's, is said to have referred to his work as "Bauern-Verhimmung" and J.G.Th. Gräßes was also derisive of Auerbach's "Dorfgeschichten", alluding to them as "angeblich treue Bilder aus dem Volksleben des Schwarzwaldes, die ... doch nur Idyllen sind."

It is noteworthy that, since Auerbach's death, literary historians have been extremely begrudging of his fame. Many do not appear to accept Auerbach's contribution to the genre and feel obliged to make excuses for Gotthelf's lack of recognition. Roedder, for instance, remarked in 1914: "The Swiss writer did not gain immediate recognition in the world of letters, and the credit rightfully belonging to him fell [... to Berthold Auerbach" (5). Others such as Eda Sagarra (1971), more than half a century later, express the argument that the Swiss dialect in much of Gotthelf's work, and his seeming indifference to accepted canons of form, stood in

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10 Quoted in Jürgen Hein, Dorfgeschichte (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976) 79.

the way of wider recognition and ensured Auerbach a bigger audience (46).

Fritz Martini’s criticism of Auerbach’s “Dorfgeschichten”, in his well-known text Deutsche Literatur im bürgerlichen Realismus 1848-1898 (1964), was harsh:

Sie kamen auf Kosten des realen Zeitgehaltes und der künstlerischen Substanz weit mehr dem Zeitgeschmack entgegen. Denn in ihnen zeichnete sich jene Flucht in das Idyllisch - Einfache und Friedsam - Harmonische ab, die im Biedermeier bereits in die Trivialliteratur abgesunken war und nach 1848/49 die bürgerlichen Neigungen erneut anzog (463).

Clifford Albrecht Bernd appears to confirm the view that Auerbach compromised reality in his work: "His reality holds up solely under the guise of local colour, and it breaks down abruptly on being transported to the broad, actual life of the general public" (1981, 23).

Others, such as the literary critic, W. Höllerer, in Studien zur Trivialliteratur, are equally scathing and seek to negate Auerbach’s literary legacy:

Eine Untersuchung trivialer Heimat-Literatur muß mit Berthold Auerbach beginnen, der mit seinen "Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten" und seinen leicht
Most recently, Udo Köster, the literary historian, writing in 1989 reluctantly concedes that Auerbach’s work was of importance to German literary history: "Berthold Auerbach gehört nur der Augenblick; aber dieser Augenblick seiner Erfindung der Dorfgeschichte war für den Gang der Literaturgeschichte so folgenreich wie wenige" (194).

On the other hand, M.I. Zwick, one of the few scholars who have devoted an entire text to an analysis of Auerbach’s work, stresses the ethical component in his texts:

Den Dichter Auerbach bewegte zuerst immer das ethische Motiv, nicht das poetische Farbenspiel und die "Lust zu fabulieren." Ihm war das Dichten kein selbstgefalliges Spiel mit bunten Bildern, die nur das Auge ergötzen und das Herz kalt lassen (1933, 9).

And more contemporary literary historians, while again merely skimming the surface of Auerbach’s oeuvre, are more gracious towards him. Glaser writing in 1980, for instance, states:

Auerbach dringt auf den authentischen Charakter seiner erzählten Dorfwelt: Er spricht von einem bestimmten Dorf, er
schildert aus der eigenen Anschauung
Land und Leute, das Brauchtum, die
Abfolge einer Dorfkirmes oder einer
Priesterweihe, das überkommene Lieder-
und Sagengut - alles das ist im
Gedächtnis gegenwärtig oder genau
recherchiert, nachprüfbar,
wirklichkeitsgetreu (186).

Literary scholars and critics, in contrast, have been
consistently zealous in their praise of Gotthelf. Hermann
Boeschenstein refers to "Gotthelf’s immense knowledge of
human nature - Shakespeare in the garb of a village priest"
(76), while Roedder speaks of "his unexcelled insight into
the peasant’s inner life" (4). Furthermore, Robert Godwin-
Jones, a Gotthelf scholar, maintains:

"Like Dickens, with whom he has often
been compared, Gotthelf constructs a
totally self-contained fictional world
which, while being precisely localized,
takes on universal significance through
the author’s penetrating psychological
insights into basic human emotions and
passions (1984, Intro).

Based upon my investigation of both Auerbach’s and
Gotthelf’s texts, I conclude that literary commentators and
historians alike have, consistently, and it appears without
independently reevaluating their writings, driven Auerbach
and Gotthelf into two over-simplified categories. Gotthelf is hailed for his realistic depiction of country life and its inhabitants, while Auerbach is condemned for appealing to popular taste by sugar-coating his peasants.

It is the object of my dissertation to rectify this facile approach by undertaking a close analysis of the respective texts and their constellation of characters. In the case of Auerbach I contend that, after in depth exploration of the Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten (1843-1854), the above is a distorted, indeed a false critical evaluation. I will demonstrate that, contrary to prevailing opinion, the picture of peasant life which Auerbach presents, with particular reference to the peasant woman, is far from idyllic and sentimental, and when compared to the historical, social and cultural sources conveys a convincing and realistic portrait of the nineteenth century peasant woman. I purpose to show that Martini’s appraisal of Auerbach’s work: "Er blieb auf das idyllische Kleinformat beschränkt, da sein Begriff der Volksliteratur naturgemäß auf eine Abschirmung gegen die Problemgehalte der Zeit angewiesen war" (1964, 464) is indeed erroneous. And furthermore, that Auerbach achieved the objectives he outlined in "Vorreden spart Nachreden", a preface to the 1843 edition of his Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten : "Alle Seiten des jetzigen Bauernlebens sollten hier möglichst Gestalt gewinnen" and
Ich habe es versucht, ein ganzes Dorf
gewissermaßen vom ersten bis zum letzten
Hause zu schildern; die vorkommenden
Sitten und Gebräuche sind dem wirklichen
Leben entnommen, so wie auch die Lieder
aus keiner gedruckten Sammlung, sondern,
so viel mir bekannt, bisher noch
ungedruckt sind.

In regard to Gotthelf, I strongly disagree with E.K.
Bennett’s evaluation of his work: "There is no attempt on
the part of Gotthelf to idealize or to sentimentalize"
(113). I also dispute Roedder’s claim that Gotthelf’s work
was so realistic and “his adherence to the principle
Naturalia non sunt turpia is indeed so strict that at times
a sensitive reader is tempted to hold his nose” (5) and: "to
all intents and purposes Gotthelf must be regarded as the
precursor of naturalism” (5).

I further contest E. Roggen’s opinion that it is
precisely because Gotthelf depicted the peasant in such a
realistic fashion that he did not achieve the same success
as Auerbach:

Nur wenige Dorfgeschichten-Schreiber
hätten sich getraut, den wirklichen
Bauern vorzuführen mit all seinen
niedern Leidenschaften, seinem
ungebildeten Wesen, seiner groben
Sprache und dem Schmutz der täglichen
Arbeit, sondern Rücksicht auf das gebildete Lesepublikum genommen. Deshalb habe auch Gotthelf, obwohl seine Dorfgeschichten früher als die Auerbachs erscheinen, weniger Anklang beim Publikum gefunden; das Verdienst Auerbachs sei es, der Dorfdichtung auf breiter Front zum Durchbruch verholfen zu haben.\textsuperscript{12}

I hope to demonstrate, in my dissertation, that Gotthelf's depiction of the peasant woman is not as convincing or as realistic as the critics purport, for instead of presenting an average nineteenth century peasant he offers two extremes. The woman is either "good" or "bad": an exemplary housekeeper or a shoddy custodian of her farm, (further characteristics will be examined in chapter four) she is, largely, defined and appraised by Gotthelf in relation to such factors.

\textsuperscript{12} I was unable to obtain E. Roggen's doctoral dissertation "Die Motive in Auerbachs Dorfgeschichten" (1913) through Inter-Library loan. The reference I use is quoted in Jürgen Hein, Dorfgeschichte (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976) 67.
E.K. Bennett has added to the vexed topic of the "Novelle" by referring to the "Dorfgeschichte" as "the Novelle of country life" (119). It is not my intent, in this dissertation, to further aggravate the complex debate as to what constitutes a true "Novelle", since the term cannot justifiably be applied to either Gotthelf’s or Auerbach’s oeuvre. Gotthelf himself did not utilize the appellation "Novelle" to describe his shorter works, as Waidson notes:

Gotthelf was probably unaware of the development of the Novelle in Germany as a literary genre that set in with Goethe and the Romantics. He did not use the word himself, usually calling his shorter narrative works Bilder, Sagen, Geschichten, Erzählungen - pictures, legends, stories, tales (204).

Roedder also confirms the author’s disinterest in the area of literary theory and aesthetics: "As a literary artist Gotthelf shows barely any progress in his whole career, and intentionally so. Few writers of note have been so perfectly indifferent to matters of form" (5).
In Auerbach’s case the situation is less involved since he designated the volumes of his work, which appeared between 1843-1854, "Dorfgeschichten." In view of the above factors, I will not, therefore, devote time or space to a delineation of the "Novelle", but I think it expedient to draw attention to the major difference between the genres as outlined by Bennett:

If the Novelle be compared with the tale [Dorfgeschichte], it will be seen that the difference between the two genres consists in the presence of ... one centre of interest in the Novelle which is not essential to the tale. The form of a tale is indeed merely that of a short novel: a proceeding from one given point along a more or less direct path to another (200).

Towards a Definition of the "Dorfgeschichte"

The "Dorfgeschichte" as a genre has, however, posed some difficulty of interpretation to the literary historian and critic. The majority of those who have researched the genre, from its inception to the present day, have concentrated on establishing a definition of the "Dorfgeschichte." In reference to an analysis of its form, the prevailing
attitude was expressed by M. Zahlbruckner in 1952: "Sie verfolge keine "formal künstlerischen Absichten."¹

Definitions of the "Dorfgeschichte", throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, have been loose at best, as Jürgen Hein remarked in 1976: "Schon Ende der vierziger Jahre [1840s] konnte aber "Dorfgeschichte" alles sein, was sich zwischen Skizze und Roman als Formen bäuerlicher Epik einordnen ließ" (68). The only consensus of agreement among early literary commentators, in reference to the "Dorfgeschichte", was that the rural milieu should constitute the focus of interest. E. Rüd, writing in 1909, defines the "Dorfgeschichte" as follows: "Unter Dorfgeschichte verstehen wir nur eine Geschichte speziell bäuerlichen Inhalts,"² while L. Lässer maintained in 1907 that "jede Darstellung des Dorflebens bzw. des Bauerstandes" must be included under "Dorfgeschichte."³

Bennett's definition, in 1961, was more explanatory in nature:

¹ I was unable to obtain M. Zahlbruckner's doctoral dissertation "Echte und unechte Dorfdichtung" (1952) through Inter-Library loan. I must, therefore, rely on the reference in Jürgen Hein, Dorfgeschichte (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976) 26.

² E. Rud's dissertation "Die deutsche Dorfgeschichte bis auf Auerbach" (1909) was also unavailable through Inter-Library loan. My reference to his study is quoted in Hein, Dorfgeschichte 21.

³ I incurred the same problem with L. Lässer's text: Die deutsche Dorfdichtung von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart (1907). Therefore, the reference I use is quoted in Hein, Dorfgeschichte 21.
The Novelle of country life brings a whole new type of subject matter in place of the fancies of the later Deutschland writers. It opens up the whole world of the Bauerntum, a self-contained world characterized by its own laws, customs and traditions reaching back into the Middle Ages and having still abated nothing of their rigidity at the time in which it becomes the object of literary exploitation (119).

Friedrich Altvater’s definition of the "Dorfgeschichte" in 1967, is, however, recognized as the first systematic attempt to describe the genre:

Die Dorfgeschichte spielt im Dorf und handelt von Bauern. Dies ist die einzige Feststellung die wir für die gesamte Dorfepik machen können. In der Dorfliteratur gibt es zwar auch den Gegensatz Stadt-Land und Hütte-Schloß, die eigentliche Dorfepik hält sich jedoch mehr oder weniger streng an die bäuerliche Scholle als Schauplatz (10).

Later definitions of the "Dorfgeschichte" became more theoretical. In 1976, Hein outlined the characteristics of the genre as follows:
Dorfgeschichte als eigenwertiger Bezirk der Erzählkunst zeichnet sich aus durch Volkstümlichkeit (Einfachheit, Klarheit), bäuerliche Erzählperspektive und pädagogische Tendenz; Hauptmotive sind: (1) Der Hof, (2) Die Dorfgemeinschaft, (3) Stadt-Land, (4) Sittenkritik (Laster und Leidenschaften) (22).

Uwe Baur added to this definition in 1978: "Hier fasziniert nicht der einzigartige Ausnahmefall, das psychologisch und intellektuell Exklusive des Individualromans, sondern "das charakteristisch Allgemeine einer historisch bestimmten gesellschaftlichen Gruppe" (122).

Emergence and Reception of the "Dorfgeschichte"

Baur in his text *Dorfgeschichte: zur Entstehung und gesellschaftlichen Funktion einer literarischen Gattung im Vormärz* (1978) cites an anonymous author, writing in the 1840s, who saw the birth of the "Dorfgeschichte" being brought about "durch die Umbildung unseres Bauernstandes und seine neu gewordene Bedeutung im politischen und sozialen Leben" (14). This claim, and its implications for the image of the peasant in nineteenth century German literature, will be analyzed, in some detail, in chapter two.

The advent of the "Dorfgeschichte", as stated in the preceding pages, was greeted with great enthusiasm by the
literati in Germany. Karl Gutzkow, writing in Der Grenzbote in 1843, welcomed the new literature wholeheartedly:

Es ist ein Genre erfunden worden, auf dessen weitem Felde die erschöpften Talente sich stärken können; eine Fundgrube des reichsten Unterhaltungsstoffes thut sich vor unseren Augen auf, ein neuer Stufengang ist angebrochen, der die edelsten Metalle zu Tage fördern kann (3).

Furthermore, Baur reports that a reviewer for the same paper wrote, in reference to the appearance of the "Dorfgeschichte," in an excited rhetorical tone:

Contributors to the Genre

It is not of great surprise, therefore, that, in the wake of such a "discovery", there ensued, as previously stated but not discussed, a considerable fracas concerning the "founder" of the "Dorfgeschichte." Since this is of direct interest to my topic, I will provide a brief synopsis of the views of the literary historians and critics on this issue. Hein attributes the use of the term "Dorfgeschichte", around 1840, to Auerbach: "Zum erstenmal wurde sie wohl von Berthold Auerbach benutzt, der mit "Dorfgeschichte" einen neuen inhaltlich-stofflich und formal bestimmten Erzähltyp meinte" (68), while Baur hails the latter as "der bewusste dichterisch-literarische Organisator der Dorfgeschichte" (20). Upon Auerbach’s decease, the notable literary figure, Friedrich Theodor Vischer extolled the author’s contribution to the genre in a commemorative speech: "Du hattest Vorläufer, vereinzelt ist diese Form vor dir dagewesen; aber Schöpfer heißt, wer eine Form reichlich entwickelt und als bleibende Gattung aufstellt im Saale der Dichtkunst" (Baur, 15).

More recent literary scholarship cannot agree as to the "founder" of this genre. Altvater maintained, in 1967, that "die gattungsmäßig echte Dorfgeschichte setze mit Gotthelf ein" (4), while K.I. Flessau refers to Heinrich Zschokke "als einer der wesentlichen Begründer der Schweizer
Dorfgeschichte." The literary scholar, Emil Ermatinger, on the other hand, is of the view: "Die drei Begründer der Dorfgeschichte sind Weill, Auerbach and Rank" (79). This diversity of opinion is perhaps due to the lack of research which has been conducted on the "Dorfgeschichte" as Hein, writing in 1976, explains: "Das Gebiet der Dorfliteratur (bäuerlichen Epik), insbesondere der Dorfgeschichte ist bisher kaum systematisch untersucht" (1).

If one considers the small number of texts (see Works Cited), which have the "Dorfgeschichte" as their specific focus of interest, there appears to have been little interest in the genre in the course of the twentieth century. By the 1970s it becomes increasingly difficult to find scholarly material pertinent to the "Dorfgeschichte", although two very helpful texts by Jürgen Hein and Uwe Baur, which I have made reference to in this section, appear in this period. The last decade has proven even more bleak, after a thorough search of all available sources, I was unable to find a single text in reference to the "Dorfgeschichte" in Germany.

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4 Jürgen Hein quotes K.I. Flessau in his text Dorfgeschichte, but he does not provide a reference to Flessau's work. The reference I use is quoted in the above text, p. 61.
I am aware that any study pertinent to the woman, at present, is not only topical, but according to the tenor of today’s literary scholarship, many writers and critics, who treat the aforementioned subject, adopt a feminist approach and argue from an ideologically feminist point of view in their discussion.

As previously stated, mine is not a feminist dissertation, although I will be treating issues which are of interest to the feminist historian and literary scholar. Josephine Donovan, a feminist critic, has underscored the importance of taking the social and legal background of the woman into consideration, in order to arrive at a full understanding of her character in fiction. In Donovan’s view, feminist criticism is ultimately cultural criticism (10). Chapters one and two could then be conceived as cultural in Donovan’s sense of the word, for they are devoted, in part, to an account of the social and legal position of the woman in nineteenth century Germany and Switzerland. However, in my discussion of Auerbach’s and Gotthelf’s texts I have not adopted the tools of feminist criticism. As stated in the introduction, the primary object of my dissertation is to rectify the myopic approach which
literary historians and scholars have assumed in regard to Auerbach's and Gotthelf's depiction of country life, with particular reference to the peasant woman.

When I decided upon my dissertation topic, **The Image of the Peasant Woman in Selected Works of Berthold Auerbach and Jeremias Gotthelf**, I took the above factors into account. Feeling intimidated by the vast debate in feminist literary theory and criticism, I attempted to familiarize myself with the latter and to elicit a model of feminist criticism. I found however, that feminist criticism and theory, as of 1991, is in a state of flux, various stances virtually contradicting each other. In the followings pages I report on my findings.

It is not the aim of my dissertation to engage in a polemic with feminist criticism, but I would like to point out certain factors, through a brief, historical overview of feminist theory, which have led me to the above conclusion. Today, the majority of French and Anglo-American feminist theorists reject the pioneering work of the 1960s as Janet Todd, the feminist historian, remarks: "The early socio-historical criticism that is now denigrated formed the base and condition of later study, was in a way the begetter of us all, and so inevitably, like a mother, appears naive in the light of changing modes" (1988, 1). The origins of feminist criticism appear archaic by the standards of
today’s complex, theoretical debate. Todd comments on this issue as follows:

Feminist criticism begins, I suppose, when the first woman became aware of her relationship to language and conscious of herself as writer, speaker, reader or auditor. But it probably gets under way in our time with Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1928) and with Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949). With much simplification and compression, these two books may be seen as begetting the American and French lines of feminist criticism (18).

The earliest phase of feminist literary criticism was largely based on, and influenced by, the tenets of the American Women’s Movement in the late 1960s. As a result, early feminist criticism was politically activist in nature; it called for equal opportunity for women in all areas of life. Feminist critics such as Kate Millett in the United States, for instance, saw the aim of feminist criticism to be the subversion of patriarchy, that rule of the fathers.

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Other proponents of feminist criticism such as Patricia Spacks, writing in the 1960s, understood feminist criticism "to include any mode that approaches a text with primary concern for the nature of female experience in it" (1981, 14). Josephine Donovan, writing in 1975, developed a more elaborate theory. She divided feminist criticism into three distinct subdivisions: (1) The analysis of the "image of women," nearly always as it appears in works by male authors; (2) The examination of existing criticism of female authors; (3) "Prescriptive" criticism - which was still in need of formulation, but one which she saw as the future crux of feminist criticism. This form of criticism would attempt to set standards for literature that is "good" from a feminist viewpoint (2).

In her text Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory (1975), she suggested that, in order to win feminist approval, literature must fulfil one or more of the following functions: "(1) Serve as a forum for women; (2) Help to achieve cultural androgyny; (3) Provide role models; (4) Promote sisterhood; and (5) Augment consciousness-raising" (19). Feminist fiction, as Erica Jong remarked, would reject "all those so-called feminist novels in which women are depicted as helpless victims."  

By the late 1970s, in a harsher "political" and academic climate, Todd reports that "the seeming naivety of

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American feminist criticism was abandoned, and it turned to enter the theoretical storms" (38) which were beginning to rage in France. Interest was directed towards a new criticism "termed indiscrimately post-structuralism and deconstruction" (Todd 38). This new trend was associated with Jacques Derrida in France, and scholars such as J. Hillis Miller, Paul de Man, and Geoffrey Hartmann at institutions in the United States. The new methods began to infiltrate American feminist critics. Elaine Showalter, one of the most prominent American feminist critics in the 1970s, who had formerly been condemned by the Francophile critics\(^4\) for her socio-cultural approach, acknowledged the new methods in an essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics" which she published in 1979.

By the 1980s new developments were taking place in feminist literary criticism in America. A series from the University of Chicago Press, *Women in Culture and Society*, presented by Catherine Stimpson, was instrumental in these new developments. It included works such as Ellen Pollak's *The Poetics of Sexual Myth, Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope* (1985). In reference to these new critics, Todd states:

\[\text{The aim, typical of the newer kind of critics, is then, textual and}\]

\(^4\) Janet Todd reports that Francophile critics such as Mary Jacobus makes a direct attack on Showalter in her text *Reading Woman*. She describes the latter's work as "untheorized, experimental and literary - herstorical."
ideological, formalist in the sense that works are viewed as verbal structures, but going beyond formalism in the desire to prove that questions of intrinsic and extrinsic, text and context, ultimately converge. The hope is, as Ellen Pollak well expresses it, to unite formal and sociopolitical concerns so as to avoid the ahistorical danger in deconstruction and the naive view of empirical neutrality in historical criticism (70).

Today there is, in essence, no real agreement among feminist critics. Only one clear criterion to define various feminist positions appears to exist, as Todd explains: "Attitudes to Virginia Woolf become the real acid test of critical positions" (36). This lack of agreement is not unusual in itself, for as Donovan states: "Female reality is not monolithic, but has many nuances and variations" (13). The feminist critic, R. Bowlby, writing in 1988, elaborates further:

Feminism is a far from unitary concept for feminist critics today, ranging as it does from affirmations of a natural but suppressed female difference to an insistence on the precariousness of all constructions of gender, from claims for an "indigenous" female literary
tradition to the question of a certain literary mode (Intro).

Furthermore, as Terry Lovell, explains in reference to the major schools of feminist literary theory:

The denial of national differences carries difficulties of its own. International movements such as feminism and socialism develop along significantly differentiated lines which can be related to specific historical, political and intellectual contexts (1990, 3).

The cultural gap, for instance, between the French and Anglo-American approaches is wide. Alice Jardine, the Francophile critic, aptly summarizes the major differences as follows:

The Anglo-Americans emphasize "oppression", the French "repression", the Anglo-Americans wish to raise consciousness, the French explore the unconscious; the Anglo-Americans discuss power, the French pleasure; the Anglo-Americans are governed by humanism and empiricism while the French have
developed an elaborate debate on textual theory.\(^5\)

British feminism is yet another matter and has been described as "a far less influential variety" (Todd 17). In Britain the feminist critical effort in the past and present, unlike France and America, is not on the whole taking place in the universities. It is occurring instead among independent writers, journalists and in the polytechnics. Despite the apparent lack of interest in feminist criticism in British academe, feminist publishing has flourished. Michelle Barrett and Cora Kaplan are just two examples of writers who are making an impact in Britain. Furthermore, British feminist criticism cannot be viewed in isolation from socialism. Hence it stands in stark contrast to recent American models as Todd, in a somewhat simplified manner, explains: "British feminism has always had an un-American link with Marxism and politics of the Left: it made a commitment to the collective effort and insisted on the participation of feminist criticism in the wider critique of society" (86-87).

As stated by Todd both Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) may be regarded as the forerunners of the American and French lines of feminist criticism (18). Since both authors

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have been repeatedly hailed as the pioneers of feminist criticism, it is worthwhile to consider what feminist critics have had to say about them, and, more significantly, to examine what the authors themselves had to say in regard to their works.

In reference to the feminist debate, Todd commented, as previously mentioned, "attitudes to Virginia Woolf become the real acid test of critical positions" (36). This would appear to be the case, for feminist theorists and critics blow either hot or cold on the subject of Woolf. Jane Marcus, a feminist critic, who has edited several texts on Virginia Woolf, is glowing in her praise of the author. In New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf (1981), which consists of 12 essays by feminist critics pertaining to the author, Marcus claims Woolf as the common denominator in the vast tangle of feminist differences: "Our methodologies differ, as do our training and our ages and our styles. We are linked by sex and a sense that something has been missing in Virginia Woolf scholarship. As a literary critic, Virginia Woolf is the mother of us all" (Intro). Marcus attributes Woolf with the discovery of a language through which women could express themselves: "She raided the patriarchy and trespassed on male territory, returning to share her spoils with other women: women's words, the feminine sentence, and finally the appropriate female form" (Intro). Furthermore, Marcus considers Woolf's contribution to the Women's Movement to be of paramount importance: "As a literary
critic and novelist, Virginia Woolf thought not only back through her mothers but also sideways through her sisters. It was a collective historical effort and an active political effort of committed socialist feminism" (Intro).

In stark contrast to Marcus' adulation of Woolf, Jane Wheare, in her text *Virginia Woolf: Dramatic Novelist* (1989), reports: "Many critics - amongst them left-wing poets of the 1930s and some feminists in more recent years - have condemned her [Woolf] as an amoral novelist who places technical innovation above social commitment in her writing" (3). Elaine Showalter is one such critic. In *A Literature of Their Own* (1978) she refers to Woolf's novel: *A Room of One's Own* as "an extremely impersonal and defensive book" (282-283). She justifies this statement by maintaining that the impersonality, which she perceives in the aforementioned text, is a sign of weakness on the part of Woolf to take a firm feminist stance. Showalter further deprecates Woolf's novel by stating that the author's concept of "androgyny" was in fact "the myth that helped her evade confrontation with her own painful femaleness and enabled her to choke and repress her anger and ambition" (282-3). Other feminist critics, Naomi Black among them, call attention to the fact that Woolf could not have been a feminist since she rejected the very word and referred to it in *Three Guineas* as "an old word, a vicious and corrupt word, that has done much harm in its day and is now obsolete." Black, however, is not as scathing of Woolf as is Showalter.
In the case of Simone de Beauvoir she has been hailed as "a pioneer of the Women's Movement",\(^6\) and further: "Simone de Beauvoir has contributed immeasurably to the progress and the strengthening of women's conscience and emancipation."\(^7\) Her novel *The Second Sex* (1949) is described severally as "the earliest consistent manifesto establishing women's role"\(^8\) and as "a classic in feminist literature."\(^9\)

Alice Schwarzer, the feminist critic, refers to de Beauvoir's novel as follows: "The Second Sex, her physiological, psychological, economic and historical study of the internal and external reality of women in a male-dominated world, is a pioneering work without parallel" (23).

Jean Leighton elaborates further on de Beauvoir's contribution to the Women's Movement:

> Her perception of how the male-dominated culture tries to transform woman into an "object" who exists primarily to please men has had profound reverberations and has been taken over by the Women's Liberation movement as part of its

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\(^7\) Bieber, *De Beauvoir* 103.


\(^9\) Leighton, *De Beauvoir on Woman* 219.
eloquent indictment of the inhumanity of man to woman. Above all, her attempt to delineate how woman’s oppression does not depend so much on legal exclusion (they can vote, can’t they?) as on massive social conditioning of male and female so that "sexism" dominates all of our judgements, represents a pioneer advance in the feminist movement (220).

While such accolades have been heaped upon de Beauvoir by decades of feminists, she makes her position on feminism clear in the introduction to The Second Sex:

For a long time I have hesitated to write a book on woman. The subject is irritating, especially to women; and it is not new. Enough ink has been spilled in the quarreling over feminism, now practically over, and perhaps we should say no more about it. It is still talked about, however, for the voluminous nonsense uttered during the last century seems to have done little to illuminate the problem.

De Beauvoir’s attitude towards the feminists, at that time, was not laudatory: "We should consider the arguments of the feminists with ... suspicion, however, for very often their controversial aim deprives them of all real value" (Intro).
And far from exonerating women in her novel, de Beauvoir placed the blame for their dilemma not on the male sex, but on women themselves: "If woman seems to be the inessential which never becomes the essential, it is because she herself fails to bring about this change" (Intro).

The author saw her book as an attempt to change the status quo by encouraging women to demand their rights: What fate awaits our younger sisters, and what directions should they take? It is significant that books by women on women are in general animated in our day less by a wish to demand our rights than by an effort toward clarity and understanding. As we emerge from an era of excessive controversy, this book is offered as one attempt among others to confirm that statement (Intro).

It is true that de Beauvoir later altered her position on feminism and the Women's Movement. In a series of interviews, conducted with Alice Schwarzer between 1972-1982, she explains: "It is absolutely essential for women to take their destiny into their own hands. That is why I have now joined the Women's Liberation Movement" (32). In reaction to Schwarzer's question about not having developed tactics for the liberation of women in The Second Sex, de Beauvoir responds: "That's right. I admit it was a shortcoming in my book. I finish with vague confidence in the future, the revolution and socialism. I have changed my
views now. As I’ve been telling you, I really am a feminist" (42).

It is significant, however, that when asked by Schwarzer as to her opinion of the new breed of radical, militant feminists, she distanced herself from them in one vital point: "I believe that although the women’s struggle is unique, it is certainly linked to the struggle women have to conduct along with men. As a result, I reject the total repudiation of men" (33), and further "There are some feminists who do not accept that one may conduct the same struggle as they do, if one is closely linked with one man; I do not agree" (29).

While it is clear that de Beauvoir became more of a confirmed feminist, at least in some respects, later on in life, I would have to agree with Konrad Bieber’s appraisal of de Beauvoir’s objective in writing The Second Sex:

Simone de Beauvoir did not set out to "free women." Her aim was far more modest: by explaining historically, biologically, psychologically, sociologically, and philosophically what women’s condition has been through the ages, she has eventually equipped the combative champions of women’s rights in our day with the weapons to be used in the continued fight for equality and justice, as it turned out not only for
women but for all human beings treated unfairly (114).

The South African writer, Doris Lessing, is frequently included along with Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir as a pioneer in feminist criticism and the Women’s Movement. Mona Knapp reports that many literary historians describe *The Golden Notebook* (1962) as Lessing’s magnum opus (53), while R. Whittaker states, in reference to the book, that "it is not surprising that it has been seized on as a polemic by various movements" (75). Knapp goes on to describe *The Golden Notebook* as "a classic in every feminist library" (53). In her view a feminist reading of the work is reinforced by Lessing’s deliberate emphasis on the role of sexuality in Anna’s (the female protagonist’s) reflections (59). Whittaker also stresses the role of female sexuality in the text: "*The Golden Notebook* broke new ground in its open discussion of female sexuality from the point of view of a woman writer" (69) and further:

> There is a great deal about men’s sexual inadequacies in this book, from lovers who are technically efficient but emotionally detached, to those who are simply inept. What Mrs. Lessing reiterates is the different nature of the sexual act for a woman if it is in the context of love (69).
J. Taylor also supports the view that Lessing forged new
ground in this area: "But no one before The Golden Notebook
had so accurately captured the different moods and ambiguity
of women's sexual feelings" (51).

In view of these remarks it is, therefore, interesting
to note Lessing's own reaction to the reception of her book.
In the introduction to The Golden Notebook she states:
"Emerging from this crystallising process, handing the
manuscripts to publisher and friends, I learned that I had
written a tract about the sex war, and fast discovered that
nothing I said then could change that diagnosis." The author
was not pleased with this narrow reading of her work: "Yet
the essence of the book, the organisation of it, everything
in it, says implicitly and explicitly, that we must not
divide things off, must not compartmentalise" (Intro).

And more significantly perhaps, her position on
feminism was decidedly lukewarm:
I don't think that Women's Liberation
will change much though - not because
there is anything wrong with their aims,
but because it is already clear that the
whole world is being shaken into a new
pattern by the cataclysms we are living
through: probably by the time we are
through, if we do get through at all,
the aims of Women's Liberation will look
very small and quaint (Intro).
What I have attempted to demonstrate, in this section, is that the authors on whom the feminist theorists and critics have pinned their entire debate were not feminists in the contemporary sense of the word. Furthermore, it has suited some feminist critics to alternately hail and abandon the "pioneers" at the slightest whiff of a new and trendier theory. And while the whole field of feminist criticism and theory is, without question, fascinating, it appears that it still has a long way to go before a convincing and definitive model may emerge, which would illuminate the scholar who searches for it in earnest.
CHAPTER ONE

GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND:
AN HISTORICAL, CULTURAL OVERVIEW OF
THE WOMAN IN THE COURSE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In order to place this discussion of the nineteenth
century ¹ German woman in a meaningful social, cultural and
historical context, it is clearly necessary, to have some
grasp of the woman’s life in Germany, in preceding
centuries. She, of course, does not exist in an hermetic
vacuum, but is a product of infinitely complex hereditary
influences and forces which determine, to some degree, how
she must live her life. Therefore, in this section I attempt
a brief overview of the life of the woman in German speaking
areas (Germany and Switzerland) from the oldest sources
available to me up to the century in question, which will be
treated in more detail. One of the major difficulties in

¹ I am cognizant of the fact that the woman (and her
circumstances) in 1895 differed greatly from that of her
counterpart in 1805. In this chapter and in chapter two,
I present an historical, cultural overview of the woman
in the course of the nineteenth century. In chapters
three and four which deal with Auerbach and Gotthelf, who
were writing the works which are under discussion in the
aforementioned chapters between 1838-1854, my focus is
directed at the mid-nineteenth century woman.
this task, with particular reference to the period prior to the sixteenth century, is the lack of pertinent sources as Margaret Ker, the feminist historian, explains: "So few women who lived in western Europe between 600 and 1500 have left us any detailed records of how they saw themselves in relation to the society into which they were born" (1987, 7).

In this connection, it was also exceedingly difficult to find material on the subject of women in nineteenth century Switzerland. I consulted numerous social and literary histories in search of relevant information, but the results were meagre. The cultural historian, Walter Sorell, writing in 1972 lapses into gross exaggeration, when he contends that Switzerland as an historical and cultural entity has not entered the foreigner’s consciousness (116). But, at the same time, he makes an interesting point, which may perhaps account, to a degree, for the lack of historical sources on Swiss women, when he states that despite Switzerland’s many institutions the only one that is known is the disfranchisement of women (119).

The material I was able to obtain, in reference to this area, I found in texts which deal specifically with the history of women in Germany. It would appear, that in the minds of a variety of historians and anthropologists the historical, social and cultural association between Germany and the German speaking canton of Switzerland is so strong that no line of demarcation is drawn in the discussion of
German and Swiss women. This link is perhaps not so surprising if one considers that, originally, the Swiss Confederation formed, by descent, language and sense of belonging, a part of the German Reich. The Swiss called themselves "Alter großer Bund in oberdeutschen Landen."

Though Switzerland’s full independence from the Reich was practically established at the Peace of Basle in 1499 and officially recognized in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the ruling class in the Confederation continued to think of themselves as German (Lowie 16).

In regard to all of the historical and cultural information, which will be investigated in this chapter, I must underscore that I am presenting an array of available historical facts which, I realize, may not always be "objective." In order to combat this potential problem, I have endeavoured to produce a wide range of material, which spans a considerable number of years (1865-present), from a variety of individuals: historians, travellers and writers with dissimilar points of view in the hope that as unbiased an account as possible will emerge.

In reference to the importance of the historical and cultural context for an analysis of the peasant woman in literature, which is my focus of interest, I agree with Josephine Donovan’s statement (referred to in the introduction) made in 1975: "To understand a female author—or character—completely, the critic must take into account the social and legal status of the woman in her society"
Since my dissertation rests upon an analysis of Auerbach’s and Gotthelf’s depiction of the nineteenth century peasant woman, it is imperative to consider the relevant historical and cultural material in order to evaluate Auerbach’s and Gotthelf’s work. Furthermore, it is important, in this connection, to trace the development of the woman back in time, so that a meaningful historical perspective may be established. The following pages are an attempt to achieve this objective.

Some of the earliest authorities on the subject and position of women among Germanic peoples circa 450 BC are Julius Caesar and Cornelius Tacitus. According to Caesar, German women were held in great respect when compared to their Gaulish counterparts. German matrons were esteemed as prophetesses and no battle was waged unless the women had first given assurance of a victorous outcome. In this connection, Tacitus reported that the Sitones, a people of Northern Germany, also bestowed the royal power on the female sex for they believed in their divine properties, hence their respect for them as prophetesses.²

In the opinion of the historian, Hugh Puckett, "Frauendienst", the cult of chivalry, elevated women to a new position of eminence (1930, 17). But, however exalted the woman’s status may have been in theory, she was

accorded, in Germanic law, a very different rank from that enjoyed by men. Eda Saggara, a cultural historian, explains: "From the moment of her birth, when the symbolic ceremonies attributed a lesser value to her than to a male child, and in matters of law and inheritance, a girl was treated less favourably" (1977, 405).

From early childhood onward, the woman was entrusted to the guardianship of a male and consequently lost any independence she might have enjoyed. Under this arrangement, she had to seek her guardian's consent in all matters and stood to lose her property, if she acted without his approval. In reference to the choice of spouse, for instance, the appointed custodian arranged the marriage for his charge as he saw fit. If the woman, whether young or old, virgin or widow, married without his permission, she lost the right to inherit the goods of her relatives. Furthermore, the feeling of caste was very strong; a woman was not permitted to marry below her station. In keeping with a law of the Visigoths, she who sought to marry her own slave was burned alive, and if she attempted it with another's bondman, she received one hundred lashes as punishment (Hecker 83).

The woman upon marrying became subject to the power of her husband "according to the Sacred Scripture", and he, subsequently, acquired lordship over her entire property (Hecker 84). Moreover, the husband had full power of life and death over his spouse and their mutual children. If upon
the decease of her husband there were suspicions regarding
the manner of his death however, the respective wife was
submitted to inquisitorial torture and burnt at the stake if
judged guilty of his murder (Hecker 78). Apart from her role
as wife and mother the woman did not work outside the family
as Eugene Hecker, the social commentator, notes: "In the
half-civilised state of things which then obtained there was
no such thing as women engaging in business; indeed, not
even men of any pretension did so; war was their work"
(1914, 88).

In Puckett’s view "knighthood gave way to a bourgeois
culture which saw a different mission for women. The
treatment accorded them indicates the tone of the age.
Instead of the pedestal for them, the chimney corner" (19).
On the basis of more recent historical research it is
difficult to agree with such full-blooded praise of the
Renaissance (1450-1600). It would appear from the accounts
of the historian, Merry E. Wiesner, that women did not fare
any better in this period. She reports in reference to the
matter of wife abuse for instance: "Even in cases involving
the most gruesome wife beating or cruelty, city councils
usually ordered women to remain with their husbands" (1986,
19). Furthermore, the women’s legal position was of a very
tenuous and ambiguous nature: "Women were simultaneously
independent legal persons (they owned property, inherited
wealth, received wages, paid taxes) and dependent parts of a
legal entity, the family, whose financial decisions they did
not officially control" (Wiesner 31). On the one hand, a woman could draw up her own will without outside impediment, but, on the other, if she claimed rape she was obliged to prove that she had resisted and that she had a good reputation. In the family arena itself women were still denied legal guardianship of their children in the Renaissance period. In the event that the husband died, the children were entrusted to a male guardian, who became responsible for their welfare, even if the mother was still living (Wiesner 22-23). In an effort to maintain this law, appeals were made in the sixteenth century to the authority of St. Augustine, who declared that woman is a creature neither decisive nor constant.3

Priscilla Robertson, the anthropologist, writing in 1982 contends that there was less emphasis on sexual roles in the eighteenth century and that the Age of Reason ushered in a period of considerable intellectual equality and social freedom for women. She claims that women, while not encouraged to advance in the same way as men, were not forbidden from doing so simply by reason of their sex. To support her argument she states that women were teaching in Italian universities up until the 1820s (4). In my research I found that there were some outstanding achievements by German women in the 1700s. Dorothea von Schlözer, for instance, was awarded a Dr. Phil. from the University of

Göttingen at the age of seventeen, but as Ute Frevert, the cultural historian, reports in 1989 "she was a most exceptional case and the object of astonishment and ridicule" (34). Furthermore, as Margaret Hunt, the feminist historian, remarks in respect to society’s perception of the woman in this period:

Certainly the polarities of the virgin/witch myth became less stark, but the ambiguity about the female nature was no less intense, and it was buttressed even more firmly by a physiology which stressed the reciprocal effect of mind and body - women’s bodies having a greater sway over their minds than men’s (1984, 4).

Some Perspectives on Childhood

It was my intent to trace the social, and educational development of the woman, from childhood to adulthood, within the aforementioned time frame, but, upon investigation, I found that pertinent sources are again exceedingly rare. In this section, I attempt to provide some background on this area beginning with the prevalent attitudes towards children at that time. In 1983 Linda Pollock, the sociologist, states in regard to the treatment
of children in Europe prior to the nineteenth century: "The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized and sexually abused. Century after century of battered children grew up and in turn battered their own children" (19). The attitude towards children up to the end of the seventeenth century has been characterized as "autocratic, indeed ferocious" (Pollock 8). Offspring were viewed by their parents as vessels full of Original Sin and it is reported that, in some parts of Europe, children were not breast-fed because they were regarded as parasites who would drain the mother. In the late seventeenth century a new and more enlightened social attitude towards children began to prevail. Parents no longer considered their young as "sprigs of old Adam whose wills had to be broken" (Pollock 9), but all this signified, in effect, was they were more in favour of shutting their children in dark cupboards, rather than beating them (Pollock 9).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries attitudes towards children continued to change as John Fout, the historian, explains: "These [the children] were no longer regarded as a kind of wild animal, but as a sort of human being, still steeped in sin it is true - their tainted origin necessitated that - but capable of salvation by copious doses of religion" (1980, 129). The practice of "swaddling" (wrapping newborn infants in bandages up to
eight feet to curtail their movements) was still customary (Randall 209). Mothers continued to be advised that excessive handling of the infant was unhealthy. The emphasis for a strict routine in raising children, from the time of their birth, and on the need to teach habits of order, cleanliness and self-control, characterized advice about child-care right through this era (Gorham 67). Discipline continued to be regarded as the most central question in child management. The child’s behaviour was seen as directly related to its eternal salvation, and the latter was considered as of much greater importance than its happiness, or its physical health. Child punishment was still rampant and became more public. In England, for instance, The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine published in 1847, over a six month period, an interchange of correspondence between mothers, comparing various methods of thrashing their daughters (Randall 216).

Over time the family slowly became child-oriented and began to value its children. This change first manifested itself in the landed and professional classes, who were able to afford the luxury of sentimental concern for their children. The poorer sectors of the population, on the other hand, remained indifferent, for the most part, to their offspring for some time to come. Auerbach, as the son of a poor village pedlar, had first-hand experience of this social problem. He reflects on this issue in two of his works: Barfüßele, and Florian und Kreszenz (dates and
analysis furnished in chapter three). Thus there were distinct class differences in the methods of rearing children during this period which are outlined by Pollock as follows:

(a) Higher court aristocracy: these showed a negligent mode with the care of children given to nurses and teachers.

(b) Upper classes: these cared for their children but believed in physical punishment.

(c) Professional and landed classes: these demonstrated a permissiveness and very affectionate mode of rearing.

(d) Puritans, non-conformist bourgeoisie and upper artisans: these showed concern and love for their children, substituting prayers, moralising and threats of damnation for beatings.

(e) Lower artisans: these did want their children to have a sound education; but treated them brutally.

(f) Poor: these were brutal, exploitative and indifferent towards their offspring (9).

Developments in Education for Women

In regard to the matter of female education, which is my focus of interest in this section, it is significant, as Puckett remarks, that its history bears a close similarity
to the rise and fall of women's power and recognition in society in general (161). It is noteworthy, in this connection, that some of the oldest Germanic literary monuments, such as the "Minnesang", speak highly of women, who, at that time, were credited with proficiency in whatever branch of learning that was then current. Women, in fact, stood a greater chance of being educated in the Middle High German period, as Puckett comments: "The ladies were often more literate than their swashbuckling gallants; for to read and write was considered womanish and monkish" (161). Indeed, women teachers (Lehrfrauen) are recorded in tax records as early as the fourteenth century in the cities of Speyer, Bern, Regensburg, Mainz, Zürich and Frankfurt (Wiesner 79).

The sixteenth century held further promise of amelioration in educational facilities for women. Luther himself, and his associate Philip Melanchton, spoke on their behalf. The public school became a recognized institution for the first time in this period, and while the training of boys was still the primary consideration, there were instances where girls also shared in the benefits. A case in point is the town of Memmingen which, between 1556-1600, established two primary schools for girls which approximated the structure and regulations of schools designed for boys (Wiesner 82).

Although the seventeenth century was pervaded by the unholy strife of the Thirty Years War there were also
significant developments in education, in general, in
certain parts of Germany. In 1694 the University of Halle
was founded, which, in the view of M.E. Sadler, the
educationalist, was "the first University to be based on the
principle of freedom of thought and teaching, and therefore,
the first to assimilate modern philosophy and science"
(108). The principle of compulsory attendance, as a civic
duty, for both sexes at elementary schools, was established
by the School Regulations of Weimar in 1619. And in 1642 the
Schul-Methodus laid down by Ernest the Pious of Gotha, gave
more systematic effect to the principle of State authority
in education (Sadler 107).

But it is in large part to a religious group, the
Pietists, that credit must be attributed for the return of
interest in better schools for women. Hermann Francke
established in 1698, in Halle, the first high school for
girls in Germany. His plan, projected in that year, was not
realized for another ten years, however, and so his concept
of "higher education" for women was actually a part of the
intellectual development of the eighteenth century (Puckett
19). But most importantly perhaps, the Pietists played a
significant role in awakening public consciousness to the
sorry state of popular education, with particular reference
to women, and to the social duty of improving it.

The eighteenth century saw the founding of the
University of Göttingen (1737). The predominance which the
study of theology had enjoyed at Halle fell in Göttingen to
the study of law and political science. In Sadler’s opinion "the influence of these two Universities transformed academic life in Germany" (107). In Prussia, school attendance was made compulsory by Royal Order with the promulgation of the Rescripts of 1716 and 1717. This policy was consummated by the Allgemeine Landrecht of 1794, which formally declared schools and Universities in Prussia to be State institutions, and their establishment permissible only with the State’s prior knowledge and approval. The same ordinance required all public schools and educational establishments in Prussia to be under the supervision of the State and to be subject, at all times, to its examination and inspection (Sadler 107).

Grammar schools, however, remained closed to girls, and other state educational establishments, above elementary level, were also exclusively for boys. Frevert comments on this discrepancy as follows:

Whereas their brothers left home to take ever more comprehensive and detailed courses of study in preparation for their future educational and professional careers, the education and training of middle-class girls continued to take place predominantly in the home (36).
Female Education in Germany: The Nineteenth Century

In respect to education in Germany in the nineteenth century, which is of particular interest to my study, there was no lack of new ideas stirring among the intellectuals throughout the century.\textsuperscript{4} Sadler sees the history of education in Germany during this century as falling into, and being influenced by, three distinct historical periods. These he outlines as follows:

The first period, which extended from the beginning of the century to about 1840, was, especially in its earlier years, an era of reconstruction inspired by patriotic enthusiasm and by a passionate belief in the political value of intellectual achievement. The second period, which extended from 1840 to the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, was an era of consolidation, marked by some reaction from the high-pitched hopes of the earlier period, and also by the growth of realism in educational policy. The third period, which has extended from the foundation of the

German Empire to the present day, [he was writing in 1912] as being an era of renewed advance, brilliant in its administrative achievement and in its systematic readjustment of educational arrangements to modern needs (103).

In Sadler's view, the intellectual foundations of modern Germany were laid within the first forty years of the nineteenth century. In regard to higher education four Universities (Berlin, 1810; Breslau, 1811; Bonn, 1818; and München, 1826) were founded or re-organized during this period. Strides were also made in higher technical education at approximately the same time (110). Moreover, new gymnasia were established, but significantly, with "the aim of imparting general culture and an all-round education to the intellectual elite of German boyhood." Further down the scale elementary education was also being revamped with a new goal: "The uplifting of each human being to a higher plane of moral and intellectual freedom" (110).

The second period (1840-1870) was, in contrast, "an era of reconsideration chilled and darkened by reaction." Progress at the universities slackened as speculative philosophy and neo-humanistic philology lost their earlier fire. The secondary schools also suffered as administrators harked back to the ideals of the Reformation. And innovations in elementary school education were impeded as attempts were made to restore it to "an antique simplicity
of reading, writing, elementary arithmetic and strictly dogmatic religious instruction" (Sadler 110-111).

On the basis of numerous historical sources\(^5\) it appears that the woman's chance of any kind of decent education, in the nineteenth century, was extremely unlikely. Puckett, in regard to the quality of education available to German women during this period, remarks: "It was well enough to react from [sic] the hothouse intellectualism of the Gottschedian days. But what can be said in defense of the primitive principle that all training, in fact, all existence of woman, is of value only in so far as it benefits man?" (164).

It was left to the family to organize the education for their children. In affluent families the girls attended a private, sometimes co-educational, preschool elementary school. Instruction would take up approximately an hour in the morning, and an hour in the afternoon, for children between the ages of three and eight (Gorham 20). Thereafter, the girls proceeded to private "Töchterschulen." In most cases the education received by the female, at such institutions, was of poor quality, unmethodical, and not especially comprehensive. Girls were given a superficial training in showy "accomplishment": a smattering of French, music and drawing, and fancy needlework (Gorham 21).

schools which prided themselves on a higher standard of female education, the main emphasis for girls was invariably on literature, religion, foreign languages, and history. Science, mathematics, and classical languages, the core of higher education for boys in the nineteenth century, were not included (Fout 211).

In the rare event that the more affluent, privately-tutored woman succeeded in gaining something more than the conventional and meagre educational diet, the popular conception of what a woman needed to prepare her for life never got far from Jean Jacques Rousseau’s (1712-1778) claim: "La femme est faite pour plaire à l'homme" (Robertson 36). And as far as German society was concerned "the only examination which a woman has to pass is on the subjects of dress, manners, dancing and music" (Puckett 27).

In closer connection to my subject matter, working class and peasant girls had poor, but equal training with the boys in the "Volkschule." They were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. They, however, had no opportunity to prepare themselves for the economic struggle which the increasing industrialization of the country thrust upon them, for nowhere in the country could a girl obtain the full post-elementary, professional training which was available to the boys (Rösler 112). Auerbach draws attention to this topic by highlighting the unsatisfactory standards of education for rural women in works such as Brosi und Moni and Befehlerles.
The course of women’s lives was determined and controlled by the single decision of whom they would marry. This is a theme in approximately half of Gotthelf’s tales, which will be investigated in chapter four, while Auerbach also treats this subject in works such as Die Kriegspfeife, Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange and Die Frau Professorin. The decision to marry was most often made before the age of twenty, for as the historian, Rona Randall, explains "by twenty-five her chances on the matrimonial market were considered to be over" (1989, 197). Robertson reports that German patriots heartily endorsed the myth that theirs was the only land where marriage was holy (28). But writers, such as Heinrich Heine, disputed this claim: "German marriage is no true marriage. The husband has no wife, but a serving-maid, and he still goes on living his intellectually isolated life even in the midst of his family" (Robertson 162). Indeed, the entire approach to courtship and marriage in Germany appears to have been of an extremely utilitarian nature. Henry Mayhew, an English writer and traveller, who lived in Germany for many years during the mid-nineteenth century, reported: "Such things as marriages for love are almost utterly unknown in Saxony" (110). The woman, it seems, was pursued by the man, not because of her sterling character, excellence as a human being, or physical beauty,
but rather in direct proportion to the size of her prospective dowry. This, as we shall observe, is confirmed in Auerbach's *Des Schloßbauers Vefele* and *Barfüßele*, and in *Der Notar in der Falle* and *Der Besuch auf dem Lande* by Gotthelf. Mayhew goes on to explain:

Almost every unmarried male sets a price upon himself; and one gentleman, with very white teeth and an incipient bald head, was candid enough to inform us that he appraised himself at 7000 thalers, and would not think of walking with the prettiest girl in Creation if she possessed a groschen less than that sum (112).

Mayhew proceeds to describe the apparent dissatisfaction, in respect to this manner of courtship, on the part of the female sex and their complaint "that they were looked upon as little better than beasts of burden by their husbands, and treated as such; and that marriage contracts were entered into merely as a means for men to get money and furniture enough to start in life" (132). But there was little women could do to alter this state of affairs and, indeed, there appears to have been a tacit agreement of sorts between both sexes on the subject of courtship and love. A conversation between a wealthy German mother and her engaged daughter, narrated in 1857, supplies some insight on this matter: "I sometimes fear, Mamma, I am
not as passionately in love as I ought to be. Do you think so, Mamma?" "Quite, my love. A true woman’s love is, in the first instance, mainly composed of gratitude and pity. Gratitude for his affection and pity for his loneliness" (Cunnington 161). Despite this rather desolate portrait of a high society marriage, in the nineteenth century, the alternative as Frevert describes it: "Eking out a bleak and empty existence as an "old maid" merely tolerated by the parents or unmarried siblings with whom she was forced to live" (108) - was not alluring. This, as we shall see, is a matter which Gotthelf treats in *Der Notar in der Falle*.

Social commentators, M. Walker among them, maintain that the situation for women deteriorated further after marriage. Mayhew recounts the response from a German male, whom he interviewed in the 1850s, when asked the length of the honeymoon period in Germany:

> Oh, yes! I do remember that is your name for what we call the "Flitterwoche."

> "But", said we, "do you really limit the happiness of newly-married life to one week only?. "Ja Wohl!" our friend answered, "and I should think a man has plenty of it by that time; and has been married long enough, too, to repent of his bargain (131).

This male attitude was further reflected in the husband’s expectations of his wife. C.W. Cunnington, the
cultural historian, writing in 1936 elucidates: "The two sexes lived in worlds remote from each other. They shared common interests, but not thought, for the more secret regions of their minds were kept apart" (95). Women were not required or desired as intellectual companions. The prevalent male stance, in this regard, was, as Cunnington ironically quips: "To be perfectly pure, the female mind must be perfectly blank" (90). And there was certainly no desire on the part of the male for it to be any other way, as Robertson argues: "It is possible to be extremely fond of a little woman confined to Kinder, Küche, und Kirche, and yet startled when the same woman asks for a larger share of your life" (200). Consequently, in Cunnington's view, many women in the nineteenth century simply drifted through life, being occupied with petty matters, the shape of a bonnet, the making of a dish, her greatest occupation being the perpetual need to humour him whom she had sworn to love, honour and obey (94). William Thackeray's Mr. Brown's Letters to a Young Man about Town (1853), although primarily reflective of the British public, also sounds the German's attitude towards his wife:

An exquisite slave is what we want for the most part; a humble, flattering, smiling, tea-making, pianoforte-playing being, who laughs at our jokes, however old they may be, coaxes us and wheedles
us in all our humours, and fondly lies
to us through life (24).

The majority of women were not merely denied intellectual fellowship, but, according to historical sources, they were also sadly neglected. In this connection, an English woman, who had lived in Germany in the 1850s, remarked to Mayhew: "There are two creatures in Germany whose lot I do not envy, the cows and the married women" (Mayhew 131). She goes on to explain that it was not uncommon for the husband to spend each evening out of the home, while his wife stayed up until "he staggered home from the beerhouse an hour or two before midnight" (193). This state of affairs was considered normal. A wife, if she were a decent one, was expected to send her husband to the inn every evening so that he could strike up business acquaintances! Women had their own "Kaffee Klatsche", but the significant factor in this matter is that man and woman, wife and husband did not interact socially either at home or in the community.

Many wives were not only socially and intellectually ostracized by their husbands, they were also physically abused by them. Again, the fiction of the day appears to attest to this, Auerbach, for instance, describes male violence to the woman in Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange and Der Lehnhold. Old German law, as previously stated, had permitted the husband, as head of the household, to use corporal punishment on his wife, his children, and his
servants. This was confirmed as late as the sixteenth century by ecclesiastical courts, and persisted well into nineteenth century Germany. Wife abuse was more common in the lower than in the upper classes, but was, nonetheless, prevalent in Germany. It also varied from province to province within Germany. Bavarian common law stipulated that the husband must only chastize his wife in moderation, while in Hamburg the man could decide how much was fitting (Robertson 163).

As late as the 1860s, a husband was entitled to take his wife to the police station to be beaten. It was public knowledge that husbands beat their wives. Mayhew recounts that even well-to-do, educated males, ranking as gentlemen in the land, boasted in the beerhouse of the "Maulschellen" or "Karbatschen" which they had inflicted upon their wives the night before (132). Influential public figures, such as W.H. Riehl, further aggravated this situation by citing with approval in his book Die Familie (1855) the different standards of punishment for a harridan and a wife beater. In the former case, the neighbours tied the woman to a donkey and led her through the village streets, in the latter the clergyman simply reprimanded the husband (Sagarra 1977, 410).

The wife was in a very vulnerable position, and could only claim protection from the state if blood flowed when her husband beat her. To add to this sorry state of affairs, many husbands are reported to have deserted their wives in
this period. Statistics indicate that men, who were no longer content with their spouses, procured money from them for the voyage to America, promising that they would send for them, but in nine cases out of ten, never contacting their family again (Mayhew 132). As in the case of wife abuse, Auerbach’s fiction would appear to support this claim. In Erdmute, for instance, Cyprian deserts his daughter at the port once he has acquired her fortune.

Women who found themselves in unfavourable situations had little recourse. Divorce was not an option for an unhappy wife in Randall’s view:

Fall from her pedestal, and where would she land? Any property she owned on marriage had become her husband’s. In return, he had contracted to support her. One lapse from grace on her part, no matter how extenuating the circumstances, and that support would be withdrawn. She would be dismissed from his home and denied access to his children, for they were his children, not hers. Her property would also remain his. In short, she was trapped. To break her marriage vows would mean a broken life, rejected by family and friends, without money or any means of support (189-190).
German women in the nineteenth century shared certain common problems, whether they were duchesses or tradesmen's wives. Law and custom placed them all under their husbands' domination, financially and sexually. The only role women were perceived as having was in the home, a theme which is reiterated in Gotthelf's works in chapter four. In this context, German women had a particularly bad lot as Thomas Smith, an English traveller in Germany in the 1850s, remarked: "Plaything and drudge define her position only too truly" (97). Robertson elaborates further upon this claim: "The masculine sex was totally dependent on women for physical care, food, cleanliness, comfort, and consolation. These came as their right, and they did not have to pay for them with any particular consideration" (132).

Compared with English households, the German housewife of the 1850s, in her quest to tend to her husband, appeared to work much harder and lacked many creature comforts. The English, it is reported, were perplexed by the amount of work which German middle-class women were willing to undertake themselves. Anna Mary Howitt, one of the first English girls to study art in Munich in 1854, explained that the sight of a "Frau Geheimrathin" hanging out clothes in the garden was "truly German" (Robertson 141). And whereas the English woman would normally delegate the tasks to her two or three servants, the German family of comparable status would generally make do with a single maid-of-all
work. Robertson describes the relationship between the mistress of the household and her servant as follows:

> It was policy to keep breathing down the maid’s neck – check her every quarter-hour, and keep all the supplies locked up – thus betraying a lack of trust. On the other hand, it was assumed that a German servant who never saw her mistress in the kitchen would despise her as a poor housekeeper and would probably start thieving (139).

This mutual enslavement further restricted any degree of independence the wife might have enjoyed in her domestic domain, as Smith notes: "With ‘sparen’ as her motto she devotes and sometimes sacrifices herself to the household and her children’s material welfare. She accepts conditions as they are, is too docile and unassertive, and sets too low a price upon herself" (516).

The first years of the nineteenth century further compounded the lowly position of women in society. After the Napoleonic Wars, social conditions all across Europe promoted a retreat into private life as well as a search for national identity. In Germany, the concept of "family life", which had been somewhat of a misnomer in the eighteenth century, was now rejuvenated (Robertson 13). The "rather stunted sentiments of motherhood" of the previous period (which Hunt attributes to the woman’s increasing involvement
in the public sphere) were replaced by the belief that women not only belonged in the home, but also had exceedingly important duties to attend to there. To fulfill these responsibilities would not be a confinement so much as a liberation into a new sphere of importance for the woman, a conviction which Gotthelf seeks to instil throughout his work, as will be observed in chapter four. This new sentiment was identified in the public mind with the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Robertson, in respect to the latter’s views upon the woman’s role, comments: "It is a family fête which he celebrates; it is a mother which he presents to the adoration of the world, seated near a cradle, a beautiful child on her bosom, her countenance beaming with joy beneath the tender looks of her husband" (11).

In Germany this mood was known severally as Biedermeier, Restoration or pre-March era. The principle of the German Biedermeier was, in brief, the identification of the home town with nature and identification of both with virtue. The advent of industrialization and with it the imminent encroachment by the city were, in contrast, new and, therefore, regarded as unnatural and threatening. The Biedermeier ideal arose out of this awareness of man-made change and "to satisfy the nostalgia for a simple, pastoral past amid the realities of the urban, industrial present"

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The concept of "home" represented changelessness and stability in the majority of people's minds. Hence the small town became the German national idyll, although as Walker points out: "In reality the small town has always been from time out of mind that sociocultural location where inertia and malice, pedantry, prudery, and spiritual narrowness have grown rank out of a marsh of stunted souls" (65-66).

The Biedermeier was a culture of the quiet and orderly interior. At the heart of this was the woman, but a new woman bearing no resemblance to the rather independent, intellectual eighteenth century figure. The new image was specifically German; a motherly woman who was justifiably proud of her thrift, yet full of girlish innocence. Deborah Gorham, the historian, underscores the importance of this innocence to the above image: "She was also to remain permanently childlike even in maturity" (7).

In German literature women were presented as mothers and sisters to their menfolk, rarely as wives and lovers: the ideal of feminine purity was implicitly asexual (Gorham 7). The German girl and woman was unspoilt; any trace of sophistication was foreign to her. She was simply required to be the "sunbeam that made everything glad" (Franingham 2). Both in literature and life in the mid-nineteenth century, she found her whole "raison d'être" in her husband and family; she had no substance out of this role, which is confirmed by Gotthelf's mother figures in Wie Joggeli eine
Frau sucht, Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt and Michels Brautschau. The familiar image of the German "Hausfrau" is a creation of this period, a source of complacency to society generally; she was rarely the object of satire in German writing. The "Hausfrau" was not confined to one social class, but seems to have been accepted as the feminine ideal by virtually all classes, including the aristocracy.

This new image infiltrated every area and level of society. Even after the establishment of the International Workers’ Association in London in 1864, whose goal was to ensure women the right to work, its German chapter published a discussion document in 1866, which revealed its rather dubious policy on working women:

The rightful work of women and mothers is in the home and family, caring for, supervising, and providing the first education for the children, which, it is true, presupposes that the women and children themselves receive an adequate training. Alongside the solemn duties of the man and father in public life and the family, the woman and mother should stand for the cosiness and poetry of domestic life, bring grace and beauty to social relations, and be an ennobling
influence in the increase of humanity's enjoyment of life.\textsuperscript{7}

Women who worked outside the home in the nineteenth century were employed in agriculture, textile and clothing manufacture and domestic service. Working conditions were deplorable in most European countries. Women were paid, in virtually every case, less than half of that which men earned for performing the same task. Frevert, in reference to what she terms "the veneration of a new type of feminity" and its ramifications for the working woman, maintains: "The concepts of equality which the Enlightenment occasionally proposed stood no chance in the face of this partly modern, partly historicised model" (19). Moreover, reports of unbearable working conditions served only to give further justification to the prevailing male view that women belonged in the home. There was little tolerance for any woman who worked even if she were forced to do so in order to support herself, or if the occupation, in which she was involved, was deemed worthy. Florence Nightingale herself, wrote that when she informed her parents of her intention to become a nurse "it was as if I had wanted to be a housemaid."\textsuperscript{8} This subject (employment in an urban setting) is not discussed by either Auerbach or Gotthelf since, as stated in the introduction, the rural milieu constitutes the

\textsuperscript{7} Der Vorbote 1866: 44.

\textsuperscript{8} Quoted in Elizabeth Walsh, Women in Western Civilization (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenken, 1981) 215.
focus of interest in the "Dorfgeschichte." When the city does appear, as in Die Frau Professorin by Auerbach and Der Notar in der Falle by Gotthelf, it is usually to highlight some inequity in the city inhabitants and their lifestyle.

Medical views concerning women, at that time, did little to further their cause. The nineteenth century medical profession propounded the theory that women were totally controlled by their physiology - their uterus and ovaries. Men were sexual beings part of the time, but women were always at the mercy of their cycles and, therefore, emotional and irrational creatures. Dr. Karl von Baer's discovery of the human ovum in 1827, and the subsequent demonstration that the egg ripened each month and ruptured its envelope, led to a more biological justification for popular opinion concerning the low worth of women (Robertson 24). In regard to female sexuality, William Acton, a medical man, writing in 1857, claimed: "As a general rule, a modest woman seldom desires any sexual gratification for herself. She submits to her husband's embraces, but principally to gratify him; and, were it not for the desire of maternity, would far rather be relieved from his attentions."^ Moreover, the medical profession purported the view that "to

^ Quoted in Rona Randall, The Model Wife, Nineteenth-Century Style (London: The Herbert Press, 1989) 192. Ms. Randall does not provide notes, or indeed a bibliography to her book. The information and examples she cites are, nonetheless, of interest to my topic, and I have, therefore, decided to include them.
educate the girl is to weaken the future mother" (Robertson 27).

Another agent which exercised a powerful influence on the accepted role of women, in German society, was the Church. Indeed, Church authorities were in no doubt as to where woman’s duty lay. Religious publications such as The Obligation of Married Women to their Spouses, instructed the wife to practise "that loyalty which she owes her master and lord, who alone is lord and master in the house, whom she must aid in the tasks of the house, but only in the way he sees fitting" (Sagarra 1977, 408). Religion long remained the woman’s only social outlet and, in the majority of cases, the sole reading matter available to her was the Bible and devotional books, as Hedwig in Der Lauterbacher, by Auerbach, informs us. And yet, despite her fervent piety and the Church’s iron grip upon her life, there were, according to Sagarra, many learned doctors of theology who, at that time, denied that woman even possessed a soul (1977, 408).

Nineteenth century thought cannot be conceived without the important voices of German philosophers.10 There were also a few outstanding German women, such as Caroline

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10 Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and the Romantic philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling are some examples. It is not viable to investigate here the views pertaining to women propounded by the aforementioned, but as is common knowledge, they gave little attention to the specific problems of women.
Schlegel-Schelling and Bettina von Armin, who were active in the public sphere. Much discussion of the "new woman" took place in the salons of Berlin, the most famous was that of the Jewess Rahel Levin. Under the guidance of such free-thinking, socially adept women many projects for the amelioration of the woman's lot were designed, but the German Romantic movement, of which they were part, was much less socially revolutionary than the slightly later French counterpart with its stress on utopian social change (Robertson 355). Furthermore, as Inge Drewitz, the feminist historian, notes in relation to these women: "They felt engaged first and foremost to their highly personal "ego" and did not enter the lists as protagonists of women and their rights in general" (1983, 17). Louise Otto-Peters, whom we shall return to later, stated in the 1840s in regard to Rahel Varnhagen von Ense, who was a prominent salon member:

Rahel war und blieb doch immer allein
mit sich selbst beschäftigt, und zwar so
sehr, daß sie trotz ihres reichen und
hervorragenden Geistes es nicht einmal
tzu objektiven Darstellungen bringen
konnte - nur Briefe und Tagebücher hat
sie uns hinterlassen, in denen von
nichts die Rede ist als von sich...¹¹

¹¹ Original excerpt from the Frauen-Zeitung (1851-1852) by Louise Otto-Peters, reproduced by Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres,
Many of the "romantic women" were concerned not with issues such as equal rights in the work place, but with female equality in male/female relationships and marriage: matters which I will examine in chapters three and four. And on the latter subject a conspicuous difference between these intellectual German women and their counterparts in France becomes apparent. Robertson maintains that French free spirits fled from the institution of marriage, whereas German women were never really satisfied until they achieved matrimony (370). The marriage they propounded was, however, a rather daring blueprint for the day, since it signified a union in which the respective partners would be drawn to one another intellectually, spiritually and erotically: "Friendship, sensuousness, passion and harmony merged together in what Romanticism called love, and the marriage which embraced such a love was a union of independent, individual people responsible for themselves" (Frevert 57).

Among the commentators, Puckett describes best the period, and role played by the aforementioned women in the fight for equality:

The Romantic period, the first third of the century, was a time of unrest, the germination stage for much of the intellectual life of the century. Viewed as an epoch in the history of feminism,

it offers characteristics that are new, phases of woman's life not appearing in the eighteenth century. At the same time, it belongs only to the beginnings of feminism, since no feminist organization or body of doctrine resulted. The women of the Romantic period were still groping. They had flashes of ideas about women's rights without thinking them through (117).

A new trend and influence, whose impulse came from France, began in the 1830s and 40s. The July Revolution in Paris (1830) and the Saint-Simonian movement helped fire the minds of the German public with thoughts of human equality. The emancipation debate in Germany was set in motion by writers such as Heinrich Heine, Karl Gutzkow, Heinrich Laube and Theodor Mundt, who belonged to the Young German movement. Members of the movement saw in Enfantin's (the founder of the Saint-Simonian movement) statements both the dilemma and the salvation of the German woman:

Woman is no longer a slave, but she is treated as a minor; she is still exploited by man as labour is exploited by capital, for she is regarded as his inferior in the institution of marriage. This institution must be altered, and
the complete equality of man and woman must be proclaimed (Butler 47).

Many of the members of the Young German movement caused public indignation in their call for women's liberation. Gutzkow, for example, achieved notoriety as well as condemnation for *Wally die Zweiflerin* (1835) his "novel of the emancipated woman."12

In rallying to the woman's cause many commentators, E.H. Butler among them, contend that the Young German movement did little to improve women's conditions, since the influence of Saint-Simonianism was almost entirely confined to the theory of the "rehabilitation of the flesh" with its corollary the relation between men and women (1926, 50). Drewitz also concurs with this view: "What fascinated them in particular was the battle cry of the 'Emancipation of the Flesh.' Under the slogan 'we're putting new shirts on our wives' they campaigned against the customary marriages of convenience and pleaded for the "free electric embrace" (17). Furthermore, it did not help the women's cause that Saint-Simonian doctrines came to Germany primarily through the novels of George Sand. This resulted, as Robertson colourfully puts it, "in the public picture of a woman with a dagger in her girdle, a cigarette in her mouth, and a whip in her hand" (355) - an image which, even if somewhat exaggerated, did not conform to the dominant feminine ideal.

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The Genesis of the Woman’s Rights Movement in Germany

The fight for women’s rights began approximately in the middle of the nineteenth century. France had already entered the battle when Olympe Marie de Gouges countered the "droits de l’homme", or Rights of Man (1789) with a manifesto of her own: The Proclamation of the Rights of Women and Female Citizens (1791), which she presented to the Paris National Assembly. In her view, the declaration of 1789 was incomplete unless women also derived tangible and practical benefits from it. At approximately the same time in England, Mary Wollstonecraft was making a stand for legal recognition of her sex with A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1789).

In Germany political developments, such as the failure of the revolutions,¹³ affected the progress of women’s rights. After 1760 German intellectual and artistic culture had rapidly caught up with that of the more advanced West, but as the historian, Hans Kohn, writing in 1960 reports: "Politically and socially Germany remained a quiet backwater, unstirred by the political storms and the social changes sweeping the lands around the North Atlantic" (22). Advocates of women’s rights in Germany were few in number in the nineteenth century, and were the object of indifference or derision to the majority of both sexes. Of those who

¹³ For a discussion of the causes, course and repercussions of the 1848 revolution see the standard work by Veit Valentin, 1848: Chapters in German History. London: Allen, 1940.
became involved in the Woman’s Movement a significant number actually opposed votes for women.

The main impetus towards a Women’s Rights Movement came from those concerned, as were most German reformers, with education rather than liberty. Women such as Anna Schepeler-Lette and Jenny Hirsch, who were acknowledged as the pioneers of women’s rights in Germany in the 1840s, continued to see their goals very much in relation to the male sex: "Thanks to our untiring labours the conviction is spreading that every woman, rich or poor, high or low, ought to have an education such as will make her, in the highest and best sense, the helpmate and companion of man - wife, mother, and teacher" (Stanton 153). To further impede the establishment of a Women’s Movement, middle-class and working-class women were divided in their interests. In addition to these factors another matter for conflict in the Women’s Movement was the by no means uniform image that women had of themselves.

This state of affairs notwithstanding, support groups did exist in Germany. Even in the most menial economic positions, women’s associations were formed, for instance, the Maidservants’ Association in Leipzig in 1848. There were also women champions for the cause among them Luise Mühlbach, the pseudonym of Klara Mundt, who was very active between 1838 and 1849 and earned herself the less than flattering reputation in her day as "an emancipated woman" (Drewitz 13). Fanny Lewald was also instrumental as one of
the most important first-generation authors of the feminist movement. Luise Otto-Peters, in particular, is hailed for her advocacy of women's rights during and after the 1848 Revolution. She fought not only for equal rights in the work environment, but for independent working places for women: "Es muß den Frauen gestattet werden, Schneiderwerkstätten zu errichten, in denen nur von Frauen für Frauen gearbeitet wird. Dies Verhältnis ist eigentlich so natürlich, daß es gar keiner weitern Bevorwortung bedarf." She was also responsible for the Frauen-Zeitung published in April 1849, whose foundation broke new ground for women as the historian, Catherine M. Prelinger, comments:

    Unlike the magazines for women that preceded it, magazines published by men and catering to the entertainment of women, the Frauen-Zeitung had as its major purpose to disseminate information of a political and social character specifically relating to women and to function as a forum for opinions and discussions of the rights and duties of women in society (1987, 106).

The motto of the newspaper ran as follows: "Durch Bildung zur Freiheit, und durch diese zum Wohlstande" (Joeres 57).

In 1865 Otto-Peters founded, with three other women, the Allgemeine deutsche Frauenverein and edited its journal, Neue Bahnen.

In Switzerland the fight for women's rights was even more difficult as Marie Gögg, a Swiss, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, related: "Our little country has, up to the present moment, remained almost a stranger to this important subject."\(^{15}\) Switzerland was one of the least disposed of European countries to accept the idea of the civil emancipation of women, and much less the conferring upon them of political rights. There were also additional factors which further hindered the development of the Women's Rights Movement in that country. The nation was divided into 25 cantons each of which had its own legislation, and its own cantonal code so that standardized innovation was a nigh impossible task. This of course made it exceedingly difficult for women to work toward a common end, as Gögg confirms:

The differences of nationality, of religion, and of legislation in the various cantons have produced a variety of customs, habits and characteristics, which are extremely dissimilar, and which render Switzerland a composite

\(^{15}\) An original essay by Marie Gögg, a political exile in Switzerland during 1848-1854; reproduced by Theodore Stanton, ed. in The Woman Question in Europe (New York: Source Book Press, 1884) 374.
having but one solid bond of union, but
a very solid one, - a mutual veneration
for the federal flag. How can anything
be accomplished under such
circumstances, where, instead of one
obstacle, 25 must be gotten over one
after the other?\textsuperscript{16}

But there were more rudimentary and significant reasons
for the delay of a Women's Rights Movement in Switzerland.
Chief amongst these was, in Gögg's opinion, "the reluctance
which a woman feels to take a new step in a little centre
where everybody knows his neighbour."\textsuperscript{17} She argues that in
France, England and America the Women's Movements had arisen
in large cities, where one is not a slave to what people
say, and where friendly co-operation is more easily secured.
Switzerland, she contends, is composed only of big villages
and small cities and, therefore, did not enjoy the above
advantages. She goes on to state that in countries such as
the aforementioned, eminent and influential men, lawyers and
senators among them, lent their support to the Women's
Rights Movement, which was never the case in Switzerland.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} Stanton, \textit{Woman Question} 385.
\textsuperscript{17} Stanton, \textit{Woman Question} 384.
\textsuperscript{18} Stanton, \textit{Woman Question} 384.
CHAPTER TWO

THE PEASANT WOMAN AND
HER BACKGROUND DURING THE 1800s

In this chapter I will narrow the focus to the area of my immediate interest: the rural community (Bauern) in Germany and Switzerland, with particular reference to the peasant woman. In view of its relevance to my dissertation topic, I will provide an historical and cultural overview of this social stratum during the period under discussion.

By the middle of the nineteenth century two-thirds of Germany's population, four-fifths in Prussia, was still engaged in agriculture, which produced more wealth than any other sector of the economy. The bulk of the population lived in the country, in farming communities, villages and small market towns. Around the year 1860, 25-30 per cent of the rural population were farmers, just under a third owned no more than a smallholding, a further third no land at all, and 10 per cent practised a non-guild craft. Although the number of yeoman farmers (Vollbauern) were on the decline as early as the 1820s, the rural society retained its farming structure well into the nineteenth century (Frevert 22). According to the historian, Rudolph Stadelmann: "Germany [in
the nineteenth century] could justifiably be described as an agrarian country" (1948, 24).

At approximately the same time in Switzerland, some 300,000 hectares were given over to the raising of grain; agriculture supplied roughly 80 per cent of the country's food requirements. Unlike Germany, however, the divisions between rural and urban centres of population were not so well defined as the economist, Chester Lloyd Jones, who prepared a Trade Information Bulletin on Switzerland in the late 1800s, reported:

Switzerland is so small and the communication system so well developed, especially in the plateau region, that many of those living in small towns may be considered in some respects as urban or suburban population; however, many town dwellers who have business interests are also farmers in a small way, so that the distinction between urban and rural is hard to make.¹

Legislation affecting rural dwellers, in both countries, was in effect throughout the nineteenth century. According to Eda Sagarra, the cultural historian, "Peasant Emancipation is the term used to describe a whole series of

¹ Chester Lloyd Jones, Trade Information Bulletins on Resources and Industries in Switzerland (Paris: U.S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 1926) 3.
land reform measures beginning in the late eighteenth century and culminating in the October Edict of 1807" (1977, 343). Attempts at peasant liberation had been made before the nineteenth century, but interest was again rekindled through the new challenge of human rights which the Enlightenment had made popular. Modern economic views and agrarian policies imported from England also served to fire interest in the subject (Stadelmann 25).

This exposure did not result in standardized agrarian reform in every area of Germany however. It was not until the Stein-Hardenberg legislation of 1807-1821 in Prussia that the first major change to affect the German economy since the Thirty Years War occurred (Gagliardo 7). The reforms embodied in the legislation of three dates, namely, 1807, 1811, and 1821, were directed at alterations in the system of land holding and agrarian cultivation in Prussia. The first edict of October 9, 1807 signified, in practice, the end of the society based on status since it removed two essential characteristics: the restriction of the "Stände" to fixed professions, and the intervention of the state in municipal administration (Cohn-Bramsted 36). This document also called for the abolition of all class restrictions on the purchase of land and the acquisition of servile status, by whatever means, was prohibited. In addition all peasants who possessed hereditary rights to their land, together with their families, were declared immediately free; and all servitude was to be abolished as of St. Martin's day,
November 11, 1810 (Gagliardo 19). Furthermore, the division of the people into three hereditary Estates of aristocracy, middle-class and peasantry was destroyed which meant, in theory, that citizens and peasants were now free to move from the land and into new occupations if they so wished (Cohn-Bramsted 36).

Attempts at peasant emancipation had already been made in Switzerland in the eighteenth century. From its inception, the French Revolution (1789) had profound repercussions in Switzerland as the historian, E. Bonjour, notes:

> When the Revolution broke out in France, at that time Switzerland’s most powerful ally, this great convulsion could not fail to spread to the confederation. The country was stirred to its depths, economically, spiritually, and socially. The Revolution, a turning-point in history all over Europe, was particularly so in Switzerland (1938, 211).

When France occupied Switzerland in 1792, she sought to win over the rural population by promising the abolition of oppressive feudal dues. It was this policy which was chiefly responsible for the peasant’s enthusiasm for the revolution, but he was soon to find that Napoleon would not fulfill his promises (Bonjour 225). By the nineteenth century, the
peasant was gradually gaining complete political equality and began to dominate the state by his large voting power. At the same time, he gained economic independence by shaking off the great burden of taxation on persons and property (Bonjour 315).

In reality, the aforementioned legislation brought little change to the life of the peasant in either country. Only the peasantry in Schleswig-Holstein had come in contact with the ideas of the Enlightenment. In Silesia, the situation was at its most inflammable, because peasant emancipation, in contrast to the old Prussian provinces, was impeded by the authorities at every turn. In other German states, the abolition of "Leibeigenschaft" and personal servitude was introduced somewhat more slowly than in Prussia. Furthermore, the peasants themselves were suspicious and reluctant witnesses of innovations designed by officials and intellectuals on their behalf (Sagarra 1977, 344). The historian, John Gagliardo, elaborates on this subject as follows:

For various reasons - his illiteracy, his parochialism, his aversion to innovation and, most important, his legally, politically, and economically inferior position in the social order - the peasant was almost entirely incapable of undertaking systematic
measures for his own betterment (1969, 6).

The outcome of the land reforms did not always improve conditions for the peasantry, as Gagliardo notes:

In 1840, as in the mid-eighteenth century, it was still the size of an individual’s lands which tended to determine his wealth. The small proprietor, the peasant, was hurt in the application of reforms to his own land not only because of his ignorance of the great potential of innovation, but also because he could not afford it. More than ever, the peasant became incapable of influencing his own social destiny (10-11).

But perhaps the most significant and far-reaching consequence of the reform legislation was one which had not been anticipated: the rise of an agricultural proletariat out of landless peasants or of those whose holdings were too meagre to provide an adequate income. Both respective groups were forced to leave the land to find employment in the city, thus effecting permanent change in the rural canvas. This very issue is reflected in some of Auerbach’s works. He makes reference, for instance, to country lads leaving for America and France in *Der Tolpatsch*, *Barfüßele* and *Florian und Kreszenz*. 
The Changing Image of the Peasant

The discussion which land reform engendered did, indeed, have some positive results for the peasant. Attention was drawn to his situation which, over time, brought about a review in the public’s perception of him. The seventeenth and early eighteenth century peasant was, to those who deigned to think of him, ignorant and boorish, a stock figure of comedy (der deutsche Michel\(^2\)) and the butt of crude satire used to give "local colour" in literature (Gagliardo 8). This image persisted well into the eighteenth century. Sagarra comments on the prevalent societal opinion of the peasant, at that time, as follows: "He was a brutish creature, by his very nature destined to remain so. The picture of the witless tiller of the soil, animated by low cunning, but an easy dupe of his social superiors, persisted long into the Age of Reason" (1977, 339-340).

This image slowly began to change in the course of the nineteenth century. This was due to a number of factors, as Gagliardo explains: "The creation of positive and favourable characteristics for the peasant, or, as contemporaries might rather have put it, the ‘discovery’ of them, was a process inseparable from the major intellectual currents and changes of eighteenth-century Germany" (61). The scholar, Uwe Baur, concurs with this view: "Der grundlegende Wandel im 18.

Jahrhundert in der allgemeinen Einschätzung des Nährstandes ist dominant ökonomischen Ursprunge und entfaltete im Einklang mit den Ideen der Aufklärung, des Naturrechts, des Rousseauismus und des Philanthropinismus" (1978, 63). In this connection, a large number of agricultural works on the subject of "economy", as the cultivation of land was then called, began to appear. Interest in educational reform, which was then current in Germany and encompassed the discussion of social evils such as alcoholism, also called attention to the peasant. Gotthelf’s *Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen*, a text which will be explored in chapter four, is an example of a fictional work which was inspired by such discussions. All of these factors helped to create a new climate of opinion favourable to the peasant. The Swiss, H.C. Hirzel’s remark was indicative of this change in attitude towards the peasant and his occupation in general:

One learns... gradually to recognize that agriculture is the mother of the human race, and consequently the source of all wonderworks of the human wit, all industry of the human understanding, and generally of all the knowledge which the understanding has acquired for itself, which it has raised to sciences, and
which it propagates upon descendants from generation to generation.$^3$

In addition to these works there was a host of public and influential figures, who, in the eighteenth century, had already begun to express interest in the life of the peasant. But it was literature which played the most important role in projecting a new, but by no means consistently accurate, image of the German peasant. In the mid and late eighteenth century some literary figures became interested in the peasant and his environment. Albrecht von Haller in _Die Alpen_ (1729) and Salomon Geßner in _Die Idyllen_ (1756), for example, extolled the simple virtues of the countryman and his way of life. And poetic circles such as the Göttingen Hainbund, established in 1772, were also given to rhapsodizing on the theme of the peasant's piety.

In an obviously oversimplified manner, Sagarra speaks of the transformation in the image of the peasant "from brutish beast to ideal peasant of modern times" (152).

Hirzel was instrumental in promoting the "new" peasant:

> Weil er durch Literarisierung des Bauern

Jakob Guyer (1716-1785) aus Wermatswil, genannt Kleinjogg,$^4$ den Grundtypus des

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In regard to the role which literature played in propounding this image (Socrate rustique), Alan Menhennet, the cultural historian, writing in 1973, comments:

The picture of the common people that we see in the literature of eighteenth-century Germany is rarely a portrait of the reality. It is usually conditioned by some convention such as the Enlightenment ideal of natural moderation or the "Sturm und Drang" vision of simple, unspoiled "natural" humanity (41).

He quotes Pöllnitz, whom he claims had captured a truer and more correct picture of the peasant in his statement:

Miserable to the last degree... often not a bit of bread to eat... always trembling and humble (because of their constant subjection)... the severity with which these people are ruled is really terrible, but 'tis as true on the other hand that gentle usage has no
effect on 'em... blows are the only way
to make them good for anything (41).

This dichotomy between the idealized version of the peasant, which the nineteenth century German public began to embrace, and the actual peasant himself is explored by both Auerbach and Gotthelf in Der Lauterbacher, and Der Besuch auf dem Lande respectively.

The peasantry, as is common knowledge today, had been downtrodden, abused and maltreated throughout history. During the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), and even in the years of peace afterwards, they had undergone gruesome suffering. Reports from 1648 reveal the manner in which they were regarded by their lords: "Untertanen können bei Kauf und Verkauf, Pacht und Verpachtung nicht anders als nach den Praestandis Geld, Vieh oder Dienst nach Propertien in Betracht kommen."^5 Furthermore, Eberhard von Rochow, owner of a large estate, lent support to this statement by describing the peasants in his native Brandenburg as "Tiere unter Tieren."^6 Counted as animals they were treated as such. Wilhelm Wolff, writing in the mid 1600s, exposes, and was very critical of, the double standards of that society and the position of the peasant woman, in particular, within it:

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6 Sagarra, Social History 146.
We ourselves in our youth witnessed how a young robber knight, serving as an apprentice in land management to another high noble, cultivating inherent noble passion, for this reason brutally abused a peasant woman and crippled her without being troubled by anyone. They were poor people, and to complain meant a lawsuit, which cost money, and also called for some trust in justice.\textsuperscript{7}

In spite of the new awareness of the peasant, historians, such as Menhennet, argue that the nineteenth century educated middle-class observer found it difficult to accept the peasantry as brothers in practice (40). The fact that the city dweller depended on the peasant for sustenance did little to endear "the country bumpkin" to him, as Gagliardo correctly notes: "He [the peasant] produced the nourishment for all classes, he was the primary producer on whose efforts the entire economy depended, and, according to the more recent nationalistic insights, he was the cultural core or nucleus of the nation itself" (166).

The public continued to view the peasantry as "subjects", neither fully free, nor fully human. In this connection the peasantry, as a class, appears to have been

harshly judged in other societies at that time. Even a socially conscious writer like Maxim Gorky, remarking on the Russian peasantry in 1915, did not praise his countryman:

But where is the good-natured, thoughtful Russian peasant, indefatigable searcher after truth and justice, who was so convincingly and beautifully depicted in the world of nineteenth-century Russian literature? In my youth I searched for such a man across the Russian countryside and did not find him. I met there instead a tough, cunning realist who, when it was favourable to him, knew quite well how to make himself out as a simpleton. By nature the peasant is not stupid and knows it well.\(^8\)

In respect to the German peasant, it is noteworthy that he was receiving more attention, albeit of a disparaging nature, from foreign sources than from his fellow countrymen. Thomas Smith, an English traveller, for example, writing of the German peasantry in the mid-nineteenth century, commented:

The best that can be said of the peasantry, is they are a hard, brutal,

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thrifty race, placing little value upon the refinements of life and seemingly possessing no inclination to acquire them. Dour and revengeful, quarrelsome and ever ready with the knife, they never allow a village festival to pass without knifing events or the smashing of beer-mugs on each other's heads being duly chronicled in the local press (12).

In regard to their living quarters and the conditions in which the German peasant lived, Smith quips: "Why is the air in the country so fresh? Because the peasants never open their windows!" (12). And as to the home being an impenetrable haven for the weary peasant, Smith maintains that, when compared to other European counterparts, this concept was an alien one for the German peasant. Waxing rather lyrical he writes:

The privacy and seclusion which an Englishman values so highly is under German conditions unknown. No conception of the home as a sort of beacon light shedding its divine influence beyond its own borders has ever dawned upon the Teutonic imagination. German home-life is a loose conception and the home exercises little or no influence on Germany's sons and daughters (13).
But since the Englishman has long been renowned for prizing his home as his castle, this is, in my view, a rather unfair and emotional evaluation on Smith’s part. In fact, in the majority of Gotthelf’s works, which will be examined in chapter four, the upkeep of the farm and homestead is a matter of extreme personal pride to the farmer.

Life on the Farm

Peasant life was, according to anthropological and historical sources, quite miserable. The peasants worked long hours for little reward and enjoyed, on the whole, little respect. Their horizon of life was continually bounded by the harsh struggle for daily subsistence, particularly among the poorer peasants. Social differences in the rural community were more rigidly defined than in the cities, as Stadelmann remarks: “The ‘serving class’ and ‘the ruling class’ faced one another very blatantly and clearly” (30). On the farm (Bauernhof) itself, roles and status were firmly demarcated. First and foremost, a system was in operation on the farm which today would clearly be designated as patriarchal. Sagarra comments, on this matter, as follows: “The relationship of the family and dependants, and of the household and farm servants to the master of the house was one of respectful submission” (1977, 142). This meant that “he” (the head of the household) delegated some
of his authority to his wife who, in turn, prescribed tasks for the servants. Auerbach, as we shall observe in chapter three, explores this relationship in his work.

Among the farm labourers themselves there existed gradations of rank: hired help of higher and lower order – the "Großknecht" as well as the "Kleinknecht", which is in evidence in *Hans Joggeli der Erbvetter* by Gotthelf. In spite of this differentiation, the economy of the peasant farm did not impose strict dividing lines between the work expected of a male farm servant and that expected of a female one, although the responsibilities varied, as outlined by the historians below. The only area of work that was exclusively female was in the house and kitchen, which meant effectively that the women generally worked longer hours than the men (Evans and Lee 166).

R.J. Evans and W.R. Lee describe the typical working life of a woman peasant at that period:

First, a girl 13-14 years old will be taken on to help the peasant’s wife with the household chores and looking after the children. As she grows she is promoted to under-servant (Unterdin) and starts learning farming tasks. Then she gets promoted to middle servant, who milks the cows and feeds them under supervision. Finally she becomes an
upper servant, who is responsible for
the animals (163).

This latter task was the ultimate in terms of responsibility
and promotion. The importance of the maid to the well-being
of the animals was acknowledged and rewarded, by means of a
bonus paid by the farmers, when an animal was sold.

Ideally a female servant was initiated into all aspects
of women’s work on the farm during her time of service. The
hardest work was the variable seasonal work in the fields,
which is attested in Auerbach’s Erdmune. In this regard
Smith, with characteristic colourfulness and pompous
intensity, maintains that the female peasant had the most
difficult time of all:

Especially among the peasant classes
women are little better than beasts of
burden. From morn till eve, during all
the seasons, they may be seen – young
and old – performing the heaviest tasks
connected with agricultural labour. On
market days the woman carries the
heaviest load, while in droughty summers
it is an everyday sight to see her, bent
nearly double in carrying a vessel
containing about six bucketsful of
water, fitted by straps on to the back,
considerable distances to water the
parched fields. Yet hers is a lot much
desired and envied by her unmarried
sisters! (6-7).

Working as a farm labourer had wider social
ramifications for the woman. Being in the employ of a farmer
meant being subject to the patriarchal authority of the
household - the farm servant would have to obey the farmer
in the same manner as did his children, a relationship which
both Auerbach and Gotthelf describe in their work. The rules
governing service also dictated that the female peasant
would live in the same house as the farmer and his wife,
share the work and the holidays with them, and finally, and
this continued even at the end of the century on middling
peasant farms, she was expected to eat the same food at the
same table. In all, this meant complete integration into the
hierarchy of the household, as Evans explains: "Their rights
and their participation in the work of the farm differed
from that of the farmer’s own children in one fundamental
way only: they were employed by him, and stood to inherit no
land from him" (161).

Furthermore, the peasant woman was part of a larger
community, the village, and her position in the family and
the standing of that respective household determined her
social identity in the village. Since, as Ernest Cohn-
Bramsted, the historian, informs us "the reputation for good
domestic management was the pride of the women", (1964, 52)
it was, therefore, of utmost importance for the female
peasant to find service in a decent, reputable family, and
to do well there, for it secured her respect and position in
the village community at a later date. This was important
not only because of the attendant prestige of being
respected, but every woman farmhand sought independence with
good cause. Tolerance of females, who were considered an
encumbrance and liability to the community, was low. Evans
relates that court records from that period illustrate the
lengths to which a village would go to rid itself of an
unemployed, or sick, farm servant. He cites the case of Anna
K. as an example. The latter was a servant who had been
severely injured in an accident involving a threshing
machine, and there were rumours that she was pregnant out of
wedlock. The records reveal that the Mayor of the village
applied to the court in Ebersberg for permission to ban the
woman from the community (162). This procedure was
apparently common practice and indicates that village
officials regarded the presence of unmarried female
servants, within the district, as a moral impediment. Women
who left their employ without customary notice were also
considered as subversive, undesirable elements in the
community. It was feared that those women who lacked money
or relatives would drain the village poor fund, and would
further endanger the prevailing code of sexual ethics by
succumbing to prostitution to support themselves. Moreover,
should pregnancy be the outcome of prostitution, the child,
in turn, would be entitled to support from the village’s
poor relief fund, if the father were a native of the village
Auerbach illuminates some of these social issues in his work. He treats the dilemma of the unmarried pregnant woman in *Des Schloßbauers Vefele*, and the villagers’ fears that Amrei might have recourse to the communal poor fund in *Barfüßele*.

**Marriage in the Rural Community**

To ward off such a dilemma, and to gain some sort of secure social and financial position within the village, the woman’s only option was marriage. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that a maid’s existence was entirely oriented towards her future marriage. Since, as we have observed in the previous chapter, marriage was problematic for women from all social strata, the working peasant woman could not afford to wait passively for a prospective suiter to woo her, hence she strove with all her might to attract him. Gotthelf provides an especially amusing account of women in pursuit of husbands in *Der Ball*. During her period of service the peasant woman struggled to amass the dowry she needed in order to be even considered in the running as an eligible marriage partner. This also applied to those from the poorest sections of the village. Consequently, the peer group became the focal point of social activity for unmarried single women, who went to dance halls and on Sunday outings in the hope of procuring a husband.
Although the dowry was also a matter of course in other European countries, Smith notes that, by comparison, German women made themselves exceedingly cheap in the marriage market. His account is somewhat outrageous and exaggerated: "Girls of the lower classes exercise the greatest thrift in order to procure 'eine Ausstattung' and a little money, without which she has little hope of finding a Hans who will make her his housekeeper and slave. Having bought a man, her chief worry in life seems to be removed" (6). But, at the same time, this statement appears to reflect the foreigner's, or, in any case, the Englishman's appraisal of the Germans. Reports from Germans themselves, who journeyed abroad in the 1850s, serve to collaborate this view: "Travellers in England contrast the lot and intelligence of the peasantry in that country with those prevailing in their own North Germany, to the great advantage of England" (Gonner 84).

The situation regarding courtship had further social repercussions. Because marriage was often very difficult and engagements sometimes of years' duration, acceptance of pre-marital intercourse spread upward from the peasantry, where it had always been endemic, to higher classes of society. Gotthelf treats this issue, in some detail, in Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen. Again, foreign opinion, in respect to this matter, was less than favourable. Robertson reports that in 1843 the English economist, Robert Vaughan, judged that Prussia was lower in
female chastity than any other Protestant community of Europe! (71). This, if at all accurate, is hardly astounding since women from all rungs of the rural hierarchy were at the mercy of a system which allowed men to take full advantage of the woman’s need to marry.

In a bid to get hitched, young single women were particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. In order to capture a male many gave in to pre-marital sex in the hope that it would secure them a husband. Eleanor S. Riemar, the feminist historian, writing in 1980 raises an important point in this connection:

Hence sexual attractiveness, which had not been an issue when parents selected their daughters’ husbands, became an important factor in courtship and marriage and in women’s self-image.

Popular culture and new social conventions encouraged women to be sex objects; continued spinsterhood was a sign that a woman was not sexually appealing to men (134).

It is interesting to observe that illegitimacy in the lower and upper rural classes was not considered a scandal, if the father were a genuine marriage prospect: a matter reflected in Des Schlossbauers Vefele by Auerbach and Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen by Gotthelf. Both male and female farm servants often had one or even
several children by the time they married. The illegitimacy rate was gauged at approximately 15 per cent even at the end of the nineteenth century, though the statistics, as Evans notes, varied from region to region within Bavaria (I70). In spite of this tacit, societal acceptance, the situation was wretched for the children of farm servants. There was no place for offspring born on the farm and so, almost immediately after the birth, the child was turned over to foster-parents. Consequently, the mother’s only chance to visit her children was on her free Sunday afternoons. Moreover, if the respective female had more than one child, the children were delegated to a number of foster families with the result that many siblings grew up separately, knowing little of one another.

In the mid 1880’s economic pressure forced many workers to leave the farm:

Da die Arbeitsplätze in der Landwirtschaft im 19. Jahrhundert nur minimal anstiegen, die Kinderzahl am Lande aber ebenso wie in der Stadt rasch zunahm, mußten die landlosen Bauernkinder um Taglohn arbeiten, in die industrielle Produktion der Städte ausweichen oder nach den USA auswandern (Baur 54).

Numerous young women from the agricultural lower classes left for the city in the hope of earning enough money to
marry and set up home. For others, life on the farm was hard and monotonous, and just as service in foreign armies had had its appeal for young peasant men in the past, so it was that the city became a sort of utopian magnet which lured the young with promises of quick wealth. This, in turn, led to the gradual erosion of the old patriarchal way of life in rural communities.

The majority of the women who left the land, entered domestic service which remained the major source of employment for unmarried women without skills until the close of the nineteenth century. Life in the city, however, presented new, equally difficult problems. Conditions for domestic servants were, by and large, deplorable. Those who did not have live-in domestic positions faced the problem of finding affordable shelter themselves. Many were forced to rent space, i.e. part of a room in which to sleep, with families or in a boarding house. Thus, necessity and low wages forced working women into overcrowded, unsanitary, and dismal living conditions (Riemer 132). In light of this change in the rural canvas, the "Dorfgeschichte" is of particular importance in providing access to this social stratum (the rural population), because the writers of this genre, while creating fictional texts, were drawing on their own reflections about factual inhabitants and experiences of peasant life.
The literary critic, Arnold Bettelheim, commented, in 1907, on the array of women in Auerbach’s works as follows:

Stark- und weichmütige Familienmütter, Frauen als Erzieherinnen, als Vorsehung ganzer Geschlechter; Bauernmädchen, der selbstlosesten, zartfühlendsten Liebesempfindung fähig, dicht neben heißblütigen und leichtfertigen - eine solche Fülle von Nordstetter Landsleuten schickte der Dichter in die Welt (162).

After indepth investigation of the entire collection of Auerbach’s Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten (1843-1854), I agree with Bettelheim’s somewhat effusive evaluation. Due to the diversity of women presented in the texts, I have decided to arrange the respective works in clusters (with no chronological intention), which appeared to share a common theme in relation to the female character.

In this chapter I will analyze works in each respective group, and in accordance with my objective delineated in the introduction, I will demonstrate that Auerbach did not
merely sugar-coat, or deodorize his peasants as has been claimed; but he, in fact, provides a convincing and realistic portrait of the nineteenth century peasant woman. In contrast to Gotthelf, few of Auerbach’s “Dorfgeschichten” may be regarded as “comic”, or “humorous” renditions of village life. Of the ten volumes I consulted only Befehlerles (1843) and Die Kriegspfeife (1844) treat the lighter side of rural life. I shall begin my investigation of Auerbach’s depiction of the peasant woman with the aforementioned works.

Auerbach’s Women: Young and Old

It will become apparent in the study of the woman in Auerbach’s works, that the author does not provide a detailed account of her physical appearance or, on occasion, of her circumstances. This is true of Befehlerles (1843). We receive no information concerning Aivle’s age, her physical appearance, or her standing in the village hierarchy. There is, as we shall see, next to no character development. She is important only in that she is central to Matthes’s, the male protagonist’s, “crime” and as the agent who unwittingly lengthens his period of incarceration.

When we first encounter Aivle, her feistiness of spirit leads us to the belief that she may stand in opposition to the image of the demure woman discussed in the preceding
chapters. Contrary to the traditional female role, she is shown to act as male protector when Matthes is led away by the guard: "Es [Aivle] erfaßte den Matthes beim Arme, als wollte es ihn retten" (Auerbach 1: 110).\(^1\) But this valiant gesture, on her part, is soon subjugated by her puerile helplessness which pervades the entire work: "Dieses [Aivle] aber sah nichts mehr, denn die hellen Tränen standen ihm im Auge, und die Schürze vor das Gesicht haltend, ging es schnell zurück ins Haus" (110).

While Auerbach presents Aivle as a comical figure, who elicits humour by her apparent slow-witted nature, he sounds a more serious note by offering some insight into the mindset and social standing of the "average" female of that period. For instance, as a direct consequence of Matthes’s actions, Aivle is summoned to appear in court. She is petrified at this prospect due to her ignorance (through no fault of her own) of this predominantly male institution: "Allerlei Schreckbilder von schwarzbekleideten Gemächern standen vor seiner Seele" (115). In reality, her fears materialize, for she is subjected to the advances of the

\(^1\) For the reader’s orientation, brief recapitulations of content for the works under discussion in chapters three and four respectively may be found in Appendix II. In addition, because of the lack of pertinent critical material in reference to Auerbach’s and Gotthelf’s treatment of the peasant woman, I do not provide the conventional review of critics (see Appendix III). Furthermore, since Gotthelf is a recognized author and Auerbach is virtually unknown today, I thought it advisable to provide the reader with two short biographical sketches of both writers (see Appendix I).
lecherous court official who, preying on her vulnerability as a poor, uneducated woman, seeks to extort information from her: "Aivle schien ihm sehr zu gefallen, denn er faBte es am Kinn, streichelte ihm die heißen, roten Wangen und sagte dann: Setz dich nur" (117).

Although frightened, Aivle is depicted by Auerbach as attempting to rise above her fears and her dictated societal role as an obedient, complying woman. The author demonstrates how, through the power of love, an "oppressed" creature can gain a higher awareness of herself as a conscious human being. During her interrogation in court, Aivle is momentarily transformed through thoughts of Matthes:

Sein Herz klopfte rasch, ein gewisses Gefühl des Stolzes erhob sich in ihm, ein Bewußtsein, das über alle Gefahren hinausragte, belebte sein ganzes Wesen, es dachte plötzlich nicht mehr an die Papiere, nicht mehr an den Oberamtmann, nicht mehr, wo es war, es dachte nur an Matthes (117).

The author also reveals how despite her brave efforts, Aivle lacks the tools, i.e. education, which would permit her to assert herself as a woman socially and politically and to successfully confront the male power structure. Because of this, her bungling rendition of events, in fact, makes the situation less favourable for Matthes. The ending is abrupt,
Matthes is furious because Aivle’s confession in court condemned him to a longer prison term, but the author, who has underscored the injustices perpetrated upon the female (the woman is deliberately kept in ignorance and is endangered by the prevailing power structure) throughout the work; in this instance, and in contrast to his more realistic conclusions, will have a “happy end” and the lovers are reconciled: “Das ist die Geschichte von dem Maibaum an des Wagner Michels Haus; am Hochzeitstage der beiden Liebenden ward er mit roten Bändern geschmückt” (119).

In Die Kriegspfeife (1844) we gain more insight into Kätherle’s character than we did in respect to Aivle in the former work. Kätherle, in keeping with the image of the “ideal” woman discussed in chapter one, is depicted by Auerbach in a nurturing, mothering capacity. She tends to Hansjörg who has lost his finger, and caters to numerous male needs by taking provisions to the wounded soldiers. As befitting the above female role, she serves and waits upon the man. And although she disapproves of Hansjörg’s pipe smoking, it is she who stuffs his pipe. Furthermore, while she acts as the moral conscience in the relationship, by reminding Hansjörg that it is a transgression of social duty and Christian principles when he shoots himself to avoid conscription, she willingly buries the offending finger.
And yet, Auerbach presents Kätherle as a "liberated" woman in some respects. While he shows her to be humble in her actions, she is recalcitrant in behaviour: "Hansjörg ärgerte sich gewaltig über den Eigensinn Kätherles, und er steifte sich immer mehr auf seine Liebhaberei" (Auerbach 1: 46). Kätherle exerts her influence upon Hansjörg in a subtle, yet winning manner. She, in fact, blackmails him by demanding that he forfeit his pipe or she will withhold sexual favours: "Das erste, was das Kätherle immer und immer von ihm verlangte, war: daß er das Rauchen aufgeben solle. Er durfte es nie küssen, wenn er geraucht hatte, und ehe er zu ihm ging, mußte er fast immer seine liebe Pfeife verstecken" (46). It is she too who coerces Hansjörg into marriage, all of which contradicts his and, by extension, society's conviction: "Es sei unmännlich, sich von einem Weibe etwas vorschreiben zu lassen; das Weib müsse nachgeben" (46).

Moreover, Auerbach places Kätherle in the position where she is seen not only to dictate the nature of the relationship, but to re-write its rules at will. Having insisted that Hansjörg forego his pipe, and having achieved her goal: "Die beiden umarmten sich selig, dann rief Hansjörg: "Mein Lebtag kommt mir kein' Pfeif' mehr in den Mund" (50), she appears at their wedding with a pipe in her mouth and offers it to him. Is she, like some higher being, granting him permission to smoke, or is she testing his vow never to do so again? In accordance with the first idea, she
speaks to Hansjörg as one would to a child: "Da, nimm, du hast dich wacker gehalten, du kannst dir schon was versagen," and for one who was so adamant about him not smoking she recants her position entirely: "Meinetwegen magst du wohl rauchen, ich hab' kein bißle dagegen" (53). In this case the woman is presented by Auerbach as the stronger partner and the author demonstrates that a marriage can prove successful when founded on the woman's terms: "Die Pfeife wurde als ewiges Andenken über dem Himmelbette des jungen Ehepaares aufgehängt, und Hansjörg deutet oft darauf hin, wenn er beweisen will, daß man sich mit festem Vorsatz und aus Liebe alles abgewöhnen könne" (53).

In this section I investigate works, Der Lauterbacher (1847) and Ivo, derHairle (1850), in which the peasant woman is shown by Auerbach to be a powerful agent in exerting both positive and negative influences upon the male protagonist in question. In this connection, the prevalent nineteenth century peasant image, with particular reference to the woman, (chapter one) is also taken to task by Auerbach, who in Bettelheim’s view, was especially interested in exploring this theme: 

Vefele, die Bauerntochter, die als Vorläuferin der Frau Professorin aus dem Dorf in städtische Kreise, der studierte Lehrer aus dem Städtchen Lauterbach, der ein Bauernmädchen heiraten soll,
behandeln in Gegenstücken das von Auerbach zeitlebens immer wieder abgewandelte Verhältnis der Naturkinder zu den Gebildeten (149).

The 78 year old Maurita in Der Lauterbacher is presented by Auerbach as a composite of qualities, which reflect both the real and ideal image of the peasant delineated in chapter two. On the one hand, she is cunning and intuitive. She assesses and understands Reinholt’s (the schoolmaster) motives in settling in the village before he can fully express them himself: "Wenn man jung ist, möcht’ man gern alle Leut’ auffressen, die einen aus Lieb’ und die anderen aus Ärger; wenn man alt ist, da läßt man einem jeden sein’ Sach" (Auerbach 2: 242). Although a "simple peasant" she is first in a line of female characters, presented by the author, to display deep psychological understanding of the male. Indeed, her appraisal of Reinholt to her granddaughter proves correct: "Hedwig, er ist ein G’studierter, die haben oft Mucken im Kopf, ich weiß das von meiner Schwester her; du muß Geduld mit ihm haben; denen G’studierten gehen oft ganz andre Sachen im Kopf ’rum, und da lassen sie’s am Unrechten ’naus" (282). Like Kätherle in the previous work, she is shown in a more traditional role by Auerbach, when she nurtures the male. For instance, she takes Reinholt to her bosom immediately, when he asks permission to address her as "Großmutter", by responding: "Rechtschaffen gern, du guter, lieber Mensch, es kommt mir
auf ein Enkele mehr oder weniger nicht an, und ich will's probieren und will deine Strümpf' stricken, bring mir auch die zerrissenen" (242).

While Reinholt had formerly sought shelter from the rural community in nature, Maurita is depicted by the author as his living refuge, a kind of human Mother Nature: "Bei allen Gefühlsverletzungen, die der Lehrer durch die Art und Weise der Bauern empfand, wendete er sich aber nicht mehr an die Mutter Natur, sondern an die Großmutter Maurita, die ihm über die Art, wie die Menschen hier lebten, manchen Aufschluß gab" (245). She is, to an extent, Auerbach's "ideal" woman, a combination of earthy and spiritual qualities. She is not religious in the conventional sense of the word, but she is portrayed by him as a spiritual person: "Die Hand der alten Frau streifte ihm plötzlich über das Gesicht, es war dem Lehrer in der Tat, als ob ihn eine höhere Macht berührte, er saß da mit geschlossenen Augen, und die Augäpfel zitterten und bebten, die Wangen glühten" (242).

As previously stated, Maurita is presented as the living example of Mother Nature, Hedwig, her granddaughter, on the other hand, is depicted by the author as the epitome of the younger "Naturkind." We first encounter her, in a vividly idyllic, pastoral scene: her apron overflowing with crimson berries, a snow white chicken pursuing her. Hedwig is shown to display the required Biedermeier virtues: modesty, humility, piety and kindness of heart. Like the
majority of female peasants in Auerbach's day, Hedwig's educational and cultural horizons are severely limited. Her only reading matter is: "Das G'sangbuch und die biblisch' G'schicht" (262). In spite of this "deficiency" Hedwig, like her grandmother before her, is portrayed by the author as capable of not only exerting an influence upon the learned schoolmaster through her natural common sense and intuition (much to his surprise), but she is also responsible for effecting change in his person. Reinholt grapples with the emotions ensuing from this unlikely turn of events: "An ein ungebildetes Bauernmädchen hast du dich hingegeben, weggeworfen. - Nein, nein, aus diesem Antlitze spricht die Majestät einer zarten, sanften Seele" (249).

At the onset, Reinholt, who has a very rigid, and by no means flattering, image of the peasant, (indicative of the townsman's attitudes in the early nineteenth century) attempts to justify to himself his reasons for contact with Hedwig: "Ihre Geistesbildung auf allerlei Weise zu prüfen" (250) and further: "Er wollte erproben, wie weit sich Hedwig einer feineren Bildung fügen würde" (264). Indeed, his intention in settling in the district was to impart to the community his conception of "die reinen Freuden des Geistes" (211); but it is Hedwig who enlightens him in this respect. Auerbach depicts her as the carrier of intelligence and sensibility. Through her, Reinholt gradually learns "daß man wohl viel miteinander sprechen kann, ohne gerade Bücher gelesen zu haben" (266). He thus begins to differentiate
between experience gleaned from contact with "real" life and that found in dry matter. He is, in effect, transported to a different level of reality through contact with Hedwig: "Der Lehrer war wie in eine neue Welt versetzt" (269).

Upon his arrival in the village the thought of marriage to a countrywoman had appalled Reinholt: "Innerlich dachte er: lieber eine Äffin, als so eine vierschrotige Bäuerin zur Frau" (217), but through Hedwig he now perceives the peasant female and her work, which he formerly viewed as a further denigration to her status, in a different light: "Die Hoheit Hedwigs erschien ihm nicht erniedrigt, vielmehr erhöhter durch ihre Arbeit" (270). He had also been adamant: "Ich will all meine Kraft zusammenhalten, um mich gegen das Verbauern zu wahren" (218), but he now permits himself to be gradually won over. Reinholt begins to re-evaluate the peasant, which Auerbach utilizes to negate a prejudice in regard both to gender and the rural community.

This change manifests itself in many ways, but most significantly in reference to Reinholt’s attitude towards the use of dialect. On first encountering the village folk, he was repulsed when Agnes addressed him in dialect: "All die Schönheit des Màdchens verschwand plôtzlich vor den Augen des Lehrers, da er diese harte, in groben Lauten vorgebrachte Rede hörte" (212). But, as he begins to value Hedwig as a person who is both shrewd and sensitive, and as he falls in love with her, he grows fond of it: "Er hatte die sûJîen Worte Hedwigs so freudig aufgenommen, daß er sogar
As Reinholt settles and casts off his prejudices towards the village community, he begins to comprehend the words of the Buchmaier: "Die Leut’ sind zwar hier herum ein bißle grob; es ist nicht so, aber es sieht so aus" (215). Appearances had deceived him, but now that he realizes his error (through the agencies of both Maurita and Hedwig) he consciously strives to draw closer to the community and is, in turn, of use to it. Maurita’s words: "Es geht auch bei den Menschen so: "zuerst muß man für sich allein etwas gewesen sein, ehe man in Gemeinschaft gut arbeitet und tüchtig ist" (254), while further highlighting her peasant wisdom, prove correct in reference to Reinholt. He begins to understand how his escape into himself, through his diary entries, had distanced him from experiencing reality. In reference to them he now remarks: "Wenn ich diese Blätter ansehe, ist es mir oft, als war ich früher ein sonderbarer Egoist; ich habe die Welt nur in mich aufzunehmen, nicht mich an sie hinauszugeben betrachtet" (295).

While this village story revolves largely around the transformation of the schoolmaster through contact with Maurita and Hedwig, it is also clear that changes are wrought in Hedwig through intercourse with the former - thus illuminating the psychological realism of Auerbach’s characters. The author, as we shall observe in other works,
frequently utilizes the motif of the mirror in signifying change in the female character. In this case we are informed in reference to Hedwig: "Als im Vorbeigehen ihr Blick in den Spiegel streifte, wendete sie sich schnell ab, sie kam sich ganz wie eine andere Person vor, so fremd war ihr Aussehen" (276). Her character is metamorphosized from one of extreme timidity to a level of independence she had not previously enjoyed. But, in order not to detract from her credibility as a character, Auerbach reveals a latent self-determination in Hedwig. For instance, when the teacher challenges her concerning her usage of dialect, at the onset of the work, she retorts: "Ich tät’ mich in die Seel’ nein schämen, wenn ich anders reden tät’, und es versteht mich ja auch ein jedes" (264). Moreover, as she continues her acquaintance with Reinholt, her independence of spirit becomes more obvious. The author has her go so far as to challenge Reinholt’s position within the relationship by announcing: "Ich will sehen, wer Meister wird, ich bin kein Kind mehr" (275).

Auerbach traces Hedwig’s development as she continues to assert herself. After she and Reinholt are married, the latter, when explaining matters to her, persists in treating her in a condescending manner until she protests in self-confidence: "Hör mal, wenn du mir was zu denken gibst oder sonst was anbringen willst, sags grad ’raus, mach’ kein so Schmierale drum ’rum, ich will dir nachher schon sagen, ob ich’s versteh’, oder ob ich’s nicht mag" (298). Furthermore,
unlike the majority of Gotthelf's marriages, Auerbach establishes, in this instance, a relationship based on honesty and trust with the woman as the initiator and keeper of these elements: "Was er dachte und fühlte, offenbarte er Hedwig" (294). The assurance that theirs is a happy marriage is conveyed in the final words of the text: "Mit freudigem Ernst wurde das Ehebündnis geschlossen. - "Es sei gesegnet" (299).

As in the previous work, Auerbach presents, in Ivo, der Hajrle (1850), two female figures; an older and a younger woman, who are instrumental in moulding and influencing the male character Ivo after whom the tale is named. Ivo's mother, Christine, is also important in the respect that, through her, Auerbach provides us with some insight into the life and relationships of the nineteenth century peasant woman.

In this village story Auerbach focusses on the woman and her position within the institution of marriage which, in this instance, appears to be fraught with difficulty and unhappiness. When Ivo returns home on vacation we are informed: "Er sah die nur halbverdeckte Zwietracht zwischen seinen Eltern" (Auerbach 1: 187). The author suggests that the husband is responsible for this state of affairs, while he casts Ivo's mother in the role of peacemaker by her attempts to placate the former and, at the same time, by staunchly defending him to Ivo. Moreover, she is depicted as
psychologically astute, a quality she shares with Maurita in Der Lauterbacher, in her appraisal of her husband’s unhappiness:

Guck, dein Vater ist der rechtschaffenste Mann, den man finden kann, aber er hat eine unglückliche Natur, er ist mit sich selber unzufrieden, weil er halt manches verunschickt und nicht alles nach seinem Kopf geht; und da mocht’ er dann grad, daß andre allfort mit ihm zufrieden sein sollten (188).

In Auerbach’s description of her perseverance with her husband, he lends her Christ-like characteristics. As in Maurita’s case, the author assigns her spiritual, if not transcendental, qualities:

Das Paradies seines elterlichen Hauses war vor ihm eingesunken, nur seine Mutter schwebte noch wie ein Lichtengel darüber, und einmal sagte er sich ganz leise: "Sie heißt nicht umsonst Christine, sie ist grad wie der Heiland, sie nimmt mit Lächeln das schwerste Kreuz auf sich, will gar nichts für sich und alles für andre (189)."
When she is ill, Auerbach describes her in terms which suggest a metaphysical quality: "Ihr Auge schloß sich, aber eine lichte Glorie schwebte auf ihrem Antlitze" (231).

Christine’s determination in the face of adversity, an attribute she shares with many of Auerbach’s female characters, is formidable, and serves as the guiding principle for Ivo in his decision to remain a priest: "Man kann alles, wenn man nur recht will, hat meine Mutter gesagt; das soll mein Wahlspruch sein" (189). When Ivo finally resolves to leave the seminary his mother does not react as violently as her husband, but she is revealed by the author as exerting pressure upon him in a more subtle manner: "Kannst du denn dein’ Mutter so bitten und betteln sehen?" (240). Ivo’s mother means well, but it is she who initially implanted the idea of becoming a priest into Ivo’s mind at a tender age, and she has actively nurtured it as he matures: "Die Mutter Christine aber war eine fromme und entschlossene Frau, sie ließ einen einmal erfaßten Gedanken nicht mehr so leicht wieder los" (144).

It is not clear whether she does so through selfish motives. We know from the text, however, that upon the ordination of her son as priest, the respective mother is honoured by being addressed thereafter as "Sie", and as one of the villagers remarks in this connection: "G’wiß, die ist jetzt mehr, als andre Menschen" (121). Indeed, it is solely on her account that Ivo reverses his decision and determines to continue his studies as a priest. In light of the above
information it could be argued that, while Auerbach refers to Christine as "eine fromme Frau", he also underscores her human weakness by revealing her personal desires in relation to her son. The author indicates that her life revolves entirely around Ivo, perhaps to the detriment of both her husband and her son. She appears to project her unfulfilled needs and desires upon Ivo by making him the sole object of her affection. Auerbach expresses his disapproval, to an extent, by suggesting the notion of guilt on her part: "Er ist mein Herzblättchen. Und wenn ich eine Sünde damit thue, daß ich ihn so lieb hab', laß die Schuld mich entgelten und nicht ihn!" (165). Furthermore, Christine depends upon Ivo as if he were her husband. When she has to undergo an operation, in spite of the presence of her husband, she tells Ivo: "So, jetzt kann ich alles besser aushalten, wenn du da bist" (231). She is ultimately spared harsh judgement, however, when she is shown to finally renounce her own wishes in favour of Ivo’s personal happiness. She is responsible for sending Emmerenz (her maid and Ivo’s childhood friend) to him, which, ultimately, leads to his fulfilment through marriage.

The other female character of note in this work is the servant Emmerenz. The relationship between her and Ivo is depicted, at the onset, as that of siblings. Ivo torments the former like a brother does a sister, but he is also extremely protective of her: "So neckisch auch Ivo manchmal Emmerenz war, so ließ er ihr doch von niemand ein Leid
anthun" (130). He is so determined in this respect that he is teased by his peers on her account: "Obgleich Ivo deshalb von seinen ungalanten Schulkameraden "Mädleschmecker" geschimpft wurde, ließ er doch nicht von der Emmerenz" (127).

Just as Auerbach provides us with some insight into the circumstances surrounding the mistress of the farm; through Emmerenz, he illuminates the life of the poor peasant servant. For instance, he describes her work life. At an early age she is sent to work in the fields. When she is nine she is already earning her living as a governness: "In einem Lebensalter, in welchem sonst die Kinder nur mit der Puppe spielen, hatte Emmerenz eine lebendige anspruchsvolle Puppe zu versorgen; aber sie tat es meist mit kindlicher Lust und Spielerei" (149). This statement also reflects negatively on the village community, who surrender their offspring into the care of governesses who are themselves children. Later on Emmerenz becomes a servant in Ivo’s parental home.

The various stages and developments in Emmerenz’s life are glossed over, since Ivo’s development is the focus of the work. However, apart from her employment, Auerbach presents information pertaining to Emmerenz’s private life, such as courtship and marriage. Her marriage prospects, as a poor servant, are less than favourable and share many similarities with those of her counterparts outlined in the preceding chapter. As a pretty maid she is "desired" by
many, such as the flighty Konstantin. He pursues her, but as he tells Ivo: "Sie will ja nichts von mir, das ist eben die Sach’, die thut so heilig und zimperlich wie die deutsche Diana" (215). Konstantin’s intentions are not honourable and, while clearly fictional, they reflect factual patterns in the male’s attitude towards the female discussed in chapters one and two. When questioned by Ivo if his motives in regard to Emmerenz are honest, he responds: "Was? ehrlich? G’wiß, was denn anders? aber vom heiraten ist jetzt noch keine Red’, kennst du noch das alte Burschenlied:

   Lieben, lieben will ich dich,
   Ich will dich lieben,
   Aber heiraten nicht (215).

Auerbach’s description of Emmerzenz’s appraisal of her marriage prospects is treated more realistically and ironically than Gotthelf in his work. She is shown to clearly assess and vocalize her situation, while Gotthelf’s women, although they may feel the same, do not express this awareness: "Was könnt’ ich kriegen? So einen alten Witwer, der schon ein paar Weiber unter die Erd’ geliefert hat" (223). This statement also reflects accurately on the marriage dilemma as experienced by women in that period. It is, therefore, especially surprising that Emmerenz, a poor servant, should win Ivo, the sole heir of a wealthy farmer, as a husband. It is hinted from the onset by Nazi (the servant) that Emmerenz and Ivo are destined to be
together. Indeed, it is Ivo's love for Emmerenz which wrenches him from the priesthood, although it is Emmerenz who takes it upon herself to go to Ivo at the seminary. The love relationship between Emmerenz and Ivo is indeed credible, but that two individuals from such diverse ends of the rural hierarchy should marry is, of course, unrealistic in terms of the social background (see chapter one).

Auerbach, however, implies that this marriage is not condoned by Ivo's father. It is noteworthy that Ivo does not return home to claim the farm, but through Nazi, who has come into a fortune, he is enabled to set himself up as a farmer in a neighbouring district and to send for Emmerenz: "Er [Nazi] reiste für ihn als Brautwerber in die Heimat und holte die Emmerenz, die sich vor Freude gar nicht zu fassen wußte" (255).

In connection with this group, and its theme, I would like to include and discuss Der Tolpatsch (1843) which, on first glance, casts the woman as "femme fatale" and the ruination of the hero. I contend that this is not the case and through closer examination of the text I hope to demonstrate my point.

Der Tolpatsch is, in essence, the story of the male character Aloys. Again, as in the two previous works there are two women of note in this village story: Marannele who works as a servant on Aloys' farm and Aloys' mother. Of
interest in this work, and in regard to Marannele, is Auerbach’s exploration of the expectations which the male and society imposes upon the woman.

Aloys, for instance, places full responsibility for his life and happiness upon Marannele. When she pays him attention he is content: "Er war mit sich und der Welt zufrieden" (Auerbach 1: 24), but when she is absent from the village, life has no significance for him: "Es war ihm, als ob das ganze Dorf ausgestorben wäre, da das Marannele den ganzen Tag darin nicht zu finden sein sollte" (27). Furthermore, because of a fleeting comment from Marannele concerning Jörgli (Aloys’ peer) as "ein flinker Bursch", Aloys embarks upon a course of action which not only destroys his own chance of happiness, but Marannele’s also.

In his obsession with her and what he perceives as her attraction to Jörgli, plus his own feelings of inferiority towards the latter, Aloys loses sight of his goal: a relationship with Marannele. Indeed, he becomes completely absorbed with Jörgli: "Der Jörgli war das Endziel seines Unmutes" (27). It becomes, in fact, a battle not between the sexes, but rather between the two males, Aloys and Jörgli. Auerbach casts Aloys as a sensitive youth who suffers from the ridicule of the village: "Aloys wurde immer empfindlicher gegen den Spott der Leute" (25). He is young, and impressionable and believes that if he follows in Jörgli’s footsteps, who is a soldier, (and whom he secretly admires) he will gain acceptance with his peers, the village
community as a whole, and will subsequently win Marannele:
"Ich muß als ein ganz anderer Kerl heimkommen, dann soll mir
noch einer Tolpatsch sagen, ich will euch schon tolpatschen"
(40). Auerbach indicates here that Aloys is also subject to
society’s carven image of the male.

Marannele appears to feel affection for Aloys, since she tells him: "Aloys, du bischt e braver Bua" (24) on a
number of occasions. Despite his insecurities, and in
keeping with the traditional feminine role, (chapter one)
Marannele seeks to reassure Aloys in every possible way. She
tries to involve him in social activities by inviting him to
dance. His unfair retort notwithstanding, "du willst mich
nur foppen" (31), Marannele perseveres with him. Resisting
the urge to call him "Tolpatsch" as the others do, she
endeavours to dispel his fears: "Und ich tanz’ so gern mit
dir als wie mit einem" (32) and further: "Ich lern’ dir’s
ganz allein, Aloys", sagte das Marannele, ihn beruhigend"
(32).

Auerbach suggests, however, that her sentiments towards
him are of a maternal and protective nature rather than the
impassioned love of a woman for her man; but as we know from
the preceding historical chapters this was not a
prerequisite for marriage in the nineteenth century. When
Aloys goes to Horb to enlist, Marannele gives him a Kreuzer
as a good luck token in the hope that he will not be
recruited. Like his mother, she is upset by the news that he
is chosen: "Als der Aloys heimkam, gab ihm das Marannele
weinend einen Rosmarinstrauß mit roten Bändern daran und nähete ihm denselben auf seine Mütze" (37). But when it comes to courtship, she is somewhat embarrassed by him. During a game in which the young folk engage, Aloys, cast in the role of suitor, must recite a verse to Marannele. She reacts as follows: "Das Marannele schlug zuerst die Blicke in den Schoß aus Scham und aus Angst, der Aloys möchte in seiner Rede steckenbleiben" (29). Aloys misunderstands Marannele's behaviour. Without undue courtship, and no display of affection towards her on his part, Aloys expects Marannele to vow that she will not marry another while he is away. Her answer "Gewiß nicht" is by no means unambiguous. It is Aloys who appears to assume that Marannele is now his, a notion supported by his letters to his mother in which he refers to her as his intended wife.

In contrast to her matronly feelings towards Aloys, Marannele appears to be physically attracted to Jörgli. She is portrayed by Auerbach as being susceptible to his dash and charm:

Wenn er [Jörgli] sonntags in seiner geraden, kecken Haltung, die Füße auswärts setzend und die Sporen klingen lassend, die Soldatenmütze auf dem Kopfe, mit den lederbesetzten Reithosen angetan, das Dorf hinaufging, da sagte sein ganzes Wesen: "ich weiß, daß sich alle Mädle in mich vergucken"; oder wenn
But, at the same time, the author depicts her as innocent and inexperienced in regard to men, particularly in her attitude towards Jörgli. When Aloys attempts to dissuade her from the latter, she does not disguise her admiration for him, which implies that she is not deceitful and is also unaware of any imminent danger: "Das Marannele gab ihm [Aloys] recht, suchte ihn aber auch zu überzeugen, daß er sich Mühe geben müsse, auch so ein flinker Bursch zu werden, wie der Jörgli" (33). Furthermore, she is shown to act with certainty and self-confidence when she deals with Aloys, but she is unsure of herself with Jörgli, which would further suggest that she is not worldly-wise.

It is not clear what Jörgli feels for Marannele, but in his treatment of her, Auerbach highlights the power of the man over the woman. It would appear from the text that she is viewed merely as an object by him, as a perspective conquest by which to torment Aloys. His friends seem party to his scheme and, in taunting Aloys, they display their blatant disregard for Marannele as a person and woman: "Tolpatsch", sagte der Kobbel, "was krieg' ich Schmusgeld, wenn ich mach', daß dich das Marannele heiratet?" (33). Furthermore, when Jörgli drives the recruits to Stuttgart he
asks Aloys if he has a parting message for Marannele. It would appear that it is not so much the budding love between the two that causes Jörgli to finally pursue Marannele, but Aloys' defiant response: "Du brauchst gar nichts mit ihm zu schwätzen, es kann Dich auch für den Tod nicht ausstehen" (39). Jörgli’s reaction: "Der Jörgli fuhr lachend davon" (39) suggests he has accepted this as a challenge.

From the time Aloys leaves for Stuttgart the author keeps Marannele from view. We hear through Aloys’ mother only that she has been seduced by Jörgli, is expecting his child and they have married as a result. We sense however, that Jörgli is not the most attentive of husbands and that he has pursued Marannele in order to prove himself victor over Aloys. When Marannele is inquired after at the inn, Jörgli responds within earshot of Aloys: "Es sei "unbaß", und lachte dabei" (47).

This state of affairs notwithstanding, it is not Jörgli or Aloys, but Marannele who appears to be placed and judged in a negative light. In this regard it is perhaps somewhat unexpected that another woman should have such little sympathy with the plight of a fellow female and should, in fact, castigate her as a "femme fatale." Aloys’ mother tells him: "Ich bitt' dich, ich bitt’ dich, schlag' dir das Marannele aus dem Sinn, das ist ein keinnütziges Ding" (43). But from the information the author has provided concerning Marannele and her situation, it is difficult to perceive her as such. It is true that she admires and is susceptible to
Jörgli, but in the light of what we know regarding the latter it is more viable to view her as the victim, as opposed to the seductress in the relationship, despite the apparent unfavourable judgement of her village. By highlighting these discrepancies, Auerbach's intention is clear: the reader should understand that both Marannele and Aloys are trapped in society's web of fixed images.

In this connection, the narrator appears to be biased in favour of the hero, referring to him severally as "guter Tolpatsch" (21) and "lieber Tolpatsch" (22). Furthermore, Aloys is depicted as having sacrificed much on Marannele's account. It is implied that he joined the army, and endured a miserable life there, for her sake: "Es ist doch kein recht Geschäft das Soldatenleben, man wird hundsrackermüd, und hat doch nichts geschafft" (41). That she had never wanted him to enlist, and had given him the lucky Kreuzer in the hope that he would escape recruitment, is overlooked. Moreover, it is suggested that because of her, Aloys must finally leave "sein liebes Nordstetten" (39) for America where he ekes out a lonely existence. In a letter to his mother from Ohio he laments: "Was hab' ich davon, wenn ich so allein da bin?" (50). He seems thoroughly defeated and self-mockingly refers to himself as "der Tolpatsch." He is again presented as the injured party. Auerbach elicits further sympathy for him through his willingness to provide for Marannele anonymously - he cannot forget her. On the other hand, the parting impression of Marannele, evoked in a
line of the song which Aloys hums on his return to Stuttgart, and which also happens to be the same tune which Marannele and Jörgli sang together, is a negative one: "Ach, die Rosen welken all’" (49). We can only deduce that Auerbach, in playing devil’s advocate, is highlighting the hypocrisy of the village and its double standards in regard to its treatment of both the male and female, a theme which is rarely sounded in Gotthelf’s work.

Daughters, Fathers, Lovers

The majority of the Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten dwell on the darker, more elemental side of rural life. Bettelheim refers to the characters who people this sphere as "fast lauter böse, in die Tracht schwarzer Leidenschaften gehüllte Menschen" (154). Such diverse themes as family feuds, murder and adultery are sounded in these works, but central to them all is the fate of the woman and the treatment she receives at the hands of the man. These stories fall into two predominant groups, the first of which presents women as victims of the very bulwarks of the patriarchal society itself - their fathers, and the second in which they are depicted as victims of those who are cloned and conditioned to take over the patriarch’s role - their husbands and lovers.
In *Erdmure* (1847), because of the feud and ensuing animosity between the brothers Gottfried and Cyprian, the female character of the title is forbidden contact with the former’s household:

Der kleinen zehnjährigen Erdmure, die ein derbes braunes Kind mit den dunklen Augen des Vaters war, hatte man das Haus des Ohms Gottfried streng verboten, sie durfte es nicht mehr betreten und niemand aus demselben grüßen, ja, sie hörte Tag und Nacht die häßlichsten Worte über den Oheim und wußte nicht anders, als er wolle ihren Vater an den Galgen bringen (Auerbach 2: 308).

Erdmure is a victim of her father’s hatred for her uncle which is instilled into her at an early age. This also holds true for Bläsi, Gottfried’s son and Erdmure’s first cousin: "So war der Familienzwist bis tief in die Kinder gedrungen" (Auerbach 309). In this regard, the position and power of the patriarch, and its attendant ramifications for children of both sexes, is highlighted by Auerbach: "Die beiden gingen rasch aneinander vorüber, ohne zu grüßen; anfangs war es das strenge Verbot des Vaters, was Erdmure davon abhielt, bald aber setzte sich eine selbstständige Feindseligkeit in ihr fest und ebenso in Bläsi" (316). The offspring in this work are depicted as slaves to their parents’ desires at the expense of their own personal happiness. Erdmure and Bläsi,
for instance, had formerly been childhood friends, but the
dissention between their fathers signified the end of this
friendship (a theme which has been repeated in works such as
Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe and Lucia de Lammermore).

Within the patriarchal domain itself, Auerbach presents
the woman’s position as unfavourable. Erdmute is not treated
kindly at home, and it is suggested by Gottfried’s wife that
the domestic environment in which she lives is detrimental
to her well-being: "Wenn du dein Schwesterkind [Erdmute] ins
Haus nehmen willst, mir ist’s rechtschaffen recht; das Kind
verkommt so in dem Durcheinander und bei der herben
Stiefmutter" (301). Moreover, her father squanders her
inheritance and involves her in his shady schemes: "Nach und
nach ging Cyprian weiter und verkaufte, was nicht niet- und
nagelfest im Hause war. Oft mußte Traudle [die Magd], meist
aber Erdmute, wenn es Nacht war, vom Vater begleitet,
kleinere Gegenstände und Bettstücke nach der Stadt tragen" (320). Her father is shown to be extremely harsh towards her
and because of a minor clumsiness on her part, he not only
banishes her to the servants’ quarters, but unfairly
relegates her to the enemy camp: "Ich sehe schon, Erdmute,
du bist Gottfriedisch, was denen nachschlagt, paßt nicht
unter Menschen, nur unter Vieh und aufs Feld. Von morgen an
hast du nichts mehr in der Stube zu tun, du versorgst mit
dem Knecht und der Magd unser Bauernwesen. Ist dir’s recht?"
(315).
Erdmute, in contrast, is depicted by Auerbach as not only cheerfully accepting her lot, but as the defender of the man who is the cause of her suffering (overtones of Christine in Ivo, der Hairle). She strongly rejects Gottfried’s offer of a home: "Ich bleib’ in keinem Haus, wo man so über meinen Vater redet, er hat das beste Herz von der Welt, freilich schwach ist er, aber er muß selber am meisten darunter leiden, und es hat keiner das Recht, darüber zu schimpfen" (334). In this connection, Erdmute, although very young, is presented by the author as psychologically astute - she analyzes instead of laying blame - a quality she shares with many of Auerbach’s female characters as we have observed. Furthermore, when her father demands she go to court to claim her dead mother’s fortune from Gottfried, she is cast as the willing agent on whom her father depends to rectify matters: "Sie freute sich wieder, daß es ihr gegeben sei, alles wieder gutzumachen" (324).

As a result of this action, her father acquires the means to emigrate to America, but Erdmute, who has been secretly reconciled with Bläsi, is forced to deny her own desires since her father expects her to accompany him. For all her obedience and faithfulness, however, he abandons her at the port, although she has repeatedly proven herself as a worthy daughter, which Cyprian himself has to admit: "Das ist ein Kind, das ist ein wahrer Engel, ich bin’s nicht wert, daß ich so ein Kind habe" (323). Through Erdmute’s predicament, Auerbach highlights the dependence of the woman
upon the man for financial support and social standing. Erdmute has no choice except to return immediately to the village, but because of Gottfried’s anger concerning the court case she cannot disclose her identity. She is prepared to trust Bläsi’s plan (to masquerade as Traudle’s daughter who is unknown to the village), for although betrayed by her own father, she is willing to obey another man completely, even if he too appears egocentric and authoritarian: "Auch hiergegen bestand Bläsi darauf, daß es ihr genügen solle, wenn er allein wisse, wer sie sei, sie brauche sonst niemand" (351).

Erdmute, in contrast, is depicted as humbly accepting the situation as fitting retribution for having left Bläsi in the first instance: "Und hingegeben in treuer Liebe, sagte Erdmute, daß sie gern Buße tue, weil sie ihn verlassen hatte, daß sie ihm allein angehöre und ihn fortan um nichts mehr bitten wolle, bis er selber finde, daß es Zeit sei" (353). It would appear, however, that Erdmute is secretly critical of Bläsi’s schemes: "War denn diese ganze Mummerei nicht unnötig und grausam?", but that she submits to them temporarily in order to prove a point: "Aber Bläsi sollte sehen, daß sie ihm unbedingt gehorchte" (352). Moreover, Auerbach portrays Erdmute as struggling for independence by maintaining that women can also be mentors to men. Hers is a timid call for equality: "Ich will gern von dir lernen, aber du mußt auch von mir, glaub mir, das ist auch nötig" (352), a note which Auerbach continually sounds throughout his
work. Erdmute’s attempt at self-assertion is again in evidence when, in response to Bläsi’s angry outburst concerning the alleged gift of her earnings to Traudle, she states:

Ich will dir’s nur gestehen, ich hab’ mein Geld noch und hab’ dem Traudle nur zwei Gulden geschenkt; aber weil du mich so mißtrauisch gefragt hast, hab’ ich grad’ umgekehrt gesagt; du mußt an mich glauben, ungefragt, wie ich an dich; ich mein’, ich hab’ dir’s bewiesen (363).

Like Eve in Kleist’s *Der zerbrochene Krug* she asks for trust despite appearances to the contrary. Furthermore, Auerbach succeeds in this work, which is modelled on the traditional theme of feuding parents and star-crossed lovers, in integrating his views on the necessity of mutual compromise in a relationship.

Despite the hardships incurred on her return, (Erdmute is not only denied contact with the village community at large, she is also forced to work as a day labourer to support herself), she appears to find happiness in the end. She is reconciled with Gottfried, and wins Bläsi as a husband: "Sobald der Dispens eingetroffen war, noch vor der Fastenzeit, wurde die Hochzeit Erdmutes und Bläsis gefeiert, und Gottfried, der viel daheim sitzen mußte, hatte es am liebsten, wenn Erdmute bei ihm blieb; er sprach wenig, aber
ihre Nähe tat ihm wohl" (367). To complete her joy, she receives a letter from her father begging her forgiveness:

Ein Brief an Gottfried aus der neuen Welt von Cyprian vollendete noch im zweiten Sommer die Sühne. Cyprian klagte bitterlich um das verlorene Kind, beteuerte seine Unschuld und zwar, wie er oft wiederholte, im Angesicht des Todes. Er mußte im Innersten zerbrochen sein, denn er bat Gottfried um Verzeihung für all die Unbill, die er ihm angetan, und immer wieder sprach er von seinem nahen Tode (367).

The circle of "Sühne" would appear complete, Erdmute had first spoken of it and Cyprian’s admission closes the cycle. It is significant, however, that Auerbach avoids the facile "happy end" by indicating that her father still insists on his innocence: "Cyprian ... beteuerte seine Unschuld" (367), although he has repeatedly sinned against his daughter Erdmute.

From the onset of *Sträflinge* (1852), Auerbach highlights the social injustice towards women by underlining the differences in rural attitudes in regard to male and female convicts. Magdalene, the female protagonist, is singled out from the community because she is a woman who has been convicted (although not guilty) of a crime. Even
Jakob, who is guilty of a much more grievous offence, views her as somehow different than he is: "Ein Mädchen mit dem Stempel des Verbrechens auf der Stirn ist doppelt und ewig unglücklich; was soll aus ihm werden?" (Auerbach 2: 154). Consequently, he is apprehensive about being seen with her in public.

When we first encounter Magdalene in the chapter entitled "Die lustige Magd", she is not presented as the hardened criminal we may have anticipated. Auerbach, in reference to her physique, describes her as "gar anmutig" (154). The author, as if toying with the reader, does at the same time suggest an ambiguous quality in her physical appearance: "Das kugelrunde ruhige Gesicht sah aus, wie die Zufriedenheit selber, seltsam nahmen sich dabei die weit offenen hellblauen Augen mit den dunklen Wimpern aus; es schien eine Doppelnatur in diesem Gesichte zu hausen" (154).

Magdalene does exhibit characteristics which adhere to this notion of "Doppelnatur." On the one hand, she is impertinent towards the villagers. When asked by the farmer: "Sind deine Mitschele auch frisch?" she quips: "Ja, nicht so altbacken wie Ihr" (155). She is also abrasive towards Jakob when they first meet. But, as her lifestory unfolds, it becomes clear that she is quite a different person than the image she projects: "Ich bin nicht so aus dem Häusle, wie ich mich oft stell’" (157). As part of this role-playing, which lends further realistic elements to her character, she uses humour to protect herself from the scorn of the
village: "Da bin ich halt lustig" (157) and "Narr, das ist Pfui-Courage" (157). Her life, while doubly hard as a convict, also reflects the conditions which many peasant women had to endure on a daily basis (chapter two):

Es kann's kein Mensch auf der Welt schlechter haben als ich: die halb' Nacht am Backofen stehen und verbrennen, den Tag über kein' ruhige Minut' und nichts als Zank und Schelten, und wenn ich was nicht recht thu', da heißt's gleich: Du Zuchthäuslerin, du ... da ist kein Wort zu schlecht, das man nicht hören muß. Es ist kein' Kleinigkeit, so einen Korb voll Brot zum Verkauf herumtragen und oft kein Bissen im Magen haben (157).

Auerbach underscores the degree to which the "criminal" woman is set apart from the community. Magdalene's only contact in the village is Jakob, but he is unpredictable in his treatment of her. After she has related the events which precipitated her arrival in the village he ignores her entirely, but then abruptly demands a meeting with her. She is in sore need of a friend and, in spite of Jakob's volatile behaviour, she is joyful: "Wie glänzte jetzt ihr Angesicht voll Freude" (160) and

Sie war still, aber innerlich war sie den ganzen Tag voll Jubel und Seligkeit;
es kam ihr immer vor, als ob heute nochmals Sonntag sein müßte. Auf dem Speicher und in der Küche faltete sie oft die Hände und drückte sie fest aufeinander; sie sprach kein Wort, aber ihre ganze Seele war ein Gebet voll Dank und Liebe (166),

which indicates her dependence upon male approval and acceptance. Like Erdmute she is not at such a low ebb that she is wholly susceptible to Jakob’s every whim, however, and her response displays her strength and attempts to assert herself, not only as a human being, but also as a woman in this hostile environment: "Nein, ich laß mir nicht befehlen, und ich bin kein so Mädel, das einem nachlauft" (161).

In a manner reminiscent of later realistic or even naturalistic writing, Auerbach elicits sympathy for Magdalene by describing her life prior to her conviction and arrival in the village. She is robbed of her mother at an early age, and the man whom she knows as her father abandons her to an orphanage. Like the average peasant girl (chapter two) she is set to work early. She is already earning her keep as a governess at the age of 14. Her situation is aggravated because her father regularly confiscates her earnings and squanders them on alcohol. When he can no longer secure her wages he steals silverware from the house of her employer. She is subsequently blamed for the theft.
and wrongfully convicted of a crime which her father committed.

The experiences with her father and his abuse of her notwithstanding, Magdalena, like Erdmute, is still prepared to have trust in a man. She is willing to give Jakob a chance, even after he has admitted the charge of manslaughter to her. Like the heroine in *Florian und Kreszenz*, who will be discussed at a later point, she has faith in him: "Aber du bist doch gut, und es wird dir gewiß auch noch gut gehen" (173). Furthermore, she demonstrates this belief in Jakob by entrusting him with her savings which, for a servant in her position, is tantamount to relinquishing her only means out of servitude: "Sie überlegt, ob es nicht besser sei, wenn sie das Büchlein Jakob zur Aufbewahrung gebe; ein Mann kann eher darauf acht haben" (166). This statement further underscores her dependence on the man and her lack of faith in herself as a woman. At the same time, however, like Erdmute, Christine, and Maurita before her, Auerbach reveals her as having a deeper understanding of "life" than her male counterpart. For instance, when Jakob confesses his desire to become part of a large, loving family through marriage, she responds wisely: "Die rechte Lieb' ist doch, die man zu Leut' hat, die nicht verwandt heißen; das ist viel mehr" (175).

Auerbach shows that in spite of her irrepressible optimism, because she has the mark of the criminal upon her, she is continually victimized by the villagers. When 80
florins are stolen from the mayor, Jakob is immediately
condemned as the guilty party, and Magdalene is also
arrested. Although she is clearly not guilty, her money,
which had been in Jakob’s safekeeping, is confiscated,
进一步说明了一位无罪、无辜的妇女的困境。没有人来帮助她，甚至牧师在工作开始时也曾告诫教民要对罪人施恩： "Aber niemand half ihr, selbst der Pfarrer nicht, der ihr zürnte, weil sie ihre Unschuld beteuerte" (181). Her total isolation and despair, but, at the same time, her incredible strength in the knowledge that she is master of her own fate, is captured by Auerbach in a passage reflecting a sort of stream of consciousness:

Dein Schicksal ist in deine Hand
gegeben, du gehörst und hast niemand, du
bist allein; alle Liebe und allen
Lebensunterhalt mußt du erobern, du
kannst jede Minute ausgestoßen werden
und bist fremd; kein unauslösliches
Familienband umschlingt dich über alle
Irrungen und Wechsel des Lebens hinweg
(181).

To further aggravate her situation, the character Frieder, whom Magdalena encounters in the village, is revealed as the man she believes to be her father and the thief who stole the 80 florins. He is thus the author of her misery for a second time, but to add to her grief he denies paternity, on
the basis of village records, thereby robbing her of any remaining vestige of social identity: "Frieder grinste sie höhnisch an und sagte: "Probier’s nur, hau zu, hack mir das Beil in den Kopf, da, mach schnell; du bist ja in erster Ehe zur Welt kommen, im Kirchenbuche bin ich ja doch dein Vater nicht" (184).

The outcome of the story is admittedly somewhat contrived. Frieder, in a drunken stupor, confesses that he stole the money. He is led off to prison, and clears Madgalena’s name before he comes to a grizzly end by hanging himself. Magdalena falls into a fever, but recovers when the entire village, who had formerly held Jakob in derision, welcomes him home from gaol like a long lost hero: "Wie ein siegreicher Held wurde Jakob im Dorfe empfangen. Alles drängte sich zu ihm heran, alles faßte seine Hand; man nannte ihn einen braven, wackern Menschen und war überaus liebreich" (189). While Auerbach concludes this work with an image of a stylized family of sorts: "Dort steht ein Mann kerzengerade und hält die zusammengewickelte Fahne; unter dem Hause steht eine Frau und hat ein kleines Kind auf dem Arm, das die Hände hinausstreckt ins Weite" (192), he makes it clear that the woman is regarded by society as an insignificant member in comparison to the man. No mention is made of a similar homecoming for Magdalena, for instance, or of any retribution being made to her, who, time and time again, has been grievously wronged both by various individuals and the community at large. Her reward, it is
suggested, is her incorporation into a family unit - a husband and child.

There is a constellation of female characters from the entire rural hierarchy in Der Lehnhold (1853), chief among them the figure of the mother. Through her, we receive a valuable and more detailed insight into the circumstances of the more affluent nineteenth century peasant woman than in the works hitherto discussed. Auerbach, as in Ivo, der Hajrle, accentuates the difficulties which the wife endures in married life: "In den bald vierzig Jahren ihrer Ehe hatte sie es nicht vergessen, daß ihr das herbe und schrotte Wesen ihres Mannes viel Herzeleid gemacht, aber sie hatte sich daran gewöhnt" (Auerbach 5: 15). Through marriage, as was often the case for the woman who married outside her own village, she is transplanted into a foreign environment with rigid traditions of its own, a theme which is repeated by Auerbach in Die Frau Professorin:

Dennoch blieb sie dem oberländischen Wesen noch vielfach fremd. Auf einem großen einsamen Bauernhofs aufgewachsen,
kam sie als Frau wieder in einen solchen, sie kannte wenig von der Welt,
aber hier war doch alles anders; sie stammte aus dem viel mildern geschmeidigern Unterlande, hier oben war
She has never become fully integrated into her husband's community: "So sehr sie aber dies erkannte, blieb sie doch diesem Leben fremd, sie hatte noch immer die Sitten ihres väterlichen Hauses im Sinne" (16), a statement which conveys the permanent influence of the patriarchal model upon her life.

This clash between patriarchal structures has been the cause of much dissention between her and her husband early on in the marriage, but has eased over time. Mutual happiness is not, in any event, the cornerstone of such marriages as we know from historical sources, and as Auerbach tells us here: "Bei den Bauern, besonders aber bei den Großbauern, ist die Ehe vielfach nur ein Vertragsverhältnis in der ausgedehntesten Bedeutung des Wortes" (16). Enhancement of the existing farm is of paramount importance to both parties, and if anything should develop between them in the way of love and affection it is a bonus, but by no means necessary: "Die Arbeit für Erhaltung und Vermehrung des Besitztums ist die Wesenheit des Lebens, dem die Heilighaltung des geschlossenen Bundes noch eine gewisse Weihe erteilt, und kommen Kinder, so erblüht die Verträglichkeit auch wiederum oft zur Liebe" (16). Because of this tacit understanding divorce is thus out of the question: "Offene Zuwürfnisse oder gar Trennungen aus Mangel an Liebe kommen darum im Leben der

alles wie mit der Holzart zugehauen
(15).
Großbauern fast nie vor" (16). Auerbach does not imply, in this case, that the woman desires more from the marriage, but in works such as Ivo, der Haarlre he reveals the female as directing her needs elsewhere than her husband to be fulfilled.

Auerbach presents the wife as having practically no social outlet: "Nur selten, zu einem Jahrmarkt, zu einer Gevatterschaft oder Hochzeit verließ man den Hof, und die Bäuerin hörte überall mit Befriedigung, wie hochgepriesen sie und ihr Mann waren" (16-17). Based upon the information in the previous chapters this could well be considered a reflection upon the general lot of the woman throughout the nineteenth century. Her lofty position in the farming hierarchy and her wealth do not enhance the quality of her life, which again is in keeping with the image of the miserly peasant propounded in the seventeenth and eighteenth century: "Nie kam es ihr in den Sinn, von ihrem Reichtum einen andern Genüß haben zu wollen als den, ihn zu erhalten und zu vermehren und, wie sich's gebührt, den armen Leuten der Gegend ihre Gaben zukommen zu lassen" (17).

Despite the seeming narrowness of her life, and what appears to be a lonely existence with her husband, Auerbach reveals her strength of character by showing her attempts to derive happiness from her lot. She is presented as wise and pragmatic: "Sie war eine kluge und behagliche Frau, die die Freude des heutigen Tages nicht mit Kummer um kommende Zeiten verscheuchte" (19). Amidst the volatile home
environment: "Es war nun ein seltsam zerstörtes Leben auf dem Furchtenhofe" (18), the mother is depicted as the stabilizing force and the pacifier between the warring males, her husband and her son Alban. Although her husband tries to manipulate her into winning Alban over to his point of view, she chooses to remain impartial, a quality learned from her mother: "Mein Mutter selig hat nie in Mannshändel drein geredet" (131).

It is in this encounter that the true and repressed sentiments of the husband and wife towards each other surface: "Wie von einem Blitz durchzuckt, standen Mann und Frau plötzlich still, sie merkten, daß vor den Kindern, vor fremden Menschen ein Widerstreit zwischen ihnen zu Tage gekommen war, der tief in ihnen beiden wurzelte" (131). Auerbach depicts the woman as a victim of her husband’s brutality when she endeavours to assert herself: "Der Vater hielt sie zurück und so heftig, daß sie laut schrie" (131). But when she discovers that her husband has incarcerated Alban, her child, in the cellar, despite her awareness of her dictated role which requires obedience to her husband, nothing can prevent her unleashing herself against him: "Die Mutter umhalste ihren geliebten mißhandelten Sohn, und jetzt hörten die Kinder ein entsetzliches Wort aus ihrem Munde gegen den Vater. "Du bist ein Untier und kein Mensch", rief sie ihm zu" (139). In spite of her efforts to forge peace in her family, she witnesses the death of both her sons through
the actions of her husband. Broken hearted, she swiftly follows them.

The other mother figure in this tale represents the lot of the poor peasant woman. Dominik’s mother, although aged, is still earning her keep by working in the fields as a day labourer. Despite her years she is not granted particular consideration - she is not permitted to pause in her work when Dominik visits her, and she is forced to ask him for money in order to subsist. She lives with her son and daughter-in-law who do not treat her well. In this connection, Auerbach suggests that relations in this section of the community are as stilted and unnatural as those in the upper rural echelons. He also draws attention to the fact that the mother’s seniority does not exempt her from the village mores. When Dominik returns home jobless to his mother, we are told of the pressure the village insidiously exerts on personal relations: "Die Mutter wagte es nur im geheimen, ihm ihre Liebe zu bezeigen, vor den andern mußte sie scheinbar zu ihnen halten" (106).

There are other male/female configurations under the domination of the father figure in this work which are of interest. Of primary importance is the relationship between Dominik, the Furchtenbauer servant, and Ameile, his daughter. We know from the relevant social and historical sources (chapter two) that such a coupling is not only unacceptable, but unthinkable. Auerbach reveals the villager’s opinion on this matter when he has Dominik state:
"Das ist ein unverzeihlicher wahnsinniger Übergriff, und sowohl um sich selbst zu wahren, als auch um als treuer Diener seines Herrn zu bestehen, sucht er [Dominik] jede Äußerung dieser Zuneigung zu bekämpfen" (13). Moreover, it is suggested that such a union betokens disaster: "Er bangte vor dieser Liebe, die ihm nur Unglück bringen konnte" (63).

Auerbach captures the influence of rural convention, founded on the patriarchal model, by outlining the young Ameile’s sensitivity to social expectations. As "ein holdes, frisches Naturkind" (78), she, like her mother, is extremely concerned about maintaining her own and her family’s image in public: "Was im Hause vorgeht, und besonders zwischen Vater und Kind, das darf nicht über die Schwelle" (65). She is influenced and moulded by her background. Consequently, she views life solely from the perspective of a young well-to-do farmer and hence the ultimate compliment she can pay the Oberamtmännin, a city dweller, is: "Sie sind so gescheit wie die rechteste Bauernfrau" (80).

While Ameile is clearly proud of her heritage, she is also aware of the restrictions her community imposes upon her. Moreover, she recognizes that as a woman she is disadvantaged in life. She imagines that as a man she could gain some independence: "Hundertmal wünschte sie sich im Scherz und Ernst, auch ein Bursche zu sein, und klagte, daß bei der neuen Welt gar nichts für die Mädchen herauskäme" (65). It is significant that she considers the future as holding no promise of amelioration for the position of the
woman in society. But, in spite of this knowledge and her acceptance of the role imposed upon her, she is seen to assert her independence as a woman in practically the same terms as many of Auerbach's female characters before her: "Ich bin kein Kind mehr" (96).

She, in fact, is the only one who defies her father by scolding him for not accepting Alban's gesture of reconciliation. Furthermore, she proposes the first meeting with Dominik. In the garden love scene, Ameile declares herself ready to leave with him, hence initiating the immense and far-reaching step of breaking with all that she holds sacred. This is further underscored by Auerbach when her father discovers their liaison. She endures his wrath until he speaks ill of Dominik, at which point she claims him as her own, thus further transgressing rural convention by selecting a partner who is not only below her station, but is a servant to her father: "Das leid' ich nicht, er ist ehrlich und treu und rechtschaffen, und er hat mich nicht verführt, und wir können vor Gott und der Welt hinstehen und frei aufschauen, und daß er arm ist, das ist kein' Schand. Mein Dominik -" (108).

Ameile loses her entire family, through her father's actions, but she gains happiness with Dominik. This socially "unequal" relationship is shown to be the only positive and lasting one in the work. As a wife, Ameile treats Dominik with respect and, as he states, she never reminds him that it is her fortune which he controls: "Du kennst mich aber,
und du gunnst mir was Gutes, und du hast nicht bang, daß ich
dir dein' Sach verthu'" (149). Despite the devastation
wrought in her family, through adherence to the patriarch,
Auerbach reveals that Ameile continues to be proud of her
standing in the community, which espouses a patriarchal
system, and through her comment, although meant in a
humorous manner, it is clear that she expects Dominik to
fulfil his new role also: "Aber du mußt auch nie vergessen,
daß du jetzt ein Großbauer bist" (149).

Another "illicit" relationship is that between Alban,
the Furchtenbauer's son, and Breni, a day labourer on their
farm. The prevailing attitude of those in a higher position
in the rural hierarchy towards poor peasant women is
revealed in the Furchtenbauer's comment concerning the
liaison between Breni and Alban: "Der Vater hatte schon
lange bemerkt, daß Alban mit der Breni etwas habe, er hatte
nichts dagegen, daß sein Sohn mit dem, wie er selbst
gestehen mußte, "bildsaubern Mädle" seine Lustbarkeit trieb,
das darf ein reicher Bauernsohn" (27). This statement also
implies that it is acceptable for the son to have his
pleasure with a female servant, but it is not permissible
for the daughter to have relations with a male servant -
harking back to the situation in medieval times (chapter
one).

The power and influence of the patriarchal model is
also evinced in the case of Alban. He too is conditioned by
his father's thinking: "Solch ein Verhältnis taugte nicht
He tries to convince himself of his father’s precepts: "Ein Großbauer hat vor allem daran zu denken, daß die Familie in alten Ehren bleibt" (32). When the latter acts as matchmaker by arranging a meeting for Alban with an eligible widow, Alban acquiesces and appears to be convinced of the responsibility of his station. When he enters her home he is struck by his sense of belonging: "Und in ihm war es wie ein Ausspruch der Gewißheit, daß er hier sein Lebensziel gefunden habe" (39). He quickly forgets Breni and is inspired by the thought of his father’s approval should he be successful as suitor. Once rejected by this woman, however, he flees to Breni for solace.

It nevertheless appears that Alban grows to love Breni. This is manifest in his behaviour towards her when she comes to work as a day labourer:

Seine innere Liebe und das demütige und
doch so hohe Wesen Brenis ließen ihm
den Scherz als eine Entwürdigung und
Roheit erschienen, zumal da das Mädchen
in seiner untergeordneten Stellung sich
dagegen nicht hätte auflehnen dürfen und
nur dem Spott der Genossinnen
ausgesetzt war (30).

Furthermore, he makes arrangements for her, on his deathbed, which provide her with financial security. Auerbach’s
intention is clear - by causing Alban to realize the innate worth of this "simple" peasant woman, he unmasks rural tradition and convention as contrary to human values.

In Des Schloßbauers Vefele (1843), Auerbach shows the female character of the title to be victimized by her father from an early age. Like Erdmute, Vefele grows up in an environment of parental discord: "Der alte Zustand dauerte fort, der Schloßbauer und seine Frau lebten oft in Unfrieden" (Auerbach 1: 60). The situation deteriorates over time: "Ja, je älter sie wurden, um so mehr schien sich eine Übelnehmerei, eine heftige Bitterkeit zwischen ihnen kundzugeben." Like many of the female characters in Auerbach's works, Vefele is depicted as a peacemaker: "Das Vefele wuBte zwar immer wieder den Frieden herzustellen" (65). The effect of parental strife is seen to bear a stronger and new influence upon her than on previous characters in similar circumstances. It is noteworthy that she is the first of Auerbach's women to vow that she will not marry: "Es war dann vergnügt und munter, aber im stillen weinte es oft bitterlich über das traurige Schicksal seiner Eltern und über sein eigenes, und dann gelobte es sich heilig, nie zu heiraten" (65).

In this work Auerbach describes the repercussions for the woman who is dominated by her father. Vefele is denied contact with her peers, because her father thinks himself superior to the community. Significantly, it is the woman
who is shown to suffer most as a consequence of this isolation: "Die Mutter und ihre Kinder, namentlich aber ihre beiden Töchter Agathle und Vefele, litten am meisten bei dieser Trennung von der Gemeinde" (58). As a direct result of this enforced separation Vefele is vulnerable to the charlatan Brönner, who is wholeheartedly welcomed by her father because of his affected manner, as Bettelheim remarks: "Die Lieblosigkeit, unter der sie Jahre und Jahre gelitten, macht sie doppelt empfänglich für die gleisnerischen Worte des Windbeutels" (23). In his cajolment of her, he draws a comparison between the town and countrywoman and implies that the latter is less intelligent, a theme already treated in Der Lauterbacher and again taken up in Die Frau Professorin. His use of French: "Parole d’honneur, Vefele, Sie sind ein liebes Mädchen und gar nicht wie ein Bauernmädchen, parole d’honneur, und haben so viel Verstand, wie irgendeine in der Stadt" (72-73), while designed to baffle her, also reveals his false value judgement since the subtext of his remark is a cliché.

Vefele is inexperienced and succumbs to Brönner’s city charm. Once he has exploited her, he seeks to change her, a theme which is reiterated in Die Frau Professorin and underscores Auerbach’s interest in the townman’s perception of the peasant: "Die erste Veränderung, der sich nun Vefele unterwerfen müste, war eine sehr traurige. Der Brönner schickte ihm eines Tages eine Näherin aus der Stadt und ließ ihm Kleider anmessen." Significantly, the garb in which he
clothes Vefele is described as tight and restrictive, which serves to reflect unfavourably on the city: "Vefele kam sich vor wie ein Rekrut, der nicht mehr Herr über sich ist und sich in jede beliebige Uniform stecken lassen muß, weil ihn das Los so getroffen; es ließ alles ohne Widerrede aus sich machen" (76). Moreover, Brönner has no regard or respect for Vefele as a countrywoman and his evaluation of her conforms to the negative view of the peasantry discussed in chapter two: "Der Brönner ... nannte das Vefele ein "dummes Dorfkind, das nicht wisse, daß hinterm Berg auch noch Leute wohnen" (77).

Auerbach captures the plight of the spinster, when he describes Vefele’s dilemma upon the death of her father. She has no option as an unmarried woman, but to live with her brother and sister-in-law who treats her cruelly: "Das Vefele hatte schwere Zeiten in dem Hause Melchiors, dessen Frau ein böser Drache war und immer tote Kinder gebar, so daß die Leute sagten, ihr Gift töte die Kinder im Leibe" (77). Vefele’s situation parallels that of the historical figure (Anna K.), discussed in chapter two, almost exactly. Her situation is further aggravated when it is discovered that she is pregnant with Brönner’s child:

Bei alledem hatte das traurige Schicksal Vefeles noch nicht seine höchste Höhe erreicht. Als seine Schwägerin seinen Stand inne ward, steigerte sich ihre Hartherzigkeit zum empörendsten Grade,
When Vefele tries to press Brönner to marry her for the sake of their unborn child, he not only abandons her, but absconds with her inheritance. We know from the preceding chapter that pregnancy out of wedlock was not frowned upon if marriage ensued, but if the woman had no marriage prospects she was viewed as lacking all propriety and stood, therefore, outside the village pale. The degree to which Vefele has fallen socially is reflected in the servant’s offer of marriage, which under any other circumstances would be considered an unspeakable insult to the daughter of a well-to-do farmer. Auerbach is masterful in his description of her despair: "Da sank das Vefele in sich zusammen, es lag mit dem Gesichte auf dem Boden, und ein furchtbarer Gedanke ging ihm durch die Seele, der Gedanke, daß es mißachtet und auf ewig unglücklich sein werde" (77-78). To add to her dilemma she is banished, like Anna K., from the village by the mayor, who has long nurtured a personal grudge against her father:
Endlich kam das äußerste Unglück über Vefele. Der Schultheiß des Orts hatte ihren Stand erfahren, und der hartherzige Mann ließ nun seinen alten verhaltenen Grimm aus; er ließ Vefele durch den Dorfschützen sagen, es müsse das Dorf verlassen und nach seinem Geburtsorte zurückkehren, da sonst das Kind, wenn es hier geboren würde, Heimatsrechte ansprechen könnte (83).

Auerbach, far from castigating Vefele, is scathing of this system, referring to the official as "der hartherzige Mann." Vefele’s virtual excommunication from the village is accentuated by Auerbach, when Marem the Jew, himself a social outcast, offers her help. Vefele refuses the latter, disappears and presumably perishes with her unborn child. The final words of the text denote the personal as well as the general devastation, wrought essentially by men, in this respectable household: "Das vornehmste Haus des ganzen Dorfes, das gehörte einst dem Vater des Vefele; der Vater ist tot, die Mutter ist tot, die fünf Kinder sind tot, und das Vefele ist spurlos verschwunden" (86), and serve as a haunting end to the realism of the above lines.

In *Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange* (1842), Auerbach explores the consequences of the male’s jealousy for the woman and their relationship. The author’s physical
description of the two protagonists, Tonele and Sepper, suggests that they are a perfect match:

Der Sepper und das Tonele waren ein herrliches Paar, beide fast gleich groß und schlank, und beide doppelt schön, wenn sie miteinander gingen; jedes für sich allein war schon schön, aber beieinander waren sie es erst recht, unter Tausenden heraus hätte man sagen müssen: diese zwei gehören zusammen (Auerbach 1: 93).

All should go well, but Sepper, Tonele’s intended husband, has an extremely jealous disposition. He views Tonele as an object and insists that she speak to no other man: "Mit dem Jäger darfst du halt kein Wort mehr reden" (97) and "Ich will aber, du sollst kein Wörtle zu ihm sagen" (96). Auerbach demonstrates how the woman seeks to assert herself in this situation. Tonele struggles for independence by stressing her womanhood: "Und ich lass’ mir von dir nicht befehlen, mit wem ich reden soll" (96) and "Ich bin kein Kind, ich weiß schon, was ich zu tun hab" (Auerbach, 97). But Auerbach suggests, as was the case in Befehlerles, that it is impossible for a woman to successfully challenge the prevailing patriarchal system. A woman who attempts to step outside the boundaries of her prescribed role is immediately and unfairly castigated as "ein hoffärtiges, falsches Ding" (96).
In contradiction to Sepper’s claim, Tonele is depicted by Auerbach as willingly submitting herself to the village code. When Sepper’s rival in love, the aforementioned hunter, (remains unidentified) pursues Tonele, she does not court his attention, thus negating Sepper’s unfair evaluation of her. Indeed, she declines his offer to accompany her through the village, because she is aware of, and submits to, the mores of her community: "Nein, das schickt sich nicht, daß Ihr mit uns durch das Dorf gehet, tut mir den Gefallen und gehet voraus zu den Buben" (95). Sepper however, has no faith in Tonele’s continued assurance that she is devoted to him: "Auch der Sepper war hocherregt, aber er konnte es doch nicht unterdrücken, noch einmal von dem Jäger zu sprechen. Das Tonele sagte: "Laß jetzt den Jäger, guck, es gibt jetzt gar nichts auf der Welt als du" (100). Tonele, the rational partner is, in effect, not taken at her word and is rewarded by violence when Sepper, her emotional counterpart, commits his first violent act against her by ferociously biting her on the cheek. He then disappears from the village.

Auerbach also draws attention to a different calibre of man and his attitude towards the female sex in this work, although, as in the case of Sepper, he is a simplified type. The hunter appears to truly value Tonele, and has indicated high regard for her from the onset. Unlike Sepper, who seeks to humiliate her, he elevates her by comparing her to the Virgin Mary: "Es ist ein Mädle wie von Wachs, grad wie die
Mutter Gottes in der Kirche; solang ich mir denken mag, hab' ich noch keines so gesehen" (93). Even when she is disfigured by Sepper he accepts her as she is: "Bei mir tät' das nichts," sagte der Jäger, "und wenn Ihr nur einen Backen hättet, Ihr tätet mir doch besser gefallen, als alle Mädle von Nordstetten bis Paris" (103). But Sepper, on his return to the village, denies Tonele her chance of happiness with the hunter. He denigrates Tonele and, by extension, women in general when he suggests that he and the hunter pull straws for Tonele: "Du - wir wollen nicht lange machen, da, wir wollen Hälmlie ziehen, wer von uns beiden vom Tonele lassen muß; und wenn ich's verlier', so muß ich das Gewehr für mich haben" (106). When he receives no satisfaction, he fatally shoots the hunter and jubilantly leaves the scene contented to have deprived Tonele of another man’s love. Tonele is not only the victim of male violence, but of society’s indifference to the position of a defenceless woman. Sepper is never called to justice for his crimes against Tonele whom he has abused, victimized and ultimately destroys: "Das Tonele ist aber erst nach vielen Jahren einsamen Kummers vom Leben erlöst worden" (107). This conclusion is bleaker than those of the aforementioned works, and would certainly negate the claim that Auerbach had a propensity to conclude his Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten with a facile "happy end."
Marriage: For better or for worse

Many of the village stories, while alighting on the subject of marriage, have other themes as their focus, as we have observed in *Ivo, der Harle* and *Der Lehnhold* for instance. Others such as *Befehlerles, Die Kriegspfeife, Erdmute* and *Sträflinge* end at the point where the lovers embark on married life. In this section I propose to examine Auerbach’s treatment of the courtship and subsequent marriage relationship, with particular regard to the female experience, in *Brosi und Moni* (1852) and *Florian und Kreszenz* (1848).

In the former work the first reference made to Moni by her husband Brosi is not a particularly flattering one and reveals the unromantic nature of their courtship while, at the same time, mirroring the male/female relationships outlined in the preceding chapters. Brosi is recounting how he met his wife and states: "Ich hab’ dich zuerst als Here mit dem Besen und auf dem Mist gefunden" (Auerbach 7: 115). As in other works, Moni’s physical appearance is not described in detail, but what is of interest here is that it is implied from the onset that she is not as sought after as the other young female peasants: "Die Monika wäre, ohne einen Fuß zum Tanz gesetzt zu haben, nach Hause gegangen, wenn sich nicht die Schneiderin von Haldenbrunn über sie erbarmt und einmal mit ihr herumgetanzt hätte" (119). This
however, may have little or nothing to do with the degree of her physical attractiveness, since we know from Auerbach and the available historical sources that it was, in most cases, the rich young farmers' daughters who were pursued, even by poorer male suitors, irrespective of their appearance.

Despite the lack of male attention and the attendant dearth of favourable marriage prospects, Auerbach's women are seen to be more discriminating in their choice of mate than Gotthelf's. Moni does not succumb to the first male who displays interest in her. Brosi, like Jakob in *Sträflinge*, treats her in an erratic manner, he ignores her when it pleases him, and then suggests that they should begin a courtship. Moni is irascible: "Wir brauchen gar nicht zusammenkommen, gar nicht," lautete die schnippische Antwort der Monika" (121). This however, appears to be nothing more than female coquetry on her part, for Brosi wins her heart. But as in many of Auerbach's tales which reflect the material presented in the preceding chapters, the procedure of courtship is quickly skipped over, and an agreement of marriage is reached without the reader being privy to the details.

As an individual, Moni, despite her feistiness, is made to feel insecure as a woman by the terms which her village community impose upon her. The male's expectations of marriage - a handsome dowry - and the effects of these expectations upon the female are highlighted by Auerbach,
when Brosi confesses to Moni his disappointment about not marrying into a wealthy family. While she is not responsible for, and has no control over her humble background, she internalizes the latter as a reflection of her worth: "Da weinte Moni bitterlich und wollte sich nicht beruhigen lassen" (134). The degree to which Moni stands outside the village pale (again for reasons beyond her control - lack of physical beauty, financial resources, anti-social mother) is indicated in her concern that she has no friends of her own to invite to the wedding.

At the same time, Auerbach embues Moni with qualities traditionally attributed to the peasant: cunning and sagacity. For instance, she refuses to leave her own wedding until she has acquired all of the gifts: "Brosi sprach im geheimen vom Heimgehen, aber Monika hatte noch manche Leute im Auge, die noch kein Geschenk gegeben hatten, deren Weggang mußte abgewartet werden" (139). Like the mother figure in Der Lehnhold she is depicted by the author as pragmatic and capable of intellectual reasoning. When she and Brosi live with her mother while she is pregnant, Brosi is concerned that the child they are expecting will be adversely affected by her mother’s constant bad mouthing, but Moni assures him: "Das schadet nichts. Man wird just nicht giftig davon, das siehst an mir, und in frühen Jahren zu wissen, daß nicht alle Menschen Lämmer Gottes sind, hat auch sein Gutes" (142).
In some of the works hitherto discussed, Der Lehnhold and Ivo, der Harjle among them, the institution of marriage is presented as a largely negative one. In this village story Auerbach portrays the marital relationship as a mutually fulfilling and loving union. Even in the courting stage the author stresses the positive effects, engendered through contact with the woman, upon the hero: "Und noch nie schmeckte Brosi ein Schoppen so gut, als den er mit seiner Moni austrank" (132). Once married, Brosi’s joy is complete and his statement: "Wüßten denn die Leute nicht, daß er zum erstenmal in seinem Leben eine Heimat gefunden, und das er jetzt ein doppelter Mensch war, daß er daheim eine wackere nette Frau sein eigen nannte?" (140) serves as a subtly negative commentary on the concept of marriage in that period. Both Moni and Brosi are depicted as living in a state of contentment and harmony and it is noteworthy that Auerbach, who extols the virtue of work in several of his aphorisms, stresses their industry in this connection: "So weit die dunkle Tanne die hohen Berge bedeckt, gab es gewiß kein arbeitsameres und fröhlicheres Haus als das von Brosi und Moni" (143). While Brosi feels secure and more fulfilled through Moni, she too seems to have gained an identity and confidence through him which she, like Hedwig in Der Lauterbacher, had lacked. Of interest is that Auerbach, through her, emphasizes the tenuous position of the woman in society and her subsequent dependence upon the male for some degree of social status and, more importantly, social
integration: "Sie strahlte vor Glückseligkeit, sie, die Vereinsamte, Verstoßene, die nun durch ihren Mann in die Gemeinschaft der Menschen aufgenommen war" (149) and further: "Da, wo der Gemeinderat sitzt, dort saß ja ihr Brosi; die arme verstoßene Tochter des Apothekerrösele hatte einen Mann, der auf der ersten Kirchenbank saß" (192-193). This fact notwithstanding, she like Kätherle in Die Kriegspfeife is, in essence, the partner who learns to dictate the course of their domestic affairs: "So arbeitete sie fortan im geheimen mit allerlei Künsten daran, daß ihr Mann sich nicht daran gewöhne, seine Unterhaltung außer dem Hause zu suchen" (148).

Brosi and Moni are presented as being more equal as male and female than many of the other male/female configurations in Auerbach’s works. Unlike the majority of men whom Auerbach portrays, Brosi recognizes and acknowledges when he is wrong. Brosi and Moni’s first argument occurs when Brosi is vexed with his wife because she criticizes his foolhardy behaviour at the inn, and informs him that she will no longer accompany him there, if he continues to act in this inappropriate manner. He expects her to apologise to him for her words, but she stands firm: "Ich bin auf dem Glauben, daß ich nichts Böses than hab’" (150). Brosi eventually recognizes that he was indeed in error, but the significant factor is that it is one of the rare occasions when Auerbach has a male character admit a failing to a woman: "Du hast recht, du hast recht und ich
brauch' Gott nicht bitten, daß er dich gescheit macht" (151).

Auerbach also highlights elements of the marital relationship which are not discussed in his other works, such as the demonstration of affection between the partners. Brosi and Moni, for instance, do not express their emotions verbally, or display physical affection towards one another. Even after Brosi has been absent a year on "Wanderschaft" they do not vocalize their love, but they consider themselves happy because of their increased prosperity:

Moni hatte viel zu erzählen, und wie natürlich alles kunterbunt
durcheinander, schließlich aber kamen sie doch immer wieder beide darauf zurück, daß sie glückliche Menschen seien, nicht durch die Liebe, davon sprachen sie nicht, sondern durch die Vermehrung ihres Besitztums (165).

In Florian und Kreszenz (1848) Auerbach underscores the role which the parents play in selecting the marriage partner for their child and the consequences of this action. Kreszenz's parents have no regard for her personal happiness, and directed by purely selfish motives, they seek to marry her off to someone of their choice: "Der rote Schneiderle sah schon im Geiste seine Tochter als Frau Obergeometerin" (Auerbach 2: 147). Her parents themselves do
not enjoy a happy or peaceful marriage: "Noch hatten sie das Gesangbuch nicht aus der Hand gelegt, und schon war die häßlichste Zwietracht zwischen ihnen entbrannt" (153). It is suggested that physical abuse is no stranger in their household, although, in this instance, it is the woman who is cast as the perpetrator (she seeks to defend her children from her husband’s violence): "Der Schneiderle wollte auf Kreszenz los, seine Frau aber stellte sich vor ihn hin, ballte die Fäuste, und der gestrenge Mann kroch scheu in eine Ecke" (153). Auerbach points to the hypocrisy of the villagers in his description of Kreszenz’s parents’ conduct with the geometrician. They will resort to any ploy to disguise their animosity for the sake of ridding themselves of Kreszenz: "Da trat der Geometer ein, Vater und Mutter machten freundliche Gesichter und taten, als ob sie die Liebe selber wären" (155) and "So war alles Lüge bei Tische" (155).

Despite parental pressure, Kreszenz, like Ameile in Der Lehnhold, is shown to break the prescribed mould by rejecting the appointed suitor and deciding in favour of Florian, her true love. In this connection, Auerbach alludes that not all marriages were motivated by need and he focusses on the emotional dynamics in male/female involvement. From the onset Kreszenz is forewarned about Florian: "Aber vor dem Florian mußt du dich jetzt in acht nehmen, sonst gibt’s böse Sachen" (145). She, however, appears to find her identity in him and is willing to take
the consequences upon herself: "Jetzt weiß ich doch wieder, 
was ich bin, und dein bin ich, mag daraus werden, was will" 
(180) while, as Bettelheim points out: "Florian liebt auf 
seine Art die Kreszenz" (152). In chapter two we discussed 
the position of the woman under patriarchal guidance and 
domination on the farm; here we witness it in operation. 
Kreszenz is turned out of the house by her father on account 
of her decision, which contravenes his wishes:

Der Schneiderle kam hinter die 
Entwendungen seiner Tochter, und in 
einer stürmischen Nacht, als der Wind 
den Regen jagte, verstieß er sie aus dem 
Hause und drohte ihr, sie den Gerichten 
zu übergeben, wenn sie wiederkäme. Die 
Mutter lag todkrank darnieder und konnte 
nicht abwehren (183).

Florian, on the other hand, is shown to be more 
interested in attempting to maintain his position as "der 
erste Bursch im Dorf" (172). He indeed seems a self-
absorbed, vain fellow: "Der Florian kann sich fünfmal aus - 
und ankleiden, soviel schöne Kleider hat er bei sich" (145) 
and "Florian begnügte sich für diesen Sonntag damit, 
Aufsehen im Dorfe zu erregen, das gelang ihm in vollem Maße. 
Alle Leute redeten nur von ihm, von seiner schwarzen 
Samtjacke mit den silbernen Knöpfen" (156). His overweening 
pride, acquired while in France, prevents him from engaging 
in farm labour such as that which Kreszenz and his peers
perform, and also implies that he regards the aforementioned as his inferiors: "Er wollte nämlich bloß auf seinem Handwerke oder sonst in einem angesehenen Geschäfte arbeiten, die Feldarbeit hielt er unter seiner Würde; lieber wäre er Hungers gestorben, ehe er, wie andre vermögenslose Menschen, Steine auf der Straße geschlagen hätte" (166). And when he does not procure work in his chosen field, his pride again deters him from accepting help out of the village poor fund: "Gucket, lieber bestehl' ich den Heiligen; lieber leg' ich meine Hand da auf den Block und hack' mir sie selber ab, eh' ich einen Bettel aus der Gemeindekass' in die Hand nähm'" (190).

Whereas he is obsessed with retaining the image he has created for himself - a single entity, separate from the community - Kreszenz continually surrenders herself to him in order to facilitate his quest. Although he can find farm work she at once offers to help him by giving him her few valuables to pawn: "Ohne ein Wort zu reden, nahm sie ihre Granatenschnur samt dem Anhenker vom Halse, zog ihren silbernen Ring von der Hand und reichte es ihm hin" (184-185). In spite of his refusal to work, her faith in him is unerring even when he turns to crime to support himself. Despite her seeming naïveté in regard to Florian, Auerbach underscores her strength in the face of adversity. When Florian is arrested, and led through the village in shackles, she is prepared to accompany him, thus partaking of his shame: "Ich geh' neben dir durch das Dorf," sagte
Kreszenz, ohne zu weinen; "du sollst dich nicht allein schämen. Tut dir das Eisen weh? Gräm dich nur nicht zu arg" (198).

Auerbach continues to reveal her potential as a human being and woman. Although we have seen her primarily in a submissive stance in regard to Florian, it is she who ultimately emerges as the stronger partner. Auerbach invests her with strength, loyalty and wisdom. Like Ivo’s mother, Christine, and Erdmute she is presented as psychologically astute in her understanding of the male. During Florian’s imprisonment, Kreszenz gives him hope and reassures him of her love and continued belief in him: "Wenn Du auch einmal schlecht gewesen bist, Du bist doch nicht schlecht, das weiß ich. Sei nur fromm und geduldig und trag Dein Schicksal, unser Herrgott ist mein Zeug’, ich tät’ Dir’s gern abnehmen" (201). Significantly, it is only at this juncture that the author allows Florian to begin to realize her worth: "Florian fühlte ein nie gekanntes Entzücken, er konnte selig weinen, er sah erst jetzt recht, was er an der Kreszenz besaß" (201). Kreszenz is true to her promise and waits for him. She also provides the financial backing to enable them to start afresh when he is released: "Er wurde mit offenen Armen empfangen, Kreszenz hatte sich etwas Geld erspart, und nun zogen die beiden als Bürstenverkäufer im Land umher" (202). Auerbach highlights the struggles which poor, landless peasants encounter in a bid to support themselves. The life Florian and Kreszenz lead is a miserable one,
devoid of comfort and security. Two of their children die and they are forced to beg in order to feed the remaining four. Dire poverty tempts them to sell their son to a stranger, but Kreszenz, like Kätherle in Die Kriegspfeife, acts as the moral conscience in the relationship and is unable and unwilling to desert him.

The ending does appear to augur some happiness for Kreszenz when the priest, who had formerly denied paternity, finally acknowledges her as his child: "Mein Kind, mein Kind!" sprach der Pfarrer mit ersticker Stimme und warf sich an ihren Hals" (209). In order not to jeopardize his position, however, he insists that their relationship remain clandestine and he passes her off as his niece in public.

Auerbach's statement: "Alle trüben Erinnerungen an die Vergangenheit sind ausgelöscht" (209) somehow does not ring true, and suggests that the author intended the reader to question this imposed conclusion.

Rich and Poor: A Study of the Peasant Woman

If we examine the titles of the Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten it is noteworthy that female names constitute approximately half of the titles. All of these works treat themes which are relevant to the woman's life, but two works in particular: Die Frau Professorin (1848) and
Barfüßele (1856) offer detailed insights into the life and psyche of the woman from both ends of the rural hierarchy.

Lorle, the main character in Die Frau Professorin (1848), is depicted by Auerbach as the epitome of the "Naturkind." Reinhard’s friend, in urging him to paint her, describes her as follows: "Hier ist dir ein süßes Naturgeheimnis nahegestellt" (Auerbach 3: 14). Like Hedwig, in Der Lauterbacher, she is first introduced as part of an idyllic rural canvas: "Das Wirtstöchterlein ging über den Hof, lustig gekleidet, ohne Jacke und barfuß. Eine Schar junger Enten umdrängte sie schnatternd" (13). The first encounter with Lorle further compounds this pastoral image. Interestingly enough when she is presented to Reinhard’s friend she takes refuge, as had Hedwig, in her apron: "Grüß Gott," antwortete das Mädchen, die dargebotene Hand fassend, ohne aufzuschauen und ohne die Schürze vom Gesicht zu nehmen" (10).

Unlike the vast majority of women Auerbach presents, Lorle lives a sheltered, untroubled life as the following description of her reveals:

Das war ein Antlitz voll seligen,
ungetrübten Friedens, eine süße Ruhe war
auf den runden Wangen ausgebreitet;
diese Züge hatte noch nie eine
Leidenschaft durchtobt, oder ein wilder
Schmerz, ein Reuegefühl verzerrt, dieser
feine Mund konnte nichts heftiges, nichts Niedriges aussprechen, eine fast gleichmäßige zarte Röte durchhauchte Wange, Stirn und Kinn, und wie das Mädchen jetzt mit niedergeschlagenen Augen das Bügeleisen still auf der Halskrause hielt, war's wie der Anblick eines schlafenden Kindes (14-15).

The author usually explores the traditional familial configuration: mother/son, father/daughter in his work. Of significance here is that he takes this model to task. Lorle's mother appears to play no role in her upbringing. When her husband seeks her advice concerning Lorle's prospective betrothal to Reinhard, she feebly responds: "Wie du's machst, ist's recht" (60). It is not clear whether her husband is responsible for her seeming lack of interest in her daughter's life, but he appears to condone her dependence upon him by underscoring her submissiveness as a desirable female attribute. It is noteworthy that all his advice to Lorle is couched in general terms as if he were quoting a law of nature, and he flees into facile quasi-legalistic formulations when he approaches the male/female issue: "Guck, Lorle, so muß eine Frau sein, merk dir das" (60). Furthermore, the only advice he offers her, in regard to her behaviour towards the male sex, is designed to keep her in a subordinate position also: "Lorle, merk dir das jetzt auch, das mußt du nicht thun; wenn der Mann red't, muß
das Weib still sein" (61). In accordance with his precepts and although he does not care for Reinhard his advice to him, when he and Lorle are leaving for the city, only serves to further reinforce these chauvinistic views: "Man muß sie gleich von Anfang merken lassen, wer Meister ist" (66).

Reinhard also has a fixed image of Lorle. He attempts to define her as "a woman" by telling her who she is and what she feels. In his pompous declaration of love he assumes, before Lorle has an opportunity to respond, that she could never desire anyone but him: "Gutes Lorle," erwiderte Reinhard, "ich weiß, Ihr habt niemand auf der Welt so lieb als mich. Zittere nicht," fuhr er fort, ihre Hand fassend, "ich kenne dein ganzes Leben: du hast, während ich in der Ferne umherschweifte, still meiner gedacht" (46). He witnesses her curiosity about his friend, but he is so egocentric that he interprets this interest as an effort to please him on Lorle's part: "Mir zulieb warst du so freundlich gegen den Kollaborator" (47).

Contrary to his beliefs, Lorle is attracted to his friend and pointedly asks if he is single. She however, denies her feelings for him, because the concept of personal choice is alien to her, and she believes herself subject to a greater power: "Er [Reinhard] bedachte nicht, daß auch Lorle mit sich gekämpft hatte und daß sie sich dieser Liebe demütig fügte, als einem Gebote Gottes" (47). In accordance with this belief, when Lorle agrees to marry Reinhard, she submits herself entirely to him as her father had advised:
"Befiehl mir nur recht und immer, was ich thun soll, du
guter Reinhard" (47). Because she is so subjugated by her
father, she is insecure and vulnerable. From the onset, she
is intimidated by the educated Reinhard: "Ich bin dumm,
nicht wahr? Ihr dürfet's frei 'raus sagen, ich nehm' Euch
nichts übel" (46), but at the same time Auerbach indicates
that Lorle is self-confident enough to assure her partner
that she can receive criticism without personal
annihilation.

Even in the courting stage Reinhard enforces his will
upon Lorle by insisting that she pose as the Madonna. She
remonstrates at first, but again quickly surrenders to him:
"Ich muß in Gottes Namen alles thun, was du willst" (49).
She is aware of her lack of formal education and Reinhard
preys upon this. He does not appreciate that she perceives
things differently than he does and that her opinion might
enhance their relationship. For instance, when Reinhard
gives a scientific diatribe about grass, Lorle, in her
unpretentious manner, responds: "Das ist eben Gras,"
erwiderte Lorle, und Reinhard schrie sie an: "Wie du nur so
was Dummes sagen kannst, nachdem ich schon eine
Viertelstund' in dich hineinrede" (63). But instead of
appraising his behaviour critically she blames herself for
her lack of knowledge, thus betraying the typical female
inferiority complex: lack of trust in her own judgement and
unquestioned belief in the man - all propounded through male
dominated structures. And yet, Auerbach implies her strength and resilience in a language which is fraught with quiet victory:

Dieser Abend bebte wehmütig in der Seele
Lories nach, sie gab Reinhard keine
Schuld, sondern ward nur fast irr an
sich; sie kam sich nun wirklich grausam
dumm vor, und oft, wenn er sie um etwas
fragte, schreckte sie zusammen, aber
lügen konnte sie nicht, keine Teilnahme
und kein Verständnis heucheln. Die Liebe
aber überwindet alles. Lorle nahm sich
vor, recht aufzumerken, wenn Reinhard
etwas sagte, denn er war ja viel
gescheiter. So verlor sich nach und nach
ihre Zaghaftigkeit wieder, und sie war
das harmlose Kind von ehedem (63).

As in Der Lehnhold, Auerbach highlights the all consuming power of the village code. He clearly demonstrates how Lorle can deal with her pain, but she is unable to challenge the rural mores. The only occasion Lorle asserts herself with Reinhard, and rejects his wishes, is when it comes to transgressing the village order: "Nie war sie zu bewegen, an einem Werktage mittags mit Reinhard spazieren zu gehen, wenn aber der Feierabend kam, dann war sie bereit; das war der Dorfsitte gemäß, unter deren Herrschaft sie stand" (62).

Auerbach accentuates the seeming nonchalance of the
male in regard to the woman he purportedly loves. During the
period of courtship, Reinhard takes no pains to reassure
Lorle of his love. He sets off on a trip without informing
her: "Reinhard hätte sie durch ein einziges Wort beruhigen
können, und er dachte nicht daran" (58). Having just
proposed to her he immediately strikes a negative and sombre
note which, in essence, amounts to a power play, on his
part, in respect to their marriage: "Ich kann dich glücklich
machen, wie noch kein Weib auf Erden war, und - unendlich
unglücklich" (48). Lorle, in contrast, embraces the prospect
of marriage as the realization of the self by living: "Nein,
erst recht leben, lang, lang, leben" (47).

Reinhard does not truly consider Lorle’s happiness. He
rejects her father’s suggestion that she spend some time in
the city with a relative before they marry so she can become
somewhat accustomed to the life there. Reinhard will not
agree to this and his response reveals his perfect
selfishness in marrying her. It also suggests that he does
not want an equal partner since he denies her the
opportunity of becoming "educated": "Daß Lorle nichts zu
lernen habe, gerade so, wie sie jetzt sei, mache sie ihn
glücklich" (59). Reinhard does not treat Lorle as a woman
and prospective wife. He continues to address her as "Kind"
in spite of her reticent objection, which clearly
demonstrates her desire to be regarded as a woman: "Nicht
Kind sagen." He views her rather as an icon: "Lorle war ihm
ein Topus des Urmenschlichen, des ursprünglich Vollkommenen,
an sich Vollendeten, unberührt von den Zwiespältigkeiten der Geschichte und der Bildung" (88).

Once in the city Reinhard does not allow Lorle time to adjust. He demands that she sever all ties with her home immediately: "Sei fröhlich, laß die ganze Welt hinter dir versinken; ich habe dich herausgetragen aus dem Strom des gewohnten Lebens, wir sind allein, ganz allein. Denk jetzt nicht mehr heim" (71-72). Lorle has never been away from her village before, and yet he will not tolerate her talking about it: "Reinhard sagte zornig: "Du kannst doch ewig nicht über dein Dorf hinausdenken, das ist einfältig" (74) - a totalitarian measure on his part - cause an individual to forget his/her past and you can own their present and their future. When she is upset and homesick, he has no compassion upon her: "Heiße Thränen rollten über die Wangen Lories, und Reinhard ließ sie eine Stunde allein sitzen" (74).

Furthermore, he never conceives that she has sacrificed everything for him in leaving her village. But he informs her, in no uncertain terms, that he has paid dearly for her. He does not acknowledge that he has forced her to abandon kit and kin in order to satisfy his personal desires for a home. The degree of his egocentricity is betrayed by his formulations: "Nie," schloß er, "hab’ ich’s empfunden, was ein Heimatherd ist; meine tiefe Sehnsucht ist nun erfüllt, freilich mit einem schweren Opfer, ich habe mich in Dienst begeben" (75).

From the onset, Lorle is ill at ease in the city. This
is evident when she is being commandeered around her new abode. Every detail is explained to her as if she, the country bumpkin, had never resided in a house. Her remark: "Das braucht Ihr mir nicht sagen" (76) does little to endear her to Reinhard’s friends, but highlights their hypocrisy and her honesty: "Sie sprach das in reiner Ehrlichkeit, sie kannte die Gesellschaftslüge noch nicht, der zufolge man sich unwissend stellen muß, um dem andern in seiner Weisheit angenehm zu erscheinen; sie wollte der "guten Person" nur die unnötige Mühe ersparen" (76). Her directness and honesty, a quality which the author stresses repeatedly, again exposes the townfolk when at a concert she attends with Reinhard, his friend comments: "Du hast eine herrliche, einzige Frau, sie hat noch den Mut, offen zu gestehen, daß sie sich bei Beethoven langweilt" (82). In her simplicity she is very shrewd however. Even Reinhard is forced to agree with her when, in regard to Leopoldine (a socialite), she aptly remarks: "Die ist Weinessig, ist einmal Wein gewesen" (77).

Instead of facilitating her integration into this new environment, Reinhard begins to neglect Lorle: "Reinhard stellte seine Frau niemand vor, sie bedurfte ja niemand außer ihm, er war ihr alles" (77). He claims that he leaves Lorle at home because he seeks to protect her: "Gutes Kind, du sollst und wirst nie erfahren, wie wirr und kraus es in der Welt hergeht" (80) and further: "Sei jetzt nur heiter, sei froh, daß du vieles nicht weißt" (80), but his motives
are questionable, for he deliberately attempts to keep her in ignorance of her surroundings. And the true reason that he does not take her with him on social engagements is that he is ashamed of Lorle. His friends express interest in meeting her, but he declines: "Er fürchtete zugleich, daß sich Lorle nicht, wie er wünschte, benehmen möchte" (86). On the evenings that he is at home, he desires absolute possession of Lorle, insisting that she sit with him, totally unoccupied, while he paints: "Stricke und nähe nicht, arbeite nicht, gar nichts, wenn du bei mir bist; es ist mir, als wärest du nicht allein, nicht auschließlich bei mir, als wäre noch ein Drittes bei uns zweien, als wärest du nur halb bei mir" (81).

While Reinhard abandons Lorle, he strikes up a friendship with the countess Mathilde von Felseneck. The intimacy he does not enjoy with his wife, he is able to share freely with her:

Von diesem Abend an gestaltete sich ein eigentümliches Verhältnis zwischen Reinhard und Mathilde. Wenn sie sich bei Hofe oder in den Salons trafen, kam eine gewisse ruhige Sicherheit über sie; so förmlich auch ihr beiderseitiger Gruß war, es lag etwas Zutrauliches darin, als hätten sie sich ohne Verabredung hier ein Stelldichein gegeben (85).
As he continues contact with the countess, Reinhard becomes increasingly dissatisfied with Lorle: "Seine Häuslichkeit kam ihm so eng, so kleinbürgerlich vor" (87). The qualities he used to find charming in her, such as her lack of affectation, he now finds offensive:

Auch fiel ihm jetzt eine eigentümliche Ungrazie Lories auf: die Haftigkeit und Kräftigkeit ihres Gebarens war nun unschön; sie faßte ein Glas, das Leichteste, was sie zu nehmen hatte, nicht mit den Fingern, sondern mit der ganzen Hand, ihre Bewegungen hatten in den Stadtkleidern eine auffallende Derbheit (87).

Everything indicates that he had been attracted by an image, not a person, and he is now tiring of his project: "Drückte dann Lorle mit kindlichem Stottern ihre Gedanken und Empfindungen aus, so hörte er selten darauf und gab sich noch seltener die Mühe, sie zu ergänzen und zu berichtigen; er war es müde, das ABC der Bildung vorzubuchstabieren" (87).

Auerbach underscores the isolation of the countrywoman, who is uprooted from her native village and planted in an environment foreign to her. Lorle is truly alone. Since her departure from the village no mention is made of contact with her parents, and yet rumours have circulated in the village that she is unhappy. Significantly, it is her father
who visits her, but Lorle, in spite of her loneliness and marital difficulties, has been an exemplary pupil and is true to Reinhard. She tells her father: "Eheleute müßten sich selber verständigen, da könne selbst der Vater nichts thun" (109), a wise and independent statement, which indicates that Reinhard has not managed to reduce her to the child which he persists in seeing in her.

Despite Lorle’s efforts to salvage the marriage, Reinhard recoils more and more from her. He falls out of favour with the whole town and scarcely evades a duel when he insults an Englishman visiting the court. Lorle is the last to discover this incident, which, in turn, further exasperates her feelings of low self-esteem: "Bin ich denn gar nicht mehr da?" (116). Auerbach, as in Erdmute and Vefele, demonstrates the power which the man, even the degenerate species, has upon the woman. Reinhard’s lifestyle and behaviour exert such an influence upon Lorle that she begins to lose her way. Indeed, the verbs she utilizes to define her position: "sein", "sollen", "werden" are key words denoting an identity crisis: "Ich weiß gar nicht mehr, bin ich denn noch und was soll ich denn?" (92). This escalates to a point of utter despair when Reinhard, doubting that she can perform even the most mundane of tasks, attempts to select her clothes for the audience with the Prince: "Was soll denn aus mir werden?" (95). This is one of the few occasions when Lorle expresses anger for her husband: "Denk nur nicht immer, daß ich gar nichts versteh’"
(94) and further: "Ich bin kein Kind, das hab' ich dir schon hundertmal gesagt" (95). At this moment we are granted a glimpse of Lorle's potential as a person, while Reinhard is reduced in stature. Auerbach has prepared this carefully with the result that it does not come off as psychological inconsistency. For the first time Reinhard sees Lorle as a formidable natural force to be reckoned with: "Aber er hatte die Zügel verloren, um dieses Naturell zu halten, er konnte nichts thun, als um Ruhe bitten" (95).

The degree of Lorle's unhappiness in her new surroundings and the terrible restraints on her development are signified in the motif of the captured bird, which was hinted at the onset of the work: "Das Lorle ist grad wie ein feingoldiger Kanarienvogel unter grauen Spatzen" (18), and is continued throughout the text:

Eine Lerche, gewohnt und geschaffen,  
hinanstrebend im weiten Raum ihren  
Gesang erschallen zu lassen, lernt auch  
im engen Käfig singen wie in der  
Freiheit, aber am Gitter stehend bewegt  
sie ihre Flügel in leisem Zittern,  
während sie singt, und nie wird sie  
zahm, jeder betrachtende und forschende  
Blick macht, daß sie in wildem Aufruhr  
sich gegen die Umgitterung wirst und  
stemmt; sie verstummt und will  
entfliehen (99).
This unnatural confinement is again reiterated at the end of the text: "Lorle breitete unwillkürlich die Arme aus, sie wünschte sich Flügel, sie wollte fort, sie wußte nicht, wohin" (117). The use of the caged bird metaphor to denote the restricted life style of nineteenth century women is, in the view of Mary Eagleton, the feminist critic, appropriate, if not predictable (200). She, however, is referring specifically to women writers such as Charlotte Brontë who, in works like Jane Eyre, conveyed the social and historical position of women through the use of such metaphors. It is, therefore, noteworthy that Auerbach should portray Lorle’s dilemma in a metaphor which, according to Ellen Moer, the feminist critic, "truly deserves the adjective female" (Eagleton, 210).

As in Florian und Kreszenz, Auerbach shows how the woman survives indeed blossoms, to a degree, in the face of numerous difficulties. Her plight notwithstanding, Lorle seeks to help others. When a neighbour is unwell she tends to her diligently and upon her death she cares lovingly for her children. She is also touched by the sight of the pauper selling sand to feed his family and purchases the entire load, although she has no use for it. This encounter causes her to reevaluate her situation and she determines to try afresh with Reinhard. It is significant that, although Reinhard is on the verge of emotional and financial disaster, Lorle is so entrenched in the patriarchal system that she continues to look to him for approval: "Du bist
doch undankbar, du hast's so gut, hast dein täglich Brot, und dein Mann läßt dich über alles Meister sein" (118). And yet her intuition, despite her lack of knowledge concerning Reinhard’s exact situation, causes her to sense that he is in need of help: "Ach, er ist ja so gut. Wenn ich ihm nur helfen könnt" (118). Lorle, despite her good intentions, is confronted with an impossible situation. However, when Reinhard eventually staggers home drunk he refuses Lorle’s gestures of reconciliation. It is only at this point, having exhausted every option, that she decides to leave. Her parting message to Reinhard contains no hint of bitterness, only thanks for the time they shared together. In light of Auerbach’s use of the metaphor of the caged bird, it is significant that Lorle’s decision to leave Reinholt parallels, in mood and language, that of Jane Eyre when she rejects Rochester’s proposal of an illicit sexual union: "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you."^2

Furthermore, Auerbach shows the consequences for the socially displaced woman. Lorle returns home, but is never truly part of the village community again. Social and historical sources indicate that those who moved off the land or even to adjacent farming districts were not expected to return to their native village. In the event that they did, they were often held in contempt as failures, or feared

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because they might feel themselves superior. Although this does not appear to be the case with Lorle, for she is fondly regarded by the villagers, the final image of her moving through the village in city attire suggests that she can never find her place in a social context again:

Durch das Dorf geht eine Frau in städtischer Kleidung, von jedermann herzlich begrüßt, und fragt ihr, wer sie sei, so wird euch jeder mit dankendem Blicke sagen, daß sie der Schutzengel der Hilfsbedürftigen ist. Und ihr Name? Man nennt sie die Frau Professorin (120).

In Barfüßele (1856) Auerbach explores two subjects: (1) the power of the patriarchal model to instil an individual’s role in society and (2) the plight of the orphan in the nineteenth century. In reference to the first theme, Amrei, who is simply referred to as “das Mädchen”, is presented by Auerbach as a caring and loving sister to her younger brother Dami. Contrary to the usual sibling rivalry, Amrei constantly gives her brother the advantage in order to boost his confidence: "Das Mädchen nickte beifällig und machte ein Gesicht als ob sie ihm das Rätsel zum erstenmal aufgegeben hätte, während sie es doch schon oft gethan hatte und immer wieder aufnahm, um ihn dadurch zu erheitern" (Auerbach 6: 51). Amrei, though herself an orphaned young child,
instinctively assumes the role of mother, and does everything in her power to ensure she will not be separated from her brother on the death of her parents. While struggling to come to terms with her own grief, she vows that she will protect and care for Dami through life: "Hier, daß verspreche ich dir, ich will dir mein Lebenlang alles thun, und alles geben, was ich hab’" (60).

Amrei subjugates her own wishes for Dami’s sake. When she is offered the chance of a home and a brighter future with a rich farmer in the Allgäu, she declines the offer because it is not extended to Dami. She puts his interests constantly above her own. When the same farmer gives her the gift of a necklace, her joy is marred because Dami receives nothing. In order to appease his jealousy, however, she submits to his demands by agreeing not to wear it: "Ich verspreche dir was du willst!" (59). Moreover, she does not think of her own welfare, but of Dami’s: "Amrei dagegen war stets zierlich und gewandt, aber sie weinte oft in der Schule, nicht wegen der Strafen, die sie selbst bekam, sondern so oft Dami gestraft wurde" (65).

Amrei seeks to provide guidance for her brother, but, at the same time, she feels at a loss as a woman because she cannot provide a male influence in Dami’s life, which she perceives as necessary: "Und für den Dami wär’s doch besser, er wäre in einer Vatersgewalt; das thät’ ihn aufrichten" (73). Her choice of words "father" and "power" are revealing. In this connection, she realizes innately the
importance of the male role in society; thus when she is relegated to goose girl she does not permit Dami to assist her: "Er war ein Mann, er sollte einer werden, und ihm könnte es schaden, wenn man ihm einst nachsagte, daß er vormals die Gänse gehütet habe" (77). She harbours an ideal of "a man", acquired it would appear from the community in which she lives, and in accordance with this she is later saddened when Dami decides to emigrate to America, but she is also impressed because: "Das zeigte doch von männlicher Kraft" (111).

Amrei assumes such responsibility for Dami that she is cast by the community as his "mother":

Und so groß war bereits die selbstverständliche Geltung Barfüßeles und so natürlich die Annahme, daß sie für ihren Bruder sorge, daß man ihn immer nur des "Barfüßeles Dami" hieß, als wäre er nicht ihr Bruder, sondern ihr Sohn, und doch war er um einen Kopf größer, als sie, und that nicht, als ob er ihr Unterthan sei (100).

This sense of duty and responsibility towards him does not cease when he leaves the village. Having made every effort to facilitate Dami’s move to America, she is willing to seek work in a factory in Alsase in order to support him when he returns home penniless.
As previously stated, Auerbach also takes issue with the plight of the orphan in the nineteenth century, with particular reference to the woman, in this work. When Amrei’s and Dami’s parents die (it appears simultaneously) no one explains to the children what has befallen them. Several days later they are led to their parents’ graves and abruptly informed that they have died. Amrei and Dami have relatives in a neighbouring village, but they are neglected by them. When their uncle visits, well after the funeral, he cannot remember Amrei’s name: "Ein Gefühl der Verfremdung machte es zittern, weil der Ohm es bei falschem Namen genannt. Es mochte fühlen, daß da nicht die rechte Anhänglichkeit war, wo man seinen Namen nicht mehr wußte" (67). Amrei and Dami are given shelter by the villagers not because of any altruistic inclination on their part. "Die schwarze Marann" gives accommodation to Amrei out of selfish motives: "Die kleine Amrei hatte sie, wie sie sagte, nicht aus Gutmütigkeit zu sich genommen, sondern nur weil sie ein lebendiges Wesen um sich haben wollte" (61). Dami’s guardian, the Rodelbauer, (who is also legal guardian to Amrei) also accepts him for ulterior motives.

Auerbach illustrates how the village community, although it has no genuine regard for the children, assumes it should play a role in their lives. This is suggested from the onset. When Amrei declines the farmer’s offer of a home, she is given strategic advice which reveals the villagers’ attitudes: "Sag’ im Dorf nichts davon, daß ich dich habe
For all their curiosity and desire to impose their values in such matters, Auerbach indicates repeatedly that no one truly cares for Amrei. She has a very isolated existence in the village. Firstly, she is shunned because of her lowly position as orphan in the rural hierarchy and, as such, she is viewed as a financial burden. She is further ostracized because she lives with Marann, herself an neglected outsider: "Nur in des Rodelbauer Haus wurde sie noch gern geduldet, war ja der Rodelbauer ihr Vormund" (95). She is thus largely left to her own devices: "Aber je mehr sie heranwuchs, um so weniger Aufmerksamkeit wurde ihr geschenkt; denn die Menschen betrachten nur die Blüten und die Früchte mit teilnehmendem Auge, nicht aber jenen langen Übergang, wo das eine zum andern wird" (66). Even her guardian (der Rodelbauer) does not care for her welfare, although she is legally his charge. At the dance he abuses his responsibilities towards her for the sake of satisfying his own desires: "Amrei aß nicht viel, und der Rodelbauer wollte sich den Spaß bereiten, das Kind trunken zu machen" (96). She is also the object of his verbal abuse. He repeatedly rebuffs her with "Du bist ein dummes Kind" (67).
Amrei has no real contact with children her own age: "Barfüßele lebte so für sich, daß man sie gar nicht zur Jugend im Dorfe zählte; sie war mit ihren Altersgenossen freundlich und gesprächsam, aber ihre eigentliche Gespiele war doch nur die schwarze Marann" (101). At a wedding, one of the few social gatherings to which she is invited, no one dances with her (overtones of Moni). In fact, she is teased unmercifully by her peers and although from the onset she is described as shoeless, this is the first occasion when she is referred to derisively as "Barfüßele": "Mit dir tanzt keiner, du bist ja das Barfüßele" und: "Barfüßele! Barfüßele! Barfüßele!" schrie es nur von allen Seiten" (96).

Her isolation and loneliness is complete when Dami leaves for America. Auerbach, as in a number of the previous works, is particularly successful in capturing the woman’s emotions of confusion and despair, as she struggles to place herself in some meaningful social context: "Auf allen Straßen der Welt geht kein Mensch zu mir, denkt kein Mensch zu mir; und gehört ich denn nicht auch her?" (118) and further: "Ein kalter Schauer, der in Wehmut überging, wollte sich gar oft Amreis bemächtigen, sie wollte weinen über ihr Schicksal, das sie allein, verlassen von Vater und Mutter, hinausstellte" (81). Again, Auerbach is very critical of the village and its superficiality in judging from appearances only:

Die Leute im Dorfe sagten: das Barfüßele müsse kein Herz im Leibe haben, denn es
waren ihr nicht die Augen naß geworden,
als ihr Bruder schied, und die Leute
wollen gerne selbst die Thränen sehen.
Was gehen sie die heimlich geweinten an?
Barfüßele aber hielt sich wach und
straff (115).

Furthermore, she soon learns that the village would
gladly be rid of her also:

Aber sie merkte bald, daß man sie nicht
nur gerne gehen ließ, sondern daß man
ihr sogar zürnte, weil sie nicht
gegangen war [nach Amerika]. Der
Krappenzacher machte ihr die Augen auf,
indem er sagte: "Ja, Kind, du hast einen
Trotzkopf, und das ganze Dorf ist dir
böß, weil du dein Glück mit Füßen von
dir gestoßen hast (76).

They are not truly concerned for her welfare or future, but
as the historical villagers in the previous chapter, they
are fearful of her depleting the village poor fund. She is
informed of this in no uncertain terms: "Und wer dich
ansieht, rechnet dir vor, was du bald aus dem öffentlichen
Almosen kommst" (76). It is at this juncture that she is
advised to take over "der Gänsehirtendienst" (77), the most
humble and undesired of all positions. Auerbach thus
underlines the difficulties experienced by poor women
without prospects. In addition to tending the geese, Amrei
also works as a servant at the young Rodelbauer’s in order to support herself. She works hard: "Sie war anstellig zu allem und wußte sich gleich bei allen beliebt zu machen" (98), but she is badly treated especially by Rosel, the daughter, who seizes every opportunity to remind Amrei of her station: "Und es wird auch deinesgleichen auf dem Tanz sein" (120).

As in Die Frau Professorin, Auerbach provides us with a detailed psychological profile of the heroine. In this instance he concentrates on the outsider in her own village. In spite of her situation, the author presents Amrei as possessing tremendous willpower: "Aber sie gewann schon früh eine Kunst und eine Kraft, die sich schwer lernt und übt: die Thränen hinabwürigen" (81). In reality, she is very sensitive and vulnerable, but also remarkably resilient, a quality which is evinced in a number of Auerbach’s women in varying circumstances:

In der That war Barfüsele von allem schnell tief ergriffen, aber sie war dabei auch stark und leichtlebig wie ein Kind; es war, wie damals die Marann’ bei ihrem ersten Einschlafen bemerkt hatte, Wachen und Schlafen, Weinen und Lachen hart nebeneinander; sie ging in jedem Ereignis und jeder Empfindung voll auf, kam aber auch rasch wieder darüber hinweg ins Gleichgewicht (103).
Although of poor, uneducated peasant stock she is presented as capable of existential questions: "Warum hier ein Kind tot, auf das die Mutter wartet, so zitternd, mit ganzer Seele wartet, und ich und mein Dami wir sind verlorene Kinder, möchten so gerne die Hand der Mutter fassen, und diese Hand ist Staub geworden?" (93). At the same time she voices Auerbach's own beliefs by her determination to make the best of her lot. In his aphorisms, Auerbach makes several references which are virtually identical to those expounded by Amrei: "Rechtschaffenes Denken ist die beste Aufheiterung" (103) and: "Arbeiten und Einsammeln, das ist das beste, und da bleibt man lustig und gesund und glücklich" (116). She believes in self-reliance and advises Dami: "Schlag selber um dich!" (110) and "Ich denke, das Reue das Dümste ist, was man in sich aufkommen lassen kann. Wenn man sich den Kopf herunterreeft, man kann gestern nicht mehr zu heute machen" (183). And, in contrast to Dami who wishes his life away, Amrei seizes the moment: "Barfüßele kämpfte gegen dieses ewige Hinausschauen auf eine kommende Zeit und das Verlorengehenlassen der Gegenwart" (109).

On the other hand, Auerbach lends romantic elements to her character: "So war klares Ausschauen und träumerisches Hindämmern in der Seele des Kindes nahe bei einander" (78) and further: "Aber über alles menschliche Getriebe hinüber wurde Amrei doch oft ins Reich der Träume getragen" (79). She recognizes, however, that there is a discrepancy between
reality and her dreams, which further accentuates her dilemma: "Ach, warum ist denn das alles nicht wahr? und warum hat man denn das alles ausgedacht, wenn er nicht wahr ist?" (79). She fantasizes that the woman who gave her the necklace, the Landfriedbauer, will come and claim her as her own child. This leads in to the invitation to the dance and from this point onward the tale begins to lose some of its realistic description and becomes, to a degree, as one critic has described it "the story of Cinderella of the Black Forest."  

From the moment the mistress of the farm prepares her for the dance, Amrei, like Magdalene in *Sträflinge*, plays another role. The farmer tells her: "Du siehst aus wie die Tochter von der Landfriedbäuerin" (120), the very woman she hoped would fetch her. Amrei feels "verzaubert" and the villagers who meet her on the way do not recognize her. Furthermore, at the dance, she is chosen above all others by the mysterious "Reiter." She throws herself entirely into the enjoyment of the moment in a refreshing, uninhibited fashion: "Es ist mir jetzt grad," sagte Amrei, "wie wenn wir zwei Tauben wären, die in der Luft fliegen" (130). But even in the midst of this romantically charged encounter, Auerbach does not lose sight of his goal: a realistic portrayal of the poor peasant woman. This is captured in

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Johannes' (the rich stranger) reaction when he learns that Amrei is not a farmer's daughter:

Nein, ich dien'," sagte Amrei und schaute ihm fest ins Auge, er aber wollte das seine niederschlagen, die Wimper zuckte, und er hielt das Auge gewaltsam auf, und dieser Kampf und Sieg des leiblichen Auges schien das Abbild dessen, was in ihm vorging; er wollte fast das Mädchen stehen lassen (131).

Through this statement, Auerbach captures Amrei’s total lack of social affectation on the one hand, and the restraints imposed upon the male, especially a wealthy one, in regard to his choice of marriage partner, on the other. Amrei is pragmatic enough to know that nothing can come of this and, in keeping with her philosophies, she enjoys it for what it is: "Du hast einem armen Mädchen für sein Leben lang ein Gutes geschenkt" (131).

And yet Auerbach, like Gotthelf in some of his works, demonstrates how male attention has a profound effect upon the woman: "Barfüßele hatte heute eine ganze Lebensgeschichte erlebt" (133). She feels acknowledged as a human being for the first time through this experience: "Du bist doch jetzt auch einmal als eine Person angesehen worden, du bist bis daher immer nur zum Dienen und Helfen für andre dagewesen. Gut Nacht, Amrei, das war einmal ein Tag!" (136). Auerbach also suggests that this episode is
responsible for a sexual awakening in her: "Und in keuscher Schamhaftigkeit vor sich selber bedeckte sie Busen und Hals mit beiden Händen" (137).

When Johannes comes to court Rosel, but takes Amrei as a wife instead, Auerbach pushes the credibility of the story too far. In the first instance, it seems unlikely that Johannes does not recognize Amrei, even with her swollen face, since he spends time speaking with her in the barn. But in an instant of recognition, he rescues her from Rosel "the ugly sister" and proposes to her on the spot.

Furthermore, Johannes is the son of the Landfriedbauer and so Amrei’s dream of being part of that family becomes reality. His parents accept her willingly and all ends well: "Das war ein glückseliges Beisammensein in der Schule, im Hof und auf dem Felde, und der Bauer sagte immer: es habe ihm seit Jahren das Essen nicht so geschmeckt wie jetzt" (200). However, despite this rather abrupt conclusion, I agree with Werner Kohlschmidt’s appraisal of Auerbach’s success in creating a work in which the real and the unreal components are successfully integrated:

Die Milieuschilderung natürlich bleibt es: die verschiedenen Bauergestalten und ihre Frauen, die kauzige Gestalt der schwarzen Marann, Barfüßeles Pflegemutter und Guttäterin, die Individualität des etwas weichlichen Bruders. Das alles ist nicht
idealisiert. Alles in allem verdankt die Geschichte einer höchst geschickten Mischung von Wirklichkeit und Unwahrscheinlichkeit ihren Erfolg (251).
In this chapter I will explore Gotthelf’s depiction of the peasant woman in his *Kleinere Erzählungen* (4 volumes). As stated in the introduction, the amount of research which has been conducted on this subject in these works is, with the exception of *Die schwarze Spinne* (1842), sparse at best. Literary scholars such as Hans Künzi and Felicity Ann Rodner, who have undertaken more recent and in depth investigation of the woman in Gotthelf’s shorter works, tend merely to reiterate the more traditional views of earlier and renowned critics, Walter Muschg and H.M. Waidson among them. Künzi concludes his book, *So ein handlich Weib* (1984), for instance, by stating: "Gotthelfs Frauengestalten gehören zu den schönsten in der Weltliteratur" (9), while Rodner maintains: "More often, however, Gotthelf’s woman does not embody a single extreme of behaviour, whether good or bad, but she is rather a composite figure, closer to the average person of our common experience" (1976, 66).

I strongly disagree with Rodner’s evaluation of Gotthelf’s women and contend that the author, in his portrayal of peasant women, consistently presents two
extreme female archetypes. Furthermore, that his statement in *Die Käserei in der Vehfreude* (1850): "Denn noch bis auf den heutigen Tag kommt vom Weibe vornehmlich das Böse und das Heil, die böse Lust und die Liebe, Satanas oder Gott" (416-17), in fact, reflects his opinion and treatment of the female sex throughout the *Kleinere Erzählungen*. While Rodner praises Gotthelf’s skill in creating women who are "neither saints nor demons" (67), I hope to demonstrate that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, this is precisely what Gotthelf presents: "saints" or "demons." I maintain, therefore, that, in reference to providing a convincing, realistic portrait of the average nineteenth century peasant woman, Gotthelf does not, as Werner Günther claims, reproduce life "mit 'photographischer' Treue und Genauigkeit" (1958, 65).

**Women as Negative Examples**

I will begin my analysis of this subject with the works which have courtship as their theme, and cast the woman as a primarily negative stereotype. Included in this group are *Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht* (1841), *Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt* (1845), *Michels Brautschau* (1849), *Der Notar in der Falle* (1848), *Der Ball* (1852), *Der Besuch auf dem Lande* (1847), and *Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl* (1852).
Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht (1841) is the tale of Joggeli’s attempts to find a wife who will replace his deceased mother and, hence, re-establish order on the farm. From the onset of this work, Gotthelf stresses the difficulties which the quest for a suitable marriage partner entails, in particular, for the male: "Von allen Seiten werde der angelogen. Man bezahle Leute, welche das Mädchen bis in den Himmel erheben sollen, und bezahle wiederum Leute, die es auszumachen hätten, als ob es in keinen Schuh gut wäre und man mit ihm ein Bschüttloch vergiften könne" (Gotthelf 1:9). Although courtship involves two parties, both of whom are presumably capable of deceit, Gotthelf focusses entirely upon the wiliness of the woman in this work. In referring to women, in general, he utilizes terms such as "Hexe" and "Drache" which, traditionally and mythologically, conjure up the most negative images of woman: "Nun sei aber das das Verflügeretste, daß man nie recht wissen könne, ob man eine Hexe, ein alt Judenkrös oder den alten Drachen selbst ins Haus kriege; denn alle diese Greuel seien meist schon im Mädchen eingepuppt, hinter glatter Mädchennhaut verborgen" (8). Furthermore, the woman is charged, by Gotthelf, with mass deceit, she not only beguiles the individual man, she also projects a false image to the community at large: "Und gar oft mache das Mädchen vor dem Hause und hinter dem Hause und besonders im Wirtshause das zärtlichste Gesicht, dem im Hause der Drache
fußlang aus den Augen sehe und seine Krallen schon im Ankenhafen und in der Tischdecke habe" (8).

To illustrate this premise Gotthelf presents two women for scrutiny: Rösi and Marei. In keeping with the latter claim, the author immediately highlights the discrepancy between Rösi’s private and public behaviour. She is shown to conduct herself admirably at social gatherings, which leads the community to believe that she is a model of propriety at home:

Und dieses Rösi war das gleiche Mädchen, das so nett und aufgeputzt an Märkten und Musterungen erschien, so sittsam tat, so mäßig sich betrug, vor einem Schluck Wein sich schüttelte und vor jedem Blick eines Burschen sich verbergen zu wollen schien. Mit Gewalt mußte man es zum Tanzen zwingen, mit Gewalt zum Essen, mit Gewalt zum Reden, aber es hieß, daheim sei es gar werksam, gehe immer mit dem Volk aufs Feld und sei ohne allen Stolz und Hochmut (12-13).

Gotthelf, however, reveals Rösi in a different light on her home turf. In so doing he concentrates exclusively upon her shortcomings. Significantly, he judges and appraises Rösi as a person by criteria which determine her calibre as mistress of the farm. She is evaluated, for instance, by the exterior
and interior condition of the farm, the order, or lack of
order in the household, with particular reference to the
kitchen; the standard of food which is served, her behaviour
and demeanour as mistress of the farm within her domain, and
by her example and influence upon the conduct of her
servants.

Rosi falls very short of Gotthelf’s standards. Her
house does not function smoothly: "In der Küche keine
Ordnung" (13) and the food she serves is unappetising:
"Endlich brachte man auch ihm etwas heraus, das eine Suppe
sein sollte, aber aussah wie schmutziges Wasser" (12). On a
more personal level, the author places Rösi in a negative
light when he describes her emerging from the cellar
accompanied "mit einem verdächtigen Weingeruch" (12). He
goes further and by equating "Sittsamkeit" (demureness,
modesty) with moral character and female purity, Gotthelf
moulds the reader’s perception of Rösi - to her detriment:
"Und da war von Sittsamkeit nichts zu sehen, es hatte ein
beflecktes Inneres" (13).

In his treatment of Marei, the mistress of the second
farmhouse Joggeli visits, Gotthelf continues this rather
one-sided categorization of women by again accentuating only
Marei’s negative qualities. The author again evaluates her
character by the condition of her farm. The farmhouse,
 itself, is depicted in a state of neglect: "Das Dach des
Hauses war schlecht, der Misthaufe aber groß" (13). As in
Rösi’s house, Gotthelf emphasizes the lack of order within
the home: "Im Hause war noch lange Lärm, es schien ihm auch nachts keine Ordnung da zu sein und alle zu machen [sic], was jedem beliebe" (15). The servants are also portrayed negatively by their conduct at table: "Rohe Späße, Zoten wurden alsobald flüssig; man schien damit das schlechte Essen würzen zu wollen" (14). Marei, the future mistress, instead of acting as a positive role model for the servants, which was expected traditionally and is the subject of Gotthelf’s novels such as Wie Uli der Knecht glücklich wird (1846), is shown to encourage this inappropriate behaviour: "Marei, die Tochter, nahm herzhaft teil daran ohne irgend die geringste Scham, hatte aber nebenbei immer noch Zeit, Vater und Mutter zu widerreden" (14).

In both cases Gotthelf makes the negative qualities in the respective women overly explicit. He, in fact, further denigrates Rösi and Marei when he suggests that such prosperous farmer’s daughters are even unfit wives for a tinker: "Nun habe er beide gesehen, und es schaudere ihn, wenn er eins oder das andere haben müßte, und wenn er nur ein Kesselflicker wäre" (15-16). He does not suggest the presence of even one redeeming feature in either Rösi or Marei with the result that they can be regarded as nothing more than caricatures, an issue which has been overlooked by Gotthelf scholars.

Gotthelf moves from one extreme pole to the other in his treatment of women in this work. The final house, which Joggeli approaches, is presented by the author as the
complete antithesis of the former two: "Blank war das Haus, hell glitzerten die Fenster, ein freundlicher Garten lag vor demselben, und wohlbesorgte Blumen spendeten freigebig ihre reichen Düfte" (17). At the centre of this household Gotthelf places an impeccable woman: "Ein schlankes, großes Mädchen mit reinem Haar" (17). Whereas both Rösi and Marei represented all that the author considered undesirable in a woman, Anne Mareili encompasses every ideal attribute and virtue which Gotthelf esteemed in a woman. She, in essence, reflects the Biedermeier image of the ideal homemaker propounded in the nineteenth century and discussed in chapter one.

Order reigns supreme in every area of Anne Mareili’s home: "Es hatte alles ein reinlich Ansehen, und das Volk tat manierlich, betete mit Andacht, und aus dem ganzen Benehmen sah man, daß da Gott und Meisterleute geehrt würden" (17). And her food, whose importance to Gotthelf’s peasants cannot be overstressed (Waidson 36), is fitting: "Die Suppe war eben nicht überflüssig dick aber gut" (17). While Gotthelf consciously influences the reader to regard Rösi and Marei in a negative manner, he builds Anne Mareili into a paragon of virtue. She is kind to the servants, her obstreperous grandmother and to the beggars who seek her aid. She is also hospitable to Joggeli as befits her position, but she chastises him when his behaviour is unseemly: "Das sei doch keine Manier" (17). Unlike Rösi and Marei, who are depicted as being flirtatious with Joggeli, Anne Mareili is seen not
to tolerate his inappropriate advances: "Da kriegte er eine Ohrfeige, daß er das Feuer im Elsaß sah" (19). But when Joggeli attempts to drive her to the limit by criticizing the food she prepares, and by deliberately shattering the crockery she had given him to mend, Anne Mareili, like the ideal mistress, shows no sign of anger, but remains perfectly placid.

However, it can be argued that Gotthelf, in making Anne Mareili such a flawless woman, in effect, destroys her credibility as a character. She becomes no more than a convenient vehicle for him to expound his views on women, and on the nature of the exemplary wife and custodian of the farm. Gotthelf's didactic intent is clear, as Rodner elucidates: "The female reader should realise how ugly are women such as Rösi and Marei, and that she should not be as they are, but rather as Anne Mareili is, sweet and tender in private as in public, before marriage and afterward" (265). But there are difficulties and inconsistencies in Gotthelf's portrayal of Anne Mareili. He does not appear to consider that having created such a paragon of virtue, the reader might experience some difficulty with Anne Mareili's sudden acceptance of a man who had transgressed every rule of good taste, as a husband: "Du bist ein wüster Mann, aber reuig bin ich doch nie gewesen, daß ich dich wieder angesehen" (22). Rodner's evaluation of this issue is misleading: "The revelation of the truth behind Joggeli's deceitful disguise comes as a pleasant surprise for Anne Mareili, whose heart
had already told her that something of this nature was in store" (105). This is an obvious misrepresentation of the text since the reader is informed that, on Joggeli's departure, Anne Mareili feared that he might be a thief who would return to rob her.

A factor which is significant in Gotthelf's treatment of women, and one which is repeated throughout his work, is that the women he depicts are not allowed the same margin of error as the respective male characters. For instance, while Gotthelf vehemently opposes women's deceit in courtship and marriage, he does not criticize the male when he is guilty of the same act. He, for example, does not judge Joggeli harshly for his deceit in procuring a wife and for his generally dubious behaviour. Rösi and Marei are both castigated for their coquetry, but Gotthelf makes nothing of Joggeli's nocturnal escapades in pursuit of women: "Er war ein lustiger Bursche, in der weiten Umgegend kannte er alle Dirnen, und wenn irgendwo ein hübsches reiches Mädchen unterwiesen wurde, so war er meist der erste unter dessen Fenster" (8). Here an ambiguity, on the part of Gotthelf, must be noted. The author bitterly decried the practice of "Kiltgang" (see glossary), in particular, among the lower rural classes in works such as Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen (1838). He bemoaned the high rate of unwanted pregnancies which ensued from such nocturnal visitations and he believed that the "Kiltgang" promoted promiscuity and debauchery in the rural community which, in
turn, led to the erosion of wholesome country life. It shows, therefore, remarkable moral inconsistency that in this work Gotthelf couches the "Kiltgang" in terms which make it appear an innocuous practice.

Furthermore, while Gotthelf rails against women because of their tricks and ploys in capturing a partner, which significantly he has not proven in this work, he downplays Joggeli’s deceit when, in pursuit of an eligible wife, he masquerades as a tinker: "Er war der widerwärtigste Bengel, der je das Land durchstrichen hatte" (10). Rather, we are encouraged to laud and condone his schemes as a cunning suitor: "Und es sei doch gut ... daß so ein Kesselflicker überall hingucken könne" (16). Indeed, the final statement of the text serves only to reinforce Gotthelf’s conviction about the low worth and irresponsibility of women and to commend Joggeli’s behaviour:

Oh, wenn die Meitscheni wüßten, daß
den Augenblick ein solcher
Kesselflicker über die Küchentüre
hereinsehen könnte, wäre auch am Werktag
um manche besser Wetter, und sie täte
mannerlicher jahraus und -ein und wäre
gewaschen Vormittag und Nachmittag (23).

Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt (1845) continues the theme of female deceit in courtship, but Gotthelf also presents prototypes of women who represent the "old order", 
a wholesome way of life which he saw threatened, as well as an example for the younger generation of women to adopt. As in *Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht* peasant women, in general, are cast in a less than flattering light from the onset of this work. Gotthelf sets the tone by providing a female perspective on women. Grit, the matchmaker, in conversation with Anni, Christen’s mother, refers to her own sex in a disparaging fashion: "Nein, nein", sagte Grit, "wenn alle Weiber wären wie du es wäre noch dabeizusein; aber es sind deren, die alle Tage wüster werden" (Gotthelf 1:370).

We know from the former work that it was common practice, in the countryside, for the families of marriageable sons and daughters to pay handsome sums to matchmakers who, in a bid to get them a partner, would subsequently extol the virtues of the respective parties abroad in the community. But, of interest in this case is that Gotthelf repeats the depiction of the male as the vulnerable party in this procedure, which is indicated in Anni’s remark to Grit: "Sie locken ihn [Christen] auf alle Weise, sie wissen, daß ich es nicht tun will, darum haben sie dich gesandt, um gut Wetter zu machen. Wieviel haben sie dir versprochen, wenn du die Sache könnest, zwegreise?" (374).

Gotthelf implies, in this and the preceding work, that the majority of women are deceitful creatures. But he shows too that Christen, the male protagonist, is also guilty of
deception. Firstly, he beguiles his mother, by concealing the purpose of his trip, (he tells her he is going to buy livestock when in fact he intends to visit Stüdi) and, secondly, he embarks upon a course of subterfuge with a view to deceiving both Stüdi and her mother which is the focus of examination in this section. It is noteworthy, however, that although Gotthelf creates here a character of dubious moral integrity, he does not use his "narrator's voice" to mould the reader's reaction. Christen's behaviour is treated as if natural and unquestionable.

Moreover, critics do not appear to have perceived this rather polarized stance on the part of the author. Waidson, for instance, in reference to Christen and the subject of marriage, states: "He is, however, no fool, but is biding his time until he hears of an advantageous match" (189). I maintain that Christen's motivation in pursuing Stüdi is not so straightforward, but that he is propelled by her vow to remain single. It is clear that he is challenged when he hears Grit recount the fate of Stüdi's former suitors: "Und je schwerer Grit die Sache machte, desto leichter kam sie ihm vor, desto sicherer war er seiner Sache" (390). Furthermore, his ultimate goal in courting Stüdi is to appease his masculine vanity by making a conquest, as the following statement indicates: "Er hörte der Mutter und Grit sehr gerne zu, aber aus ihren Reden nahm er, was ihn gut dünkte, und handelte gerne ohne weibliche Einmischung; er liebte die Souveränität" (390).
While Gotthelf strongly condemns flirtatiousness in women, as we have observed in the previous work, he does not chide Christen for his demeanour towards women on his journey to Stüdi’s home: "Für jeden Begegnenden hatte er einen Gruß, und wars ein Mädchen, so entfloh ihm ein Witz" (391). In this connection, it is suggested that he has had relations with many women: "Denn weiben wollte er, das hatte er sich vorgenommen. Aber noch fischte er bloß so im allgemeinen, was Besonders hielt ihn nicht fest" (390). Rodner’s comment on Gotthelf’s ambiguous moral stance in this matter is apt, but she does not pursue this argument further: "But whereas a man is permitted to judge and reject repeatedly until he is well pleased, a girl who dallies too long in making her choice becomes the object of prejudicial gossip" (107). Neither does she analyze whether the author condones or criticizes this state of affairs.

More significantly, Christen manipulates in order to achieve his goal. He is aware that Stüdi’s parents are miserly hence he deliberately embarks on an appropriate course of behaviour which will impress them. Upon his arrival at their farm, he humbly requests a potato from the pot which causes Stüdi’s mother to believe that he is the right partner for her daughter. Instead of Gotthelf casting a sceptical eye upon Christen’s actions, however, it is Stüdi’s mother who is made to look ridiculous, a theme which is continued in works such as Der Besuch auf dem Lande.
Although she has just encountered Christen, she is willing to part with her daughter because of his apparent predilection for inexpensive food: "Stüdi, Stüdi, es ist eine da, der wird für dich sein, traue ich; er gefällt mir bsunderbar wohl, so ein huslicher und manierlicher ist noch keiner gekommen" (395). Moreover, Christen boldly lies to her when he claims: "Mir gefällt es daheim am besten, wenn man im Frieden sein kann und alles gut geht wie an einem Schnürchen" (Gotthelf 399), while we know of his infamous "nächtliche Herumfahren" (388). More significantly, the latter activity involves having intimate relations with the women he visits, the repercussions of which are delineated in the previous work.

I shall now turn to an investigation of the women characters in this work. Gotthelf again provides an example of the model woman in the person of Stüdi, the object of Christen’s quest. Like Anne Mareili, in Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht, she possesses many of the attributes which Gotthelf prizes in a woman:

Wie reich sie seien, wisse niemand und wer bei Stüdi zPlatzg komme, der sei ein glücklicher Mensch und nicht nur wegen Geld, sondern auch wegen der Person, von wegen Stüdi sei es Mönch, es hübschers sehe man nicht bald, und dazu gutmeinig gege die Tiere und gege de Lüte (392-393).
But, as in the case of Anne Mareili, her character is less than credible. Although Gotthelf extols Stüdi as a shrewd individual who has inspected many suitors, he depicts her as the easy dupe of Christen. She is, in effect, tricked even more quickly than Anne Mareili in the preceding work. If it is true as she insists to her maid: "Häb nit Kummer!" sagte Stüdi, "ich kenne das Kraut neue afe, bi nümme hättig (von heute)" (396), why then is she so completely taken in by Christen? Moreover, it is even hinted that the upright, choosy Stüdi has intimate relations with Christen during his first visit: "Kurz, Christen kaufte sich ein, sie kriegen ein bsundbar Vertrauen zu ihm; wir glauben nicht zu irren, wenn wir annehmen, er sei selbe Nacht bei Stüdi zKilt gewesen" (400), which again highlights Gotthelf’s ambiguous stance in this matter.

Unlike Anne Mareili, Stüdi only discovers after the wedding that Christen is not what he appears to be. She learns that, contrary to her husband’s former insistence that he prefers potatoes above other food, he had, in fact, feigned this preference in order to impress her. This may seem innocuous in itself, but when transferred to a broader plane could be seen to have wider implications for their relationship. Gotthelf does not discuss the repercussions of Christen’s deceit upon the marriage. However, he avoids any moral or critical stance by retreating into a clichéd,
fictional universe, where all is well: "Und also geschah es auch, es gab ein glücklich Ehepaar, das gesegnet lebte, und dessen Andenken im Segen blieb" (414).

Anni is the first in a line of strong mother figures whom Gotthelf appears to extol. She is a sterling example of the unceremonious peasant farmer who represents the "old order" which Gotthelf revered. And yet as in the case of Frau Sämelene in Der Besuch auf dem Lande, the author highlights certain negative qualities in Anni. She is a country innkeeper and, as such, she depends on her guests for a living. Contrary to expectation she is shown to be impudent to the pretentious public official who, in an effort to impress a town companion, suggests how she should cook the fish he has chosen: "Wißt Ihr was, Herr Amtsschreiber," sagte die Wirtin, "kommt und kocht selbst, Ihr versteht das sicher viel besser als ich" (378).

Moreover, when her guest reminds Anni of the honour in showing his friend, a stranger to the countryside, the outstanding quality of trout available to them, she responds: "Scheiße auf die Ehre!" (379), which is crude and uncharacteristic of Gotthelf’s heroines. Furthermore, when her guests take their leave, she denies them the customary hospitality of visiting their table before they depart. It appears that Gotthelf allows such behaviour because Anni insults a "townie" for whom the author had little patience. Had Rösi and Marei displayed such rudeness to Joggeli, the
country lad, they would undoubtedly have been the object of Gotthelf’s criticism.

While Anni is presented as a hard-headed, gruff peasant in her treatment of those she does not respect, like Anni in Michels Brautschau and Frau Berner in Hans Berner und seine Söhne, she is depicted by Gotthelf as an adoring, doting mother: "Mit mütterlichem Glanze in den Augen sah ihm [Christen] die Mutter nach" (389). Anni’s judgement of Christen is dictated by her maternal feelings. Since she views him as a child who is unable to function independently of her, she, consequently, underestimates his ability to make moral judgements and is unable to see him for the scoundrel he is:

Die gute Mutter hatte es wie viele Mütter, sie hielt ihren Sohn für ein halbes Kind und ganz dumm ohne ihren Rat in Beistand, sie hatte ihm noch das Essen eingegeben, als ob er einjährige sei, wenn er es im geringsten gewünscht hätte, daß er ein durchtriebener Schalk, sei und sehr selbständig, davon hatte sie nicht die mindeste Ahnung (390).

Furthermore, although she regards Christen as incompetent without her, she allows herself to be completely manipulated by him:

Nun wußte er, [Christen] daß die Mutter immer zuerst allem widersprach, was er
sagte, immer alles abschlug, was er
wünschte, jedoch am Ende immer
einwilligte ja sogar seine Wünsche in
Befehle umschuf, wenn Zeit genug
zwischen dem Lautwerden solcher Wünsche
und ihrer Ausführung lag (388).

And while Gotthelf appears to condone such motherly
devotion, he also seems critical of the woman who sacrifices
her own wisdom and judgement in order to satisfy her son's
every wish.

Up to this point in the courtship tales Gotthelf has
repeatedly alluded to female guile in procuring a marriage
partner, but he has not yet demonstrated the devices which
women utilize to achieve their goals. In Michels Brautschau
(1849), Gotthelf reveals the woman at work in capturing a
mate. Mädi, the female protagonist, is Gotthelf's most
negative and extreme example of a woman who will do
everything in her power to secure a man. From the very onset
of the tale, the author underscores her self-serving,
utilitarian motives in regard to Michel, when she remarks to
her companion: "Es ist Michel auf dem Knubel, ein ungeleckt
Kalb, aber es lohnte sich der Mühe, es zu lecken. Seine
Eltern sind im Kirchhof, er hat einen bezahlten Hof,
ausgeliehenes Geld" (Gotthelf 2:246).

Gotthelf portrays Mädi as a cunning, conniving woman by
unveiling the strategies she employs to snare the eminently
eligible Michel. Firstly, she orchestrates events in a bid to capture Michel. She enlists the help of a friend who persuades Michel to visit a soothsayer. Mädi has paid the latter to tell Michel that the woman he meets at Kuttlebädli, on a certain Sunday, will be his wife. At the actual meeting itself, Gotthelf reveals Mädi as the party who is in full control. She, in effect, beats the male at his own game. Michel, contrary to his usual barbarian treatment of women, makes every effort to behave in a civilized manner towards Mädi. She, however, upstages and thoroughly confuses him by imitating his behaviour: she compliments his dog and offers it food before Michel has an opportunity to do so. The comment made by the innkeeper, in reference to Mädi, is apt: "So hab ich noch keine tun sehen, wenn sie einen verhexen wollte, wie die" (415).

Furthermore, Gotthelf wins the reader’s sympathy for Michel by revealing Mädi as a mistress of manipulation. Although she is the guilty party in knowingly fooling Michel, she continues to keep him at a disadvantage. Michel believes that Mädi is unaware of his identity and reputation as a troublemaker and is concerned that she will reject him, if he discloses his person to her. Instead of easing his mind, she adopts a very righteous stance when Michel, who is desperate to continue their acquaintance, seeks to vindicate his bad reputation by highlighting his good behaviour with her. Mädi makes no effort to flatter or reassure him, but simply remarks: "Ein Tag sei nicht alle Tage" (418).
Furthermore, when she receives exactly what she wants in his proposal of marriage, she guards against him gaining that impression: "Du bist nicht der erste, den ich haben könnte, und wirst nicht der letzte sein" (426).

Gotthelf makes Mädi appear even more manipulative, by showing the degree to which Michel is truly smitten by her. When he is informed by Mädi’s father that she is dowryless, Michel, in stark contrast to the typical nineteenth century male outlined in chapters one and two, to whom the dowry was all important, is not discouraged at this prospect. Instead he is overjoyed by his good fortune in gaining such a wife as Mädi: "So kühn und stolz, wir möchten sagen, so ganz von Glück gesättigt, war Michel noch nie durch die Welt marschiert. Jetzt hätte er, was ihm einzig gefehlt auf der Welt und eine, wie es auf der Welt keine mehr gebe, so kams ihm vor" (431).

Mädi’s intentions in marrying Michel, on the other hand, are made to appear suspect and of a purely selfish nature, which is further indicated when she visits Michel’s farm. She is depicted as being consumed with the prospect of becoming the future mistress of Michel’s property:

Darauf führte Michel sie noch in den Spycher, das Herz oder die Schatzkammer eines Hofes, und ob dem Reichtum darin erstaunten sie. Es ward Mädi ganz eng im Hals; es konnte kaum schnaufen, wenn es dachte, es sei möglich, daß es den
While this desire is, in itself, not unusual, as E. Strübin explains in reference to this work: "Bäuerin zu werden ist aller recht denkenden Bauernmädchen Ziel" (20); Mädi’s appraisal of the "good" Anni: "Das ist eine Wunderliche; allweg sieht die eine Frau nicht gern, aber vielleicht ist da noch was zu machen" (434) does, however, suggest that she will employ any means to usurp Anni’s position. And that she is adept at this is clear, for before the "Gschau" (see glossary) is over she has won Anni’s heart: "Bei den Schweinställen gewann Mädi Annis Herz vollständig" (436).

To further compound the already negative image of Mädi, we learn that she never discloses the secret of their meeting to Michel, even after they are married: "Aber nie getraute sich seine Frau, ihm das Geheimnis vom Kuttlebädli zu enthüllen" (443), and so, in effect, their marriage is founded upon deceit, an act of which Christen, in the previous work, was also guilty. But perhaps because the outcome is positive, and the marriage is successful: "Michel wurde nie reuig und seine Frau noch viel weniger; es gab ein sehr glückliches Ehepaar" (442), Gotthelf does not condemn Mädi entirely. Indeed, the farm thrives from the union between Mädi and Michel: "Denn bei allem war Gottes Segen, und auf dem Knubel wird ein Bauer bleiben, solange Gottes Segen droben bleibt, solange fromme Eltern sorgen und
hausen, daß sie den Segen hinterlassen können, der den Kindern Häuser baut" (443). While, as previously stated, Gotthelf does not fully castigate Mädi, I do not agree with Künzi’s view that Gotthelf admires women such as Mädi:


Rather, it appears that Gotthelf favourably portrays the woman who readily devotes her life to the service of the male and to the upkeep of his farm. Anni, Michel’s servant and guardian since the decease of his mother, is one such example. She is depicted, by the author, as a loyal, faithful servant who, instead of taking advantage of her new position of power, tends to Michel so diligently that her own son is disadvantaged on occasion: "Michels Mutter war nämlich gestorben, als derselbe noch in den Windeln war, darauf vertrat Anni Mutterstelle an ihm und zwar so, daß ihr fast gleich alter Sohn Sami gegen Michel immer den kurzern ziehen mußte, Michel ihr immer der Liebere schien" (309). If
anything, Anni, like her namesake in *Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt*, is over-protective towards Michel: "Und pflegte seinen Micheli noch immer, als ob er ein Wickelkind wäre" (312). Her mothering of him is known in the district with the result that Michel is the object of fun to his peers: "Für den ists hohe Zeit, um diese Zeit müssen die Kinder ins Bett, längst wird ihm die Kindermutter sein Breili zweghaben" (302).

Apart from her role as "mother", Gotthelf extols Anni as an exemplary custodian of the farm. She is portrayed as the source which cements the very farm itself: "Anni, seine Kindermutter, war auf dem Knubel nicht die Majestät, aber das Faktotum, führte die Haushaltung treu, als ob es die eigene wäre, und mit Einsicht und Verstand dazu" (312). She oversees the operation and is recognized as the "Herrin": "Diese [die Mägde] mußten gehorchen so gut als englische Damen, wenn die Hausfrau sich erhebt und in das Teezimmer schreitet" (318). But, Anni is shown to be guileless in her intentions: "Und wenn Anni auch immer sagte: "Meine Schweine, mein Flachs, unsere Kühe usw., so hatte es doch reine Hände, ein sauber Gewissen, sah treuer zu Michels Sache als manche Mutter zum Vermögen ihres Sohnes" (313). And like Frau Sime Sämelene in *Der Besuch auf dem Lande*, a work which will be analyzed in the following section, she displays extreme pride in the farm, a pride which Gotthelf encouraged both in fiction and in his capacity as pastor in
his community: "Die Hühner legen vierzehn Tage früher als an allen andern Orten" (325).

Anni is depicted as a pious individual, a necessary prerequisite in Gotthelf's "good" women and one which she employs to guide the male. She scolds Michel when he engages in a squabble on Easter Sunday: "Und noch dazu an einem so wichtigen Tage, an der heiligen Oster, denk, wenn du da in der schweren Sünd ungesinnet hättest sterben müssen!" (314). Anni represents the old societal order which Gotthelf hailed and believed threatened: "Und weißt nicht, wie börs die Welt ist, und wie nirgends mehr Glauben ist und niemand mehr tut, wie es der Brauch ist" (328). Furthermore, the fact that the following statement: "Das Weibervolk sei immer gewesen, wie es gewesen von Eva her" (328) is voiced by a stalwart, upright woman makes it distinctly patriarchal in its view of women. This also applies when Anni, like Grit, in the preceding work, expresses a particularly negative view of the younger generation of women: "Du guter Micheli, du weißt nicht, was das Weibervolk ist heutzutage, und wie die heutigen Meitscheni sind!" jammerte Anni" (327). This idea is further continued when Anni comments on the deceitful nature of women posturing as eligible marriage partners: "Wenn man meint, man habe einen Engel an der Hand, hat man die wüsteste Kröte am Hals" (334). If we understand these comments to be reflective of the author's stance, and there is no indication to the contrary in the text, we can take
this as illustrative of one of the focal points in my thesis (see p.17).

As in the two former works, Gotthelf does not deal with the male protagonist so harshly as he does with the "negative" women. It appears of little consequence, for instance, that Michel himself is nothing short of a buffoon: "Michel war so eine rechte, wahrhaftige Lümmelmajestät, aber eine gutmütige" (301) and further: "Michel habe ein gutes Herz, aber ein Grober sei er" (383). Moreover, Gotthelf does not blame him for his uncouthness, and literary scholars, such as Waidson, echo this attitude: "His [Michel's] upbringing is partly responsible for his foolishness" (190). He has had, as we have observed, little discipline from Anni, his guardian, and his father, who is mentioned only once in the text, has not provided him with parental guidance. Indeed, he delights in his son's capacity for physical violence, which involves him in skirmishes with the village lads and ultimately costs him money: "Als er [Michels Vater] das erstemal zweihundert Taler Schmerzensgeld zahlen mußte, hatte er größere Freude daran, als wenn er zweitausend Taler geerbt hätte" (310).

Michel's motivation in seeking a wife is, as in the case of Joggeli, of a purely utilitarian nature as the literary scholar, Walter Muschg, remarks disapprovingly: "Auch er will nicht aus Liebe, nur des allgemeinen Brauchs wegen heiraten, weil auf einen Hof eben eine Frau gehört und weil ihm die Nachteile des Ledigseins zu verleiden beginnen"
Michel hopes to end the ridicule he receives as a result of Anni's over-indulgence, and to dispense with the compensation costs he incurs as a consequence of defending his honour. A wife is no more than a convenient escape from his dilemma: "Da dachte ich, eine Frau wäre gut, da könnte ich daheim bleiben und doch Freude haben" (330). Moreover, he has no respect for women. He behaves abominably towards those he meets on the numerous rendezvous he arranges, he conducts himself in a more civilized fashion towards his dog than to his female guests. And yet it is clear, through Gotthelf's wholly negative depiction of the women in this work, that his sympathies lie with Michel, who has to guard against such women.

Der Notar in der Falle (1848), Der Ball (1852) and Der Besuch auf dem Lande (1847) place their protagonists in a mixed social setting. The first work is set in an urban community, and the remaining two bring the rural and urban populations together in their pursuit of a marriage partner, with one significant difference in regard to the works hitherto examined, as Rodner states: "Three other tales ... present a total of five young people in search of a spouse, but their task is not to select the best of many candidates, rather to find anyone who is willing to take them" (118).

In Der Notar in der Falle (1848) Gotthelf, as in the preceding work, again focusses on the ploys which a woman
uses to procure a husband, but he also treats a social problem of his time: the dilemma of the unmarried woman without prospects. Kurt Guggisberg, the Gotthelf scholar, comments on this issue as follows: "Die Ehe war zur Zeit Gotthelfs für viele problematisch geworden" (169). Strübin elaborates further on the subject of marriage in the nineteenth century: "Die Ehe ist eine Selbstverständlichkeit. Wenn eine Bauerntochter vierundzwanzig ist und noch keinen Mann hat, wird bereits gefragt, ob etwa die Familie ungesund sei oder ob sie gerne zu Narren geraten" (13).

It is true that Gotthelf depicts Luise, the female protagonist in this work, in a negative light. Indeed, she surpasses the cunning Mädi in her strategies. In a ploy to attract and marry the notary Stößli, she not only boldly lies to him about her health, she also enlists his help in drawing up a fabulously extravagant and fictitious will. This leads Stößli to believe that Luise has a vast fortune at her disposal and, contrary to his initial impressions, she is, therefore, an extremely attractive marriage partner.

But in opposition to the preceding works, Gotthelf also highlights the factors which force a woman to adopt such extreme measures. In so doing the author reveals, and appears critical of, society’s hollow, morally questionable criteria: beauty and money as the basis of evaluation in the choice of wife, a matter which will now be discussed. Luise
is not physically striking. She does not fit society’s required image of beauty: "Ihr Gesicht war weder rot wie eine Klapperrose noch blaß wie geronnene Milch, vom Mond beleuchtet, aber sie war eben eigentlich gar nichts; sie war eben eines von den unglücklichen Wesen, deren Äußeres gar nichts Bemerkbares hat" (Gotthelf 2:102). Moreover, it is presumed that she does not stand to inherit a fortune from her aunt and so there is little incentive for a male, who might otherwise be discouraged by her lack of beauty, to court her attention: "Ihr Lebtag hat sie noch nie ein Rendezvous gehabt als etwa mit ihrer Tante" (105).

The community in which she lives is also influenced by these factors in its treatment of Luise as a person. Due to the belief that she is undesirable to a man because of her lack of beauty and money, she is not considered a threat to her female counterparts who are also competing for marriage partners: "Sie war keiner im Wege" (103). One by one she loses her acquaintances to marriage and is, thus, further ostracized from the community. This illustrates the importance of marriage to the female for social standing, as Strübin notes: "Scharf grenzt sich das Treiben der Ledigen, die von der Konfirmation bis zur Hochzeit eine Gruppe bilden, von dem Leben der Verheirateten ab, das beinahe ganz in Arbeit und Pflichterfüllung aufgeht" (12). This dependence upon the male for social identity, through marriage, is further underscored by Gotthelf in the description of the transformation, which Luise undergoes
when she is asked to be bridesmaid at her friend’s wedding: "Es war, als ob ihr ein Licht angezündet sei in der Seele" (108) and further: "Und wer die Mütze genommen hätte, sie zu beobachten, würde in ihren Augen ein süßes, seliges Träumen gelesen, gesehen haben, daß da hinten eine neue Welt aufgegangen sei" (108).

Gotthelf makes it clear that it is desperation to become part of the society based on marriage which makes Luise vulnerable to any male, a theme discussed, in detail, in chapter two. Because Luise has never been the recipient of male attention, due to the above factors, she is genuinely smitten by the polite notary Stößli whom, Gotthelf ironically suggests, is not all that he seems: "Der Notar war von Natur eine ganz gute Seele, das heisst eigentlich eine gute Haut. Ob er eine Seele hatte, das wissen wir nicht" (113).

Furthermore, while Luise can be accused of intentionally scheming and deceiving Herr Stößli, Gotthelf also discloses his ulterior motives, and in so doing draws further attention to the duplicitous nature of the society in which Luise and Stößli live. The latter is very ambitious, and is seeking a wife, with a hefty dowry, who will advance his career. Unlike the male characters in the former works, who appear to have no need or concern for the dowry, Stößli fits the negative male stereotype delineated in chapters one and two. Once Stößli believes that Luise
will, one day, be enormously wealthy, he also schemes to win her:

In contrast to Michel in the former work, who is fully taken with Mädi, Stöffli has no genuine interest in Luise. Greed propels him to pursue her: "Der Mensch [Herr Stöffli] hatte sehr Angst, es könnte ihm etwas dazwischenkommen, und der Frau Spendvögtin traute er am allerwenigsten, er wußte wohl warum, sollte sie doch Haupterin sein" (128).

It is interesting, in this connection, that Gotthelf takes every opportunity to cast the "townie" in a negative light. He does not do this, for instance, with the country lads, Joggeli and Christen, who are also guilty of ulterior motives in regard to women. Furthermore, in contrast to Mädi, Gotthelf makes Luise appear less culpable by portraying the notary as a blustering windbag. For example, when asked by Luise, if he would love her were she penniless, he responds: "O bitte, bitte, kein Wort mehr," sagte Herr Stöffli, "es beleidigt mich!" and further:
Wir Liberale haben es nicht wie die Aristokraten, wir fragen nach Geist, nicht nach Geld, darum sind wir auch die Herren der Zeit, denn der Geist ist es, der die Welt überwindet!" rief er pathetisch aus (126).

In this respect he bears a marked similarity to the character Brönner in *Des Schloßbauers Vefele* by Auerbach and like Vefele, Luise is also duped by Stößli’s words: "Sie ward glücklich, sie glaubte an seine reine, schöne Liebe; denn wenn dem nicht zu glauben war, wem sollte man noch glauben auf der Welt?" (129). In this connection, both Gotthelf and Auerbach appear to adopt a position which feminist critics could define as a feminist stance. The authors create a male character of dubious integrity who beguiles a woman of outstanding character who, due to society’s patriarchal values, "falls victim" to the male without gaining the consciousness of her own worth.

In spite of her ploys, Luise does exert a positive and humane influence upon the stoic notary: "Und glücklich war Herr Stößli selbst, bis in die Ellbogen schien das Glück zu fahren, die Steifheit auszutreiben, sie in lieblichen, zarten Schwingungen auf und nieder, hin und her zu schaukeln" (129). And contrary to public expectation Luise, through male and, by extension, societal acknowledgement of her person, not only blossoms forth, but proves a more than worthy companion for the pompous Herr Stößli:

It is noteworthy that Gotthelf implies here a new era, at least in the awareness of individuals like Luise, and that he allows a female character to confound the male by voicing this hope.

In addition, Gotthelf reveals the townfolk in a negative light for their response to the spinster. Initially, Stößli’s friends make derogatory remarks concerning Luise to him: "Was zum - kommst dich an, was siehst du an diesem vermilbeten Käslein? Bist verhext worden?" (130). Those around her are amazed at Luise’s "luck": "Die Leute zerbrachen sich die Köpfe, wie das zugegangen. Dafs Luise ihn nehme, sei begreiflich, aber daß der hochmutige Stößli da angebissen, gehe über das Bohnenlied" (130). Furthermore, Gotthelf demonstrates how the community’s perception of Luise adversely influences
even her own aunt, and blinds her to Luise’s inner qualities. Her response to Stößli’s proposal betrays her lowly opinion of her niece: "Seid Ihr ein Narr, oder meint Ihr, ich sei einer, oder seid Ihr gar ein Komödiant?" (127). Only those who share in the dilemma of being a single, undesirable woman, by societal standards, are glad and derive encouragement from Luise’s prospective betrothal: "He nun so dann, wenn die noch einen bekommen, so ist für mich die Hoffnung nicht verloren, bin doch noch eine andere als die" (130).

Despite the notary’s initial outrage when he learns that Luise is penniless, he and Luise eventually live happily together: "Aber es ging viel besser, als man hätte glauben sollen, ein vollständiger Friede und gegenseitige Zufriedenheit stellten sich allmählig ein" (135). Contrary to outward appearances and his primary fears – his peers would scorn him and his career would, consequently, suffer – marriage to Luise proves anything but detrimental for the notary: "Herr Stößli kam zu bedeutenden Geschäften, seine Freunde fanden Luise verflucht gebildet und schätzten ihn glücklich, daß er eine Frau habe, mit welcher er ein vernünftig Wort reden könne" (136). Rodner’s outrage at this outcome: "Luise’s capture of the notary, by contrast, involves such duplicity that the reader at times wonders how Gotthelf can permit a marriage based on this dishonesty to proceed to what seems to be a happy duration" (135), smacks of a moralistic, obviously "patriarchal" attitude, and
conveniently overlooks Christen’s similar behaviour in *Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt*. She also fails to recognize that, while Gotthelf is more sympathetic to the plight of the unmarried woman in this work, he does not condone Luise’s acts of deception.

*Der Ball* (1852) deals with a cross section of men and women who have one goal in common: to find a mate. Trineli, a country woman, is depicted by Gotthelf as deriving little joy from her life on the farm: "Während Trineli etwas an Weltschmerz litt; europamüde und lebenssatt war es zwar noch nicht, aber es klagte sehr, wie sie keine Freude hätten, nirgends hin kämen, ganz versauren müssten" (Gotthelf 4:87). In this connection, Gotthelf makes an unusual reference to domestic duties and rural life: "Was es doch auf der Welt für gut Sach hätte? Essen und Trinken genug, jawohl, aber keine Freuden; einen Tag wie den andern am Angstkarren der Haushaltung ziehen" (89). Like Luise in *Der Notar in der Falle*, Trineli is immediately rejuvenated, in spirit, when Jacot, a town dweller, who had previously lodged with them, expresses interest in meeting her at a ball. The much desired male attention rouses her out of her depression and instantly causes her to view her life and routine in a different light: "Ja, er [Jacot] hatte selbst das Rübenabhauen in die angenehmste Arbeit verwandelt" (100), which again highlights Gotthelf’s awareness and indeed preoccupation with the woman’s dependence upon the man, not
only for social recognition and identity, but for meaning and structure in her life.

Gotthelf also presents Trineli’s town counterpart in the person of Lisette, Jacot’s sister. Like Trineli she shares in the dilemma of being a spinster in a community which discriminates against single women. She too regards love as the ultimate quest in life which, as we know from chapter two, was not an uncommon desire on the part of the female: "Ach, wenn Liebe nicht wär, ich lebte nicht mehr, war der Text zum Grundton ihrer schönen Seele" (103). In common with Luise, in the preceding work, she recognizes that she is not physically beautiful and that she cannot rely on such a prized attribute to attract a man. In this context, Gotthelf appears critical of society’s obsession with outer beauty: "Die ist übernächtig; und man hat viele Exempel, daß es in kurzer Zeit aus den Schönsten die wütesten alten Hexen gegeben hat und böse nota bene" (103). Indeed, as in Der Notar in der Falle, the author defines his position on this subject by highlighting certain qualities in Lisette, which he considers to be more vital and worthy in a woman and wife:

Nun, mit dieser Lisette wäre einer gewiß nicht so schlecht gefahren, denn neben ihrem Herzen hatte sie noch Fleiß, war gutmütig, konnte Strümpfe flicken und eine Suppe kochen und schrie nicht alle Tage nach einem neuen Rock wie nach
einer Wasserquelle; auch konnte sie
ganze Abende daheim bleiben, ohne sich
aus langer Weile und zugleich als Mittel
dagegen am Boden herumzwalzen oder die
Haare sich aus dem Kopf zu raufen (104).

In keeping with what has emerged as a sustained belief in a patriarcal society, it is significant that the attributes Gotthelf extols are those which keep the woman firmly within the home and family; they do not develop independence of mind.

Gotthelf accentuates the woman’s desperation to marry in the amusing description of Lisette’s and Rosalie’s (her friend) preparation for the ball and an anticipated male conquest:

Lisette und Rosalie kamen in große
Aufregung, zwei Mächte balgeten sich in
ihnen, sie wollten pressieren, von den
ersten sein auf dem Schlachtfelde, aber
auch von den Schönsten, dazu aber müssten
sie anwenden, Zeit brauchen, sie hatten
es nicht von Gott empfangen, müssten die
Schönheit selbst machen nach dem
Wahlspruch: "Helf, was helfen mag!"
(120).

Their urgency in capturing a man and the idea of the male as victim and the woman as predator, which is suggested in the military style terminology used in the above description, is
continued by Gotthelf: "Wären sie geritten, man hätte sie für Walküren nehmen können, die am rosenroten Blut der Jünglinge ihre Freude hatten" (120-21). Gotthelf's ambiguous and unresolved position, in regard to women, is again in evidence here. On the one hand, he appears to be fully cognizant of the inescapable pressures which the patriarchal social order exerts upon the woman. He seems to empathize with the latter, whose only chance for a decent life rests on finding a husband, and, on the other hand, he prevents the reader's empathy by making the woman look ridiculous in her zealous pursuit of a man.

In the same vein, Gotthelf also focusses on the pressure which women exert on men in their bid to hook them. Once Rosalie, for instance, has managed to capture Jacot's attention, she does not hesitate to ask: "Wann wollen wir annoncieren?" (152). Furthermore, although it is their first romantic encounter she elicits mutual surrender: "Was mein ist, ist dein, und was dein ist, ist mein, nicht wahr Jacot, o my Jacot?" (154). At the same time, as in Der Notar in der Falle, Gotthelf again appears to castigate society by highlighting the transformation wrought in women through male attention. The effect of Jacot's interest upon Rosalie is shown to be enormous: "Unterdessen erhoben sich Jacot und Rosalie, die letztere mit strahlendem Gesichte, schwebte mehr als sie ging, war fast gar wie ein Engel, wenigstens wie einer von den mindern" (155). Indeed, it is suggested that she experiences fulfillment as a woman because she has
succeeded in winning a man: "Und Rosalie, nachdem sie mit
Jacot die nötigen Abreden getroffen, wanderte mit Stolz nach
Hause, sie hatte den großen Wurf getan, sie hatte eine Seele
erworben und zwar eine männliche, lebenslänglich" (160).

Gotthelf, as in the works previously discussed,
underscores the discrepancy which exists between appearance
and reality in the pursuit of a marriage partner. As in 
Wir Joggeli eine Frau sucht he accuses women, in particular, of
being dishonest: "Das ist ein fataler Sinn das, besonders
bei Mädchen, denn was hat man am Ende von ihrem
Liebenswürdig scheinen, wenn sie später als Frauen als das
Gegenteil sich erzeigen?" (109). Gotthelf emphasizes the
fickleness and superficiality of women, for instance, when
Trineli and Stini (her sister), who had been initially
overjoyed at the prospect of meeting Jacot, abruptly dismiss
him, when he arrives in a dilapidated old cart, which is the
cause of great mirth at the inn: "Seit sie das Gespött und
das Gelächter über ihn gehört, sie hätten in die Erde
kriechen mögen" (118). Furthermore, the author shows Jacot
being duped by the outward appearance of the elegant woman
he encounters at the dance: "Er meinte, es sei ein vornehm
Fräulein, so wie sie glänzte und glitzerte prächtiglich"
(127). In truth, she has two illegitimate children and is
seeking a man to father them. Moreover, she has a dubious
arrangement with Jacot’s friend (her pimp?), whom she has
enlisted to help attract Jacot by flattering his ego: "I der
Tausend, wie kommst du zu der, du Glückskind?" (129).
Gotthelf again suggests that finding a truly eligible partner is a difficult business and that the man is in a particularly vulnerable position, as Jacot learns to his cost: "Dem armen Jacot tat es im Herzen sehr weh, daß nicht bloß die rechten Mädchen nichts von ihm wollten, sondern auch der Freund ihn verriet" (132-3). While Gotthelf seems aware that woman is conditioned by her society to pursue a mate above all other goals, it is clear that his sympathies lie with the wounded Jacot.

In this connection as in Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht and Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt the text does not permit us to discover any criticism of the male's intentions towards the woman, on the part of the author. In the first instance, Jacot's initial motivation in attending the ball is suspect. While Trineli regards him as her possible saviour, Jacot views her merely as a solution to his financial problems: "Trineli wollte er heiraten, seinen Posten aufgeben, zur Frau aufs Land gehen und da in der Landluft vergnügte Tage leben. Wenn er einmal eine reiche Frau habe, dann hätte man ihn gerne wieder in der Stadt" (97). There is no question of affection or even attraction being a factor in his pursuit of her. Moreover, it is also clear that Jacot regards country women as socially inferior beings, and is, thus, relieved when he finds Trineli capable of more "existential" thoughts: "Denn er fand einen höheren Zug darin, ein Zeugnis, daß Trineli zu Höherem geboren als Kraut z'bschütten und Schweine zu mästen" (87). Neither does
the author seem to condemn him when he is quickly distracted by another woman after Trineli loses interest in him: "Wenn es mit Trineli fehle, so hätte er nicht bessern Ersatz finden können" (128). When this liaison also fails to materialize, Jacot promptly diverts his attention to the next available female: Rosalie. That he is also desperate to marry is indicated through his participation in the sudden, ardent declarations of love which are uttered between both parties in a language which suggests the battle of the sexes: "O Jacot," seufzte Rosalie schmachtend. "O mys Rosalie!" "My Jacot, o Jacot!" "O mys Herz, mys Lebe!", und zwischenher knatterte es wie das Bataillonsfeuer zwischen den Kanonendonner, es werden wahrscheinlich Küsse gewesen sein" (152).

Of note also is the male perspective on a successful female conquest. When Jacot informs his father about his new amour, the response is hardly flattering to Rosalie or women in general: "He nun, eine Laus im Kraut ist besser als gar kein Fleisch. Große Sprünge wirst nicht machen, daneben ungsinnet gibts auch was" (160). Despite this revelation and a final note of irony, in reference to the male, on Gotthelf's part, the ending proves happy, however, as Jacot himself declares:

Oh, wie doch in vierundzwanzig Stunden alles ändern kann! Gestern um diese Zeit war ich im Roßstall in Höllenangst, erst wollten mich die Rosse totschlagen, dann
der Stallknecht, und jetzt, o Rosalie!
und hingerissen sank er ihr an den Hals.
Ob er noch dort hängt, wissen wir nicht,
aber wir glaubens (161).

In Der Besuch auf dem Lande (1847) Gotthelf again
treats the subject of courtship, and the townsman’s
perception of the peasant woman, a theme which was present,
but not developed in the former work. The difference in the
town and countryman’s view of women constitutes one of the
major points of interest in regard to the above subject.
Jakobli, the town dweller, boasts: “Wir halten das Weib
nicht für eine Sklavin, aber auch nicht für eine Zierpuppe;
das Weib soll das Leben zieren und es selbst genießen”
(Gotthelf 2:36). Sime, his country counterpart, on the other
hand, is of the opinion: “Mit dem drNarr Machen beim
Weibervolk kommt man nicht weiter, als daß man für einen
Narr gehalten wird, und wie man sie gewöhnt, so hat man sie”
(56).

While Jakobli’s appraisal of women could be considered
commendable, it is implied in his attitude to his
perspective visit: “Da hoffte er Gelegenheit zu finden,
Bildung und Manieren zu zeigen” (24-25) that he considers
country folk as crude and ignorant. Hence he believes that
Sime’s sisters will quickly succumb to his city charm:
“Jakobli, Esaus Sohn, war dagegen ganz glücklich, er hoffte
fast zweifelsohne auf reiche Eroberung” (10). As in the case
of Jacot in \textit{Der Ball} Gotthelf further undermines the "townie", Jakobli, by revealing that his primary concern, in regard to Züsi and Anne Bäbeli, is their wealth: "Sime Sämelis Sämelis hatte zwei Schwestern, welche hübsch sein sollten, jedenfalls reich wurden, und diese hatte der Jakobli, der Leutenant, im Auge und ästimierte einstweilen den Bruder um der Schwestern willen sehr" (10).

Gotthelf's intention in this work seems to be to contradict the false impression which the townsman harbours of those who live in the country. In order to achieve this end he presents Frau Sime Sämelene: a combination and extension of the mother figures in \textit{Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt} and \textit{Michels Brautschau}. Like many of Gotthelf's older peasant women, she is extremely proud of her position as a well-to-do farmer: "Er [ihr Mann] und seine Anne lebten in holder Eintracht, er war stolz auf sie, sie auf ihn; wie sie beide lebe niemand zwischen Himmel und Erde, glaubten sie, nebenbei verachteten sie jedermann, der nicht ebensoviel Kühe und Pferde hatte als sie" (19). This pride is also evinced in a number of country women in this work. When Jakobli, at a later juncture, politely addresses the innkeeper's daughter as "Jungfer", she retorts snidely: "Bin keine Jungfer," sagte Lisabethli zornig, "ein Meitschi (Tochter vom Hause) bin ich" (59), which would confirm Strübin's comment in this connection: "Herren" lassen sie sich nicht titulieren, "Bauer" gilt als Ehrenname (19).
Frau Sämelene, like Anni in *Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt*, is, in some respects, quite a negative figure. But by making her chastise the "townie", Jakobli, Gotthelf implies that he condones her behaviour. She is, in essence, a rather cantankerous woman. She does not conceal her sarcasm, for example, when, in reference to Jakobli’s father, who has moved from the land to the city, she states: "Auch Euern Vater habe ich gekannt, ehe er zu einem vornehmen Herrn geraten ist" (16). This superior attitude towards those who make a living away from the land, and one which Gotthelf seems to espouse, was endemic in the rural community as Strübin notes: "Im Grunde ist nur Bauerarbeit wirklich Arbeit. Müller, Bäcker, Wirte, Krämer werden üblicherweise als Betrüger beargwöhnt" (19-20). Furthermore, Frau Sämelene drills Jakobli unmercifully about life in the city only to poke malicious fun at him when his reports do not meet her standards. She fails to acknowledge, or recognize that an apartment in town cannot accommodate livestock and she persists in appraising all things by the way of life on the farm. It is noteworthy, however, that although Gotthelf appears to admire women such as Frau Sämelene, he also displays a patronizing attitude towards the female sex by making them look ridiculous on occasion (both Annis in *Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt* and Michel Brautschau), or as extremely naive in this instance. In addition, Frau Sämelene is rude and sardonic when Jakobli politely invites her daughters to the city for a visit:
"Allem Anschein nach hätten sie Kosten genug, "und mit neun Kreuzern für Milch kämet ihr nicht aus, wenn die Mädchen dabei sind" (50).

Contrary to legendary country hospitality, Frau Sämelene displays only displeasure and contempt for their city guest to her son. Her statement: "Jetzt kannst dich hineinmachen zu deinem Maulaffen, welchen du mitgebracht. Ich hätte geglaubt, du seiest klüger und brächtest nicht solch Zeug mit, welches nicht taugt, als daß man die Zeit darob versäumt und zum Dank brav ausgeführt und verhöhnt wird" (17) conveys both arrogance in her position, but also an inherent sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the urban dweller. Jakobli’s motives in visiting the farm have, of course, been misguided. This is further underscored by his fickleness in regard to Züsi and Anne Bäbeli, a fickleness also displayed by his counterpart Jacot in Der Ball:

> Es hatte sich freilich Züsi zugeneigt, weil es ihm zuerst holden schien, aber da beide Schwestern akkurat gleich reich waren, so neigte sein Herz sich ohne Anstrengung bei der schönen Gelegenheit auf die andere Seite und kriegte eine heftige Neigung für Anne Bäbeli (38).

But, the reader, nevertheless, experiences some empathy for him as the butt of what Muschg describes, in somewhat extreme terms, as "der primitive Hochmut gegenüber allem Nichtbäuerlichen, der schmutzige Geiz und Egoismus, die
ahnungslose Roheit und Protzerei, die menschliche Armseligkeit" (220).

Gotthelf depicts Frau Sämelene as a hard-headed peasant in all of her dealings. In addition to her work on the farm, she shares a common goal with other country women, a goal which was discussed, in depth, in chapter two: "Ehestiften gehört überhaupt zu den Passionen der Weiber: Wenn eine Frau etwas von einer Heirat schmückt, ist ihr nicht mehr zu helfen, und es ist gerade, "wie wenn der Tüfel in sie gefahren wäre" (Strübin 14). Frau Sämelene seeks to marry off her daughters, but it is significant that wealth is her major prerequisite in a successful match: "Zu heiraten, war einstweilen ihr Lebenszweck, dessen weder Eltern noch Kinder Hehl hatten, aber gut, das heißt reich heiraten, das wollte man" (19). In this respect the power which the parent wields, in the choice of partner for her offspring, is indicated by Gotthelf in the following statement: "Liebhaber hatten sich wohl schon gezeigt, aber der Mutter war keiner recht gewesen, solch Lumpenzeug kriegten sie in hundert Jahren noch, sagte sie" (19). She has no patience with Anne Bäbeli’s call for love in marriage:

Dann lachte die Mutter, Frau Sime Sämelene, und sagte: "Narr, was du bist, der und kein anderer, jawolle! Ist doch nicht ein Möff wie der andere, haben alle die Nase mitten im Gesicht, aber nicht alle sind reich, und wer reich
This response is not only symptomatic of the peasant’s attitude towards money, a characteristic traditionally associated with him/her, but it also reveals a blatant disregard for the male sex, in general, which is a new, and lone, element in the works discussed to this point. The majority of women previously investigated have not only actively sought out, but fawned over male attention as a means of self-definiment.

Gotthelf makes the mother such a dominant figure in this work that her daughters Züsi and Anne Bäbeli, whom we expect from the onset to be the centre of attention, are pushed to the background. The author underscores the role of environment and heredity by presenting Züsi as a younger version of her mother. When Jakobli botches his attempts at catching the calf upon his arrival, Züsi displays contempt for him, although she has not yet been introduced to Jakobi: "Mit großen Augen sah Jakob ihm nach; zornig sagte das Mädchen: "Hast du es scheu gemacht, so fang es wieder!" (14). She also concurs with her mother’s views on marriage and the importance of wealth in a suitable match: "Es [Züsi] sagte ganz offen, daß es reich heiraten wolle" (20). And like her mother, she reveals an unattractive side to her character by courting Jakobli’s attention, whom she regards as a buffoon, simply to compete with her sister: "Aber die
angenehme Unterhaltung und die süßen Augen des armen Burschen gönnte es der Schwester deswegen doch nicht" (40).

Anne Bàbeli, on the other hand, is depicted by Gotthelf as a much gentler soul. She is alone in displaying compassion for the hapless Jakobli at his "toilette" when her brother humiliates him in public: "Anne Bàbi, bring ein Kacheli mit Wasser und einen Lauser (ein enger Kamm, zum Läusefang eingerichtet)!" (29). She does not subscribe to her sister's and mother's utilitarian views on marriage: "Wenn es [Anne Bàbeli] von Heiraten sprach, so sagte es immer, auf das Geld allein sehe es doch nicht, es müsse ihm einer auch gefallen, daß es ihm sei: Der und kein anderer!" (20). But, she is, as we have observed, castigated for this opinion as the literary critic, Ernst Gallati, remarks: "Ein feiner geartetes Kind hat es oft schwer; Sime Sàmelis sensiblere Tochter Anne Bàbi wird rundweg für einfältig gehalten" (28). In spite of her misgivings, however, she is shown by Gotthelf as ultimately subjecting herself to the expectations of her household: "Was Hausbrauch sei, sei Hausbrauch, und besser als die anderen zu haben, begehre es nicht" (39). In accordance with his belief in a patriarchal society, Gotthelf, as in Der Ball where he praises qualities in the woman which do not develop independence of mind, also condones Bàbeli's compliance to domestic and rural convention.
To complete the section on the courtship tales I have included Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl (1852), which has been described as "an idyll of hard work and thrift, of contentment with the humble lot" (Waidson 199). This story, unlike those previously discussed, has as its milieu the rural poor. Moreover, it concentrates on a courtship and marriage which is motivated through purely practical considerations vis-à-vis the male and female. This type of arrangement was common practice among the majority of peasants in the nineteenth century, especially amongst those from the lower end of the rural hierarchy, as discussed in chapter two.

In stark contrast to the ploys and wiles devised by both sexes in the former works, the quest for a marriage partner is shown, by Gotthelf, to be a straightforward arrangement, in this instance. Hansli, the central character, comes upon a weeping peasant woman, who remains nameless throughout the work, on the way to Bern with his cartload of brooms. She is distressed because she is denied permission to sell the shoes her father has made:

Jetzt habe es in der Stadt einen neuen
Haschierer gegeben, gar e grusam böse;
der habe es schon mehrere Dienstage,
wenn es zum Tore hereingekommen,
schrecklich geplagt und ihm gedroht,
wenn es noch einmal komme, so nehme er
ihm die Schuhe weg, und es müsse ins
Gefängnis; es sei verboten, Schuhe in
die Stadt zu tragen und damit zu
hausieren (Gotthelf 3:106).

From the onset, the relationship, between both parties,
is based on purely practical grounds. Hansli offers to help
the woman by stashing the shoes in his cart, where they will
be undetected, and she, in turn, comes to his aid by helping
to pull his heavy cart: "Soll dir stoßen oder helfen
ziehen?" fragte das Mädchens, als ob es sich von selbst
verstehe, daß es das Seine beitrage" (107). And thus both
parties are facilitated in their tasks: the woman is able to
sell her shoes and Hansli's cart is easier to pull: "Hansli
wußte nicht wie; die lange Allee schien ihm um die Hälfte
kürzer geworden zu sein" (107).

In this his most convincing and realistic portrait of
peasant courtship, Gotthelf reveals the factors which are of
importance in the choice of mate among the rural poor.
In contrast to works such as Der Notar in der Falle and Der
Ball physical beauty does not appear to be a necessary
property, in courtship, for this social stratum: "Wir können
leider nicht sagen, das Mädchen hätte einen unauslöslichen
Eindruck auf ihn gemacht, es war auch nicht darnach. Es war
ein vierschrötig Ding mit breitem Gesicht" (107). But
Gotthelf, in his description of the woman, emphasizes her
industry and good heart which he also underscored in Lisette
in Der Ball: "Ihre größten Schönheiten waren ein gutes,
treues Herz und unermüdlicher Fleiß, diese Züge stechen aber
gewöhnlich nicht besonders hervor, und viele halten nicht einmal viel darauf" (107). This idea of ability and competence as the most important quality in the poorer peasant woman is also reiterated during the "Gschau", when Hansli’s mother condones his choice of wife by stating in the presence of both Hansli and the peasant woman: "Eine Schöne hast nicht," sagte sie vor dem Meitschi zu Hansli. Daneben macht das nichts; von der Hübschi hat man nicht gelebt. Wenns gsunder Art ist und werkbar, so wird die Sache sich schon machen" (112). The only factors which appear of consequence to Hansli’s mother is the woman’s ability in the home and some degree of religious knowledge: "Die Mutter examinierte es gut über Pflanzen und Kochen, wollte wissen, was es bete, und ob es lesen kônne im Testament und auch in der Bibel" (112).

Moreover, the sector of the community, to which Hansli belongs, is depicted by Gotthelf as having little respect for women as individuals. When Hansli informs his mother of his intention to take a wife, her response as a member of the female sex herself, while humorous, is highly offensive to the modern reader and is, in effect, a consummation of the views espoused by the mother figures in Michels Brautschau and Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt: "Aber Hansli, warum nicht lieber an eine Geiß oder an einen Esel! Was dir nicht zSinn kommt! Was willst mit einer Frau machen?" (109). Hansli’s reasoning reveals that he has also been conditioned to regard a wife as a potential beast of burden:
"He, Mutter, öppe was ein anderer,"
sagte Hansli, dann dachte ich, könnte
sie mir helfen den Karren ziehen, es
ginge mehr als noch einmal so leicht,
when mir eine hülfe, und in der
Zwischenzeit könnte sie pflanzen und
helfen Besen machen, wo man weder eine
Geiß noch einen Esel dazu anweisen kann
(109).

This notion is again repeated in Hansli’s description of the
peasant woman to his mother: "Und wie das ein Meitschi sei,
gerade wie für ihn gemacht, exakt wie eine Uhr, nicht
hoffärtig, nicht vertunlich, und ziehen tue es, er wette,
ein mittelmäßig Kuhli möchte es nicht" (110).

The mutual decision to marry is portrayed by Gotthelf
as an unproblematic arrangement in this instance: "Dieses
Bündnis in betreff gegenseitiger Hülfeleistung ging ohne
weitläufige diplomatische Verhandlung zu" (108). Hansli
proposes to the country woman on their second encounter. His
offer of marriage is direct, devoid of romance and is
expressed in terms which suggest a work contract: "Aber
jetzt deucht es mich, ich möchte eine anstellen; wenn du
wolltest, du wärst mir gerade recht. Ich wollte dich
heiraten, wenn es dir anständig ist" (111). In the preceding
works a proposal, or even the possibility of a proposal of
marriage, was instrumental in effecting change in many of
the female characters. It is noteworthy, in this instance,
that the woman’s response and acceptance of Hansli’s offer is equally pragmatic and unemotional: "He, warum nicht, wenn ich dir nicht z’wüest und z’arm bin," antwortete das Meitschi" (111). But, Hansli’s condition that, through marriage, the woman must accept his mother as her own reveals, to some degree, the dependence of the woman upon the man and the necessity of accepting the terms he dictates regardless of the social strata:

"He", sagte das Meitschi, "was sollte ich anders, bins gewohnt, die Mutter für die Mutter zu halten, mich zu unterziehen und es anzunehmen, wie es kommt, böser und minder böse, sauer und minder sauer. Habe nie geglaubt, ein böses Wort mache ein Loch, da hätte ich ja kein Stück Haut einen Kreuzer groß am ganzen Leib" (111).

The marriage appears to be successful, although Gotthelf only reveals the male’s appraisal of their union: "Aber Hansli war nicht so dumm und ward nicht reuig, er hatte grade ein Fraueli, wie es für ihn paßte, ein demütiges, arbeitsames, genügsames Fraueli, dem es bei Hansli war, als hätte es den Himmel erheiratet" (113). They have children, but, through Gotthelf’s choice of language, it is indicated that they regard their offspring solely in terms of their usefulness to the family as a working unit: "Das Fraueli besaß, sich selbst ganz unbewußt, die
The balance in the relationship is upset only once and temporarily, when Hansli, in an unlikely turn of events, inherits an enormous fortune. His wife, whose name we have never learned, for as Rodner correctly states: "The girl's importance as a composite of qualities rather than as a personality is emphasised by the fact that she is never given a name: before marriage, she is "das Meitschi" and after she is "die Frau" (95), is unable to deal with a situation which changes their station and role vis-à-vis one another. It is significant that she regards beauty as an essential element in their new situation, which would suggest that lack of beauty is acceptable only among the rural poor: "Jetzt wirst mich verachten, da du so reich bist, und denken, hättest nur eine andere! Ich tät, was mir möglich war, aber jetzt bin ich nichts mehr, ein alter Kratten" (120). Hansli's response: "Sobald du mir noch einmal davon anfängst mit Heulen und ohne Heulen, so prügle ich dich mit einem neuen Seil, daß man dich am Bodensee kann schreien hören" (121) does little to reassure his insecure wife. And while his reference to physical punishment may not be serious, the view of woman as an automaton incapable, and not desirous of emotion, which is held by the rural poor, is underscored by Gotthelf.
Waidson, in reference to two of the stories I will examine in this section; Das Erdbeeri Mareili (1851) and Der Sonntag des Großvaters (1852), states:

In ... his shorter tales Gotthelf achieves the expression of an atmosphere of rare, inward beauty that transfigures the by now familiar Emmental characteristics into symbols of scarcely impaired saintliness. For all his delight in the exuberance of peasant worldliness he knows that this is of little worth unless there is throughout a man’s life a consciousness of divine presence. Those who can live in this world and yet not be of it, who can remain gentle and kindly in spite of the example of their hard-hearted, greedy neighbours, who live a life of self-effacing service to others while scarcely realizing that there is anything unusual in such humility, know the true glory. Das Erdbeeri Mareili, and Der Sonntag des Großvaters ... embody this Christian ideal of simplicity and perfection (199-200).
In addition to the two aforementioned works, I have included *Hans Joggeli der Erbvetter* (1848) in this group. It is in these tales that Gotthelf provides his most idealized portrait of women. Of the three stories, the heroine of *Das Erdbeeri Mareili* is presented by Gotthelf as the ultimate example of feminine Godliness. From the onset of this work, the priest, who is recognized by others as an instrument of God, extols Mareili to one of his parishioners in terms which fast suggest a state of sinlessness: "Wer vom Erdbeeri Mareili was Böses sagt, versündigt sich, Mareili war besser als Ihr und ich" (Gotthelf 3:11).

In his depiction of Erdbeeri Mareili, from childhood to adulthood, Gotthelf focusses, almost entirely, on Mareili’s inner life. From a very young age she is shown to inhabit a different realm than members of her peer group: "Mareili lebte ein seltsam Leben, bald Himmel, bald auf Erden, beide waren eins und eng verflochten ineinander" (20). Her life with her mother is described as hallowed: "So lebten sie fort Jahr um Jahr in glücklicher Gleichförmigkeit, von Gott gesegnet" (28). Waidson comments in this connection: "Her shyness and strongly imaginative inner life are unusual. She belongs to the tradition of mysterious figures which originates in Goethe’s Mignon" (202).

Furthermore, Mareili is portrayed by Gotthelf as having no interest in matters terrestrial. When she visits the town with her mother, at the age of eight, she is overwhelmed and
distressed by the urban lifestyle and inhabitants. It is significant, in this regard, that Gotthelf again takes every opportunity to malign the city, in this instance, as a place which does not nurture spiritual life. In stark contrast to the majority of women discussed in the previous works, Mareili is particularly frightened by male attention: "Und wenn ein Herr, besonders ein junger, ihm was sagen wollte, so lief es davon wie ein Reh" (28).

Gotthelf describes Mareili’s life as an act of devotion and service to others. In the first instance, she supports her family financially through her uncanny knack of finding strawberries which, she, in turn, sells to the community. She also provides moral support for her widowed mother who has to care for several children. After her mother dies she is employed by a noblewoman. Not only does she prove a perfect servant in terms of domestic duties, she is, more significantly, a source of comfort to her lonely mistress, who ultimately wins inner peace through Mareili’s presence. Together they achieve a level of spirituality which transcends the earthly realm, and is celibate by nature: "Wenn sie zusammensaßen in vielen einsamen Abendstunden so waren sie ähnlich zwei Nonnen, welche die Welt hinter sich gelassen und über der Welt zu Schwestern geworden waren" (47).

Gotthelf builds Mareili into a paragon of virtue. Upon the death of her mistress she continues her life of self-denial and sacrifice. She returns to the poor "Schachen"
land where she grew up, although she has inherited a handsome fortune from her deceased employer. She spends her last days befriending and caring for the neglected children of the rural slums. Moreover, she does so out of purely unselfish motives: "Mareili war nicht selbstsüchtig, meinte nicht, wenn es Kinder erziehe, erziehe es sie für sich, sondern es erzog sie für sie" and further "Sobald es an der Zeit war, sandte es sie hinaus in die Welt, wohl ausgerüstet mit Geschicklichkeit und Gottseligkeit" (49).

With the exception of the children she tends and the local pastor, who greatly admires her, Mareili dies unknown to all. At the end of the work the pastor elevates her to the status of angel: "Nun ist es wieder bei seinem Engel und ist selbst ein Engel" (50). According to Waidson, Gotthelf's objective in this work is to convey the message that "the saint may live and die in humble quietness, leaving no memorial" (202-203), an idea which the pastor confirms:

Sein Leben war kein äußeres, welches in die Augen fiel, es prangte nicht mit Hoffart, verrichtete keine Heldentaten, weder mit dem Spieß, noch mit der Zunge, sein Leben war ein inneres, sein Wesen war gering vor der Welt und auf solche Wesen versteht die Welt sich nicht (9).

But, while this may be true, it must be said that Mareili's unfaltering perfection and preeminently ethereal existence may alienate the reader in search of a realistic reflection
of human nature. Gotthelf has presented such an extreme case of "goodness", without any psychological insights into her person, that Erdbeeri Mareili is bound to lose credibility as a character.

In Der Sonntag des Großvaters (1852) Gotthelf also presents an idealized portrait of the woman, but Kätheli, the female protagonist, is more earthbound than Erdbeeri Mareili in the previous work. The idea of woman as blessed of God is again inferred by Gotthelf from the onset of the work, when Uli states in praise of Kätheli: "Gläis [sein Sohn], du hast eine Frau die hilft dir. Gläis, du hast eine gesegnete Frau, sie hat Gaben, kostbarere als Gold und Edelstein" (Gotthelf 3:91). But as in Der Ball, Kätheli’s gifts are seen to be in direct relation to her competence in the home: "Du glaubst nit, was das wert ist i re Hushaltig. Wenn du das Gegenteil erfahre müßtest ein Jahr oder zwei, so würtest erst, was das wert ist" (58). It would appear, therefore, that Gotthelf considers Kätheli an exemplary woman, because she is a capable homemaker: "Ein demütig Mädchen aber hätte ein Beispiel nehmen können, wie eine rechte Hausfrau waltet" (76) and "Denn daß man unabgewaschen Geschirr in der Küche stehen lassen könne, fiel ihm nicht ein, hätte es ihm aber jemand zugemutet, so hätte es ihn angesehen, als mute derselbe ihm Ungebührliches zu" (76).
This work is, in some respects, the antithesis of the stories hitherto examined. In the latter the institution of marriage was of paramount importance to the woman: she just flourished at the prospect. In this instance, Gotthelf treats the consequences of an unsuccessful marriage. We are presented here with the fate of the woman who is married off against her wishes, a theme which was discussed in chapters one and two. The idea of parental guilt, in this arrangement, is also suggested by Gotthelf: "Du bist mit deinem Mann nicht glücklich, und daß du ihn hast, daran trage ich Schuld, das plagt mich" (68). Uli, Kätheli’s father-in-law, chose Kätheli for his son at the expense and sacrifice of her own personal happiness. This is another instance where Gotthelf’s equivocal posture emerges: he underscores the unequal position and treatment of the woman in her society:

Ich wußte, wie Gläis ist, unschlüssig, alles schwer nehmend; da dachte ich, mit einer Frau sei ihm am besten nachzuhelfen. Du warst mir lieb von Jugend auf; schon als du noch in die Schule gingest, sah ich dir manchmal nach und dachte, wenn das zGutem ausfällt, so ist das wie gemacht für Gläis, das hat den heitern Mut, die raschen Gedanken und das anschlagige Wesen, was ihm fehlt (69).
Gotthelf also highlights the dominant role of the male which demands that the woman submit to his wishes. Uli, for instance, was fully aware of Kätheli's unwillingness to marry Gläis, but it did not prevent him from his purpose: "Aber ich hörte, wie du seufztest, als dSach richtig wurde, und sah nachher oft rote Augen. Das kam mir schwer auf das Herz, erst jetzt sah ich recht, was einer auf sich nimmt, wenn er fast gewaltsam den Lebenslauf zweier Menschen ordnet" (69).

As a result of the marriage, Kätheli has led an emotionally isolated life with a husband who represses his feelings: "Der gute Gläis war von den seltsamen Menschen einer, die es gut meinen, aber es nicht erzeigen können, zu denen sich daher niemand gezogen fühlt" (72). Of all the women Gotthelf portrays he is at his most convincing and masterful in his initial depiction of Kätheli and her plight in a marriage of convenience. But she loses her credibility as a character, however, in her response to her conditions which were brought about by a man. In spite of an unhappy marriage which is a direct consequence of her father-in-law's scheming, Kätheli, rather than feeling embittered towards the agent of her discontent, reveres him: "Sie aber betrachtete ihn fast wie den lieben Gott und liebte ihn, wie selten ein leiblicher Vater geliebt wurde" (57). Moreover, instead of railing against Uli as the man responsible for her miserable existence, she seeks to appease his guilty conscience by reassuring him that she and Gläis will be
happy in the future: "Das freute mich, Vater, und glaubt es mir, unsere glücklichen Tage kommen nach und nach und werden bleiben, während es umgekehrt ist bei denen, welche die Narrheit zusammenbringt, und nur heiraten, ums gut zu haben und lustig zu leben" (70). Through her words she, in effect, absolves Uli from guilt before his death which is signified in his exclamation: "Oh, wenn man einander mehr das Wort gönnte, wie manche Bürde wäre weniger auf der Welt oder leichter!" (70).

Kätheli's attitude towards her distant husband is also exemplary. Gotthelf again casts her in the role of peacemaker to the male when she soothes Gläis, who is unable to accept his father's imminent death. While he has ostracized her emotionally throughout their marriage, she strives to destroy the walls which separate them. She first attempts to draw her husband close to her physically: "Und als er nicht antwortete, setzte sich Kätheli neben ihn, schlang den Arm um seinen Leib, frug zärtlich wie vielleicht nie: "Gläis, was hest, säg mers, säg mers doch fry recht!" (77). She, then, endeavours to appeal to him mentally and spiritually. Furthermore, she assures him of her love, although in this regard Gotthelf exalts the man, at the expense of the woman, by indicating that it is the grandfather's spirit which propels her:

Der Geist des Großvaters regierte in seinem Herzen. "O Gläis, wenn es nur das ist! sagte es. "Weißt du denn nicht, daß

In this moment Kätheli’s and Gläis’s love appears to be born and an abrupt happy ending is achieved by Gotthelf, which again stretches the reader’s imagination: "Stillschweigend reichte es Gläis noch einmal die Hand, der zog es an sich, und in junger Liebe schlugen freudig beider Herzen" (79) and further: "Der Großvater streckte seine Hand aus nach Kätheli und Gläis, sie legten ihre Hände in die seine. "Es ist doch schön auf der Welt!" sagte er - "wo Liebe ist," setzte er nach einer Pause bei" (93-94).

In **Hans Joggeli der Erbvetter** (1848) Gotthelf, in contrast to the former works in this section, presents two categories of women: (1) those whom the reader is meant to reject; and (2) the model woman whose example we are encouraged to adopt. The women we meet at the onset of the work are depicted by Gotthelf in a negative light. In opposition to the exemplary housewife in **Der Sonntag des Großvaters** they are lazy creatures who desire large rewards for their idleness: "Am schönsten sei es [Mareili] doch da, wo man bei vielem Gelde essen und trinken könne, was einem gut dünke, arbeiten könne so wenig, schlafen soviel als man wolle, und tun, was einen ankomme" (Gotthelf 2:156).

Moreover, all of the "relatives" who visit Hans Joggeli,
with the intent of wheedling his fortune from him, are, with the exception of Hansli, women. Gotthelf reveals this group as self-serving and treacherous in their intentions. They feign concern for Hans Joggeli’s welfare and endeavour to ingratiate themselves to him by bearing gifts, but, in reality, they long for his death as one of the cousins intimates: "Ein schönes Alter, ich möchte es Euch gönnen. Mir wäre es nur zu lang, kriegte Langeweile" (150).

The author presents these women as capable of every ploy in order to get close to Hans Joggeli and his money. He casts them as extremely competitive and critical creatures. For instance, Mareile, in reference to one of Hans Joggeli’s visitors, states: "Das ist die falscheste Frau, welche auf zwei Beinen läuft!" (148). On a more vicious level, one of Joggeli’s "cousins" in a bid to usurp Bäbeli, Joggeli’s lifelong, faithful servant, and replace her with her own daughter, lies to Bäbeli by telling her that Joggeli is displeased with her service, and is anxious to rid himself of her. Furthermore, Gotthelf underscores their unbounded arrogance; they believe they can outsmart Hans Joggeli which is indicated by the second visitor: "Überhaupt hatte sie zuviel SelbstbewuBtsein, um zu fürchten, so ein alt, dumm Männchen könnte sie überlisten" (155).

Bäbeli, on the other hand, is presented by Gotthelf as the complete antithesis of the above women. Significantly, the author compares her to a "Reh", the noun used in reference to the "saintly" Erdbeeri Mareili. As in Der
Sonntag des Großvaters the woman, in this instance, Bàbeli, is depicted as dependent upon male attention and approval regardless of the terms which the man dictates. Hans Joggeli is a hard taskmaster to Bàbeli, but she is appreciative of his rare gifts of money, not because of the monetary gain, but because of the implicit display of affection towards her: "Bàbeli hatte fast einen Satz getan vor Freude, nicht bloß des freien, schönen Nachmittags, sondern vielmehr der Teilnahme und des so seltenen Liebeszeichens des Vetters wegen" (168).

Bàbeli is portrayed as the only female who genuinely cares for Hans Joggeli. Perhaps more importantly she is concerned with how he views her, which Gotthelf uses to indicate the dependence of the female upon the male and to condone, it appears, her adulation of him. This would account for her alarm at the fictitious report of Hans Joggeli’s dissatisfaction with her as a servant. She is a trusting individual and is appalled when she discovers she has been deceived: "Aber nein, aber nein, ists möglich, können so schlecht die Menschen sein, so lügen, so falsch sein!" (180). She is, however, primarily angry with herself, because in giving credence to the reports of the "wicked" cousin she has, in effect, mistrusted her master: "Aber es ging mit zerknirschtem Herzen, und es konnte wirklich nicht begreifen, wie es so leichtlich sich habe betören lassen können" (180). She blames herself, because she is guileless and consequently does not understand evil deeds in others.
Bäbeli possesses all of the virtues which the author appeared to admire in a woman. She is depicted by him as a God-fearing woman, who lives each day in the knowledge of her Maker: "Dann fuhr das Madchen züchtig auf, faltete die Hände, dankte Gott für die gute Nacht, bat um Segen für den Tag, machte rasch und wohlgemut sich ans Tagewerk" (200). Like many of the women previously discussed, Bäbeli is cast by Gotthelf as a protector of men. When Hans Joggeli falls ill, multitudes of greedy relatives descend upon him and set up home in his house in anticipation of his death. Bäbeli is distraught by this behaviour, but is practical and seeks to protect Hans Joggeli from them and their schemes: "Auch sagte es ihm nichts von all dem Gerede; es wollte den Ärger und die Not des armen Vetters nicht vermehren" (187). While the others scrutinize his valuables, she devotes herself to him without impinging upon his need for peace: "Bäbeli dagegen war seine getreue Abwart oder Pflegerin, soweit er es bedurfte" (192). She tends to him in a selfless fashion which ensures his serenity of mind:

So eins war Bäbeli nicht, es tat das möglichste und plagte doch den Vetter nicht mit der Liebe; es zeigte sie bloß, daß der Vetter in stillem Wohlgefallen sie inneward, wußte, er könne auf eine Liebe zählen, die da nicht das Ihre sucht, nicht ungeduldig wird, sich nicht aufbläht, sondern alles erträgt und
While Bäbeli is presented by Gotthelf as a sensitive, impressionable creature, he also reveals her as a strong woman when the need arises. In the midst of her sorrow when Hans Joggeli expires: "Bäbeli war untröstlich" (194), she is the stabilizing, moral conscience of the household. In spite of the objectionable behaviour of the relatives, she will not tolerate a fellow servant speaking ill of them: "Bäbeli meinte, er solle doch schweigen. Hätten sie recht getan bei Lebzeiten des Patens, so wollten sie sich nicht verschanden nach seinem Tode; es sei wohl gut, wenn man ein gut Gewissen habe, aber deswegen sei es einem nicht erlaubt, die andern zu richten" (209). Furthermore, she remains in control of the operation of the farm although she is grief-stricken: "Doch ob seinem Schmerz vergäß Bäbeli seine Pflicht nicht. Noch dachten die andern nicht daran, als es zum Kaffee rief, welchem Ruf willig entsprochen wurde" (211).

Contrary to rural tradition and public expectation, Bäbeli is named beneficiary of Hans Joggeli’s farm. In accordance with the submissive female characters, explored in the two previous works, Bäbeli immediately feels unworthy
of this honour and believes that Benz, the Großknecht, should inherit the farm. The conclusion is rather incredible, for she and Benz, who have not been romantically linked throughout the work, are betrothed in marriage on the same day. This transpires because the executor of the will informs them that this was Hans Joggeli’s desire.

Furthermore, although Bäbeli clearly has reservations concerning this arrangement: "Da war große Freude unter allen, welche diese unerwartete Nachricht hörten, bloß Bäbeli wehrte und wollte weinen oder böse werden, es wußte nicht recht was" (220), she submits herself to Hans Joggeli’s request:

So geschah es auch, und es war gut so, denn im Nidleboden geht es gut bis auf den heutigen Tag; Hoffart, Hochmut, Müßiggang sind dort noch nicht eingekehrt, sondern Liebe und Treue, Fleiß und Frömmigkeit sind die vier Sterne, welche in unverdüstertem Glanze über dem Nidleboden stehen, nie untergehen (220).

In spite of this abrupt ending, Gotthelf succeeds in creating a character who, while still very much a paragon of virtue, is more fully developed than the saintly Erdbeeri Mareili and the exemplary Kâtheli: she is, in this respect, a more credible and convincing character than the aforementioned women.
"Demons and Rejects"

In this section, my intention is to investigate the works in which Gotthelf turns from the largely lighter side of rural life, which has been examined to this point, to a much darker depiction of the lives of the peasantry, with particular reference to the female experience, in *Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen* (1838), *Die Wege Gottes und der Menschen Gedanken* (1848) and *Die schwarze Spinne* (1842).

In 1836, in Bern, a young doctor by the name of Samuel Lehmann published an acclaimed article on the subject of alcohol abuse. He was of the opinion, R. Buhne, the literary critic, reports "man sollte durch Kalendergeschichten die Leute über die Gefahren des Alkohols aufklären" (59). In 1837 Heinrich Zschokke wrote *Die Branntweinpest* which treated the problem of alcoholism in the rural community, but Karl Fehr, the Gotthelf scholar, suggests that the drama kindled Gotthelf’s displeasure and social awareness "weil es ein wucherndes Volkslaster verharmloste" (1986, 145).

As a result, Gotthelf decided to write his own work: *Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen*. He states his objective, in the foreword to this piece, as follows:

Der Verfasser hatte über das Branntweintrinken ein Lustspiel gelesen,
welches mit einer Heirat und einem
frohen Mahle schließt. Er versuchte nun
über denselben Gegenstand ein
Trauerspiel, und zwar erfand er dasselbe
nicht, er ordnete nur zum Druck die
Erzählung wirklicher Begebenheiten, die
er einem Freunde verdankt.

Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen is
regarded by the literary historian, Eda Sagarra, as "a
realistic study of life" (4). Indeed, Gotthelf’s initial
description of the inn, which the traveller enters, as
"düster und voll unerträglicher Fliegen" (Gotthelf 4:260) is
in stark contrast to the idyllic rural settings which the
author favours. The customers in the tavern are also
depicted in a manner which is unusual for Gotthelf: "Mehr
wunderte mich das saure, stöckische Wesen der Menschen"
(261). Attention is particularly focussed on the
unattractive picture of the five alcoholic women "die taten...
ungeniert Bescheid in Branntwein" (261). Upon closer
inspection the women come off even more unfavourably. Marei
is described as having "ein unverschämtes Gesicht" (262),
while Elisabeth is portrayed even more grotesquely in
surrealistic-like overtones which exude debased sexuality:
"Die gemeinste Sinnlichkeit guckte sogar aus den
Nasenlöchern, und die Augen sahen so klebrig an jeden
Burschen auf, als wenn sie wie Harz sich ihm anschmieren
wollten" (262).
In an effort to demonstrate the evils of alcoholism, particularly among women where he believed it had the direst consequences, Gotthelf describes, in detail, the individual decline of five women into alcoholism. The account of their demise is very extreme, repetitious and reads like a modern case study of five abused women, which has led scholars such as Rodner to maintain: "Upon occasion, the didactic message outweighs in emphasis the actual fictional value of the story" (242) and "the reader might feel that the examples of Marei and Elisabeth would be sufficient moral deterrent for one story, but Gotthelf goes on to explore further terrible ramifications of the effect of drink upon young women" (276-277). I agree with this view, but I have chosen instead to investigate the case of Studi and Lisi.

While some of the women, Marei among them, are products of a poverty-stricken, depraved environment, Studi hails from a decent family and is described as "ein gar liebliches Mädchen von Jugend auf" (279). Her parents have her best welfare at heart and because of this they send her to Bern as an apprentice seamstress. It is here that she is exposed to a destructive lifestyle. The woman who teaches Studi the trade, and with whom Studi lodges, is described by Gotthelf as "ein unsauberes Weibsstück" (281). She is negligent towards her own children: "Sie war eine gute Arbeiterin, aber sie arbeitete, um besser zu leben, um ihre Kinder bekümmerte sie sich nicht, sie arbeitete, um Mannsvolk damit anzuziehen, ob ihre Kinder Schuhe hatten oder blaugefrorene
Füße, focht sie nicht an" (282). She epitomizes all that Gotthelf opposed in women: she does not fit the stereotype of the exemplary housewife, who remains at home and devotes herself to the family. She is promiscuous and entertains numerous men: "Sie war allenthalben wo es lustig ging, in Bädern, auf Märkten, hatte allenthalben gute Bekanntschaft und brachte von dort immer Kilter zum Übernachten heim, Männer und ledige Bursche" (282). Above all, she is prone to drink: "Diese Witwe war nun nicht nur eine Liebhaberin vom Mannenvolk, sondern auch vom Trinken" (282).

Stüdi, the innocent, is subjected to her way of life: "Sie hatte aber nur ein Bett, und bei ihr mußte Stüdeli, das liebliche Mädchen, schlafen und Zeugin sein von all ihrem Treiben, mußte alle Nächte tiefer und tiefer sich einweihen lassen in das Leben einer geilen Witwe" (282). Furthermore, under her bad influence, Stüdi is soon introduced to alcohol: "Es [Stüdi] nahm dasselbe anfangs gar ungerne, aber das gute Mädchen wollte die Meisterfrau nicht böse machen" (282). By the time Stüdi has completed her apprenticeship the damage is irreversible and she becomes further, and independently, entrenched in a rather depraved lifestyle: "Aber nimmt den Branntwein immer lieber, und jedes Mannsbild ist ihm recht" (283).

Gotthelf’s didactic intent, in this work, is clear in his extreme description of the outcome of Stüdi’s alcoholism. As a result of her addiction, Stüdi becomes physically incapacitated and mentally unbalanced: "Es war
allerdings, als ob eine fremde Macht es packen wolle" (301) and further: "Dazu stieß es Töne aus so gellend, daß sie durch Mark und Bein gingen, und aus den Tönen erriet man bald, daß es ein Kind, das man ihm entreißen wolle, zu verteidigen wähne, bald sich selbst gegen Notzucht" (301). When she becomes uncontrollable, she is bound up and treated in a deplorable manner, by her family, which conjures up visions of medieval torture:

Man mußte Stüdi anbinden, einsperren und tat es auch. Man tat es, wie man es auf dem Lande zu tun pflegt, auf eine schonungslose, unmenschliche Weise. Man verdingete es. Es wurde in eine Kammer eingeschlossen splitternackt, die Fenster wurden herausgenommen, die Löcher mit Laden zugenagelt, weder ein Sonnenblick noch ein Mondesstrahl fiel mehr in die dunkle Höhle (302).

That this barbaric treatment was not uncommon in Switzerland is suggested by Gotthelf: "Solche vernagelte Höhlen findet man noch mehrere im Kanton Bern" (302).

Stüdi is further maltreated and abused:

Die Leute, bei welchen Stüdi war, waren nicht die schlimmsten Leute, aber nicht die verständigsten. Sie vergaßen es mit dem Essen selten, aber wenn Stüdi rasend wurde, so prügelte es der Mann
gottvergessen ab, weil man ihm gesagt
hatte, das sei gut dafür, also aus
lauter Barmherzigkeit (303).

She is kept like a caged animal and is the source of
contempt even to the children: "Dann kamen aber auch Kinder
tzu ihm, die seines Spiels spotteten, das kudrige Kind
verhöhnten und es ihm nehmen wollten" (303). When she
becomes unmanageable, she is given liquor to sedate her and
on one such occasion she escapes her prison: "Es tanzte
hinaus mit seinem Kinde in die kalte Nacht und niemand sah
Stüdi lebendig wieder" (304). The final image we receive of
her verges on naturalistic description: "Da fanden sie einen
Leichnam, grausam schon entstellt; aber es war Stüdeli, sein
kudrig Kind am Herzen" (304).

Like Stüdi, Lisi also began life without poverty and
disadvantage: "Lisi war ein Prachtmeitschi von Jugend auf
und eines Vorgesetzten Tochter" (288). She epitomizes
wholesome country life as Gotthelf perceives it: "Es war ein
wahres Modell eines natürlich fröhlichen, gesunden
Landmädchen" (263) and further: "Es leuchtete wie die
Gesundheit selbst und war immer drei Zoll größer als die
größten Kinder seines Alters" (288).

As in the case of Stüdi, Gotthelf describes, in extreme
terms, the circumstances which account for Lisi's descent
into alcohol. Her mother dies when Lisi is a young teen and
her father expects her to take over her mother's role:
Der törichte Vater dachte nicht, welch Unterschied sei zwischen einer vierzig- bis fünfzigjährigen Frau, die durch vierzigjährige Reibungen der Welt in ihr Geleise gedrückt worden, und einem vierzehnjährigen Mädchen, das die Welt erst zu berühren beginnt, in ein Geleise zu bringen sucht (289).

While he spends his time at the inn, he leaves her to manage the farm on her own. Consequently, she is easy prey to unscrupulous neighbours "die machen sich herbei mit Rühmen und Flattieren" (289). The servants also take advantage of her inexperience: "Neben diesen Leuten taten auch das mögliche die Diensten und Tauner, um das gute Liseli zu mißbrauchen" (290). She has no one to guide or direct her: "Wer warnte es, wer gab ihm ein Gegengewicht gegen alles, was auf sein Fleisch eindrang!" (290). She is, therefore, very vulnerable to anyone who is stronger: the male sex in her society: "Nun schlich sich dieser verfluchte Tischgänger an das Madchen wie ein giftiger Wurm in einen schönen Apfel" (290-291). He entices her to drink and have intimate relations with him to the point where she becomes dependent on both: "Die verbotenen Genüsse wurden ihm auch Bedürfnis" (292). As a result of her addiction and lack of parental care she becomes both negligent and self-indulgent: "So kochte Liseli apartigs für sich und den Tischgänger, leerte dem Vater im Keller seine Guttern" (292). When her father is
informed of this behaviour, by a servant, he believes the latter’s report, without conducting his own investigation, or pondering his own role in the matter, and savagely beats Lisi: "Nun gabs eine wüste Geschichte. Lisi wurde geprügelt, der Tischgänger fortgejagt, und somit glaubte der Vater den Schaden radikal kuriert zu haben, während er nun mit der Magd sich mehr abgab als recht war" (293).

While her father is largely to blame for her situation, the repercussions of this episode are far-reaching for Lisi, however, and, in effect, rob her of the chance of a decent husband: "Lisis Ruf war auf immer zerstört, und jeder rechte Bursche wandte sich von ihm ab, während jeder Schlechtes im Sinn tragende sich herzuließ" (293). When Lisi marries she does so for the wrong reasons: "Liseli gefiel er auch, denn er sparte den Wein nicht" (330) and deliberately deceives her intended husband:

Liseli nahm sich in acht seine Schwachheit zu früh merken zu lassen.
Wenn sie miteinander ausgingen, das Hochzeit anzugeben oder Verwandte zu besuchen usw., und einkehrten, so trank es mäßig vor seines Bräutigams Augen, begnügte sich mit einem Schoppen oder einer Halbe (331).

Moreover, like Marei she steals from her husband in order to satisfy her habit, which, in turn, leads to a cycle of mutual physical abuse:
Als das Männchen aber statt mit der Hand, mit welcher es nichts ausrichtete, mit der Faust dreinschlug, so merkte Liseli, daß es ernst sei, flammte nun auch auf, hob ihn mit beiden Händen hoch auf, schlug ihn aufs Bett und walkte ihn dort durch, bis er mit den zärtlichsten Namen um Vergebung flehte (333).

When she becomes pregnant it first appears that she may be able to devote herself to her children instead of succumbing to alcohol: "Sie hatte eine gar unaussprechliche Freude an ihnen. Es war fast, als ob es sich ändern und wirklich eine treue Mutter werden wollte" (334) and: "Die Lust zu solchen Dingen war ihm über der Liebe zu seinen Kindern rein vergangen" (334). But since she herself has been deprived of parental guidance, she does not understand her responsibility towards them: "Aber es narrte mit ihnen, wie man es mit jungen Katzen treibt, sie waren sein Spielzeug, seine Kurzweil; sie anzuziehen, sie zu füttern, war seine Herzenslust" (334). She soon tires of this temporary distraction, resumes drinking and during one of her drunken stupors the house catches fire. Liseli escapes the inferno, but in a bid to rescue her children she re-enters the house and perishes with them:

Da brannte die Mutterliebe den Heldenmut an der freudig geht in den Tod, und
Liseli stürzte sich in die Flammen zu
seinem Kindern; aber retten konnte es
sie nicht, konnte nur mit ihnen sterben.
Gott nahm es aus seinem Jammer und
ersparte ihm den Jammer um seine
verbrannten Kinder, die eine nüchterne
Mutter gerettet hätte (338).

The women presented in this work are among the most
unattractive, degenerate and pitiful of Gotthelf’s
creations. It is clear, however, that Gotthelf does not hold
them responsible for their decline, indeed he prefaces his
account of the women’s alcoholism by firmly laying the blame
at society’s door: "Andere Leute haben das aus ihnen
gemacht, was sie jetzt sind" (270). This is again reiterated
in reference to Stüdi and Lisi in particular: "Ja, und Stüdi
und Lisi hätten auch schöne Blumen werden können in Gottes
Garten, wenn die Welt nicht gewesen wäre" (278). Instead,
Gotthelf condemns the parents who surrender their offspring
without a thought for their well-being: "Tausenden wiirde man
keine hundert Franken ohne Unterpfand und Bürgschaft
anvertrauen, aber ein Kind übergibt man ihnen mit Leib und
Seele ohne Bedenken" (285) and further: "Man sinnet nicht,
wie schwer das Beispiel einwirkt, und wie zart eine
Kinderseele für fremde Eindrücke ist" (285).

The farmer’s wife in Die Wege Gottes und der Menschen
Gedanken (1848) is, undoubtedly, one of Gotthelf’s most
negative female characters. In works such as Wie fünf
Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen, Gotthelf attributes external circumstances and conditions (the role of the environment) as the cause for the moral atrophy of the characters in question. In this case the woman, herself, appears to be responsible for her depravity:

War aber der Mann wüst, so war die Frau noch viel wüster, allgemein hieß sie die Pfeffergret. Die armen Leute fürchteten sie mehr als die Krähen eine Vogelscheuche, aber wenn sie dazu kommen konnten, in dunklen Nächten ihren Kohl auszureißen oder ihren Hanf abzumähen, so sparten sie es nicht (Gotthelf 2:67).

As previously stated in chapter two, the quest for prosperity was, in most cases, the cornerstone of arranged marriages in the countryside. It is, therefore, not unusual that both husband and wife, in this work, should delight in monetary gain. Their moral impediment is that they do so at the expense of the poor and needy, who are starving in the corn famine which has befallen the land:

Schnittfritz und Pfeffergret waren glücklich, wenn sie an ihre vollen Kästen und Kisten dachten, und während arme Leute hungerten und beteten in schlaflosen Nächten, taten sie sich gütlich im Hinterstübchen und rechneten, wie sie ihren Mammon am meisten mehren,
den allerbesten Nutzen aus der Not der Armen ziehen möchten (68).

Indeed, Gotthelf shows them reveling in their neighbours' misery: "Je mehr der Mangel stieg, desto greulicher ward die Freude in ihren Herzen, und desto sorgfältiger bewachten sie die kleinsten Bissen Speise, fast wie der bekannte Höllenhund Zerberus das Höllementor" (73). It is noteworthy, that the author, in his description of them, utilizes language which connects them to hellish agents.

While it is true that Bauer Schnitzfritz is equally impoverished as a human being, Gotthelf focusses entirely upon his wife's lack of morality. Firstly, he exposes her lack of feeling for her husband. This is illustrated when, on encountering her troubled spouse on his return from market, her first query reveals that her true concern is not for his welfare, but for money: "Bist ums Geld gekommen?" schrie sie, "bist angefallen worden?" (72).

Gotthelf, as we have observed, throughout the previous works, regarded the role and example of the woman in the home to be of paramount importance, not only, to the future of the family, but, by extension, to society at large. Pfeffergret, in contrast, falls very short of Gotthelf's image of the ideal homemaker and bulwark of propriety. Instead of inculcating peace in the house, a quality greatly prized by Gotthelf, she acts as an agent of disquiet: "Sie witterte in der Küche herum, daß man hätte glauben sollen, Schüsseln und Pfannen hätten sich den Krieg erklärt und
Moreover, she is a poor example to her servants who traditionally depend upon the mistress of the farm to establish desirable standards of behaviour: "Sie brüllte das Gesinde an" (76). And, when, through their own avarice and folly, events transpire against her and her husband, her own children are not spared her wrath:

Den Verlust wollten sie einbringen,

wurden nun noch wüster gegen Menschen

und Tiere als sie vorher schon waren, so

sauer im Gemüte, daß sie weder den

Kindern noch sich untereinander ein

freundlich Wort mehr gaben. Ihr Haus

glich einem Pfeffersalat, wo man pusten,
niesen, husten muss, wenn man nur

daneben vorbeigeht (82).

Furthermore, she is not an impartial mother. Both she and her husband dote upon their dissolute son: "Am Sohne hingen beide vorzüglich, obgleich er der unangenehmste Bursche war, welchen man antreffen konnte im Kanton Bern" (83). The reason they do so reveals their selective entrenchment in, and dependence upon, the prevailing patriarchal system which the majority of the peasants, Gotthelf presents, share in common: "Aber er sollte die Eltern einst vertreten auf Erden, sollte der Herr ihres Gutes werden, und darum liebten sie ihn so blind" (83). Consequently, they have no regard for their daughters which
betrays not only their, but society’s, low estimation of women: "Zwei Mädchen hatten sie noch, aber sie waren gewohnt, sie für nichts anzusehen, und die Gewohnheit änderten sie nicht" (85). Gallati comments on this issue as follows: "Mit der praktisch-materialistischen Sehensweise des Bauers hängt es zusammen, daß ihm ein männliches Kind immerhin erwünschter ist als ein Mädchen. Diese sind minderwertig und werden in allen Ständen falsch erzogen" (26).

Even in Gotthelf’s most negative characters attention is occasionally drawn to some distant redeeming feature which survives despite the protagonist’s transgressions. In this case Gotthelf seems prepared to dismiss the woman entirely, indeed he aligns her, without reservation, with the devil:

Pfeffergret hätte man zu solcher Zeit um kein Geld in den Wald gebracht. Sie war abergläubisch; wenn es dunkel wurde, fürchtete sie den Teufel schrecklich und sah ihn in allen Ecken. Daß es immer Nacht war in ihrer Seele, merkte sie nicht, und den Teufel darin fürchtete sie nicht, im Gegenteil, er war ihr lieb von ganzem Herzen (79).

Furthermore, while Gotthelf displays a fondness for assigning very positive, even ideal attributes to the elderly as in Der Sonntag des Großvaters; in this work, the
author stresses only the "Zorn, Verdrüß, Gram, Angst" (85) which possess the souls of Schnitzfritz and Pfeffergret as they age and approach death.

Die schwarze Spinne

Since its inception, and to the present day, Die schwarze Spinne (1842) has captured the attention of many literary critics and scholars worldwide. According to Waidson "it is formally Gotthelf's most accomplished work" (180), while Fehr describes this story as an "unübertroffen gebliebene Meisterleistung" (1967, 56). Die schwarze Spinne is Gotthelf's best known tale and has consequently been the focus of many studies. But upon investigation of numerous critical texts, Walter Silz's Realism and Reality: Studies in the German Novelle of Poetic Realism among them, I discovered, however, that there has been more interest in the form and aesthetics of this work, than in an exploration of the character of Christine, the female protagonist: my focus of interest. The most attention Waidson devotes to her, for instance, is to refer to her as "a bold, devil-may-care woman" (182).

Christine has been described by literary scholars as "diabolically magnificent" (Rodner 415). In stark contrast to works such as Das Erdbeeri Mareili the idea that women are more innately susceptible and responsive to evil than
men is implied by Gotthelf in the peasants' first encounter with the devil, in the form of a green Huntsman. When the latter perceives that the men become fainthearted because of his proposal, which entails the surrender of an unbaptised newborn in return for his help, he advises them: "Suchet bei euren Weibern Rat" (51).

The initial interchange between the Huntsman and Christine is described, by Gotthelf, in terms which suggest the erotic and sensuous: "Da kam plötzlich über die Achsel des Weibes eine lange schwarze Hand, und eine gellende Stimme rief: "Ja, die hat recht!" (55). Furthermore, in order to win Christine over, the Huntsman is described as approaching her in a different manner than the other villagers, which indicates that she is more vulnerable to his amorous gestures and idle flattery: "Aber gegen Christine machte er ein zärtlich Gesicht und faßte mit höflicher Gebärde ihre Hand" (55) and: "So ein schön Weibchen habe er lange nicht gesehen, sagte er" (55). The notion that Christine is both receptive to evil, coupled with promiscuity, is again reiterated by Gotthelf when she informs the gathering of male peasants (it is noteworthy that she waits until there are no women present) about the Huntsman's kiss "den sie nicht mehr geachtet als andere" (74).

To further underscore her shortcomings, Gotthelf contrasts Christine with the young mother, the grandmother, and the Godmother, all of whom he imbues with traditional
and wholesome peasant virtues. Christine, on the other hand, does not share any of these attributes which, as we have observed throughout this chapter, Gotthelf values highly in a woman:

Sie war nicht von den Weibern, die froh sind, daheim zu sein, in der Stille ihre Geschäfte zu beschicken, und die sich um nichts kümmern als um Haus und Kind. Christine wollte wissen, was ging, und wo sie ihren Rat nicht dazu geben konnte, da ginge es schlecht, so meinte sie (54).

The reasons why Christine appears to be castigated by the author are of particular interest in this context. In the first instance, she is unfavourably judged by him, because she is "ein grausam handlich Weib" (52) and is not a native to the village: "Eine Lindauerin soll es gewesen sein" (52). More significantly, Gotthelf depicts Christine in a negative light because she is seen to question male authority. In this connection, the author suggests that Christine has repeatedly manipulated men to achieve her goals: "Der Gedanke kam ihr immer mehr: mit dem ließe sich etwas machen, und wenn man recht mit ihm zu reden wüßte, so täte er einem wohl einen Gefallen, oder am Ende könnte man ihn übertölpeln wie die andern Männer auch" (56) and further: "Aber die Zeit drängte, kein Mann war da als Sündenbock, und der Glaube verließ sie nicht, da sie
There is no question, but that the text suggests Christine’s culpability for her role in the pact with the devil, but despite Gotthelf’s attempts to further malign Christine as a woman, because she does not kowtow to male domination, or adhere to the traditional form of femininity, her feistiness and strength of character is nonetheless, portrayed as impressive:

Indeed, there can be no doubt of Christine’s fearlessness, since she has previously undertaken a warring expedition with the Hornbach peasant. She is, as Rodner has stated, “doubly strong: she has the arrogance, aggression and bold decisiveness of the male, allied with the majority [sic] and sexual power of the woman” (400), a combination of qualities which Gotthelf appears to condemn as undesirable and subversive in a woman.
It is, therefore, significant that the village folk, who had formerly hesitated to accept Christine as a member of their community, should promptly turn to her for help: "Da begann der Mann zu jammern und alle andern mit ihm, denn es ward ihnen allen, als ob Christine allein zu helfen wüsste" (60). Their hypocrisy in this matter is highlighted by Gotthelf in their altered reception of Christine: "Eine Teilnahme, deren Christine sonst nicht gewohnt war, empfing sie, und jeder wollte ihr erzählen, was man gedacht und gesagt, und wie man Kummer um sie gehabt" (60). But when the second child is saved from the Huntsman the villagers, who have become confident that they will continue to evade the Huntsman's demand, are no longer prepared to bear responsibility for their complicity with Christine in the pact. When she is physically afflicted by the devil, for instance, they shun her. The following statement: "Was Christine peinigte, tat ihnen nicht weh, was sie litt, hatte nach ihrer Meinung sie verschuldet" (70) indicates that the villagers set themselves up as her judge. Moreover, when the devil begins to wreak revenge by plaguing the land with deadly spiders, one of the peasants suggests that they appease the Huntsman by killing Christine: "Nur einer stund auf und redete kurz und deutlich: das Beste schiene ihm, Christine totzuschlagen" (74). Christine is directly responsible for the calamities which have befallen the land, but Gotthelf indicates that the village community had already given tacit acceptance to the devil's proposal,
prior to Christine’s encounter and agreement with him: "Sie begannen zu rechen, wieviel mehr wert sie alle seien als ein einzig ungetauft Kind" (59). It is clear that Gotthelf also condemns the villagers for their compliance in the pact, and for their hypocrisy, but there is no doubt that his objective in this work is to demonstrate "die Herrschaft der Dämonen, die blinde Raserei der Leidenschaften, die furchtbare Macht des Bösen" (Muschg 1954, 174) which a lone woman is capable of evoking.
After in depth investigation of the texts and a close analysis of the female characters, I hope to have demonstrated that Auerbach, contrary to decades of critical thought, does not sugar-coat or deodorize his female characters as has been claimed, but that he indeed presents a comprehensive, convincing and realistic portrait of the peasant woman, which holds ground when compared to the historical, social and cultural sources dealing with the respective period. Moreover, that Gotthelf, who has been hailed by critics for providing realistic, unexcelled insights into the mind and life of the peasant woman, does not, in fact, achieve this, but presents a rather narrow and polarized picture of the peasant woman. My findings are summarized in the following pages.

In contrast to Gotthelf, who concentrates primarily on women from the more affluent rural echelon, Auerbach presents a variety of women from all strata of the rural community. The wealthy are portrayed in works such as Der Lehnhold, Des Schlossbauers Vefele, and Die Frau Professorin.
while the reasonably well-off peasant woman is depicted in works such as Der Lauterbacher and Der Tolpatsch. The author also provides valuable insights into the life of the impoverished peasant woman in works such as Ivo, der Hajrle, Sträflinge, and Barfüßele. Through Emmerenz in Ivo, der Hajrle, for instance, Auerbach presents a description of the working life of the poor peasant girl from childhood to early adulthood. This is also the case with Magdalene and Amrei in Sträflinge and Barfüßele respectively. Issues such as courtship and marriage, for the women from this sector of society, are also treated in the aforementioned works. In Der Lehnhold, Auerbach describes the circumstances of the older peasant woman, the work she performs, her position and relationship within the family and the village community.

Unlike Gotthelf, Auerbach deals with many aspects of rural life. His themes are very diverse and range from a discussion of the position of the orphan to family feuds, murder, the socially displaced woman, marriage, adultery and wife abuse. While many of Gotthelf’s tales are cast predominately in the comic mode, Auerbach does not flinch from an examination of the more problematic, elemental side of rural life. His female characters are, therefore, portrayed in a rich assortment of situations and circumstances. Because of this the majority of Auerbach’s women, in contrast to Gotthelf’s creations, appear to grapple with "real" life and its attendant problems. Even in the case of Lorle in Die Frau Professorin, who lives a
sheltered, untroubled life in the country, once transplanted in the city she has to contend with numerous problems, and is forced to make decisions which have far-reaching repercussions for her life.

Auerbach also shows the woman in interaction within spheres relevant to her existence: her immediate family and her village community. Unlike Gotthelf, who espouses a patriarchal society throughout his works, but does not discuss the role of the patriarch within the family, (there is a conspicuous absence of father figures in the works discussed in chapter four) Auerbach explores, in detail, the position of the peasant woman as daughter, wife and mother within the patriarchal family model. The author is particularly interested in the relationship between the father and his daughter, a theme he treats in a number of works. In Des Schloßbauers Vefele, for instance, he shows the results of the father’s anti-social behaviour upon the womenfolk in the household, but upon his daughter, Vefele, in particular. He also examines the consequences of Cyprian’s behaviour, for his daughter, in Erdmute. Furthermore, the repercussions of having challenged the patriarch’s wishes are investigated in the figures of Florian und Kreszenz and in Der Lehnhold.

In regard to the matter of courtship, a theme which appears to engage Gotthelf almost entirely, the latter portrays his women as "geradezu heiratswütig" (Buhne 69) and subsequently responsive to any man (Der Ball). Auerbach’s
women, on the other hand, - observed in a more psychologically perceptive fashion by the author - appear to harbour doubts about marriage and are more discriminating in their choice of man *(Die Kriegspfeife* and *Brosi und Moni*). Moreover, Auerbach, in contrast to Gotthelf, who appears more interested in developments prior to the courtship: "the chase" so to speak, explores the complex and shifting dynamics in male/female relations. In *Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange*, for example, the author discusses problems within the relationship, such as the man’s obsessive jealousy and its dire consequences for the woman. The woman’s attempts to maintain her identity within this arrangement are also examined.

On the subject of marriage, Gotthelf portrays the latter as an ideal institution in the majority of his works. Auerbach, on the other hand, depicts not only the good marriages in works such as *Brosi und Moni* and *Der Lauterbacher*, with especial reference to the female experience, he also explores the failed marriages in *Ivo, der Hajrle* and *Des Schloßbauers Vefele*. In *Der Lehnhold*, in particular, he provides quite a detailed account of the issues and struggles within an unhappy marriage. And whereas Gotthelf does not focus on the progression and development of the male/female relationship after marriage, except some cursory references to this matter in *Der Sonntag des Großvaters* and *Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl*, Auerbach offers an extremely detailed account of married life in the
main figures of Brosi and Moni. The relationship between both partners, the domestic routine, child-rearing, financial difficulties and arguments, in short, the very stuff of daily married life is analyzed by the author. In Florian und Kreszenz, Auerbach also provides a vivid description of married life for two impoverished peasants.

In reference to the portrayal of the women themselves, Auerbach creates fuller and more developed characters than Gotthelf. The women in the latter’s works are rarely developed psychologically, their main preoccupation as characters is shown to be the capture of a man. In Auerbach’s works the woman is revealed as psychologically astute. She ponders on her existence as such, her role in society, her relationships and her responsibilities. In Ivo, *der Hajrle* Christine is shown to examine the reasons for her husband’s unhappiness, while Maurita in *Der Lauterbacher* also assesses the reasons for Reinholt’s discontent, as well as providing solutions for his problems. Even some of Auerbach’s younger women, such as Erdmute, are capable of recognizing the reasons for another’s depression.

Moreover, while Gotthelf, almost without exception, shows the man to be cleverer and more ingenious than the woman, Auerbach treats the woman more favourably. The author reveals Erdmute, Christine, Maurita and Magdalene all to have a deeper understanding of the more important issues in personal and family life - for example, love and loyalty as well as the resultant happiness - than their male
counterparts. And in contrast to Gotthelf’s women, the aforementioned women are shown to have gained their knowledge through life and its tribulations. Therefore, their wisdom and strength, as well as the whole gamut of emotions which they display, from extreme joy to utter despair, do not appear contrived or incredible.

In Die Frau Professorin and Barfüßele, in particular, Auerbach provides a very detailed and convincing psychological portrait of the peasant woman from both ends of the rural ladder. In the former work, the author traces Lorle’s development from her experiences as a young girl in a country milieu to her life in an urban setting. Lorle’s perceptions and emotions, from her feelings of low self worth, her affections for Reinhard, her thoughts on the nature of marriage, her sense of isolation and bewilderment in the city, her appraisal of city life and its inhabitants, to her decision to leave her husband and return to her native village, are closely and perceptively investigated by Auerbach. In the case of Barfüßele, the author explores the circumstances and psychological development of a poor, orphaned peasant from childhood to early adulthood. Her relationship with her brother, and the village community, her probing thoughts on the nature of life and love, her sexuality as well as her hopes for marriage, her utter despair because of her social displacement, are all called into play.
In this connection, some of Auerbach’s women attempt to assert themselves as individuals and as women, a dynamic which contributes to their life-like character, and one which is conspicuously lacking in Gotthelf’s women. A number of Auerbach’s women, from both poles of the rural hierarchy, struggle to achieve a degree of independence. It is noteworthy, and adds to their realism, that the otherwise well-rounded characters express this desire in identical and somewhat puerile terms, which highlights their lack of tools, i.e. education, social position, to enable them to state their case effectively, and to successfully confront the patriarchal order which dictates their role. Both Ameile and Lorle, from the higher rural echelon, attempt to assert themselves in precisely the same words: "Ich bin kein Kind mehr" (Auerbach 3: 95). Tonele and Magdalene from the poorer sections of the community express their displeasure, with the men who attempt to mould them, in exactly the same formulations as their wealthier counterparts: "Ich bin kein Kind mehr" (Auerbach 1: 97).

Auerbach does not detract from his realistic portrayal of the woman by presenting her as a creature of extremes, as does Gotthelf in Die Wege Gottes und der Menschen Gedanken and Die schwarze Spinne. This is perhaps due to his conviction, which he stated in an aphorism: "Was wir sind – wir sind es nur teilweise aus uns. Wir sind es – bewußt oder unbewußt – wesentlich aus der Genossenschaft derer, die mit uns zugleich atmen" (LWH 135). Even in works such as Der
Lauterbacher in which Auerbach presents a somewhat idealized portrait of the peasant woman, he refers to Maurita, for instance, as "eine höhere Macht", his depiction of the woman is much more convincing and realistic than Gotthelf's ideal women in works such as Das Erdbeeri Mareili and Der Sonntag des Großvaters. While Auerbach presents Maurita as a woman of sagacity, and occasional superior intuition, we gain a much more developed psychological picture of her, which reveals that she has earned these qualities through living 78 years in the world. She bears nothing in common with Gotthelf's saintly Erdbeeri Mareili, who appears to have been miraculously endowed with near supernatural attributes at birth. Maurita is not even religious in the conventional sense of the word. Her "religion" is more homespun, she sets standards for herself by which she attempts to live.

In Ivo, der Hairle, while Auerbach underscores Christine's saintly perseverance with her cantankerous husband, referring to her as "ein Lichtengel" (Auerbach 1: 189), he also ensures that she remains a credible character. Unlike Gotthelf's Erdbeeri Mareili and Kätheli in Der Sonntag des Großvaters, who never falter from their path of perfection, Auerbach demonstrates that even an exemplary character such as Christine possesses human foibles. For instance, the author reveals how she has influenced Ivo to become a clergyman through selfish motives; she enjoys the attention she receives as the mother of a priest. And Auerbach also suggests that she makes unfair demands on her
son, sometimes at the expense of her own husband and Ivo’s personal happiness.

Even the author’s “good” women are shown to make bad judgements. Kreszenz marries unwisely, Marannele in Der Tolpatsch becomes pregnant out of wedlock and the same fate befalls the gentle Vefele. But unlike Gotthelf, Auerbach does not set himself up as a judge of these women, instead he points to the hypocrisy and double standards of the society in which these women live. In this connection, the author draws further attention to the unequal treatment of women in Der Lehnhold. For instance, while it is acceptable for Alban, the wealthy heir, to have his pleasure with Breni, the servant girl, provided he does not marry her, it is strictly forbidden for his sister Ameile to partake of the same arrangement with Dominik, the man servant.

Apart from the experiences pertinent to the woman in her rural milieu, Auerbach also treats the theme of the townsman’s perception of the peasant woman in more detail and more effectively than Gotthelf. The latter refers to this issue in works such as Der Ball and Der Besuch auf dem Lande, but he does not explore the reasons why the townsman believes the peasant woman to be an inferior being. Auerbach, on the other hand, in Der Lauterbacher analyzes Reinholt’s grounds for his opinion about the country woman: her lack of education, the degrading nature of her work, as well as the simplistic dialect she speaks. And in opposition to the female characters in Gotthelf’s Der Ball, who do not
contradict the townsman’s lowly appraisal of them, Auerbach illustrates through his women, the reasons why Reinholt is forced to reassess his view of the peasant woman. Furthermore, in *Des Schloßbauers Vefele*, which treats this theme to a lesser extent, Brönner, the male protagonist, does not reevaluate his opinion of Vefele, the country woman, but of interest here is that Auerbach outlines his attempts to transform Vefele into a "lady."

Even in his slighter, "comic" works, such as *Befehlerles* and *Die Kriegspfeife*, which do not offer deep psychological insights into the peasant woman, Auerbach succeeds in making a pertinent statement about the position of the woman in society. For instance, he strikes a serious cord when he highlights the difficulties which the woman experiences, when she attempts to assert herself in a male power structure as in the case of Aivle in *Befehlerles*. And in *Die Kriegspfeife* he questions the male’s dogged perception of the male/female role: "Es sei unmännlich, sich von einem Weibe etwas vorschreiben zu lassen; das Weib müsse nachgeben" (Auerbach 1: 46) by revealing the protagonist, Kätherle, as the stronger partner.

Gotthelf, as previously stated, appears to favour a depiction of the wealthy peasant woman. Four of the courtship tales, discussed in the opening section of chapter four, portray affluent peasant farmers. Rösi, Marei and Anne Mareili in *Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht*, Stüdi in *Wie
Christen eine Frau gewinnt, Trineli in Der Ball and Frau Sämelene in Der Besuch auf dem Lande all hail from wealthy peasant stock. In other works such as Der Sonntag des Großvaters and Die Wege Gottes und der Menschen Gedanken, both Kätheli and Pfeffergret are mistresses of prosperous farms. Only Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl treats, to a degree, the woman from the rural poor, and while there is some mention of the poor in Das Erdbeeri Mareili, the author focusses on Mareili’s inner life so exclusively that a real description of her true circumstances is overlooked. Some attention is drawn to the impoverished peasant woman in Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen, but since Gotthelf’s depiction of the women is so grossly exaggerated, in order to strike home his message about alcoholism, the accounts of this milieu are not credible. It would appear, as the literary historian, N. Furst, has remarked in reference to Gotthelf: "Often he shows an undisguised preference for the well-grown individual, for the privileged children of God, those who are at the same time healthy and handsome and wealthy: they are his chosen people" (54).

Auerbach, as we have observed, presents a variety of themes and situations, peopled with women of different ages, circumstances and positions in the rural hierarchy. Gotthelf, on the other hand, treats the theme of marriage predominately: the majority of the works in chapter four have marriage as their focus of interest. This in itself
would be interesting in this context, if the reader received some insights into the mind and character of the woman in this relationship, but this is not the case. Most of these works conclude with a marriage and offer little or no information pertaining to the course of the marriage itself. In tales such as *Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht*, *Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt*, *Michels Brautschau*, *Der Notar in der Falle*, *Der Ball* and *Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl*, Gotthelf ignores the existing conflicts which are present in these unions, and indicates that all of the marriages turn out to be happy. Furthermore, in contrast to Auerbach, he avoids a depiction of an unhappy marriage. In *Der Sonntag des Großvaters*, he sets out by presenting a portrait of a loveless marriage, but by the end of the work he has resolved a lifetime of problems, and reconciled husband and wife just before the grandfather expires.

In regard to Gotthelf's depiction of the peasant woman he does not, like Auerbach, present a multi-faceted picture of the woman. As I have attempted to demonstrate, Gotthelf portrays women who are simply "good" or "bad": there is no middle ground, or psychological differentiation in the author's treatment of the woman. Women are "good" if they adhere to the author's criteria, which espouses a traditional and patriarchal view of women: they should be exemplary housekeepers, and submit to the male: Anne Mareili in *Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht*, Stüdi in *Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt*, Kätheli in *Der Sonntag des Großvaters* and
Bäbeli in *Hans Joggeli der Erbvetter*. Women are "bad" if they are shoddy custodians of their property; Rösi and Marei in *Wie Joggeli une Frau sucht*, and Marei in *Hans Joggeli der Erbvetter*, or if they endeavour to trick the man into marriage and out of his money: Màdi in *Michels Brautschau*, Luise in *Der Notar in der Falle*, several of the women in *Der Ball*, and a whole host of cousins in *Hans Joggeli der Erbvetter*.

In contrast to Auerbach's women, who are liable to err, there is no question in Gotthelf's case of the "good" woman falling from grace, or of the "bad" girl changing her wicked ways. Anne Mareili in *Wie Joggeli une Frau sucht*, for example, appears perfect in every respect. Kätheli in *Der Sonntag des Großvaters* also continues to exhibit exemplary behaviour, despite a difficult and unsatisfactory home life. On the other hand, Rösi and Marei are shown by Gotthelf to be incapable of doing anything right. The author also casts grave doubt upon Màdi as a person in *Michels Brautschau*, and while he appears to have some sympathy with Luise in *Der Notar in der Falle*, an exceptional concession on his part, he still reveals her as a liar.

In opposition to Auerbach, who does not present extreme good and evil women, Gotthelf provides an idealized portrait of the woman in *Das Erdbeerli Mareili* for example. But unlike Auerbach, who traces the development of his female characters, Gotthelf does not lend substance to his female figures by charting the development of their characters. As
previously stated, we do not gain a psychological picture of Erdbeeri Mareili, she is simply "supernatural" from the onset. On the other hand, in works such as Die Wege Gottes und der Menschen Gedanken, Gotthelf presents a woman who is the complete antithesis of the heroine in the former work. Pfeffergret has no vestige of goodness in her, she is bad to her husband, her children, her servants, the animals and her neighbours. Christine in Die schwarze Spinne is also depicted as a woman deplete of redeeming features. This is in stark opposition to Auerbach's treatment of the woman: he does not lapse into such extremes, but presents the average peasant woman with her fair share of virtues and shortcomings.

Furthermore, while Auerbach frequently shows the woman to have a deeper understanding of personal relations, Gotthelf depicts the woman as slow-witted in her comprehension of human nature. Anne Mareili in Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht, although a paragon in most respects, does not penetrate Joggeli's intentions. This also applies to Stüdi, who having interrogated many suitors, never questions Christen's motives. Even the more mature peasant woman, whom Gotthelf, on first glance, appears to revere, is disparaged by him in some respects. Both mother figures in Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt and Michels Brautschau, are shown to be naive vis-à-vis their sons, despite their apparent cunning, and Frau Sime Sämelene in Der Besuch auf dem Lande is revealed to be "unenlightened" despite her feelings of
superiority towards Jakobi. In this connection there is no question of Gotthelf’s women attempting to step outside the prescribed mould, as a number of Auerbach’s women do. Even the aforementioned "stronger" women live for the man and cater sheepishly to his every need, thus detracting from their credibility as hard-headed, practical peasants which Gotthelf purports them to be.

It is noteworthy that neither Auerbach nor Gotthelf provide a detailed description of the physical appearance of the peasant woman. Literary scholars appear to agree on the cause of this omission. In reference to Auerbach, M.I. Zwick, explains: "Er versteifte sich fast zu sehr auf die innere Bedeutung der Dinge und Schicksale und legte weniger Wert auf ihre äußere Erscheinung" (10). Werner Günther, makes, in essence, the same statement in regard to Gotthelf:

Ein Weiteres ist zu sagen: Gotthelf ist dermaßen vom inneren Wesen dieser Frauen erfüllt, daß er in der Regel gar nicht daran denkt, sie auch äußerlich genauer zu porträtieren. Wie sie leben, weniger, wie sie leiben. Ihr inneres Wesen, ihr Charakter, ihre Gesamterscheinung ist ihm gegenwärtiger als ihr Physisches (1958, 67).

Furthermore, both Auerbach and Gotthelf do not deal with all aspects of the peasant woman’s life. Matters such as very early childhood are not discussed. Auerbach treats
childhood/adolescence in some of his works, but Gotthelf tends to begin his depiction of the peasant woman when she is ripe for marriage. *Das Erdbeerli Mareili* is an exception, but the author, as previously noted, concentrates on the spiritual life of the child in question. Subjects such as education, which we know from the historical material in chapter two, was, in any case, a low priority in the life of the peasant woman, is virtually overlooked by the respective authors. Auerbach draws attention to the consequences of a lack of education in works such as *Befehlerles*, *Brosi und Moni*, *Sträflinge* and *Der Lauterbacher*. Gotthelf, apart from a reference in *Der Notar in der Falle*, (it is significant that Luise is a town dweller) expresses no interest in the subject of female education.

Neither author describes matters such as the social activities available to the woman or her relations within her respective peer group. This is perhaps not unusual since, as historical sources indicate, the woman spent most of her time working in the house or in the fields with little time for recreation. Auerbach makes some reference to the country dance as a social outlet for the rural youth in *Brosi und Moni*, *Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange* and *Barfüßele*, while Gotthelf highlights the village tavern as their meeting place in *Wie Christen eine Frau sucht* and *Michels Brautschau*. 
It is clear that Gotthelf discussed the woman and her role in many of his stories, a fact which could lead the reader to believe that she is an important figure in his works. Through his portrayal of the woman, however, which casts her as a thoroughly idealized type, or as evil incarnate, he does not present a realistic picture of the woman or her life. Auerbach, in contrast, is more aware and sensitive to the discrepancies between the "image" of the woman which society harbours, and the actual woman herself. This he endeavours to illuminate in his works.

To conclude, the first portion of Virginia Woolf’s statement in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), which describes woman as a creature of extremes (perpetrated through men writing fiction), could serve as an apt reflection of Gotthelf’s treatment of the woman in his works. On the other hand, the section of the quotation which highlights the true circumstances of the average woman might be said to mirror Auerbach’s attempts to produce a realistic portrayal of the woman in his works:

> Indeed, if woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men, one would imagine her a person of the utmost importance; very various; heroic and mean; splendid and sordid; infinitely beautiful and hideous in the extreme; as great as a man, some think even greater. But this is the woman in fiction. In
fact, as Professor Trevelyan points out, she was locked up, beaten and flung about the room. A very queer, composite being thus emerges. Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring on her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband (45-46).
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Three Women Writers and their Critics

Simone de Beauvoir


Doris Lessing

Virginia Woolf


Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism


Berthold Auerbach, whose real name was Moyses Baruch, was born February 28, 1812 in Nordstetten, in the Black Forest. He came of a poor Jewish family who expected him to become a rabbi, but he was estranged from Jewish orthodoxy by the study of Spinoza. He turned instead to the study of law and philosophy at the universities of Tübingen, München and Heidelberg. He studied philosophy under David Friedrich Strauss and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling. Due to his involvement with a "Burschenschaft" he was sent down as a "demagogue" and incarcerated in 1837, for two months, at the fortress of Hohenasperg in Württemberg.

Auerbach completed his studies in Heidelberg and became associated with the Young German movement. His first work was a tract *Das Judentum und die neueste Literatur* (1836) directed against W. Menzel, a prominent opponent of the Young German movement. In 1837 he wrote his first novel *Spinoza* (2 vols.,) which was the expression of Auerbach’s admiration for the philosopher. This was followed by the novel *Dichter und Kaufmann* (2 vols., 1840). Auerbach established himself as a writer with his *Schwarzwälder*
Dorfgeschichten (1843-54). The author moved to Berlin in 1860 and continued his literary career there until his death. Among Auerbach's other works are: Schrift und Volk (1846), the novels: Neues Leben (1852), Auf der Höhe (1865), Das Landhaus am Rhein (1869), Walfried (1874) and Der Forstmeister (1879).

As in the case of Gotthelf, Auerbach's motivation in writing was, to some degree, pedagogical. His self-confessed aim was: "Freiheit und Edelsinn im deutschen Volke zu fördern."¹ M.I. Zwick, the Auerbach scholar, comments further on this issue: "Nur in der Erziehung zur Humanität sah er das Heil der Menschheit" (11). Unlike Gotthelf, however, Auerbach was not a polemic writer as Zwick reports: "Er war zu empfindlich und zu leicht verletzt und hatte keine Freude am Debattieren" (104). This is confirmed in his views on fanaticism which he expressed in a series of aphorisms, which E. Wolbe has edited in Lebensweisheit (1914): "Fanatismus ist Zeichen des Kampfes mit sich selbst wie mit der Welt" (14). Auerbach was of the conviction that "life" itself is the real teacher: "Keine Lehre, keine noch so hohe, ändert den Menschen Sinn. Nur das Leben, Anschauen, die Erfahrung der Tatsachen an sich und andern, nur das belehrt. Das ist ja das Elend der Dogmatik, daß sie lehren will, was nur das Leben gibt" (LWH, 141).

¹ M.I. Zwick, Berthold Auerbachs sozialpolitischer und ethischer Liberalismus nach seinen Schriften dargestellt (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933) 10.
While Auerbach believed that religion was essential to man’s existence: "Die Religion allein, und nicht ein noch so fein gefügtes Nützlichkeitssystem kann die Menschheit zum Frieden und zur Schönheit des Daseins führen"² his stance on theology was undogmatic: "Die Theologie verdirbt die Religion. Was braucht’s da viel? Liebe Gott und liebe deinen Nächsten. Punktum" (LWH, 83) and further: "Der Glaube an den Himmel hat oft den Glauben an die Erde verdrängt" (LWH, 90). His call was for tolerance of all religions:

Wir müssen lernen, daß es verschiedene Formen und Seelensprachen für ein und dasselbe gibt. In der Vielfältigkeit der Konfessionen liegt eine Bürgschaft gegen den Fanatismus, wie weiter hinaus eine Bestätigung, daß die äußere Religionsform gleichgültig ..., daß man in jeder Religion ein rechtschaffener Mensch sein könne und sogar ohne äußere Religion³

and further: "Nur wenn wir uns gegen Menschen anderen Glaubens, anderer Überzeugung liebevoll zeigen, nur dann haben wir das Recht, uns Bekenner der Religion der Liebe zu nennen" (Zwick 39).

² Zwick, Berthold Auerbach 44.
³ Zwick, Berthold Auerbach 39-40.
Like Jean Jacques Rousseau, Auerbach was of the opinion that man is innately good: "Denn des Menschen Seele ist von Natur gut und edel, das Schlechte ist eine Verirrung der guten Kräfte, die man aus Mangel an wahrer Einsicht den falschen Weg leitet." In contrast to Gotthelf, "the doleful denouncer of the times", Zwick reports that Auerbach believed "daß die Welt immer schöner werde. In den verschieden Wissenschaften sah er die Möglichkeit, durch mannigfache Neubildungen das Universum immer herrlicher erscheinen zu lassen" (47). In this connection, he held that every individual had a duty to himself and to his fellow man:

Allenthalben ist Gelegenheit gegeben, sich als rechtschaffen und tapfer, als dienstwillig und hilfreich gegen andere zu bewähren. Das ist schließlich das Beste, was der Mensch kann, ob er nun als Minister oder als Ackerknecht und Fabrikarbeiter seinen Menschenberuf erfüllt.  

Ironically, Auerbach lived to see the re-emergence of anti-Semitism in Germany in the late nineteenth century. A letter to a friend, K.E. Franzos, betrays his utter despair at this situation: "Kämpfen für alles was man längst  

4 Berthold Auerbach, Gesammelte Schriften (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1857-64) 472. 

5 Auerbach, Gesammelte Schriften 280.
erkämpft geglaubt, und in meinem Alter mit erlöschender Kraft - Oh! das ist bitter. Ich wollte, ich hätte diese Zeit nicht mehr erlebt."

In this regard, Zwick attributes the sudden lack of interest in Auerbach’s oeuvre in the German speaking world in the late nineteenth century to the fact that Auerbach was Jewish: "Zweifellos hat Auerbach nicht allein unter dem allgemeinen Schicksal des rasch wellenden Nachruhms gelitten, sondern auch unter dem Verhängnis, daß er Jude war" (119). Auerbach died on February 8, 1882 in Cannes at the age of 70.

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6 Auerbach, *Gesammelte Schriften* 104.
Jeremias Gotthelf (pseudonym of Albert Bitzius) was born on October 4, 1797. He was the son of Sigmund Friedrich Bitzius, a Protestant pastor in the small town of Murten, at that time, in the Canton of Bern. In 1805 his family moved to Utzenstorf, a village between Bern and Solothurn. At the age of fifteen Albert entered the upper Gymnasium in Bern and he began his theological studies two years later. H.M. Waidson comments on Bitzius' attitude towards theology, at that period, as follows: "He disapproves of the tendency of certain students and professors to take a narrow, over-serious attitude to Christianity, and dislikes the separatists, those who will not conform to the orthodox state [sic] Protestantism as founded by Zwingli" (5).

After completion of his theological examination, Bitzius was ordained in 1820. He acted as curate to his father at Utzenstorf for a short period and then spent a year in Göttingen, returning home in 1822 after a brief sight-seeing tour around Germany. When his father died in February 1824, Bitzius experienced the first disappointment in his career as a cleric; he was not promoted to his father's position as pastor. Instead he was transferred to a post as curate in Herzogenbuchsee, a large, prosperous
village to the east of Solothurn. After a five year term he was released from this position, following a dispute with local Church authorities, and was sent to Bern for a year and a half. In his correspondence to a friend during this period he expressed anxiety at confronting the "cultured city public" (Waidson 10). Indeed, the Church council was not pleased with Bitzius' performance as orator and so on New Year's Day, 1831 he left for Lützelflüh to take up yet another curacy.

In March 1832 he was promoted to the office of pastor at Lützelflüh and was to remain there until his death in 1854. In January 1833 Bitzius married Henriette Zeender, the granddaughter of a neighbouring pastor. His mother and half-sister joined the new household, but Waidson, who has undertaken one of the most detailed studies of Bitzius' life, suggests that it was not a thoroughly harmonious gathering: "It is reasonable to assume that family life at the pastorate of Lützelflüh, dominated by the autocratic, often ill-tempered attitude of the head of the household, was not altogether idyllic" (13). This is in contrast to Auerbach's marriage which has been described, in somewhat effusive terms, by M.I. Zwick as follows: "Er liebte und wurde geliebt und war mit seiner Gattin Auguste so glücklich wie kein Mensch auf Erden" (1).

From the very onset of his career as pastor, routine clerical work did not satisfy Bitzius. One of his first endeavours, for instance, was to reform school conditions in
his parish. Like Auerbach, he was intimately involved in the ferment of ideas about him - it is noteworthy, in this connection, that Switzerland in the 1830's was far more radical in temper than either Germany or Austria.¹ On November 22, 1830, in the wake of the July Revolution in Paris, mass demonstrations were staged in Zürich in support of the principle of popular sovereignty. Bitzius was no supporter of the old regime, and a number of letters written towards the end of 1830 show unqualified support for the reformers. Bitzius admired the Schnell brothers who were prominent at that time as leaders of the Liberal government, and he remained loyal to them and the ideals of 1830 long after their respective fall from power.

In 1836 a group called the National Party, an offshoot of the Liberal government, became, in effect, the new government. The brothers Schnell and their supporters now became a conservative opposition, known as the Old Liberals. From the beginning of this split Bitzius disapproved of the National Party and their leader, Carl Neuhaus. In 1846 the Neuhaus government in Bern was usurped by a more radical regime, the Volunteer Army Party (Freischarenpartei), headed by Ulrich Ochsenbein and Jakob Stämpli. By this time the conflict between Radicalism and the more moderate forces was already causing a division throughout the Swiss nation.

Bitzius saw it as a struggle between Christianity and atheism; the traditional Christian way of life of his countrymen was threatened. In this connection the literary commentator, Alex Nathan, remarks:

It has to be remembered that in those days Radicalism signified for contemporaries more or less what Communism signifies for us today. It implies a philosophical as well as a political standpoint, and one that was contrary to the traditional Christian view of life (239).

It was his fear of the threat to the family unit and hence to the community as a whole, which caused Bitzius to abandon his earlier liberal views of the 1830s and to advocate a return to an earlier paternalism.\(^2\) In contrast to Auerbach, his ideal was a patriarchal society in which the political, social and economic elite would look out for the interests, both material and spiritual, of their fellow citizens.\(^3\)

Bitzius' career as a writer began with his first novel, Der Bauernspiegel (1836) which was an instant success in Bern. In view of his disappointment with political and social developments in his country it is not surprising that he adopted the pseudonym Jeremias Gotthelf after Jeremiah Sagarra, Tradition and Revolution 119.

"the doleful denouncer of the times," who, according to the literary historian, N. Fuerst, turns so easily into the poet of the Psalms exclaiming, "God, help; for the goodly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail among the children of men" (52). This has led the majority of literary critics to conclude in regard to Gotthelf and his work: "From first to last he was an activist and engaged, he wanted to influence, to advise, to help"\(^4\) and further: "His original impetus to write was pedagogical: he wished to reinforce through his fiction his work as a pastor and educator"\(^5\), while Godwin-Jones maintains "the didactic element came first in his conscious mind" (16). From the late 1830s onwards Gotthelf was extremely prolific. His literary reputation rests upon his novels and certain of his shorter works which are my focus of interest and, as stated previously, have largely been neglected by literary scholars and critics. Within an eighteen year period Gotthelf had written twelve novels. The most famous of these are: \textit{Uli der Knecht} (1841), \textit{Geld und Geist} (1843-44) and \textit{Anne Bäbi Jowäger} (1843-44). Gotthelf died October 22, 1854 at the age of 57.

\(^4\) N. Furst, \textit{The Victorian Age of German Literature} (London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1966) 53.

\(^5\) Furst, \textit{Victorian Age} 54.
Befehlerles (1843)
A "Maibaum" has, allegedly, been cut down illegally and placed before Aivle's house by her intended husband, Matthes. The latter is arrested and imprisoned because of his "crime", and the main body of the text concerns itself with Matthes's experiences while incarcerated. Aivle is summoned to testify at court, but despite her blundering confession which serves to convict Matthes, and sentences him to a longer prison term they are reconciled, marry and live happily together.

Die Kriegspfeife (1844)
Kätherle and Hansjörg are promised to each other in marriage. Kätherle, however, delays setting a wedding date because Hansjörg will not give up his pipe-smoking of which she disapproves. Hansjörg is, at first, adamant that he will not surrender his pipe to please Kätherle. Through her feminine guile, however, she succeeds in making him promise to do so. Once this is settled Kätherle and Hansjörg marry and thereafter live together in harmony.
Der Lauterbacher (1847)
Reinholt, a young, inexperienced and idealistic urban schoolteacher accepts a teaching post in a small rural community in the hope of imparting to the country folk "die reinen Freuden des Geistes" (Auerbach 211). Much to his chagrin, he finds this an impossible task due to the coarse nature of the villagers. He retreats into himself and in his self-imposed isolation he is unable to communicate with his neighbours on any level. Through contact with the 78 year old Maurita his prejudices are revealed to him, and instead of seeking refuge in his books, he begins to establish true communication with the village. Further interaction with Hedwig, Maurita’s granddaughter, with whom he falls in love, opens his eyes to the great educator: "life." He can now be of value to society as Maurita had told him: "Zuerst muß man für sich allein etwas gewesen sein, ehe man in Gemeinschaft gut arbeitet und tüchtig ist" (254). He marries Hedwig, remains in the village and becomes a beloved member of the community.

Ivo, der Hairle (1850)
Ivo first decides to become a priest at the tender age of six. This quest is facilitated through mild parental coercion. He enters the seminary at the age of eleven. During his ecclesiastical training he realizes, through the men he encounters and the experiences he undergoes, that he is not a suitable candidate for the priesthood. He informs
his parents of his decision to leave the seminary, but his father is furious. In order to appease his parents he returns to resume his studies. His mother, however, wishes his personal happiness. She sends Emmerenz, their farm servant and the secret desire of Ivo’s heart, to him to give her approval of his decision to leave the seminary. Ivo and Emmerenz declare their love for one another and eventually marry.

Der Tolpatsch (1843)
Aloys, the young farmer, is in love with Marannele who works on his mother’s farm. Aloys is a sensitive youth and, because of this quality, he is the object of fun to his peers. In order to prove his manhood to Marannele, the village community, and to his rival Jörgli, whom he fears may contend for Marannele’s affections, he decides to enlist in the army. He declares his love to Marannele before he leaves, but while he is absent on duty she is seduced by Jörgli. Unable to remain in the village because of his pain, he emigrates to America where he ekes out a lonely existence, haunted by his love for Marannele.

Erdmute (1847)
The brothers Gottfried and Cyprian have been involved in a longstanding feud. Their respective children Bläsi and Erdmute, although drawn to one another, are forbidden contact with each other because of the animosity between
their fathers. Cyprian has already squandered the inheritance which Erdmute received from her mother, but he forces her to sue for the remaining portion which Gottfried controls. Erdmute obeys his command, but when Cyprian acquires her money he abandons her and emigrates to America. Erdmute has incurred Gottfried’s wrath as a result of the court case and cannot rely on him to support her financially. She is obliged to leave the village in pursuit of work. Bläsi searches for her, they declare their love for one another, and she returns with him. She is physically disguised, but Gottfried recognises her. He finally accepts her back as a member of the family, and she and Bläsi marry with his blessing.

Sträflinge (1852)
The convicts Jakob and Magdalena are sent to a rural community to serve their time in an experimental type of civil service. Their relationship within the village, and with one another, is explored. The difficulty of rehabilitation for the criminal in a society where prejudice towards her/him is rampant is also a focus of interest in this work. Both Jakob and Magdalene are abused psychologically by the villagers and when a theft is committed they are immediately suspected as the thieves, although both are innocent. They are arrested, but they are eventually cleared of the charges, and accepted into the
village community. They marry, have a son and live in harmony together.

Der Lehnhold (1853)
This is the tale of a well-to-do, respected, rural family which is torn apart by a dispute concerning the inheritance of the farm. The Furchtenbauer is responsible for the loss of his younger son Vinzenz's eye. As an act of contrition he swears to the latter, in secret, that he will inherit the farm, contrary to local tradition which requires that the older son, Alban, become the "Lehnhold." When the time comes for the property to be transferred to Alban he is simply told, without any elucidation, by his father that Vinzenz will appropriate the farm. Alban teeters between placid acceptance of this situation and torrid consternation at this injustice. Despite the Furchtenbauer's promise to Vinzenz it is clear that he favours Alban as the rightful heir. He is fearful that Alban will litigate and this will result in the division of the farm, a prospect which every reputable farmer abhorred since the farm unit would be destroyed. He will not tolerate this and retracts his promise to Vinzenz. He assures Alban that he will acquire the farm if he vows not to divide the property and to renounce his love for Breni. Alban refuses on both counts and Vinzenz is hailed as the new "Lehnhold" which, in turn, leads to a bitter quarrel between the two brothers. Vinzenz is accidentally killed by Alban who also dies soon.
afterwards, followed by his mother and father. The story ends on a more positive note, however, since Ameile, the only daughter, inherits the farm and marries the partner of her choice, the servant Dominik, under whose guidance the farm thrives.

*Des Schloßbauers Vefele* (1843)

Vefele is raised in an environment of parental disharmony. Her father exerts full control over the entire household, he keeps a close reign on their actions and dictates with whom they should associate. Consequently, the family lives apart from the rest of the farming community. Vefele’s father strikes up a friendship with Brönner, a hollow and opinionated fop. He is a frequent visitor and preys on the inexperienced Vefele. He seduces her, but when he learns that she is pregnant he deserts her, taking her inheritance with him. Vefele, in turn, is forced to leave the village because no one is willing to support her. She and her unborn child disappear without a trace.

*Tonele mit der gebissenen Wange* (1842)

Tonele and Sepper are sweethearts. Although Tonele constantly assures Sepper of her devotion, he is jealous of any male who pays attention to her, but he is especially incensed because the hunter expresses attraction for Tonele. Sepper is not convinced of Tonele’s fidelity and in an effort to mar her beauty, presumably to deter the hunter
from pursuing Tonele, he bites her on the cheek and then flees the village. The hunter successfully woos Tonele and all seems well until Sepper returns. The latter demands that he and the hunter cast lots for Tonele. The hunter refuses, Sepper fataliy shoots him and disappears. Tonele eventually dies, a broken woman.

Brosi und Moni (1852)
The relationship between Brosi and Moni, from their courtship to separation in death, is traced in this work. Attention is paid to the development of the relationship through Brosi's "Wanderschaft" and the birth of their six children. The problems which parents encounter with their children is also examined. Severin, the youngest son, is rebellious. On account of a petty dispute with his parents he leaves home for several years without keeping contact with them. When he eventually returns he is accompanied by an English wife, who is also of the Protestant persuasion. This, at first, threatens the equilibrium of the whole household, but both Brosi and Moni accept his wife, and the entire family continue to live in harmony together.

Florian und Kreszenz (1848)
Kreszenz is in love with Florian who has returned to the village having served as a soldier in France. He has acquired airs and graces while absent from his home. Despite being cautioned, Kreszenz allows herself to be wooed by
Florian. He cannot support his newly acquired, lavish lifestyle, but he will not work as a farm labourer. He steals a neighbour's valuables and is sentenced to six years in prison. Kreszenz remains faithful to him and when he is released they marry. Due to Florian's insistence that he cannot live in a village where he has incurred such shame they move around the countryside making a living wherever they can. They have several children whom they cannot support and life is a constant struggle for them. Their misery is somewhat alleviated when the priest, Kreszenz's biological father, finally acknowledges her as his child.

Die Frau Professorin (1848)

Lorle, the country lass, is a shining example of the "Naturkind." She is at one with her environment and exudes wholesome simplicity. She is wooed by Reinhard, an academic, who visits the countryside on summer vacations. She agrees to marry him and they move to the city where he holds a post as professor. Everything in the city is extremely alien to Lorle. Reinhard does not facilitate her integration into this new lifestyle; he desires to preserve her as an unspoilt trophy and as a diversion from his taxing social schedule. He soon tires of Lorle's "simplicity", however, and spends most of his time outside the home. She becomes increasingly isolated and unhappy. She finally decides to return home to her village when all efforts, on her part, to save the marriage fail.
Amrei, referred to derisively as Barfußele by the villagers, and her brother Dami are orphaned at a tender age and are largely left to fend for themselves. They are both considered as burdens by the village community. Amrei works to keep herself and Dami decides to make his fortune in America. Life is difficult for Amrei, she is a virtual outcast in her community. At a dance she meets Johannes, the son of a wealthy farmer. When he discovers that she is a servant the budding romance comes to an abrupt end. Amrei is unable to forget Johannes and he has feelings for her, but he submits to rural convention by seeking a wife who belongs to the same social class. In his bid to find a wife he visits the farm where, unknown to him, Amrei is in service. He is impressed by Rösi, the daughter of the house, until he finds her in the act of physically beating Amrei. In an unlikely turn of events he recognizes Amrei, proposes to her and takes her home to his parents.
Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht (1841)
Joggeli’s mother has died and Joggeli, the only child, has inherited the farm. Since his mother’s death the property has suffered from her loss. Joggeli does not enjoy the same influence and control over the servants who, in turn, carry out the farming and household tasks in a slovenly fashion. Joggeli believes that if he takes a wife, order will be restored to the farm and it will once again prosper. Since he is aware that the business of choosing a suitable mate is fraught with difficulty and deception, he thinks his chances of finding a good wife would be enhanced if he could go incognito and peruse potential candidates when they are off their guard. Consequently, he masquerades as a tinker and, through this method, he secures a suitable bride.

Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt (1845)
Christen is the future proprietor of a country tavern, but he is unmarried and it is customary for the son to have a spouse before the inn is passed over to him. Christen, however, is not overly eager to find a wife much to the chagrin of his mother who would willingly assist him in his search. He plans to choose his own wife when it suits him.
When he overhears a matchmaker describing Studi, the daughter of a wealthy farmer who has rejected numerous suitors, his interest is peaked. He determines to win her as a wife unbeknownst to his mother. He succeeds in his quest much to his mother’s surprise, who has underestimated his ability to find a wife without her help.

Michels Brautschau (1849)
Michel is the owner of a large, affluent farm. Anni, a former servant, became Michel’s surrogate mother upon the death of his own mother. His father, who is still living, plays no significant role in his son’s upbringing or in the operation of the farm. Anni manages the property and household in an exemplary manner, but she has stifled Michel’s development as a man through her excessive pampering. In order to vindicate himself and prove his masculine strength, Michel is led into innumerable fights with the lads in his community. After several expensive monetary compensations he reasons that if he had a wife he would not need to find entertainment outside the home. With the help of Anni and Sami (her son) he arranges to meet a selection of women with a view to choosing a wife. He behaves abominably towards all of them with the result that they reject him as a prospective husband. He finally meets his match in Mädi, who actively seeks him out and uses every trick at her disposal to win him as her spouse. Despite her methods both she and Mädi enjoy a happy marriage.
Der Notar in der Falle (1848)
Luise, the female protagonist, in this tale lives with her aunt in the town. She is already twenty-four and has received no offer of marriage. She is not considered to be physically alluring and she has no inheritance which would attract a man. At her friend’s wedding she meets the notary Stößli. She is instantly smitten by his polite behaviour towards her, but Stößli does not requite her feelings. She is unable to overcome her emotions and, in an effort to attract him as a husband, she fabricates accounts of her enormous fortune. Stößli is now eager and promptly proposes to her. After their wedding he discovers that Luise has lied to him and is penniless. He threatens to divorce her, but her aunt intervenes. After some time they achieve happiness in their marriage.

Der Ball (1852)
Jacot, a town dweller, has been given an ultimatum by his father who can no longer afford to support both Jacot and his siblings: he must find employment or find himself a wife. Jacot thinks the latter is preferable and he has two possibilities in mind: two rich farmer’s daughters who can provide an attractive lifestyle. With this in mind he invites Trineli to a ball. She and her sister are also anxious to marry as is Jacot’s own sister and her friend
Rosalie who also attend the ball. Jacot does not acquire
Trineli as a wife, but he ends up with Rosalie.

Der Besuch auf dem Lande (1847)
Jakobli, a city dweller and an acquaintance of Sime
Sämelene, wrings an invitation out of Sime to visit his
farm. Jakobli has heard that the family is wealthy and his
ture motivation in seeking an invitation is to woo and win
one of Sime’s sisters. His view of rural life and the
inhabitants is less than flattering, but this does not deter
him in his quest for a wealthy wife. During his visit his
prejudices are shown to be unjustified. He believes
countryfolk to be inferior beings, but the mistress of the
farm is a formidable force who puts Jakobli in his place and
sends him packing without a wife.

Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl (1852)
Hansli, the male protagonist in this work, and his widowed
mother have difficulties making ends meet and live as
dependents on a farm. Hansli takes up broom-making in order
to supplement their income and soon makes a modest, but
reliable living. He marries a hardworking woman who can
assist him in his business. The marriage is not motivated
through romantic considerations, but is nonetheless
harmonious and many children are born to them. The entire
household works hard and, in time, they can afford a modest
dwelling of their own. In an unexpected turn of events,
Hansli inherits a hefty fortune and utilizes the money to set himself up as a peasant-farmer.

Das Erdbeeri Mareili (1851)
Mareili is the youngest child of a widow who, when her husband dies and leaves her impoverished, is obliged to move from the town and settle in the "Tschaggeneigraben", the poorest and most disreputable area of the rural community. She ekes out a meagre living for her family by working as a seamstress. When Mareili displays an uncanny knack for finding profuse banks of wild strawberries she becomes the chief breadwinner of the family, as well as acquiring her title Erdbeeri Mareili. Mareili is no ordinary child, she inhabits a realm between earth and heaven. On her rounds of affluent houses in Bern she meets the mistress of one such manor. Upon the death of her own mother she is employed by this woman, thus continuing her life of service and self-sacrifice. After her mistress dies she returns to her home among the rural poor and cares for the neglected and discarded children. After a life of self-renunciation she dies unknown to all but a few.

Der Sonntag des Großvaters (1852)
Uli, the grandfather in this work, is aware that death is imminent. He is downhearted because of the role he has played in uniting his son Gläis (Klaus) to Kätheli in marriage. Gläis is an unpredictable, distant, somewhat
miserly individual who does not appreciate his longsuffering, gracious wife. Uli's admonitions to his son concerning his treatment of Kätheli appear to go unheeded. When Uli reveals his feelings of guilt, on account of his matchmaking, to Kätheli she endeavours to ease his conscience. She confronts Gläis with the result that he comes to his senses and they are reconciled before Uli dies.

**Hans Joggeli der Erbvetter** (1848)
Hans Joggeli is a country bachelor. He owns a prosperous farm, but his lifestyle is simple and quiet. He is not a miser, however, and uses his money wisely to help those in need. As old age descends upon him so too do a multitude of relatives and imposters who hope to ingratiate themselves to him in the hope of an inheritance. Only Bäbeli, his faithful servant, cares for Hans Joggeli without ulterior motives. With the help of Benz, the farm servant, and the local doctor she ensures that Hans Joggeli can spend his last days in tranquility. The story takes an unexpected turn when Bäbeli, contrary to expectation, inherits the farm.

**Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen** (1838)
The fates of five women form separate narratives of calendar-like shape which are held together by the framework of an old peasant-farmer who expatiates to a traveller passing through the district. The circumstances which have led to the women's alcoholism are recounted to the traveller
on his first visit. On his return to the village, at a later date, he is informed by the same peasant of the outcome for each individual woman as a consequence of alcoholism.

Die Wege Gottes und der Menschen Gedanken (1848)
The farmer Schnitzfritz and his wife are fortunate enough to survive the corn famine of 1816. While their harvest proves good, the majority of their neighbours are destitute. Instead of selling some of their corn at a reasonable price to other starving farmers, Herr and Frau Schnitzfritz hoard it up in order to obtain a higher price. The latter do not escape punishment however; they store their corn too long with the result that it becomes worm-infested and has to be destroyed. When Schnitzfritz and his wife die, the sins of the fathers fall upon the next generation and the cycle of greed and Godlessness repeats itself.

Die schwarze Spinne (1842)
The work opens with the imminent baptism of a newborn child in a country village. The women are busily making preparations for the lavish meal which is to follow the christening. After the feast, the gathering rests in the garden and the grandfather is persuaded, with much hesitation, to recount the legend of the Black Spider. His first narrative describes the tyranny of the overlord, Hans von Stoffeln, to his subjects in the early sixteenth century. The former demands that the peasants build him a
new castle, lined with an avenue of trees. This entails the transportation of enormous trees from the valley to the mountain site where the castle is located. Von Stoffeln threatens severe punishment if the villagers do not complete this task within a month. In their despair, the peasants are accosted by the devil, in the form of a Green Huntsman, who agrees to help them if they surrender an unbaptised newborn in return. After some reluctance, the villagers give support to Christine who, through a kiss, enters into a pact with the Huntsman. The avenue of trees is formed, and a child is due to be born in the village. The peasants cheat the devil out of this child, but when a second infant escapes his clutches the swelling on Christine’s cheek bursts forth, begetting myriads of poisonous spiders who kill all the cattle in the district. When the third child is saved, Christine herself is transformed into a giant spider who wreaks havoc and death upon the Emmental. The spider is finally exorcised by a young mother who sacrifices her own life by sealing it in a beam in the very house where the celebration meal takes place. The sequel transpires two hundred years later. Christen is owner of the house in which the spider is imprisoned. His domineering wife and mother-in-law are avaricious and self-indulgent. They insist that Christen build a new house; the old one is to be converted into the servants’ quarters. During a night of carousing one of the servants opens the beam and releases the spider. The plague is once again upon the land, but, on this occasion,
it is Christen who captures the spider and incarcerates it a second time.
APPENDIX III

SOME COMMENTS ON THE CRITICS

Jeremias Gotthelf

Many literary critics have dealt with Gotthelf's characterization of the peasant woman in his novels, but they have paid little attention to this subject in Gotthelf's shorter works. After in depth investigation, I found that the only study which treats the peasant woman in Gotthelf's tales exclusively is Felicity Ann Rodner's doctoral dissertation: "Women in Gotthelf's Short Stories" (1976). I have made further reference to this dissertation in chapter four.

Since scholarly research on this subject matter is scant, I have elected not to present here a full review of literary critics, but I have incorporated the latter, where relevant, into chapter four. In the following pages, I will provide only a brief framework of critical reference as a guideline to the research which has been undertaken on Gotthelf.

Critical evaluation of Gotthelf begins as early as the mid-nineteenth century. In his letters, Gotthelf's fellow
countryman the writer, Gottfried Keller, (1849-55) praised the "vortreffliche, alte, dicke Bäuerinnen"\(^1\) in Gotthelf’s novels. In the early twentieth century Adolf Bartels in *Jeremias Gotthelf* (1902) hailed Gotthelf as "the father of Naturalism" in reference to the work *Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen*, a claim which I dispute (see introduction) and have explored, in some detail, in chapter four. Other works such as *Jeremias Gotthelfs Weltanschauung* (1917) by Ricarda Huch appeared during this period, but is of little interest to my dissertation.

A more in depth and studied analysis of Gotthelf’s work appeared in 1931: *Gotthelf: die Geheimnisse des Erzählers* by Walter Muschg. This text is especially interesting for its discussion of the woman in Gotthelf’s novels, which Muschg characterizes as "Urmutterweib" - a primeval mother figure. He also refers to some of the shorter works which I have taken up in the discussion of Gotthelf in chapter four. Helene Barthel’s *Der Emmentaler Bauer bei Jeremias Gotthelf* was published in the same year. Barthel’s sole emphasis, in this work, is on Gotthelf’s role as a chronicler of nineteenth century Swiss society, as opposed to an analysis of the author’s work. Her short sections on peasant marriage, in reference to Gotthelf’s novels, are, however, illuminating.

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\(^1\) Gottfried Keller, *Gottfried Kellers Werke*, vol. 7 (Zurich: n.p., n.d.), 256.
The mid-twentieth century saw a resurgence of interest in Gotthelf’s work. In 1940, Der natürliche Mensch. Ein Versuch über Gotthelf, by Doris Schmidt, appeared which is of interest to a study of the peasant woman in Gotthelf’s novels. In this connection, Schmidt, while hinting at Gotthelf’s tendency to depict extremes of character in his women, concludes her investigation by maintaining that Gotthelf was masterful in his portrayal of the average peasant woman, a premise I have disputed in chapter four.

Jeremias Gotthelf: An Introduction to the Swiss Novelist (1953), by H.M. Waidson, was the first detailed work, on Gotthelf, in the English language. It remains, to my knowledge, the most comprehensive guide, in English, to the author’s work. In his text, Waidson describes Gotthelf’s life and times, in great depth, and examines his vast literary canon. Unlike the majority of critical commentators, Waidson devotes a substantial section of his book to a discussion of Gotthelf’s shorter works or tales. Unfortunately, these discussions, while focussing on certain stories which are of interest to my dissertation, are more akin to descriptive summaries of the plot rather than analytical discourses of the works.

Muschg provides some analysis of individual women in his study, Jeremias Gotthelf. Eine Einführung (1954), but in sole reference to novels such as Anne Bäbi Jowäger. On the other hand, he dedicates only one page to Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen and a mere paragraph to
both Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl and Michels Brautschau. As in his former work, published in 1931, it is noteworthy that Muschg appears to regard Gotthelf’s women as somewhat sinister, negative creatures, an argument I have investigated in chapter four. In the same year, Karl Fehr’s Das Bild des Menschen bei Jeremias Gotthelf was published. This text provides useful information on Gotthelf’s life, with particular reference to the earlier portion of his career, as well as a description of the author’s objectives in seizing the pen.

Another well-known study Jeremias Gotthelf. Wesen und Werk by Werner Günther appeared in 1954. Günther furnishes interesting material in regard to the nineteenth century Zeitgeist in Switzerland; the hierarchy on the farm, at that time, and a description of the qualities and attributes which Gotthelf prized in the rural dweller. No more than a few lines are allotted to a brief mention of Der Notar in der Falle, Der Besuch auf dem Lande, and Wie Christen eine Frau gewinnt. Günther’s second work Neue Gotthelf-Studien was completed in 1958. As in his primary study, he does not concentrate on an analysis of the woman in Gotthelf’s shorter works, but he extols the author’s realistic portrayal of the peasant woman:

Die Frauengestalten ... gehören zweifellos zum innersten Schöpferkreis von Gotthelfs Dichterpersönlichkeit, zu seinem Allerheiligsten. Ihre wunderbare
Aufgeschlossenheit nach innen, die auch immer eine solche nach außen ist, unterscheidet sie sehr deutlich von den Männerfiguren, die sich gleichsam mit den Vorhöfen des Tempels begnügen müssen (38-39),
a view which I have discussed, in some length, in chapter four.

E. Strübin’s Grundfragen des Volkslebens bei Jeremias Gotthelf (1959), like Jeremias Gotthelf. Wesen und Werk (1954) by Werner Günther, treats, in some detail, Gotthelf’s views on the role of the individual in society, at large, and in the hierarchical rural structure in particular. Matters such as spinsterhood and its consequences in that community, as well as the relationship and role of man and woman, in the marriage contract, is also explored. It is, however, a great pity that Strübin does not apply this information to an analysis of the pertinent texts such as Der Notar in der Falle and Der Besuch auf Lande, for instance.

The next decade, 1960s, did not prove as fruitful in the output of critical analysis on Gotthelf. Mann und Frau in der Dichtung Gotthelfs (1964) by Alfred Ruef, while seeming to promise much in its title, does not penetrate beyond a rudimentary overview of the subject. Of interest to my dissertation, however, is Ruef’s awareness of Gotthelf’s predilection to create female characters, who diverge into
two extremes: good and evil. He does not, however, investigate the works which are of interest to me. *Jeremias Gotthelf* (1967) by Karl Fehr is more developed than his former work of 1954, and proves an excellent introduction to Gotthelf and his work. Fehr provides biographical information on the author, while treating his literary output throughout the various stages of his life. Fehr also offers a brief outline of the research conducted on Gotthelf up to 1967. The shorter works, however, receive no serious attention. One paragraph is devoted to *Die schwarze Spinne*, while three or four lines are given over to *Der Besenbinder von Rychiswyl*.

The 1970s saw *Jeremias Gotthelfs Gesellschaftskritik* (1970) by Ernst Gallati, which, as the title indicates, is an exploration of aspects of Gotthelf’s social criticism in relation to his novels. This work is an extension of the historical, cultural background in Günther’s *Jeremias Gotthelf. Wesen und Werk* (1954) and *Grundfragen des Volkslebens bei Jeremias Gotthelf* (1959) by E. Strübin. Gallati examines, for instance, Gotthelf’s attitudes towards the farmer vis-à-vis his family, the community and the poor. Peasant superstition as well as rural social practices, such as the "Kiltgang", are also discussed. As in the case of the majority of critical commentators, however, only a few lines are devoted to *Der Besuch auf dem Lande, Wie Joggeli eine Frau sucht* and *Der Ball*. 
Felicity Ann Rodner’s doctoral dissertation "Women in Gotthelf’s Short Stories" (1976) is a long, but, for the most part, purely descriptive account of certain women in Gotthelf’s tales. Rodner groups the latter into categories such as "The Young Girls", "The Young Wife", "The Mature Woman", "Mothers" and "Widows", but she does not develop a theme or argument which connects them. Her dissertation is a walk through Gotthelf’s stories, which, although preeminently readable, fails to offer insightful analyses on this virgin subject.

Three texts pertaining to Gotthelf appeared in the last decade. In 1984, Robert Godwin-Jones translated a number of Gotthelf’s stories, into English, in his book Tales of Courtship by Jeremias Gotthelf. In the introduction to this text, he draws attention to the lack of research which has been conducted on Gotthelf’s tales, but he does not offer an analysis of them, in this, or in any other publication to my knowledge. In the same year So ein handlich Weib from Hans Künzi appeared. While this text is devoted exclusively to a lively discussion of the peasant woman in Gotthelf’s novels, the analysis is superficial at best, and no examination of the figure of the woman is provided in relation to the shorter works.

Hans Peter Holl offers an extremely detailed and thorough rendering of Gotthelf’s work in Gotthelf im Zeitgefl echt: Bauernleben, industrielle Revolution und Liberalismus in seinen Romanen (1985), but as the title
suggests, he focusses entirely on Gotthelf’s novels. Karl Fehr published his third work on Gotthelf in 1986: *Jeremias Gotthelf. Poet und Prophet-Erzähler und Erzieher*. The only contribution in this text, which is of interest to my topic, is a more extended study of *Wie fünf Mädchen im Branntwein jämmerlich umkommen* than is found in his earlier work: *Das Bild des Menschen bei Jeremias Gotthelf* (1954).

Note: On the basis of the above information it should be clear that the aforementioned texts were of little use in providing helpful guidelines or indicators for my analysis of Gotthelf’s work. Therefore, as will have been observed in chapter four, I have relied, almost solely on my own close reading of the texts for the discussion of the author.
As stated in the introduction, apart from a cursory mention in a number of literary histories, it is exceedingly difficult to procure a text which treats Auerbach and his oeuvre exclusively. Therefore, since there is not sufficient material to warrant even a brief review of critics I have, as in the case of Gotthelf, incorporated the (two!) critical texts, where appropriate, into the relevant chapter (chapter three).

But first a word on the three texts which are included in the bibliography under the subheading: Berthold Auerbach - Criticism. The oldest work: Sketches of Foreign Novelists (1861) by the Englishwoman, Georgina Gordon, proved to be a great disappointment. The book consists of a series of poorly translated sections from the work of nineteenth-century writers, among them a portion of Auerbach’s Barfüßele.

Berthold Auerbach: der Mann, sein Werk, sein Nachlaß (1907), by Arnold Bettelheim, is the first lengthy study of Auerbach; it covers approximately 400 pages. Bettelheim provides quite detailed biographical information on the author, which includes a number of interesting letters from Auerbach to his cousin Jakob Auerbach. The Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten (1843-1854), however, do not receive the same attention as Bettelheim devotes to a description of Auerbach’s life and times. He refers to a number of the
village tales, *Ivo, der Hajrle*, *Der Lauterbacher* and *Des Schloßbauers Vefele* among them, but no detailed analysis of these works is offered.

*Berthold Auerbachs sozialpolitischer und ethischer Liberalismus* (1933), by M.I. Zwick, is the only other substantial study of Auerbach. In this work Zwick provides much detail on Auerbach, the man. He pays particular attention to matters such as the author's social ethics, his views on education, work, and patriotism. In this respect it is a very useful book, but Zwick does not appear to be as interested in Auerbach's literary work. He makes fleeting comments with regard to the *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, but usually to illustrate Auerbach's position on one of the above topics.

Note: As in the case of Gotthelf, although more so in this instance, I have had to rely almost exclusively on my own close reading of Auerbach's texts, due to the obvious lack of pertinent critical sources.
GLOSSARY

Gschaui or Gschau:


The Gschaui, the "look-me-over," also plays an important role in courtship. Each family of a prospective couple visits each other's farm prior to the engagement to make sure everything is in order and that everyone will be able to get along harmoniously. Robert Godwin-Jones, trans., Tales of Courtship by Jeremias Gotthelf. (New York: Lang, 1984) 13.

Idyll:

(Gk. "little form"). It can refer to either a poem or an episode in a poem, or to a poem which
describes some episode or scene in rural life (in which case it is very nearly synonymous with pastoral). (q.v.), or a description of any scene of tranquil happiness. In common parlance "idyllic" is used to describe a serene and euphoric state or environment which is remotely attainable and idealized. It is not therefore a definite poetic genre, though having strong associations with the bucolic e.g. the idylls of Theocritus. J.A. Cuddon, A Dictionary of Literary Terms. (London: Deutsch, 1979) 322.

Kiltgang:

Die Söhne sollen z.Kilt laufen, weil es auch der Vater getan. Die Kilter pochen darauf als auf ein Recht, und die Mädchen und Frauen halten das