

# **Destination 'Heimat': Tourist Discourses and the Construction of an Austrian Home- land in Popular 1950s Austrian Movies**

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## **RESÜMEE**

Tourismus ist nicht (nur) eine gefällige und marktkonforme Darstellung von Land und Leuten, sondern erlaubt auch Einblicke in die Prozesse der nationalen und kulturellen Identitätskonstruktion. Basierend auf einem diskursiven Verständnis touristischer Narrative und Praktiken analysiere ich in diesem Artikel, wie zwei populäre österreichische Nachkriegsfilme, *Der Hofrat Geiger* (1952) und *Echo der Berge / Der Förster vom Silberwald* (1954), den touristischen Habitus als Voraussetzung für die Wiederrichtung einer österreichischen Heimat darstellen. Die physische und mentale Mobilität der „Touristen“ denen es gelingt, im Fremden jeweils auch das Eigene zu erkennen, wird dabei zum Modell für ein Nachkriegsösterreich, das sich seine Idee von Heimat als ein von Deutschland unabhängiges Konzept neu zusammenbauen muss. Anhand einer detaillierten Diskussion der Filme zeige ich, dass Tourismus nicht einfach ein Oberflächenphänomen ist, sondern nuancierte Einblicke in kulturelle und nationale Identitätskonstruktionen ermöglicht, die auch zu vergleichenden Studien mit anderen ‚belasteten‘ Nationalidentitäten führen können.

*Wer nie fortgeht, kommt nie heim.* (Luis Trenker, *The Prodigal Son*, 1934)

*Wir lieben die Heimat, aber wir brauchen die Fremde. Wir brauchen den Fremdenverkehr und laden alle Welt zu uns zu Gäste.* (Austrian President Karl Renner, 1946)

With few exceptions, scholars, cultural critics, and literary authors have approached the study of tourism's role in post-World War II Austrian history with tightly-held noses. Paradigmatic literary examples for the early and later postwar period are Hans Lebert's

*Die Wolfshaut* (1960) and Norbert Gstrein's *Einer* (1988), respectively.<sup>1</sup> Both authors draw very direct connections between the continuation of authoritarian trends in Austrian society and politics and the obedient host attitude demanded by the tourism industry.<sup>2</sup> Tourism already had a bad reputation as the trivial pursuit of the uneducated masses, and the Austrian government's often clumsy and rather transparent attempts at utilising tourist images to cleanse the country's reputation after its dalliance with the Third Reich only seemed to confirm the notion that tourism was mainly the inauthentic superstructure covering up the country's brown foundation. When author and Nobel laureate Elfriede Jelinek was asked if she would indeed consider "Alpine tourism as a perfect means to cover up history in Austria?" she replied "Yes. Everything that has been done in this country since 1945 was the result of an intricate cover-up."<sup>3</sup> An important point of crystallisation for this critique has been (and to some extent still is) the genre of the *Heimatfilm*. Rooted in and associated with allegedly low-brow popular literary traditions, the blood-and-soil ideology of National Socialism, and the processes of capitalist commodification in the economic boom years of the 1950s, the *Heimatfilm* seems to illustrate in ideal ways Austria's attempts to sell a false historical and national image for (mostly German) tourists:

*The mentioning of the term Heimat in Austria evokes the 'naturally' pink and sparkling frosting of the Heimatfilm [...] as well as everything that (German) tourists would like to see when visiting Austria's countryside.*<sup>4</sup>

This is not to deny that sanitised tourism images and narratives in the *Heimatfilm* and in other venues have been used to market a particular Austrian image. However, in this article I will treat tourism not as an inauthentic surface phenomenon, but as a discursive matrix through which we gain a better understanding of national identity processes. My analysis of tourism in two highly popular post-World War II films, *Der Hofrat Geiger* (1947)<sup>5</sup> and *Echo der Berge/Der Förster vom Silberwald* (1954),<sup>6</sup> focuses on the function

1 H. Lebert, *Die Wolfshaut*, Hamburg 1960; N. Gstrein, *Einer*, Salzburg 1988.

2 Austrian writer Peter Turrini described Austria's role in the postwar European landscape as follows: "The Germans should work and the Austrians care for their relaxation. Austria had become a central European Hawaii, a touristic banana republic." (P. Turrini, "Die touristische Bananenrepublik", in: *Der Spiegel*, 10. Nov 1986, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13520866.html>).

3 E. Brenner, "Where are the Big Topics, Where is the Big Form?" Elfriede Jelinek in Discussion with Eva Brenner about her Play *Totenauberg*, Theater, and Politics", in: Elfriede Jelinek: Framed by Language, Hg. J. B. Johns and K. Arens, Riverside 1994, 18-34: 30.

4 All translations of German-speaking sources are mine, the original German will be provided in the footnote section. "In Österreich denkt man bei der Erwähnung des Begriffs Heimat ganz spontan an den 'natürlich' rosa glänzenden Überguß des Heimatfilms, und [...] an all das, was die (deutschen) Touristen sehen wollen, wenn sie nach Österreich aufs Land kommen." R. Buchschwenter, "Ruf der Berge – Echo des Fremdenverkehrs: Der Heimatfilm. Ein österreichischer Konjunkturritt", in: *Ohne Untertitel: Fragmente einer Geschichte des österreichischen Kinos*, Hrsg. R. Beckermann und C. Blümlinger, Wien 1996, 259-84: 282.

5 *Der Hofrat Geiger*, Dir. Hans Wolff, Perf. Paul Hörbiger, Marianne Andergast, and Hans Moser, Willi Forst Productions, 1947.

6 *Echo der Berge/Der Förster vom Silberwald*, Dir. Alfons Stummer, Perf. Rudolf Lenz, Anita Gutweil, Rondo Film, 1954.

of tourism in the reconstruction of an Austrian national *Heimat* during the country's Allied occupation from 1945 to 1955.

As I have discussed elsewhere in greater detail, tourism can be a very productive discursive framework for investigating performative identity constructions.<sup>7</sup> Historian Alon Confino has demonstrated how studying what he calls the “rhetoric of tourism” can provide insights into people’s everyday desires and into their understanding of normalcy.<sup>8</sup> Precisely because “tourism, like festivals, religious ritual, art, and cinema, is not a flight from reality but a symbolic practice and representation to understand and negotiate with [reality],” the tourist discourse both mirrors and shapes socioeconomic, political, and cultural practices.<sup>9</sup>

Such a discursive understanding of tourism is particularly helpful for the Austrian post-war period, when the widespread destruction of the tourist infrastructure prevented any kind of actual tourism on a larger scale.<sup>10</sup> The majority of foreign visitors in the immediate afterwar years were not tourists but displaced persons and allied soldiers. Yet, it would be wrong to conclude from the meager statistics that tourism was irrelevant in the larger discourses about the Austrian nation. As David Crouch formulates it, “crude consumption figures do not reveal very much of spatial practice”,<sup>11</sup> and one must look beyond the number of overnight stays to other practices, narratives, and images in order to recognise tourism’s role in the reemergence of Austria as a coherent place and as a national, cultural, and ethnic community.

Cinematic texts are a particularly rich resource for investigating representations of tourist images and practices. As film historian Tom Gunning notes, cinema from its early days onward has imitated the “view of the tourist [...], placing natural or cultural sites on display, but also miming the act of visual appropriation, the natural and cultural consumed as sights.”<sup>12</sup> The postwar *Heimatfilm* genre, arguably one of the most unique cinematic eras in German-speaking cinema,<sup>13</sup> relies heavily on tourist place images of rural heaths and breathtaking Alpine panoramas as a quasi default backdrop. In much of the critical literature, these particular place images have been treated as synonymous with the particular *Heimat* ideology promoted under National Socialism. As Johannes von Moltke has demonstrated in his pathbreaking study, *No Place Like Home* (2005), the reflexive dismissal of these codified (and commodified) tourist place images in the *Heimatfilm* as

7 For a more detailed discussion of performative identity constructions in tourism see G. Graml, “We Love Our Heimat, but We Need Foreigners: Tourism and the Reconstruction of Austria, 1945-55,” in: *Journal of Austrian Studies*, 46 (2013) 3, 51-76.

8 A. Confino, “Traveling as a Culture of Remembrance,” in: *History & Memory*, 12 (2000) 2, 92-121: 101-2.

9 A. Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History*, Chapel Hill 2006, 220.

10 A. Brusatti, *100 Jahre Österreichischer Fremdenverkehr: Historische Entwicklung, 1884-1984*, Wien 1984.

11 D. Crouch, “Introduction: Encounters in Leisure/Tourism”, in: *Leisure/Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge*, Hg. David Crouch, New York 1999, 1-16.

12 T. Gunning, “Before Documentary: Early Nonfiction Film and the ‘View’ Aesthetic,” in: *Uncharted Territory: Essays on Early Nonfiction Film*, Hg. Daan Hertogs and Nico de Klerk, Amsterdam 1997, 9-24: 15.

13 T. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History*, New Brunswick 1989, 141.

reactionary and fascist ignores that the Nazis' rather narrow utilisation of *Heimat* is only one manifestation of the *Heimat* idea within a much longer history. Drawing on the work of historians Celia Applegate and Alon Confino, Moltke describes how in the 19th century the notion of *Heimat* had developed from a term describing one's belonging to a particular local or regional community to a concept that helped people reconcile the tensions between their affiliations with a regional space and the required loyalty for the emerging German national community.<sup>14</sup> This mediating function of *Heimat* must therefore be differentiated from the eventual National Socialist conflation of *Heimat* with the Third Reich's proclaimed pre- or anti-modern version of community.<sup>15</sup> As Moltke argues, categorising all *Heimatfilm* images as quasi-fascist to some extent reaffirms a National Socialist definition of *Heimat* and ignores the concept's "dialectical" potential.<sup>16</sup> Instead of trying to once and for all define the place of *Heimat*, Moltke encourages scholars to "pay close attention to the place(s) of *Heimat* in modernity."<sup>17</sup> The 1950s *Heimatfilm* genre, in its broad range of manifestations, offers insights into how "culture negotiated central concerns with home, space, and belonging in the ongoing process of national reconstruction. In this context, the *Heimatfilm* came to function as a veritable (if selective) map to a postwar national space [...]."<sup>18</sup> In the following sections, I will trace the emergence of Austrian national spaces by using two widely popular *Heimatfilme* as roadmap. As I will show, tourist practices and narratives are more than just manifestations of modernity against which the comforting notion of *Heimat* is being deployed. The films' overt references to tourism and to a tourist "habitus" can be read as intentional modelling of the physical and mental mobility necessary for the journey towards a new *Heimat*.

### The Tourist as Prototypical Austrian in *Der Hofrat Geiger*

The 1947 release *Der Hofrat Geiger* is a particularly suitable example for investigating this role of the tourist discourse. The eponymous councillor (*Hofrat*) Geiger – a representative of the second-most popular professional group represented in the *Heimatfilm*<sup>19</sup> – has resigned his position in protest against Austria's annexation by Nazi Germany. He has spent the war years in seclusion with his former clerk Lechner, who works as his servant and is also responsible for the ruse that props up the councillor's postwar life: Pretending that Geiger's successor in the ministry is overwhelmed by his task, Lechner slips Geiger outdated files for annotation and comment and thereby provides his master with a purpose in life. Things change when Geiger, in one of the files, stumbles across the name of a woman with whom he had a holiday love affair during a pre-war vacation in Spitz

14 J. v. Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*, Berkeley, CA 2005, 9

15 *Ibid.*, 54.

16 *Ibid.*, 14.

17 *Ibid.*, 12.

18 *Ibid.*, 23.

19 W. Höfig, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm 1947-1960*, Stuttgart 1973; qtd. in R. Buchschwenter, "Ruf" (4), 277.

at the Danube, a small town in the famous tourism and wine-growing region *Wachau*. After some calculation, Geiger and Lechner determine that the former lover's daughter mentioned in the file must be the councillor's. They decide to repeat the vacation trip to the Wachau, where Geiger does indeed meet his former lover, Marianne, and their now adult daughter.

Based on a successful 1942 play by Martin Costa, the 1947 film version about the councillor who is able to re-connect with his past and to correct prior errors was a big hit with audiences and experienced remakes in 1961 and 1962.<sup>20</sup> For the immediate postwar years, *Der Hofrat Geiger* is listed as the most famous and financially the most successful Austrian film production.<sup>21</sup> Critics and reviewers frequently cited the 1947 film and the remakes as an illustration of how the *Heimatfilm* and tourist film genres were utilised to distract from Austria's complicity in the crimes of National Socialism.<sup>22</sup> However, as the synopsis of the film's plot demonstrates, tourist discourses and practices play a central role in literally and figuratively *re-membering* an Austria whose continued existence as unified and coherent entity was quite uncertain under the Allied occupation during the immediate postwar years. With the country at large and the capital city of Vienna partitioned into four different occupation zones, Austrians experienced their homeland as fragmented. Attempts to cross the military demarcation lines were difficult, and the developing cold war between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union led to heightened anxiety about the country's future.<sup>23</sup>

*Der Hofrat Geiger* references Austria's contemporary situation with shots of bombed out ruins in Vienna's center and with a rather comical sequence in which the councillor's servant Lechner tries to exchange objects of dubious value on the black market in order to obtain eggs for Geiger's breakfast. While this underscores that *Hamsterkäufe* likely generated a lot more mobility than tourist trips, the film does use the tourist discourse to represent the reconstruction of Austria as suitable and, most importantly, accessible *Heimat* after 1945.

On a very basic level, tourism provided a safe discursive terrain for negotiating the conflicting desires around the country's more recent past: While many Austrians wanted to leave it behind, the construction of a supposedly "new" and autonomous Austrian nation would have to connect with its pre-annexation history, which offered at least some point of orientation amid the ruins of World War II. The fact that councillor Geiger's departure

20 M. Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre and Masculinity*, New York 2013: 155; F. Schuh, "Heimat bist du großer Filme: Thesen zur Kitschindustrie", in: *Ohne Untertitel: Fragmente einer Geschichte des österreichischen Kinos*, Hg. Ruth Beckermann and Christa Blümlinger, Vienna 1996, 247-58: 256.

21 According to Steiner, *Der Hofrat Geiger*, and its sequel, *Der Herr Kanzleirat* (1948), also became very popular with West German audiences after their premiere as first Austrian films in the West German occupation zones in November 1948 (G. Steiner, *Die Heimat-Macher: Kino in Österreich 1946–1966*, Wien 1987: 69-70).

22 Maria Fritsche makes a convincing case for distinguishing between the *Heimatfilm* and the tourism film genre and for including *Der Hofrat Geiger* into the latter. For the purpose of my paper, this debate is mostly irrelevant, as I focus on the various ways in which the discourse of tourism facilitated the reconstruction of an Austrian identity in popular cinematic contexts, irrespective of the actual genre. Fritsche, *Homemade* (20), 154-9.

23 M. Rauchensteiner, *Der Krieg in Österreich 1945*, Vienna 1945: 454.

from a “fake” postwar existence is triggered by the memory of a tourist experience might strike one as odd, considering the destruction and the many problems that Austria faced in the immediate postwar years. And yet, the film’s use of the tourist discourse to allow Geiger an escape from his situation reaffirms Dean MacCannell’s analysis of the tourist as a model for “modern-man-in-general”<sup>24</sup> who tries “to overcome the discontinuity of modernity” and to “incorporat[e] its fragments into unified experience”, so that he can “discover or reconstruct a cultural heritage or a social identity.”<sup>25</sup> The film allows Geiger to do just that: Even though his former lover, Marianne Mühlgruber, is initially quite underwhelmed by Geiger’s sudden appearance almost two decades after their affair, the couple eventually re-unites after a lengthy comedy-of-errors segment. Geiger is even able to rectify his former irresponsibility by silently financing the renovation of the rundown inn managed by Marianne. In doing so, he actively contributes to the transformation of a place that best illustrates his last experience of pre-war normalcy into the new (and simultaneously old) postwar *Heimat*.

Obviously, Geiger’s efforts to turn back the clock and engage in “Wiedergutmachung” – a term used repeatedly and intentionally in the film – are rather transparent attempts at rewriting recent Austrian history. Probably more common than the example of Geiger as courageous servant of the state who resigned in protest against Austria’s annexation by the Third Reich were those career civil servants, who had become illegal National Socialists already before 1938 and who prepared the quick transition from the authoritarian Schuschnigg government to the National Socialist regime. *Der Hofrat Geiger* directly and comically alludes to Austria’s problem with history when Geiger and Lechner confuse themselves with the rather simple task of calculating the councillor’s daughter’s age. Their inability to simply subtract 1929 from 1947 to arrive at the age of eighteen alludes to Austria’s inability (and unwillingness) to straighten its own historical record.<sup>26</sup>

These sequences, in which the film itself calls attention – albeit in a comical fashion – to the distortions and misrepresentations of historical developments, illustrate that the use of tourist images and narratives does not simply constitute an attempt to cover up an inconvenient history. Instead, tourism models the kind of mental travelling required to turn an experience of lack and disruption into an experience of wholeness. Unless one argues from the (long fashionable) vantage point of the supposedly well-educated traveller for whom tourists are synonymous with the travelling masses of the *ignoranti*, the question as to whether or not tourist images and narratives are authentic misses the point. As cultural geographer Mike Crang writes,

24 D. MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, Berkeley, CA, 1999: 1.

25 *Ibid.*, 13.

26 This calculation is also interesting insofar, as the year of the daughter’s conception is not 1938, the year of Austria’s annexation by Germany, but 1929. Assuming that the year is the symbolic marker for a time in the past when things were in order, the film clearly locates this past not only before the National Socialist years but also before the core period of Austria’s authoritarian experiments under the Dollfuß and Schuschnigg governments.

*It is not about the image of places as beheld by tourists, but rather the processes and practices of signification – where tourism takes up discourses and representations and uses them in ordering places, making meanings, making distinctions, and thus making places through actions.*<sup>27</sup>

According to Crang, interest in tourist places needs to focus on the “ontology of tourist places” instead of on the “epistemology of their representations.”<sup>28</sup> Whether or not tourist places are authentic is less important than understanding how, by whom, and for what purposes they are being constructed.

In this context, *Der Hofrat Geiger* is of interest not so much because its use of tourist images and narratives results in a distorted version of the recent past, but, rather, because the way the film uses the tourism discourse calls attention to the constructedness and questionable authenticity of national identity in the first place. Geiger’s departure from a life built on his servant’s benevolent deception in order to find a more authentic experience is, ultimately, only the repetition of an earlier tourist trip. Instead of reading this solely as evidence that Geiger’s – and by extension Austria’s – “true” existence is covered up by tourist images, I view it as an illustration of what Judith Butler calls the “performative” character of all identity processes. “Performativity,” according to Butler, is “the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names.”<sup>29</sup> In the realm of tourism studies, this concept of performativity has inspired a direction of research where “places and spaces do not function anymore as the stabilising elements in complex and fluid identity positions” but are subject to ever-changing performative interpretations which are themselves contingent on multilayered socio-cultural contexts.<sup>30</sup> As political scientist Cynthia Weber’s work demonstrates, the concept of performativity has also impacted our understanding of the nation state. The allegedly “pre-discursive, natural” concept of the “state” is necessary as a kind of everyday “cultural referent [to which] sovereignty refers,” but in reality the nation state is “performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its result.”<sup>31</sup>

While it looks, at first, as if the tourist narrative allows Geiger to go back in time and place to pick up his life where he irresponsibly dropped the ball eighteen years ago, the film soon undercuts such an easy assumption. There is no family waiting for Geiger to join them: Marianne does not see herself as the councillor’s wife, and the daughter is unaware that Geiger is her father. Slowly, Geiger constructs – performs – his new life by using the normative discourses of tourism and bureaucracy to his advantage. The tourism infrastructure requires constant renovation and financing, Marianne’s citizenship status needs to be determined, and the handing over of property to the next generation has to

27 M. Crang, “Circulation and Emplacement: The Hollowed-Out Performance of Tourism”, in: *Travels in Paradox: Re-mapping Tourism*, Ed. Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes, London 2006, 47-64: 48.

28 *Ibid.*, 53.

29 J. Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*, New York 1993, 2.

30 S. Coleman, and M. Crang. “Grounded Tourists, Travelling Theory”, in: *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*, Ed. Simon Coleman and Mike Crang, New York 2002, 1-17: 11.

31 C. Weber, “Performative States”, in: *Millennium*, 27 (1998) 1, 77-95: 91.

be organised. Thus, although Marianne clearly rejects Geiger's initial attempts to present himself as *pater familias* by referring to his demonstrated disinterest in this role, he is nonetheless able to assume the position of head of household and even make it look natural via the tourism discourse.

On a larger scale, Geiger's performative construction of a multi-generational family also symbolises the performative reconstruction of Austria. At a time when the country's territorial integrity was in question and its sovereignty constrained by Allied commanders, the tourism discourse offered an allegedly non-political territory for reimagining a new Austria that was able to show off its long and grand history without addressing its responsibility for the most recent negative past. The relevance of tourism in this process is not so much its role as cover-up, but as a discursive terrain that enabled the creative and dynamic performance of this new Austrian identity, while also re-establishing a not-so-new conservative patriarchal society that allowed for significant continuity from the war to the postwar years.

On a visual level, the repetition of a pre-war vacation experience enables the film to use stock images of the *Wachau* as stand in for the whole country, thereby creating the temporary illusion of unfettered travel opportunities even though the film's locations were all well within the Soviet-occupied zone. The actual performative construction of Austrianness, however, happens in the persona of Geiger, whose nuanced gendering within a patriarchal context illustrates the desirable traits of the new Austria as generally non-aggressive, capable of enduring prolonged frustration, and equipped with an ultimately disarming charm that was meant to distinguish Austrians (and Austria) from supposedly active, aggressive, and virile Germans (and Germany).<sup>32</sup>

One of the dangers of drawing such distinctions was to present Austria and Austrian men as all-too-feminine, as the beginning sequences of *Der Hofrat Geiger* indicate. The councillor and his servant live and argue like a couple, with one person taking care of the household and the other serving as the main breadwinner. Despite his role as head of household, Geiger is clearly stereotyped as a feminine character, affected by mood swings and constantly complaining about drafty windows, uncomfortable pillows, and bad food. Maria Fritsche has offered an innovative and convincing analysis of how the domestic life of councillor Geiger and his servant Lechner indicates a homosexual relationship,<sup>33</sup> but it's important to also view Geiger's transformation from domesticated and weak male to decisive patriarch of a multi-generational family in the context of quickly changing attitudes towards resistance fighters and *Wehrmacht* soldiers. As much as the

32 In his essay, "Geschlecht und Volkscharakter," Siegfried Mattl shows how such a gendered perception of national differences has been projected back into history in official publications such as *The Book of Austria*, where Austria is presented as a space that had to endure continuous (and violent) traffic from Germanic peoples such as the "Illyrians, Celts, [...] Teutons, [...] Goths" (S. Mattl, "Geschlecht und Volkscharakter: Austria Engendered", in: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 7 (1996) 4, 499-515; E. Marboe, *The Book of Austria*, Vienna 1948, 5). In this context, Austria's annexation by Germany appears as simply a repeat of earlier Teutonic attacks on Austria. For a detailed discussion of *The Book of Austria's* role in postwar Austrian identity construction see G. Graml (7).

33 M. Fritsche, *Homemade* (20), 154ff.



film touts Geiger's "heroic" act of resignation in protest against the Nazi takeover, the political climate in postwar Austria showed very little respect and gratitude for those Austrian men who actually resisted the Nazi regime or deserted from the military. In monuments and speeches soon after the war, Austrian soldiers serving in the German *Wehrmacht* were acknowledged as men who had done their patriotic duty, while resisters and dissidents were either not mentioned or labelled traitors.<sup>34</sup>

The performative construction of his family within the discourse of tourism enables Geiger to redeem his Austrian manhood as a "fighter" without getting too close to the supposedly more virile German masculinity. The opponent Geiger has to fight and overpower is Marianne, a woman who, as the film insinuates, has become too autonomous and independent while raising her daughter as a single parent and managing the old and quaint inn where she and Geiger had originally met. Before Geiger's return, Marianne had already repeatedly rejected rich hotel owner Mr. Pfüller's offers to marry him and turn her flagging inn into a "dependance" of his successful hotel, *Der Goldene Ochse*. Initially, Marianne also rejects Geiger's offer of marriage, but she agrees to marry the councillor in name only when Pfüller, who is also the mayor of Spitz, threatens to have her disowned because of her lack of Austrian citizenship documents.

However, Pfüller threatens to reveal the arranged nature of the marriage to the authorities, so Marianne strives to obtain a certificate of Austrian citizenship for herself, which would enable her to divorce Geiger and reject Pfüller's blackmailing. Unbeknownst to her, the citizenship application lands on Geiger's desk, and he gives her a humiliating and exhausting months-long runaround that ends with the rejection of her application by Geiger himself on the grounds that she is already married to an Austrian and that he is graciously protecting her from being indicted for lying to the authorities. In the meantime, Geiger finances the inn's renovation, fulfilling the longstanding plans of the waiter, who has also married Marianne's and Geiger's daughter, Mariandl, and together with her has produced a legitimate grandchild.

Thus, while Geiger's tourist performance includes not only physical mobility but models a dynamic reconstruction of Austria's patriarchal system, Marianne's existence within the discourse of tourism is defined by shrinking physical and symbolic spaces. Performing the host part has provided her with a temporary autonomy and agency, but has also already placed her on the more passive end of the host-tourist continuum. Geiger's ability to basically go back in time, as well as his secret financing of the inn's renovation while tying up Marianne in a kafkaesque bureaucratic process, constitutes a forceful and final usurpation of Marianne's space, confirming geographer Doreen Massey's observation of the gendered Western perspective in which "time [...] is typically coded masculine and space [...] feminine."<sup>35</sup>

34 H. Uhl, "Das erste Opfer: Der österreichische Opfermythos und seine Transformationen in der Zweiten Republik", in: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, 1 (2001), 19-34: 22.

35 D. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, Minneapolis 1994, 6.

As Fritsche notes correctly, the film's success with female audiences shows that the idea of men taking on responsibilities and relieving women of some of the many roles they had assumed over the course of the war was certainly popular among women.<sup>36</sup> However, the film's use of the tourism discourse to model a set of mental acts of travelling and mobility that would help (male) Austrians to reimagine and reenact Austria as place and as a community organised around patriarchal principles prefigured a conservative construction of Austrian national identity that would become even more pronounced in subsequent films, as I will show in my discussion of *Echo der Berge*.

### Creating an Austrian *Heimat* in *Echo der Berge*

While *Der Hofrat Geiger* offers an exclusively domestic version of national reconstruction via tourism, *Echo der Berge* directly addresses the tension arising from the attempt to apply the concept of *Heimat* with its strong pan-Germanic undercurrents and its central role in the recent National Socialist past to the newly-proclaimed Austrian republic, which tried to distinguish itself from Germany by pointing out a supposedly long history of difference between Austrianness and Germanness.<sup>37</sup>

Already the production history of *Echo der Berge* indicates the prominent role the discourse of tourism played in these attempts to redefine *Heimat*. Originally, the chairman of the Austrian Federal Hunting Association, Baron Franz Mayr-Melnhof, wanted to produce a *Kulturfilm* to promote the Austrian ideals of hunting and environmental protection at a German hunting exhibition. Advised that the long nature sequences would bore audiences, the production team added a rather contrived plot about a young woman who gives up her avantgardist urban ways of life and her artist fiancé in favor of the Alpine *Heimat* and a down-to-earth gamekeeper. The Austrian ministry of trade recognised the film's potential as tourism advertising tool and generously supported the production under the rubric "Österreichwerbung." Consequently, the film opened with great fanfare in Austria in November 1954, with the Austrian chancellor and president as honorary guests and a "splendid buffet in hunting style, with hunters in uniform, a game buffet, a small hunting exhibition, etc."<sup>38</sup> The film was equally successful in Germany, where it premiered under the title *Der Förster vom Silberwald*. Director Alfons Stummer's production generated at least "ten times its production cost" and became the template for a series of so-called *Silberwaldfilme*, which turned the initially rather unknown actors Anita Gutweil and Rudolf Lenz into a *Heimatfilm* power couple.<sup>39</sup>

36 M. Fritsche, *Homemade* (20), 152.

37 For an overview of the often bizarre semantic struggles to retroactively separate the deeply entangled histories of Austria and Germany see H. Ritter, "Austria and the Struggle for German Identity", in: *German Studies Review*, 15 (1992), 111-29.

38 Producer Alfred Lehr as quoted in G. Steiner, *Die Heimat-Macher* (21), 163.

39 In 1956, *Der Förster vom Silberwald* received the Bambi Filmpreis, Germany's prestigious award for commercially successful films. *Ibid.*, 164-65; R. Buchschwenter, "Ruf" (4), 263.

The film's particular production history, as well as the increasing number of Austrian-German *Heimatfilm* co-productions in the 1950s, have provided ammunition for those critics who view the touristic representation of Austrian landscapes in these films as indication of the country's self-colonisation through tourism and as example for the longevity of pan-Germanic political tendencies. Robert Buchschwenter, for instance, interprets Austrian contributions to the *Heimatfilm* genre as barely veiled tourist marketing tools that allowed Austrians to sell their country to German tourists, who could then revel in a *Heimat* ideal, "[das] in den unterwühlten Seelenlandschaften der [deutschen] Nachkriegszeit als Verlustposten klaffte."<sup>40</sup> Moltke, too, seems to describe a kind of ongoing cinematic *Anschluss* when he encourages scholars to "look south from the Federal Republic and recognise that the cinema of the 1950s, and the *Heimatfilm* in particular, are essentially a German-Austrian coproduction [...]."<sup>41</sup> Fritsche has questioned this undifferentiated treatment of German and Austrian *Heimatfilme* by pointing out that the Austrian version of the genre distinguishes itself with its often undisguised hostility to modernity.<sup>42</sup> While I agree with Fritsche, my analysis of the combination of *Heimat* and tourism discourse in *Echo der Berge* shows that even Austrian *Heimatfilme* played a mediating role, especially when it came to allowing Austrians to develop *Heimat* sentiments for their newly founded republic without completely abandoning the long-cultivated attachment to Germanic values.

*Echo der Berge* tells the story of Liesl, a modern artist living in Vienna, who begins to question her emancipated lifestyle and her relationship with an avantgardist sculptor during a visit to her grandfather's estate in the Alpine village of Hochmoos. Long walks through the mountains with the grandfather's gamekeeper, Hubert Gerold, a refugee from East Prussia, open Liesl's eyes for nature's supposedly organic order and beauty; they also result in her falling in love with Gerold. Soon Liesl's Viennese fiancé, Max Freiberg, shows up to complicate the plot. Jealous of the gamekeeper, he tries to impress Liesl by poaching a stag. Gerold catches him, but lets him go after mistakenly identifying Freiberg's rifle as one of councillor Leonhard's guns, wrongly assuming that Liesl has provided Freiberg with the weapon. Refusing to reveal the poacher's identity to his employer, councillor Leonhard, Gerold hands in his resignation. Liesl, unaware of the drama, is disappointed by what she senses to be Gerold's disinterest in her and returns to Vienna. Only after Freiberg eventually tells her the truth does Liesl return to Hochmoos, where the councillor, upon discovering what happened, reinstates Gerold as forester and paves the way for the film's happy ending.

From its very beginning the film emphasises the important role of the tourist discourse in constructing *Heimat*. The film opens with gamekeeper Gerold confronting a crew of loggers, whom the mayor has charged to cut down a patch of forest known as the "Silberwald" in order to generate revenue for the community. Hearing about the clearcut-

40 R. Buchschwenter, "Ruf" (4), 264.

41 J. v. Moltke, No Place (14), 25.

42 M. Fritsche, *Homemade* (20), 101.

ting from his gamekeeper, councillor Leonhard prevails on the mayor to stop the process and generate income via alternative means. Leonhard's description of the "Silberwald [as] a small miracle of nature that the creator has given to us during one of his best moments,"<sup>43</sup> is apparently convincing enough for the mayor and the town council to abandon the clearcutting and sell real estate instead. This process shows how local economic needs and decisions take a backseat when it comes to maintaining the landscape's value as an aesthetic and spiritual refuge for urban tourists.<sup>44</sup>

The main protagonists in *Echo der Berge* are all outsiders and, in one sense or another, tourists: Councillor Otto Leonhard presumably has worked in a government-related function and moved to Hochmoos to spend his retirement years. Although the town has an elected mayor and town council, their power pales in comparison to the quasi-aristocratic paternalism demonstrated by the councillor. Aiding Leonhard in his efforts to protect Hochmoos as *Heimat* is forester Hubert Gerold. As a refugee from Germany's former Eastern provinces, Gerold is derogatorily called a "Zugreister" (non-belonger) by the locals, but he quickly becomes the main guarantor of *Heimat*'s integrity who, eventually, also manages to encourage another tourist, namely the councillor's granddaughter Liesl, to recognise Hochmoos as her *Heimat*. Finally, there is Liesl's fiancé Max Freiberg, who presents the most obvious and negative traits of modern mass tourism and is, consequently, removed from the scene towards the end of the film.

It is through the love triangle formed by Gerold, Freiberg, and Liesl that *Echo der Berge* deploys the discourse of tourism to promote a particular version of Austrianness and also demonstrates to Austrian audiences how they can mobilise their *Heimat* sentiments and performatively construct their Austrianness without completely disrupting prior and more German-oriented ideas of *Heimat*. Although Gerold is German and Freiberg Austrian, over the course of the film the former comes to represent Austrianness and the latter appears to be a stand-in for German tourists. From the beginning, gamekeeper Gerold is shown as sharing the councillor's view of life's divine order in which every being has its god-given place. He also is an educated and cultured person who plays classical music on the organ, reads books, and prefers an evening listening to a live radio broadcast of a symphony by Austrian composer Anton Bruckner over an intimate dinner. Finally, while being a man of principles, he also knows his place and can be discreet, even in the face of unfair treatment. As already described above, he rather resigns his position than denouncing Freiberg as the poacher.

The modern sculptor Max Freiberg is the binary opposite character to Gerold. Already the clear lines and intense colour schemes of his living and working spaces in Vienna are presented as negative contrast to the councillor's house in Hochmoos with its thick

43 Der "Silberwald ist ein kleines Naturwunder, das uns der Schöpfer in seiner schönsten Laune geschenkt hat."

44 Ironically, the Heimatfilm-genre's frequent exhortations to protect nature in order to lure tourists rarely addresses the destruction of nature by mass tourism. For more on the connections between the Heimatfilm genre, tourism, and environmental discourses see R. Palfreyman, "Green Strands on the Silver Screen? Heimat and Environment in the German Cinema", in: *The Culture of German Environmentalism: Anxieties, Visions, Realities*, Ed. Axel Goodbody, New York 2002, 171-86: 178.

stone walls, round arches, and earthen colours and, in the traditional understanding of the house as the small-scale representation of *Heimat*, mark Freiberg as non-belonger.<sup>45</sup> While Leonhard and Gerold underscore their performance as belongers by wearing the local *Tracht*, Freiberg keeps wearing urban street clothing and modern travel suits throughout the film. Instead of trying to fit into the family and the community, he provokes by dismissing the councillor's taste as quaint and by arrogantly extolling his international credentials as artist and his yearning for Paris.

Freiberg's journey to Hochmoos is the only actually travel scene in the film and constitutes a poignant disruption of the idyllic *Heimat* of Hochmoos: In a series of shot-counter-shot scenes, Freiberg in his noisy red convertible is cut against Gerold and Liesl hiking through meadows and forests. Yet Freiberg's modern and fast means of transportation is shown to be no match for the supposedly eternal time of nature: At the very moment when his roadster reaches high speed on the country road, the film cuts to Liesl and Gerold kissing each other for the first time.

This symbolic (and ultimately futile) act of automobile aggression foreshadows Freiberg's subsequent violation of the rules of *Heimat* by poaching. The act is triggered by a conversation with the waitress at the local inn, during which Freiberg ironically remarks that in Hochmoos a man needs to be a hunter in order to count as a man. When the waitress comments that this seems to apply to Liesl's interest in a certain hunter and mockingly asks Freiberg if he does not know how to shoot, Freiberg caustically notes that "once we all had to learn how to shoot."<sup>46</sup> But her comment has hit a nerve, and the next scene shows Freiberg killing the stag. Caught in the act by Gerold, who calls the deed a "crime," Freiberg first ridicules the forester's moral outrage and then meekly offers to pay for the damage, which Gerold refuses.

On one level, these sequences seal the fate of the modern touristic outsider in favor of the earthbound gamekeeper, who will eventually "win" Liesl: Freiberg's last appearance in the film shows him hosting a party in his modern Viennese apartment and flirting with other women, while Liesl is already on the phone telling her grandfather's servant that she will come "home." Insofar, the film diverges from the usual *Heimatfilm* recipe, which does not fully condemn modern elements, but, rather, renegotiates the relation between the traditional and the modern in a "dialectical" fashion.<sup>47</sup>

On another level, the film offers a remarkable degree of flexibility when it comes to the recalibration of Austrian national identity. It's important to keep in mind that Gerold, after all, is German and Freiberg Austrian, but that the former is recast in the mold of the disciplined and level-headed masculinity supposedly typical for Austria, while the latter transforms into a stereotypically aggressive German. Because of this bait-and-switch process, the German native's prominent role in the Austrian *Heimat* cannot be

45 The role of architecture in Austrian Heimatfilme is addressed in more detail in I. Nierhaus, "Wie im Film: Heimat als Projekt des Wiederaufbaus", in: Ohne Untertitel: Fragmente einer Geschichte des österreichischen Kinos, Ed. Ruth Beckermann and Christa Blümlinger, Vienna 1996, 285-304: 287.

46 "Schießen haben wir alle einmal lernen müssen."

47 J. v. Moltke, No Place (14), 13.

read simply as a continuation of National Socialist desires. Similarly, the (East) German's conversion into an Austrian is not simply an offer of identification for German tourists to find the fascist *Heimat* south of their borders. Rather, Gerold's adaptation of a new homeland models a path for Austrians to re-member and perform an Austrian *Heimat* without completely renouncing the now politically suspect Germanic subcurrents of the *Heimat* concept.

Although *Echo der Berge* apparently rejects modern tourist practices, as the excoriation of Freiberg from the plot shows, the film actually demonstrates the relevance of tourist discourses in performing places and identities. At closer look, the supposedly organic and natural sense of belonging displayed by Gerold is a skilfull performative construction, in which his adoption of Austrian high culture and conservative gender perspectives becomes combined with a patriarchal and patronising value system. Gerold demonstrates that even someone whose original *Heimat* was the East Prussian heath – in a sense the opposite of the Austrian mountains – can develop a sense of belonging that trumps both the rights of the locals in Hochmoos and the urban Austrian Freiberg. In this regard, his *Heimat* performance not only suggests that Austrians *can* apply their *Heimat* concept to Austria by engaging in similar acts of mental and emotional mobility, as long as they endorse a particular conservative notion of *Heimat*. The film posits this desirable flexibility against the unbounded and rootless mobility of the modern artist Freiberg, whose inability to correctly identify and locate his Austrian *Heimat* results in his ultimate removal from the *mise-en-scène*.

Analogous to *Der Hofrat Geiger*, the performative construction of Austria via the discourse of tourism requires the taming of a woman. The trajectory of the inn keeper Marianne, whose relative economic and social independence needed to be curtailed and whose place had to be redefined by men, is paralleled by the story of Liesl, who must exchange her seemingly emancipated role of modern artist for the role of dutiful but passive female companion. In the case of Marianne, the transformation of her role is mirrored by the renovation of the inn without her consent and during her forced absence. In the case of Liesl, the transformation is initiated at the very moment when her role as modern woman collides most visibly with the normative patriarchal structure of Hochmoos. During her first visit to Hochmoos, Liesl is still clearly a tourist, and it is during one of her skiing outings that Gerold catches her trespassing the game preserve. After receiving a scolding for being a typical "urban dweller" who thinks she can ignore the rules, Liesl asks to be taught the rules. Gerold's subsequent contrived lecture about the "divine" order of nature carries disturbingly social-darwinistic undertones as well as the barely veiled suggestion that the natural laws also apply to humans, in the sense that the weaker sex needs guidance from the stronger.

The use of the tourism discourse for the promotion of patriarchal gender roles in this film resonates with Austrian tourism marketing at the time. For instance, an advertising brochure from 1953 that addressed young female travelers featured the fictional story of a woman who quickly realised that independent travel was much harder than she had envisioned. Gratefully, she accepts when an elderly man in native costume offers herself

as travel companion. The young woman is overjoyed when this “Opa,” as she calls him, drops his disguise and transforms himself into young handsome man with whom she will fall in love.<sup>48</sup>

Liesl’s fate in *Echo der Berge* is very similar, and what makes the film an even more interesting “text” for studying the different functions of the tourism discourse is the fact that it foregrounds the constructedness of the supposedly natural gender system. Liesl’s transformation from artist to docile companion is illustrated by a decisive change in her artistic perspective. Starting out as a modern artist producing abstract three-dimensional clay objects, Liesl ends up creating naive two-dimensional drawings of deer jumping through meadows. By adopting this technique, Liesl also mirrors the cinematic construction of the *Heimat* landscape, simultaneously promoting a highly artificial product for consumption but also revealing the process of construction as a model for audiences to arrive at a stable notion of *Heimat* in the midst of a rapidly changing world.

The immense popularity of these films must not be misread as evidence that Austrian society somehow stopped the process of postwar modernisation. On the contrary, the time frame in which the films were released also marks the irreversible reorientation of Austria’s political and cultural identity towards the West in general and towards US popular culture in particular. While an older generation of moviegoers might well have watched these films with a nostalgic longing for a bygone era, younger audiences likely viewed the films as curious leftovers of their parents’ generation.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, the touristic representation of Austrian landscape and culture disseminated by these films was adopted even by these younger cohorts. As the popularity of more recent hybrids between *Heimatfilm* and tourism marketing, such as the TV series *Schloss Orth*, demonstrates, these tourism images continue to influence the Austrian self-image up to the present and play an important role in the definition of Austrianness within the larger political and cultural framework of the European Union.<sup>50</sup>

My discussion of these two films has focused mainly on how the discourse of tourism has enabled the performative reconstruction of a conservative and patriarchal notion of a distinctly Austrian society that tacitly includes many of the previous Germanic traits without labelling them as such. To be clear, the discourse of tourism has influenced many other areas of Austria’s social, cultural, and political life as well, and I have discussed several of these influences elsewhere.<sup>51</sup> My emphasis in this article was on the fact that tourism is a complex and often contradictory set of practices that cannot just be viewed

48 Landesfremdenverkehrsamt für Steiermark, *Schöne Ferien-Steiermark*, Graz 1953; see also my detailed analysis of this brochure in G. Graml (7), 63-64.

49 E. Hanisch, *Der lange Schatten des Staates: Österreichische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*, Wien 1994, 434.

50 G. Heiss, “Tourismus”, in: *Memoria Austriae I: Menschen, Mythen, Zeiten*, Hg. Emil Brix, Ernst Bruckmüller und Hannes Stekl, Wien 2004, 330-356: 342.

51 The discourse of tourism played of course a major role in facilitating Austria’s attempts to return back onto the international stage as a respected member of the international community. For a detailed discussion as to how a supposedly objective external tourist gaze was imagined as neutral arbiter of Austria’s standing see G. Graml (7), 53-56.

as camouflaging reality or through an exclusive economic lens. Especially in the context of the Austrian postwar period, the discourse of tourism was of great importance before any government and private initiatives to jumpstart the tourism industry went into effect. As the main protagonists in the two films exemplify, tourism was a helpful habitus of mind to achieve a successful performative construction of an Austrian *Heimat*, of Austrian national identity, at a time when many other discursive arenas for doing so where closed off.

Clearly, Austria has used tourist images and narratives for a long time during the postwar period to evade its share of responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism. But even in this case I deem it more productive to analyze the processes through which tourism contributed to and facilitated this kind of evasion than to declare tourism the inauthentic surface under which a real Austria is hidden. Recent research on the role of tourism in the attempted political rehabilitations of fascist Spain and of Croatia illustrates the potential for a comparative look at such tourist practices on an international and even global level.<sup>52</sup>

52 L. Rivera, "Managing 'Spoiled' National Identity: War Tourism and Memory in Croatia", in: *American Sociological Review*, 73 (2008), 613-34; N. Rosendorf, "Be El Caudillo's Guest: The Franco Regime's Quest for Rehabilitation and Dollars after World War II via the Promotion of U.S. Tourism", in: *Diplomatic History*, 30 (2006), 367-407.