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## 13 An entangled history of environmental and cultural sustainability

Satirical reflections on the German forest and the German oak as resources of cultural energy

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### Introduction

In Sustainability Studies the modern concept of sustainability as the capacity of ecological, economic, sociocultural, or political systems to remain infinitely productive is commonly traced back to its roots in forestry. The German term 'Nachhaltigkeit' was introduced by Hans Carl von Carlowitz in his groundbreaking treatise on forestry *Sylvicultura oeconomica, oder haußwirthliche Nachricht und Naturmäßige Anweisung zur wilden Baum-Zucht* (1713), a text written in reaction to the scarcity of timber after large-scale clear cuttings. Von Carlowitz promoted a careful, farsighted forest management, what he described as "the conservation and cultivation of wood in a way that guarantees a continuous, durable and sustainable utilization, because it [the wood] is an essential thing, indispensable for the essence/character of the country" (von Carlowitz 1713: 105–106).<sup>1</sup>

Significantly, von Carlowitz does not primarily argue with the economic value of the wood, its indispensability for industry, house building and the military, but he asserts its ethic and aesthetic values for the people, and he does so even in this central passage of his treatise. In other words, von Carlowitz emphasized the importance of sylvan nature for a culture's sustainability, and others adopted his point of view. In fact, early forestry's narrow focus on yield increase has been broadened since by the acknowledgement of the multiple functions of the forest, not only as a source of raw material and as a protective barrier, but also as an important factor in the ecological system (in view of photosynthesis, air purity, water balance and climate altogether), as an aesthetic factor in landscaping, and, last but not least, as a space for recreation (cf. Steinsiek 2012: 94) – and even for self-fulfilment and creativity, as I want to add. Consequently, the present-day German law for the preservation of the forest (*Bundeswaldgesetz*) equally provides for the sustainment of its economic, ecological, aesthetic and recreational functions, while balancing the interests of the public and the forest owners.

Thus, the planting of trees for future generations is one of the oldest forms of provision and sustainable action that has been documented in sources and



conveyed in pictures (cf. Steinsiek 2012: 92–93). To repair the already visible damage, von Carlowitz recommended reforestation and tree nurseries: Their German term 'Baumschulen' emphasizes the cultural formation of nature. The future-oriented symbolic meaning of reforestation was again taken up after the Second World War when in 1948 the Deutsche Mark was introduced and the new 50-pfennig coins showed a woman planting a tree – an oak tree, precisely, which has a long career as an outstanding symbol of German national identity.

The association of the German (or Germanic) people with their forests, and in particular with their oaks, can be traced back to the Romans. The idea has been taken up at several crucial moments in German cultural history. Going much further than von Carlowitz in the semantization of the forest, the cultural historian Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl promoted his conviction of "the close bond between landscapes and peoples" (Riehl 1854: 25) in his widely read *Natural History of the People* (*Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Socialpolitik*, 1854–1869). He relates the different characters of peoples to their natural environments, on the one hand meaning that they were shaped by their environments – a basic idea of climate theories as proposed by Aristotle and Montesquieu – and on the other hand that their own shaping of their environments, especially their handling of the forest, not just through landscaping but also through artistic representation, reveals their characters. Delineating a collective German identity in contrast to its European rivals, his 'ethnography' begins with the assertion that only Germany still has a "real forest" with a "social meaning" (Riehl 1854: 25). He argues that the wild forest, as all untouched nature, is a source of strength for humans, thus it needs to be protected for the sake of the culture's sustainability.<sup>2</sup> Famous is his plea: "We must preserve the forest, not just to keep the oven warm in winter, but also to make sure that the people's pulse keeps beating warm and merrily, and that Germany remains German" (Riehl 1854: 32). Riehl's last words do not have a racial connotation, as could be assumed when the quote is isolated from its context. They refer to his ideal of a 'natural' lifestyle, which can only be realized in "personal freedom, untouched by police surveillance" and "free of moral pressure" (Riehl 1854: 34). Thereby he means a freedom of movement and opinion he terms "Germanic Waldfreiheit" in contrast to other nations' restrictive policies (34).

According to Peter Finke, who promoted the renewal of cultural studies as "Cultural Ecology", important criteria to measure the sustainability of a culture are, besides its resource management and generally its interaction with the natural environment, its diversity and its creative potential (cf. Finke 2003: 267). He links creativity to diversity by assuming that, just as biodiversity offers various survival strategies, cultural heterogeneity offers a whole range of lifestyles that foster creativity (cf. Finke 2003: 264). In this perspective, which rests on a comparison between cultural systems and ecological systems, languages are considered the most important sources of cultural energy, since they create and transform the structures of civilizations or cultural ecosystems (cf. Finke 2003: 271). Language, in turn, is the medium of literature and many art forms, "whose task is the constant critical examination, imaginative exploration, and creative self-renewal of

these cultural sign systems" (Zapf 2016a: 65), as Hubert Zapf phrases it. Zapf's theory of literature as a powerful form of cultural ecology departs from the observation that literature and other arts act like ecological forces within the cultural system.<sup>3</sup>

These recent approaches are relevant for my essay in a twofold way: By presenting satirical texts and drawings from German magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that display concepts of sustainability, this essay analyses discourses of environmental and cultural sustainability with the aim of showing their historical entanglement. However, looking at satirical works that mock unsustainable uses of natural resources, unsustainable cultural politics and even certain concepts of sustainability is not the same as studying writings that seriously promote sustainable practices. Some studies trace the conceptual history of sustainability in various cultures and disciplines, and some of them may criticize earlier concepts of sustainability from today's perspective, but this essay tries to see these historical concepts through the eyes of contemporary satirists and cartoonists. It does not present a selection of caricatures in order to prove or illustrate a history of ideas that has already been written, but it considers these artworks for their own sake: It looks at the cultural function of these verbo-visual artworks, which are themselves a form of cultural energy to be taken into account within an ecology of knowledge. Furthermore, it reveals the enormous role mass media has played (and still plays) in the development and popularization of sustainability concepts, and it shows how deeply they are rooted in the German culture's very own history of ideas. In the late nineteenth century, different discourses emerged – such as landscape preservation and animal protection – that articulate proto-ecological thought without ever mentioning the proper term "Nachhaltigkeit". The latter is the keyword, however, in all discourses on the forest, and here the entanglement of environmental and cultural sustainability is more evident than in any other field.

The artworks I discuss in this essay require some preliminary remarks on the media history of caricatures and satirical magazines.<sup>4</sup> In newspapers and magazines from the second half of the nineteenth century, the dominant discourse consists of success stories that quite uncritically describe humans' conquest of nature. In newspapers like the *Illustrirte Zeitung* (1843–1944) or the entertaining and educational bourgeois journal *Die Gartenlaube* (1853–1944), which appeared weekly from mid-century, readers were being informed continually about technical innovations as well as the expansion of industrialization and infrastructure. Only after the readers had been made familiar with all these aspects of sweeping modernization could the 'achievements' be called into question through a demonstration of their downsides. The papers mentioned above, however, usually did not intend to alarm their readers. This goal was instead pursued by satirical magazines like *Fliegende Blätter* (1845–1928), *Kladderadatsch* (1848–1944), *Kikeriki* (1861–1933), *Der wahre Jacob* (1879–1933) and *Simplicissimus* (1896–1944). Besides poems, short stories and advertisements, these magazines featured countless caricatures. Unfortunately, historians often treat them as mere illustrations of events instead of unique verbo-visual forms of cultural criticism, sometimes



being the only possible form of a critique otherwise too dangerous to be expressed publicly.

Since satire, and especially caricature, aims at making its readers or beholders realize that something is wrong, it deforms and exaggerates its subject, often to a degree that makes it seem ridiculous, although not all satires provoke laughter. Even if it uses wit to attract attention, its main goal is to make people think about the problem it displays. Its other common techniques are parody, irony and sarcasm, and they rely on allegation and provocation. They cannot be understood without knowing their horizon of reference, the sociopolitical status quo and the ideal they thwart. Both must be known in order to recognize them as dissent. It has to be kept in mind, however, that magazines had to respect censorship regulations for mass media.<sup>5</sup>

Leafing through satirical magazines of the second half of the nineteenth century, it becomes clear that satire primarily targeted the lifestyles of bourgeoisie and gentry, class conflicts, patriarchy, women's emancipation, children's education and other explosive sociocultural topics. During the German Empire much critique was directed against the monarchy and imperialism, the politics of the Kaiser and chancellor Bismarck, the military and warfare. Generally, caricature's favourite topics rest on human mistakes which do not have disastrous consequences and thus can be laughed at. Of the far fewer caricatures that depict industrialization, modernization and urbanization, some call attention to the consequences for human life and the natural world. Among those, only few address visible environmental problems of the time, such as air or water pollution, while more can be found that focus on the fate of the woods.

As is well-known, Germany's pristine woodlands had been shrunk and transformed, notably through being turned into timber, throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Environmental historians have asserted that an early consciousness of nature's value can be discerned in complaints of a wood shortage ("Holznot"), complaints that had been widespread in central Europe since the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Whether these complaints were justified or not, they were motivated mainly by economic calculations and existential fear, rather than by the impulse to protect nature for its own sake. Some early environmentalists nevertheless did consider the excessive clear-cutting as historically the first step towards humanity's destruction of nature (cf. Schultze-Naumburg 1916/1917: 12). However, I would like to defend the thesis that forest clearance receives attention mainly because the destruction of the German forest is regarded as an existential threat to both nature and culture.

### German forest and German oak: nature as a cultural symbol

The 'German forest', as described in poetry and fairy tales, hailed in folk songs, imagined in paintings and referred to in political discourse, has always been more than a natural landscape and even more than a cultural landscape. Going back to ancient times, it has become a national myth and a symbol of German culture; its

popularity grew enormously between 1800 and the Nazi Regime, while its connotations varied over time.<sup>7</sup>

The earliest descriptions of the German forest date back to the Romans (e.g. Caesar's *De bello Gallico*, Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historiae*, and Tacitus' *Germania*) and deserve to be briefly mentioned because these accounts, notably from a Mediterranean perspective, already prefigure its striking mythification. The forests of Germania, most often called the Hercynian forests, were described as pristine and endless, scary and mysterious, consisting of giant oaks (Pliny), inhabited by strange animals such as unicorns (Caesar), and populated by brave Germanic tribes, prototypical forest people, which were considered humble and hospitable by Caesar, and coarse and barbaric by Tacitus.<sup>8</sup> The latter mentions the decisive Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (or Hermannsschlacht) in 9 CE, that is, the victory of the Germanic tribes headed by the Cheruscan Arminius (Hermann the German) against Rome's legions led by Publius Quinctilius Varus. Here already, Hermann is idolized as "the liberator of Germania",<sup>9</sup> who was well suited to serve as a heroic model for the emerging German nationalism in the nineteenth century. In this view, Hermann stood for freedom from foreign rule and for the united 'nation' yearned for in the decades before 1871, but also for a genuine forest people (Waldvolk, Waldgemeinschaft). The Germans' self-understanding as descendants of the Germanic people naturally implies their self-perception as a forest people, now defined by exclusively positive attributes.

In the German Renaissance, the humanist Conrad Celtes, who edited Tacitus' *Germania* and complemented it with his own *Germania generalis* (around 1500), uncritically revived the idealized image of a vast Germanic forest full of giant oaks. In fact, according to forest historians, at least two thirds of this central European territory was densely wooded until the Middle Ages, during which period deciduous and mixed forests were much more prevalent than they are today, as now the forests are mostly conifer. Beginning in the middle ages there were several phases of extensive deforestation, which were already perceived as a problem in the sixteenth century, and complaints of a lack of wood did not stop before the mid-nineteenth century. It is commonly agreed that between 1750 and 1850 the Central European forest was in its worst condition, before coniferous forests were created in large-scale reforestation projects. Today, approximately one third of Germany is covered by forests, roughly the same extent as in the Renaissance.

During the following centuries, various influential poets (e.g. Casper von Lohenstein, Klopstock, Kleist and Grabbe) studied Tacitus and chose Hermann as a hero for fictions imagining the origins of the Germanic or German people. Klopstock especially took up the adoration of the oak tree, which symbolizes the Cherusicans and the fatherland in his drama (cf. Klopstock 2009: 30, 32, 34, 71, 80). In his odes, he turns it into a symbol for "genuinely German poetry", considering oak leaves more appropriate to crown a German poet than the classical laurel wreath.<sup>10</sup> Thus, by 'germanizing' the classical images of Greek poetry, Klopstock ties poetic inspiration, that is, cultural creativity and ultimately German culture, to the natural surroundings of a typically 'German' forest.



The increasingly differentiated symbolic spectrum ascribed to the oak tree and the forest becomes evident when Klopstock compares the German language of his earliest ancestors to a forest wilderness and states that Martin Luther, with his Bible translation, has transformed it into a grove (cf. Klopstock 1975: 157). He was not the only one in his times to compare language – as the prerequisite for culture – and its different stages of development with forests cultivated to various degrees. But while some, like Klopstock, favoured a highly cultivated language, others idealized its most ‘natural’ state, like the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm: they edited the most famous German fairy tale collection (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen/Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, first published in 1812), promoted the literary tradition in their journal *Altdeutsche Wälder* (1813–1816) and initiated the great German Dictionary (*Deutsches Wörterbuch*, published since 1854) in order to preserve cultural and linguistic heritage for future generations. In view of one satire discussed later it is worth mentioning that the Grimms metaphorically describe both folk poetry and the development of the German language as plants that need to grow naturally and undisturbed. Jacob speaks of his native language as a ‘giant tree’, which, as he explains in his German Grammar (*Deutsche Grammatik*, 1819), is threatened by ‘weeds’, meaning foreign loanwords (cf. Grimm 1884: 557; Grimm 1881: 519–520).<sup>11</sup> His ideal of a ‘pure’ language was shared by many of his contemporaries; significantly, the journal published by the “Association for the Promotion of the Pure German Language” (*Verein zur Beförderung der deutschen Reinsprache*, founded in 1848), which promoted language purism much more uncompromisingly, was named “The German Oak; Journal for the Promotion of German Sense, German Civilization, and Pure German Language through Instruction and Entertainment” (*Die deutsche Eiche. Zeitschrift zur Förderung deutschen Sinnes, deutscher Gesittung und deutscher Reinsprache durch Belehrung und Unterhaltung*).<sup>12</sup>

Besides their predilection for sylvan metaphors, the Grimm brothers played a key role in mythifying the forest through their widely read fairy tales. Not only are many of the collected tales set in the woods, but in the editorial process the Grimms also amplified the fictional forests and emphasized their essential meaning as an exceptional sphere in which people and nature still exist in organic unity.<sup>13</sup> This corresponds to their ‘Zeitgeist’: Since deforestation and monocultural plantations had become a visible concern, verbal and visual imaginations of a healthy primeval forest had become ever more popular. A few examples should suffice to demonstrate this: The political connotation of the German forest becomes visible in paintings from the French period in which German volunteer units (like the Lützowsche Freikorps) seek shelter in an oak grove as in Georg Friedrich Kersting’s painting *Auf Vorposten/On an Outpost* (1815) or in which the French enemy is getting lost in the dark German forest as in Caspar David Friedrich’s *Der Chasseur im Walde/The Soldier in the Forest* (1814).<sup>14</sup> Additionally, historical paintings depicting scenes from the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest popularized the German forest. Of even greater importance for the context of this essay is the pictorial association of the forest with core areas of culture such as religion (e.g. Adrian Ludwig Richter’s *Genoveva in der Waldeinsamkeit/Genoveva in the Forest*

*Solitude*, 1841), architecture (e.g. August von Kreling’s *Erwin von Steinbach im Waldesdom/E. v. S. in the Sylvan Dome*, 1849), painting (see Carl Spitzweg’s *Der Maler auf einer Waldlichtung unter einem Schirm liegend/The painter lying in a forest clearing under an umbrella*, ca. 1850), music (e.g. Moritz von Schwind’s *Des Knaben Wunderhorn/The boy’s magic horn*, 1848) and poetry (e.g. Carl Spitzweg’s *Der Lieblingsplatz/The Favorite Place*, 1849). When we look at these paintings of the forest as a sphere of the sacred and the sublime, of art and leisure, it becomes obvious why German Romanticism is often specified as “Forest Romanticism” (“Waldromantik”). Besides these paintings, it is very often Romantic poetry that serves as a point of reference for the verbo-visual satires discussed in this essay.

When asked about the most popular forest poems, literary scholars usually first of all name Joseph von Eichendorff, who often described an idyllic sylvan nature that stands in stark contrast to the urbanizing world and the political turmoil of his times (see, for example, *Klage/Lament*, 1809). The Catholic Eichendorff spent his childhood on a Silesian estate amidst vast forests before he experienced the drastic sociocultural transformations of the nineteenth century. Surprisingly, scholarship has largely neglected the fact that he witnessed nothing less than the destruction of the forest due to war, fire and overexploitation.<sup>15</sup> Extensive clear cuttings, which he explicitly criticized in personal notes, did not even spare oak forests (cf. Frühwald 1994: 19). Even his own mother sacrificed a forest belonging to the family to pay her debts (cf. Frühwald 1994: 20). Of course, these grim realities were no adequate subject for Romantic poetry. Eichendorff instead concealed the loss in his forest imaginations, which have often been called “landscapes of yearning” (“Sehnsuchtslandschaften”) and should, more precisely, be seen as “endangered landscapes” and the “aesthetic revival of the lost nature experience” (Frühwald 1994: 17–18).

This is not the place to offer a comprehensive overview of Eichendorff’s forest imaginations. In this essay, it is most important to note the forest’s function as a place of both ethical and artistic inspiration: Firstly, it is a model of morality and a shelter for those who want to live a faithful, upright life which includes respect for the achievements of their predecessors (see *Der Jäger Abschied/The Hunters’ Farewell*, written 1810/published 1837, and *Abschied/Farewell*, 1815). Secondly, Eichendorff naturally locates the creation and recitation of song and poetry in the forest, implicitly arguing that only a beautiful environment offers inspiration (see also *Die Zauberin im Walde/The Fairy in the Forest*, 1837), and this inspiration is needed to fulfil the poet’s duty: to communicate his homeland’s beauty. However, both cultural and natural heritage are in danger and need to be preserved: In his poem *Trost/Consolation* (1837) he mourns the death of great singers/poets, but at the same time he optimistically reminds his audience that their heritage can be sustained as long as the poems are being remembered and the forest greens every spring. Thus, the singer/poet prays for the forest, most prominently in the final line of *Der Jäger Abschied/The Hunters’ Farewell*: “Schirm dich Gott, du schöner Wald!”/“May God protect you, beautiful forest!”. Here, hunters leaving the forest to fulfil their political duties praise it for being their spiritual home, which inspires them to loyalty and national feeling – they associate the forest with the



German banner. It is one of Eichendorff's best-known poems, which, along with *Abschied/Farewell*, had been set to music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy; it belonged and still belongs to the standard repertoire of choirs.<sup>16</sup> The poem's first lines ("Wer hat dich, du schöner Wald/Aufgebaut so hoch da droben?"/ "Who has built you, beautiful forest, so high up there?") and its refrain ("Lebe wohl,/ Lebe wohl, du schöner Wald!"/ "Farewell, farewell – you beautiful forest!") has been quoted many times in various popular contexts and taken up repeatedly in parodies modifying the poem's original content – or rather bringing its concealed subtext to the surface.

### The fight over the forest in parody and satire

As early as in 1873, the hunters' personal farewell was reinterpreted as environmental lament: The satirical journal *Fliegende Blätter* dedicated a full page to a poem framing two illustrations under the heading *Elegie/Elegy* (Figure 13.1). The parodistic poem and the two realistic pictures – as a whole signed by Crassus [Sigmund Krassberger] – contrast past and present, a once healthy, beautiful forest versus an ugly field of tree stumps. Alluding to the first lines of Eichendorff's original, the question "Who has built you . . .?" is replaced with "When will [the forest] be cut down?" (rhyming: "auferbaut" – "niederg'haut"; as a fitting English translation one could think of an equally forced rhyme: "By whom were you built?" – "When will you be killed?"). The parody ends with the grandchildren blaming the stock company for the destruction of the forest.

This was only the beginning of the parodistic echo of Eichendorff's poem that could be heard well into the twentieth century, and sometimes even today. More than twenty years later, the same journal, *Fliegende Blätter*, featured another verbo-visual parody, titled *Abschied vom Walde/ Farewell to the Forest* (1895)<sup>17</sup> just like the poem's musical version by Mendelssohn. Its single picture by E. Wagner shows a bald hill, sawing woodworkers, and a wagoner handling the horses that carry away the dead trunks. Its text, written by Friedrich Detjens, is even closer to Eichendorff's original in its structural and metrical composition. Quite similar to the parodistic poem by Crassus, it alters the famous opening apostrophe to the forest by replacing "built" ("aufgebaut") with "cut" ("abgeholzt"), and its final lines also explain that sellout of the forest is a result of greed for money. The later parody from 1895, however, is a stronger plea for environmental and cultural sustainability. Explicitly criticizing that the sounds of the hunter's horns and the poets' songs inspired by nature have been replaced by the noises of tree-sawing and horse-whipping, it demands that the younger generation protect what their ancestors had protected: both nature and art.

Once the potential of Eichendorff's poem for environmental critique had been discovered, its matrix was taken up at various occasions during the following decades, for example to call attention to the destruction of the Grunewald Forest. Before coming to this particular case, it has to be mentioned that in the second half of the nineteenth century, against the backdrop of accelerating industrialization and urbanization, the forest had become more and more important as

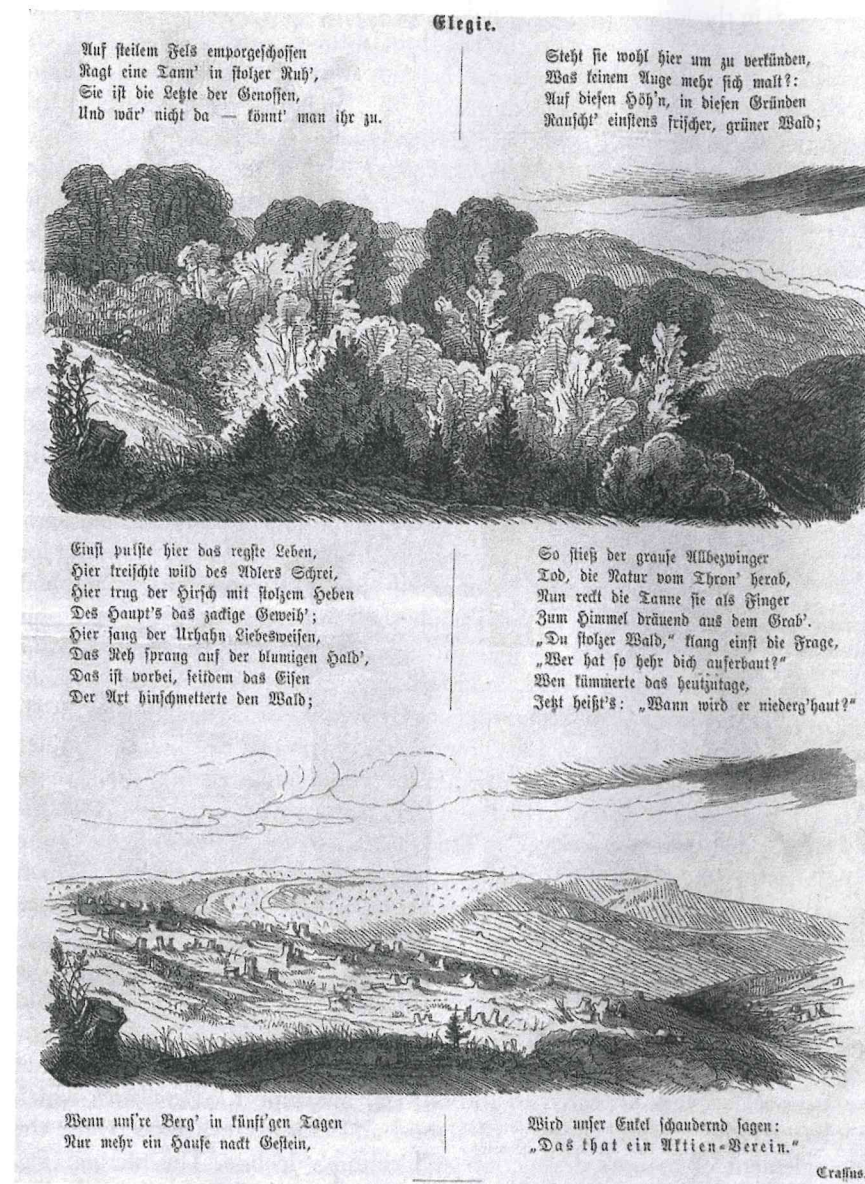


Figure 13.1 Crassus (1873). "Elegie". *Fliegende Blätter*, 58(1452), 159  
<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/fb58/0163> [Accessed 1 August 2017].



a recreation area for the bourgeois and, a little bit later, also for working-class urbanites. While the Romantics around Eichendorff had famously described their wanderings in the forests, only several decades later, hiking became a fashionable leisure activity for the masses. In the last third of the century, growing conflicts over the question of to whom the forest belongs and whose needs should obtain priority (be it the urbanites and tourists or the landlords or the foresters) led to a series of controversial public and parliamentary debates, and finally to the *Feld- und Forstpolizeigesetz/Field and Forest Police Law* (1880).<sup>18</sup> This law's purpose was to protect the property rights of the forest owners against theft of wood by limiting the public use of the forest. Interpreted as an attempt to deny the people access to the forests and thus denying them nature, fresh air, freedom and leisure altogether, the law provoked an unprecedented wave of protest, which manifested itself in satire and caricature.<sup>19</sup> In the end, this law did not keep the masses out of the forest.

The Grunewald, located in the western part of Berlin, had been mainly used as an aristocratic hunting ground, until the rapidly growing city's dwellers conquered it in the 1880s in search of 'nature'. Reacting to public will, Wilhelm II finally stopped his hunting activities in the Grunewald around 1904 and announced that it would be turned into a public park, but the Prussian ministry for agriculture, led by Victor von Podbielski, nevertheless planned to sell it as land for building.<sup>20</sup> Already, with the expansion of the city, parts of the Grunewald had been turned into building land, for example the "Villenkolonie Grunewald", an upper-class residential area developed in 1889. The forest clearance carried out for this purpose was publicly criticized in the satirical popular song *Die Holzauktion/The Wood Auction* ("Im Grunewald, im Grunewald ist Holzauktion"), which was widely known and sung in and around Berlin beginning in 1892. In a similar vein, but addressing its critique of the forest's sellout and the state's greed more eloquently and more explicitly, the poem *Der Grunewald bei Berlin. Ein Zukunftsbild nach bekannter Melodie/The Grunewald Forest in Berlin. A Picture of the Future in well-known Tunes* (J.S. 1909) offers a dystopic vision of a near future in which all the forest, along with its sales revenues, has gone. This poem, which once again takes up Eichendorff's opening lines and refrain, and modifies both accordingly, appeared in the journal *Der Wahre Jacob* in 1909, in the May issue. In the same month, the newly built racecourse "Rennbahn Grunewald", for which again part of the forest had been sacrificed, was to be inaugurated.<sup>21</sup>

In 1908, when the construction of the racecourse was well under way, another verbo-visual artwork appeared in the satirical magazine *Kladderadatsch* which emphasized the interdependence of nature and culture, or, respectively, the entanglement of nature's destruction and culture's decline. The picture (Fig. 13.2) signed by Arthur Johnson fills an entire page and bears the title *Das Schweigen im Grune-Wald (frei nach Böcklin)/The silence of the Grunewald forest (after Böcklin)*. Below the picture it says "Hier malte Walter Leistikow seine schönsten Bilder"/"Here, Walter Leistikow has painted his most beautiful pictures".

Only readers familiar with art history and contemporary painting might have been able to decipher the meaning of the double reference to two painters.

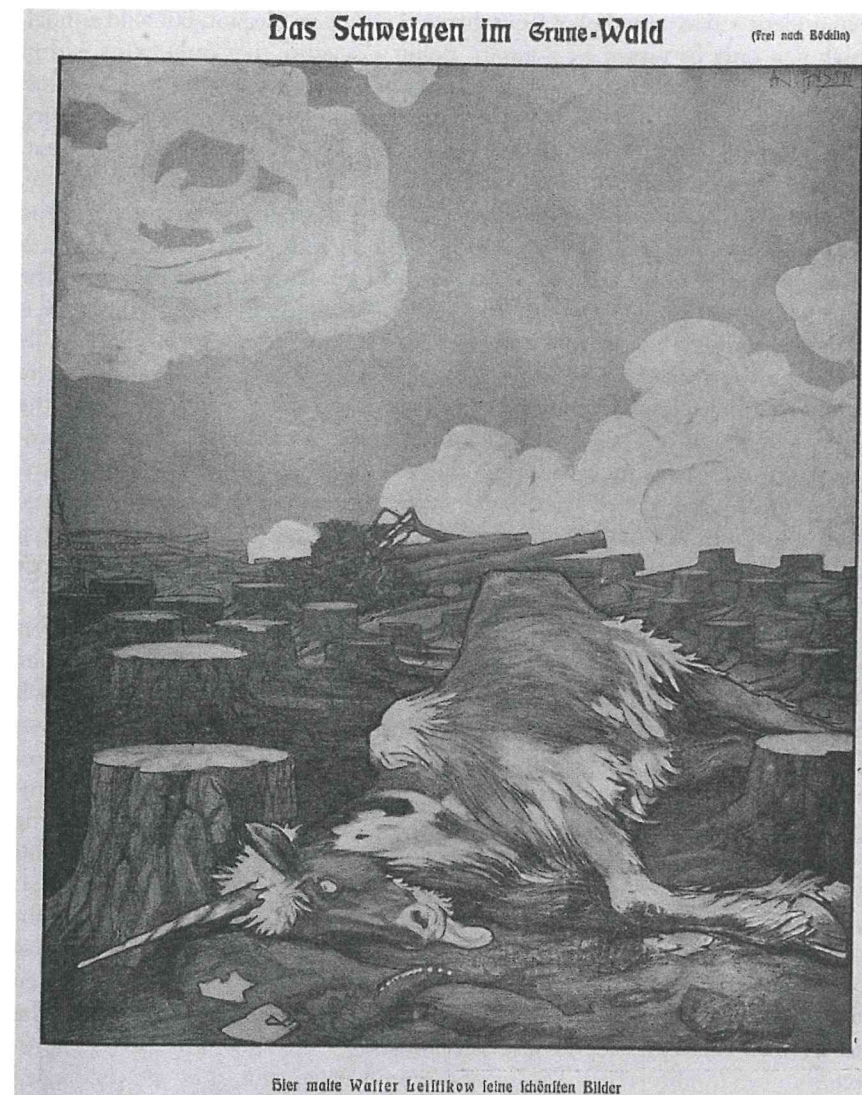


Figure 13.2 Johnson, A. (1908). "Das Schweigen im Grune-Wald (frei nach Böcklin)". Beiblatt zum *Kladderadatsch*, 61(35), 1 (30 August 1908)

<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/kla1908/0617> [Accessed 1 August 2017].

Johnson's drawing is a parody of the painting *Das Schweigen des Waldes/The Silence of the Forest* created by the famous symbolist Arnold Böcklin in 1885. His painting shows a unicorn strolling through a healthy forest and carrying a crowned woman on his back. In sharp contrast, Johnson's satirical picture shows a dead

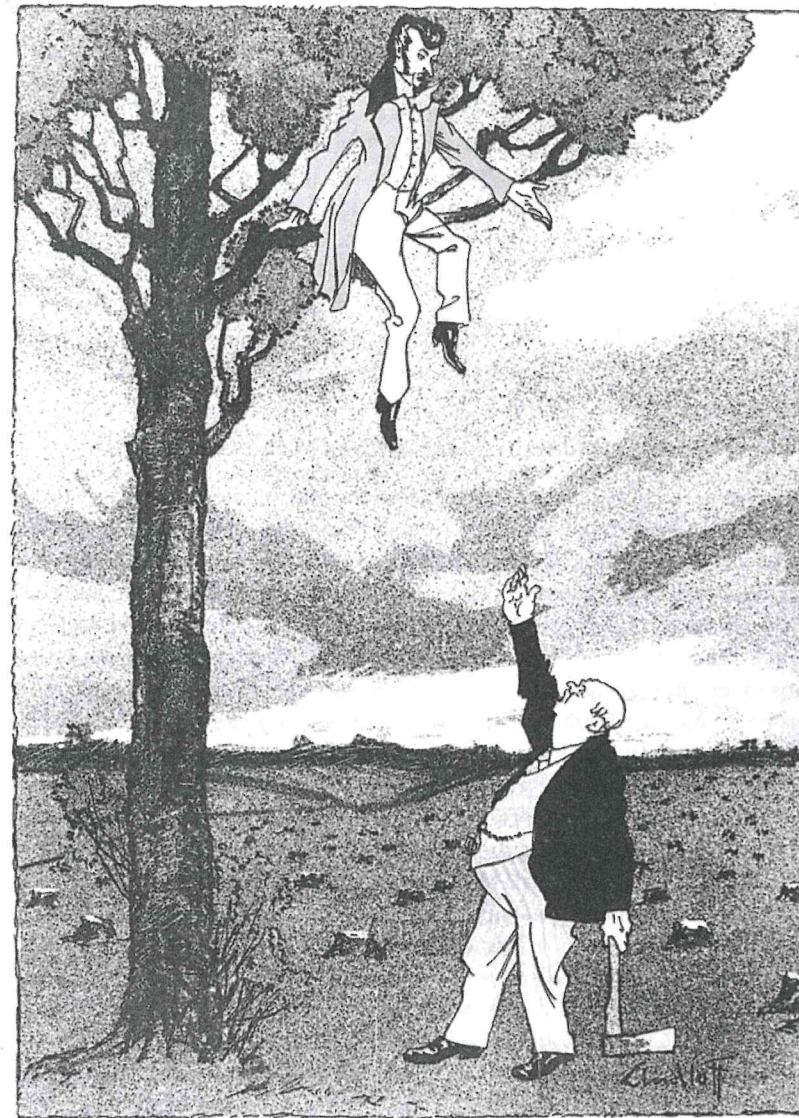


unicorn lying among the stumps of cut trees. The noble fabulous creature has been understood as a symbol of fecundity and purity, an elegant, but wild animal, which can only be tamed by a virgin. Being a creature that only exists within the realm of myth and art, it ultimately stands for art itself, or the marvellous. Significantly, it is only to be found in the forest, which protects it from reality. Thus, Johnson's picture implies that art inevitably dies along with the forest. While in the title of Böcklin's painting the 'silent forest' refers to a sacral sphere, the silence in Johnson's satirical picture indicates the death of nature, art and culture. Besides the loss of the Grunewald, the picture also bemoans the death of the painter Walter Leistikow, who was well-known for his paintings of the Grunewald and had died just a month earlier. Assuming that Johnson's satire is a friendly obituary for Leistikow, it suggests that the painter's death inevitably means the death of Grunewald painting. On a more complex level the satire implies that Leistikow's Grunewald can never be surpassed artistically, since the forest as he saw it has been destroyed; only in his immortal paintings is it preserved forever. Interestingly, although this was probably not intended by the artist, the unicorn has special significance in the context of environmental damage because its horn was said to be able to clean contaminated wells and waters (cf. Wehrhahn-Stauch 1958: 1534). If the animal dies, environmental contamination cannot be reversed.

At first sight, most caricatures that address the destruction of the German forest and the negative consequences on culture seem semantically less complex than the example discussed previously, but at a second glance they leave much room for (mis-)interpretation and often make it difficult to discern their object of mockery. This, however, is the prerequisite for reaching their double goal of entertaining the readers and influencing their political opinion. Often they cynically comment on a critical issue without offering solutions, like the following page-filling drawing (Fig. 13.3), whose heading ironically proclaims: "Nieder mit dem deutschen Wald!" / "Down with the German forest!" The picture from 1921, presumably created by Hans Maria Lindloff, shows a man in fancy, but old-fashioned clothes sitting on a lonely oak amidst a field of tree stumps. The first line of the text below the picture says: "Der letzte deutsche Romantiker auf dem letzten deutschen Waldbaum (singend): 'Schirm Dich Gott, du deutscher Wald!'" / "The last German Romantic on the last German forest tree (singing): 'May God protect you, beautiful forest!'" The second line identifies the stout, timely dressed man beneath the tree holding an axe as a wood speculator. He impatiently yells at the Romantic above: "Sie da, runter! Wird's nu bald!" / "You there, come down! Hurry up!". He unmistakably tells us that the Romantic era has definitely come to an end, especially now after the defeat in the First World War. Romantics are being chased away, the reign of the Realists and the sell-out of German culture have begun.

We could simply interpret this piece as one of many attacks against speculators, who sacrifice nature for money. Alternatively, we can read it as a critique of an exaggerated emotional attachment to nature and thus laugh about the Romantic who believes in the possibility of a harmonious relationship between humans and

# Nieder mit dem deutschen Wald!



Der letzte deutsche Romantiker auf dem letzten deutschen Waldbaum (singend): „Schirm dich Gott, du deutscher Wald!“  
Der Holzspekulant: „Sie da, runter! Wird's nu bald!“

Figure 13.3 Anon. [signature unidentifiable] (1921). "Nieder mit dem deutschen Wald!" *Kladderadatsch*, 74(42), 2 (16 October 1921)

<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/kla1921/0585> [Accessed 1 August 2017].



nature. In this sense, it mocks the whole Romantic discourse represented by the other satires discussed earlier. Or, the ridicule could be directed against the revival of such an emotional attachment in a climate of growing nationalism. It should be noted that many caricatures from this time comment on the First World War reparations demanded from Germany by the Allied Powers in the Treaty of Versailles. Chancellor Joseph Wirth's policy of complying with the Allies' demands was criticized by conservatives and industrialists. This caricature appeared one week after his Minister for Reconstruction, Walter Rathenau (who resigned only a few weeks later), had reached an agreement with Loucheur, the French Minister of Reconstruction. The Treaty of Wiesbaden, signed on October 6 and 8 in 1921, allowed Germany to replace monetary payments with material goods such as wood.<sup>22</sup> Its many critics bemoaned the handing-over of the German forest, the symbol of German identity, to the French (cf. Escherich 1924).<sup>23</sup> In any case, the field of stumps and the fight over the forest is intended to mirror the deplorable state of the German nation, once pictured as a mighty oak forest.

### In search of cultural identity – caricatures of the German oak

There is more than enough proof that before the mid-nineteenth century the association of the German oak and the German people had become a commonplace. This development is best documented by satire, whether in the form of poetry or verbo-visual caricature. Heinrich Heine, the last poet of Romanticism and the one who overcame it, is well-known for his satirical attacks on German society and morality, having been a critical observer of rising nationalism. The poet of Jewish origins mocks in particular the German's metaphoric self-image as a faithful oak. In his poem *Zur Beruhigung/For Reassurance* (1844), for example, he criticizes the people's lack of a revolutionary spirit by ironically praising its loyalty to its rulers.

As delineated before, the roots of the symbolic German forest with its legendary oaks extend back to pre-modern times, but new emphasis has been put on it since the early nineteenth century, and these symbols became ever more popular up until the Second World War. All journals bear witness to this fact, but satirical magazines especially document that the oak "soon became proverbial as a patriotic icon of bravery, power, and strength", which was held up against domestic political disruptions as well as used as a means of self-assurance in international conflicts (Zechner 2011: 20; cf. Hürlimann 1987). After 1871, many pictures show, without any need for explanations, an oak being trimmed, split and uprooted. In most cases the oak simply stands for the state or nation being shaken by all kinds of political issues.<sup>24</sup> In some cases, however, it explicitly symbolizes a transnational German culture, as in the caricature *Die deutsch-österreichische Eiche* (Fig. 13.4) that appeared on January 27, 1898, in the popular Austrian satirical magazine *Kikeriki*.

Here, the icon of German identity was shared by the Austrians, reminding us of the "Greater German Solution" ("großdeutsche Lösung") once considered, but then abandoned in 1848. In the centre of the picture we see a giant oak, which is being attacked from two sides, but does not succumb to the pressure. The



Figure 13.4 Anon. (1898). "Die deutsch-österreichische Eiche". *Kikeriki*. *Humoristisches Volksblatt*, 38(8), 2 (27 January 1898)

<http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=kik&datum=18980127&seite=2> [Accessed 1 August 2017]

political background of this caricature is the nationalities' struggle in the multinational state Austria-Hungary ("Nationalitätenkampf"). The subtext reads: "Du Erdäpfelstaude und du Paprikapflanze, Eure Anstrengungen, mich zu entwurzeln, werden keinen Erfolg haben!" / "You potato plant and you pepper plant, you won't succeed in your struggles to uproot me." These words are ascribed to the German-Austrian oak addressing the Slavs (represented by the potato) and the Hungarians (represented by the pepper). The 'pepper' invokes the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (the so-called "österreichisch-ungarischen Ausgleich"), which established the dual-monarchy, that is, it re-established Hungarian as one of two official languages. All other ethnic groups of the monarchy envied the Magyars for their partial autonomy. Especially the Czech national movement demanded equalization in view of the Magyars and the Germans, but the requested compromise (the so-called "österreichisch-tschechischer" or "deutsch-tschechischer Ausgleich") soon collapsed. In the last third of the nineteenth century, the German-speaking minority in the Czech lands felt threatened by the Czech culture's fight for autonomy. Bowing to the growing pressure, in April 1897 the Austrian minister-president Count Kasimir Felix Badeni issued an ordinance called the "Badenische Sprachverordnung", which made Czech (besides German) the second official language in Bohemia and Moravia, thus requiring bilingualism in those who wanted to become civil servants. This ordinance – which the 'potato' holds in his hands against the 'oak' – incited protests and boycotts in the parliaments of Prague and Vienna instigated by the German Nationalist Party, and it led to Badeni's resignation at the end of November 1897, two months before the caricature appeared in *Kikeriki*. Since the political turmoil continued, Badeni's successor had to restrict this language ordinance, and in 1899 it was repealed.



In this caricature, it is not the oak and thus the Germans' self-image that is being ridiculed; instead, some readers might laugh at their opponents in the clash of cultures, while others laugh about the whole topic, the seemingly unresolvable cultural conflicts. While this caricature still emphasizes the steadfastness of the oak and thereby the dominance of German-Austrian culture, it foreshadows the fatal development of this conflict and the eventual fall or split of the oak.

Unsurprisingly, during the First World War, German journals show an increased need for self-affirmation and self-encouragement. On the one hand, we find poems praising the invincible oak combined with realistic drawings of giant oak trees, without any humorous note.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, (self-)doubt and fear concerning the Germans' military strength is expressed via images of bending or mutilated trees. At worst, the unbendable oak is replaced by other tree species, indicating that the Germans can no longer be associated with oaks.<sup>26</sup>

The satirical journal *Simplicissimus* features the German oak on so many of its covers, that they would deserve a separate examination in view of this magazine's own ideological history. During the Wilhelmine Era, the journal was well-known for its satirical attacks on the authoritarian state as a whole, particularly its military and its police. After the declaration of war, however, the journal gave up its focus on internal enemies in favour of external ones and displayed a new patriotism. In the run-up before the First World War, it articulates the domestic political crisis by images of a hollowed oak trunk infested with parasites. Different parties are alternately given the role of the animal pests which gnaw on the oak (Fig. 13.5): the German Centre Party or Catholic Centre Party (Deutsche Zentrumspartei), the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) or the National Liberal Party (Nationalliberale Partei) were in turn attacked satirically for policies considered culturally unsustainable.<sup>27</sup> Of course, all criticism is articulated metaphorically.

During the war, of course, Germany's war opponents figured as the oak's enemies, who, in the first years, did not succeed in bringing down the oak. Interestingly, even in caricatures in which Germany's opponents are depicted as iconic national stereotypes in human form, the Germans are still rendered as a tree that is being attacked with axes, while the peaceful plant itself does not carry a weapon: as in a caricature from 1915, in which the members of the Triple-Entente try in vain to fell the oak (Fig. 13.6). After the lost war, the defeated nation is depicted as a defoliated oak.<sup>28</sup> One year later, a cover (Fig. 13.7) anticipates the ratification of the controversial Treaty of Versailles by showing the felling of the German oak and commenting sarcastically: "Der Friede ist perfekt – der Krieg kann weitergehn"/ "The Peace is perfect – the war can continue". Subsequently, caricatures from the early 1920s mirror the Germans' discontent with their leading politicians' compliance with the Treaty's reparations – a compliance ("Erfüllungspolitik") which was interpreted by many as a surrender of the nation's identity, and a threat to its cultural sustainability.<sup>29</sup> In the following years various crises were met with pictures showing a saw being taken to the oak. In summer 1922, with the onset of hyperinflation, a *Simplicissimus* cover depicted a defoliated oak being felled in order to be processed into paper urgently needed for banknotes.<sup>30</sup>

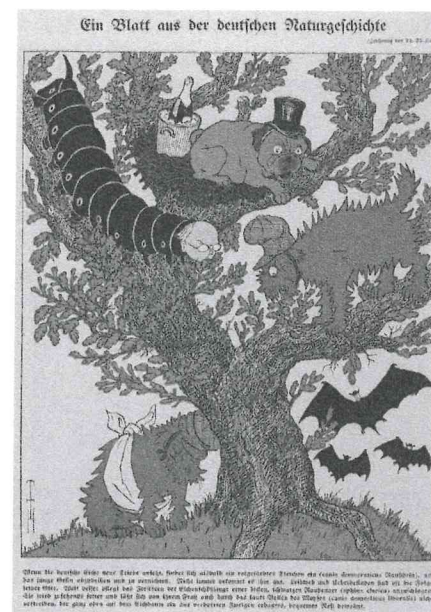


Figure 13.5 Heine, T. (1907). "Ein Blatt aus der deutschen Naturgeschichte". *Simplicissimus*, 11(49), 1 (4 March 1907)

[www.simplicissimus.info/uploads/tx\\_lombksjournaldb/1/11/11\\_49\\_789.jpg](http://www.simplicissimus.info/uploads/tx_lombksjournaldb/1/11/11_49_789.jpg) [Accessed 1 August 2017].

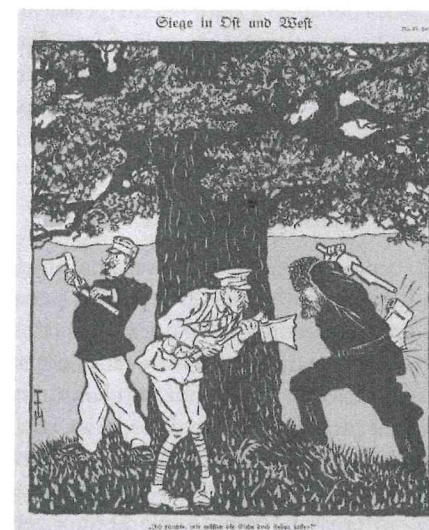


Figure 13.6 Heine, T. (1915). "Sieg in Ost und West". *Simplicissimus*, 20(7), 1 (18 May 1915)

[www.simplicissimus.info/uploads/tx\\_lombksjournaldb/1/20/20\\_07\\_073.jpg](http://www.simplicissimus.info/uploads/tx_lombksjournaldb/1/20/20_07_073.jpg) [Accessed 1 August 2017].



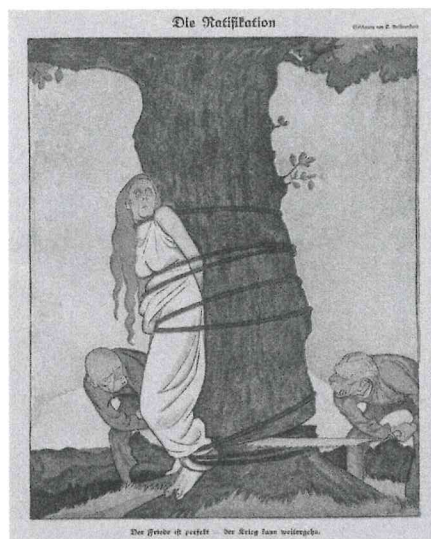


Figure 13.7 Gulbransson, O. (1919). "Die Ratifikation". *Simplicissimus*, 24(31), 1 (28 October 1919).

[www.simplicissimus.info/uploads/tx\\_lombkswjournaldb/1/24/24\\_31\\_409.jpg](http://www.simplicissimus.info/uploads/tx_lombkswjournaldb/1/24/24_31_409.jpg) [Accessed 1 August 2017].

And in 1923, when Bavaria declared a state of emergency and turned its back on the young Weimar Republic in an act of separatism, the Bavarians virtually saw off the branch on which they are sitting.<sup>31</sup> Almost ten years later, in late 1932, the oak finally lies on the ground cut into many pieces, the picture visualizing the political fragmentation in the Reichstag.<sup>32</sup>

### Racial discourse and its satirical reflection

In the early twentieth century climate of increasing nationalism impregnated by racist ideas, cultural sustainability primarily meant protecting the 'purity' of the German people in order to secure their future. This notion, as one can imagine, provoked various satirical reactions.<sup>33</sup> However, these are not always easy to evaluate. Some poems and caricatures do not condemn nationalism and racism altogether; some of them seem to approve of a moderate nationalism, but ridicule a nationalism based on racist ideology; others solely mock the projection of racial ideas onto the forest.

In view of this essay's interest in the entanglement of verbo-visual discourses on cultural and environmental sustainability, it is worth taking a closer look at the racial connotations attributed to the German forest within anti-Semitic discourse. One very early example that demonstrates the instrumentalization

of the German forest for anti-Semitic propaganda appeared in 1896 in the Austrian magazine *Kikeriki*. The journal was founded in 1861 and published in Vienna until 1933. Its founder, Ottokar Franz Ebersberg, was known as a democrat who promoted religious tolerance and stood up for the underprivileged. In its first three decades, the magazine represented liberal and pro-Semitic views, but between the early and mid-1890s, under the growing influence of the Christian Social Party (Christlichsoziale Partei Österreichs) and its founder Karl Lueger, the magazine began to promote anti-Semitic ideas. Thus, until the mid-1890s we find caricatures that mock and critique anti-Semitic discourse, while in the second half of the decade this discourse is affirmed and incited.<sup>34</sup>

As revealed by the names written below the drawing, this caricature, titled *Im Hochgebirge/ In the high mountains* (Fig. 13.8) features *Kikeriki*, the rooster mascot of the magazine, addressing Karl Lueger, who was at that time vice mayor of Vienna and known for his anti-Semitic politics.<sup>35</sup> As we learn from the subtext of the caricature, the rooster, who represents the naïve lower-class citizen, is astonished to see the vice mayor acting as woodcutter. Lueger is depicted with axe and saw, ready to fell the trees marked by the inscriptions "Jüdische Presse" (Jewish press), "Corruption", and "Großkapital" (high finance). The part of the subtext attributed to Lueger tells the reader: Only after those growing 'trees' are eliminated, will the "German forest" and the "Kircherl" (the small church in the background representing Christianity, or, more precisely, Catholicism) receive enough light and air to grow and thrive again ("Freili – i muß da a so a paar gar z'üppige Stämm' aushauen, damit unser deutscher Wald und das Kircherl drinn' wieder Licht und Luft kriegen!"). Drawing on the stereotypical enemy image of the wealthy and corrupt Jewish elite in control of mass media and thus a powerful cultural force, the caricature articulates the fear of being outnumbered, or, in accordance with the forest metaphor, of being overgrown by foreign peoples, especially Jewry.

As in most caricatures, it is up to the reader to recognize the object of mockery, here, to recognize whether Lueger's anti-Semitism is being affirmed or ridiculed. While we would naturally expect satire to mock Lueger's position, in this case the radical change of the journal's political line and other aggressively anti-Semitic jokes in the same issue argue against a critique of anti-Semitism. It seems to be a rather affirmative pictorial comment on Lueger's propaganda, yet there is a confusing little detail in the centre of the picture. How shall we interpret the fact that the rooster, when speaking to Lueger, drops his cigar, and thus risks setting fire to the whole forest and burning down not only the 'foreign' but the 'domestic' trees as well? In view of this, the caricature could be a warning that this anti-Semitic discourse can, again metaphorically speaking, lead to an uncontrollable 'forest fire'. It remains a matter of speculation how contemporary readers might have interpreted this contribution. In this essay, it serves as another example that locates culture – religious culture to be more precise – within the sphere of



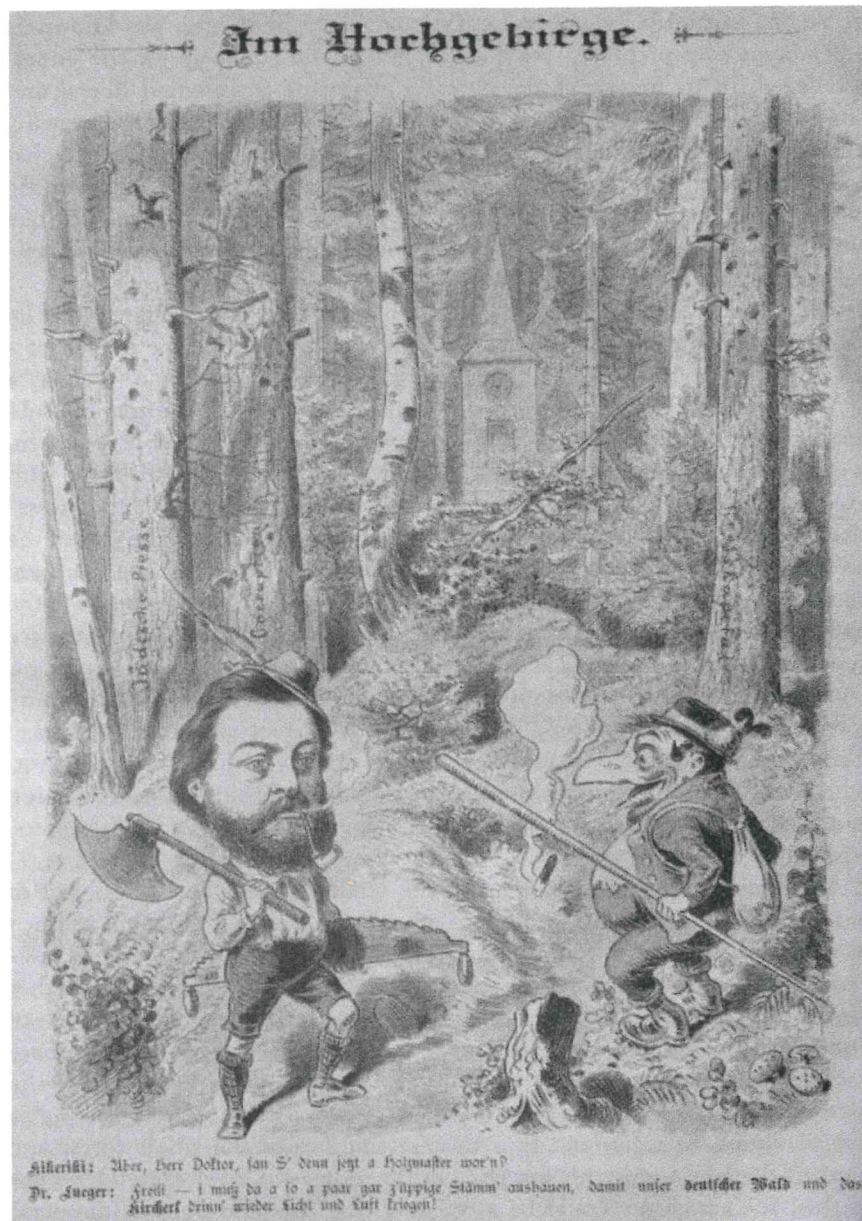


Figure 13.8 Anon. (1896) "Im Hochgebirge". *Kikeriki*, 36(74), 4 (13 September 1896)  
<http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=kik&datum=18960913&seite=4&> [Accessed 1 August 2017]

nature and associates natural heritage (the forest) with cultural heritage (the church). This seems to be underlined by the title *Im Hochgebirge*: The high mountains were considered the last region where one could still find wilderness in the sense of a natural nature – a genuine source of cultural energy that could guarantee cultural sustainability (cf. Riehl 1854: 64–65).

Another caricature that plays with the potential for a racial semantization of the German forest undoubtedly ridicules anti-Semitic discourse: The contribution *Deutscher Wald im Dritten Reich*/German Forest in the Third Reich (Fig. 13.9) appeared more than three decades later, in 1932, shortly before the Nazis' seizure of power, in *Der Wahre Jacob*. The satirical journal, which had been published since 1879, was politically close to the Social Democratic Party; due to its sharp attacks on Nazi politics, it was prohibited in 1933.

This caricature depicts a Nazi and a forester inspecting the forest, standing in front of a beech tree. The Nazi asks the forester to "draw some sap" from the tree in order to "have it tested for 'Semikokken'",<sup>36</sup> the latter being a fictitious term hinting at 'Jewish bacteria'. At the time, this word creation was not entirely new. It had been coined a few years earlier in an anti-Semitic discourse that associated the Eastern Jews with infectious diseases.<sup>37</sup> The caricature mocks the Nazis' pseudo-scientific racism. In the same issue of the journal, another caricature turns the disease metaphor around and uses it against the Nazis themselves: In a drawing of the German Michel (*Deutscher Michel*), his back is dotted by swastikas indicating that he suffers from a bad rash. The caricature's critique of the Nazis' idiotic extension of their ideology to nature itself was not far from reality: In Nazi documents such as Hermann Göring's famous speech "Ewiger Wald – ewiges Volk"/"Eternal Forest – Eternal People", the military leader describes the forest as the "foundation of German culture" ("Grundlage deutscher Kultur", Göring 1940: 250).

Interestingly, in this caricature the oak is for once replaced by the most common deciduous tree in Germany: the beech, more precisely, the copper beech (or European beech), called "Rotbuche" or "Blutbuche" in German. Using the botanically equally correct term "Blutbuche", the subtext reinforces the pseudo-medical context of the blood test and at the same time hints at the Nazis' blood and soil ideology ("Blut und Boden"). Less known, but also interesting, are other connotations of the beech, which is an ambivalent symbol (cf. Zumsteg 2008). It stands for strength, but also for cultural creativity and for calamity: While praised as *genius loci* in many German poems (e.g. by Eduard Mörike), it also figures as a gallows tree in famous texts (most prominently Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's *Die Judenbuche*). Most importantly, this tree is a basic symbol for text culture due to the etymological link between "Buch" (book) and "Buche" (beech), resting on the fact that the Germanic peoples had used beech rods for writing. Choosing the beech (along with the oak) as a symbol for a people or nation means characterizing it as both closely connected to nature and as highly civilized. In view of that period's brute nationalism, caricatures can only ironize this self-image.



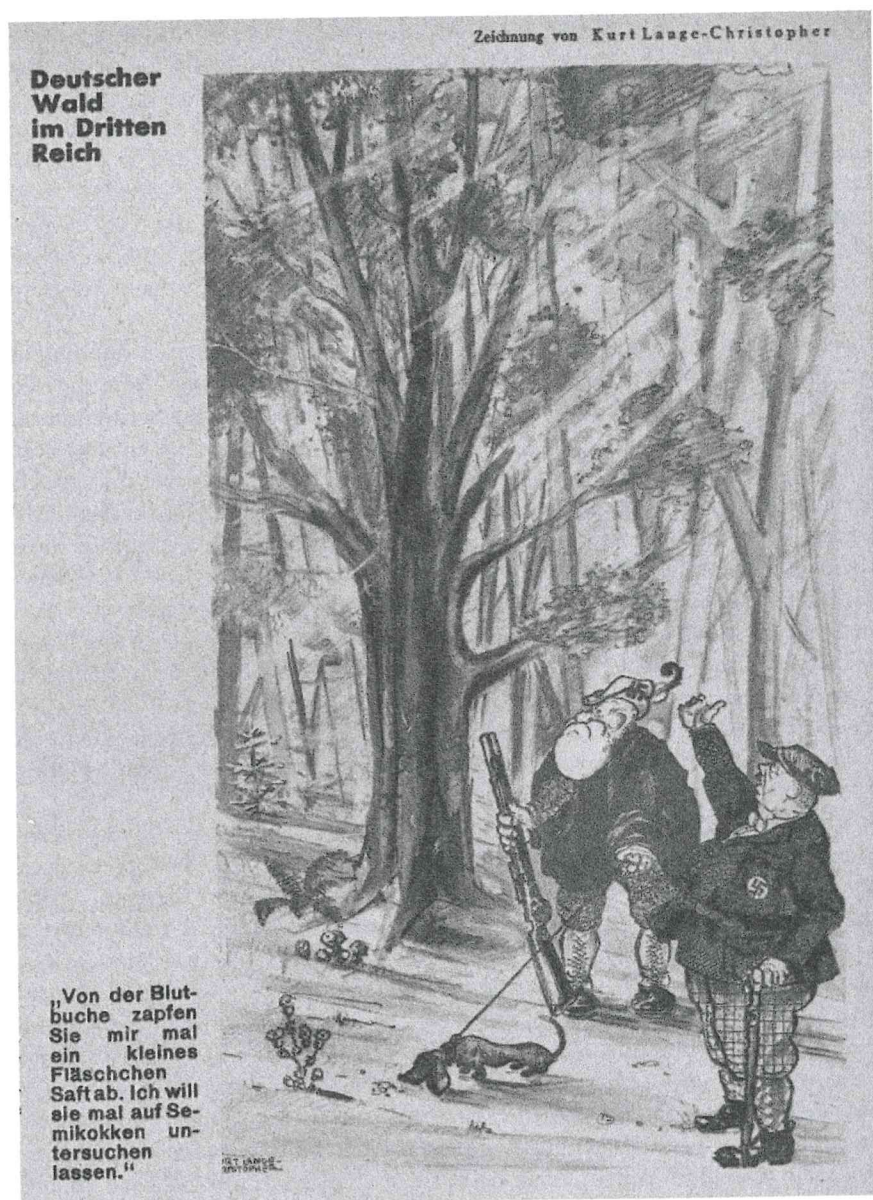


Figure 13.9 Lange-Christopher, K. (1932). "Deutscher Wald im Dritten Reich". *Der Wahre Jacob*, 53(12), 14 (4 June 1932)

<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/wj1932/0194> [Accessed 1 August 2017].

## Outlook and conclusion

If we accept one of the central premises of Finke's and Zapf's cultural ecology and assume that diversity is a precondition for cultural sustainability, the nationalist and racist approaches doubtlessly pointed in the wrong direction. After the Second World War, the German forest and the German oak as national icons almost completely disappeared from political and cultural discourse, but a special attachment to the forest was still articulated in popular culture such as the post-war Heimatfilm (e.g. *Grün ist die Heide*, 1951; *Der Förster vom Silberwald*, 1954). However, since the key words, German forest and German oak, had no political function for a while, all satire that focused on current issues spared these seemingly discarded icons. It has to be added that satire as a medium did not thrive in the decades following the war. Most satirical magazines had to close down during the Second World War; it was the end of a flourishing German culture of verbal and visual satire. In the second half of the twentieth century, satirical magazines did not play the same role as before. The most prominent German magazine, *Titanic*, was founded as late as 1979 – just in time to witness the public panic over the "Waldsterben" (forest dieback), which brought the German forest back into the centre of public attention.<sup>38</sup> Here is not the place to discuss the countless caricatures and the satirical treatment of this topic, but it should be mentioned that the amount of media attention and concern for this environmental problem can partly be explained by the semantization of the forest in German cultural history. This is in line with the observation that the Germans brought more emotion to the debate on forest damage than their European neighbours, who were more concerned about the general effects of air pollution, not least on humans (cf. Metzger et al. 2009: 43). During this period, German media reports fell back on old ideas, as they tended to interpret the forest dieback as a threat to cultural sustainability.<sup>39</sup> The emerging environmental movement and the Green Party (founded in 1980) greatly profited from the Germans' emotional attachment to their forest. This has been noticed and commented on in caricatures that mock the instrumentalization of the German forest for political goals, especially by the Green Party. In the twenty-first century, Klaus Stüttmann depicts the 'German forest' as a wind farm that, with its many wind turbines standing in dense rows and covering a great part of the land, resembles a forest (Figures 13.10 and 13.11).

The visual analogy hints at the ambiguity between the mythification of the German forest and the pleas to protect it on the one side and its use as a natural resource on the other side. These caricatures suggest that the Germans now worship wind energy instead of the forest; both idealizations are considered stupid, the adoration of the wind turbines perhaps even more so. Above all, the cartoons criticize the presumed ideological and emotional elements in energy politics. The cartoon published on the occasion of the Green Party's twenty-fifth anniversary (Fig. 13.10: "25 Jahre Die Grünen. Schützt den deutschen Wald!")/"Save the German forest!") implies that in the twenty-first century the Germans' wind farms have become as famous as the German forest had been for two thousand years. But it also criticizes the Germans for concentrating on another object of fancy,





Figure 13.10 Stuttmann, K. (2005). "25 Jahre Die Grünen. Schützt den deutschen Wald!!" *Der Tagesspiegel* (13 January 2005)

[www.stuttmann-karikaturen.de/karikatur/660](http://www.stuttmann-karikaturen.de/karikatur/660) [Accessed 1 August 2017].

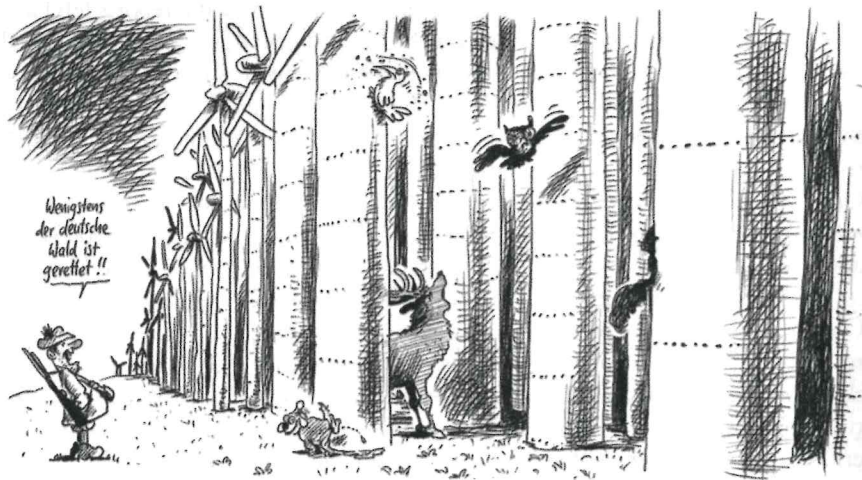


Figure 13.11 Stuttmann, K. (2004). "Wenigstens der deutsche Wald ist gerettet!!" *Der Tagesspiegel* (2 April 2004)

[www.stuttmann-karikaturen.de/ergebnis/326](http://www.stuttmann-karikaturen.de/ergebnis/326) [Accessed 1 August 2017].

thinking that they have already saved their forest by environmental protection policies, while they destroy landscapes by building wind farms, which could be considered as disastrous as forest clearings. The other caricature's message (Fig. 13.11: "Wenigstens der deutsche Wald ist gerettet!!"/ "At least the German forest has been saved!") is equally ironic, since it calls attention to the fact that wind turbines, even if they slightly resemble trees from afar, are no adequate substitute and neither fulfil the animals' nor the humans' needs. These new 'German forests' may provide power, but no cultural energy.

In conclusion, it could be noted that in recent satire on environmental transformations the whole concept of a 'German forest' is decidedly exposed to ridicule. Satires that use the term improperly for non-natural anthropogenic phenomena not only point to a change in values, but they also suggest that any cultural mythification of nature is illusory, and its discursive instrumentalization is reactionary. This does not mean, however, that discourses on environmental sustainability and on cultural sustainability can be disentangled. To the contrary, 'quality media' often quietly presuppose a common understanding that cultural sustainability always depends on environmental sustainability, while 'sensational media' and politics tend to the mythification and instrumentalization mentioned above. Today, the protection of landscapes is still propagated by emphasizing their cultural meaning, but the nationalist view has gradually been replaced by a global perspective – just as sustainability altogether has become a transcultural issue.

## Notes

- 1 All translations from German sources into English are mine unless otherwise noted.
- 2 See Riehl's critical comments on the forest clear cuttings of the nineteenth century and on the substitution of deciduous forests with conifers as well as his plea for special protection of the oaks (Riehl 1854: 35–37).
- 3 For more detail, see Zapf (2016b).
- 4 These remarks can be found at greater length in Zemanek (2017).
- 5 These remarks can be found at greater length in Zemanek (2017).
- 6 In our context it suffices to refer to the debate, regardless of the thesis that the degree of the alleged wood shortage did not correspond to reality. Cf. Radkau (2011: 40–42).
- 7 Zechner (2016) considers it as an 'imagined landscape' and traces its facets from the Romans to the Nazis. My essay owes much background knowledge and many references to this study.
- 8 See Gaius Plinius Secundus. *Naturalis historiae*, book XVI, ch. 2; Julius Caesar. *De bello gallico*, book VI, ch. 21, 23, 25–28; and Publius Cornelius Tacitus. *Germania*, ch. 2–5.
- 9 Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales*, book II, ch. 88.
- 10 See Klopstock's odes *Thuisikon*, *Der Hügel und der Hain*, *Unsere Fürsten* and *Mein Wäldchen* (Klopstock 2010: 248, 300–304, 278–279, 365). For more details see Zechner (2016: 21–23).
- 11 For references to the Grimms' writings, I am indebted to Zechner (2016: 83–104).
- 12 On the language purism movement, see Gardt (2000).



- 13 They express this idea in many of their writings; most prominently: Grimm, J. and Grimm, W. (1812): VI. On the Grimms' mythification of the forest, see Ono (2007); Zechner (2013). For an ecocritical interpretation, see Stobbe (2017: 298–304).
- 14 For forest imaginations in German Romantic art, see Maringer (2009); for the development of the German forest, see Bernhard (2012).
- 15 For an exceptional focus on environmental history in Eichendorff scholarship, see Frühwald (1994).
- 16 In Mendelssohn's works the songs are titled "Der Jäger Abschied", also known as "Jägers Abschied" or "Der deutsche Wald" ("Wer hat dich, du schöner Wald") op. 50,2 (1840) and "Abschied vom Wald" ("O Täler weit, o Höhen") op. 59,3 (1843).
- 17 For a discussion of the picture (Detjens, F. and Wagner, E. [1895]), see Zemanek (2017, 132–134). – All artworks mentioned that appeared in *Fliegende Blätter*, in *Kladderadatsch* and in *Der wahre Jacob* are in the digital library of Heidelberg University available at: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de>.
- 18 For an explanatory comment on this law, see Amtspresse Preußens (1882).
- 19 For example: "Das Forst- und Feldpolizeigesetz" (Anon. 1880).
- 20 There was an outcry against Podbielski articulated in the liberal leftist press inflamed by Berlin workers and citizens who wanted to secure the forest as recreation area. See the caricature "Pod der Waldverwüster" (Stutz 1904). – For a detailed account of the fight over the Grunewald, see Wilson (2012a: esp. 86–131; 2012b).
- 21 On the building of the Grunewald racecourse, see "Die neue Rennbahn im Grunewald bei Berlin" (Anon. 1907). – Podbielski also played a key role in the construction of the racecourse. The protests against the sell-out of the forest culminated once more in January 1909 at the "Zweiter Berliner Waldschutztag"/"Second Berlin Forest Protection Day". In 1915, finally, the Prussian state sold the Grunewald to Berlin; the city assured its inhabitants that the newly bought 10000 hectares of forest would be preserved and exclusively used as recreation area.
- 22 Still searching for a solution concerning the conflict over reparations, Walther Rathenau, who as a successful Jewish business man also had to face anti-Semitic attacks, was assassinated on June 24, 1922.
- 23 This view was also articulated in poems, e.g. in another one that appeared in *Kladderadatsch* in 1923 titled "Abschied vom Walde" (Anon. 1923), which again begins with the parodistic question "Wer hat dich, du schöner Wald,/ Abgeholzt. . . ?" and answers "Frankreich hat Dich, schöner Wald!" ("It is France who has got you now, beautiful forest!").
- 24 Again, many caricatures could be mentioned here. A typical early example from *Kladderadatsch*: "Wie man das Hindernis wegschafft für eine große liberale Partei" (Anon. 1880).
- 25 See "Die deutsche Eiche" (Anon. 1917).
- 26 See the text-image-combination titled "Einst und Jetzt" (Anon. 1911) from *Kikeriki*. All artworks mentioned that appeared in *Kikeriki* are available at: <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=kik> [accessed 1 Aug 2017].
- 27 For caricatures depicting these parties as animal pests, see also "Die deutsche Eiche" (Schulz 1904). – All artworks mentioned that appeared in *Simplicissimus* are available at: [www.simplicissimus.info](http://www.simplicissimus.info) [Accessed 1 Aug 2017].
- 28 See the caricature "Deutscher Herbst" (Gulbransson 1918) that appeared one week after the Armistice of 11 November 1918.
- 29 See, for example, "Erzberger und die deutsche Eiche" (Arnold 1920).
- 30 See "Dividenden über alles" (Arnold 1922).
- 31 See the caricature "Bayern und Reich" (Arnold 1923), which appeared two weeks before the Munich Putsch.
- 32 See "Einstimmigkeit" (Gulbransson 1932).

- 33 See the poem "Treueschwur", which appeared in *Simplicissimus* in 1907 next to a caricature drawn by Eduard Thöny (Thoma and Thöny 1907). The poem was written by Ludwig Thoma, who was at that time chief editor of the *Simplicissimus* and known for his biting left-liberal critique, which is why he covered his identity with the pseudonym Peter Schlemihl. His poem mocks a pledge of allegiance to Germania; the statue is part of the Niederwalddenkmal close to Rüdesheim on the shores of the Rhine River.
- 34 On *Kikeriki*'s political outlook, see Holzinger (2015). On caricatures of Jews, see Schäfer (2005).
- 35 When this caricature appeared in September 1896, Lueger had just been elected mayor of Vienna, but since the Emperor Franz Joseph I resented Lueger's blatant anti-Semitism and prevented his appointment several times, Lueger had to serve as vice mayor until Franz Joseph finally conceded to a plea by Pope Leo XIII and accepted him as mayor. In 1893, Lueger, a zealous Catholic, had founded the Christlichsoziale Partei, who won their voters from the petite bourgeoisie with anti-capitalistic and anti-Semitic propaganda. During his mayoralty Lueger was very popular thanks to infrastructural reforms that improved everyday life in the metropolis – not the least important of which being the transformation into a green city – but also due to the emergence of a personality cult that would later be imitated by Hitler's entourage.
- 36 The German subtext reads: "Von der Blutbuche zapfen Sie mir mal ein kleines Fläschchen Saft ab. Ich will sie mal auf Semikokken untersuchen lassen."
- 37 In 1926, the magazine *Vorwärts* – the official voice of the Social Democratic Party since 1876 – included a caricature in which a doctor examines the members of the Reichstag and tests their blood for "Semikokken". Cf. Nemitz (2000: 67).
- 38 On this public debate, see Metzger (2015); Bemann and von Detten (2013).
- 39 'Old ideas' refers to the attribution of a cultural value to the forest, not to nationalist or racist ideas. Cf. Metzger et al. (2009: 45).

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## 14 The cultural sustainability of Victorian waste

Ursula Kluwick

### Introduction

Cultural sustainability has the ring of a new buzzword. It is probably most readily associated with the replacement of the three-pillar model of sustainable development with a four-pillar model that includes cultural as an addition to ecological, economic, and social aspects to indicate that the role of culture is increasingly being taken into account as a key component of sustainability. However, and as my phrasing already suggests, the idea that cultural sustainability is in some way new is entirely a matter of perspective. Because if we disregard the fact that the *attention paid* to the role of culture in sustainability is new, we are left with the impression that there is in fact really nothing particularly novel about the involvement of culture in questions of sustainability. Indeed, sustainability has everything to do with culture, be it culture as a way of life (after Raymond Williams) or culture as specific artistic and intellectual practices. My contribution to this volume highlights this through a historical perspective on the concept of cultural sustainability and through a focus on the conversation between the two meanings of culture just indicated. I zoom in on a specific controversy in Victorian Britain that circulated around what I argue is a question of sustainability: waste management, in particular discussions about the utilisation of human excrement as manure and the relative merits of a dry conservancy versus a water-borne system of sewage removal. I look at the interdiscursive engagement of Victorian literature with this issue, arguing that it can be read in terms of a form of cultural sustainability. Literary representations of water in the nineteenth century helped naturalise the connection between water and sewage, thereby to some extent also supporting the actual re-organisation of waste disposal. In this sense, literary production contributed to a climate in which a form of waste disposal was adopted that, as far as the use of resources is concerned, was arguably less sustainable than the traditional dry conservancy method that had hitherto been practiced. In this sense, water-borne sewage disposal was culturally sustainable because in the cultural imaginary it figured as a more endurable method enabling a healthier future. One of the main objectives of my essay, then, is to draw attention to the mechanisms by which a culture which valued sustainability (the recycling of manure) nevertheless made possible a shift to an environmentally less sustainable form of sewage disposal as an imaginatively sustainable change.