Wilhelm Busch: The Art of Letting Off Steam Through Symbolic Inversion

By

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Program in German
in conformity with the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
April 2013

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the failed revolution of 1848, which had been sparked by demands for democracy and constitutional reform, Germany’s princes reluctantly introduced new freedoms regarding print and the right to assembly. However, reactionary forces in governments unwilling to cede power quickly repressed these freedoms, leading to tighter controls on public and private life. Consequently, dispirited citizens clutched at the old Biedermeier ways, withdrawing to an “ill-remembered social order of bygone days” (Shorter 169). It was against this backdrop that the illustrated works of Wilhelm Busch (1832–1908) appeared in the popular Bilderbogen (“picture broadsheets”) of the day, and later as stand-alone Bildergeschichten (“picture stories”), using satire and symbolic inversion to mock German society by skewering assorted political, social, and cultural sacred cows. The aim of my dissertation is as follows. I will start by examining Busch’s use of symbolic inversion as a way of implying a shift in power between figures of authority and the disgruntled “second-class” citizens of Biedermeier society: women and children. Next, I will examine how Busch’s animal characters, particularly apes with their close resemblance to mankind, mock human pretensions of biological superiority. Finally, I will show how objects meant to serve their human “masters” overpower them, even in their homes, suggesting that there was no refuge from the vagaries of a rapidly changing world. Key to my analysis will be an exploration of the mechanism of “inside out” and “upside down,” described by Mikhail Bakhtin with regards to the carnival scenes of Gargantua et Pantagruel, as a sanctioned and mocking way of questioning the power of the state and its institutions. Along the way, I will compare and contrast Busch’s picture stories with similar strips in the Fliegende Blätter, in order to prove how groundbreaking the author’s exposé of nineteenth-century German society truly was. As I explore the synergy between image and word, I will demonstrate how
Busch’s use of symbolic inversion is slyly subversive, undermining established authority in the political, social, and cultural arenas, and providing a safety valve in the form of humour that transcends the boundaries of class, education, and gender.
Acknowledgements

Without the encouragement and support of many individuals, this project would never have come to fruition. At Queen’s University, I would like to thank my Doktormutter, Dr. Christiane Arndt, for her guidance during the research and writing of my dissertation. A debt of gratitude also goes to Dr. Jill Scott and Dr. David Pugh for their invaluable insights and resolute confidence over the past years. I would also like to thank Dr. Jean-Jacques Hamm (Queen’s University) and Dr. Christine Lehleiter (University of Toronto) for their useful remarks. This has been the most challenging assignment of my life, one I would not have missed for the world.

Thank you to Dr. Margaret Maliszewska for her assistance, as well as to Nathalie Soini, M.A., for expediting much-needed reference works. To Dr. Petra Fachinger, thank you for introducing me as a returning student to the works of Wilhelm Busch. To Prof. Dr. Werner Nell (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg), Prof. Dr. Florian Vaßen (Leibniz Universität Hannover), and Prof. Dr. Hans Joachim Neyer (former director of the Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst), along with his colleagues Frau Ruth Brunngraber-Malottke, M.A., and Frau Monika Herlt, schönen Dank for making research materials available to me in Germany. Danke, also, to my colleagues in the German Department (in alphabetical order): Pia Banzhaf, Marie-Thérèse Ferguson, Steve Goodman, Rebecca Hügler, Maria Irchenhauser, Steffi Kullick, Matthias Müller, Eva Sattelmeyer, Svenja Schmidt, Andrea Speltz, and Corina Szarka. Together, you allowed me to fulfil a lifelong dream!

A special thanks goes to my friend and former colleague, Maria da Conceição Pereira, for kindly proofreading my copy. Finally, merci mille fois to my husband, Werner Sykora, for his constructive criticism, advice, and unflagging support during the completion of my dissertation. Ohne dich hätte ich es nicht machen können.
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### Abbreviations for Frequently Cited Works

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<th>Work Details</th>
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<td><strong>JWBG</strong></td>
<td><em>Jahrbuch der Wilhelm-Busch-Gesellschaft</em> (1949–1964/65), Hanover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MBB</strong></td>
<td><em>Münchener Bilderbogen</em>; qtd. from Ries compendium (above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WBA</strong></td>
<td><em>Wilhelm-Busch-Archives</em>, Hanover</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WBG</strong></td>
<td><em>Wilhelm-Busch-Gesellschaft</em>, Hanover</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WBJ</strong></td>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION “REFLECTING A NEW ORDER”

In the aftermath of the failed revolution of 1848, which had been sparked by demands from students, workers, and the liberal middle classes for democracy, increased social rights, and constitutional reform, Germany’s ruling princes made significant concessions, including the abolition of the feudal system and the right to assembly. Within months, however, cracks appeared in the liberal camp, with many fearful of the “urban mob and the ‘proletariat’” (Blackbourn 114). Seizing the opportunity, reactionary forces in governments unwilling to cede power repressed these new freedoms, leading to even tighter controls on public and private life. Adding to the stresses on a society already in turmoil was the advent of rapid industrialization and increasing urbanization, the loss of property and feudal privileges by the aristocracy, and the rise of a prosperous new Mittelstand composed of well-to-do industrialists and businessmen.

With the crumbling of traditional social and economic structures, as well as uncertainty about their actual position in society, members of the old middle class (e.g., millers, bakers, tailors, teachers, blacksmiths, tavern keepers, and the like) retreated to the familiar pre-revolutionary Biedermeier conventions that governed the behaviour of men, women, and children, clutching at what Edward Shorter has called an “ill-remembered social order of bygone days based upon paternalistic authority and organized along corporate lines” (196). It was against this backdrop that the works of the German illustrator and poet Wilhelm Busch (1832–1908) first appeared in

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1 The term Biedermeier, m. (“Upright Person”), was coined by Adolph Kußmaul (1822–1902) after reading two poems by Joseph Victor von Scheffel (1826–86), published in 1848, that introduced the fictitious petty-bourgeois character Gottlieb Biedermaier: “Des Biedermanns Abendgemütlichkeit” [“Biedermann’s Evening Cosiness”] and “Bummelmaiers Klage” [“Bummelmaier’s Complaint”]. See Sengle 2: 121. Duly inspired, Kußmaul and Ludwig Eichrodt (1827–92) penned a collection of satirical poems entitled Weiland Gottlieb Biedermaiers Schulmeisters in Schwaben Auserlesene Gedichte nebst Beigaben des Buchbinders Horatius Treuherz und des alten Schwartenmeier [The Choice Poems of the Swabian Schoolmaster Weiland Gottlieb Biedermaier with an Addition by the Bookbinder Horatio Braveheart and the Old Subduer], which appeared in the Fliegende Blätter in 1855. Examples include Die Schlacht bei Leipzig (FB 22.505 [1855]: 6) and Das arme Dorfschulmeisterlein (FB 22.511 [1855]: 49–50); also Sengle 2: 121. While the name Biedermeier conjures up parochialism and small-mindedness, it is not to be confused with Biedermann, m. (“jemand von altem Schrot und Korn” or “someone of the old stamp,” DW 1: 1812).
the popular *Bilderbogen* (“picture broadsheets”) of the day, and later as stand-alone *Bildergeschichten* (“picture stories”), using satire and symbolic inversion to poke fun at German society by skewering assorted political, social, and cultural sacred cows.

As Golo Mann (1909–94) writes, Busch held up a “sharper kind of mirror” to German society,\(^2\) which enjoyed the works of the “seemingly cheerful but deeply malicious and misanthropic humorist with unfailing delight,” feeling that he had seen right through them, but in a way that appealed to them:

> Einen anders gearteten, schärferen Spiegel hielt der Hannoveraner Wilhelm Busch dem Bürgertum vor. Die Leute genossen die Werke des nur scheinbar heiteren, unergründlich boshaften, menschenfeindlichen Humoristen mit nie versiegender Freude. Sie fühlten sich von ihm erkannt, aber auf eine Weise, die ihnen gefiel.

(456)

Yet, Busch’s mirror is no ordinary looking glass. Indeed, it is more like a funhouse mirror that distorts, exaggerates, and even inverts the image of those reflected, so that up is down, and down is up. In one tale, for example, it magnifies the reversed priorities of materialistic haut-bourgeois parents fleeing a house fire with their “valuables” (e.g., boot jack and mousetraps), while their quick-witted pet monkey rescues their baby daughter instead (*Fipps, der Affe*, 1879). Thus, the hero of the story acts as a parent should and the baby’s parents make monkeys of themselves. In another story, the author’s mirror turns the conventional relationship between children and adults on its head as a couple of truants repeatedly get the better of their petty-bourgeois neighbours in a series of *Streiche* or “tricks” that begin with the boys’ stealing and

\(^2\) The verbal phrase “jemandem einen Spiegel vorhalten” has both a literal (“to hold up a mirror to someone”) and a figurative (“to reproach someone”) meaning. Thus, the phrase becomes a metaphor for having someone reflect on some undesirable aspect of his or her behaviour.
eating a poor widow’s chickens (Max und Moritz, 1865). The tale comes full circle with a reversal of fortune when the chickens come home to roost and the miscreants are ground into duck feed, to the applause of the villagers. These are just two examples of how Busch uses symbolic inversion in his picture stories to question and make fun of Biedermeier behaviours and pretensions in order to cope with a world where traditional roles were under attack. To reduce any anxiety this might have provoked in his readers, the author uses the exaggerated forms of caricature and the natural rhythms of the German language in order to create memorable character types. Together, word and image form a unique blend of pointed wit and broad humour that allow Busch, the acknowledged “Stammvater der Comics” (“father of the comic strip,” FW v; Heine 36; Killy 332–34; Taylor 77), to connect with readers of all classes, making them laugh in spite of themselves. Thomas Nipperdey hits the nail on the head when he declares:

Die Übertreibung macht dem Leser das Verfremdete erträglich, ermöglicht Distanz und Lachen und die gewaltige Popularität, auch und gerade jenseits der literarischen Bildung, die dieser moralistische Pessimist gewinnt. (770)

Thus, Busch, the “moral pessimist,” uses exaggeration to make what is alienating bearable, affording distance and laughter, and ensuring his popularity regardless of his readers’ literacy.

According to Barbara A. Babcock (The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society, 1978), “‘symbolic inversion’ may be broadly defined as any act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, or social and political” (14). As such, it is based on role reversal where wives dominate husbands, children discipline parents, slaves rule masters, animals hound predators, and so on (Babcock 41; Kunzle, “Bruegel’s” 198). In print, examples of symbolic inversion are seen in drôleries (i.e., topsy-turvy
marginalia) from the Middle Ages, which portray distaff-wielding wives who threaten their cowering husbands, and crossbow-shooting hares that attack fortresses guarded by fierce-looking human soldiers. Symbolic inversion can also be seen in a number of satirical broadsheets – particularly the German and Dutch marriage satires of the latter Middle Ages where wives usurp the role of their husbands – that coincide with the progressive tightening of the bonds of marriage from what was once a social contract built on mutual consent to a union based on duty under the German Reformists (ECS 223).

Symbolic inversion is also the mainstay of carnival, from the revelry and debauchery of Saturnalia and Dionysian festivities to the high jinks of today’s Fasching. In his groundbreaking thesis on Rabelais (1940), later published as Rabelais and His World (1968), the literary and social theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) was the first to recognize the mechanism of “inside out” and “upside down” in the carnival scenes of La vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel (c. 1532), describing how it provided a sanctioned and mocking way for oppressed citizenry to question the power of the state and various institutions (8, 11), principally the Church, in the hopes that the authorities would take notice and change the rules. Written at a time when the celebration and symbolic meaning of religious festivities were at an all-time high (Stam 83), Rabelais’s work centres on the notion of degradation inherent in carnival, notes Bakhtin, with its festive laughter directed at one and all that first derides, then buries, and finally revives (11–12). He goes on to say that this degradation was often linked to the lower half of the body (e.g., genitals, bellies, and buttocks), translating in geographical terms to contact with the earth as both grave and womb that swallows up and gives birth at the same time (21). As Bakhtin scholar

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1 A comprehensive index of satirical marginalia, from livid wives thrashing their unlucky husbands to intrepid animals battling determined humans, can be found in Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts (1966), compiled by the late art historian Lilian M. C. Randall.
Carolyn M. Shields notes, the theorist’s concept of carnival breaks down barriers, overcomes power inequities and hierarchies, and reforms and renews relationships, both personal and institutional (97), using grotesque imagery, mock crownings and uncrownings, and death and birth as a means of regeneration (98, 102–03).

According to Bakhtin, Rabelais influenced numerous sixteenth-century writers, including the authors of Narren-Literatur (“folly literature”) such as Hans Sachs (1494–1576), Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (1621–76), and Johann Fischart (c. 1545–91); as well as the German Grobianists,4 where we see ordinary citizens (Bürger) take on the members of the feudal nobility (Junker) with the latter’s predilection for sloth, gluttony, drunkenness, and general immorality (RW 11, 63). As the grotesque depictions of carnival gradually lost their primary meaning in the Renaissance and subsequent eras, he explains, the underlying process of degradation took on a more figurative meaning of destruction and regeneration (22). According to Bakhtin, the festive laughter of carnival became the first casualty of this process with the stabilization of the monarchy in the seventeenth century, accompanied by a new tone of seriousness and the emergence of a rationalism that tended towards singular meanings in which the ambivalence of the grotesque could no longer be admitted (101). Still, he observes, grotesque realism did not become extinct, adding that it lived on in comedy, satire, fable, and the novel (101–03), like the Caquet [Cackle] genre of stories, in which women characters discussed intimate matters (105). With its inversion of the customary pecking order, its laughter directed at

4 Named after Sankt Grobian, the patron saint of boorish behaviour in Das Narrenschiff (1494) by Sebastian Brandt (1457–1521), Grobianismus was related to Rabelais, notes Bakhtin, with its emphasis on material bodily life and grotesque realism (RW 63). He adds that because these forms were directly influenced by the carnival and the folk festival, the resulting images of the body (i.e., eating and drinking) devolved into indecency (63), with misogynistic verse and bawdy drinking songs (ECS 222). To that end, Friedrich Dedekind (1525–98) wrote Grobianus et Grobiana: sive, de morum simplicitate, libri tres [Grobianus and Grobiana: Or, On Candid Behaviour, Book Three], 1549, a primer on etiquette and the avoidance of overeating and excessive drink, later translated into German by Fischart’s teacher, Kaspar Scheidt (1520–65). Qtd. in RW 63n6.
pompous family patriarchs and bourgeois denizens, and its mockery of proper manners and etiquette, Bakhtin’s carnival spirit lives on in Busch’s picture stories, where once-oppressed women repeatedly maintain their newfound power, children and animals “get away with murder” before receiving their comeuppance, and objects that are meant to serve attack their users.

In the extreme, questioning the power of the state and social hierarchies can lead to actual revolution. As Jeet Heer observes, “[e]very revolution is a bit of a carnival, where the world is turned upside down as kings are brought low and nobodies become heroes” (par. 11). For this reason, authorities throughout history have been quick to suppress manifestations of upside down that appear to advocate the overthrow of governments or the abdication of rulers. As harmless as they may seem to today’s reader, cat-and-mouse broadsheets that depict rodents storming feline fortresses were censored during the period of the French Revolution in parts of Europe, indicating that rulers were afraid of their potential to fire up and mobilize the masses (Kunzle, “Bruegel’s” 198n4). To wit, the illustrator Charles Philipon (1800–61) was charged with lèse-majesté and jailed for rendering the head of Louis-Philippe I (1773–1850) as a series of pears, turning the ruler into a “poire” or “simpleton.” Even after 1850, when Busch created his stories, omnipresent state censors continued to check the galley proofs of publications for inflammatory political content, leading many publishers to pull their punches and practise self-censorship (Friedrich 98).

Yet, with the exception of one story loosely based on the life and times of St. Antony of Padua that was accused of denigrating religion and public morals, resulting in a publication ban that lasted until 1902 in Austria (RZ 926), Busch’s work managed to escape the censor. This is likely because the author staged most of his tales in the pre-revolutionary world of the

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5 Les poires [The Pears], 1831 (Grand-Carteret 203; see RZ 1073).
Biedermeier, a semi-mythical time of imagined security and happiness that posed no real threat to the new social order. Busch mockingly reinforces this illusion of a kinder, gentler time in many of his illustrations by showing old-fashioned hand tools, oil lamps, school slate boards, and wick-trimming candlesnuffers that harken back to another era. We see similar longings for the small-town, well-ordered world of the Biedermeier in the hushed poems of Eduard Mörike (1804–75) and the utopian novels of Adalbert Stifter (1805–68), as well as the paintings of “harmonious families with pretty children” (Friedrich 99) by artists such as Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1793–1865) and Busch contemporary Carl Spitzweg (1808–85). Yet, the appearance of “order, tranquility, and conformity” (Galway 147) in Busch’s works is not what it seems. As Gert Ueding and others have written, the author’s peaceful scenes of Biedermeier life quickly unravel into total chaos (Wilhelm 159; Klotz 35; Willems 198), suggesting that emotions run just below the surface of the characters, ready to explode at the slightest provocation. For example, a group of female street cleaners in Ein galantes Abenteuer (1866) flies off the handle at the misplaced gallantry of a gentleman in full Biedermeier regalia (e.g., monocle, checked scarf, bowler hat, and walking stick), thrashing him within an inch of his life with their twig brooms and leaving him thoroughly chastened. Sic transit imperium masculinum.

Scenes like these were a new way of portraying symbolic inversion. Instead of showing it as a fait accompli, as in the case of the Dutch (and, to a lesser extent, German) marriage satires, like the Jan de Wasser [Jack the Washer] series where the wife bosses her husband around from the beginning of the tale, the arc of the story running through Busch’s multi-episodic Bildergeschichten creates an illusion of normalcy in the first few panels before something snaps, with the subsequent panels rapidly inverting and maintaining the reversal of the customary relationship between the characters. To be sure, other illustrators before Busch portray the fall
from fortune of their characters, yet there appears to be no decisive moment launching their
decline, only a foreshadowing of their eventual misfortune. For example, the introductory
painting in *A Rake’s Progress* (1735) by William Hogarth (1697–1764), in which the wastrel
Tom Rakewell dumps his pregnant fiancée, hints only obliquely at his sorry ending in Bethlehem
Hospital seven paintings later. Furthermore, the work of Busch’s predecessors lacks the sense of
movement from panel to panel that gives a story its oomph. Thus, in the moral calendar
illustrations of Daniel Niklaus Chodowiecki (1726–1801), a series of set pieces with brief
descriptive captions portrays the steady decline of the hero (or heroine). Busch precursor
Rodolphe Töpffer (1799–1846) comes closest to the author’s use of the story arc to show the
downfall of his heroes, like the ill-at-ease protagonist of *Histoire de Mr. Jabot* [*Story of Mr.
Jabot*], 1833. But, while Töpffer visually improves the immediacy of his illustrations through the
use of line art, allowing him to make “quick and continuous sketches” that are both “lively and
funny,”6 the accompanying prose tends to slow down the action in the panels. Töpffer’s graphic
narratives have none of the sense of rapid reversals of fortune to be found in Busch’s picture
stories, only a series of lengthy adventures full of mishaps.

As a trailblazer, Busch sets himself apart from his contemporaries at the illustrated
weeklies of the day by using the sequential narrative of the comic strip for the purpose of *story-
telling* rather than *joke-telling*. His fresh approach contrasts sharply with the strips in the
*Fliegende Blätter* [*Flying Leaves; synonym for Flugblatt, n., or “flyer”*], arguably the most

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6 In his *Essai de physiognomie* [*Essay on Physiognomy*], 1845, Töpffer states, “[D]ie Strichzeichnung [ist]
unvergleichlich vorteilhaft wenn sie, wie in einer Bildergeschichte, dazu dient, schnelle und fortlauende Skizzen zu
machen, die nur lebhaft und amüsant sein müssen und die, als Glieder einer Serie oft nur an Ideen erinnern, wie
Symbole oder in einer Rede verstreute rhetorische Figuren und nicht integrierende Kapitel des Haupthemas
darstellen” (9).
popular satirical weekly of the day, where we see single-panel jokes that go straight to a lame punch line, or multi-panel, long-winded affairs that often fall flat in the telling. In a modern-day parallel, the North American political comedy programs, *The Daily Show* (1996–) with Jon Stewart, and *The Colbert Report* (2005–) with Stephen Colbert, use humour that depends more on irony, parody, and satire, as Josh Compton observes, than on the simpler jokes of the late-night talk show hosts. Furthermore, notes Compton, Stewart’s and Colbert’s viewers are more “cognitively engaged” (11), in other words, willing to make the effort required to understand the topic at hand. Whereas the strips in the *Fliegende Blätter* concentrate on the manners and mores (rather than the politics) of nineteenth-century *Biedermeier* society, they tend to go in for “cheap laughs.” By contrast, Busch’s picture stories, based on the same way of life, engage their readers with more complex story-telling, inviting them to laugh at the behaviours portrayed and the socio-historical situations that give rise to them. In that regard, the stories function much like Stewart’s segments (i.e., monologues and skits) that train their sights on the foibles and hypocrisies of contemporary political practitioners, or like Colbert's observations that skewer his subjects using “deadpan humour” (11). Similar to these modern-day “court jesters” who hold up a mirror to the shortcomings of the ruler (Fox 142), Busch reflects exactly what he sees, thereby “transcending the border between chaos and order” (142) and affording “a transformation of consciousness that would allow us to see things more truly” (142). Thus, we could say that the author’s stories are both *Menschenkritik* and *Zeitkritik*, conditioned by universal human motivations against the backdrop of history.

Part of the enduring charm of Busch’s picture stories lies in his novel use of caricature,

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7 Second to the *Fliegende Blätter* were the humouristic-satirical weeklies *Kladderadatsch* and the *Düsseldorfer Monatshefte* (Galway 179n2).

8 These include *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* (1992–) and the *Late Show with David Letterman* (1993–), whose format includes stand-up monologues, “soft” political jokes, running gags, and special guests. See Compton 11. As of April 2013, Leno turned over the helm of his show to the *Late Night’s* Jimmy Fallon.
with its exaggerated features and simplified lines. This “shorthand” (Lavin 22) art form reduces the characters to what Scott McCloud (Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art, 1993) has described as their essential meaning, allowing the viewer to identify with them (30, 36). By contrast, the more detailed and life-like, albeit stereotypical, figures seen in the Fliegende Blätter, ranging from Munich’s haute bourgeoisie to an assortment of lower-class individuals, including Bavarian and Swabian peasants (Walz 17), become frequent objects of ridicule, thereby distancing them from the reader. Often, the illustrations and captions in the Fliegende Blätter and its sister publication, the Münchener Bilderbogen [Munich Picture Sheets], feel somewhat divorced from one another. This was also the case with Busch’s earliest contributions, starting in 1859, where he drew illustrations to accompany text provided by the magazines’ publisher, Kaspar Braun (1807–77). This situation changed in 1861 with Das Raben-Nest, where the author combined his own images and captions in verse form for the first time, thereby setting the stage for instant notoriety four years later with Max und Moritz.

Another part of the appeal of Busch’s stories can be attributed to the interplay between image and verse. According to Hans Ries, Busch’s unique “Bilder ohne Worte” (“images without words”) allow the author to tell a story while succinctly alluding to the plot (“Verhältnis” 23). At the same time, he says, the author’s captions frequently provide additional or slightly different information about what appears in the image, adding that it encourages the reader to take another look to see what is actually going on (26–27). Ries goes on to say that the captions often emphasize a superfluous detail in the image that has nothing to do with the plot, thereby creating a sense that the author is toying with the reader (27).

The interplay between image and verse is rendered more forceful with Busch’s mocking use of ancient German Knittelverse (“rhyming couplets”). Whereas many of the prose captions in
the *Fliegende Blätter* feel hackneyed and contrived (i.e., most were written by committee), Busch’s verse flows naturally, based on the high- and low-German regional vernaculars with which he was familiar (“Sprachen meines Paradieses,” Bohne, *SB* 137), as well as archaic spellings and colloquial rhythms. There are examples of mild oaths, like the once-liturgical “Zapperment!” (“Sakrament!” i.e., “Damn it!”) of Bauer Mecke in *Max und Moritz* (*FW* 379.384). As Bakhtin explains, oaths were once used in carnival settings to mock a deity or figure of authority and have come to acquire a tone of levity as they lose their magic and specific practices (*RW* 6–7). Invariably, Busch identifies his characters with amusing proper names that reflect their occupation, social standing, or some aspect of their personality (e.g., Lehrer Lämpel or “Teacher Dim-Bulb,” lit. ‘Little-Lamp’), making them unforgettable in the process. Then, he drives his message home with rhyming couplets that mock classic verse forms, like the Baroque trochaic tetrameter (/x/x/x/x/). The following example, cited by Horst Joachim Frank (110) but worth repeating here for its penetrating wit, can be found in the Fourth Trick of *Max und Moritz*: “Also lautet ein Beschluß: / Daß der Mensch was lernen muß –,” *FW* 354.203–04).

Here, the pompous metre reinforces the narrator’s sarcastic message lauding the timeless contributions of teachers everywhere to the wellbeing of mankind, which stands at variance with the accompanying image of Lehrer Lämpel, a second-rate village teacher.

With its blend of high and low verbal forms, Busch’s verse seems to refute Bakhtin’s strict definition of poetry as something that answers the pull toward centralization and unification (i.e., timelessness), which spoken language, with its different registers, dialects, and

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9 All quotations are taken from the manuscripts of Busch’s picture stories (author’s own hand or copy revised by the Otto Bassermann publishing house), as found in *Frühwerk, Reifezeit, Spätwerk*, ed. Hans Ries, comp. Ingrid Haberland, in assoc. with the *Wilhelm-Busch-Gesellschaft* (Herwig Guratzsch and Hans Joachim Neyer), 2002, 2nd ed. (Langenhagen: Schlütersche, 2007) print, vols. 1, 2, and 3 of *Die Bildergeschichten: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, unless otherwise noted. Among other things of note is Busch’s habit of omitting quotation marks before and after an interruption in mid-sentence (e.g., “Kann sein! – sprach er – Man wasche mich!” *Maler Kleksel* [1884], *SW* 515.200), whereas the publisher often sticks it in (*FW* 972).
genres, does not ("Discourse" 271). The late Northrop Frye (1912–91) also observes that the formulaic devices of verse – meter, rhyme, alliteration, fixed epithets, and so on – make verse the simplest and most direct way of conventionalizing words for communication (210). Yet, Busch’s verses marry both poetic and spoken aspects with uncommon flair, enabling them to become adages in the German language\(^{10}\) and guaranteeing their instant appeal. By bringing together exaggerated images and hyperbolic verse in a novel way, the author revolutionized “la littérature en images” (Grand-Carteret 329), essentially perfecting Töpffer’s invention of the “first interdependent combination of words and pictures seen in Europe” (McCloud 17).

The vast majority of Busch’s one-hundred-and-eighty-odd Bilderbogen and twenty stand-alone Bildergeschichten were written during the Poetischer Realismus (1840–80), a period influenced by “[dem] wirklichen Leben” (“real life,” Osterhammer 48), when literature was filled with pessimistic depictions of everyday existence, a sharpened sense of class division, and a renewed emphasis on moral duty (Frenzel 411–12). In post-revolutionary Germany, rapid industrialization, technological improvements, and urbanization triggered the crumbling of traditional social structures (Galway 146), with the aristocracy losing much of its wealth and hereditary privileges (Blackbourn 89; Diephouse 183; Lenger 114). Moreover, newly thriving cities in recently developed industrialized regions saw the rise of an entrepreneurial class (e.g., industrialists, merchants, and bankers, using their new wealth to “marry up” into a now destitute nobility, Galway 146; also Lenger 112). As a result, there was a growing divide between the established bourgeoisie and the new owner-driven petty bourgeoisie or Mittelstand that had arisen from the old group of urban burghers (e.g., master craftsmen, small business men, tavern- and shopkeepers, 112). At the bottom of the social ladder were the factory workers, wage

\(^{10}\) "In Ängsten findet manches statt, / Was sonst nicht stattgefunden hat” ("Nächtliche Politik," Der Geburtstag oder Die Partikularisten [1873], RZ 475.94–95).
labourers, farm servants, and other working poor (112). In the end, the *Mittelstand*, with its hard work, ethics, and thrift, came to be seen as a superior social and moral category, while the working classes symbolized material poverty and social degradation (Sheehan, *GL* 26–32).

All told, these massive sociological changes triggered a collective identity crisis (Galway 146). Already smarting from political repression, dispirited citizens like those in Busch’s picture stories withdrew to the imagined safety of their homes, clinging to old *Biedermeier* rules of conduct including “[how to] dress, raise children, express affection, measure success, [and] enjoy leisure” (Sheehan, *GH* 801; qtd. in Galway 146–47). At the same time, censorship was tightened and new laws meant that writers, publishers, and booksellers were increasingly hard-pressed to dupe their censors (Friedrich 98). These rules and restrictions continued through the *Gründerzeit* and *Wilhelmian* periods (Blackbourn 148).

The *Poetischer Realismus* was also a period of landmark scientific and philosophical discovery, with the publication of Charles Darwin’s revolutionary theory of evolution, along with Arthur Schopenhauer’s contention that man and animal alike were prisoners of their own base desires. Busch indirectly acknowledges the theory of evolution and the interconnected of the species by repeatedly endowing animals with human characteristics and impulses. To be sure, fables and exempla featuring human-like pranksters, like Reinhart Fuchs, had been used to impart moral lessons throughout the centuries. In his picture stories, Busch takes the scenario a step further by placing animals of all stripes on an equal footing with humans as they duke it out over multiple panels. Ultimately, most of the animals succumb to a grisly fate, not through lack

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11 Busch first read the works of Charles Darwin (1809–82) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) at the home of his uncle and tutor Georg Kleine (1806–97) in Lüthorst, after his return from the *Royal Academy of Fine Arts* in Antwerp (Hochhut 2: 19). On the recommendation of his brother Otto (1841–79), the author later delved into Schopenhauer’s works during his stay at the home of the banker Johann Daniel Kessler (1812–91) and his wife Johanna (1831–1915) in Frankfurt, where Otto was employed as a tutor to their sons Hugo (1856–1929) and Harry (?–1924). See Galway 222.
of intelligence or courage, but because of a moral weakness, even as their human antagonists exhibit their own deficiencies in character. Thus, the author succeeds in poking fun at human pretensions of superiority while reminding readers that the species, particularly man and primate, have much in common. As Ulrich Mihr states, Busch appropriates bits and pieces of Schopenhauer`s philosophy (i.e., *Wille zum Leben* `will to live` and *Egoismus* `ego` motivating man and animal alike, along with a human capacity for *Bosheit* `malice`), in order to cope with the *Schein und Sein* (``appearance and reality``) of the failed revolution (10), marked by the unwelcome intrusion of the Prussian government into everyday affairs.

In the end, no one individual or class, from the once-stately monarch Charlemagne (*Eginhard und Emma: Ein Fastnachtschwank in Bildern*, 1864) to the lowly peasant Krischan Bopp (*Balduin Bählamm, der verhinderte Dichter*, 1883), escapes Busch`s rapier-sharp pen. The author`s stories quickly became popular with readers of all ages and from all classes, suggesting that they had struck a collective nerve. As the noted Busch scholar Hans Joachim Neyer (*Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst*) so precisely observes with regards to the public`s relish for Busch`s grisly humour, “Busch hat einen grausamen Humor, der weh tut. Er öffnet die Augen mit Gewalt, weil die Leser es so mögen” (Personal).

**Intention of the Dissertation**

The central claim of this dissertation is that Wilhelm Busch uses symbolic inversion to poke fun at German society, its mores, and its conventions. To show how the author opens the eyes of his readers to their foibles and shortcomings as he reflects their changed circumstances in the wake of the failed revolution, I will tackle four major categories of symbolic inversion: women dominating men; children getting the better of adults; animals besting humans; and objects outwitting their owners.
In Chapter 2: “Women Take the Upper Hand,” I will investigate how representative examples of women of all classes repeatedly triumph over figures of male authority (e.g., husbands, male peers, and social betters) that represent the “natural order of things.” For the most part, men come up short in their encounters with members of the opposite sex, with single, attractive women rebuffing male advances, while beleaguered wives exercise broomstick-justice. Only spinsters (by circumstance or by choice) are invariably depicted as social outcasts, suggesting that nineteenth-century society considered them a threat to public order. With the general acceptance by society, at least in principle, of the notion of women’s equality, the author portrays his characters as “unintentional feminists” (Zucker 254), drawing attention to, and questioning, the real-life situation of women in post-revolutionary Germany.

In Chapter 3: “Tykes, Truants, and Other Little Terrors,” I will show how Busch’s child figures subvert adult authority through pranks and various acts of insubordination, a definite novelty at the time the stories were created. In addition to boy mischief-makers, my study will include largely ignored examples of girlish agitators who undermine authority, either as an act of open defiance or as a demonstration of resourcefulness, confounding social expectations. Coinciding with the discovery of childhood as a distinct phase of human development, Busch’s tales are the first picture stories to portray children in lead roles. Thus, notes David Kunzle (The History of the Comic Strip, 1973–90), the author effectively buries the Rousseau-esque myth of the naturally virtuous child, adding that childish rebellion is as natural and inevitable as social revolution (NC 4). Read by young and old alike, the author’s stories allow children to temporarily exert power over adults, while permitting adults to vicariously relive their own revolutionary urges, even though, in the end, surrendering to such impulses can not be left unpunished.
In Chapter 4: “Animal Upstarts,” I will examine how Busch’s array of animal characters in the once-immutable hierarchies of the “Great Chain of Being,” from pesky insects to scheming dogs, gain the upper hand over their human betters for the sheer fun of it or to press their advantage. Written against the backdrop of Darwin’s theory of evolution and theories of natural selection, the author’s stories point to an alternative hierarchy where animals have dominion over man (and woman), albeit temporarily, upsetting a long tradition of Biblical belief. However, it is the author’s simian characters that wreak the most havoc, with their propensity for aping malicious and inappropriate human behaviours, ranging from childish pranks to adult vices (e.g., smoking and drinking). As such, they mock human pretensions of superiority by repeatedly underlining how closely related humans and animals are in terms of behaviour and motivation, even though the animals, like their childish counterparts, get their just desserts in the end.

In Chapter 5: “The Treachery of the Object,” I will show how Busch uses Tücke des Objekts (“object treachery”),12 whereby objects of all shapes and sizes seem to act according to a mind of their own. This was something new, as virtually all of the objects in the popular magazines of the time had a largely passive role. As Busch’s objects act out against their supposed human “masters,” they mock, reveal, and punish them for their weaknesses, hypocrisies, and supposed transgressions. But, it is within the imagined sanctuary of one’s home that objects most often endanger the very life and limb of their owners (e.g., darting candle flames), reflecting the generalized sense of anxiety and helplessness felt by many citizens in the aftermath of the failed revolution. That many of the objects in Busch’s stories are not mass-produced, but rather handcrafted items harkening back to an idyllic time, is irony indeed, betraying the trust that users placed in them and showing the futility of holding onto the past. My

12 It was Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1807–87) who coined the expression “Tücke des Objekts” (“object treachery”) in his 1879 novel Auch Einer: Eine Reisebekanntschaft (1: 24). Qtd. in FW 438; also Bonati, Darstellung 67.
research includes the recently discovered Der Kuchenteig (1863), the captionless precursor of Max und Moritz, where rising cake batter threatens to devour a disobedient young fellow before he escapes its clutches.

As I examine to what extent Busch’s picture stories are conditioned by the socio-historical circumstances from which they emerged, I will investigate the synergy between image and verse in Busch’s picture stories in order to determine how they slyly subvert and subtly undermine authority. I will continue by asking what made the author’s stories so popular. Did nineteenth-century readers feel a sense of superiority at seeing the pretensions of their compatriots laid bare? Did Busch’s humour, by transcending the boundaries of class, education, and gender, provide a safety valve for German society, helping it to cope with the repression of personal liberties and yearnings for democracy?

My dissertation aims to fill a gap in existing research as the first broad study linking symbolic inversion in Busch’s picture stories to the social changes in the decades following the failed uprising of 1848. To my knowledge, published works make only one direct comment to that effect. Volker Klotz (“Was gibt’s bei Wilhelm Busch zu lachen?” 1988) speculates that Busch may have used role reversal to enable powerless citizens to deal with the collective trauma of the unsuccessful revolution (46), but does not go into much detail. While the eminent Busch scholar Hans Ries, with the assistance of Ingrid Haberland and supported by the Wilhelm-Busch-Gesellschaft (Herwig Guratzsch and Hans Joachim Neyer), has published the most exhaustive background to date on Busch’s works (Die Bildergeschichten: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe, 2002; rev. 2007), there are few references to symbolic inversion per se. Instead, the focus is on regional language, such as Hannöversch (“Knopp” or “button”) and Plattdeutsch (“Smokepiepen” or “smoking pipe”), influences from folklore and fairy-tales (Grimm,
Schrader, and Raff), satirical illustrations (Grandville), and natural history (Brehm).

For his part, Kunzle cites many examples of world upside down in Busch’s picture stories, viewed through the lens of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) and *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* (1867) by Karl Marx (1818–83), with their questions of animal drive, class struggle, property, and crime and punishment. I will add to this analysis, comparing and contrasting a wider representation of female and child characters in order to create a more complete picture of the effects of social change on these groups in post-revolutionary Germany. In addition, my examination of object treachery will take up where Kunzle leaves off, showing how it was bound up with the uncertainty of the times.

Intriguingly, Kunzle states that, with regards to the depictions of children in the *Fliegende Blätter*, “twenty or so are properly punished” and that most “score a clear-cut victory” over adults (NC 249). This statement is at variance with what I have found in my reading of the back issues of the publication from 1855 through 1895, a period that spans Busch’s formative and mature periods. In addition, other “socially and biologically inferior” figures in the magazine, such as women and animals, fare just as poorly as the children. In Busch’s picture stories, however, subordinate characters repeatedly overcome their traditional oppressors, making their lives miserable before they either triumph, are brought to heel, or depart this life. I will argue that the author’s iconic characters, with their “cartoony faces” depicting “just another face in the crowd” (McCloud 36), provide the author with sufficient cover to portray what was actually happening in Germany without causing too much offence. Conversely, the more life-like figures and faces in the *Fliegende Blätter*, along with the single-sheet *Münchener Bilderbogen*, where many of the more popular stories of the magazine were reprinted, could not deviate very far from social norms without risking public condemnation. With that in mind, I will compare
and contrast instances of symbolic inversion in the author’s picture stories with examples in the
*Fliegende Blätter* covering similar topics in order to prove how groundbreaking the author’s exposé of nineteenth-century German society truly was.

With one exception, my study excludes analysis of the author’s works of prose and poetry.\(^{13}\) I will refer, however, to relevant points of social and literary criticism introduced in Busch’s final autobiography, *Von mir über mich* (1894). At the end of my research, I will propose a theory of world upside down exclusive to Busch’s picture stories, arguing that the author not only permits his characters of all ages, social classes, and professions, women included, to rise above Bakhtin’s stated “norms of etiquette and decency” (*RW* 10), but that, in shifting those norms from “top to bottom and front to rear” (11), Busch reflects how nineteenth-century Germany was questioning assumptions of the existing world order. That the social hierarchies in many – but not all – of the author’s stories manage to survive the journey from questioning to actual change directly counters the view, held by Bakhtin and supported by Natalie Zemon Davis, that challenging the existing world order can revitalize the system, but not transform it (9; 153). A keen observer of his life and times, Busch holds up a mirror to *Biedermeier* pretensions, thereby showing German society as it really was, warts and all, not as it wished to be seen, perfect in every way. As Golo Mann reminds us, the author’s picture albums have done more for our understanding of this era than any sociological study of the period: “Wer etwas vom Geist des deutschen Bürgertums in der Bismarckzeit [erfahren will], der kann es in den Busch-Alben besser als in manchen gesellschaftswissenschaftlichen Traktaten” (456).

\(^{13}\) These include the poems in *Kritik des Herzens* [*Critique of the Heart*], 1874; the social satire *Eduards Traum* [*Edward’s Dream*], 1891; and the coming-of-age allegory, *Der Schmetterling* [*The Butterfly*], 1895. The last two works were translated into English by Carol Galway in her thesis “Wilhelm Busch: Cryptic Enigma” (2001).
CHAPTER 2: “WOMEN TAKE THE UPPER HAND”

From feisty wives who outsmart abusive husbands (*Wie der Mann um den Hausschlüssel bitten lernt*, 1862) and assertive single women who thwart the unwelcome advances of lustful men (*Der hastige Rausch*, 1871), to female outlaws who take revenge on gullible men (*Erschreckliche Geschichte von der weiblichen Räuberhöhle, so sich zugetragen hat zu Ungarn*, 1861), Wilhelm Busch’s picture stories repeatedly portray women who trump their male oppressors. To be sure, the theme of upstart women switching roles with men in order to ridicule male feebleness and puffed-up hypocrisy was nothing new. Examples abound in literature, art, and popular culture, where lusty wives like the Wife of Bath and Rabelais’s Gargamelle control their unsuspecting husbands through cunning and trickery; and where angry wives, depicted in mediaeval woodcuts and misericords, whip the hides of unruly husbands. Mock illustrated proclamations of sixteenth-century carnivals in Nuremberg went so far as to invite every woman burdened with “a wretched dissolute husband” to divest him of his freedom and to thrash him until “his [ass]hole bleeds” (*ECS* 226). Such acts of symbolic inversion imply what Henri Bergson describes as an attack on closed systems, characterized by control and defensiveness (46; qtd. in Babcock 22). Or, to quote Mikhail Bakhtin, they represent the temporary suspension of hierarchical rank during carnival time (*RW* 10), only to revert to the status quo thereafter.

“Disorderly” Women and Social Reform

While parody and satire had frequently been used to mock the behaviour of high-handed males, the underlying assumption was that “disorderly” (Zemon Davis 147) wives and women would eventually resume their accepted role in life in order to maintain social order. In the post-

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14 *Misericords* (“mercy seats”) are ledges attached to the underside of folding seats in choir stalls to provide support to clergy required to stand during divine offices. Generally hidden from public view, the ledges present humorous scenes from everyday life, such as world-upside-down portrayals of wives beating husbands (“Misericord.” par. 1).
revolutionary Germany during which Busch created his picture stories, there was a “fear of modernity and […] attachment to past ways” (Shorter 196) as citizens clung to the old Biedermeier rules of conduct that guided female and male behaviour alike (Sheehan, GH 801; qtd. in Galway 146–47). While the Code Napoléon of 1804 gave all citizens equality before the law, married women were still subject to the rule of their husbands under the Allgemeines Landrecht (Prussian Civil Code) of 1794 (Rosenhaft 213–14). After 1848, this situation continued to suit the needs of a country in the throes of rapid urbanization and industrialization, where men assumed the role of breadwinners and women were expected to marry, stay at home, and raise a family (Blackbourn 162; Rosenhaft 210; Schnell 61).

However, nineteenth-century gender roles and identities were not necessarily immutable (Rosenhaft 209). Early feminists such as Louise Otto (later Otto-Peters, 1819–95) called for social reforms in pamphlets and petitions, founding newspapers like the Frauen-Zeitung [Women’s Newspaper] during the revolution to reflect women’s grievances and worries (Blackbourn 110; Rosenhaft 228). Central concerns of German feminism included the right to vote, the reform of antiquated marriage laws under the Prussian Civil Code, and the removal of barriers to education, training, and employment (228). This does not mean that women threw off their aprons and turned into men. Although a few patriotic souls braved public condemnation by manning the barricades, so to speak, the majority chose to heed the call of Otto, Malwida von Meysenbug (1816–1903), Fanny Lewald (1811–89), and Kathinka Zitz-Halein (1801–77),

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15 This situation changed under the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (German Civil Code) of 1900, notes Joseph A. Biesinger, when women were declared “legal persons” for the first time, husbands lost the legal guardianship of their wives, and women in general were allowed to engage in legal contracts (311).

16 As Eve Rosenhaft observes, female property owners in Germany were allowed to vote in certain localities during the nineteenth-century, although it was often by proxy. She adds that neither the constitution nor subsequent reforms leading to the formation of the North German Confederation (1866–71) granted them the right to vote or to hold office (214). In Germany, women only gained the right to vote in 1919.

17 Women fought on the barricades in Berlin and Vienna (1848), as well as in Dresden (1849). See Zucker 238; also Rosenhaft 219–20.
founder of the *Humania Association*\(^{18}\), who advocated support roles for working- and middle-class women (Zucker 245–46). In real life, women still recognized their limitations, dealing with the restrictions placed upon them, breeching the rules where they could (Rosenhaft 214).

It is my contention that what makes Busch’s picture stories so revolutionary for the time is the fact that, for women, his suspensions of hierarchical rank are not temporary, in that there is rarely any reversion to the status quo. Indeed, his female characters are the first to storm the barricades and tend to keep the upper hand over husbands and other males once the latter have been put in their place. Now, the author may not have been advocating full emancipation for women, as the term is understood today. In reality, contradictory views of gender, class, and national identity were still operative during this time (Rosenhaft 209). However, I would argue that, by portraying his female characters as “unintentional feminists who […] carr[y] on propaganda by deed” (Zucker 254), Busch succeeds in drawing attention to, and questioning, the real-life situation of women in post-revolutionary Germany. Furthermore, he illustrates frank portrayals of sex and sexual attraction, a taboo subject that was largely missing in pictorial social satire throughout the nineteenth century, after a long run in the moral strips of the preceding two hundred years (*NC* 1). Considered as a whole, we could say that Busch’s female characters reinforce the notion put forward by Gordon Craig that society at large was open to the idea of women asserting themselves or, at the very least, did not reject it out of hand (159).

I will start by showing representative examples of three groups of “disorderly” female characters who rebel against the “natural order of things”: wives who deliver justice to overbearing husbands; single, nubile, and sexually attractive women who foil persistent men; and

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\(^{18}\) As Stanley Zucker writes, Zitz-Halein was inspired by the goals of the Democratic Association, founded by Ludwig Bamberger (1823–99) and Franz Heinrich Zitz (1803–77), her future husband, in order to establish a German democratic republic capable of handling unemployment and poverty (238–39). After the revolution, *Humania* supported exiled and imprisoned refugees (248). Located in Mainz, it reflected the revolutionary tradition of the city under seventeen years of French governance, from 1792 to 1793 and 1798 to 1814, respectively (238).
unmarried women who overturn expectations by remaining single. Included are women expressing sexual desire and power in the bedroom. Furthermore, I will examine how, in the words of Bakhtin scholar Carolyn M. Shields, the theorist’s concept of carnival enables individuals like Busch’s female characters to break out of the confines of tradition, hierarchy, and oppression, in order to find new, explicit, and more egalitarian ways of interacting with the world (98). Key to my analysis will be a comparison of Busch’s depictions of newly assertive women with the traditional passive young females or embattled “old crones” depicted on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter and the Münchener Bilderbogen. Along the way, I will argue that Busch’s novel use of caricature reduces his characters to what Scott McCloud has called their “universality” (31), with common characteristics easily recognized by his readers (30, 36). Coupled with their bold, new actions that turn expectations inside-out, a mixture of blunt spoken language and graceful poetry, and the unparalleled use of a quick-moving story arc that topples a formerly powerful character in the blink of an eye, Busch’s iconic female figures invert and succeed in mocking Biedermeier convention (Friedrich 99). By the end of this chapter, I will demonstrate how the author’s stories hint at a greater gender equality that, if by no means perfect, overturns the idealized Biedermeier view of women in pre- and post-1848 Germany as “feminized” creatures (Blackbourn 162), bound to hearth and home.

**Gutsy Wife Characters**

Let us start with Busch’s fearless wife characters. In Wie der Mann um den Hausschlüssel bitten lernt (1862), for example, a beleaguered petty-bourgeois wife takes advantage of her husband’s momentary inattention to show him who actually rules the roost. Fittingly for the times, the tale is couched in the language of warfare, with the legends under each of the five panel illustrations providing ironical commentary to the mundane battle between

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19 First published in FB 36.874 (1862): 111.
the sexes for power and territory. Raining blows onto his wife’s head with his closed umbrella (i.e., symbol of male authority) as he wrests the house key (i.e., symbol of female authority) from her clutches, the husband forcibly annexes her property:

![Images of a man and woman with a house key]

*Fig. 1. Wie der Mann um den Hausschlüssel bitten lernt (1862). FW 154.1, illus. 1; 155.3, illus. 3; 156.5, illus. 5*

He triumphantly takes his leave, but makes a fatal miscalculation and gets his coat pocket caught in the door, with the key inside. Compelled to make an appeal to his wife for the release of his coat pocket, the husband receives permission to proceed and is granted honourable discharge. The wifely arsenal (i.e., protruding tongue and wagging index finger) may not have the power to kill or maim, but has hit its mark all the same. The reader gets the feeling that the sequence will be repeated as each truce ends and marital hostilities begin anew. This is not the *Biedermeier* notion of quiet domesticity and wifely complacency, but rather the picture of a spouse who seems to have absorbed the lessons of the revolution, dealing with the shenanigans of an abusive husband with military precision.

A second example of the updated battle between the sexes is seen in *Die Brille* (1870), where a bespectacled husband, identified as an actuary, sits down for the noonday meal his wife brings to the table (*RZ* 154, illus. 1). It is a scene of domestic tranquility, with a married couple

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fulfilling the sharply defined roles of the male as breadwinner and the female as nurturer, immortalized in “Das Lied von der Glocke” or “The Song of the Bell” (1799) by Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) and reprised in the widely consulted and reprinted *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*. The poem tells of a husband who “must abroad into hostile life, mid labour and strife, with craft and with pain, must gather and gain,” while “indoors governs the modest housewife, the mother of children, and doth wisely steer the domestic sphere […] never resting.”

In *Brockhaus*, “man has a more creative spirit suitable for the world at large,” while woman, with her “silent yearning” and “endurance” sustained through “goodness and cunning,” is “confined to a small circle.” In Schiller’s version, a woman “never rests,” while in *Brockhaus*, she “buzzes in endless activity,” finding “solace and help in her tears.” The words may be different, yet the ideas with regards to established gender roles are largely the same.

But, the characters in *Die Brille* soon depart from their respective scripts, demonstrating that the established order of things can be overturned in an instant. When the actuary’s wife ladles him a bowl of *Wurstsuppe* (“sausage soup”), he examines it as intently as he would a mortality table (*RZ* 154, illus. 2). To his surprise, he pulls a long hair out of the broth and refuses

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to eat any more (155, illus. 3, 4). Ignoring his wife’s entreaty, “Hast Du mich lieb, so wird’s Dich nicht geniren!” (155.8), and refusing her offer of Wurst from the offending tureen, he retreats to the cabinet, takes out a bottle of rum, and pours himself a glass (156, illus. 5, 6). From there, the domestic scene quickly descends into chaos, with the husband’s uncrowning and downward spiral. When his wife removes the bottle from his reach, the calm rationality expected from a man of his profession turns into a violent temper tantrum. Grabbing his cane, he trips his wife and smashes the bottle she raises to protect herself. Lightning-quick, she removes her husband’s glasses from his face, rendering him sightless:

Fig. 2. *Die Brille* (1870). *RZ* 159.23–4; illus. 12; 160.25–26, illus. 13

The wife observes her husband’s descent into ignominy with increasing amusement as he lurches about the room, backs into the stove and burns his hind quarters, entangles himself in an errant ball of yarn, smashes the soup tureen which empties its contents on the dog, and finally ploughs headfirst into the edge of the open door, bloodying his nose (160–63, illus. 14–20) – and his masculine pride.23 Vanquished, he pleads for his glasses, which his regnant wife haughtily

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23 In *Erreurs populaires au fait de la médecine et régime de santé* [Popular Mistakes with Regards to Medicine and Health Care], 1578, by Rabelais contemporary Laurent Joubert (1529–82), it was believed that the size and potency of the male genital organs could be interpreted from the shape and dimensions of the nose, according to the popular
delivers at the end of her besom or “twig broom” (165, illus. 24). Instead of finding “solace and help” in her tears as Brockhaus would have counselled, she has used her own brand of “cunning” to overpower her intemperate husband. As the actuary’s wife unleashes an ever-increasing series of humorously original gory gags that humiliate and render her husband impotent, we could say that she has effectively castrated him, if his bloodied nose (or male member by proxy) is any indication.24 Yet, despite the spectacle of blood dripping from her mate’s injured appendage (coloured bright red in one broadsheet version of the story for maximum effect),25 the melodramatic gestures of a cartoonish character begging for mercy at the feet of his broomstick-wielding wife still manage to amuse. Not only has she managed to break free of her housewifely constraints, her actions have given her what Bakhtin might call a “life-creating and transforming power, an indestructible vitality” (PDP 107; qtd. in Shields 98) that the reader suspects will endure. Meanwhile, the couple’s dog has taken advantage of all the commotion to snatch a piece of sausage that has fallen to the floor (164, illus. 22). It bids us a smiling adieu in the last panel, while the actuary kisses his wife’s hand in supplication.

With her comical appearance and exaggerated gestures, the actuary’s wife stands in sharp contrast to her more realistic- and fearsome-looking counterparts in the Fliegende Blätter. They include the poker-wielding “harridan” in the ironically named Hausrecht or “domestic rights” (1876), who asks her husband, peeping out from under the table where he has taken temporary

Latin expression: “Et quoy qu’on dise, ad formam nasi cognoscitur ad te levavi, d’autant que la proporcion des mambres n’est observue [sic] an tous, plusieurs ont une belle trompe de nez, qui font camus dans la brayette […]” (5.4: 477; ital. in orig.; qtd. in RW 316).

24 According to Kunzle, it was an insult for man to pull another’s nose, as ritualized by Charles Dickens (1812–70) in Nicholas Nickleby (1838/39) when the tragic actor Mr. Lenville tweaks the protagonist’s nose as punishment for attracting positive attention with his acting ability. Another example is A Chapter of Noses (1834) by George Cruikshank (1792–1878), in which the artist insults an unscrupulous publisher who passes off the drawings of Cruikshank’s brother, Isaac Robert (1789–56), for those of his more famous artist-brother. See NC 243.

refuge, if he intends to go out:

His answer, “definitely not, I will show you who is master of the house,” is an empty threat, given his lowly and defenceless position. The disorderly state of the room also implies that some sort of struggle has preceded the exchange, which she has clearly won. These are not characters that elicit laughter or sympathy, only a sense that one has walked in on a real-life situation of domestic violence. Tussles between husbands and wives to determine who wears the pants are also seen in Der Herr im Hause (FB 42.1021 [1865]: 39) and Häusliches Vergnügen (FB 54.1354 [1871]: 208), while in Erkennungszeichen (FB 52.1289 [1870]: 101), physical altercations serve as legal proof that one couple is already “married,” not merely engaged. These images can only capture a moment in time, as they are limited to single panels. By contrast, Busch’s stories are full of action with cartoonish scenes of violence so overstated that they encourage readers to applaud the show of female bravado in spite of themselves.

Scenarios like those in Die Brille – and to a lesser extent in the Fliegende Blätter – that portray the wife as victor over her husband were not far removed from actual episodes in nineteenth-century Germany. As Hans Ries et al. point out (RZ 154), Busch took his inspiration
for the story from a marital ruckus he witnessed as a thirteen-year-old living in the rectory of his Lutheran pastor-uncle, Georg Kleine (1806–97). In *Von mir über mich* (1894), he recounts:

> Etwa ums Jahr 45 bezogen wir die Pfarre zu Lüethorst [sic]. Unter meinem Fenster murmelte der Bach. Gegenüber am Ufer stand ein Haus, eine Schaubühne des ehelichen Zwistes; der sogennante Hausherr spielt die Rolle des besiegten Tyrannen. Ein hübsches natürliches Stück; zwar das Laster unterliegt, aber die Tugend triumphiert nicht. Das Stück fing an hinter der Szene, spielte weiter auf dem Flur und schloß im Freien. Sie stand oben vor der Tür und schwang triumphierend den Reiserbesen, er stand unten im Bach und streckte die Zunge heraus; und so hatte er auch seinen Triumph. (Hochhut 2: 15)

The battling husband and wife of Busch’s memory, she on the stoop swinging her besom and he languishing in the brook below, are described as bit actors in a “beautiful, natural play,” where “vice rules but virtue does not triumph.” We imagine him punished for some transgression, yet his protruding tongue, while explicable, lacks dignity and self-control. With the events of 1848 just three years away when Busch witnessed the scene above, it is entirely imaginable that the wife reflects the growing discontent of her counterparts with the expectations and restrictions placed on their lives. We can imagine her pushed to the breaking point as she runs her truculent husband out of their home with her broom. This is not to say that wives had never shown anger against their imperious husbands in similar situations. But, the fact that this scenario occurs in the run-up to an actual revolution, coupled with the fact that Busch chooses to reprise it in various shapes and forms in his picture stories, strongly indicates that he has tapped into a *Zeitgeist* of sorts, whereby German women had glimpsed the possibility of change.

To be sure, combative women like those above had been a regular feature in the popular
printed materials of earlier centuries. In the crude playing cards of Peter Flötner (1490–1546), for example, we see one woman thrashing her husband’s naked buttocks (Zemon Davis 158, fig. 5.1). Similarly, in a German woodcut of the sixteenth century, wives are enjoined to beat their husbands’ bottoms with sticks and switches “until his asshole bleeds.” The response of the husbands was to “scream in homicidal anger” (ECS 243) at their wives, as seen in Die Neunefolgy

Heud einer bösen Frawn [The Ninefold Skins of a Shrewish Woman], 1539, where one husband flays the nine skins off his disobedient wife to teach her a lesson. “Disorderly” wives were also ridiculed as Doktor Siemann (“Doctor She-Man”) in the literary tradition of the sixteenth century (Collins and Taylor 403; Zemon Davis 160; Zika 270), while Hans Sachs (1494–1576) glorified husbands who beat their wives as Sankt Kolbmann (“Saint Cudgelman”). Such misogynist portrayals can be attributed to male disquiet at the evolution of the institution of marriage from a sacrament that could only be ended by the death of one spouse, to one where divorce was permitted owing to cruelty or adultery, with the possibility of remarriage for the innocent party.

This was all part of Martin Luther (1483–1546) and the Reformers having declared marriage as a basic Christian duty (ECS 222), conditional on state registration and, after the Council of Trent in 1563, the presence of a priest and two witnesses (Witte 39–40). By comparison, women in the Dutch Republic had more freedoms than their sisters elsewhere (241) with regards to marital reciprocity (Wyntjes 400), ruling over the household just as their husbands did in the community at large (Schama 9). This was primarily due to a growing urban society and middle class,

26 “Wer der angriff ist geschehē schon yede fraw thūt zu jrem mā gon, schlahē drin mit steckē und rūthen, von enstē mächt eim dʒ loch blūtē” [“Let us attack, each woman go to her husband, and beat him with sticks and switches, until his (ass)hole bleeds”]. The lines appear with the bottom-left illustration of the slightly damaged woodcut entitled Uñ halt in eyner Sum, Wolches weyb hat ein verspielen liederuchē mań, Der sol hienstuzter zm Weich sein Freiheit mer han, Auch sol eyn yedes weyb jren man selbs Reformieren. Wol mit stangen, gablen, stecken, Rathen schmieren, Und keyn vertrag mer mit jenē machen, Auch nit auff hözen das loch thū im dan trachen [Summary of How Every Woman Who Has a Wretched Dissolute Husband, Shall Deny Him Hereinafter His Freedom in This Country, and in Order to Reform Him, Shall Herself Lick Him with Sticks, Forks, Rods, Birches, and Have No More to Do with Him, and Continue This Treatment Until His Ass-Hole Is Roaring], c. 1550. See ECS 226, fig. 8–5.
allowing many women to acquire education and practise occupations once restricted to men (Peacock 9). These new female freedoms caused apprehension among Dutch men (9), with marriage strips like *Jan en Griet*, c. 1700, from the *Jan de Wasser* series, tut-tutting in disapproval at husbands who tend the home fires while their wives engage in a life of soldiering and business dealings from the day after they are married. Even so, the Dutch marriage satires still ridicule female power wielded outside the home (*ECS* 243), stopping short of the cruel and sadistic punishments meted out by the furious husbands in the German woodcuts.

**Broomstick-Justice**

To topple formerly imperious husbands, Busch’s dynamic wife-characters wield the everyday besom as their weapon of choice. Once a symbol of “unruly” women and the fearsome powers of witchcraft, it is now a tool for sweeping away male ineptitude and conceit. Thus, the peasant wife in *Der Bauer und der Windmüller* (1861) explodes in anger and drives her bungling husband into the house at the end of her broomstick for allowing the sadistic miller to hang their valuable donkey on one of the rotating blades of his windmill (*FW* 90, illus. 12). She seems to rule their household with an iron fist, with her husband so cowed that he lets his cross-saw blade cut her nostril “accidentally on purpose” (91, illus. 14) as he takes his leave (*NC* 275), with a grotesque realism that degrades both her appendage and her power.

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27 The broomstick motif in Busch’s picture stories is related to the distaff or “woman’s sceptre” in the world-upside-down motifs of mediaeval popular culture (Winstead 96). For example, misericords portray wives beating their trembling husbands with distaffs (Grössinger 107, fig. c), while marginalia show them wielding distaffs in a show of power over men (Winstead 96; also *Luttrell Psalter*, MS 42130, fig. 60, British Lib., London; qtd. in Randall, “Woman with Distaff and Spindle Beating Man,” 232).

28 *Müllertücke*, f. (“miller-mischief”), is documented by several authors (Mager et al. 154–55; Strackerjan 231; Volkmann 78). As Hans Ries et al. observe, the notion probably stems from an ancient superstition whereby individuals living outside of the community were considered to be dishonest (*Handwörterbuch* 604). Qtd. in *FW* 82.

29 Regarding what David Kunzle has called the seemingly accidental damage inflicted by objects on behalf of their owners (*NC* 275), see also chap. 2, p. 47; also chap. 5, p. 182.
In another instance, the independently wealthy Herr Knopp (“Mr. Roly Poly”), a typical “Münchner Spießer” (Bohne, WBGSS 26 and WBLWS 152) and hero of the Knopp-Trilogie (1875–77), experiences broomstick-justice for transgressions both imagined and real. The first incident takes place during his bachelor days in the episode “Freund Mücke” (Abenteuer eines Junggesellen, 1875), after an evening of carousing with the womanizing friend of the title. When the pair returns to Mücke’s (“Gadfly’s”) house, Knopp’s life is shifted upside down as his friend’s broom-swinging wife angrily mistakes him for her cheating husband and greets him with abusive words reminiscent of the street rather than polite society:

Frau Mücke’s “schon wieder mal!?” clearly indicates that her husband is a serial cheater. That her mate is too cowardly to face her head-on, pushing his friend through the doorway first (659, illus. 106), shows who wields the actual power in their household. Once again, caricature, swift justice, and Bakhtin’s crude “marketplace speech and gesture” (RW 10), special to carnival time and meant to free the user from the norms of etiquette and decency (10), become even more

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30 The surname Knopp was widely heard in Hanover and also common in Wiedensahl (Schulz 39). Ries et al. suggest that the similarity in sound between Knopp and Knopf, m. (“button”), is inspired by the rotundity of the hero and is possibly related to Kugel, m. (“ball,” Zoder 1: 927). All qtd. in RZ 600.

31 Mücke, f. (“fly”), is a nickname for a bothersome person (Bahlow 344; qtd. in RZ 652).
humorous when they are directed at the wrong individual. In that regard, the unleashed fury and “vulgar” speech of Mücke’s comic-strip wife stands in sharp contrast with the exasperated spouse in the Fliegende Blätter’s Eine Gardinenpredigt (1875), who attempts to drag her drunken husband from the tavern where he spends his evenings, with the complaint that his promises to come home always stretch into the next day:

Fig. 5. Eine Gardinenpredigt (1875). FB 63.1569: 52

Realistically drawn, the wife is not allowed the same frank speech and exaggerated gestures as Busch’s cartoonish counterpart, most likely to avoid offending the publication’s male readership.

The second incident of broomstick-justice occurs during Herr Knopp’s married life in the punningly titled episode “Ein Mißgriff” (“mistake,” lit. “mis-handle”) from Herr und Frau Knopp (1876). Here, the master of the house, out-of-sorts during the Saturday housecleaning activities, wanders aimlessly about. On the pretext of looking for his pipe, he deliberately makes a detour around a broom and bucket at the foot of the window being polished by the housekeeper Liese as she stands on the sill, whereupon he “absentmindedly” tweaks the bottom part of her exposed calf, much to the annoyance of Frau Dorette:

Und zwickt der Liese ins Bein hinein. Abscheuliches Mädchen, verlasse das Haus!!” Hat Knopp eine schöne Beschäftigung. –

Frau Dorette, now holding the broom at attention like a battle standard, dismisses the unfortunate maid on the spot, while her husband stands in the corner like a naughty boy. Knopp is reduced to grinding the morning coffee until the couple hires a replacement, giving him “eine schöne Beschäftigung” or a “a nice job” to do (above). When Liese’s two replacements are fired for questionable hygiene, Knopp also inherits two more “nice jobs” that reflect his continued debasement and diminished status: shining boots (716, illus. 30) and milking the family goat (720, illus. 34). Even without the dismissals, Frau Dorette has a strong motivation for asserting her authority. This is because the era in which Busch created his picture stories was marked by the ascension of an affluent and self-assured class of merchants, bankers, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs (Blackbourn 158) like Knopp. Marrying into this class meant comfort and security for a woman like Frau Dorette, herself the former live-in domestic of her husband. Undoubtedly, she knows just how insecure her former position was, for had Knopp chosen someone else during his marriage pilgrimage, she would likely have been banished from the household by his new bride. Frau Dorette solidifies her position by conceiving and giving birth to a daughter in the third story of the trilogy, Julchen (1877). His world turned literally upside down, the new papa
has finally hitched himself to the responsibilities of fatherhood, as foretold by the vignette on the title page of the preceding story *Herr und Frau Knopp*, where we see a man on all fours pulling a wagon with his crop-wielding wife and Cupid atop, to which has been attached a smaller cart with a rattle-shaking baby (*RZ* 688–89). Both Cupid and the baby smile knowingly at the reader. That a nineteenth-century husband like Knopp ruled on paper, but was actually bound to ensuring a comfortable existence for his family, was par for the course. That he atrophies and expires once he has fulfilled his duty as a father and married off his daughter (829–30, illus. 102, 103), is at once humorous and cruelly ironic, to say the least.

“Das Weib sucht zu erhalten”

Yet, not all of Busch’s wife-characters are as forceful as Frau Dorette and her husband-dominating contingent. In chapter 2 of *Balduin Bählamm, der verhinderte Dichter* (1883), for example, the compliant Frau Bählamm (“Mrs. Baa-Lamb”/”Bel Âme”) remains at the family home in Munich with four young children, while her “Möchtegern Dichter” or “would-be poet” of a husband (Bohne, *BBMK*) decamps to the countryside to write verse, despite the mounting household bills. True to type, she crumples into a delicate swoon when he returns from his unsuccessful sojourn with a mewling infant she mistakes for his (*SW* 490, illus. 101; chap. 9). In fact, it had been consigned to his care by a fellow female train passenger who stepped out to warm up its bottle in a restaurant during a shorter-than-expected stopover (486, illus. 94). After

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32 As Ries et al. explain, *Balduin* is derived from the adjective *bald* or *kühn* (“bold”). Herwig Guratzsch adds that it stands in sharp contrast with the poet’s surname *Bählamm*, a variation on the Low German *Bahlamm* (*bâlam* or “baa-lamb,” 36; qtd. in *SW* 429), with its onomatopoetic whiff of country life. By extension, its owner is a “gutmütiger, aber unbeholfener, dabei etwas einfältiger Mensch” (“good-natured, but unhelpful and somewhat simple person,” Schambach 15) or, in Hanover German, the embodiment of the adjective *schlaff* (“lacksadasical,” Ludewig 23). *Bählamm* can also be seen as a humorous bowdlerization of *bel âme*, m. (“beautiful soul,” Poncin 121–22). See *SW* 429.

33 Familiar landmarks, such as the banks of the Isar River with its poplar trees and the Sterneckerbräu, are visible in the illustration (*SW* 431–32). The beer hall took on a darker significance when it became the meeting place and first headquarters of the Nazi party (Faber 417).
the thankful mother reclaims her baby, all is forgiven (491, illus. 102, 103). Downtrodden and disappointed after turning both his and his family’s life inside out in the pursuit of what proves to be a futile dream, Balduin assumes his breadwinner role once again, with his relieved wife tending the home fires. But, for all her patience, Frau Bählamm understands something about money matters, unlike the indolent young wife in the Fliegende Blätter’s Ungerechter Vorwurf (1883), who reproaches her husband for having bought insurance for himself: “Immer denkt Ihr [Männer] doch nur an Euch; – mein Leben versichern zu lassen, fällt Dir natürlich nicht ein!” (FB 78.1966: 109). What she does not understand is that by taking out insurance on himself, the husband has essentially made provisions for her as his beneficiary, should he die or have an accident. Still, the reader is clearly meant to laugh at her ignorance; like many of her real-life “feminized” counterparts, she is kept uninformed about household finances.

The fate of Frau Bählamm, however, is mild in comparison to that of two passive wife-characters – the only ones in Busch’s works – that submit to the thuggish authority of their husbands. In Der hohle Zahn (1862), a husband driven wild by the pain of a toothache tries everything to find relief, including hitting his wife with a switch: “Jedoch das Übel will nicht weichen, / Auf and’re Art will er’s erreichen. / Umsonst – er schlägt, vom Schmerz bedrängt, / Die Frau, die einzuheizen denkt” (FW 142.13–16). By lashing out at his innocent mate in this manner, the husband demonstrates just what a “big baby” he is, just as his wife shows how willing – or unwilling – she is to endure the inequity in their marriage.

The second occurrence of husband brutality occurs during the episode “Ein schwarzer College” (Abenteuer eines Junggesellen), when Knopp’s friend Förster Knarrtje (“Forester Grouch”) finds his wife at home with the local priest, where he has taken refuge under the table:

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While Knarrtje clearly intends to strike his cheating wife rather than confront the priest, we do not actually see the cane make contact in subsequent frames, although the family dog makes sure the priest does not escape scot-free by taking a bite out of his cassock seat. Would the reader be correct in suspecting that Knarrtje’s bad-tempered behaviour might have something to do with his wife’s ill-advised affair? Förster Knarrtje’s coarse language and aggressive behaviour are both brutal and hypocritical in that they are directed solely at his wife, not at the equally guilty priest. Frau Knarrtje, for her part, is a stark reminder of sanctioned wife beating under the Prussian and French civil codes (Abrams, “Martyrs” 363) that imposed harsh penalties on unfaithful wives (“Concubinage” 81–82). In 1845, Friedrich Karl von Savigny (1779–1861), a pioneer in German law reform, went so far as to draft a revision to the Prussian Civil Code that justified punishing a wife for adultery, as she had “violated the most vital interests of state, family and public morality alike” (Vogel 157; qtd. in Abrams, “Concubinage” 82).

In a similar vein, the Fliegende Blätter contains various portrayals of physical abuse by husbands. Take the Lied eines deutschen Knaben (1861), for example, where a boy describes the

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35 According to Ries et al., Förster Knarrtje’s onomatopoeic name is related to knarren or knurren (“to creak” or “to growl [like a dog!”), with the meaning of brummen or nergeln (“to grumble” or “to kvetch,” DW 11: 1354, def. 3 and 5). A [K]narrer is also a Brummbart, m. (“grouch,” 1355, def. 5). Qtd. in RZ 612.
practice of his father’s haut-bourgeois house, whereby the wish of one is the wish of all:

In a chain reaction of sorts, the father raises his fists against his wife, she strikes their son, he yanks his sister’s pigtail, she pulls the dog’s tail, the dog bites the cat, and the cat eats the mouse. Thus, they maintain household harmony. And, in the ironically named Der Höfliche (1876), another miserable haut-bourgeois husband, seated with his wife at a café table, goes so far as to step hard on her foot when she does not acknowledge the greeting of a passerby, just to make a ridiculous point about good manners (FB 64.1602: 112). Considered as a whole, the preceding examples point to the difficult life experienced by many women in Germany at that time, along with their reticence to fight back.

Nevertheless, the previous examples of marital violence pale in comparison with an illustration that Busch drew from real life, found among his personal sketches. In Bauer, seine zu Boden gestürzte Frau prügelnd (c. 1875), we see a farmer with a cup in one hand and a switch in the other, who towers over his wife lying face-down on the floor (Brunngraber-Malottke 180). Beside her lies a broken crock of spilt milk and, at her feet, an upturned stool. In the doorway stands a wailing child with a spoon in her hand. What might have prompted the beating? In the
Rolf Hochhut edition of Busch’s works, the sketch is accompanied by the last two lines of Schiller’s “Der Jüngling am Bache” (1803), to which have been added two more lines that imply that all is not well with the one-time lovers and now parents: “Raum ist in der kleinsten Hütte / Für ein einzig liebend Paar. / Nur für Karoline Schütte / Und für mich ist das nicht wahr” (2: 1034; Gedichte 340). Written in a jarringly light and airy trochaic tetrameter (/ x / x / x / x) that characterizes many of Busch’s rhyming couplets, the lines provide a stark contrast to the bleak reality of the sketch. Here, there is no triumphant pose with broomstick in hand, only a wife who has been upended, as suggested by her name (schütten ‘to tip’), under the pitiless blows of her husband. The cruelty of the scene reflects the tough lot of many peasant women in nineteenth-century Germany, with its long hours of toil and alcohol abuse (Abrams, “Martyrs” 362–63), to which Busch was undoubtedly privy during his various sojourns in the countryside, especially during his later years. Under the Prussian Civil Code, where husbands had the last word, leaving an abusive marriage was easier said than done (Blasius 68; qtd. in Abrams, “Concubinage” 88).

The Fliegende Blätter also reprises Schiller’s love-in-a-small-hut theme with the evocatively titled Lebensbild (1862), where a bourgeois husband holds his head in exasperation as he bemoans the need to earn more money to take care of his nagging wife and growing brood.37 Here, there is no comic relief, only a sense of resignation in the face of male and female responsibilities. By contrast, Busch allows his wife-characters, with a few exceptions, to repeatedly “flex their muscles” and thwart overbearing husbands as he highlights the basic inequality of nineteenth-century German marriage laws. That he renders them as caricatures,

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36 The last two lines from Schiller’s poem read, “Raum ist in der kleinsten Hütte / Für ein glücklich liebend Paar” (Gedichte 340), except that Busch has substituted “einzig” for “glücklich.” The original sketch in sepia ink is thought to have been drawn in Wolfenbüttel or Wiedensahl during Busch’s later years (Brungraber-Malottke 180).

with carnivalesque actions and repartee befitting the marketplace, sweetens the message.

**Life of the Single Woman**

Like Busch’s intrepid wife-characters, single female recipients of unwelcome sexual advances largely triumph over their ardent admirers, effectively changing the rules of engagement between the sexes. If the object of male desire comes from a lower social class, harassment often takes the form of physical coercion that would have been considered as forward behaviour by the mores of the time. Thus, in *Der hastige Rausch* (1871), a drunken petty-bourgeois customer asks the barmaid for the bill, taking the opportunity to fondle her shapely calf through her skirts as he does so:

![Image of a scene from *Der hastige Rausch*](image_url)

“Macht 1 fl. [Gulden] 48 kr.”

**Fig. 9.** *Der hastige Rausch* (1871). RZ 194–95.6, illus. 6

This act in itself was a highly sexual gesture, as Hans Joachim Neyer has observed, given that a woman’s calf, normally hidden by petticoats, was considered erotic in nineteenth-century Germany. Reacting immediately to the affront, the aggrieved waitress literally turns the table on her inebriated customer with a scornful marketplace insult, “Sie Lump, Sie!” with no hint of

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38 *Der hastige Rausch* was published as two installments in the *Fliegende Blätter* (*FB* 54.1346: 142–43 and 54.1347: 150–51) in 1871. It was the last of Busch’s picture stories to appear in the magazine (*RZ* 190).

39 A symbol of eroticism in nineteenth-century Germany, the calf-motif was also portrayed by the *Biedermeier* artist Carl Spitzweg (1808–85) in *Sennerin und Mönch* [*Dairy Maid and Monk*], 1838, where we see a man of the cloth stealing a glance over his shoulder at the bared calf of a strapping young shepherdess who follows him over the fence stile (Neyer, “Was” 27, 30, fig. 12).
bashfulness about it, sending the contents of the condiment jar onto her patron’s shirtfront and
the salt in the shaker directly into his eyes as he falls backwards off his chair:

“Sie Lump, Siel!”
Fig. 10. Der hastige Rausch (1871). RZ 196–97.7, illus. 7

Temporarily blinded, the drunkard crushes the hat of the other patron in the room as he attempts
to stand up (198–99, illus. 9), whereupon the laughing barmaid opens the door so that the owner
of the hat can toss the culprit into the pouring rain (200–01, illus. 12).

By comparison, the barmaid’s counterpart in Warnung (1871), appearing in the same
issue of the Fliegende Blätter, responds to her customer’s condescending “Liebes Kind” and
request for a small squab by suggesting he order a full-size one, otherwise they might serve him
a “sparrow.” On the face of it, the waitress seems to be giving the customer fair warning about
portion sizes. However, I would argue that he is “coming on” to her by insinuating she is a
“Täubchen” (“lovey-dovey”), while her rejoinder about the “Spatzen” is more than likely a play
on words between “sparrow” and the verb “spaszen” (“to fool around”).40 In other words, he
should focus his attention on someone older (“Taube”), as young women are only playthings:

40 See Spasz, m. (“seinen Spasz mit einer haben,” DW 16. 1958, def. 3), and “darf nur mit ihr (seiner gattin) allein
noch spaszen” (DW 16: 1967, def. 2c). Of further interest is that sparrows, linked throughout history to Aphrodite,
have always been thought to embody lustful behaviour (Summers-Smith 49).
Still, her response is more confident than that of the serving girl in Busch’s “Trinklied” (Dideldum! 1874), who uncomplainingly accepts a sneaky pinch on the calf from “der durstige [sic] Pilgersmann” (533.3), or thirsty pilgrim. Here, we see a latter-day supporter of Jesuitism, a halo emanating from his head, whose inebriated song\textsuperscript{41} indicates that he is thirsty for something more than the drink on tap. Why does the barmaid appear unperturbed? Is it because her customer appears to be a harmless old drunk? Or does she rest easy in the knowledge that he is about to be tossed from the premises by the bartender? Indeed, members of the \textit{Orden der Societas Jesu}, like the thirsty pilgrim, had been outlawed in Germany in 1872 by order of Johann

\textsuperscript{41} According to Ries et al., the tune is written in the style of the drinking songs that poked fun at \textit{ultramontanism} (lit. “over-the-mountainism,” i.e., Rome), a religious movement within the Roman Catholic Church with its emphasis on papal authority (\textit{RZ} 533). During the \textit{Kulturkampf} (“Culture War,” 1871–78), songs like these were meant to inflame and stir up passions. Yet, in matters of personal confession, Busch was no religionist. Indeed, the author’s nephew Hermann Nöldeke (1860–1932) observes that while his uncle supported the emerging \textit{Evangelischer Bund} (i.e., federation of regional Protestant church bodies) through yearly contributions, he refused in 1902 to send 20,000 Marks (payment from his former publisher Braun & Schneider) to the \textit{Gustav-Adolf-Verein}, in support of Protestant parishes in Catholic areas, stating that he did not want his contribution used for religious purposes (“zu konfessionellen Zwecken sollte es nicht verwandt werden”). See \textit{WB} 149; qtd. in \textit{RZ} 955.
von Lutz (1826–90), the Bavarian Minister of Culture (536). Yet, the pilgrim bears a suspicious resemblance to Busch, as Friedrich Bohne has pointed out (GA 2: 553; qtd. in RZ 533). Knowing the author’s penchant for uncovering pretence and hypocrisy, could it be that he deliberately casts himself both as a religious man and as an admirer of pretty women, with the promise of sex, in order to suggest that, underneath, we are all the same?

The drunken pilgrim reminds the reader of the randy priest who sidles up to Angelika, the pretty housekeeper of Gottlob Michael in Pater Filucius (1872), only to have her fling boiling applesauce into his face from the pot she tends on the stove (RZ 424, illus. 11). In the heat of the moment, Filicius seems to have forgotten how he should behave. Created during the Kulturkampf (“Culture Struggle”), a time when the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) sought to restrict the power of the Roman Catholic Church, the story is a religious allegory that portrays a Jesuit priest who attempts to get his hands on the fortune of Michael (cf. “Deutscher,” personification of the German state) by inveigling his way into the affections of the unmarried women in his household. They include Angelika (embodiment of the future state church) and two unattractive aunties representing the established religious denominations of the time: the aging Tante Petrine (Roman Catholic Church), as rich in material goods as she is pudgy in appearance (420, illus. 3); and the emaciated, buttoned-up Tante Pauline (Protestant Church), with no money to her name. After a series of mishaps that culminate in the defenestrating of the wily Filucius and his cronies into the dung heap outside Petrine’s window (456, illus. 71) – a

42 As Ruth H. Sanders writes, the Syllabus of Errors (1864) by Pope Pius IX (1792–1878) condemned the separation of church and state, non-sectarian schools, religious diversity, and toleration that were the proud accomplishments of Prussia along with other European states (169). She adds that the Pope declared Papal Infallibility in 1870, making kings subjects to the Pope with regards to faith and morals (Ozment 215; qtd. in Sanders 169–70). With the death of Pius IX in 1878 and the election of Pope Leo XIII (1810–1903), observes Sanders, the Church and the new German state backed away from further confrontation with the Catholic Church (Ozment 217; qtd. in Sanders 170).

43 Filucius goes back to the seventeenth-century theologian Vincenzo Filliucci (lat. Filliuccius; 1566–1622), featured in Die Moral und Politik der Jesuiten, nach den Schriften der vorzüglichen theologischen Autoren dieses Ordens
literal abasement and a comic uncrowning in the best carnival tradition – the aunties are left to mutter as Michael chooses Angelika as his bride (458, illus. 73), leaving them out in the cold.

Whereas Busch’s servant girls and other lower-class women must cope with physical advances, female characters from the same social class as the instigator become the object of lascivious gazes. In “Der Zylinder” (*Dideldum!*), we watch the morally upright Joseph, described as “fromm und gut” (*RZ* 581.3) as he heads off to Mass to celebrate his name day with rosary and breviary in hand, smiling lewdly at the backside and calves of a full-figured citoyenne revealed by a gusting wind. The vision of female beauty is an enticement so forbidden that it can only be hinted at by three long dashes or sighs. Joseph takes in the sight with the tails of his morning coat angled stiffly in the breeze. Its owner may be mindful of his manners, but his clothing has, to use Shields’s words, “seize[d] the opportunity for free expression” (106). With his rosary and gloves now also standing erect, the object of his admiration smiles wickedly as the wind catches his magnificent top hat and sends it flying:

Jetzt kommt die Ecke.     Oh, Joseph, was geht dich das an?
Ja, siehst du wohl, das war nicht gut!

Immer schlimmer
Weht hier der Wind. – Ein Frauenzimmer,
Obschon von Wuchse schön und kräftig,
Ist sehr bewegt und flattert heftig,
So daß man wohl bemerken kann – – –

Jetzt nimmt der Wind dir deinen Hut! –

Fig. 12. “Der Zylinder” (*Dideldum!* 1874). *RZ* 583.15a/b–19, illus. 5; 583–84.20–22, illus. 6

*[The Ethics and Politics of the Jesuits, After the Writings of the Excellent Theological Authors of This Order],* 1840, by Johann Otto Ellendorf (1806–43). When the name is Germanized to *Filuzi/Luzi* (cf. “Nazi” from “Ignatius”), it sounds like *filou*, m. (“rogue”), a description that describes the culprit to a t. Qtd. in *RZ* 416.
By contrast, the largely submissive women portrayed on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter choose to put up with unwanted male advances, like the seated ball-goer in Consequent (1875), whose admirer, claiming an inability to dance, sits down beside her and asks why the men on the floor can hold their partners around the waist if he cannot do the same:

![Image](Fig. 13. Consequent (1875). FB 62.1553: 133)

Unlike the owner of the top hat, his coattails hang limply as witnesses to his overfamiliarity.

**Peasant Feistiness**

Such unwanted advances are not a nuisance that Rieke Mistelfink\(^{44}\) (“Frederica Mistle Finch”), the poet’s muse in Balduin Bählamm, der verhinderte Dichter, is prepared to endure. Her immediate response to the would-be versifier’s attempt to pin a bouquet of wild flowers to her bosom is a rhyming slap to the face, much to the amusement of her pet nanny goat as it jumps up and down:

\(^{44}\) As Ries et al. note, Busch reinvented Misteldrossel, f. (“thrush,” lit. “mistle thrush”), as Mistelfink, m. (“mistle finch,” SW 447), although Grimm lists Mistelfink as a synonym of Misteldrossel (DW 12: 2269). The noun also contains the component Mist, m., or “dung” (SW 447), situating its namesake in the milieu of the barnyard.
Yet, Balduin is a glutton for punishment and further abasement as his downfall continues. Lured by Rieke’s come-hither-finger (470, illus. 66), he climbs through the stall window, where he spies her lovely countenance, whereupon he is butted by her goat and takes refuge in a wash basket (shades of Falstaff!). Rieke and her somewhat-simple beau Krischan Bopp (‘‘Christian Pop’’) thread a pole through the handles of the basket and carry Balduin to the pond (474–75, illus. 74–76), where they dump him into the water and throw cold water on his aspirations.

While Rieke, a modern-day Dulcinea del Toboso (Cremer 88; qtd. in SW 1138), is a reminder of the caricatural shepherdess who gives her admirer a bloody nose in the picture story series Pastorales (1845–46) by Honoré Daumier (1808–79), she is far from the “proto-civilized” (NC 152) characters seen in the comic strips of the time. Indeed, she wears her “barnyard” name with pride. Wary of outsiders, Rieke and her ilk have shown that they can dispatch

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45 According to Ries et al., the scene is reminiscent of Falstaff’s dunking in the buck basket (SW 1138), where he has taken refuge from Mistress Ford’s jealous husband in The Merry Wives of Windsor (1602). Busch was familiar with English and an admirer of William Shakespeare (1564–1616). See SW 1138.

46 The moniker Bopp comes from the Old German Poppo, a form of baby talk (Brechenmacher 184), as does the Low German name Krischan (‘‘Christian’’), suggesting that its namesake is somewhat immature. Qtd. in SW 446.
representatives from the bourgeois world with ease. Indeed, they are shown as complete characters motivated by the same emotions of anger and pleasure as their bourgeois counterparts. In addition, they are leagues removed from the stereotypical, one-dimensional, characters on the pages of the *Fliegende Blätter* that include a couple of toothless old housemaids who resignedly weather the foul moods of their demanding mistress (*Zur Wetterkunde, FB* 78.1973 [1883]: 163).

Rieke also commands more respect from the men in her life than many of her real-life counterparts, if the following incident from the author’s autobiography *Von mir über mich* is any indication. Here, Busch describes a scene where he takes liberties by twirling on the end of his walking stick the loose apron string of a young country woman, walking arm-in-arm with her beau, with the words: “Fräulein, Sie verlieren etwas” (Hochhut 2: 26–27). In the split second afterward, the young man knocks his girlfriend to the ground and stomps “three times on her chest” before fleeing the scene. Busch gallantly offers his arm to help the victim up. Like the Wiedensahl sketch, the scene is shocking in its brutality. (Busch’s ultimate motive remains a question.) In contrast, we cannot imagine that Rieke would have endured the same treatment from Krischan, had he decided to take out his frustrations at Balduin’s attentions in a similar manner. As David Kunzle has noted, the only response her boyfriend can muster is tearing the poet’s opened umbrella “accidentally on purpose” (NC 278) with the sharp tip of his scythe as they cross paths in a country meadow (SW 464, illus. 58).

Additionally, Rieke’s fighting spirit informs the actions of the all-woman street-cleaning brigade in *Ein galantes Abenteuer* (1866).\(^{47}\) Here, we observe five savvy street-sweepers as they respond to the greeting of a pompous *Biedermeier* twit who arrives in Hanover on the early morning train. His crime? An exaggerated bow and a misplaced overfamiliarity:

\(^{47}\) First published in *FB* 45.1102 (1866): 62–63.
The “noble women” do not appreciate the overture, raising their wet brooms to attack the unlucky visitor who dives into a barrel where they have dropped their sweepings, with the leader of the pack flinging something vile at his head. After enduring a simultaneous upending and degradation in a pure Bakhtinesque manner (RW 11), he literally saves his skin by tossing them the tidy sum of “25 Silbergroschen,” and then repairs to the bath in his hotel room to clean up before taking the train home (454–55, illus. 7, 8a/b). The lesson is that “So geht’s! – Bei Damen sollst Du fein, / – gar niemals nicht ironisch sein” (454–55.15–16; ital. in orig.). The reader notes that the “Frauen” of the tourist’s initial greeting has changed to the more polite “Damen” as he mulls over his unfortunate situation. Women or ladies – it would seem that neither enjoy ironic and familiar overtures at their expense. Even the stylized italicization of the epilogue serves to

48 Qtd. in FW 453.12. In Prussia, 20 Silbergroschen, m., made up 1 Gulden, m. See DW 16: 1009.
humorously underscore the “fine” manners of the unfortunate gentleman, who wisely vows to keep his observations to himself in the future.

But, not all lower-class figures in Busch’s picture stories succeed in breaking away from the constraints of their station. In fact, unwelcome advances can have serious consequences for the victim, as the situation with the Knopps’s banished housekeeper Liese makes all too clear. Out of all fairness to Frau Dorette, however, Busch’s story reflects a common situation in nineteenth-century Germany and Europe, where, as Raffaella Sarti explains, maids ran the risk of sexual abuse or rape by their employers and of bearing illegitimate children (428). Rather than chance public embarrassment, the lady of the house had no choice other than to remove temptation by sending her unlucky maid packing. For his part, Knopp joins the company of upper-class men stalking their maids in the Fliegende Blätter. They include the lecherous father in Der böse Papa (1860) who repeatedly tweaks the cheek of one young lad’s clearly annoyed governess (FB 32.767: 85); as well as the penny-pinching husband in Wirtschaftliche Folge der Eifersucht (1876) who fools around with a succession of four maids, so that his jealous wife dismisses them, one by one, and takes over all of their tasks (i.e., cooking, sewing, and cleaning):

Fig. 16. Wirtschaftliche Folge der Eifersucht (1876). FB 64.1613: 200
The “Dreaded Spinster”

So far, we have seen how Busch’s married and attractive, young single women quickly gain the upper hand over male oppressors and randy opportunists, both mocking and subverting the expectations of society. However, there is one group of women that draws the short end of the stick time and time again: the unlucky spinsters who have not managed to find a marriage partner and start a family in accordance with their designated role in life. If the sheer number of courtship and “spinster strips” in the Fliegende Blätter is any indication, this was a situation that concerned readers and society alike. Examples include Es beißt Keiner mehr an! (1861), where a hopeful woman dangles a fishing rod into the water to encourage a bite (FB 34.820: 95); and Des Mädchens Klage (1893), where an aging spinster, sprawled on a skating rink with skaters whizzing around in the background, complains that no one is helping her up, adding that “thirty years ago, men were completely different”:

![Image]

*Fig. 17. Des Mädchens Klage (1893). FB 98.2495: 187*
For unmarried women, time was of the essence. In Busch’s tale *Die Fromme Helene* (1872), the orphan and hero of the title, banished from the home of her aunt and uncle for “sinful” behaviour (i.e., childish pranks that would not be out of place in a carnival setting), comes to the conclusion that she will have to marry and bear children to attain respectability. Helene lands the rich but impotent financier G. J. C. Schmöck, a ridiculous and fabulously wealthy character allegedly based on the Frankfurt banker, Johann Daniel Keßler (1812–91), the largely absent husband of the author’s long-time friend and patron Johanna Keßler (1831–1915):

Die Proppertet [sic] ist sehr zu schätzen,
Doch kann sie manches nicht ersetzen.

Fig. 18. “Der Heirathsentschluß” (*Die Fromme Helene*, 1872). *RZ* 285.341–43, illus. 93; 287.351–54, illus. 98

Schmöck will give Helene respectability and wealth, but not the thing she most craves: love. Following a terrible honeymoon, Helene takes up drinking in order to drown her sorrows, and when her union with Schmöck produces no offspring, sets off on a “fertility pilgrimage.” In the end, her quest for affection will produce disastrous effects, as we shall later see.

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49 As Eva Weissweiler says, Helene’s husband is named *Herr Schmöck* (“Schmock” or “idiot,” cf. yid. “smuck,” 194), a man who, it could be said, is all talk and no action. Rudolf Zoder observes the Low Middle German origin of *smôk* or *Schmauch*, m. (“feast,” 2: 535), alluding to Schmöck’s prodigious appetite, while Ries et al. note the New High German *Schmauch*, m., in the sense of *loser Betrüger*, m. (“loser,” lit. “real fraudster”). See *RZ* 288.
The search for a suitable mate becomes even more urgent when the subject is fast approaching the best-before date. In the episode “Oh weh!” (Abenteuer eines Junggesellen), for example, Bachelor Knopp is introduced to Klotilda, the remaining daughter of his gently despairing friend, Herr Piepo (“Mr. Complainer”):\(^5^0\) “Doch Klotilda, ei ei ei, / Die ist noch bis dato frei –” (RZ 670.449–50). Alas, Knopp accidentally abases and humiliates himself during a half-naked dash from the lavatory into the midst of the young lady and her friends as they decorate the room for her sister’s engagement party (675, illus. 133), ruining his chances at marriage on the spot and making Klotilda’s quest more urgent than ever. At least, she is portrayed as somewhat attractive. Indeed, young unmarried women in the author’s stories are depicted as unappealing if they upend social propriety, like the two “hochheilig und theuer versprochen[e]” (“pious and highly recommended,” 713.169) candidates for housekeeper, interviewed by Frau Dorette as a replacement for the ill-fated Liese. To wit, the strapping “Jungfer namens Katrine” drinks straight out of the syrup jug and wipes her nose on her sleeve (714–15, illus. 28, 29), while the gawky “Junfer [sic] mit Namen Adelheid” uses Herr Knopp’s toothbrush to clean her teeth (717 illus. 33). Ironically, the two are dismissed as “abscheulich[e] Mädchen” or “disgusting girl[s]” (715.184, 719.206), the same phrase that the lady of the house uses when she gives Liese the sack, when the housekeeper’s only crime was to have inspired unclean thoughts in Herr Knopp as she washed her mistress’s windows.

Still, none of these characters create the same unease and overt hostility as their “rebellious” older sisters who overturn convention by remaining single. Busch portrays his old-maid Jungfer or “spinster” figures as social misfits, characterized by what Susan Cotts Watkins

\(^{50}\) A name local to Hanover, Piep/Piepho is a Wendish nickname for Philippus (Gottschald 386). It is also related to the Low German verb pipen (“to smoke,” “to whistle”) and küssen (“to kiss,” Lübben 331), as well as Piper or Pfeifer, m. (“whistler,” recorded as Pippu in Göttingen in 1316; Bahlow 358; all qtd. in RZ 670). Grimm seems to come closer to the mark with the figurative meaning of klagen (“to complain,” DW 13: 1843, def. 3). With his frustrated “ei, ei, ei,” Herr Piepo laments the fact that he has not married off his daughter Klotilda to date.
calls the stereotypical “thin hair, flat chests, and big feet” described in the novels of the time, and in low demand on the bachelor market (313). Compensating for their diminishing hair with enormous falls, they sport huge noses, more often than not darkened by excessive drink to deal with their presumed despair. We see Junfer Grete (“Old Maid Maggie”) visit the pharmacy to purchase Kümmellikör (“caraway liqueur”), a typical Protestant digestif ostensibly used for health reasons (Mihr 168; qtd. in “Fritze,” Die Haarbeutel; SW 39). In the same vein, Bachelor Knopp’s old flame Adele, with reddened nose, excitedly greets her former beau, pulling him to the couch and smothering him with kisses (“Eine alte Flamme,” Abenteuer eines Junggesellen; RZ 611, illus. 22). Even the aging heroine of Die Fromme Helene takes on the appearance of a stereotypical dried-up spinster after the deaths of her financier husband and of Franz, her cousin-turned-priest and likely father of her twin boys. Now a pathetically scrawny version of her former self, sprouting chin hairs and straggly hair, Helene sheds her widow’s weeds and dresses like “eine schlanke Büßerinn” [sic] (326.634; chap. 15), full of regrets for her past behaviour, as suggested by the title of the chapter, “Die Reue.” Her reward is a gruesome death, when she is suddenly set on fire by the petrol lamp after heeding the clarion call of the wine bottle perched on the table behind her, as she kneels to say her prayers.

Yet, in no other picture stories are spinsters treated as cruelly as the heroine of Die Strafe der Faulheit (1866). Here, the spoiled companion of the aging Fräulein Ammer, a lethargic pug dog named Schnick (“Snap”), is kissed, stuffed with treats, and given a place of honour in her bed in an inversion of the normal hierarchical position between human and beast, before meeting a grisly end. One day, during his daily walk, Schnick is lured away with a pretzel by the local dogcatcher, who trundles off the fat little gourmand in a sack:

51 First published in MBB 431 (1866).
Back at the kennel, the official slits his victim open from head to tail, skins him, and sticks his remains into a pot of boiling water (460, illus. 9, 10). Schick’s only offence in the evil man’s eyes is that he is deemed “too stupid and fat” to be of any use: “‘Den schlacht’ ich!’ spricht der böse Mann, / ‘Weil er so fett und gar nichts kann’” (460.17–18). Fräulein Ammer tearfully pays to retrieve her dead pet’s skin, and then has him stuffed and mounted to a cart on wheels with a pretzel glued to his muzzle for old time’s sake (461, illus. 11, 12). The moral of the story: “– Wer dick und faul, hat selten Glück” (461.24).

While the reader may laugh at the inherent truth in the closing words of the tale and the sight of Fräulein Ammer’s stuffed pet ready for future walkies, we would do well to ask ourselves just what is so funny. Schnick’s fate seems grossly out of proportion with his alleged crime of fatness and laziness. For starters, why does the dogcatcher exterminate him, instead of fining Fräulein Ammer for not having the required dog licence? And, why does he take such delight in doing so? Perhaps a clue lies in what this particular breed of dog represented at the

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52 At the time the story was written, urban pet owners had to buy a tag (Steuermarke, f.) for their dogs (FW 457). Cf. Horacker (1876) by Wilhelm Raabe (1831–1910): “(…) seinen eigenen hund beneiden, der ruhig und unbesorgt spazieren gehen kann, wenn er seine steuermarke am halse hängen hat!” (109; qtd. in DW 18: 2638).
time the story was created. According to Alfred Brehm (1829–84), the author of the popular work *Thierleben* (1864–69) that Busch often consulted (*FW* 1430), the pug was considered an “old maid’s dog (…)”, moody, naughty, pampered, and coddled to death”:

> Der Mops ist oder war der echte Altejungferhund (…), launenhaft, unartig, verzärztelt und verhätschelt im höchsten Grade, und jedem vernünftigen Menschen ein Greuel. Die Welt wird also Nichts verlieren, wenn dieses abscheuliche Thier mit sammt seiner Nachkommenschaft den Weg alles Fleisches geht. (1: 363; qtd. in *FW* 456, 2002 ed.; ellipsis in orig.)

In *Versuch einer vollständigen Thierseelenkunde* (1840), the Swiss theologian and animal psychologist Peter Scheitlin (1779–1848) goes even further, calling the breed “böotisch [foolish], langsam, flegmatisch,” while praising the poodle as a “Sanguiniker” that is “immer lustig, immer munter, allzeit wach, der angenehmste Gesellschafter, aller Welt Freund” (251; see also Brehm 1: 336; qtd. in *FW* 1430).

Indeed, we meet this exemplary animal in the following picture story, *Der Lohn des Fleißes*, published the same year as *Die Strafe der Faulheit*, and meant as a companion piece for publication in the *Münchener Bilderbogen* (*FW* 462). Here, the reader is introduced to the diligent poodle Nero, whose corpulent master, Herr Bartel, has beaten obedience and tricks into him. Nero is so fed up with the constant instruction that he tearfully implores the reader: “Ach! denkt der Nero; Ach, wozu? / Läßt mich mein Herr doch nicht in Ruh’?!” (465.13–14). Yet, one of his tricks, using a lever handle to open the front door, will enable him to raise the latch on the

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53 The infamous pug dog appears in the *Fliegende Blätter* throughout the nineteenth century. In two examples published in 1893, we see pugs tumble into the pond as they attempt to seize a tricky cat running back and forth through a hole in the fence (*Eingegangen, FB* 98.2494: 175), while another specimen is fed and fattened up by a spinster’s cats to ensure it can no longer fit through the grill and disturb them at their dinner (*Edle Seelen, FB* 98.2500: 228).

54 First published in *MBB* 432 (1866).
cage into which the dogcatcher – the nemesis of the aforementioned Schnick – has tossed him. Relieved, Nero races home, opening the door and striding purposely through it on his hind legs like the “trained poodle” that he is. In this instance, hard work guarantees happiness:

Fig. 20. *Der Lohn des Fleißes* (1866). *FW* 468.27–28, illus. 14; 469.31–32, illus. 16

So, it would seem that Fräulein Ammer is punished for her lazy spinster’s dog, while Herr Bartel is rewarded for his obedient and hard-working pooch. Unlike Schnick, Nero would seem to embody the middle-class virtues of “Ordnung, Reinlichkeit, Arbeitsamkeit, und darunter also auch Pünktlichkeit” (Halse 285) held so dear by *Biedermeier* Germany. Now, if owners can be said to resemble their animals, then the reader would surely conclude that Fräulein Ammer is indolent, while Herr Bartel is the very model of industry. But, while we may chuckle at the sight of two individuals spoiling or training their pets, as the case may be, Busch portrays the realities of social expectation at the time the picture stories were created. As Lynn Abrams writes, authoritarian marriage was the keystone of social order in nineteenth-century Germany (“Concubinage” 81). To that end, women were expected to marry, keep house, and to assume the “holy office” of motherhood (Habermas 52; Sengle 1: 59–60). Men, on the other hand, had a duty to venture out into the world and provide bread for their families. In essence, these roles served to underpin the growing urbanization and industrialization of nineteenth-century Germany.
(Hausen 61–62), particularly in the years following the revolution. Yet, there was another reason for the strict division of labour between the sexes. According to Carol Smart, unmarried women were thought to pose a serious threat to social order, largely because marriage was thought to contain the otherwise unrestrained sexual cravings of the female body and thus avoided “danger” to the community (7–34; qtd. in Abrams, “Concubinage” 85; also Freeman and Klaus 395). Notwithstanding, observes Watkins, many women remained unmarried for a variety of reasons, including a lack of males, expensive dowries and a family’s subsequent withdrawal of a daughter of marriageable age due to straitened economic circumstances, or the need to provide care for sick and aging parents (321). Abrams notes that lower-class women were often prevented from tying the knot by restrictive marriage laws designed to prevent overpopulation and limit dependency on relief for the poor, adding that possession of citizenship, evidence of the means to support a family, and a “good” reputation were prerequisites (“Concubinage” 84). Not surprisingly, she says, many couples fell foul of these regulations (84). The percentage of single women aged fifty (Fräulein Ammer’s probable age) living in Germany between 1860 and 1900 hovered around eleven percent, comments Watkins, although the proportion of single females in towns and villages was often higher than in the countryside (314, fig. 1; 315).

That women were hampered by limited options for earning a living was beside the point. “I’ve chosen my life as deliberately as my sisters and brothers have chosen theirs. (…) I want to be a spinster and I want to be a good one,” wrote one woman at the time (Freeman and Klaus 397; qtd. in Watkins 313; ellipsis in orig.). In an age when a woman was expected to marry and raise a family, these were troubling words indeed. Fräulein Ammer has forgotten her “rightful” place by flouting the rules of the society she lives in by remaining single and lavishing attention on her canine companion, instead of toiling for a husband and children. But, what about Herr
Bartel? While we can safely assume that he is a man of means, judging from his fine clothes and nice surroundings, and that he is well cared for by a wife (or housekeeper), if his ample girth is any indication, the question of whether he has produced any descendants remains unresolved. Perhaps this is why he spends his days drilling useless tricks into his Wunderhund, an irony that is not lost on the reader.

The Spirit of Lillith

With no obvious alternatives on the horizon, one widowed character decides to contravene the “laws, prohibitions, and restrictions” (PDP 122; qtd. in Shields 99) of her station by earning a living through a life of crime. In the prose tale Erschreckliche Geschichte von der weiblichen Räuberhöhle, so sich zugetragen hat zu Ungarn (1861), with illustrations by Busch, the daughter of a rich Hungarian merchant shoots her ne’er-do-well husband dead after he squanders her fortune. Out of money (“Ihr Geld war ziemlich alle,” FW 752), she posts a notice for “dreißig Mädchen […] aber nicht von hier” (“thirty girls […] but not from here,” 753; ital. in orig.). Immediately, she and her band hold up a coach, where she meets a young passenger who catches her fancy (753). She marries him and then shoots him dead, as she does her subsequent catches, a student, a coach driver, and a military man (753–54). Only when her hunter-lover betrays her does the law catch up with her. After shooting him, she is taken away by soldiers and beheaded (756). As in the Dutch catchpenny prints, women wear the breeches and go off to a kind of war, albeit one against law and order. In this version of Schiller’s Die Räuber (1781), the Kaufmannstochter harbours no regrets for her actions, only satisfaction and indifference toward her victims. How different she is from Karl Moor, who laments the death of the two people he loves most, his father and his lover Amalia, as a result of his choosing a life of crime. Clunky

55 First published with text by an anonymous author in FB 35.844 (1861): 73–75.
prose aside (the text was not written by Busch; FW 751), the story shows empowered women who can fight and whore with the best of their male counterparts, essentially overturning society’s expectations. As such, the *Kaufmannstochter* is fathoms away from the *Biedermeier* ideal of wife and mother, with her prescribed complacency toward male superiors and feigned ignorance of sexual matters.

All of which brings us to sexual activities in Busch’s picture stories. Taboo for most of the nineteenth century after an uninterrupted run in the social strips of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly in the morality works of artists like Hogarth and Chodowiecki, as well as some of the saucier works\(^{56}\) by Johann Heinrich Ramberg (1763–1840), sexuality makes a reappearance in the author’s later works (*NC* 1), destined for adult audiences. *Der heilige Antonius von Padua* (1869), a series of episodes loosely based on the life of Saint Antony (1195–1231), is one such example. The merriment starts with “Liebe und Bekehrung,” where we learn that the not-yet-saintly Antony is quite the ladies’ man, serenading a married paramour under her window on a cold and snowy night, before she beckons him with a come-here gesture to join her in her room (*RZ* 80, illus. 6; chap. 2). Before long, the cuckolded husband returns, whereupon Antony takes refuge under a washtub. As the married couple exchanges kisses atop the tub, Antony slips out and upends it, knocking them both onto the floor (83–84, illus. 11, 12). The irate husband chases the cheater into the privy at sabre-point, spearing Antony’s beret to the back wall as the culprit jumps through the open seat into the muck below, his erstwhile mistress smiling from above the top of the open door at his humiliation (84, illus. 13). With a Rabelaisian “baptism by excrement,” the sullied hero experiences a sudden conversion and decides that it is

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\(^{56}\) Among Ramberg's more risqué works is *Die Entdeckung* [The Discovery], 1800, a coloured etching showing a room full of disrobing nuns with a friar peeking around the corner of the open door, drawn to accompany a reprint of the bawdy tale *Les lunettes* [Peephole], 1665–66, by Jean de la Fontaine (1621–95).
safer to dedicate his life (and heart) to the Blessed Virgin than to pursue women who drive him crazy: “Ihr Weiber fahrt mir aus dem Sinn! / Du Königinn [sic] des Himmels sei / Auch meines Herzens Königinn. / Salve Regina!” (85.162–65; Ital. in orig.).

Be that as it may, Saint Antony will be tested on two more occasions during the course of the story. In “Die Beichte,” a “hot” young penitent named Monika does her best to seduce the “newly minted” saint when he comes to hear her confession at her sickbed. Breathlessly recounting the visit of a male friend some eight days previously, she tells the saint how she was powerless to stop him from stroking her braids and pulling her hand to his lips. She cunningly illustrates her point by taking the saint’s hand in hers to demonstrate how her admirer smothered it with kisses. Sinfully winking “Sünden zu Sünden” (“sinner to sinner,” Mihr 43; qtd. in RZ 113) at the reader, Monika observes with satisfaction as the face of her saintly confessor contorts itself into an expression of sexual frenzy, his halo shining brightly above his head:

“Blau war sein Auge, blond sein Bart (...) 
– Ach, guter Vater Antonio! 
Grade [sic] wie Eurer! Gerade so!”

“Gar lieb und kosed dran zu nippen (...) 
Ach, bester Vater Antonio! 
So nippte er! Gerade so!!!”

Fig. 21. “Die Beichte” (Der heilige Antonius von Padua, 1869). RZ 112.394–98, Illus. 43; 113.402–06, Illus. 44
However, when she tries to pull Saint Antony under the covers to prove her love for him, he musters enough strength to escape (115–16, illus. 46–48). Finally, in “Letzte Versuchung”, a nubile young ballerina (with a suspicious resemblance to Monika) tries to seduce the saint, throwing herself at him, before he directs his cross at her and she changes her into the devil (131, illus. 66). With the failure of this last-ditch effort by a beautiful temptress, Saint Antony proves his resistance to female charms, even though they seem to haunt his imagination. For all of its humour, the story ran afoul of the public censor for “disparaging religion” and “causing public mischief through obscene writings,” following its publication in the wake of the announcement of the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility by the Vatican. Indeed, it was the only one of Busch’s picture stories that nearly landed any of his publishers in jail.

In addition to sending up the private life of one saint, Busch suspends decorum and breaks new ground with his explicit allusions to frustrated female sexual desire in Die Fromme Helene. In “Die Hochzeitsreise,” the heroine of the story sheds a tear on her wedding night after Schmöck (the schmuck) extinguishes the candle and flops down into one of the two single beds in their marriage suite, too drunk (and impotent) to perform his husbandly duties: “Plums! Liegt er da und rührt sich nicht” (RZ 297.392; chap. 9). The situation is disappointing, to be sure, especially after the desires awakened by the stolen adolescent kisses with her cousin, Franz (252, illus. 38), the presumed father of her twin boys. And, whereas Busch does not portray her entertaining any lovers in her bedroom, like the bored Countess in Hogarth’s Marriage à-la-Mode (1743–45), Helene will still manage to get pleasure, as subtly demonstrated by one risqué

57 The sale Der heilige Antonius von Padua (1869), with its scenes of near seduction and the hero’s ascension into heaven with his pet pig, was prohibited by the public censor and resulted in a court appearance by Busch’s publisher Moritz Schauenburg (1827–95) of Lahr for “[die] Herabwürdigung der Religion und Erregung öffentlichen Ärgernisses durch unzüchtige Schriften” (RZ 925; also qtd. in Galway 80n49). Although Schauenburg was acquitted in 1871 and the publication ban removed later that year, it remained on the books in Austria until 1902 (RZ 925–26).
visual pun in the story. As Ries observes, the six empty wine bottles standing beside the therapeutic wine bath ordered by Helene’s doctor (301, illus. 123; chap. 10) increase to seven in the next illustration (“Über” 24). The bottles contain the dregs of her bath, which she dispenses to a group of poor townsfolk at the gates of her mansion. As they eagerly gulp down the contents, the patient keeps one of the bottles in reserve (24; RZ 302, illus. 124). As Ries slyly notes, Helene’s act gives a whole new meaning to the phrase, “to give to the poor,” adding that it was likely meant as a criticism of the Catholic practice of doing good works for salvation (24). He adds that, short of checking out Helene’s Intimbereich (“private parts”) as she takes her bath, we can only imagine to what debauched use she has put the bottle. We could say that the relaxed and indecent elements of carnival have acquired a “deeper” meaning (RW 16).

Herr and Frau Knopp, on the other hand, prefer the real thing instead. In the episode “Eheliche Ergötlichkeiten” (Herr und Frau Knopp), we get an unusually intimate glimpse into the marital bedroom with the woman on top, so to speak, when the lady of the house cunningly finds her husband’s ticklish spot. Grabbing him by the tails of his nightshirt to prevent him from escaping her clutches, she drags him under the bedcovers for a rollicking good time:

![Cartoon illustration of Herr and Frau Knopp in bed](image)

Husch, er nicht faul, eh man sichs denkt, Hat sich nach hinten herum geschwenkt Und unter die Decke eingehobt,

Wo man recht fröhlich herum rumort. 

Fig. 22. “Eheliche Ergötlichkeiten” (Herr und Frau Knopp, 1876). RZ 697.79–82, illus. 6, 7

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58 According to Grimm, the verb *rumoren* means “to rustle” or “to make noise” (*DW* 14: 1484, def. 1a, b). The verb describes both the noise making of the couple and the rustling of the bed sheets as they get down to business.
Knopp does absolutely nothing to discourage his wife, effectively “forgetting his place” and surrendering to her. The reader can be fairly sure that this was not what Brockhaus had in mind when describing a woman’s goodness and cunning.

Still, Busch manages to stay within the bounds of bourgeois propriety by couching the sexual activity of his characters in humour and innuendo, as any open discussion on the matter would have been considered “indezent und geschmacklos” (“indecent and tasteless”) at the time the story was created (Ries, “Über” 24). Not that all appreciated the subject matter. Indeed, the intimate portrayal of married life aroused strong criticism from one of Busch’s friends, the novelist Paul Lindau (1839–1919), who complained about the author’s “marriage stories” and the “certain delicate matters” for which his friend seemed to have “an unashamed liking.” Lindau claimed that Busch’s penchant for saucy stories did nothing to elevate their humour, adding that it reduced the number of his admirers. On the contrary, this harsh criticism only served to increase the author’s readership (RZ 1623), proving once again that “sex sells.”

Summary

As we have seen in the previous examples, Busch questions the assumption that women were powerless beings naturally subservient to men, according to the Prussian Civil Code and the Biblical injunction that commanded husbands to beat the sinful pride out of their wives. Unlike their submissive counterparts on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter, the author’s female characters are shown breaking free of society’s constraints, effectively demonstrating that the existing order could be both questioned and subverted. For starters, the author’s wife figures

59 In a letter written sometime during February 1878, Lindau criticizes Busch for his love of “verheirathete Geschichten” (“married stories”) and “gewisse heikle Dinge” (“certain prickly subjects”) for which he showed a particular fondness, claiming, “Das wird in den späteren Werken leider noch auffälliger – ich sage leider, denn es erhöht den Humor nicht und vermindert den Kreis der Zahl seiner Verehrer.” Busch penned a sarcastic response the same month, mentioning his years as a beekeeper and propagator of the Apidae species, before adding, “Was ‘verheirathete Geschichten’ betrifft, so sollen Sie zu einem Leider! künftighin keinen Grund mehr haben.” See Bohne, SB 184; qtd. in RZ 1623; ellipsis in orig.
consistently get the better of their husbands with anything from fisticuffs to ordinary household objects converted into impromptu weapons. Whereas birching was once a favourite instrument of discipline for disobedient wives, the broomstick as a collection of birch sticks, wielded by Frau Knopp and others, has become the wife’s weapon of choice. Instead of the shrewish wives and vicious husbands of the marriage satires, Busch’s picture stories root for assertive wives as they cheerfully poke fun at male presumption, encouraging the reader to laugh along with them.

By and large, single female characters fight back against men who take unwanted liberties with them, although the fate of the Knopp family’s housekeeper reminds us of the very real threat of sexual harassment and impregnation to nineteenth-century maids and domestics. One woman wronged by a dishonest husband takes to a life of crime; while her modus operandi may be questionable, she proves that women revolutionaries are just as brave as their male counterparts. Newly empowered peasant women also take revenge against genteel bourgeois interlopers, proving themselves to be flesh-and-blood characters, not the cruder examples seen in the *Fliegende Blätter* and the French strips of Daumier and Petit. Furthermore, Busch reintroduces sexual desire into his picture stories, a subject largely absent from the strips since Hogarth and Ramberg. Such is the case when the author invites us to laugh along with the teasing penitent Monika, a modern-day Phyllis, as she unleashes Saint Antony’s repressed sexual desires. One wife also takes the lead in the bedroom. At a stroke, Busch topples patriarchal authority, showing women as initiators in conjugal sex and men as willing participants. In Bakhtinesque terms, we could say that the author has allowed many of his female characters “free and familiar contact” (*PDP* 123; qtd. in Shields 99) with pompous husbands and males, turning their accustomed roles upside down, often permanently. However, not all female characters gain the upper hand. Unmarried women, with their threat to social order, are portrayed
as young, unsophisticated girls or stereotypical “old hags.” The latter are treated as pariahs in the author’s stories, suggesting that their single status undermined social expectations with regards to marriage and motherhood in nineteenth-century Germany. While unmarried men such as Herr Knopp are also objects of ridicule, the laughter they elicit is lighter-hearted, suggesting that society was more forgiving of single males and their peccadilloes.

There is no ignoring the fact that Busch’s stories came about at a time of real change, when women fought for self-determination and the opportunity to become fully engaged citizens. While the author generally avoided political commentary (RZ 168, 178) – there are precious few references to politics in his letters – it is not unthinkable that some of the spirit of the times found its way into his picture stories. To make readers more receptive to their “feminist” message, Busch creates humorously sympathetic character types that represent both “every woman” and “no woman” in particular. Furthermore, he lulls the reader into a false sense of complacency through the portrayal of bucolic scenes of Biedermeier life, before suddenly turning the story upside down with the humorous downward spiral of once-imperious males. In so doing, he invites the reader to laugh along with the actions of his female characters. This is precisely the opposite effect achieved by the largely negative examples of wives and women in the Fliegende Blätter that inspire fear and loathing, rather than commiseration, painting a rather depressing picture of the relationship between the sexes in nineteenth-century Germany. Thus, Busch exposes his readers to impending social changes they likely sensed, while providing them with a hearty laugh to relieve any anxiety they might have felt.

All in all, Busch’s female characters seem to point to the beginnings of a greater gender equality that, while imperfect, saw women as more than standard-bearers for Biedermeier and Brockhaus values. To be sure, there is nothing feminine about Busch’s female characters
pounding the daylights out of their male adversaries with the business end of a broomstick. While they and their real-life counterparts still had a long way to go in terms of equality before the law, Busch’s “propagandists by deed” are always on the qui-vive: behind many a smile and a silent exterior rages a warrior ready and willing to defend herself when pushed to the limit.

But, the post-revolutionary women in Busch’s stories are not the only ones who enjoy a new measure of freedom. Children, virtually absent in pictorial art until Busch’s entry on the scene, are now seen on the pages of the author’s tales, merrily subverting adult authority through pranks and other disobedient acts, as we shall explore in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3: “TYKES, TRUANTS, AND OTHER LITTLE TERRORS”

With mischievous boys who play tricks on adults (Max und Moritz, 1865; Maler Klecksel, 1884) and sweet young girls who lay waste to personal property (Die Fromme Helene, 1872; Julchen, 1877), Wilhelm Busch’s picture stories coincide with society’s discovery of childhood in the nineteenth century, and the elevation of the role of both parents in the education of their children (Habermas 51n33). Indeed, the stories formed part of the growing market for popular literature read by those David Kunzle has called “children of all ages” and from all social classes, who wanted “to look and laugh, to be entertained […] like the children they were supposed to resemble” (NC 2). Until Busch, there were no comic strips about children (3) and precious few appearances of the same in print. For example, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German broadsheets portray them as subject to discipline (i.e., proper table etiquette), whereas the country’s marriage satires ignore them altogether (ECS 318). Elsewhere, the Dutch marriage satires show children under the care of the stay-at-home father Jan de Wasser.\(^6^0\) In 1751, William Hogarth (1697–1764) depicts them as the unwilling victims of adult vice (Gin Lane) or the perpetrators of animal torture (The Four Stages of Cruelty) who meet a gruesome end (332–35). Children also appear in France as incidental characters in Mariage à la ville (1633),\(^6^1\) a series on the protocols surrounding the birth and raising of children (318).

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\(^6^0\) In Hier heeft de Jeugd tot haar geru, Jan de Wassers leven en bedryf [Here Young People May View at Leisure, the Life and Career of Jack the Washer], c. 1750, writes David Kunzle, Jack is responsible for rocking the cradle, feeding and changing the baby, and teaching it to walk (ECS 246). He adds that, in the last few episodes, Jack receives a beating from his wife Meg after he punishes their crying child, causing visitors to report that the Dutch spoiled their children (ECS 249, fig. 8–23). Scenes of child hygiene are also seen in genre paintings, such as Unangenehme Vaterpflichten [Unpleasant Fatherly Duties], 1631, by Adriaen Brouwer (1605–38), where a father, under the instruction of his wife, wrinkles his nose in disgust as he wipes his child’s bottom. (Painting viewed in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, during personal visits in May and June 2008.)

\(^6^1\) Created by Abraham Bosse (1602/04–76), the six etchings of Mariage à la ville [Marriage in Town] are entitled Le Contrat de Mariage [The Marriage Contract], La Mariée reconduite chez elle [The New Bride Brought Home], L’Accouchement [The Birth], Le Retour du baptême [The Return from the Baptism], La Visite à l’accouchée [The Visit to the New Mother], and La Visite de la nourrice [The Nurse’s Visit]. Most of the activities focus on adult interactions, with children playing an incidental role.
Children as Lead Characters

What sets Busch’s picture stories apart from those of his predecessors is that he makes children into lead characters that do battle with adults and figures of authority alike. This in itself was a new development in pictorial literature: the portrayal of aufmüpfige Kinder (‘mischievous children’) was highly unusual at the time, as Ruth Brunngraber-Malottke (Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst) has observed.62 Without a doubt, incidents of unruly children like Max and Moritz, going mano-a-mano with adults, are virtually absent from the pages of popular satirical magazines like the Fliegende Blätter. Taking their cues from what Mikhail Bakhtin calls ‘carnival familiarity,’ marked by the lifting of the prohibitions on disrespectful behaviour and everyday speech with its insulting expressions (RW 16), Busch’s child characters upset Biedermeier sanctity both inside and outside the home. In so doing, they overturn norms and rules, like their Rabelaisian counterparts who “abolish[h] hierarchies, leve[1] social classes, and creat[e] another life free from conventional rules and restrictions” (Stam 86; qtd. in Jasinski 83). And, it is not just the boys in Busch’s stories who rebel against authority. Although fewer in number, girls engage in acts of mischief that fly just as wickedly in the face of societal expectations.

While the once-rigid notions of masculinity and femininity had started to loosen after the revolution of 1848, boys and girls were still raised to assume gender-specific roles (Blackbourn 162). In Germany, these roles were the direct result of the growth of a prosperous new Mittelstand composed of well-to-do industrialists and businessmen in Germany, in which fathers assumed the role of breadwinner, and mothers that of nurturer and caregiver. To reinforce desirable middle-class Biedermeier values like the ones skewered in Busch’s works, primers

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62 As Brunngraber-Malottke states with regards to Busch’s tale Der Kuchenteig [The Cake Batter], 1863, “Es war damals nicht üblich, dass man aufmüpfige Kinder zeigt.” For more information, see chap. 5, pp. 203–04.
such as *Über die Erziehung des Weibes für seinen Beruf* [On the Education of Woman for Her Profession], written in 1865 by the public health advocate Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), gave women detailed instructions on running the household and on providing basic education like reading, writing, and arithmetic to sons and daughters (Blackbourn 162; Habermas 54). Fathers, on the other hand, made all of the major decisions in their children’s lives with regards to outside schooling, career decisions, and marriage (Habermas 50) and, presumably, needed no such instruction themselves. In addition, children’s education was reinforced by printed *Kinderfreunde* or “child-friendly publications” that included songbooks, popular *Robisonaden* (Sengle 2: 88), and, later, *Der Struwwelpeter* (1845) by Busch contemporary Heinrich Hoffmann (1809–94), with its gruesome illustrations on the consequences of less-than-perfect table manners, behaviour, obedience, and personal hygiene (Sagarra and Skrine 155; Savelsberg 186). And, despite the conviction of the groundbreaking Swiss pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) that children learned best through “head, heart, and hand” (Sagarra and Skrine 51, 327), inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) and his revolutionary *Émile, ou De l’Éducation* (1762), nineteenth-century German society still focused on “living life by the rules” (Blackbourn 161), quashing children’s “animal” desires and socially unacceptable behaviour. Corporal punishment fell to the patriarch of the family, with the time-honoured birch stick used on rich and poor children alike. In Busch’s stories, most fathers beat their headstrong sons, although there are a handful of examples where indulgent parents seem to have embraced the emerging anti-corporal-punishment movement of the time. Daughters avoid the cane altogether,

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63 In 1806, the Halle-educated theologian and satirical writer Johannes Daniel Falk (1768–1826) was heard to complain about the feminization of German men [through the reading of such materials]: “[A]us diesem gar zu großen Überfluß an Kindern zuletzt noch gären Mangel an Männern in Teutschland [sic]” (qtd. in Sengle 2: 88).

64 Used on children from all classes both at home and at school, the *spanisches Rohr*, n. ("birch stick," lit."Spanish rod"), was common to all nations except Holland, observes Kunzle, adding that Martin Luther (1483–1546) was its staunchest advocate (*ECS* 225; also Galway 26 and Lange 31).
although their chastisement does include painful embarrassment in front of parents and neighbours or, in an extreme case, expulsion from the family home.

Additionally, Busch’s child characters carry their carnival-like mischief to the classroom. The institutions of learning like those portrayed in the stories seem to have turned their collective back on the humanitarian ideals espoused by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) as part of a neo-humanist notion of Bildung (Ham 49), relying instead on schwarze Pädagogik (“black pedagogy,” Rutschky 129; qtd. in Ham 50) to beat obedience into their young charges. To that end, sadistic teachers thrash naughty boys at will, as do their counterparts in the Fliegende Blätter. Girls, on the other hand, do not feature in the Busch’s schoolroom portrayals. Apart from the fact that nineteenth-century German youths attended school longer than their female counterparts, many of them entering into trade apprenticeships (Schlumbohm 82), girls also went to school, although their education focused on practical subjects in preparation for housework and motherhood (Blackbourn 162). In real life, girls were subject to corporal punishment in the classroom, along with boys (Ham 50), as seen in several examples in the Fliegende Blätter. Could it be that Busch, a man who genuinely enjoyed the company of women (see Appendix A: Wilhelm Busch 251–56), has decided to spare his girl characters the rough-and-tumble of the classroom?

In this chapter, I will explore how children of both sexes subvert adult authority, from incidents of petty annoyance to what the political activist and rabble-rouser Abbie Hoffman

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65 In addition to parents, tutors, teachers, employers, and masters had the right to discipline their charges with whipping, caning, and birching, as noted in Meyers Konversations-Lexikon (1885–92): “Züchtigung (Castigatio), im allgemeinen die Zufügung eines Übels für ein Vergehen behufs der Bestrafung und Besserung, unterscheidet sich von der Strafe (s. d.) im eigentlichen Sinn dadurch, daß diese ein durch das Rechtsgesetz wegen Störung der Rechtsordnung zugefügtes Übel ist, während die Z. mehr auf die Erziehung zum Bessern hinzielt, also Sache der Disziplin ist. Im engern Sinn versteht man unter Z. (körperlicher Z.) die Zufügung von Peitschen-, Stock- oder Rutenstreichen. Das Recht, jemand mit einer Z. zu belegen, steht vor allem den Eltern gegen ihre Kinder zu; aber auch den Erziehern, Lehrern, Dienst- und Lehrherren ist das Recht einer mäßigen Z. zuerkannt.” See Meyer 16: 974 under “Züchtigung.”
(1936–89) has described as the choice method of undermining social order and a form of symbolic warfare: good old-fashioned pranking (65–68) with its “carnivalesque suspension of reverence, piety, and etiquette” (PDP 123; qtd. in Shields 99). I will start by showing representative examples of boys, from simple mischief-makers to pairs of Spitzbuben (“rascals”), who repeatedly get the better of unsuspecting adults. Next, I will illustrate how girls, from inquisitive toddlers to rebellious adolescents, succeed in trumping their elders through various acts of disobedience and misbehaviour, including some highly creative tricks. Key to children’s symbolic warfare is a succession of clever pranks that can be classified as “good,” “bad,” and “innocuous.”66 While all three are evident in Busch’s stories, it is the bad pranks that prevail, suggesting that the perpetrators wish to inflict real pain on their elders. As I show children from both sexes and all social classes getting the better of adults, I will ask what their behaviour and the frequently disproportionate response of the adults suggest about public attitudes following the revolution. For example, is the punishment of children a simple question of deterring socially unacceptable behaviour or of protecting property? Or is there some sort of psychological fallout at play that causes Busch’s adult characters to give vent to feelings of helplessness and rage during a period characterized by rapid societal and economic change, with the children merely supplying the trigger? The sudden adult outbursts, often bordering on the bloodthirsty, would seem to suggest the latter. Yet, even as adults try to re-cement the traditional standing order between children and adults, the reader waits for the mortar holding society together to crack

66 According to Hoffman, most pranks fall into one of three categories: “good” ones that are amusingly satirical; “bad” ones that are gratuitously vindictive; and “neutral” ones that go easy on the victim. As an example of a good prank, Hoffman relates the time in 1967 that he and his New York Yippies dropped two hundred dollars’ worth of one-dollar bills to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, shutting it down for ten minutes as traders scooped up the bills and humorously underscoring their love of money, no matter how small the amount. A bad prank includes college hazing rituals meant to cause pain or embarrassment to the victim. An innocuous (i.e., neutral) prank can be seen in the case of the British prankster Horace de Vere Cole (1881–1936) who delighted in taking advantage of his resemblance to the then Labour Party head Ramsay MacDonald (1866–1937) by inviting himself to Labour rallies and going on stage in order to denounce everything the party stood for (“Hermes,” par. 3; also Hoffman 66).
once more as the youngsters react to the foibles, pretensions, and hypocrisies of their elders.

While my study includes examples of Busch’s early realistic drawings provided to Braun & Schneider’s *Fliegende Blätter* to illustrate anonymously supplied text, I will focus on the humorous drawings and verse that sealed the author’s fame. It is my contention that, by using caricature to show the essence of his child characters, through carnivalesque antics and impertinent language belonging to the carnival place (*RW* 16), Busch paints the most realistic picture of childhood of the period, far removed from the cardboard cut-outs of downtrodden little boys and girls in the magazine.

**Little Boys Up to No Good**

Let us start with examples of petty mischief, the hallmark of Busch’s early picture stories. In *Die kleinen Honigdiebe* (1859),\(^{67}\) we see the brothers Peterl and Hansel sneaking into the neighbour’s back garden in order to steal his beehive with its promise of delicious honey. As they lift the hive, two enormous bees sting them on their noses, leaving behind spike-sized stingers that cause the surrounding flesh to swell up to immense proportions:

![Image of two boys sneaking into a garden](image)

“Den werden wir gleich haben,” sagt’s Peterl, packt den Bienenstock und hebt ihn, aber im Nu spürt jeder von den zwei Schleckern einen Stich auf der Nase, der nicht von ungefähr zu kommen scheint.

*Fig. 23. Die kleinen Honigdiebe* (1859). *FW* 15, illus. 3; 16, illus. 5

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\(^{67}\) First published in *MBB* 242 (1859).
The neighbour delights in their pain and the visible evidence of their wicked deed: "‘Ha, ha,’ sagt der Nachbar, der auf das Zetergeschrei herbeikommt, ‘habt Ihr’s gemerkt, wie es beim Honigstehlen zugeht, jetzt lauft nur heim mit Euerm Denkzettel’” (14). The boys’ mother throws up her hands with concern at the sight of their injuries (16, illus. 6), while their no-nonsense father is described as chewing out his sons (“hat erst gewaltig gezankt,” 17) before pumping cold water onto their noses to reduce the swelling. After the town blacksmith extracts the stingers with a pair of pliers (18, illus. 9), the duo spends three weeks in bed to recover from their injuries. Unusually for the time, there is no additional punishment for their misbehaviour. Indeed, Peterl and Hansel’s parents smile contentedly as their sons vow never to steal beehives again (19, illus. 12). Yet, the actions of the boys and their parents seem curiously wooden, with the honey thieves immediately admitting the error of their ways and the parents quickly absolving them of their sins. In what was now an owner-driven petty bourgeoisie, the theft of someone else’s beehive would certainly have had consequences. Was the idea to gently remind children to respect private property? As one of Busch’s early pictures-on-demand stories drawn to text provided by his publisher Kaspar Braun, the plot is hampered by an earnest moralizing element that does not reflect the author at his best.

Another example of mischief and disrespect for personal property can be seen in Der kleine Pepi mit der neuen Hose (1860),\(^68\) also drawn to illustrate an anonymous text. In this story, the hero Pepi (bav. “Joseph,” \(FW\) 48) is fitted for a new pair of trousers by his godfather-cum-tailor. Upon delivery, he immediately takes them for a test run through the countryside, where his adventures include falling into a pond and getting fished out (49, illus. 3), sitting in

\(^68\) First published in \textit{MBB} 286 (1860).
Schuster Knierem’s
tub of pitch (i.e., *Pech haben* ‘to be unlucky’; lit. ‘to have pitch’) to dry off and getting stuck by the seat of his pants (49, illus. 4), and having his trousers’ bottom cut away and the hole mended by his adept godfather (50, illus. 5). His father is less understanding, telling his son that money does not grow on trees, so to speak, delivered with a hard yank on the ear. Undaunted, Pepi continues his misadventures by dipping his finger into his neighbour’s syrup barrel for a taste, falling in headfirst, and being pulled out by the neighbour (51, illus. 7–8). As he is furiously licked by a watchful guard dog, the boy screams for his mother, who rinses him off with cold water and scrubs away the last vestiges of syrup with her twig broom (54, illus. 12, 13). Like many of her real-life counterparts, she leaves the corporal punishment to Pepi’s father, who “renews” the backside of his son to remind him that new trousers are expensive, even when made with free labour supplied by his godfather (55, illus. 14). In a society that placed high value on material goods, ruining a pair of trousers seems to call for a scolding. But, it begs the question: why go to all the trouble of making something new to wear for an active boy, if he will only go out and destroy it? One small lad in the *Fliegende Blätter’s Ueberflüssige Lehre* (1875) comes to the same conclusion, when his father, armed with a whiskbroom, threatens to teach him [not] to rip his trousers and the boy responds that he already has that skill.70

Once Busch is entrusted with the creation of pictures and accompanying verse, the earnest moralizing element of his early stories is replaced with a subtler take on headstrong boys who disobey for the pure pleasure of doing so. Thus, in *Krischan mit der Piepe: Eine Rauchphantasie* from the *Bilderpossen* (1864) series,71 a youngster dressed in fancy haut-

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69 *Knieriemen/Knierem*, m., translates as a “cobbler’s stirrup” (i.e., leather strap secured to both knees of the cobbler upon which the shoe was placed for repair). The noun is also a nickname for a cobbler. See *DW* 11: 1432, def. 2.


71 Although Busch’s *Bilderpossen* series did not sell particularly well, the immediate popularity of *Max und Moritz* (1865) made up for the disappointment (Galway 29n5).
bourgeois clothing ignores his father’s warning not to touch his pipe as he leaves on an errand:

“De Vader sagt: Ick moat nu gahn! Krischam! laat de Piepen stahn!”
“Ja, ja, min Jung! so mot et gahn! Krischam [sic] lat de Piepe stahn!!”

**Fig. 24.** *Krischan mit der Piepe* (*Bilderpossen*, 1864). *FW* 296.1–2, illus. 1; 306–07.29–30, illus. 14

Thumbing his nose at his father’s authority, Krischan does the exact opposite, lighting the pipe and drawing hard on it before making himself sick to his stomach (*FW* 297–99, illus. 2–5).

Crumpling dizzily to the floor, Krischan is retrieved by his mother, who tucks him into bed and revives him with a good, strong “swarten Kaffe” (sic; 304–05.24). His father, on the other hand, laughs indulgently as he offers the lit pipe to his queasy son as a form of aversion therapy.

While smoking by apprentices and lower-class children was seen as an acceptable pastime in nineteenth-century Germany (1247) – there are many such portrayals in the *Fliegende Blätter* – it was not an activity the upper classes wished their sons to emulate. A case in point is the magazine’s 1853 strip, *Der kleine Raucher* (qtd. in *FW* 1247), where a young bourgeois pipe-smoking lad is rebuked by his father for doing something the older man did his own youth. In addition to the “leaden” text and the predictable moral, the image, with its posed gestures and more realistic style of drawing that makes the characters look like someone in particular rather than everyman and everybody, lacks the dynamism of similar images by Busch:

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72 Examples include *Ein stiller Compagnon* (1869), where an apprentice takes a puff on the cigar a shop ower holds behind his back as he chats with a female acquaintance (*FB* 51.1251: 5); and *Vergleich* (1871), where a victorious apprentice blows smoke into the face of his companion, who claims he saw the cigar first (*FB* 54.1332: 29).
Despite his expensive clothes and posh surroundings, Krischan and his family are Plattdeutsche (“Low Germans”) at heart whose “rich idiom of the marketplace” (RW 10) points to membership in the lower social classes. That the boy’s father tries to dissuade him from smoking suggests that this activity does not fit into his notion of proper bourgeois behaviour for his young son and the social ambitions he has for him. Then again, it could also signal the father’s decision to give his son enough freedom to get into trouble and learn from the error of his ways, unlike the father of the Kleine Raucher. If so, both Krischan’s father and the father of the honey thieves could be seen as anomalies in nineteenth-century Germany, where fathers traditionally demanded – and expected to receive – blind obedience from their children.

73 See FW 296.1–2. 29. Ries et al. observe that Krischan mit der Piepe is the only picture story Busch wrote in Plattdeutsch or Low German (FW 1248). As such, the declensions in the story are restricted to two cases – nominative and non-nominative, with no distinction between dative and accusative – and no evidence of the genitive case. Particularly noticeable is the replacement of the masculine dative article “dem” with the accusative “den” (FW 978). It is a colourful reproduction of the language with which Busch was familiar. In a letter dated 2 Apr. 1875 to his Dutch correspondent-friend Maria Anderson (1842–1917), he calls it “Sprache meines Paradieses” (Bohne, SB 137; qtd. in FW 1248). Although the story went to press, the publisher, J. H. Richter of Dresden, believed that the use of dialect reduced readership (1248). From then on, the author’s stories appeared in High German, with sprinklings of Northern German dialogue to reproduce everyday speech.
In Busch’s universe, rebellious activities sometimes lead to fatal results. Thus, in the *Der Eispeter*, also from the *Bilderpossen* series, the grinning hero sneaks past his parents, huddled around a faintly steaming wood stove on a winter day in “*anno [sic] 12.*” Ignoring the warning of his forester-uncle, Peter rushes to a patch of frozen water, where he straps on his skates (*FW* 261, illus. 5). Falling through the ice, he freezes solid before he is found and carried home by his father and uncle (268–69, illus. 18, 19). As the young “Schlingel” (“rascal,” 265.32) thaws out by the stove, his parents’ initial joy turns to horror as he melts into a puddle. Weeping tears of sadness, they scoop up his watery remains and pour them in a stone crock. In the final panel, we see the same container done up like a fine preserve with Peter’s name on it and three crosses underneath, mounted on a plinth and sharing space on the cellar floor alongside a pot of cheese and another of gherkins (below). Here, the enthusiasm of a boy to take part in a carnivalesque winter festivity leads to a permanent change in status, as both he and his parents, who “melt with grief” at his changed condition, are preserved for posterity, with no chance of renewal:

Hier wird in einen Topf gefüllt
Des Peters traurig Ebenbild.

Ja, ja! In diesem Topf von Stein
Da machte man den Peter ein,
Der nachdem er anfangs hart,
Später weich wie Butter ward.

**Fig. 26. Der Eispeter (Bilderpossen, 1864).** *FW* 272–73.47–52, illus. 22, 23

Peter has no one to change him back into the boy he once was, unlike the very lucky Karl

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74 The story takes place in the region of Hanover during “anno 12” (i.e., 1812), when it had been forcibly placed under French rule. During this time, both manpower and wood were in short supply, owing to the demands of Napoleon’s Winter Campaign in Russia (*FW* 274).
in *Die Verwandlung* (1868).\(^{75}\) In this combination of two fairytales by the Brothers Grimm,\(^{76}\) the pint-sized cake-batter-thief escapes a beating by his mother, only to be lured into a witch’s cottage by the sausage she dangles on a fishing line, and to be transformed into a greedy little piglet (*RZ* 41–42, illus. 5–8). Only the timely intervention of his sister Ännchen, and her magical “Wunderblume mit lichtem Schein” (43.16), saves him from certain slaughter as she breaks the witch’s spell, with Karl promising to never again repeat his error:

> Und Bruder Karl verliert auch bald
> Die traurig-schweinerne Gestalt;  
> Da ist er froh 
> Und spricht: “Nie mach’ ich’s wieder so!!”

**Fig. 27. Die Verwandlung (1868). RZ 46.21–22, illus. 15; 47.23–24, illus. 16**

Yet, as Karl is a mere boy, the reader suspects that Ännchen will continue to use her magic to save her brother from himself (a vestige of his pig’s tail remains). Nevertheless, Novalis’s humorously recast “hohe lichtblaue Blume” (“tall, light-blue flower,” 26) with its brilliant blue and message of yearning,\(^{77}\) along with the comical reference of turning humans into pigs, as Circe did with Odysseus’s crew members\(^{78}\) for abandoning themselves to their appetites and

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\(^{75}\) First published in *MBB* 474 (1868).

\(^{76}\) *Die Verwandlung* is a combination of two tales, written in 1812, by the Brothers Grimm: *Jorinde und Joringel* [*Jorinde and Joringel*], where a beautiful young girl is turned into a nightingale by a shape-shifting witch and freed when her lover touches her cage with his magic flower; and *Hänsel und Gretl* [*Hansel and Gretel*], where a young sister pushes the witch into the fire in order to kill her and free her brother (*RZ* 39, 43, 881).

\(^{77}\) The *blaue Blume* (“blue flower”) appears in the first part of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802) by Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772–1801) as a symbol of the love of the protagonist, Heinrich, for Mathilde, the beautiful daughter of the poet Klingsohr (23).

\(^{78}\) A goddess of magic and the daughter of Helios, Circe turned half of Odysseus’s crew into pigs as a reflection of their swinish appetites and passions, thereby turning their world upside down. See *RZ* 39.
passions, points to a larger question. Should children like Karl – and the liquefied Peter, for that matter – remain in the safe confines of their Biedermeier existence, or should they take a chance by forgetting their rightful place and venturing into the world beyond, even if it leads to tragedy?

Such is the case of the darkly humorous (and deadly) *Moritatendarodie* and Max und Moritz precursor *Trauriges Resultat einer vernachlässigten Erziehung* (1860).\(^{79}\) This time, seven-year-old Fritz, the only child of the well-to-do privateer Johann Kolbe ("John Club") and his wife, gets everything his heart desires except good advice: "Alles konnte Fritzchen kriegen, / Wenn er seine Eltern bat, / Äpfel-, Birnen-, Zwetschgenkuchen,\(^{80}\) / Aber niemals guten Rath" (*FW* 62.29–32). His only "crime" is the carnivalesque taunting Schneider Böckel ("Tailor Ram") in imitation of the bleating noises suggested by the animal of his surname. After nearly a year of unending taunts, the victim finally snaps. Luring the boy into his house with a piece of cake, he chops off his head with his immense tailor’s shears before tossing him into the river:

![Image](image-url)

Kaum, daß dieser Herr sich zeigte, 
Gleich schrie Fritzchen: meck, meck, meck!  
Und mit einer großen Scheere [sic]  
Bläst er ihm das Leben aus.

**Fig. 28.** *Trauriges Resultat einer vernachlässigten Erziehung* (1860). *FW* 62.35–36, illus. 2; 63.51–52, illus. 3

Later that day, when Fritz’s mother discovers her son’s body in the fish she guts for the family’s meal, she falls onto her oversized knife (64, illus. 4), killing herself and unleashing a deadly

\(^{79}\) First published in *FB* 33.796 (1860): 108–11.

\(^{80}\) Max and Moritz are described as stealing "apples, pears, and plums" ("Äpfel, Birnen, Zwetschen stehlen," *FW* 331.12). At least Fritz comes by the fruits of his labour honestly.
chain of events, during which her husband sneezes so forcefully from the snuff he inhales at the sight of her dead body that he tumbles out of the window on top of Fritz’s old auntie, killing them both (65, illus. 5). His crime undiscovered for the moment, Schneider Böckel sets another death in motion when he uses a piece of Fritz’s checked suit to repair the pants of a Jewish itinerant scrap dealer (66, illus. 6). The “good” townsfolk, swayed by centuries of prejudice, decide that the dealer must have killed the little boy (66, illus. 7). After he is taken to the scaffold and hanged (67, illus. 8), the bill for the repair, written in the tailor’s own hand, is discovered in the victim’s vest pocket. Sentenced to the rack, Schneider Böckel uses his shears instead to cut off his own head (69, illus. 10), a suitably gruesome and grotesque ending to a gory tale.

To be sure, the murderous rage of the tailor in response to the annoying bleating of a little boy seems disproportionate, until we realize that Fritz has given voice to the popular stigma attached to his victim’s profession, ignorant of its full potential to injure. Indeed, Schneiderspott (“tailor ridicule”) arose in the Middle Ages as increasing numbers of men took up tailoring as a lucrative profession. Because it was widely seen as “women’s work,” observe Hans Ries et al., its practitioners were considered to be “schwächliche, schmächtige, überempfindliche und feige Figur[en]” (Röhrich 873; qtd. in FW 128). The vilification reached its zenith during the nineteenth century in various popular songs and tales.81 Burdened by his surname, a humorous variation on the traditional tailor name of Bock or “ram” (FW 347), coupled with the onomatopoetic taunt “[Schneider] meck, meck, meck” heard in the refrain of many songs of the era, Böckel has become the literal butt of jokes for the community. Unable to counter the bigotry of the townsfolk, the tailor seems to project all of his anger onto a powerless, albeit exasperating, little boy whose carnivalesque “relaxed verbal etiquette” (RW 16) essentially backfires on him.

81 An example is Schneiderbächlein: Sammlung von Spotliedern auf die ehmsame Schneiderzunft aus älterer und neuerer Zeit [Little Tailors’ Book: Collection of Satirical Songs from the Honourable Tailors’ Guild from Older and Newer Times], Stuttgart: Scheitlin, 1853, by Ludwig Eichrodt and Heinrich Goll. See Hasse 816; qtd. in FW 1116.
The title of the story lays the blame squarely on his parents’ lackadaisical methods of child rearing. But, is it really fair to blame them for “evil deeds” (“was Böses,” 61.2), just because they read newspapers from morning to night, never darken a church door, and enjoy the theatre, as the opening lines of the prologue state (61.5–16)? Is the argument that the acquisition of knowledge causes parents to harm their children? If so, that would make parents of the era who took advantage of the increased availability of newspapers and popular magazines like Die Gartenlaube [The Arbour], with its articles on art, literature, and science (Friedrich 101), just as negligent as Herr and Frau Kolbe. As for their lack of piety (“Aber wo ist die Frömmigkeit? 61.16), does it not hint at what Thomas Nipperdey has called art’s role as a surrogate religion in a society that was becoming more and more secular with the increasing influences of philosophy, sociology, and the natural sciences (693)? One might argue that, by opening their minds to new ideas and experiences, Fritz’s parents have become more aware of the presence of evil in the world. That they cannot – or do not – choose to recognize its manifestation in their son as he goads the tailor to commit murder is another matter altogether. In that regard, the Kolbes do not live up to their name, as they have spared the rod, or club (Kolbe) in this case, and spoiled their son. While the ultimate message of this Moritatenparodie is that parents should mind their sons to prevent such tragedy, Busch’s use of ponderous Baroque trochaic tetrameter (/ x / x / x / x), with its formal cadences and moralizing verse that grows increasingly histrionic over thirty-seven (!) stanzas, infuses the “horrific” tale with laughter to lessen the tension.

Schoolboy Pranks

Still, the petty acts of mischief and disobedience seen in the examples above pale in comparison with the highly inventive series of pranks – innocuous, good, and painful – that are hatched in the name of rebellion by Busch’s Spitzbuben. Innocuous pranks tend to be the stock-
in-trade of the author’s scenes in the classroom, with its confined space and slim chance of making a quick getaway a likely motive to tone things down. Generally speaking, things start off innocently enough before turning violent. In Bild der Jobsiade (1872), for example, the seven-year-old hero-and-future-artist-preacher-dilettante Hieronymus shows no inclination for learning. One of his pranks consists in lopping off the end of his braid and stuffing it into the bowl of his headmaster’s Lesepfeife (“reading pipe,” 355, illus. 13). Pretending to read, the student peers smugly above his book as the teacher enters the room, sits down, lights his pipe, takes a few puffs, and then spits out the juices tasting of burnt hair with an exclamation of disgust:

“Bäbä!” – so spuckt er. – “Ich glaube gar

Fig. 29. Bild der Jobsiade (1872). RZ 357.83–84, illus. 17; 358.87–88, illus. 19

With carnival “marking the suspension of all hierarchical rank” (RW 10), “no principal or teacher is exempt from a slap on the back, a pie in the face, [or] a dunk in the tank,” as Carolyn M.

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As Ries et al. state, Busch’s story is a parody of the epic poem Leben, Meinungen und Thaten von Hieronymus Jobs dem Kandidaten [Life, Opinions, and Deeds of Hieronymus Jobs the Candidate], 1784, by Karl Arnold Kortum (1745–1824). Written in the same “doggerel” as Busch’s story, Kortum’s work imitates the mock heroic style of The Rape of the Lock (1712–14) by Alexander Pope (1688–1744); Le Lutrin [The Pulpit], 1674/83, by Nicholas Boileau-Despréaux (1636–1711); and Der Renommist: Ein scherzhaftes Heldengedicht [The Swaggerer: A Humorous Epic Poem], 1740, by Friedrich Wilhelm Zachariae (1726–77). It also contains asides from the narrator in the style of The Life and Times of Tristam Shandy (1759–67) by Laurence Sterne (1713–68). See RZ 1246–47.
Shields observes (104). Yet, a simple prank\textsuperscript{83} meant to elicit laughter triggers the explosion of some sort of repressed frustration in the boy’s teacher. Pulling out his switch, he grabs the perpetrator by his now-shortened braid and yanks him forward for a swift caning on the rear-end, knocking over the inkpot and breaking his pipe in the process (above). The teacher then leans face-forward out the window, appearing to cup his genitals with his hands as if to contain the sexual excitement released by the caning (358, illus. 20).

Another example of frustrated schoolboy mischief can be seen in Maler Klecksel (1884), where young Kuno draws a chalk portrait of Herr Bötel (“Mr. Truncheon”),\textsuperscript{84} with switch in hand. The furious instructor picks him up by the scruff of the neck and slams him into the blackboard, turning him into a human chalk eraser: “Schleicht sich herzu in Zorn erregung; / Und unter heftiger Bewegung / Wird das Gemälde ausgeputzt. / Der Künstler wird als Schwamm benutzt” (SW 512.175–78; chap. 2). Later that evening, the humiliated pupil exacts revenge with an ingenious two-part prank. First, he fills a giant rusty church key with gunpowder and explodes it\textsuperscript{85} outside his teacher’s open window. When the victim of Kuno’s mischief leans out to investigate the noise, the pupil uses an oversized syringe to spray him in the face with blood obtained from a neighbouring butcher:

\textsuperscript{83} Busch based the incident on a prank he played as a youngster on the Dorftroddel, m. (“village fool”), in Ebergötzen, filling the bowl of the man’s pipe with cow’s hair. Unlike Hieronymus’s teacher, Busch’s victim thoroughly enjoyed his pipe, smoking it right down to the last hair (“Er rauchte sie aus, bis aufs letzte Härchen, mit dem Ausdruck der seligsten Zufriedenheit”). For his trouble, the author received a caning with a Georginenstengel, m. (“[dried] dahlia stalk”), from his pastor-uncle Georg Kleine (1806–97). See Hochhut 2: 14–15; also RZ 355.

\textsuperscript{84} In Low Saxon, Bötel, m., denotes a longish piece of wood or a truncheon (Niedersächsisches 625), hinting at the severe beating the teacher will administer to his pupil Kuno (qtd. in SW 510).

\textsuperscript{85} In Von mir über mich (1894), Busch recounts how he helped himself to gunpowder from a keg stored in the attic of his parents’ dry goods store in Wiedensahl, used it to fill a rusty, hollowed-out church key given to him by an older cowhand, and ignited the same in a field full of cows. When a passing neighbour reported the incident to Busch’s father, the latter was so infuriated by his son’s action that he took him back to the scene of the theft and thrashed him on the fly as he chased him around the keg (Hochhut 2: 11–12; see also SW 1205–06).
Covered with blood and revived by his wife after he faints to the floor, Herr Bötel concedes defeat, beaten by the power of the prank.

What might explain the teacher’s overwrought reaction to his chalkboard portrait in the first place? After all, it is not what Heinrich Schneegans refers to as a grotesque meant to satirize the victim, but rather an artistically rendered caricature. Is Kuno’s drawing an act of impudence or one of insubordination? Or does the boy’s obvious artistic talent incite jealousy? During the nineteenth century, observe Ries et al., students learned to draw by making simple structures on a line grid, betraying a kind of academic sterility (RZ 1072) that is the exact opposite of Kuno’s – and Busch’s – own spare style of caricature. That Kuno produces a realistic portrait of his teacher demonstrates his freethinking and the fact that the student may actually be better than his teacher, Herr Bötel, inverting the normal power relationship between the two from both the Biblical (Matt. 10. 24–26) and the social points of view. The portrait also serves as a

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86 In *Geschichte der grotesken Satire* (1894), Schneegans cites examples of fantastically sized caricatures of Napoleon III (1808–73) appearing in several French broadsheet collections, in which the emperor sports an enormous proboscis (43–46, fig. 4–8). Qtd. in RW 306.
reminder that the “free familiar contacts” between individuals of all ages in a carnivalesque setting (RW 10) are not to be trifled with in the classroom.

In *Plisch und Plum* (1882), Peter and Paul⁸⁷ learn this lesson the hard way when they snigger at the overblown pronouncements of Magister Bokelmann (“Master Stick”)⁸⁸ on proper schoolroom behaviour. In response, the sadistic instructor unsheathes his switch to cane the unfortunate backsides of his new students (SW 408–09, illus. 85, 86; chap. 7) with a chop-licking satisfaction (Mihr 79) reminiscent of Kuno’s headmaster. Of course, things would not have progressed this far had the boys’ father, Papa Fittig (“Papa Light-Wit”),⁸⁹ refused to cater to the constant imploring of his tender-hearted wife⁹⁰ to leave their sons unpunished for their dogs’ destruction of property. The boys’ father finally loses his cool when the dogs upend the family meal, vigorously switching the backside of each son as his wife tries to restrain him (401, illus. 76; chap. 6). To bring the boys’ carnival merriment to an end, Fittig borrows a page from Seneca’s⁹¹ writings, calling upon Magister Bokelmann *in loco parentis* to teach his sons about choosing virtue over malice: “`Dies` – denkt er – muß anders werden! / Tugend will ermuntert

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⁸⁷ In *Von mir über mich*, Busch recounts how he and his lifelong friend, the miller’s son Erich Bachmann (1832–1907), used to swim in the village brook and coat themselves in mud they dubbed “Peter and Paul,” baking themselves hard in the sun before rinsing themselves in the water: “Wir machten eine Mudde aus Erde und Wasser, die wir `Peter und Paul` benannten, überkleisternten uns damit von oben bis unten, legten uns in die Sonne, bis wir inkrustiert waren wie Pasteten, und spülten`s im Bach wieder ab” (Hochhut 2: 13; Weissweiler 33).

⁸⁸ According to Ries et al, the proper name Bokelmann can be traced back to Low Saxon and is still heard in Hanover today. It is derived from *Bakel*, m. (lat. *baculum* ‘school master’s rod’), an implement that the boys’ new teacher unsheathes at will (Bohne, *BBMK* 208 and Teichmann 180; qtd. in SW 405). Grimm also defines *Bockelmann*, m., as a “Butzenmann” or “bogeyman” (*DW* 2: 204, 595).

⁸⁹ Ries et al. note that a *loser Fittig*, m., is slang for a “light-witted individual” (Gottschald 185), while in Schleswig-Holstein German, *Fitt* means *Angeber*, m., or *Verklatscher*, m. (“blowhard,” Mensing 2: 117). Qtd. in SW 362. In Busch’s story, the name is telling, given Fittig’s initial hesitance in punishing Peter and Paul, and his eagerness to sell the dogs to the highest bidder at the end of the story, despite his fine words about instilling virtue into his sons.

⁹⁰ Mama Fittig is no different than the tenderhearted mothers on the pages of the *Fliegende Blätter*, like the heroine of *Eine zartfühlende Mutter* (1867) who tells a neighbour that she “chloroforms” her children before thrashing them, pointing to their “lifeless” bodies lying on the furniture to demonstrate her point (*FB* 47.1157: 85).

⁹¹ Seneca (c. 4 BC–65 AD) writes, “*[U]irtus difficilis inuentu est, rectorem ducemque desiderat; etiam sine magistro utia discuntur*” (“It is difficult to find virtue, she calls for a guide and governor: vices, on the other hand, are learned without a master”; trans. mine). *Naturalium quaestionum* (164: 8.992–94; qtd. in SW 1091).
sein, / Bosheit kann man schon allein!” (404.256–58). In turn, the boys – the only ones truly brought to heel in Busch’s stories – apply their schoolmaster’s cruel punishment to their pets:

“Nunmehro – so sprach er in guter Ruh –
Meine liebe Knaben, was sagt ihr dazu??
Aber auch für Plisch und Plum
Nahte sich das Studium
Und die nöthige Dressur,

Seid ihr zufrieden, und sind wir einig??"    Ganz wie Bokelmann verfuhr.
"Ja wol [sic], Herr Bokelmann!” riefen sie schleunig.

Fig. 31. *Plisch und Plum* (1882). SW 410.301–04, illus. 87; 411.309–12, illus. 89

There are numerous portrayals of schoolboy thrashings on the pages of the *Fliegende Blätter*, many for no apparent reason. In *Aus einem Knaben-Erziehungs-Institute* (1861), for example, the director tells the mother of a new prospect how he and his wife administer daily “scrubbings and spankings” to their young charges to remind them of their proper place:

![Fig. 32. *Aus einem Knaben-Erziehungs-Institute* (1861). FB 34.815: 53](image-url)
A more sordid example can be found in *Die Schulprügel: Ihr Nutzen und Unentbehrlichkeit* (1863), an illustrated “treatise” by a certain Dr. Robert Hase on the value of using the cane on schoolboys to enforce obedience, comparing its use in the military where it turns “powerless corporals” into “schoolmasters.”\textsuperscript{92} Granted, the society of the time felt a need to instil good behaviour in naughty pupils with a brutality that is shocking to today’s reader, yet we cannot help but ask whether there might have been other causes at play. Holding the revolution responsible for the creation of a “rebellious spirit” in schools and universities, Frederick William IV (1795–1861) of Prussia trained his sights on “radical” primary-school teachers (Friedrich 91). Supported by the 1854 decree of Anton Wilhelm Ferdinand Stiehl (1812–78), the Councillor of the Ministry of Education at the time, teachers with republican tendencies were expelled, censorship intensified, and training focused on religion (91). With poor remuneration and inferior social standing, primary-school teachers in the far-flung provinces became rapidly demoralized (91). From there, it is not a stretch to imagine them taking out their frustrations on helpless charges for misdemeanours both real and imagined.

But, not all teachers fly off the handle when victimized by an innocuous prank. To wit, the well-intentioned idealist Rector Debisch (“Headmaster Fool”),\textsuperscript{93} the hero of the episode named after him in *Abenteuer eines Junggesellen* (1875), does not believe in corporal punishment, preferring to base his arguments on reason instead. When he asks his son Kuno to fetch a “Flasche voll Bordeaux” (*RZ* 619.166) from his well-stocked wine cellar in honour of

\textsuperscript{92} “Bei dem Militär war sonst der Korporalstock der beste Exerziermeister, und wer ihn gekostet, mußte sich noch obendrein für gnädige Strafe bedanken und mit richtigem Takte machte man gerade invalide Korporäle zu Schulmeistern” (*FB* 39.945: 54).

\textsuperscript{93} In Low German, *Debisch*, m., means “fool.” Busch’s copy of Kluge’s *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (first edition 1883) contains his annotations *Debisch*, *dewisch* as dialectical forms beside the word *Thor* (Wossidlo and Teuchert 7: 112, qtd. in *RZ* 618). In contemporary Austrian German as well as some parts of Switzerland, the forms *Depp/Tepp*, m., and *depp/tepp*, adj., are commonly heard (Fussy 31), as in “ein großgöscherter Depp” (“a big-mouthed idiot”).
their visitor Bachelor Knopp, the boy chooses a bottle, drinks some of it, and then tops it up with water from the rain pipe to conceal his prank. As the father and his guest sample the “wine,” they find a dead earthworm in one glass (622, illus. 42) and a dead baby sparrow (below) in the other. Knopp doubles over in nausea, while Debisch banishes his smirking son from the room:

“As – spricht Debisch – scheint mir ein Neugeborner Spatz zu sein. Pfui, mein Sohn, entferne dich!! –”

Dies – spricht Debisch – scheint mir ein
Neugeborner Spatz zu sein.
Ei, wie käme dieses dann?? […]
Pfui, mein Sohn, entfernte dich!! –”
Das ist Debisch sein Prinzip:
Oberflächlich ist der Hieb.
Nur des Geistes Kraft allein
Schneidet in die Seele ein.

Fig. 33. “Rector Debisch” (Abenteuer eines Junggesellen, 1875). RZ 621, illus. 40; 624–25.189–91, illus. 47; 625–26.196–200, illus. 49

As his moniker suggests, Debisch foolishly imagines that the strength of reason alone will have a “cutting effect” on his son’s soul. Here, the father seems to follow the teachings of Pestalozzi and others, like the sociologist Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster (1869–1966), who proclaimed their opposition to beating pupils: “Wir sind gegen das Prügeln, weil es zu ‘oberflächlich’ schmerzt” (qtd. in RZ 1534). Busch, too, does not seem convinced of the value of using force to punish children for misconduct, if his ironic musings on the subject serve as any indication.94

But, does punishment actually result in bad behaviour? As Josef Hofmiller points out,

94 In the author’s letter to his one-time patron Johanna Keßler (1831–1915), dated 18 July 1891, he refers to prevailing practices in classroom discipline on “wondrous students”: “Unser Herrgott hat wunderliche Schüler in seiner Klasse. Gute Lehren thun’s selten allein. Ein Tupfer auf den Schädel, zwei Zupfer am Ohr, drei Stupfer in die Rippen sind meist erst nöthig bis der Schlingel fein still auf dem Platz sitzt, der ihm zukommt, sei’s oben oder unten.” See Bohne, 3B 336; qtd. in RZ 626. Yet, the ironic “wunderliche Schüler” and the rhyming “Tupfer,” “Zupfer,” and “Stupfer” (“swat,” “yank,” and “poke”) should alert the reader to the likelihood that Busch is mocking punishment in the classroom, not endorsing it.
Meister Druff (“Master Hit-Him-Harder”), the Präventivprügler (“preventive thrasher”) of the following episode in the story, achieves the same outcome as Rector Debisch (161; qtd. in RZ 627, 2002 ed.). After Druff thrashes his son Franz upon arrival at a country festival to keep him out of trouble, the young lad goes in search of a victim to alleviate his frustration. Spying Knopp chatting up one of the ladies, Franz decides to play a harmless prank, pinning a freshly slaughtered pig’s tail to the coat tails of his unsuspecting victim to emphasize his porcine figure:

Druff hat aber diese Regel:
Prügel machen frisch und kregel
Und erweisen sich probat
Ganz besonders vor der That.

Und an Knoppens Fracke hing

Gleich darauf ein krummes Ding. –

Fig. 34. “Ländliches Fest” (Abenteuer eines Junggesellen, 1875). RZ 627.207–10, illus. 51; 629.221–22, illus. 54

To everyone’s amusement, Knopp prances about on dainty feet resembling pig’s hooves as he revels in his questionable dancing skills (630–31, illus. 57, 58). Further glee ensues when Franz yanks away the bench as Knopp sits down to take some refreshment, upending his victim and causing him to rip the seat of his pants (633, illus. 62). In the carnival-like atmosphere of the country fair, the previously subjugated child finds his voice, turning the world of irksome adults upside down. Indeed, Franz’s rebellious act humiliates as it focuses on the “gross physiologism” (RW 18) of his victim’s enormous and suddenly bared hind quarters, allowing the adult guests to laugh at the antics of a corpulent outsider without any direct involvement in his misfortune.

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95 The surname Druff is based on the expression immer feste druff! (“hit him harder!” or “let him have it!”). See Winther 28; qtd. in RZ 626.
Revenge of the Lowly Apprentice

In addition to the once-repressed child, Busch also empowers the lowly apprentice, giving him licence to prank. An early example is the hero of the two-panel Tadelnswerthe Anwort auf eine wohlgemeinte Frage (1860), drawn and captioned by the author, where a young shoemaker’s apprentice, with a customer’s boot in hand, stands hunched over with his back to an old peasant woman, pretending to have something caught in his throat: “Ah ah! Ich hab was im Hals, / ich hab was im Hals!!” (FW 717). When the concerned woman places her hand on his shoulder, asking, “Ja, um Gottswillen, Büberl [sic], was hast denn im Hals?” (717), his cheeky answer, “A Züngerl!!” (“A tongue!!”), is followed by the protruding appendage. Here, the defenseless old peasant woman presents an easy target, as the apprentice knows she has no real authority to rebuke him. By contrast, vindictive masters and journeymen in nineteenth-century Germany used physical discipline, from a cuff on the ears to something harsher, to show apprentices “who was the boss” (Schlumbohm 82). Cruel attacks were often part of initiation rituals conducted by masters and senior journeymen, as Christiane Eisenberg explains (513). She adds that trainees accepted the hand they were dealt, becoming more dependent on the individual who was both master and guardian in order to avoid worse punishment (513).

The pages of the Fliegende Blätter are filled with examples of this kind of master-on-apprentice brutality. They include Illustrationen zu deutschen Liedern (1860), where a cobbler drags two apprentices by their hair; and Unangenehmes (1862), another one of Busch’s early stories drawn to anonymously written text, where a sadistic cobbler, awl in hand, yanks hard on the ear of his apprentice Maxl for not paying attention, causing him to fall off his work stool:

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96 First published in FB 33.789 (1860): 56.
97 First published in FB 36.886 (1862): 207.
By contrast, the comic-book hero Kuno of the aforementioned *Maler Klecksel* lets out all of the stops when he pranks Malermeister Quast (“Master Painter Fool”). Indeed, the apprentice is forced to schlep a mountain of paint pots, brushes, and the box containing their sausage lunch to work (*SW* 518, illus. 18), all on his own. When, instead of getting down to work, the student demonstrates his artistic talent on the willing hides of the house painter’s dachshund, whippet, and bulldog (519–21, illus. 21–24), using the sausage as bait, Quast refuses him lunch. In retaliation, Kuno piles up the tools of his master’s trade into a pyramid at the door of his bedroom, slices open his feather comforter, and pours varnish onto his unprotected head as he sleeps (525–26, illus. 32–34). Startled awake, the master leaps out of bed, covering himself head to toe in feathers, before stumbling into the dangerous contraption at the door and landing headfirst in his chamberpot, thoroughly debased as Kuno sets out for greener pastures:

98 The term *Quast*, m., is used to denote an old-fashioned painter’s sash brush (*Lübben* 288; *Zoder* 2: 343; qtd. in *SW* 517). However, *Quast* is also used figuratively as a synonym for “Narr” or “fool,” as in the dimwitted stock character “Hans Quast” (*Schambach* 163, def. b; qtd. in *DW* 13: 2329, def. 1). Malermeister Quast certainly fits the latter description, in that he stupidly underestimates the ingenuity of his clever apprentice.
Er springt hinaus in großer Hast,
Von Ansehn wie ein Vogel fast,    Und stößt mit schrecklichem Rumbum
Die neuste Pyramide um.

Fig. 37. Maler Klecksel (1884). SW 527.285–86, illus. 36; 528.287–88, illus. 37

It is a cruel yet ingenious prank, the result of pent-up childish rage at his master’s harsh punishment. By contrast, the pranksters in the Fliegende Blätter tend to pull their punches, like the devious apprentice in Lehrjungenrache (1861) who waters down the beer of a victim who is likely a fellow journeyman, in order to punish him for an undeserved slap on the mouth:

“Lehrjunge: ’A Maulschell’n! und nit vom Meister, das ist stark!
Was läßt sich da eigentlich machen? Mit Bier wegwaschen, das wird’s Vernünftigste sein. Wart’, Breslauer, Du sollst die Ohrfeige bitter büßen! Wenn Dein Bier a Bissel dünner wird, vielleicht bist nacher nimmer gar so hitzig!’”

Fig. 38. Lehrjungenrache (1861). FB 34.829: 164
Undeniably, Kuno would not have fared so well in real life, where runaway apprentices were routinely punished, with no possibility of working in the future for other masters (Möller 59–60; Wissell 291–93; qtd. in Schlumbohm 82, 83n54). Still, his revolutionary act stands out, a young boy’s *cri de coeur* against what he perceives to be an unjust system. Not that it does him any good. As various critics have pointed out, *Maler Klecksel* (“Painter Splatter”) is a parody of a *Bildungsroman* (Klein 636; Pape, “Zwar” 169; Ueding, “Poet” 147; qtd. in SW 1218), in that the young hero squanders his formidable talents. Had Kuno applied half as much energy to developing his artistic skills as to performing his clever pranks, he might have avoided his fate as a tavern keeper at the end of the story, doling out beer and small talk to his former teachers.

**Warfare by Any Other Name**

With its particularly nasty flavour, Kuno’s practical joke sets the stage for the “bad” pranks of Busch’s juvenile rogues, prompted by a desire to inflict pain. Consider *Das Pusterohr* (1867/68), where the young hero Franz aims a huge blowgun through a hole in the fence at his haut-bourgeois neighbour, Herr Bartelmann, as he enjoys his morning coffee and pretzel (*FW* 518, illus. 1). The action unfolds over several panels as the first pellet grazes the neighbour’s ear, the second breaks his pretzel in half, and the third hits him squarely in the eye (518, 520, illus. 2, 5, 6). When Herr Bartelmann investigates the source of the pellets, Franz launches a small dart or “Flitze” that pierces his victim’s nose (522, illus. 9). Finally realizing the identity

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100 In his lively memoirs of schoolboy pranks, August Ludolf Friedrich Schaumann (1773–1840), a junior officer from Hanover and war commissary between 1808 and 1814 for the First Duke of Wellington (1769–1852), recalls a time during the 1780s when he and his young friends waged covert operations against coffee-drinking old ladies with blow guns and putty pellets, causing their coffee cups to shatter and the scalding contents to burn their mouths: “Wir lagen in unserem Keller mit Blasröhren und Kittkugeln versehen nachmittags auf der Lauer, und es gelang uns oft, den alten Weibern uns gegenüber, wenn sie Kaffee tranken, die Tasse dermaßen von dem Munde wegzublasen, daß der heiße Kaffee weit umherstob und ihnen das Maul verbrannte.” See Rischbieter 188; qtd. in *FW* 1502.

101 The lexicographer Georg Schambach (1811–79) describes the use of *Pfeile*, m. pl., or *Flitzen*, f. pl. (“darts” or “arrows”), as blowgun projectiles (272; qtd. in *FW* 521).
of the prankster, the victim grabs hold of his coffee pot by the spout and uses it to whack the end of the blowgun as it reappears, driving the instrument deep into Franz’s open mouth:

**Fig. 39. Das Pusterohr (1867/68). FW 522.17–18, illus. 9; 523.23–24, illus. 12**

In the following panel, we see Franz’s teeth on the ground and, with only his shadow remaining, wonder if he has been killed (524, illus. 13). Exaggerated for the purposes of the story, the scene is a toned-down reminder of Rabelais’s “sausage war”¹⁰² in *Gargantua et Pantagruel*, during which Friar John and his army of cooks, armed with the tools of their trade, tear apart the limbs and smash in the teeth of their opponents, all in an effort to obliterate them. Why does Franz keep pestering his neighbour to the point of no return? Is he bored? Does he have no friends? In many families of the haute bourgeoisie like the one pictured in Busch’s story, children were restricted to the home or back garden, taken out by adults on excursions, and only permitted to mix with friends chosen by their parents (Schlumbohm 91). Or does Franz feel ignored by his parents? Clearly, note Ries et al., he is a pampered child, as seen by his ruffled shirt and short

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¹⁰² As Bakhtin recounts, “He brained some, smashed the legs and arms of others, broke a neck here, cracked a rib there. He flattened a nose or knocked an eye out, crushed a jaw or sent thirty-two teeth rattling down a [bloody] gullet. [...]” (“Es uns escarbouilloyt la cervelle, és aultres rompoyt bras et jambes, és aultres deslochoyt les spondyles du coul, és aultres demouloyt les reins, avalloyt le nez, poschoyt les yeulx, fendoyt les mandibules, enfoçoyt les dens en la gueule [...]). See Rabelais 1.27: 107; qtd. in *RW* 194. He adds that such images of dismemberment lie at the origin of most swearing. Qtd. in *RW* 194. Here, Herr Bartelmann bypasses conversation with the perpetrator, translating his feelings into action.
pants, adding that his misbehaviour is a slap in the face to his absentee parents (FW 1503). But, without absolving Franz, or his parents for that matter, Herr Bartelmann’s reaction is still extreme in its brutality. It is one thing to keep children in line, as nineteenth-century German society aimed to do, and quite another to cause them grievous bodily harm. By literally knocking out the little boy’s teeth and possibly doing away with him, the neighbour sends a strong message to Franz’s negligent parents that he will take care of childish rebellion even if they will not. The irony is that Franz’s prank is relatively mild in comparison to the tomfoolery of lower-class children who lived a communal life in the streets, outside the control of parents who had to earn a living (Schlumbohm 84–85, 89). As we do not see the antics of these children on the pages of the *Fliegende Blätter*, could it be that they were considered a threat to society and their very existence had to be kept under wraps? We can imagine that Herr Bartelmann would be hard-pressed to contend with similar pranks or worse from a swarm of street urchins, which could be one reason why Franz presents so tempting a target.

Herr Bartelmann’s over-the-top response to the shenanigans of a neighbour boy reminds the reader of Bauer Zöpfel (“Farmer Pigtail”) in *Die Drachen* (1881), who sadistically whips the behinds of the scrumpers Fritz and Franz “mit Lust und Liebe” (SW 338, illus. 18) when he catches them with his “hochgeschätzten Äpfel” (339, illus. 19), one of them partly eaten. The brute then retreats to the sanctity of house and home (“[U]nd so kehrt er hocherfreut / heim in seine Häuslichkeit,” 339), the h-alliteration of the verse creating an image of domestic peacefulness at odds with his nasty smile. In the same way, the reader can imagine Herr Bartelmann returning to his morning coffee, this time with an expectation of peace.

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103 *Zöpfel*, m., is a diminutive of *Zopf*, m. (“pigtail”), a hairstyle favoured by European men throughout the eighteenth century. Figuratively, *Zopf* became an allegory for the era and, by extension, a symbol of backwardness (DW 32: 80, def. 3). That Bauer Zöpfel sports what appears to be a modern cropped haircut under his peaked cap (SW 334–39, illus. 14–19) adds to the irony, underscoring his old-school approach to disciplining mischievous boys.
The desire to inflict pain, this time on an unsuspecting outsider, is seen in *Balduin Bählamm, der verhinderte Dichter* (1883). Here, the young country lad Jörg (“George”) roams the fields with the shaft of a hoe, to the end of which he has attached an oversized needle. After repeatedly “needling” *Balduin Bählamm* (“Bold Baa Lamb/Bel Âme”) through a hole in the fence with a homemade needle-and-shaft contraption, the boy finally spears the would-be poet through the seat of his pants. Realizing that he has been the victim of a prank, Balduin makes a grab for the shaft but impales his hand on the needle instead:

Aha! Und jetzt wir zugefaßt,  
Und trefflich hat er’s abgepaßt;

Verlockend und zugleich gespannt  
Setzt er sich wieder vor die Wand.  

Denn grad im Centrum bohrte sich  
Durch seine Hand der Nadelstich.

**Fig. 40. Balduin Bählamm, der verhinderte Dichter** (1883). SW 456.349–50, illus. 47; 457.351–54, illus. 48

Out of his element, we read how the “poet” nervously looks at the reader for sympathy, while the naughty perpetrator runs off without a care in the world: “Natürlich macht ihn das nervos [sic]. / Der Jörg entfernt sich sorgenlos” (457.355–56). In simple terms, Jörg attacks Balduin because, as an outsider, the poet presents an attractive target, for many of the same reasons that the pigtail-prankster Franz takes advantage of Bachelor Knopp. That the poet sports an exaggerated style of dress that shouts *Biederkeit* (e.g., straw hat, silk neckerchief, citified clothing, field chair) only adds to the sense of his otherness. In terms of the binary opposition inherent in symbolic inversion, the rural trumps the urban, which is perceived as alien because it does not fit into the
normal order of things in the eyes of the rustic characters. By affording Balduin no respect and attacking the symbols of his urbanism through a painful prank, Jörg essentially inverts the prevailing adult-child and peasant-bourgeois relationships, thereby questioning the normal categories of age and class, and reflecting a society in which outsiders are not welcome.

The sting of bad pranks like Jörg’s is doubled in Busch’s picture stories featuring pairs of bad boys, pointing to a general sense of frustration with the adult presence in their lives. In *Diogenes und die bösen Buben von Korinth* (1862), for example, two mischievous lads disturb the philosopher of the title as he meditates in a wooden barrel by banging on the slats and squirting him with a water syringe through a knothole in the side, completely soaking him:

![Illustration of Diogenes and the boys](image)

When that fails to get a rise out of him, they roll the barrel down the hill with their victim still in it (165–66, illus. 7–9). However, their punishment is not long in coming, as two nails protruding out of the side of the barrel snag the togas of the surprised boys (166, illus. 10), before the barrel squashes them “pancake-thin” (168–69, illus. 13). Diogenes has no sympathy for the victims,

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105 In his chronicles, Schaumann describes a scene where he and his companions delivered a “one-two punch” to what appears to be their favourite target of defenseless old ladies in the almshouse, using a blowgun to shoot peas through an open window and a water syringe to deliver the *coup de grâce* when the intended victims showed their faces: “Die alten Weiber im Heiligen-Geist-Hospital wurden sehr oft heimgesucht, indem wir erst eine Handvoll Erbsen ans Fenster warfen, um sie herauszulocken. Sobald sie nun herausahmen, standen zwei von uns mit großen Handspritzen parat und gaben ihnen eine Ladung Wasser ins Gesicht.” See Rischbieter 187; qtd. in *SW* 513.
exclaiming, “Ja, ja! Das kommt von Das [sic]!!” (168–69.28), similar to Meister Böck’s pronouncement in *Max und Moritz*. The irony is that the philosopher and original cynic rejected all forms of civilized life and often encouraged others to act outrageously (Moles, par. 4). In his stylized autobiography *Von mir über mich* (1894), Busch describes the effect of these now-flattened characters acting outside of the normal laws of gravity (i.e., laws of society; Galway 54): “So ein Konturwesen macht sich leicht frei von dem Gesetze der Schwere und kann, besonders wenn es nicht schön ist, viel aushalten, eh’ es uns weh thut” (Hochhut 2: 21; qtd. in *FW* 168). Thus, Busch encourages his readers to laugh at the antics of the boys even as they indulge in punishment by proxy. As Kunzle notes, the petty bourgeoisie of post-revolutionary Germany was deeply ambivalent toward the concept of rebellion, finding satisfaction in seeing it manifested and punished, succeeding and failing (*NC* 232; ital. in orig.).

**Max und Moritz: The Ambivalence of Rebellion**

This ambivalence toward rebellion lies at the heart of *Max und Moritz* (1865), whose seven rotten *Streiche* (“tricks”) take childish monkey business to new heights. If all pranks worthy of the name tread what the *Economist* magazine has called a delicate balance between legality and illegality, good and bad taste, and right and wrong (“Hermes,” par. 7), then the tricks of the two *Spitzbuben* take first prize. The story evolves over nearly one hundred panels, before a miscalculation on the part of the heroes leads to their demise. For their first trick, the boys steal into the yard of Witwe Bolte (“Widow Hot-Water-Bottle”) and nab her three prized hens and

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107 According to Eva Weissweiler, the family name *Bolte* is widely heard in Wiedensahl (128). Ries et al. observe that the name is a variation of the Low Saxon *Bolzen*, m., the red-hot metal insert placed into a flat iron to heat it up (Schambach 29; qtd. in *FW* 331), and that in East Frisian, *Bolte*, f., means “hot water bottle” (*Niedersächisches* 526; qtd. in *FW* 332). However, Adelung provides a tantalizing clue as to the origin of the name, citing the Low Saxon definition of *Bolzen/Bolte* as a joint of meat or a drumstick: “In Niedersachsen bedeutet es auch die Keule von einem geschlachteten Viehe, einen Schlägel [Schlegel]” (1: 1122, def. 5). Perhaps the name *Bolte* foreshadows the
rooster by tempting them with four chunks of bread tied together with two strings arranged crosswise (FW 333, illus. 4), in the manner of Till Eulenspiegel.\textsuperscript{108} Swallowing the bait whole, the birds try to escape by flapping their wings, only to entangle themselves in the widow’s apple tree and hang themselves to death (334–37, illus. 5–11). When Witwe Bolte makes the best of a bad situation by roasting her “precious” birds (i.e., “Meines Lebens schönster Traum,” 338.71), the two lads perform their second trick as they drop fishing lines down her chimney, snag the roasted birds, gobble them down, and then fall asleep behind a hedge, each with a drumstick protruding from his mouth (343–46, illus. 21–26). For their third trick, Max and Moritz saw partway through the bridge leading across the stream to the house of Schneider Böck (“Tailor Ram”\textsuperscript{109}) and bleat a derisive “mek, mek, mek!!” (sic). Rising to the bait, the tailor ventures onto the bridge, breaks through the last section holding it together, and tumbles into the stream:

![Fig. 42. “Dritter Streich” (Max und Moritz, 1865). FW 349.171–72, illus. 30; 350.181–82, illus. 32](image)

The fourth trick involves the sanctimonious Lehrer Lämpel (“Teacher Dim-Bulb”),

drumsticks of the widow’s once-precious roast chickens seen protruding from the mouths of Max and Moritz at the end of their second trick.

\textsuperscript{108} The scene is based on Till Eulenspiegel’s eighth prank. Here, he fastens chunks of bread to the ends of two strings arranged crosswise and feeds them to the chickens of Karger Hüßwirt (“Cheap Paterfamilias”), whose name derives from the fact that he forces his children to gorge on bread to the point of nausea, causing them to refuse it and saving their father money. See \textit{Ein kurzweilig lesen von Dyl Vlenspiegel geboren vß dem land zü Brunßwick. Wie er sein leben volbracht hatt: xcvi. seiner geschichten} (Straßburg: Grieninger, 1515), print; qtd.in FW 1281.

\textsuperscript{109} Although the tailor is referred to as Schneider Böck (“Tailor Ram”) the first time he appears, his name changes to Meister Böck (“Master Ram”) for the rest of the tale. This could be seen as a sarcastic comment on his “masterful” propensity for rising to the bait of little boys.
whose gunpowder-filled meerschaum pipe (loaded by guess who) explodes in his face after he lights it, knocking him backwards to the floor (358–59, illus. 48, 49). For their fifth trick, the boys go easy on their victim, the kindly Onkel Fritz, filling his bed with large brown may bugs (363, illus. 55), which crawl up the covers as he sleeps and buzz around his head until he manages to kill them all. The sixth trick sees the boys’ stealing into the premises of the resident Bäcker (“Baker”),\(^{110}\) climbing on a chair to reach the tantalizing sugar pretzels, ready for Easter time,\(^{111}\) on the shelf located above a trough with rising dough (372, illus. 73). When the chair breaks under their weight, the boys tumble into the dough (373, illus. 74, 75). Spying them covered with dough, the Baker rolls them into loaves and shovels them into the oven (375, illus. 78–79) until they turn “braun und gut” (376.366), with the intent of “baking goodness” into them. Miraculously, the pair escapes. For their last trick, the boys slip into the granary of Bauer Mecke (“Farmer Power”)\(^{112}\) and cut holes into his sacks of grain (378, illus. 84). When he hoists one of the sacks onto his shoulder, the farmer feels his load growing steadily lighter as the contents trickle out (“‘Zapperment! Dat Ding werd leichter,’” 379.384), whereupon he spies the boys hiding in a pile of grain (380, illus. 88). Bundling them both into a sack, he carries them triumphantly to Meister Müller (“Master Miller”), who promptly feeds them into the hopper of his grinding mill (382, illus. 92) and turns them into poultry feed as the ultimate form of justice on behalf of harassed hens everywhere.

\(^{110}\) The Bäcker and Meister Müller are the only characters identified by their profession rather than by family name (Freudenstein-Arnold 27; qtd. in \(FW\) 378), suggesting the value of commerce at the time the story was written.

\(^{111}\) Pretzels (it. “bracciatelli” or “little arms”), like the ones seen in \textit{Max und Moritz}, were typical Lenten treats in Catholic Germany, so named because they symbolized a penitent’s arms crossed over the chest. Although they were also seen in Protestant areas of the country, they did not have the same symbolism. See \textit{DW} 2: 379; also \textit{FW} 1300.

\(^{112}\) Denoting someone in power, \textit{Mecke} (i.e., “Macht”) is a common surname in Hanover (\textit{Zoder} 2: 131). According to Busch scholar Britta Michel (Hanover), the name may also have the allegorical meaning of “me,” based on the Low German possessive pronoun \textit{meck} (“me”). Both qtd. in \textit{FW} 378.
As stated in the foreword, Max and Moritz are destroyed for the crime of taunting adults, tormenting animals, stealing fruit, and refusing to sit nicely in church and school, as all children of the time were taught to do (Schlumbohm 81): “– Menschen necken, Thiere quälen, / Äpfel, Birnen, Zwetschen stehlen – / Das ist freilich angenehmer / Und dazu auch viel bequemer, / Als in Kirche oder Schule / Festzusitzen auf dem Stuhle –” (331.11–16). Predictably, none of the victims shed any tears over the untimely death of the two troublemakers. Indeed, Witwe Bolte thinks they had it coming to them, while Schneider (Meister) Böck and Lehrer Lämpel agree that maliciousness does not set a good example. Onkel Fritz calls their pranks “dumb jokes,” while Bauer Mecke shrugs his shoulders and declares that the whole business no longer interests him. Even the Bäcker asks why people are “so appetizing,” implying that the lads offered a target too delicious to pass up.113 Safeguarding the interests of his business – post-1848 Germany was quickly turning into a nation of shopkeepers (Blackbourn 164) – seems to have been more important than saving the lives of two troublemakers who threatened the expectations, possessions, and social hierarchy of their townsfolk and womenfolk. In a society where parental supervision and school discipline were expected to instil good behaviour and successful integration into the community at large (Schlumbohm 81–82; 89), something has gone awry. But, instead of holding Max and Moritz’s absentee parents responsible for the misdeeds of their sons, as Roelof Deknatel has pointed out (104; qtd. in FW 61–62), the townsfolk blame the boys for their transgressions. Might something else be going on? In point of fact, the story reflects a historical reality, as many youths ran wild at the time Busch wrote his picture stories.

As Eva Weissweiler remarks, George V of Hanover (1819–78) had fallen ill and was no longer able to rule, throwing the Welf state of Hanover (where the story is based) into turmoil (34). In the midst of rising industrialization, many from the growing underclasses of society worked as day labourers, living in miserable huts on the edge of town where they eeked out a living, leaving their children to run riot in the streets (34; also Schlumbohm 84–89). What does all of this have to do with Max and Moritz? Weissweiler points out that the foreword of the author’s classic tale resembles a Steckbrief (“wanted poster”), similar to those seen in post-revolutionary Germany, displaying the mug shots and descriptions of child vagrants (128). She goes on to say that vagrant children were imprisoned in the Lower Saxony towns of Celle and Lüneburg (north of Hanover), where they were subject to punishment as adults (124), a situation not uncommon in other areas of Germany. Yet, from the appearance of Max and Moritz’s wanted poster, Busch seems to be having the reader on. For, instead of hardened criminals, we see two youthful rabble-rousers who stare directly at the reader with smirks on their faces, Max with a mischievous twinkle in his eye and Moritz with an archly raised pair of catch-me-if-you-can eyebrows:

114 According to Richard J. Evans, adult punishment was meted out to children as young as thirteen in many areas of nineteenth-century Germany (15). He notes that with the rampant poverty and an increase in petty theft in the mid-1830s, the Hanseatic City State of Hamburg, the Principality of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and the Kingdom of Hanover decided to transport felons to America once they had served their sentences (12). Evans goes on to say that the hidden practice continued until 1875, when Congress, responding to American fears regarding the entry of undesirables into the country, passed a law banning the migration of foreign-born criminals (17).
By contrast, their colourless counterparts in the Fliegende Blätter’s Die industriellen Buben (above), also named Max and Moritz, seem to be going through the motions as they collect the bounty offered for the heads of dead sparrows, a common practice in eighteenth-century Bavaria and Austria, by helping themselves to those the authorities have already discarded behind a fence. In subsequent panels, there is no punishment for the boys’ deceit, only a monetary reward and words of praise for their supposed industry and diligence. In their case, it would seem that one of the magazine’s many contributors decided to trade off of the fame of Max und Moritz, creating an illustrated story that lacks both vitality and originality.

Getting back to Max und Moritz, critics have been divided on its significance. Some point to the inherent “evil” in children. For example, Kaspar Spinner maintains that the heroes of the tale “sind und bleiben böse” (162; qtd. in 1307). It is a view supported by Walter Pape, who maintains that Busch’s tales centre around the “Unterdrückung und Vernichtung ‘natürlicher’ Bosheit (...) die er besonders bei Kindern, Bauern und Tieren sieht” (Wilhelm 333; ellipsis in orig.; qtd. in FW 1308). Likewise, Gottfried Willems maintains that the “Übeltätigkeit” of children is instinctive, adding that it is not just a product of socialization and upbringing, nor of specific historical developments and societal relationships.

Others view the tale as a criticism of nineteenth-century society. Jiří Veselý says that Max and Moritz’s tricks are not directed at any adult in particular, but rather at “Heuchler, Frömmler, Spießbürger und Egoisten aller Art, die jede Verletzung ihrer vergötterten privaten Ordnung aus der Fassung bringt” (58; qtd. in FW 1309–10), that is, the individuals that fit the

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115 According to Grimm, every household in eighteenth-century Bavaria and Austria had to deliver a set number of sparrow heads to the [local] authorities, a practice known as “sparrow tax”: [I]n Baiern und Österreich wurde im 18. jahrh. jedem haushalt die jährliche einlieferung einer bestimmten anzahl spatzenköpfe an das amt auferlegt, was das volk spatzensteuer nannte” (DW 16: 2008, def. 1).

116 “Die Bereitschaft zur ‘Übeltätigkeit’ gilt hier (...) als dem Menschen angeboren (...) sie soll in seiner Natur liegen und ihm nicht erst durch seine Sozialisation und Erziehung, auf Grund bestimmter geschichtlicher Entwicklungen und gesellschaftlicher Verhältnisse zuwachsen” (Willems 34; ellipsis in orig.; qtd. in FW 1313).
Biedermeier mould. For his part, Friedrich Bohne maintains that the two child heroes have decided to stand up to village society, taking up arms against an order based on ancient privileges well past their prime.\(^{117}\) As previously mentioned, Dektnatel points to absentee parents and the effects of neglect on their children’s lives, to which I would add the desire for thrill seeking to relieve the boredom experienced by children left too long on their own.

After weighing the arguments, Ries et al. see Busch’s tale as a Menschenkritik rather than a Zeitkritik, maintaining that the author provides a critique of human behaviour rather than of contemporary issues (FW 1313). But, while there is no denying that Max and Moritz act disrespectfully and maliciously toward their victims, turning the tables on them in true carnivalesque fashion, I would agree with Veselý that it is the hypocrisy, bigotry, philistinism, and selfishness of the villagers that drives the perpetrators to create mischief. This supports Golo Mann’s contention that Busch holds up his mirror to nineteenth-century Biedermeier society in order to throw its foibles and pretences into sharp relief.

**Sugar and Spice and All Things Nice**

While Busch’s girl characters are fewer in number, their behaviour and pranks are no less challenging to societal expectations, ranging from mildly amusing to mean-spirited. Rare are the characters in the mould of the well-behaved Ännchen in Die Verwandlung, who uses her Wunderblume to change her gluttonous brother from a piglet back into a human being. Instead, we observe with amusement the antics of Herr Knopp’s curious and active toddler (“Ein festlicher Morgen,” Julchen, 1877) as she lays waste to her father’s Sunday wardrobe and personal effects, in a series of cute tricks that would be considered thoroughly rotten were she

\(^{117}\) “Max und Moritz machen Front gegen eine dörfliche Gesellschaft. Sie stehen auf gegen eine Ordnung, die sich auf uralte, viel zu alte Vor-Rechte stützt, die sie aber nicht als Vor-Bilder anerkennen können” (“Phänomen” 5, qtd. in FW 1310).
just a few years older. Always busy, “Julchen macht sich was zu thun” (RZ 784.134), like her energetic brethren Max and Moritz. Climbing onto the chair, Julchen (“Julia”) dips her father’s quill into the inkpot and tries her hand at writing a letter, before making a grab for his pocket watch, falling off the stool and spilling ink all over his desk and onto the floor below (784–86, illus. 28–31). Grabbing her mother’s half-knit stocking to mop up the spilt ink (786–87, illus. 32, 33), Julchen loses interest as she spies her father’s straight razor, using it to hack off the tails of his morning coat (788, illus. 35) – a reminder of the Fasching custom where women cut men’s ties to symbolically castrate them – and to dig out burnt tobacco from the bowl of his pipe (789, illus. 38). For her closing act, she places her father’s magnificent beaver hat on her small head and, finding it too large, decides to sit down on it and make herself comfortable:

Niemals soll man ihn benützen,

Stattlich ist der Biberhut;
Manchmal paßt er nur nicht gut.

Fig. 45. Julchen (1877). RZ 790.167–70, illus. 39, 40

The fact that she is partly hidden behind the chair with her back to the reader and her little legs exposed, and that, two panels later, her mother, Frau Dorette, spirits her away under one arm with the top hat at arm’s length in the opposite hand, suggests that Julchen has used the head

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118 In the First Trick of Max und Moritz, the mere sight of Witwe Bolte’s chickens and lone rooster sets the duo’s prank-creating wheels in motion: “Ihrer Hühner waren drei / Und ein stolzer Hahn dabei. – / Max und Moritz dachten nun: / Was ist hier jetzt wohl zu thun? –” (FW 333.35–38).
covering for more than a place to park her bottom.

Despite Julchen’s trail of destruction over several panels and the hinted-at degradation of her father’s stately hat, Herr Knopp does not reprimand his daughter. Indeed, she is a much-loved child, as seen earlier when he observes her diaper-changing ritual and plants a kiss on her freshly powdered bottom (775, illus. 11).\textsuperscript{119} From the beginning of the tale, Julchen demonstrates an independent streak typically seen in all of Busch’s girl characters, which is merely hinted at on the pages of the \textit{Fliegende Blätter}. In \textit{Unbefangenheit} (1876), for example, a dainty little thing observes her brother doing a cartwheel and asks her mother why she cannot do likewise:

\textbf{Fig. 46. Unbefangenheit (1876).} FB 65.1617: 20

To her mother’s response, “Nein Anna, das schickt sich nicht für kleine Mädchen,” she

\textsuperscript{119} Kunzle writes, “[n]o artist or poet had acknowledged as part of nature’s cycle the tiny human animal’s primal needs to scream and defecate” (NC 271). This is not entirely true, note Ries et al., as the Dutch genre artists whose works Busch discovered during his student days in Antwerp, like \textit{Unangenehme Vaterpflichten} (1631) by Adriaen Brouwer (1605–38), portrayed scenes of diaper-changing, although their focus was on the humour created by the smelliness of the operation (RZ 772). Still, Busch’s tender portrayal stands out for its time, and might be explained by his close relationship with his nephews, the children of his sister Fanny Nöldeke (1834–1922), that included changing their soiled diapers (RZ 1672).
deliberately misinterprets her mother’s directive, replying that she will wait until she is older. At least she shows a spark of initiative, unlike the docile ninny in Aus dem Mädchenpensionat (1869), who messes up the names of female poets, inviting us to snigger like her classmates at her ignorance. Not only are Busch’s girl figures never shown at school (i.e., Dorfschule or Mädchen-Institut), they are never threatened with corporal punishment, unlike the the cowering lass in Es hilft Nichts (1868), beaten along with her siblings by a brutish father who complains that he cannot make any of them smile despite thrashing them all day (FB 49.1218: 160). In a similar vein, a little girl in Prophylaxis (1873) receives “preventive pedagogy” from a mother hoping to keep her from breaking her ceramic mug. When a neighbour remarks that the mug is still in one piece, the mother answers that once the mug is broken, hitting will be useless:

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 47. Prophylaxis (1873). FB 58.1450: 144**

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120 “Lehrerin: ‘Nennen Sie mir, mein Fräulein, ein Paar Frauen, welche sich als Dichterinnen einen bedeutenden Namen erworben haben.’ – Fräulein: ‘Anna Creon im Alterthum und Louise von Boß in der Neuzeit’” (FB 50.1225: 8). The young student plays on the genre of anacreontic poetry with its notion of love and wine, as well as the rural epic “Luise: Ein ländliches Gedicht in drei Idyllen” (1795), written by Johann Heinrich Voß (1751–1826), that describes the courtship, wedding, and trip to the bridal chamber of a rustic couple. See FB 50.1225 (1869): 8.
On the topic of corporal punishment, Busch seems to have provided his girl characters with a temporary release from the expectations of their sex, station, and class, allowing them to act out and to be themselves. While it is only possible to speculate on the reasons why, we do know that the author had a soft spot for Nanda (1862–1909) and Letty (1864–1944), the daughters of his one-time patron friend Johanna Keßler (1831–1915), revealed through early correspondence with them, and that he cultivated friendships with many women throughout his life. Furthermore, there is every indication that he thought highly of female intelligence and capabilities, as his correspondence throughout 1875 on a variety of topics with the Dutch journalist and peace activist Maria Anderson (1842–1917) surely attests (see Appendix A: Wilhelm Busch 251–56).

Lock Up Your Daughters!

Busch’s picture stories also betray an admiration for girlish ingenuity well into young womanhood. Take the example of two young ladies locked in their rooms at night to protect them from predatory young men. No shrinking violets, they seek ways to free themselves from the oppressive limits placed on their lives through ingenious pranks, albeit with different results. In the captionless Der Korb (1867), a young girl excitedly hoists her nattily dressed beau to her third-floor bedroom window in a large basket (FW 476, illus. 1). As the basket makes its way up, the girl’s irate father tries to stab the upstart in the hindquarters with the sharp prongs of his pitchfork (478, illus. 3). After the young man has arrived safely, he accepts a glass of wine and cavalierly lights up a cigar (483–84, illus. 8, 9). As he does so, the daughter douses her increasingly angry father with the contents of her water jug as he makes his way toward her

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121 For example, Busch included a humorous recipe “Wie man Obstauflauf macht” in his letter dated 21 Aug. 1871 to Nanda and Letty: “Erst wasche Dich und schnäuze Dich / und bist Du dann fein säuberlich, / so hole Dir mit leichtem Schritte / die Pflaumen und die Apfelschnitte […].” (Bohne, SB 68; also RZ 495).

122 First published as Das gestörte Rendez-vous in FB 47.1160 (1867): 105–08.
window. Here, we see the jug as the age-old symbol of a young maiden’s intact virginity, although the reader suspects that it has already been seriously compromised. When the flood of water fails to loosen the father’s grip on her windowsill, the daughter strikes one of his hands with a wine bottle while her paramour burns the other with his lit cigar. With his life hanging by a rope, the father is cut loose by his daughter and tumbles to the ground as her boyfriend downs the wine. In the last panel, the amused neighbours come a-running and laughingly point at the hapless father, his rear-end impaled on his own pitchfork, as the young man leaps over the fence with his coat tails pointed suggestively upwards and the daughter pretends to sleep in her bed. By besting the patriarch of the family, the heroine has inverted the normal father-daughter relationship; by entertaining her beau in her room, she has thumbed her nose at convention:

Fig. 48. Der Korb (1867). FW 485–87, illus. 10–12

The Rapunzel-like character in Der Korb is decidedly luckier than her counterpart in

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123 The cracked jug as a symbol of lost virginity is seen in Der zerbrochene Krug (1806) by Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811): VEIT, “Wenn einer Ihr von uns den Krug zerbrochen, / Soll sie entschädigt werden” (32.431–32).

124 The nineteenth-century art historian John Grand-Carteret (1850–1927) contended that the father in the story was the girl’s husband, basing his claim on the episode in Balduin Bählamm where the unlucky hero is dumped into the pond by Rieke Mistelfink and her beau, Krischan Bopp (303; qtd. in FW 1442–43). However, Ries et al. believe it highly unlikely that Busch would have portrayed an episode of adultery in the Fliegende Blätter, where the story first appeared, given its reputation as a “wohlständig[e] bürgerlich[e]” (i.e., family) publication (1442).
“Die Kirmeß” (*Dideldum!* 1874). Here, we see Hermine, the very model of *Biederkeit* with her tightly coiled ringlets and corseted dress, slipping out of her parents’ bedroom window and down the grapevine trellis as they sleep in order to attend a country dance (*RZ* 564–65, illus. 3, 4).

During the lively proceedings featuring couples of all sizes and shapes dancing up a storm to the accompaniment of a band on a makeshift platform (566–72, illus. 7–18), the drunken country lad Konrad finally manages to find a willing dance partner, before his enthusiasm gets the better of him and he crashes into the platform, causing guests and musicians alike to fall into a heap of limbs and broken musical instruments (574–75, illus. 22, 23). Hermine races home and attempts to climb the trellis to her parents’ bedroom window before they awake, but snags her voluminous skirts on one of the upright slats instead, leaving her dangling. Her mother then leans out of the window and unwittingly empties her chamber pot on her daughter’s head:

Hermine eilt zum Elternhaus
Und denkt, wie sie herabgeklommen,
Auch wieder so hinauf zu kommen.

Die gute Mutter, welche grad,
Das Waschgeschirr in allen Ehren
Gewohntermaßen auszuleeren,

Und auch die Jugend, die sich sammelt
Ist froh, daß da Wer bimmelbammelt.

O weh! Da bricht ein Stab der Reben.
Nun fängt Hermine an zu schweben.

Das Fenster öffnet, sieht mit Beben
Hermenien an der Stange schweben.

Doch sieh, da zeigt der Vater sich
Und schneidet weg, was hinderlich.

**Fig. 49.** “Die Kirmeß” (*Dideldum!* 1874). *RZ* 576–77.58–62, illus. 26; 577–78.64–68, illus. 27; 579.69–72, illus. 28
Hermine’s father cuts her loose, whereupon she drops into the rose bush below, much to the delight of the youngsters who have gathered to watch the spectacle (above).

Why might the daughter in Der Korb escape punishment, while Hermine does not? Perhaps a clue lies in the clothing of the characters. In Der Korb, the young girl’s suitor is clearly a man of means, as evidenced by his top hat and fine suit of clothes. Her father, on the other hand, belongs to the lower classes, as indicated by his stocking cap and wooden clogs. The message would seem to be that the young lady should take advantage of the opportunity to marry up, just as the former housekeeper Frau Dorette did with the well-heeled Herr Knopp. For not only does marriage increase her chances for a comfortable living, it also enables her to avoid the ever-present risk of producing an illegitimate child, a sure path to social ruin in nineteenth-century bourgeois society (Hetzner 78; qtd. in RZ 690). In “Die Kirmes,” on the other hand, Hermine leaves her obviously well-to-do middle-class family home with requisite rose garden to attend a country ball alongside peasant folk. While the growing urbanization of the German countryside increased the points of contact between peasants and the upper classes, as David Blackbourn has written, the classes generally maintained their distance from one another, with minimal social interaction (163–64). By temporarily stepping down from her station and mingling with the plebes – unchaperoned to boot – Hermine revolts against parental strictures. But, her mini-revolution comes to an end when her mother literally reduces her daughter’s rebellion to what Bakhtin refers to as the “material level” (RW 19) by dousing her with the contents of her chamber pot. As if this were not punishment enough for Hermine’s “dirty” behaviour, the rosebush plays a prank of its own. According to Florian Vaßen, the flowered shrub, normally the symbol of beauty and love, punishes the girl for her sexual curiosity through the “Zerstörung des Sexualorgans” or destruction of her private parts (110; qtd. in RZ 580).
Ouch. Here, it would seem that a young lady of good standing who contravenes the existing order “deserves” the full force of parental sanctions, with her misbehaviour hitting “too close to home” to allow her any leeway.

The spectators in each of the stories above – *Der Korb* and “Die Kirmeß” – appear to display what Bakhtin calls an “individual reaction to some isolated ‘comic’ event,” not a carnivalesque “laughter of all the people (…) directed at all and everyone” (*RW* 11). But, I would argue that the stories are indeed carnivalesque, for by inviting readers to laugh along with the onlookers, Busch creates an inclusive “all-and-everyone” scenario, whereby the festive laughter is “also directed at those who laugh” (12). According to Shields, this laughter “makes possible a gaze that is both probing and complete; it permits one to see much more than can normally be perceived through the guarded filters of daily life” (121).

In the *Fliegende Blätter*, we see plenty of young ladies smooching with young men but none in the vicinity of the bedroom, not surprisingly, given that the magazine was a family publication where scenes of intimacy, even between spouses, were simply not portrayed. By contrast, depictions of brutality and violence against spouses, sons, and even daughters were not deemed to be injurious to the morals of the young readers of the publication, suggesting that harsh behaviour was simply a reflection of the times and widely tolerated in nineteenth-century Germany. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*

Yet, the disobedient daughters on the pages of Busch’s picture stories are treated lightly for following their hearts, irrespective the social standing of their fathers. Take the parody

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125 Similarly, note Ries et al., the young apothecary Mickefett is speared through his trousers’ front by the thorns of the rose plant resting on the windowsill of Julchen’s room, where he hoped to meet the object of his affections instead of the family’s visiting aunt, as he narrowly escapes the wrath of Herr and Frau Knopp (*RZ* 820, illus. 90).

126 In *Die projectirte Landpartie* (1867), we see a married couple in two single beds receiving a 6:00 a.m. Sunday morning visit from their children as their father bemoans the rainy weather on his single day off and their mother hopes for sunshine (*FB* 47.1156: 76).
Eginhard und Emma: Ein Fastnachtschwank in Bildern (1864), where Emma, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, takes advantage of her father’s rheumatism to escape the confines of the castle with her lover Eginhard. In a cartoonishly superhuman show of strength surprising for an individual so slender, she carries him on her back in order to make sure that his footprints do not appear in the freshly fallen snow (FW 248, illus. 9). Unfortunately for them, the shocked father spies the pair as they pass by his window: “Was sieht er da, vor Schreck erstarrt? / Die Emma trägt den Eginhard” (248.17–18). Guards return the pair to the palace, where the king melts at the sight of their tears and grants them permission to marry: “Jetzt aber wird er mild und weich / Und spricht gerührt: ‘Da habt Ihr Euch!’” (252–53.27–28). The ability of a daughter to trick her father and thaw his heart is also seen in the episode “Das Gartenhaus” from the aforementioned story Julchen, when a stunned Herr Knopp discovers the heroine, with hands covering her face, along with her nonchalant boyfriend Fritz in the garden shed. Gathering himself together, Knopp gives them his gruff blessing: “Spricht er: ‘Na, ihr [sic] könnt Euch kriegen!!’” (RZ 826.406). The irony is that Fritz, although blond and handsome, is a mere forester’s assistant who does not make much money. Indeed, the comical losers in the battle for Julchen’s affections – Dietchen Klingebiel (“Petey Axe-Blade”), Peter Sutitt (“Peter Sow-Teat”), and Ferdinandchen Mickefett (“Freddy Fat-Fly”) – are respectively cantor/church

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127 The tale is a parody of the saga involving Einhard, chancellor of Charlemagne, and the Kaiser’s daughter Emma (FW 1198). First published in FB 40.970 (1864): 45–48, it was judged too racy for publication in the Münchener Bilderbogen. Qtd. in FW 244–45.

128 According to Ries et al., Busch makes reference to an older practice, whereby an assistant was assigned to an employee no longer fit for service, for reasons of age or sickness. The sidelined employee provided the assistant with board and wages from the little income at his disposal. Prospects for succeeding a once-active employee were not always assured. See Meyer 1: 120 under “Adjunkt”; also RZ 801.

129 According to the lexicographer Otto Felix Volkmann, Mickefett (“feist wie eine Mücke”/“as fat as a fly”) and Sutitt (alt. Seutt, possibly “Saudüte” or “Sautitte,” f./“sow’s teat”) were characters in a carnival play around 1486, where they appear as daft jurists in a court case under the names “her [sic] Hainrich Seutt und her Conrat Muckenfist” (28; qtd. in RZ 793; also 1666). By extension, Sauzitze, f., was a nickname for a veterinarian in nineteenth-century Germany, the profession that the character Peter Sutitt eventually chooses (RZ 800.214).
custodian, veterinarian, and pharmacist, all with earning potential. That Julchen charms her father into accepting a financially questionable marriage partner, laying claim to her father’s wealth once he dies after fulfilling his fatherly duty, essentially upends the middle-class emphasis on patriarchy and the proper channels of inheritance.

Still, not all girl characters disobey or use pranks for devious purposes, sexual or otherwise. Thus, the intruder-slaying heroine of *Die kühne Müllerstochter* (1868) is applauded for her fearless behaviour. Here, Busch reprises the traditional theme of the plucky miller’s daughter who, home alone, manages to outwit and kill three intruders on the clichéd dark and stormy night: “Es heult der Sturm, die Nacht ist graus, / Die Lampe schimmert im Müllerhaus” (RZ 14.1–2). Startled by the trio as they peer through her window, the heroine watches them from the mezzanine as they enter through an opening into the basement (16–17, illus. 3, 4). Living up to her billing (*kühn* ‘bold’), she uses ingenuity to dispose of the burglars, one by one. As the first one enters, she pushes a spare millstone down from the mezzanine, flattening him pancake-thin (18–19, illus. 5, 6). After slipping a lasso around the neck of the second, she attaches it to the shaft of the waterwheel, rolling him up into a tight coil (20–21, illus. 7, 8). As the third glimpses the miller’s bags of money and attempts to grab them from the open box behind which the daughter has hidden, she slams the lid shut, snapping his neck (22–23, illus. 9, 10). Borrowing weapons from two Low German tales, the millstone in “Sage von der Borsdorfer Müllerin” and the enchanted decapitating trunk in “Van den Manchandelboom,” later published in 1812 by the Brothers Grimm (RZ 864), Busch creates gory gags that reduce the story to a level that would be grotesque, were it not for their exaggerated comic-book portrayal. Yet, the final exclamation, “So bringt ein einzig Mädchen oft / Drei Männer in’s Malheur!!!!” (24–25.23–24)

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raises several questions. Where is the girl’s father and why has he left her alone? Is the daughter simply protecting her father’s wealth against three intruders? Or is she symbolically fending off the advances of three suitors who only seek to marry her in order to get their hands on daddy’s money? Judging from her strength and ingenuity, the Bold Miller’s Daughter would be perfectly capable of running the mill on her own, marriage partner or not.

Still, not all of Busch’s mischievous girl characters succeed in besting their elders or escaping punishment. Take the protagonist of *Die Fromme Helene* (1872), a young illegitimate child cast out of her aunt and uncle’s home for general high jinks and curiosity and, the reader suspects, the errors of her parents. In the first chapter of the story, “Lenchen kommt auf’s Land,” we learn that Helene is the product of a one-night stand, the result of the many “sündlichen Excesse” (“excesses of the flesh,” RZ 227.7) of nineteenth-century city nightlife with its balls and concerts populated by joyful older men and pretty young women who, judging by their names, likely hail from lower classes: “Hier sind Bälle, da Konzerts. / Annchen, Hannchen und Maria / Hüpf vor Freuden schon das Herz –” (227.10–12). The narrator describes the ensuing results, as “beautiful mothers and older fathers” beget many children with no concern as to whether they turn out to be sinners or not: “Und die Kinder werden Sünder, / Wenn’s den Eltern einerlei” (228.43–44).

Indeed, Helene would seem to be only one of an increasing number of illegitimate children seen in Bavaria and across Europe from 1850 on (Shorter 212–13), resulting from greater social mobility and the decreased influence of the clergy over the lives of the everyday men and women, particularly among the lower classes (Phayer 132–153; qtd. in Shorter 213n37).
Now a ward of her stuffy Uncle Nolte and “milde Tante” at their home in the country, for reasons hinted at in the prologue, Helene would seem to have people in her life who care about her welfare. Yet, she pays them no mind. Warned against evil and its momentary pleasures by her uncle (“Oh, hüte Dich vor allem Bösen! / Es macht Pläsier, wenn man es ist, / Es macht Verdrüß, wenn man’s gewesen!” 230.56–58) and reminded by her aunt of the need to revere old people for their virtues (“Drum soll ein Kind die weisen Lehren / Der alten Leute hochverehren!”; 230.61–62), Helene does the exact opposite, indulging in a series of not-so-innocuous pranks in the best tradition of Busch’s boy pranksters. These include sewing together the neck and armholes of her uncle’s nightshirt (“Des Onkel’s [sic] Nachthemd”; chap. 2), causing him to stumble around his bedroom, upending candlestick, snuff box, pocket watch, and chamber pot as he attempts to pull the now-useless garment over his head (231–36, illus. 4–13). In the following chapter, “Vetter Franz,” Helene’s natural feistiness turns into sexual curiosity when she spies, through the keyhole of his room, her visiting cousin as he awakens and performs his morning ablutions (239–40, illus. 17–20), and later steals a few kisses from him (252, illus. 38). Ignoring his own advice on transitory pleasure, Onkel Nolte enters his niece’s room, unbeknownst to her, in order to read the juicy contents of her love letter to Franz, his handkerchief standing at attention as a sure sign of his arousal (“Der Liebesbrief,” 260, illus. 53; chap. 5). But, it is her complaints against her pious relatives (“Der Onkel ist, gottlob! recht dumm; / Die Tante nöckert so herum, / Und beide sind sie furchtbar fromm!” 262.221–23) that send her uncle over the edge, enraging him to such an extent that he pushes her nose into the hot sealing wax she has just applied to the envelope:

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131 As Egon Friedell writes, the proper name Nolte (dim. “Arnold”) evokes the atmosphere of a small provincial German backwater that is both stuffy and cosy: “Schon bei dem einfachen Namen Nolte steigt die ganze muffige und doch anheimelnde Hinterwelt eines kleinen deutschen Landesnestes auf” (1325; qtd. in RZ 233).
In the following episode “Eine unruhige Nacht,” Helene gets even by attaching a fishing line to her guardians’ bed covering, in the process snagging her uncle’s toe. With a self-satisfied smile, she pulls on the line from the adjoining room, lifting both bed covering and foot into the air (second figure above). Her reward is banishment from the only family home she has known. By flouting the rules of Onkel Nolte and his wife, Helene has rejected the only individuals to have taken an interest in her life, even though her uncle may have had more than charity on his mind.

Summary

As the first comic strips about children, Busch’s picture stories show youngsters of all ages and social classes repeatedly overturning the world of parents and other grownups as they expose misguided adult expectations and hypocrisy. Boys take the lead with misbehaviour and pranks ranging from innocuous to thoroughly bad. For example, little Pepi ignores his father and carelessly destroys an expensive new set of trousers, Kuno stuffs the chopped-off end of his braid into his master’s pipe, and Max and Moritz wage war on the townsfolk for their endless moralizing and neglect. This is not to say that disobedience was completely ignored in the Fliegende Blätter. Indeed, a few young boys pull mild pranks, yet, we get the sense that the
characters essentially pull their punches. Occasionally, they behave with perfect manners, like the young boy in *Frühreif* (1874) who politely greets his father on the latter’s name day. Not so in Busch’s picture stories, where young rascals laughingly court danger and mock their adult victims, momentarily prevailing over adult domination and becoming what Shields calls “active, joyful participants in the carnival of life” (120) before their expected comeuppance.

While fewer in number, Busch’s girl characters routinely turn the tables on their elders, from little Julchen who destroys her father’s toilet articles to the adolescent Hermine who explores her nascent sexuality. Only one character, Pious Helene, is fatally punished for her pranks and sexual urges, although Busch is quick to point the finger at the sins of the fathers, the shortcomings of hypocritical guardians and, later on, an impotent husband and opportunistic priest. Missing in Busch’s stories is any reference to school or jokes about “unmarried daughters,” like the foursome seen in the *Fliegende Blätter’s Merkwürdiger Eigensinn* (1860), paraded on leashes by a father who wants to marry them off in one fell swoop (*FB* 33.791: 69). Furthermore, none of the author’s girl characters are physically beaten, unlike examples in the *Fliegende Blätter* that more closely reflect the harsh realities for many girls in real life.

While it is true that nineteenth-century German society felt bound to deter children’s socially unacceptable behaviour, perhaps the problem lies with thin-skinned adults, like Schneider Böck, who rise to the bait; or with hypocritical relatives, like Onkel Nolte, who seek a release from the moral strictures they have placed on their own lives. Indeed, Busch’s adults seem wrapped up in their own world, unable to recognize the pranks of two miscreants like Max and Moritz as a cry for attention and the opportunity to eat on a regular basis, or, in the case of Helene, the prospect of being loved and accepted for who she is. For that reason, I would argue

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132 “‘Lieber Papa! es freut mich sehr, Dich kennen gelernt zu haben!’” (*FB* 60.1495 [1874]: 84).
that, in Busch’s stories, it is the adults, not the children, which pose a collective threat to society.

Regardless of the severity of the prank or the degree of misbehaviour, the adult response is generally unforgiving, often bordering on the bloodthirsty. Granted, the pranks in the author’s stories are meant to cause pain, like the pea- and dart-shooting incidents that were also seen in real life, both in the runup to the French Revolution (Schaumann) and the revolution of 1848 (Busch, Schambach), suggesting that the perpetrators may be responding to “something in the air.” But, the fact that the adults often “explode” and mete out punishment well in excess of the severity of the deed suggests that they, too, are held captive to frustrations so deeply felt that a single incident can set them off. It is no secret that citizens like those in Busch’s stories, frustrated by the stalemate in political and social reform, took to the streets, only to be met with failure. Yet, as German society knuckled under renewed government repression after the revolution and retreated to the old Biedermeier rules of conduct for men, women, and children, there is every indication that they chafed under the restrictions. Adults may not have been able to give vent to their frustrations in real life, but by showing children in acts of mischief and even destruction, Busch seems to have provided his readers with a way of reliving their revolutionary impulses, while simultaneously punishing the youngsters for their forbidden behaviour. By reducing his figures to their essential meaning through humorous caricature, the author allows his readers to both identify and, perhaps, chuckle along with the actions of his miscreant heroes, making them far less threatening than their more realistic counterparts in the Fliegende Blätter.

But, children are not the only characters capable of fomenting Bosheit and social disorder in Busch’s picture stories. Animals also turn lives topsy-turvy through acts of mischief and malice as they hint at an unsettling Darwinian interconnectedness of the species, albeit in cartoon form, as I shall examine in chapter 4.
As one of the mainstays of world upside down, anthropomorphized animals have appeared in art, carnival, and diverse forms of literature throughout the ages in order to comment on existing power structures, provide moral instruction, and criticize human behaviour. Thus, in the remaining fragments of the *Satirical Papyri* (c. 1300–664 BC), created in ancient Egypt during the political unrest of the Nineteenth Dynasty (Brunner-Traut 27), we see a *Verkehrtheit des Schlaraffenlandes* (“utopian world upside down,” 25), where an ibex and a lion play a game of chess and docile cat servants wait hand and foot on Dame Mouse. Moral guidance is provided by the animal heroes of the fables popularized by Aesop (c. 620–564 BC), like the disheartened fox that feigns disinterest in a bunch of grapes that remains tantalizingly out of reach.

Anthropomorphism is also evident in anecdotes based on contemporaneous humour (Scripture, carnivalesque fabliaux, and beast epics), which were widely heard in the thirteenth-century sermons of Dominican priests in order to prevent the attention of parishioners from wandering (Randall 7). Moreover, themes popularized by fabliaux and exempla make their way into

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133 Described by Emma Brunner-Traut as “die ältesten illustrierten Witzblätter der Welt” (“the oldest illustrated joke sheets in the world”), the fragments show animals performing human activities that go against their natural grain in order to highlight the extreme social conditions and inequities at the time they were created (4). For example, the London fragment (*British Museum*, c. 1100 BC) portrays an ibex and a lion playing chess, a jackal shepherding a herd of goats to a tune on the oboe, and a cat driving a gaggle of geese with a stick (4). The Turin fragment (*Museo Egizio*, 1292–1075 BC) shows a meerkat, a crocodile, a lion, and a donkey playing wind and stringed instruments while, in the space below, mice storm the castle of a cat (4). Finally, the Cairo fragment (*Egyptian Museum*, c. 1300–664 BC) illustrates a quiet domestic scene, where cat-servants offer a drink to Dame Mouse, style her hair, carry her mouse-baby in a sling, and cool her with a large fan (5). For illustrations, see Brunner-Traut fig. 6, 21, 30 (London); fig. 1, 4, 8, 13, 29 (Turin); fig. 2, 18 (Cairo); also Prisse D’Avennes 71 (London).

134 As secular parodies that invert from “top to bottom,” emphasizing the human body and its “animal” functions (RW 11, 15, 18), *Fabliaux* (fr. singular *fabliau*, m.) are lewd comic tales involving examples of animalization. Thus, a wife is transformed into a mare that demands her “oats” from her husband: “Si me diras: / ‘Biais freres douz, / Faites Moriaus ait de l’avainne’” [If you tell me: / Lovely sweet brother, / Give the mare her oats”]. See Levy 58.

135 Beast epics are allegorical tales in which animal heroes mock human foibles (Cuddon 77–78).

136 *Exempla* (lat. sing. *exemplum*, n.) are defined as short narratives that illustrate a moral, particularly in mediaeval sermons. Examples include Chaucer’s *The Pardoner’s Tale* (i.e., dangers of greed through the sale of indulgences) and *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale* (i.e., tradition of Chanticleer and the Fox), both c. 1390s (Cuddon 294).
illustrated manuscripts, with crossbow-armed hares atop castle walls shooting arrows at human invaders, the Lamb of God in Mediaeval knight’s dress defeating the agents of evil,\(^{137}\) and the scheming Reynard the Fox (or Reinhart Fuchs) duping his fellow courtiers and demonstrating human behaviours to avoid.\(^{138}\) Linked to both virtue and vice, animals masquerading as humans can also be found on misericords (carvings on the underside of wooden choir-stall seats), with dogs representing fidelity, and apes the devil and wanton sensuality (Gall 262) as part of the age-old tradition of *singeries* or “monkey tricks.”\(^ {139}\) In later centuries, Grandville (*Jean-Ignace-Isidore Gérard*, 1803–47) criticizes human indolence in *Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux* (1841/42), with its pipe-smoking lizards lazing about in the sun (*NC* 232, fig. 11.1, 241; also *FW* 1103, fig. 44). Yet, despite their role of sanctioned subversion, anthropomorphic depictions of animals that strayed too close to political reality or appeared to advocate social revolution were censored by reactionary rulers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as demonstrated by the suppression of various cat-and-mouse broadsheets during the revolutionary period in Europe.\(^ {140}\)

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\(^{137}\) In *The Lamb Defeating the Ten Kings*, the knightly ovine hero decapitates his enemies in a Last Judgement battle. The miniature is found on a leaf from *Beatus of Liébana, Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Spain, c. 1200–50 (Morrison 39).

\(^{138}\) In *Border with Reynard the Fox* from the *Smithfield Decretals*, France, c. 1300–50, the silver-tongued hero plays tricks on his fellow courtiers – Bruin the Bear, Baldwin the Ass, and Tibert the Cat – and escapes punishment, despite their repeated complaints to the lion-ruler, King Noble (Morrison 61).

\(^{139}\) For example, one misericord at the *Magdeburger Dom* portrays a woman beckoning her faithful dog, thereby frightening the devil that lurks behind her (Magdeburg NB-02), while another at the *Ulmer Münster* shows an ape clasping his rear paw in the shape of a cloven hoof (Ulm 45). See “Magdeburg Dom” and “Ulm Münster.” The monkey-as-devil is seen in works dating back to the *Physiologus* (3–4 AD), with its lavish illustrations and descriptions of animals, birds, and far-fetched creatures. It is also found in mediaeval European literature and primitive folklore (Schenda 138; qtd. in *SW* 160).

\(^{140}\) In Holland, *Kinders wie heeft dit ouyt meer verzonnen, Dat d’Ratten met katten den krijgh begonnen [Children, Who Would Ever Have Imagined This, That the Rats Started the War with the Cats]*, 1725–80, features rodents attacking a cat’s palace from their anchored ship (*Kinders*). In Russia, the lubok print *Мышки кота погребают [How Mice Buried the Cat]*, c. 1760, shows the atheist Peter the Great (1672–1725) pulled to his grave by Old-Believer Boyars disguised as mice (Roatcap, par. 12). Other world-upside-down broadsheets in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia depict mice defending against swarms of cats. See Kunzle, “Bruegel’s” 198n4.
What sets Wilhelm Busch’s picture stories apart from these diverse examples of traditional anthropomorphism is the fact that many of his animal characters are driven by what Peter Bonati has called *Bosheit* (“malice”) coupled with a sense of *Tätigkeit* (“activeness”) that never lets up (*Darstellung* 11). In this regard, they are similar to the fidgety young characters of the previous chapter with whom they share the distinction of “Störer von Ruhe und Ordnung” or “disturbers of peace and order” (Ueding, *Wilhelm* 77; qtd. in *FW* 368). From tiny insects to unruly dogs, animals make it their mission to upset the lives of their victims. But, it is the author’s monkey figures, with their disquieting physical resemblance to people, that take mischievousness to new heights, pointing to what David Kunzle describes as the prevailing Darwinian theories of human and animal hierarchies with power relationships ripe for inversion (*NC* 232). During the time Busch created his stories, the ideas of Charles Darwin (1809–82) were percolating in the German consciousness, championed by the biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) in his illustrated bestseller *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* (1868), although the work met with disapproval from his former teacher, the pathologist Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), who claimed that the hypothesis of evolution remained unproven (Heie 25–31). In fairly short order, the primacy of man in what Arthur O. Lovejoy describes as the “Great Chain of Being,” a hierarchical order suggested by Aristotle, whereby animals were graded according to their “degree of perfection” with man at the top and zoophytes at the bottom (58–59), was thrown into doubt. This unleashed widespread discussion and some uneasiness, particularly with regards to evolution versus teleology and the role of God in nature (94–100). “Teleologie oder Zufall” (“teleology or accident”) became the watchwords of the day (Ajouri 5), with evolution

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141 The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines teleology as the final causes that provide evidence of design or purpose in nature. See “Teleology.”
seen as accidental. Not only did these new theories shed doubt on the prevailing Judeo-Christian thought regarding the divine creation of man with dominion over all animals on earth (Gen. 1: 26), they also raised the oft-disturbing prospect of man’s descent from the apes. Coupled with what Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) described as a strong *Wille zum Leben* (“will to live”) and *Egoismus* (“ego”) motivating man and animal alike, along with a human capacity for *Bosheit*, Busch’s animal characters poke fun at what it meant to be human.\(^4\)

In this chapter, I will explore how Busch’s animal characters turn the human world upside down through the portrayal of various acts of mischief, undermining the premise of the Great Chain of Being. I will start with insects at the bottom of the biological ladder, with their knack for bugging their prey, and continue up the ladder with birds and small mammals, like mice and moles, with their penchant for irritating their co-inhabitants. I will continue with larger mammals, like dogs and foxes, that hound their adversaries, before looking at examples of primates on the upper rungs of the biological ladder – monkeys – that ape human behaviours. Along the way, I will refer to the influences of Schopenhauer and Darwin (with whose works the author was familiar), particularly the interconnectedness of ape and human. By dividing animals into categories and showing the parallels between human and animal behaviours, I aim to demonstrate how the stories reflect what was happening in society after the revolution.

Unlike the catchpenny prints that show anthropomorphic characters organized by theme

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\(^4\) Thus, we read, “Der Egoismus kann zwar zu Verbrechen und Unthaten aller Art führen: aber der dadurch verursachte Schaden und Schmerz Anderer ist ihm bloß Mittel, nicht Zweck, tritt also nur accidentell dabei ein. Der Bosheit und Grausamkeit hingegen sind die Leiden und Schmerzen Anderer Zweck an sich und dessen Erreichen Genuß. Dieserhalb machen jene eine höhere Potenz moralischer Schlechtigkeit aus. Die Maxime des äußersten Egoismus ist: *Neminem juva, imo omnes, si forte conducit* (also immer noch bedingt), *laede* (”Hilf niemandem, vielmehr verletzte alle, wenn es dir gerade nützt”). Die Maxime der Bosheit ist: *Ommes, quantum potes, laede* (“Verletze alle, so sehr du kannst”). See Schopenhauer 200. While the philosopher contends that both man and animal are driven by *Egoismus* (196), he stresses that it is the capacity for *Bosheit* that separates man from the animals, maintaining that all of its manifestations – “Grausamkeit, Betrug, Neid, Übelwollen” (“cruelty, deceit, envy, and ill will”) – require *Vernunft* ‘reason,’ not just *Verstand* ‘understanding’ (196–200). Yet, Busch’s animal characters are motivated by those very emotions. Along with their very real parallels to human behaviour, this suggests that the distance separating man and animal is not as wide as once thought.
in a series of unconnected illustrations on the same page, each representing an individual motif (Kunzle, “Bruegel’s” 198), Busch’s tales feature animal characters in dynamic multi-episodic stories, with each story covering a single theme. Using Carolyn M. Shield’s analogy whereby “the jester and the king interact as equals” (105) in a carnival setting, the author’s animal figures engage with their human adversaries on an equal footing or, on occasion, from a position of superiority, for at least part of the story. Yet, like their juvenile counterparts, animals are reined in or annihilated when they go too far. With that in mind, I will compare and contrast how the author’s anthropomorphic characters differ from those in the Fliegende Blätter and the Münchener Bilderbogen, which take their inspiration from the old catchpenny tradition, like Die verkehrte Welt (MBB 89 [1859], n. pag.). While Busch briefly revisits this tradition in a couple of early stories like Naturgeschichtliches Alphabet (1860),143 he soon abandons it for more wellrounded animal characters. In the end, I will demonstrate that there is more than biology behind Busch’s monkey business, underscoring Kunzle’s assertion that “the wicked animal or child stands for the political and social rebel” in the author’s stories (NC 252). Indeed, Busch’s animal characters seem to fight a proxy war against political repression and resuscitated Biedermeier order, suggesting that the flames of rebellion had not been completely extinguished.

Buzzing Insects and Busy Bees

In Die Fliege (1861),144 a housefly buzzes gaily around the ear of Herr Inspektor (“Mr. Inspector”) as he takes his afternoon siesta. The “wicked” and “shameless” creature lights on the bald pate of its victim, causing him to let loose with a series of comical rhyming insults: “Die böse Fliege! Seht, nun hat se [sic] / Sich festgesetzt auf seiner Glatze. / ‘Wart’ nur, du unverschämtes Thier! / Anitzo aber komm’ ich dir!!” (FW 133–34.7–10; ital. mine). Catching

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the fly as it lands on his coffee cup (135, illus. 7), he cruelly pulls off one of its legs, yet the insect buzzes off without a care: “Surr! – Da! – Sie ist schon wieder frei, / Ein Bein, das ist ihr einerlei” (136.17–18). Grabbing his fly swatter, the inspector takes aim and misses, knocking over a chair (137, illus. 12). Unperturbed, the insect flutters “happily” about (“Die Fliege flattert froh umher,” 137.24; ital. mine) before the victim finally delivers the coup de grâce. With the fly’s once-joyful abandon now transferred to him – “Und fröhlich sieht er das Insekt” (138.27; ital. mine), the inspector grinds the tiny corpse underfoot, a victim of its festive carnival over-familiarity (RW 16) with its human host (139, illus. 15).

We see the same gay abandon and grotesque ending of the insect-hero in Der Schnuller (1863),145 where a huge wasp, driven by desire for the sugar in Little Willi’s soother, lurks nearby as Grandmother hangs out the washing (FW 195, illus. 2). But, the family puppies Schnupp (“Sniffer”) and Schnapp (“Snapper”) get there first, the former grabbing the “süße Beute”146 from the toddler’s mouth and the latter licking the sweetness from his howling lips (197.9, illus. 6). As the two puppies tussle over the prize with the wasp perched atop, the insect delivers a decisive sting on Schnapp’s muzzle, causing both dogs to abandon their quest (201, illus. 14). With “contentment,” the wasp savours its triumph over humans and mammals alike:

![Image](image-url)

**Fig. 51. Der Schnuller (1863). FW 202.29–32, illus 15, 16; FB 38.923 (1863): 86, illus. 17**

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146 The word Beute, f., puns on the notion of the soother as sweet “bounty” for the sugar-crazy wasp, and Magazin-Beute, f., the technical name of the removable wooden beehive box that slides in and out of the hive to allow for the easy handling of the honeycombs. By extension, Beute came to mean the hive itself (DW 1: 1750, def. 2).
Its victory is short-lived, however, when Grandmother’s besom delivers a crushing blow and sweeps away its broken body. In the Fliegende Blätter version of the tale, the fly is shown resting in pieces, its obliteration now complete.

The insects’ destruction, portrayed close up in all of its gory detail, has the reader asking if there is some deeper meaning to both stories. After all, neither insect inflicts any real pain on its human foe. According to Kunzle, insects came to be seen in the nineteenth century as an essential element of the Great Chain of Being (NC 233). In Busch’s picture stories, he adds, they are individualized as their menace spreads, becoming an economic burden for farmers as well as disturbing the inner sanctum of their victims (233). In larger terms, the annihilation of pesky insects may have helped readers of the era, the sting of the failed revolution still fresh in their minds, to act out little fantasies of revenge without fear of consequences.

We see a similar outcome in Der Floh (1862),147 where a slumbering citizen, awakened by the attentions of a bothersome flea, kills it in the flame of his candle before going back to bed (FW 182, illus. 17, 18). Yet, insects do more than plague citizens in the safety of their homes. To that end, a procession of ants “persecutes” (“verfolgt”) the artist in Der kleine Maler mit der großen Mappe (1859)148 as he sits atop a rock in front of his canvas, with a paintbrush in one hand and an umbrella in the other to protect himself against the elements. When the artist fails to get rid of the army of ants, even by stomping on them energetically (“durch die energischstigsten Maßregeln nicht beseitigen”), he holds up one of them in full view of the others and roasts it with the lit end of his cigar. Kunzle calls it a “public execution” that, like any “political act,” frightens off the rest of the ant army (NC 234):

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147 First published in 1862 as Die gestörte, aber glücklich wieder errungene Nachtruhe (FB 37.912: 204–06).
148 First published in MBB 248 (1859).
Ein Zug Ameisen verfolgt den mit Studien eifrig beschäftigten Künstler und läßt sich durch die energischsten Maßregeln nicht beseitigen. Endlich statuiert der erzürnte Künstler ein furchtbares Exempel und treibt die Feinde in die Flucht.

Fig. 52. *Der kleine Maler mit der großen Mappe* (1859). *FW* 8–9, illus. 9–11

If we extend the ant metaphor to the German masses that marched on various cities in 1848 and 1849 to demand democracy, only to be brutally repressed, it would seem that they are no better than common pests to be crushed underfoot. This is no carnivalesque situation, with its “life-creating and transforming power” (*PDP* 107; qtd. in Shields 98), but rather the deadly serious result of a revolution gone awry.

By contrast, the heroes of *Schnurriburr oder Die Bienen* (1869) escape retribution as the very embodiment of *Biedermeier* industry, building honeycombs, sweeping out their hive, tending to their young, and serving the queen bee (*FW* 560–62, illus. 2–7). Their owner, Hans Dralle (“John Stolid”),\(^{149}\) is portrayed as a scheming country bumpkin from Wiedensahl (Busch’s birthplace) who sells his once-runtty pig, blown up into a fat porker from numerous bee stings, to an unsuspecting farmer: “‘Wat schert et meck! Hei woll dat jo!’” (“‘Was schert es mich! Er wollte das ja!’,” 568.74; ital. in orig; chap. 2). After Dralle falls asleep waiting for the bees to swarm, the queen bee addresses her subjects in the hive with a sense of urgency:

\[^{149}\text{Hans Dralle’s surname translates as “stolid” or “blundering” (drall, adj.; DW 2: 1331, def. 1; also NC 254).}\]
"Ja wohl!
Kaum sind Kisten und Kasten voll,
Trägt uns der Schelm den Schwefel in's Haus
Und räuchert und bläst uns das Leben aus.
– Kurzum! er ist ein Schwerenöther! –
Ein Honigdieb und Bienentödter! –
Drum auf! und folgt der Königinn [sic]!!"

Fig. 53. Schnurrdiburr oder Die Bienen (1869). FW 572.109–15; 573, illus. 28

She warns them that when the honeycombs are barely full, Dralle will smoke them out of house and home in a cloud of sulphur, calling him a “ladykiller, a honey thief, and a bee killer” (“Schwerenöther! – Ein Honigdieb und Bienentödter!”), and urging the hive to pack up and follow her.

Meanwhile, Dralle’s enterprising petty-bourgeois neighbour, Herr Knörrje (“Mr. Knobbly”), mocks Dralle as he rebuilds two old-fashioned straw hives for his escaped bees (588, illus. 55), touting the advantages of his own modern-day system with moveable combs:

“‘Mein lieber Freund, das ist zum Lachen; / Ableger, Nachbar, müßt Ihr machen; / So habt Ihr, ehe man’s gedacht, / Aus einem Stocke zwei gemacht; / Ableger, Freund, das heißt Methode!!’” (591.227–31; chap. 5). Dralle refuses to be persuaded by his neighbour’s “newfangled”

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150 According to the old system of beekeeping, observe Hans Ries et al., the keeper destroyed the entire colony by subduing the bees with smoke and demolishing the honeycombs containing their eggs and larvae. Busch, an amateur beekeeper along with his uncle Georg Kleine (1806–97), portrays this more traditional method in his tale, even though it had already been replaced with the modern moveable-comb hive system whereby the old queen bee was separated from the swarm and encouraged to lay eggs (FW 591, 1058).

151 With regards to Knörrje’s name, Ries et al. believe that Busch plays on the adjectives knorrig and the closely related knotig (“knobbly”), with reference to the cane (“Knotenstock”) that Knörrje uses on his young nephew Eugen’s rear-end when he catches him planting a smooch on the lips of his love, Christine. The editors base their conclusion on the fact that the beekeeper’s name appears as Knorrje in the first printings of the story (FW 578).
nonsense: “Adje! Dat is de nië Mode!!” (“‘Adieu! Das ist die neue Mode!!’,” 591.232; ital. in orig.; see FW 1298). What he does not realize is that his neighbour covets both his bees and his daughter, the comely Christine. While Dralle fights a rearguard action and pursues the swarming bees over the course of more than one hundred panels, Knörrje entraps a thief making off with one of Dralle’s two new empty hives (616, illus. 106; chap. 9), while Christine ambushes a bear, anxious to get its paws on the nonexistent honey inside the other hive (618, illus. 110).

From the prenuptial swarming of the bees to the sweet ambrosia created from floral nectar, it would seem that love is in the air. As he gives his blessing to Knörrje and Christine’s union at the end of the tale, Dralle basks in the adulation of the townsfolk who cheer what they believe to be his role in the capture of the bear and thief (624, illus. 122), enabling him, as Friedrich Bohne observes, to save face as he surrenders both his daughter and his livelihood to his neighbour (GA 2: 80). Dralle’s runaway swarm of bees, on the other hand, returns to his garden to celebrate the carnivalesque wedding of their queen and a new drone, accompanied by a Grandvillean insect orchestra (NC 256), with trumpet, clarinet, drum, and violin, that sets the tiny feet of the insect-guests, from an assortment of bees to partying May bugs, in motion:

Schon sitzen im hohen Rosensaal
Die Königinn [sic] und der Prinz Gemahl.

Zing, zing! traromm! – und auf der Stelle
Erönnen die Klänge der Hofcapelle.

Fig. 54. Schnurrdiburr oder Die Bienen (1869). FW 626.401–02, illus. 124; 627.405–06, illus. 126
With two brand-new hives, the bees’ triumph is complete. Will Dralle treat them better next time, or will they decamp next door for more promising work conditions in Knörrje’s innovative hives? Plainly, Dralle’s bees, with their embodiment of the Biedermeier virtues of order and hard work, can be seen as Knörrje’s natural companions. Both are stand-ins for the Mittelstand or new owner-driven petty bourgeoisie in Germany, what James J. Sheehan has called a “social and moral category driven by hard work and thriftiness” (GL 26–32).

By comparison, many of the insects appearing on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter labour under captions so exaggerated as to merit the description of Kalauer (“corny jokes”), for which the magazine was widely known. In Die klugen Fliegen (1867), for example, we see houseflies in petty-bourgeois costume, surrounding a pot of flypaper adhesive at the apothecary:

An off-frame father comments that the flypaper is completely useless because he does not notice any fewer flies, whereupon Karlchen responds that the flies would be foolish not to be careful, given that the label on the pot reads Fliegengift (“fly poison”) in large letters. In the above panel

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**Fig. 55.** Die klugen Fliegen (1867). FB 47.1161: 119

**Fig. 56.** 8 Arten des Scarabaens explodens militaris (1873). FB 59.1475: 132
8 Arten des Scarabaeens explodens militaris (1873), we see a visual and verbal pun on the military might of eight representatives of the brachinus explodens (“Bombadier beetle”), a species known for the audible expulsion of a noxious and foul-smelling compound to fend off enemies. Standing erect and dressed in military uniforms of different ranks, each beetle is labelled with a scientific-looking Latin and German name (e.g., Scar. expl. emeritus/Sergeantenkafer or “Sergeant beetle”). One may admire the originality of the images and clever labels, and even recognize the risk of poking fun at an entity as feared and respected as the military, but there is no denying that these images lack the vitality of Busch’s.

Rodent Madness

Moving up the biological ladder, Busch’s rodent characters prove themselves to be master tacticians, nibbling away at the pretensions of their human co-habitants. Thus, in Die Maus (1860),\(^\text{152}\) the hero of the story awakens a peasant couple from their peaceful slumber. Both Mr. and Mrs. Fischer go into full defensive mode, arming themselves with a switch and an open umbrella to drive off the creature (FW 30–31, illus. 2, 4). After the husband entraps it in his nightcap and shakes it into the rain barrel (32–33, illus. 6, 7), the mouse escapes through a hole in the bottom and runs free until the wife captures it in her apron (34, illus. 9). When her mate attempts to drown it in the washbasin, the quick-thinking mouse nips his outstretched thumb and makes its escape (34, illus. 10). At his wits’ end, the husband swats at it with his switch, upending washbasin, candlestick, and stand, and sending his wife tumbling to the floor (35, illus. 11). In the last panel, we see a close-up of the grinning mouse thumbing its nose with an sarcastic adieu: “Ich hab’ die Ehre mich ganz gehorsamst / zu empfehlen Herr und Madame Fischer!” (35). In this carnivalesque inversion of social hierarchies, it is the lowly mouse that

\(^\text{152}\) The picture story first appeared without captions as Die gestörte Nachtruhe: Eine europäische Zeitgeschichte in 12 Bildern (FB 33.783 [1860]: 6–7). It was subsequently published with captions in MBB 278 (1860). See FW 1038.
mocks the host couple with flowery language normally used by subjects to address their social betters. Adding insult to injury is the fact that the human victims are simple peasants, the “lowest of the low” in terms of contemporaneous German society.

In “Der Sack und die Mäuse” (Stippstörchen für Aeuglein und Oehrchen, 1880), we see another example of this world upside down, where a group of mice flatters a sack of grain shaped like a corpulent ruler: “‘Oh, du da in der Ecke, / großmächtigster der Säcke! / Du bist ja der Gescheidste, / der Dickste und der Breitste! / Respekt und Reverenz / vor Eurer Exzellenz!’” (SW 288.5–10). With that, one of them gnaws a hole in the sack, allowing all to partake of the grain as it spills onto the floor:

After emptying the sack, the sated mice drag it off its perch and sarcastically bow before it with a disdainful salute: “‘Empfehle mich, Herr Habenichts!’” (289.24). To use Bakhtin’s analogy, the once-powerful sack, like a carnival king, is deflated when its rule is over, suffering a literal

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The expression Stippstörchen, n., is a tautology that translates as “little story” (Stipp, m., or Stippe, f., means “little thing,” while Störchen is the abbreviated form of Histörchen, n., or “little story,” Küpper 802). The noun also appears in Low German as Stippstörken, n., as early as 1781 in Dähnerts Platt-Deutschem Wörterbuch (SW 282). These little stories seem to point to some of the larger inequities between the classes in post-revolutionary Germany.
change of costume and turning into a literal “have-not” in its ultimate uncrowning (RW 197). The effect is heightened in the author’s Bilderschriften (“illustrated manuscript”), where the hand-lettered verse is accompanied by six illustrations with grain-collecting, munching, laughing, and dancing mice (213–14, illus. 2, 3), thereby enhancing the story by providing something “for eye and ear,” as the title of the story (Stippstörchen für Auglein und Oehrchen) promises. A play on the German Volk (“common people”), “das schlaue Volk der Mäuse” (“sly mouse folk,” 288.3) are shown as victorious, overturning the ruling order. This may be wishful thinking. Many of their human counterparts from the lower rural classes were shut out of the post-revolutionary market because of agricultural overproduction, as Blackbourn has noted, adding that the urban working poor also lived a “pay cheque away from disaster” (144, 167). In essence, Busch points to some of the inequalities in post-revolutionary society, while allowing the “little man and woman” to vicariously express their desire for power and self-determination.

Similarly, the mouse hero of Katze und Maus of the Bilderposen (1864) series bests its natural enemy, the family tomcat, by jumping into the leg of a hanging pair of trousers, exiting through the cuff, and taking refuge in an old boot (FW 282–83, illus. 4–7). As the determined cat follows the speedy mouse and gets its head stuck in the opening of the boot, the critter escapes through a hole in the toe (284, illus. 8). After the cook and his wife pull the cat from the boot with much effort and upset, the husband pushes the door shut on the deserving cat, wedging and folding it in the process: “Der Kater, der’s verdient gehabt, / Wird eingeklemmt und abgeklappt” (288–89.27–28). With carnivalesque joy, the mouse hero’s friends dance around the old boot with their ring leader atop (290–91, illus. 17), providing an amusing visual portrayal of the old saw: “Wenn die Katze aus dem Haus ist, tanzen die Mäuse.” But, has order been actually restored? The mouse may have squeaked past its traditional enemy, but will the cook and his
wife long for the return of their natural ally once the mice have taken over the household? In
terms of post-revolutionary history, the cheering mice are not unlike the members of the “urban
mob and ‘the proletariat’” (Blackbourn 114), many of whom once took to the streets to claim
more equality and to whom the liberal classes feared giving more power (Siemann 122).

Compare the fate of Busch’s slippery mouse characters to that of the mole in “Der Maulwurf” (Dideldum! 1874) that upsets the sprouting vegetable beds of Gärtner Knoll ("Gardener Tuber," fig. "Clump"),
thereby degrading or throwing dirt on his efforts. His mild irritation grows into a murderous rage as he spies a molehill (RZ 548, illus. 2), prompting him to take up his hoe and let the perpetrator have it: “Schnell eilt er fort und holt die Hacke, / Daß er den schwarzen Wühlern packe” (549.5–6). As he hacks away at the culprit, in a nineteenth-century version of the carnival game of whac-a-mole, his concentration momentarily ruined by a neighbour who shoots at the sparrows in his trees (552, illus. 9), Gärtner Knoll regroups and takes a mighty swing with his “Jagdgeräth” (“hunting implement,” 550.10), demolishing his beloved pear tree in the process. Continuing the hunt with his trusty spade (554, illus. 12, 13), he stealthily approaches the molehill, only to be startled by a passing “Bettelmusikantenchor” ("beggar’s orchestra," 555.30) playing loud wind instruments. After chasing off the musicians, Gärtner Knoll renews his attack. In the effort of freeing from his spade the clump of earth containing the mole, he loses his balance and falls backwards, spearing his rear-end on the teeth of an upturned rake (557, illus. 19, 20). Enraged, he catches the mole by the tail and bashes it to death on the ground. The grotesque scene possesses a “hostile, alien, and inhuman” quality (RW

Among the several meanings of Knoll, m., are the abnormally large bony protuberances on the hands and feet, with derivations in knorren, knoten, knöbel, and knaußt (DW 11: 1465, def. 2.3). Knolle, m. (“knoll”), is also defined as an Erdscholle, f. (“clump of earth,” Schambach 509; qtd. in DW 11: 1465, def. 2.4), and, by extension, is the botanical term for the fruit of the potato plant.

For comments on the annual Spatzensteuer, f., or “sparrow tax” levied in eighteenth-century Bavaria and Austria, see chap. 3, p. 103n115.
47), rather than a “a more or less funny monstrosity” (50–51; qtd. in Shields 107):

Even though the damage and pain are self-inflicted, Gärtner Knoll refers to his small opponent as an “Ungethier” (553.21) and “schwarz[er] Bösewicht” (559.47). Perhaps, the “monster” and “evildoer” could well be found within, if the gardener were only to take a look in the mirror?

The same brutality can be seen in Busch’s poem “Ein Maulwurf” from the Zu guter Letzt (1904) series. Here, we read that a mole has decided to retreat from the noise of the world by burrowing deeper, seeking out the finest worms and larvae, and taking great pride in its expanding waistline. With no one to notice its magnificence (“Nur schad, ihn und sein Sammetkleid / Sah niemand in der Dunkelheit,” Hochhut 2: 613.23–24), it builds a molehill-temple to seal its glory and reputation. This feat of engineering attracts the attention of the resident gardener, a man with different sensibilities, who extracts the mole and snuffs it out with a blow above the ear: “Und haut so derb ihn übers Ohr, / Daß er den Lebensgeist verlor” (2: 613.39–40). By exhibiting a world-upside-down self-regard based on petty-bourgeois values and aspirations, the mole succeeds in creating a bucolic idyll for itself. By failing to keep its head down, however, it invites in the forces of the outside world, with fatal results.
In contrast to Busch’s deeper symbolism, the handful of anthropomorphized rodents in the *Fliegende Blätter* illustrate a corny, one-dimensional moral that states the obvious. In *Ein gerechtes Bedenken* (1859), for example, a group of jubilant mice celebrates the impotence of the family cat, thanks to the jingling collar of bells that one mouse has placed around the cat’s neck, although another mouse wisely reminds the group that its troubles are far from over, given that new cats are always waiting in the wings (*FB* 31.731: 6). In *Lebensweisheit* (1870), Mutter Maus lectures her young son against the “Krallen” or “claws” (i.e., *pars pro toto* for roaming cats) to be found outside their home, while Vater Maus counsels his son to “wagen oder – verhungern,” underscoring the importance of living dangerously or dying of hunger (*FB* 52.1278: 13). Rodents (and insects) can even become the stuff of nightmares, where daytime activities fuel unsettling dreams. Thus, in *Manövertraum eines einquartirten Lieutenants* (1879) by Busch contemporary Adolf Oberländer (1845–1923), a sleeping lieutenant is targeted by a mouse-artillery, armed with cannons, as infantry lines of bed bugs, lice, and fleas make their way up the bed covers. Above is a flying orchestra of mosquitoes with musical instruments, while a group of naval-officer cockroaches with telescopes surveys the ongoing operations from the bedside table:

Fig. 59. *Manövertraum eines einquartirten Lieutenants* (1879). *FB* 70.1745: 2
Here, we see humorous evidence of what Gordon Craig has called the progressive militarization of German life after the unification in 1871, in which military values permeated all facets of life (239). By contrast, Busch largely avoids overt references to political events in his picture stories, focusing instead on the everyday tensions of private life following the revolution.

**Birds of a Feather**

In addition to insects and rodents, Busch’s bird characters flock together to punish human folly. Thus, in *Der hinterlistige Heinrich* (1864),\(^{156}\) the deceitful boy of the title seeks to attract geese in the pond, using as bait the pretzel\(^{157}\) his indulgent mother has just given him: “Der böse Heinrich denkt sich gleich: ‘Jetzt fang’ ich Gänse auf dem Teich’” (*FW* 398.3–4), the cheerful meter standing in contrast with his dark intentions. As he triumphantly snatches a gosling from its family, the miscreant is pecked by its goose and gander parents, relieved of his pretzel, hoisted up into the air by the ears, and dropped headfirst through the chimney into his mother’s scalding hot pot of soup:

![Image of Heinrich tricking geese with pretzel and being punished](image)

The birds have the last laugh as they share Heinrich’s pretzel with delight: “Die Gänse aber voll 
Ergötzen / Verzehren Heinrichs braune Bretzen” (403.23–24).

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\(^{156}\) First published in *MBB* 361 (1864).

\(^{157}\) Busch’s inspiration comes from Heinrich Hoffmann’s *Struwwelpeter* (1845), “Die Geschichte von den schwarzen Buben,” where three boys, one toting a pretzel, hassle a passing Moor and are dunked by Saint Nicholas into his inkpot as punishment (11).
Unlike the gullible chickens and rooster that fall for the old trick of chunks of bread tied together by string, courtesy of the street-smart Max and Moritz, the astute geese see right through Heinrich’s ploy and quickly gain the upper beak. We know that Heinrich comes from a family of means, as seen by his pretty ruffled collar and fancy trousers (398, illus. 1), and that he has enough to eat, given his readiness to torment geese with what is for him an expendable treat. So, perhaps he has not earned his right to a successful prank, which is why his attempt backfires. But, look again and we see a fashionable handkerchief, with the appearance of an animal tail, sticking out between the boy’s legs, linking him squarely to the animal world with its uncontrollable urges and base motivations. As such, Heinrich becomes subject to the “laws of the jungle,” whereby he is chastised by the clever goose pair like a disobedient gosling.

Interestingly, Heinrich’s mother answers his mischief with silence, suggesting that she is part of the “anti-corporal-punishment” brigade that was all the rage during the latter part of the nineteenth century, or that she leaves the punishment to the boy’s father as head of the family.

With Hans Hückebein, der Unglücksrabe (1867), Schopenhauer’s combination of Lebensdrang und bösen Willen (“drive to live and evil intent”) makes its first appearance (Pape, Wilhelm 39; qtd. in FW 1468) in Busch’s animal characters. Despite his wild nature, the raven-hero of the tale is portrayed as human-like (Bonati, Darstellung 139; qtd. in FW 1465), driven by the Tätigkeit und Bosheit that characterizes Busch’s young human troublemakers. As the story begins, Fritz is is shown picking berries under a tree, when all of a sudden he spies Hans Hückebein (“John Gammy-Leg”), on a branch above. Abandoning his basket, he stalks and captures the bird and presents it to his Tante Lotte, who declares that Hans is “good,” that is, until he bites her outstretched finger, causing her pain:

159 Hückebein, n., is a regional variant of Hinkebein, n., or “gammy leg” (DW 10: 1444).
Die Tante kommt aus ihrer Thür;  
“Ach!” – ruft sie – “er ist doch nicht gut!  
”Ei!” – spricht sie – ‘welch’ ein gutes Thier!”  
Weil er mir was zu Leide thut!!”

Fig. 61. Hans Huckebein, der Unglücksrabe (1867). FW 498.19–20, illus. 10; 499.23–24, illus. 12

Hans’s carnivalesque gaiety and mockery of the household hierarchy continues over several panels as he taunts and tortures the domestic cat and dog (500–05, illus. 13–24), tramples on freshly ironed clothes with jam-smeared toes (507, illus. 28), and upends the house, breaking dishes and eggs, and spilling beer (508–09, illus. 29–31), before eyeing a glass of liqueur and slurping it down (512, illus. 37–38). Tottering unsteadily on his feet, the drunken raven tugs “with raw delight and mischief” at a strand of yarn, undoing Tante Lotte’s knitting and wrapping it around his neck, whereupon he slips and hangs himself, a victim of his own “fowl play”:

Er zerrt voll roher Lust und Tücke  
Der Tisch ist glatt – der Böse taumelt –  
Der Tante künstliches Gestricke.   
Das Ende naht – sieh’ da! er baumelt!

Fig. 62. Hans Huckebein, der Unglücksrabe (1867). FW 516.91–92, illus. 46; 517.93–94, illus. 47

If the story is read as a fable, observe Hans Ries et al., the raven can be said to represent
the “basest” behaviours in which children take the utmost delight, from cantankerousness and gluttony to malice: “Streitsucht, Zänkerei, Freßlust, Besitztrieb, gepaart mit Dieberei, aber auch Naschhaftigkeit, Unreinlichkeit, Zerstörungswut, kurz ‘Bosheit,’ wie sie sich nur Kinder zum ‘Hauptpläsir’ wählen können” (1468). In the last panel, Tante Lotte blames the demise of the bird on its predilection for malice: “‘Die Bosheit war sein Hauptpläsier, / Drum’ – spricht die Tante – ‘hängt er hier!!’” (517.95–96). Accompanied by her wagging finger, her aphorism is meant to ensure that young Fritz understands the likely consequences of misbehaving. With eyes shut in a saintly pose and the hint of a smirk, the young lad pretends to hang on her every word (Cremer 59; Mihr 129–30; qtd. in FW 1472). In reality, Hans only does what comes naturally, exploring his new surroundings, as any smart and curious bird would do, and defending himself against unwelcome aggressors. Indeed, we should not forget that it was Tante Lotte who provoked him in the first place by deliberately sticking out her finger at him and later attempting to spear him with a fork, causing him to bite her on the nose (511, illus. 35, 36). Thus, her declaration “Die Bosheit war sein Hauptpläsier” is another facet of the Biedermeier order of Busch’s pictures stories, according to which men, women, children, and, in this case, even wild birds taken in as household pets were expected to follow strict rules of conduct. The irony is that the moral and social order of this imagined idyllic time had already been overturned, pecked away at by the forces of the time like a cornered bird.

Compare the spirited Hans with his two raven counterparts in the Fliegende Blätter’s Nothwendige Folge (1877), one an accused thief disguised as a bespectacled “old woman” with a bonnet and the other a lawyer in a morning coat with top hat in hand, at a loss as to why his client has been brought to trial twelve times running:
The thief blames his recidivism on genetics, based its bad reputation in mythology and literature, a questionable characterization that the naturalist Alfred Brehm (1829–84), the author of the widely consulted *Thierleben* (1864–69) series, lays squarely at the doorstep of mankind (3: 343–46; *FW* 1464). The disguised ravens have none of Hans’s complexity of character, with his childish delight in creating mischief, and his biting response to adult aggression. Rather, with their silly anthropomorphic get-ups and weak dialogue, they embody bird-brained clichés.

**Playing the Goat**

As if Busch’s needling insects, pesky rodents, and nose-tweaking birds did not create enough misery for their human victims, randy goats take a run at human posteriors as they upend personal dignity. In *Adelens Spaziergang* (1864), the story starts off innocently enough as Adele, a haut-bourgeois spinster dressed inappropriately – for an outing in the countryside – in a

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160 First published in *MBB* 376 (1864).
bustle cage crinoline,¹⁶¹ picks forget-me-nots in a meadow. All at once, she is surprised by “ein grüner, nasser, [e]rschrecklich großer Frosch (“a green, wet, and horribly large frog”, FW 405.5–6) and swoons onto the grass, before painful bites delivered by an army of ants marching toward her nether regions cause her to leap up (405, illus. 4). As she makes her escape, she encounters what the narrator calls “Hund, Hirt und Heerde” [sic] (“hound, herdsman, and herd,” 408–09.17), with its humorous triple alliteration reminiscent of early idyllic German poetry (Stabreim). But, the idyll is not what it seems. After the herd’s rambunctious billy goat mistakes Adele’s voluminous skirt for a rival and charges her from the rear, he snags his horns on the stays of her crinoline and yanks it free (407–09, illus. 8, 9), causing her to cover her face in shame and swoon once more. As the shepherd lifts her up, a cheerful stork takes advantage of the confusion by swooping down to retrieve the now-ownerless crinoline as a nest, to the delight of the sheep:

Der Schäfer trägt Adelen fort;    Schnapp! faßt der Storch die Krinoline
Ein Storch kommt auch an diesen Ort.   Und fliegt davon mit froher Miene.

Fig. 64. Adelens Spaziergang (1864). FW 408–09.19–20, illus. 10; 410.21–22, illus. 11

Gert Ueding has called the story a Sexualposse (“sexual prank,” Buschs 28), given the presence of the frog, the ants that “unsittlich belästigt[en]” (“immorally molest,” Wilhelm 298)

¹⁶¹ Revived by the Empress Eugenia (1826–1920) at the court of her husband, Napoleon III (1808–73), the hartnäckig florierende Krinolinenmode (“intractable flourishing crinoline fashion”) was the subject of many strips in the Fliegende Blätter from 1845 on (FW 404–05). For examples, see Naturgeschichte (FB 1.20 [1845]: 160), Die Crinoline als Barometer (FB 46.1140 [1867]: 157), and Konstruktionsfehler (FB 53.1305 [1870]: 21).
her, and the presence of the traditional baby-delivering stork that makes off with her crinoline (qtd. in FW 1391). Ries et al. refute what they call a “typically twentieth-century interpretation,” pointing out that suggestive material would not have appeared in the family-oriented Münchener Bilderbogen, where the story was first published (1391). Joseph Kraus adds that there is nothing remotely sexy about Adele, as she is portrayed as “mehr Brett als Lustobjekt” (i.e., “flat as a board,” lit. “more board than object of desire”) and hence unattractive (Rev. 74; qtd. in FW 408–09, illus. 9). However, I believe that there is more at play than a simple frolic in the countryside.

The very accumulation of erotic symbolism, from the ants given free access to Adele’s limbs and private parts (made even more accessible by the large opening in the her skirts), and the frog with its slimy secretions, to the randy goat and the stork that makes off with her crinoline, all contribute elements of “sexiness” to the story. Furthermore, Adele’s repeated attacks of the vapours seem to be indicative of a distancing from matters of sex as befitting a “delicate” Biedermeier lady. The shepherd, for his part, observes the unfolding scene between goat and damsel with amused interest (406, illus. 6). With the growing number of urbanites who flocked to the imagined idyll of the countryside during weekend trips (Blackbourn 230), nineteenth-century peasants like the shepherd were compelled to put up with unwelcome intruders on their turf. Hence, it is not unimaginable that he, like his smiling sheep, takes some sort of pleasure in the comeuppance of Adele, whose squeamishness about rural life promises to enliven conversation around his rustic dinner table.

The enjoyment at viewing another’s discomfort in unfamiliar surroundings is also seen in Balduin Bählamm, der verhinderte Dichter (1883), where the nanny goat of Rieke Mistelfink (“Frederica Mistle Finch”) attacks the petty-bourgeois poet for his improper advances toward its
mistress (SW 467, illus. 62; chap. 6). It is also evident in “Kühlung” from the Hernach\textsuperscript{162} series (1908), where the sweaty Professor Schretter (“Professor Gone-Fishing”)\textsuperscript{163} leans down to take a cool drink and joins the fish in the pond after a nanny goat butts him in the posterior:

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Er bückt sich tief, auf daß er Mal tränke, über’s Wasser.
Da kam die Geiß, und bubbs!
Giebt sie ihm einen Schubbs.
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Fig. 65. “Kühlung” (Hernach, 1908). SW 669.110–11, illus. 67; 668.112–13, illus. 68

As the goat’s peasant owner fishes the professor out of the water (her smiling countenance betraying her enjoyment at his predicament), the excited goat runs off (669, illus. 69). Without a doubt, the story serves as yet another humorous metaphor for the tranquility of country life disrupted by intrusive outsiders.

Curiously, the feisty goats of Busch’s tales are absent from the pages of the Fliegende Blätter. However, we do see one servile ram\textsuperscript{164} in Menschen und Thiere (1864), dressed as a butler and holding what looks like a roast of lamb on a tray. The earnest prose of the strip informs us that “we should give thanks above all to the animals with regards to what we offer and put around ourselves,” adding the animal’s chief role is to provide man with hair and wool:

\textsuperscript{162} Up until the eighteenth century, the adverb hernach was a formal synonym for the more conversational nachher (“hereafter,” DW 10: 1115; see also Adelung 2: 1127–28). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the relationship between the formal and informal variants had switched, with hernach assuming a more informal tone (SW 576). The posthumous series Hernach is a group of every-day scenes from German provincial life in which animals and humans illustrate various humorous morals.

\textsuperscript{163} As far as I can determine, Schretter is a homonym of the family name Schrätter, based on the infinitive schrätten ‘to go fishing’ (Schambach 613, def. 2; qtd. in DW 15: 1650). This definition fits the story, where the professor goes fishing, in a manner of speaking, only to be fished out of the pond by the owner of the mischievous nanny goat.

\textsuperscript{164} The animal is identified as a sheep in the text (Schaf., n.), which is the portemanteau term for ram and ewe alike.
In post-revolutionary Germany, the production of woollen fabric and knit goods provided employment opportunities for the new urban working class, many of whom worked for meagre salaries or piece rates (Blackbourn 165), while providing handsome profits for mill owners and merchants. Like the other animal characters in human dress that appear alongside it (e.g., donkey, ox, horse, and goose), the ram is a static figure and a “stand-in” for complacent human behaviours. By contrast, Busch’s figures are always on the move, throwing decorum to the wind.

**Clever Canines**

The author’s lone fox character is a further case in point. In *Der Fuchs* (1881), a peasant wife is about to put a freshly killed chicken in the stockpot, whereupon her husband decides to entice the resident fox into the snare he has set at a hole in the wall (*SW* 303–04, illus. 1, 2). Spying the chicken, the fox asks itself in the tradition of Busch’s child troublemakers, “Was ist zu thun?” (305). With the snare about its neck, the canny hero evades the repeated blows of the axe-wielding farmer by running back and forth through the hole (308–11, illus. 6–9). When the
husband shouts for his wife to spear the fox with her oven fork, her slow reaction time allows the beast to run between her legs, causing the snare to snag her heel and send her crashing to the ground (315, illus. 13). The husband’s equally slow reaction causes him to sever the snare, setting the fox free and allowing it to snatch the chicken and disappear over the horizon:

Fig. 67. *Der Fuchs* (1881). SW 305, illus. 3; 317, illus. 15; 318, illus. 16

Husband and wife blame one another for the loss of the chicken, each using the pithy animal metaphors of “Du dumme Gans!” (“[silly] goose”) and “Schafkopf” (“muttonhead,” lit. “sheep head”) to denote the stupidity of the other (318). We can rest assured that the couple do not use these terms with any fondness, unlike those who, as Bakhtin writes, use “abusive words affectionately” once they are on friendly terms (*RW* 16; qtd. in Shields 110). But, is it really fair to blame animals for one’s own shortcomings? We have already seen how Busch’s geese characters are rather clever, punishing naughty boys for their mischief (*Der hinterlistige Heinrich*) and going so far as to save Schneider Böck (“Tailor Ram”) from the raging brook into

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165 The *Ofengabel*, f. (“oven fork”), was once associated with witchcraft and superstition, with injunctions not to leave it out in the open lest a witch take one *Ortsthaler*, m. (“quarter Thaler”), daily from the household. The oven fork also serves as a means of transportation for witches travelling to the *Blocksberg* during *Walpurgisnacht* in *Faust I*. Qtd. in *DW* 13: 1159.
which he has fallen (*Max und Moritz*). Even the shepherd’s flock smiles in unison as the artful stork flies off with Adele’s enormous crinoline (*Adelens Spaziergang*). Judging from the number of times that Busch’s animal characters trump their human adversaries, the outfoxed peasant and his wife might wish to consider new epithets for describing their own stupidity.

We may think of them as man’s best friend, but the dogs portrayed in Busch’s picture stories are anything but. Working in tandem with their human owners, they appear to possess a sense of humour and, at times, a childlike enjoyment of causing mischief. Thus, in the captionless *Der gewandte, kunstreiche Barbier und sein kluger Hund* (1865), a smarmy-looking barber greets a thick-looking peasant in need of a shave, sits him down, and proceeds to theatrically lather his face (*FW* 420, illus. 1–3). In visual terms, notes Kunzle, the image is a pun based on the German verb *einseifen* (“to soap”), a figurative term for “fleecing” and an old cartoon metaphor (*NC* 275; qtd. in *FW* 1400). As the barber begins to shave his customer, he “accidentally” nicks him, creating a steady arc of blood droplets that are eagerly lapped up by the Clever Dog of the title. A couple of panels later, the barber slices off the tip of the peasant’s nose, much to the dog’s delight as he jumps up to gobble down the morsel:

![Fig. 68. Der gewandte, kunstreiche Barbier und sein kluger Hund (1865). FW 422, illus. 9; 423, illus. 12](image)

The dog seems to know the score – could it be that the barber is actually feeding him? With the

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166 First published in *MBB* 399 (1865).
barber’s open assault on the nose of his client, notes Kunzle, the hapless peasant has been effectively castrated by the “capitalistic economic forces” that caused him to lose land and independence after the revolution (“Art” 75–76; qtd. in FW 1124). Indeed, the release from feudal servitude in post-revolutionary Germany was not without its difficulties, forcing many to move to the cities to find work or to emigrate abroad, leaving the scraps of their former lives to the dogs, in a manner of speaking.

On the other hand, a faithful guard dog protects his master’s provisions from a light-fingered youngster. In *Der Wurstdieb* (1868), Louis, the would-be sausage thief of the title, steals a ring sausage that hangs tantalizingly in his neighbour’s shed, before the resident guard dog Graps (“Grabber”) seizes his jacket with his fangs and “cleverly” pins the lad to the ground: “Doch Graps, der wachsam, zieht ihn wieder / Mit kühnem Griff nach hinten nieder. / Er legt sich klüglich auf die Spitze / Von Louis seiner Zipfelmütze” (*RZ* 28–29.17–20; ital. mine). Meanwhile, the dog rewards himself by devouring the liberated sausage (29, illus. 11). The situation is made humorous by the rhyming couplets that accompany a series of illustrations showing Louis’s repeated and unsuccessful attempts to escape from the clutches of the equally determined Graps. That is, until an ice storm freezes the boy solid (30, illus. 15). As the neighbour carries the “stiff” to the fire to thaw him out, he trips and drops him, causing Louis to smash into pieces (31, illus. 17). As his remains are swept out of the house, Louis serves as a warning to other would-be thieves of tasty victuals. Graps’s conscience is clear, on the other hand, as he has done his job and the sausage has not gone to waste. The watchdog’s correct understanding of his role stands in contrast to the unfortunate misinterpretation of the hero of

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167 Published in *Daheim* 4.33 (1868): 524–25.

168 *Louis* (“Ludwig”) was commonly heard in western Germany throughout the nineteenth century. Used to fit the meter of the story, the name is stressed on the first syllable (ö-i). It is not known if Busch intended the “s” to be audible (*RZ* 26).
Der zu wachtsame Hund (1862),¹⁶⁹ which fends off a good Samaritan attempting to pull its drunken master, Herr Petermann, from the ditch into which he has fallen (FW 151–52, illus. 4–6), only to be chastized by its master once the latter has extricated himself (153, illus. 7). The moral of the story is that, if one goes drinking, one should have a dog that bites neither from the front nor from behind (“[w]as weder vorn noch hinten bitzt,” 153.18), in other words, a less aggressive dog that actually helps its master instead of blindly defending him against all comers. Busch’s dog characters also demonstrate a human capacity for calculated mischief and Schadenfreude, as Schopenhauer once wrote in relation to the propensity of human beings to draw pleasure from another’s hard luck.¹⁷⁰ In “Der Zylinder” (Dideldum!), for example, the background action shows a nondescript dog in the company of his well-dressed master, as he sniffs at Joseph’s rosary, breviary and gloves, placed out of harm’s way on a door stoop, while their owner chases his wind-blown top hat down the street (RZ 585, illus. 9). Lifting his hind leg, the dog directs a stream of urine at the objects both sacred and profane (586, illus. 10). After Joseph rights himself from the muck into which he has fallen headfirst, the proud pooch sniffs admiringly at his achievement (587, illus. 12). As dog and owner stroll nonchalantly away from the scene of the crime, the dog turns his head to grin conspiratorially at the reader, while his victim brings up the rear, with ruined possessions held at arm’s length. With his objects thoroughly degraded and his aspirations for a nice day out “brought down to earth” (RW 21) – literally – Joseph returns dejectedly home:

¹⁶⁹ First published in FB 36.869 (1862): 71–72. Instead of wachsam (“vigilant”), Busch uses the archaic spelling wachtsam, which had already started to die out at the beginning of the eighteenth century (DW 27: 199). The adjective was replaced by wachsam in the second printing of the story. Qted. in FW 150. The modern spelling is also found in the line “Doch Graps, der wachtsam, zieht ihn wieder” (RZ 28–29.17) from Der Wurstdieb (1868).

General mischief making guides the actions of the canine heroes of *Plisch und Plum* (1882) as well, who look daggers at one another in the frontispiece of the story (SW 352–53), hinting at their subsequent antics. With their equally rotten juvenile owners, Peter and Paul, the new partners in crime destroy the *Biedermeier* peace in the Fittig (“Light-Wit”) household over several episodes, repeatedly besting their human keepers as they step into the dinner plates to slurp up the contents (365, illus. 16; chap. 2), chew off the ends of the boys’ trousers (370–71, illus. 24, 25; chap. 3), and dig around in the flowerbeds of the fastidious Madam Kümmel (“Madame Caraway”). The fun stops when she pours lamp oil directly onto their upturned behinds with “angry delight”:  

Fig. 69. “Der Zylinder” (*Dideldum*! 1874). RZ 589.47–52, illus. 16, 17

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171 In subsequent editions of the tale, the frontispiece shows the canine heroes smiling at the reader, as in Friedrich Bohne’s *Wilhelm Busch: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe* (GA), vol 4. (Wiesbaden: Vollmer, 1968) 449, print.  
172 The image is a visual reminder of the German expression “in den Fettnapf treten” or “to put one’s foot into it.” Cf. the French expression “mettre les pieds dans le[s] plat[s].”  
173 A likely reference to the character’s penchant for *Kümmelbrandtwein*, m. (“caraway seed brandy”), for its “medicinal” qualities (e.g., Junfer Grete in the episode “Fritze,” *Die Haarbeutel*, 1878; SW 39.23). See SW 379–82.  
174 Although Madam Kümmel would have fueled her old-fashioned lamp with *Rüböl*, m., or “rapeseed oil” (“Öl,” SW 379.132), the text states that she uses “caustic petroleum” (“Scharf ist das Petroleum,” 380.140). Lower Saxons like Madam Kümmel had access to petroleum, discovered in Wietze near Celle (Hanover area) in 1858 and 1859, and refined in the 1880s when the story was written (380). Busch’s use of anachronisms like the lamp serves to contrast the idyllic *Biedermeier* period of the story with the era during which his readers actually lived.
When the lady of the house faints at the sight of this shocking transgression against propriety, she upsets the oilcan between her legs, causing what may be a burning sensation of another sort. As is so often the case with Busch, the images – Madam Kümmel pouring petroleum directly into the anuses of the dogs and then spilling the can in a delicate area – provide more information about what is going on than the captions. In a carnivalesque chain of events, the debasement of Madam Kümmel’s garden leads to the debasement of the dog’s rear-ends, which in turn results in the debasement of her nether regions. The chaos in the Fittig household continues until Magister Bokelmann (“Master Stick”) whips some proper behaviour into the boys, which they, in turn, apply to their pets, turning them instantly into docile and well-behaved creatures (411, illus. 89; chap. 7). Plisch and Plum are no different from many of the lamentable canine characters on the pages of the *Fliegende Blätter*, among them the poor mutt in *Principiell* (1873) whose master claims to give him joy whenever he stops beating him:
Less brutalized but equally put-upon is the hero of Der sprechende Hund (1870), suddenly rendered speechless when his “ventriloquist” master sells him for a few coins.\textsuperscript{175} All too often, the masters of the dogs in the Fliegende Blätter reward their pets for their unquestioning loyalty by divesting them of all dignity, whereas Busch’s characters show initiative.

\textbf{Monkeyshines}

While Busch’s animal characters have exhibited many human traits thus far, it is his simian characters that come uncannily close to their human cousins in terms of behaviour and motivation. The author’s monkey stories coincide with the increasing awareness of Darwin’s ideas in scientific magazines like Das Ausland [Abroad],\textsuperscript{176} edited by Oscar Ferdinand Peschel (1826–75), as well as Ernst Haeckel’s \textit{Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte} [Natural Story of

\textsuperscript{175}``Da erhebt der Hund noch einmal seine Stimme und sagt mit hörbarer Entrüstung: ‘Nun spreche ich aber auch kein Wort mehr.’ Mit dem Hunde zugleich drückt sich aber auch der Bauchredner.” See \textit{FB} 53.1303 (1870): 8.

\textsuperscript{176}For example, readers had access to Peschel’s “Eine neue Lehre über der Schöpfungsgeschichte der organischen Welt” [“A New Lesson on the Story of Creation of the Organic World”] in \textit{Das Ausland} 33 (1860): 97+; and the article “Mensch und Affe” [“Man and Monkey”] in \textit{Das Ausland} 34 (1861): 833–35 (qtd. in Engels and Glick 286).
Creation], 1868, to name but two (Ajouri 93–99). With the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859, and its subsequent availability in translation as *Über die Entstehung der Arten durch natürliche Züchtung* in 1871 (Ajouri 103), the German public finally had an opportunity to see what all of the fuss was about. Indeed, Darwin’s works and his premise of the missing link met with varying degrees of enthusiasm in German scientific and religious quarters. For example, Haeckel contended that the naturalist’s theory was “bewiesene Wahrheit” (“proven fact”), while Peschel maintained that it was a “äußerst förderliche Hypothese” (“extremely helpful hypothesis,” Ajouri 100). For his part, the theologian David Friedrich Strauß (1808–74) called the struggle for survival the ferment that alone generates the world’s movement and progress: “Gerade diesen Kampf um’s Dasein aber, mit allem was daran hängt, haben wir oben als das Ferment erkannt, das allein Bewegung und Fortschritt in die Welt bringt” (147; qtd. in Ajouri 120). Schopenhauer, on the other hand, held a more pessimistic view, maintaining that humans were essentially driven by an inherently strong will and “base” emotions and, as such, acted only in their self-interest.

Taking his inspiration from the leading lights of the scientific and philosophical world, Busch uses caricature and humorous verse to mock the “human in the animal” as he does the “animal in the human,” suggesting that the separation between the two is not as wide as previously thought. Yet, his monkey stories are more than token *singeries* created for satirical effect.177 For starters, the author’s monkey characters engage in a full range of “human”

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177 Seen in early Egyptian art, examples of *singeries* are also found on Meißen porcelain, with monkeys imitating human behaviour for satirical effect (Pape, *Wilhelm* 28; qtd. in SW 904). More examples are found in artistic paintings, as Ries et al. have noted (904–05). For instance, David Teniers the Younger (1610–90) portrays monkeys as bar flies in *Monos en una bodega* [Monkeys in a Tavern], c. 1700 (*El Prado, Madrid*). Grandville (1803–47) depicts a group of monkey-artists in smocks intently painting a comely simian model in *Académie de Dessin* from the series *Les Métamorphoses du jour* [Changes of the Day], 1828–29. In Germany, Darwin enthusiast Gabriel von Max (1840–1915) created *Affen als Kunstrichter* [Monkeys as Art Judges], 1889, poking fun at ignorant art juries who were often seen as punching above their weight (*Pinakothek der Neuen, Munich*).
behaviours. This is not as far-fetched as it sounds. As biologist Brian Boyd explains, there are several evolutionary theories of humour that include aggression or mockery (i.e., chimpanzees hooting together at a common enemy or alerting others to a passing threat); the expression of relief (i.e., the passing of danger); and boisterous play (i.e., wrestling, tickling, poking, and evading) with its sudden, unexpected shifts in perspective that prepare for real-life situations (5–6, 8). Busch’s monkey figures take this behaviour a step further, as a way of doing battle with their human tormentors in order to establish control, cause them discomfiture or anger, or avoid something they would rather not do. Rising to the bait, the author’s human characters come out swinging. Busch seems to suggest that human beings are not as civilized as they might fancy themselves to be, prone to the same base behaviours as their simian cousins.

This appears to be the case in Der Affe und der Schusterjunge (1868), where a circus monkey from the “Menagerie von Renz,” minding its own business as it sits on a plinth “in sanfter Ruh’” (FW 235.1), retaliates against a shoemaker’s apprentice who burns his tail with the end of a lit cigar by ripping out tufts of the young fellow’s hair, snatching away his brandy flask, and downing its contents (237–38, illus. 4–6). When the youth responds by grabbing the animal’s tail, the latter smashes the flask over the perpetrator’s head (239, illus. 8). Attracted by the commotion, a portly bourgeois gentleman (“dick[er] Her[r],” 239.18) comes to the rescue, whereupon the animal removes his brand-new top hat and degrades it by sitting on it and placing it across its hindquarters to fend off the blows of the man’s walking stick-cum-birch-stick.

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178 First published without text in MBB 367 (1864); Busch likely provided verse in 1868.
179 The Menagerie von Renz refers to the circus company of Ernst Jakob Renz (1815–92), based in Vienna and Berlin, and which later became the Zirkus Schumann (FW 235).
180 As mentioned in chap. 3, p. 69n64, the spanisches Rohr, n. (“birch stick”; lit. “spanish rod”), was used to punish poor and rich children alike in all nations except Holland.
The monkey then dons the crumpled hat and completes its revenge by snatching the gentleman’s *toupee* and tearing it to pieces (241–2, illus. 13–15). As the vanquished apprentice and portly gentleman slink off into the distance, the primate resumes its previous pose on the pedestal alongside its contented trainer, drifting off to sleep “voll Seelenruh und Branntewein” (243.32).

In Busch’s story, human and animal exchange roles to humorous effect. While the so-called “domestizierte[r] Bürger qua Philister” (Campe 11) of the story, along with the supposedly “domesticated” apprentice, exhibit apelike behaviour as they torment the monkey (qtd. in *FW* 1195), the monkey does not care about the destruction of the gentleman’s new hat: “Dem Herrn sein Hut ist noch ganz neu, / Dem Affen ist das einerlei” (240.21–22). Indeed, it is the same indifference demonstrated by Paul and Peter when Madam Kümmel faints at the sight of Plisch and Plum wiping their burning rear-ends on her washing. While the gentleman’s attempts to get the monkey off the youth’s back seem commendable, the reader cannot help but wonder how the apprentice might have fared had there been no simian mischief-maker. Would the gentleman, realizing that a mere apprentice could hardly afford luxury items like cigars and brandy, have...
collared the presumed thief and handed him over to the authorities?

We see a similar interchange of human and animal behaviours used for satirical effect in “Vierhändig” (Die Haarbeutel, 1878), where a monkey (likely a java monkey or macaque; SW 853) happens upon a man of letters in a drunken stupor, propped up by a chair that has tipped over on the floor (47, illus. 1, 2). The animal then proceeds to help himself to the man’s punchbowl, drinking most of the contents before setting his tail on fire in the open flame of a candle (48–49, illus. 3–5). After dousing his tail in the remaining punch, the monkey resumes his imbibing, lifting the bowl high above his head and emptying it before it drops to the floor and smashes into pieces (49–51, illus. 6–9). Looking for something else to do, like Busch’s mischievous child upstarts, the monkey removes the sleeping man’s eyeglasses with his tail, opens a book on the table and, when this produces no enlightenment, rips it into pieces, spilling ink on the scholar’s shirtfront (51–52, illus. 10–11). Spying the now-extinguished cigar, the monkey lights it in the candle flame and smokes it (53, illus. 14). The animal soon keels over onto the scholar from the after-effects of too much smoking and punch-drinking, demonstrating Busch’s humorously astute observation on the dangers of overindulgence: “Oft findet man nicht den Genuß, / Den man mit Recht erwarten muß. / So geht es mit Taback und Rum: / Erst bist du froh, dann fällst du um” (54.23–26). As the title of the episode suggests, theirs is a “four-handed drinking session,” with no distinction between monkey and man.

For preceding tale, Busch reprises the popular motif of the rum-drinking monkey, seen in works of the author-illuminators August Schrader (1815–78) in Jocco oder Lebenslauf eines Affen (1852), and Georg Christian Raff (1748–88) in Naturgeschichte für Kinder (1783). In addition, he takes his inspiration from the aforementioned Brehm, who goes so far as to document the

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181 See also “Max und Moritz dachten nun: / Was ist hier jetzt wohl zu thun –?” (FW 333.37–38) from Max und Moritz (1865); and “Julchen macht sich was zu thun” (RZ 784.134) from “Ein festlicher Morgen” (Julchen, 1877).
reaction of various types of apes and monkeys, like the orangutan and the pavian, to alcohol in a series of experiments that would be classified as animal torture in today’s scientific circles. In his observations, Brehm compared the faces pulled by the drunken monkeys to the caricature of a coarse drunkard (“abschreckendes Zerrbild eines rohen, betrunkenen Menschen”), before sobering up and becoming “human” once more (“wieder vollkommen menschlich”). Busch places his monkey and human characters on equal footing, as he shows them partaking of alcohol with gleeful abandon, inviting us to laugh at the ill effects of their excesses – and ours.

But, monkeys do more than ridicule human vice in Busch’s picture stories. Indeed, the simian hero of *Fipps, der Affe* (1879), which appeared in print eight years after Darwin’s *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* [*Die Abstammung des Menschen und die geschlechtliche Zuchtwahl*; NC 250], takes pleasure in lording it over his human masters for most of the story, before he gets it in the end. Throughout the story, Busch underscores the similarity between the primates by giving his human characters animal-like traits and vice versa.

Introduced in his mock wanted poster (the signature piece of Busch’s scallywags), the author’s

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182 Over the course of his experiments in Egypt and East Sudan, Brehm reports that his monkey-subjects enjoyed red wine but loathed brandy. When his team forced alcohol on them in order to determine its effects, the animals became drunk and pulled “the most awful faces,” becoming boisterous, impulsive, and “animal-like.” Suffering from hangovers, they refused all food, along with the Merisa and wine they were said to enjoy. Brehm goes on to say that the “hair of the dog” for the animals was small juicy lemons: “Rothwein – andern hatten wir nicht – tranken die Affen auch, Branntwein verschmähten sie immer. Einmal gossen wir ihnen ein Gläschen davon mit Gewalt in das Maul. Die Folge zeigte sich bald (…). Sie wurden vollständig betrunken und schnitten die allerfurchtberlichsten Gesichter, wurden übermüthig, leidenschaftlich, thierisch, kurz gaben mir ein abschreckendes Zerrbild eines rohen, betrunkenen Menschen […] Wie der Katzenjammer ihnen mitspielte, zeigten sie dadurch, daß sie nicht nur das ihnen dargebrachte Futter, sondern auch die ihnen dargereichte Merisa verschmähten und sich von Wein, den sie sonst sehr liebten, mit Abscheu wegwandten. Dagegen erquickten sie kleine saftige Citronen außerordentlich: kurz, sie geberdeten sich auch hierin wieder vollkommen menschlich” (1: 86; qtd. in SW 854).

183 Although Busch created a version of the story for children called ‘*Fipps,* für Kinder bearbeitet* (1879), it never came to print. Walter Pape remarks that the author weakened his story to the point that it sounded “allzu kindertümlich” (“too childish”; ital. in orig.), losing much of its “Schärfe und Wirkung” (“sharpness and impact”) in the process (*Wilhelm* 40; qtd. in SW 947). For his part, Dieter P. Lotze states that the phrasing is “clunkier […] and that the moral of the story, tailored to young children, is simplistic (i.e., he who commits evil shall be punished), thereby losing all of its cultural and societal criticism in the process: “Die Sprache ist holpriger […]. Die Moral ist unzweideutig und auf jugendliche Leser zugeschnitten. Wer Böses tut, wird bestraft. Alle angedeutete Kultur- und Gesellschaftskritik ist verschwunden” (69; qtd. in SW 948).
comic verse and deceptively cute caricature alerts the reader to the monkey’s high energy, talent for mimicry, destructiveness, thievishness, and favourite pursuit of *Bosheit*:

> Der Fipps, das darf man wohl gestehn,

Ist nicht als Schönheit anzusehn.
Was ihm dagegen Werth verleiht,
Ist Rührig- und Betriebsamkeit.
Wenn wo Was los, er darf nicht fehlen;
Was ihm beliebt, das muß er stehen;
Wenn Wer Was macht, er macht es nach;
Und Bosheit ist sein Lieblingsfach.

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**Fig. 73. Fipps, der Affe (1879). SW 81.37–44, illus. 3; 100.155–56, illus. 35**

After the capture of our simian hero in the African wilds and transport to the port city of Bremen, he is purchased by the resident barber, the foppish Meister Krüll (“Master Curl”), as a diversion for his customers. But, Fipps soon reverts to form. His antics include butchering the hair of one of the barber’s customers, before cutting off and cauterizing the injured tip of the man’s ear (99–101, illus. 33–38; chap. 3), thereby refashioning a pointy animal’s ear to emphasize the “animal-like” appearance of the client. After leaving the barber’s shop, Fipps disrupts the romantic dessert of a fleshy couple by dumping steaming fruit pudding over the man’s head and pouring red sauce down his companion’s dress, underscoring their piggishness (106, illus. 45, 46; chap. 4). Then, he steals *Krapfen* (“crullers”) and pretzels from Konditer

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184 Krüll, m. (“lock” [of hair]), comes from the Hanover German verb krüllen (“kräuseln” or “to curl”), and is also seen in the Dutch *krul* (“curl”), a *pars pro toto* denoting the barber’s profession (Zoder 1: 991). Qtd. in SW 97.

185 The point at the top of the ear has the appearance of a *tuberculum Darwinii*, the vestigial point on the helix of the ear that corresponds to the ear-tip of long-eared mammals (Stenström n. pag.; also SW 101).
Köck ("Confectioner Belch")\textsuperscript{186} to satisfy his voracious appetite (108, illus. 48; chap. 5).

Fipps escapes punishment, but is soon trapped as a presumed chicken thief by Doktor Fink ("Doctor Finch"), who stuffs him into a sack and beats him within an inch of his life before tossing him into the empty hen coop (115–16, illus. 61, 62). Suitably chastened, Fipps is now on his best behaviour, bowing down before the doctor, lighting his pipe, gathering kindling, grinding coffee, and doing what he likes best of all, rocking little Elise in her cradle and making her laugh when she is peevish.\textsuperscript{187} As a reward, he is accepted into the Fink family and dressed as a fun plaything in chintz trousers ("[Hose] aus verblühnten Zitzkatun," 119.296; chap. 6) and a pea-green jacket ("erbsengrünen Frack," 119.300, illus. 66).

But, the "animal" in Fipps soon returns, causing him to revert to form. He makes life miserable for the maid Jette (abbr. "Henriette/Hendrike," 118) by swatting a fly on her face as she sleeps (124, illus. 76; chap. 7). From there, he takes on his four-legged domestic rivals, Gripps ("Gumption") the cat and Schipps ("Snap") the dog, who make a mockery of their names by losing a rowdy battle over a meaty bone, forcing them to acknowledge their simian playmate as victor: "Seitdem ward Fipps von diesen zween / Als Meister verehrt und angesehn" (138.393–94; chap. 8). But, Fipps’s mischief does not stop there. As the pompous Professor Klöhn ("Professor Twaddle")\textsuperscript{188} holds forth at Doktor Fink’s table on mother nature’s bounty with the creation of plants and animals that are both useful and tasty, along with the creation of man in all

\textsuperscript{186} Likely derived from köcken or köken ("to burp" or "to vomit"). See \textit{DW} 11: 1567, def. 1.a–e and 2.1, 2. The verb was used by Martin Luther (1483–1546) in the phrase "mir köket, wird zum köken übel" ("I’m so sick that I could puke," def. 2.3) and was widely heard throughout the nineteenth century.

\textsuperscript{187} "Morgens früh, so flink er kann, / Steckt er Fink die Pfeife an. / Fleißig trägt er dürre Reiser, / Ja, Kaffee zu mahlen weiß er, / Und sobald man musicirt / Horcht er still, wie sich’s gebührt. / Doch sein innigstes Vergnügen / Ist Elisen sanft zu wiegen, / Oder, falls sie mal verdrossen, / Zu erfreun durch schöne Possen. / Kurz, es war sein schönster Spaß, / Wenn er bei Elisen saß –" (\textit{SW} 119.283–94).

\textsuperscript{188} Commonly heard in Hamburg, the family name Klöhn comes from the Low German infinitive klönen ("to forge"). The verb acquired the figurative meaning of forging ideas, evolving to the present-day klönen or schwützen ("to twaddle") in Hanover German. See Zoder 1: 912 and Wossidlo and Teuchert 4: 369–70; qtd. in \textit{SW} 144–45.
of his noble forbearance, Fipps mocks his silly pronouncements by furtively applying glue to the handkerchief protruding from the professor’s back pocket, as well as pouring ink into his top hat (144–45, illus. 111, 112; chap. 10). When the professor takes his leave and dons his hat, the ink runs down his face and into his mouth (146, illus. 115). As he reaches for his handkerchief, he finds it solidly glued to his hand (147, illus. 116). When the victim threatens Fipps with his walking stick, the monkey derisively points his rear-end at him and twists the stick around the professor’s thumb, before heaving the symbols of his scholarly pursuits – book, pen, and ink well – at him as he beats a hasty retreat through the door:

![Image of the scene](image.png)

**Fig. 74. Fipps, der Affe (1879).** SW 146.429, illus. 114; 147.432, illus. 117; 148.434, illus. 119

Throughout the scene, the learned man takes on the appearance of a monkey, with simian facial features and a tail-like handkerchief sticking out of his back pocket.

Yet, when it counts most, Fipps proves to be more reliable than his human companions. To that end, he rescues the toddler Elise from a fire that breaks out in the Fink residence, while her distracted parents rush about to save their “valuable” boot jack and mousetraps instead, a

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189 . . . ’Oh, verehrtester Freund! Nichts geht doch über die hohe / Weisheit der Mutter Natur. – Sie erschuf ja so mancherlei Kräuter, / Harte und weiche zugleich, doch letztere mehr zu Gemüse. / Auch erschuf sie die Thiere, erfreulich, harmlos und nutzbar; / Hüllte sie außen in Häute, woraus man Stiefel verfertigt, / Füllte sie innen mit Fleisch von sehr beträchtlichem Nährwerth; / Aber erst ganz zuletzt, damit er es dankend benutze, / Schuf sie des Menschen Gestalt und verlieh ihm die Öffnung des Mundes. / Aufrecht stehet er da, und alles erträgt er mit Würde’’’ (SW 144–45.420–28).
sarcastic comment on the overblown materialism of the era if there ever was one:

In the long run, however, instinct proves stronger than good behaviour. Two years after the incident, Fipps decides that he has had enough of pampered life (his reward for saving Elise), throws off his fine clothes, leaves the Fink household, and resumes his life of pranking. Along the way, he smashes the pots of a travelling potter’s wife (159, illus. 139; chap. 12) and wrings the necks of Bauer Dümmel’s (“Farmer Dimwit’s”) peeping chicks (159, illus. 140). Then, he steals the tantalizing _Butterbrot_ (“slice of bread and butter”) from the farmer’s young son (160, illus. 142), rendered with a simian muzzle and shirt-tail-as-prehensile-tail to denote the proximity between monkey and young human in terms of appetites, as Ries et al. have noted (160, illus. 141). Pursued by the exasperated village folk, Fipps is felled off-stage by Dümmel’s rusty old carbine (164, illus. 149). Like the death of Max and Moritz before him, his demise passes un lamented by his victims. At the end of the tale, only little Elise takes his hand, with tears in her eyes: “Nur Elise faßte Fippsens Hand, / Während ihr das Aug voll Thränen stand” (165.527–28).

Without a doubt, Fipps’s pranks are particularly nasty, with their tendency to create mayhem and inflict physical pain. Like Max and Moritz and Hans Huckebein, he delights in
answering the call of *Bosheit*; like them, the reward for his repeated malice\(^{190}\) is death.

According to Busch scholar Ingrid Haberland, prevailing society felt a need to protect itself against what Schopenhauer described as the driving force of the will to live, as demonstrated by all natural beings (in this case, children and animals): “Die Gesellschaft wehrt sich gegen das unbequeme, den von Schopenhauer als Antriebskraft allen Lebens bezeichneten ‘Willen’ demonstrierende Naturwesen” (165; qtd. in SW 162). Fipps’s “will” is amply demonstrated by his refusing to sit still and wolfing down the food of others. In allegorical terms, the hero of the tale asserts himself in the only way he knows how in order to claim a space in a world where he is expected to behave. But, in beating the “animal” out of Fipps, the irony is that the adults in the story act in the same savage manner they pretend to despise. No one takes his hand or sheds a tear at his demise, except the young playmate he once saved. Might children and animals like Elise and Fipps have the moral upper hand over the adults in the story? Volker Klotz seems to think so, noting that Busch makes no distinction between young people and young animals. In this regard, observe Ries et al., Elise and Fipps stand together against a compact of “hardened and goal-obsessed adults”: “Die kleine Elise und der junge Affe Fipps stehen gemeinsam einer kompakten Majorität gefühlsverhärteter, zweckversessener Erwachsener gegenüber” (22; qtd. in SW 119). Ulrich Mihr goes even further, calling Busch’s story an angry portrayal of human and animal barbarity and an expression of just how shocking he found human nature to be: “Buschs wütende Darstellung der menschlichen und tierischen Grausamkeit ist Ausdruck eines tiefen Erschocken-Seins über die beobachtete Menschennatur. Er litt an der Wahrheit, die er aussprach” (66; qtd. in SW 924).

By contrast, questions of human cruelty toward primates are largely absent on the pages

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\(^{190}\) In *Max und Moritz* (1865), Schneider Böck insists that “Bosheit ist kein Lebenszweck” (*FW* 384.406), while in *Hans Huckebein, der Unglücksrabe* (1867), Tante Lotte attributes Hans’s death to his principal enjoyment of evil: “Die Bosheit war sein Hauptpläsin” (517.95).
of the *Fliegende Blätter*, where the illustrations and captions tend to focus on the interconnectedness of the species in order to mock it, all the while maintaining an amused distance. In *Verwechselung* (1863), for example, a young child seeing a trained monkey in military dress astride a dog blurts out, “Papa! Papa!” underscoring the monkey’s resemblance to his soldier-father, as the duo looks knowingly at the reader. Similarly, the flute-playing father in *Zweifeloser Darwinismus* (1874) sarcastically chastises his young progeny as they imitate him using an umbrella and a wooden spoon, comparing them to a couple of “trained monkeys”:

There are examples of similar heavy-handedness in Busch’s early illustrations, with portrayals of monkey-faced criminals awaiting execution in *Wohlgemeinter Zuspruch* (1860), for example, reflecting established prejudices with regards to physiognomy. An indication of how unsettling questions of descent were at the time Busch created his stories can be seen in the following panel from the *Fliegende Blätter*, in which the illustrator portrays various individuals with animal features and, in another extrapolation of human evolution, asks, “If man descended

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191 First published in *FB* 33.796 (1860): 108.
from the monkeys, where do sheep, bird, pig, and snake and other animal physiognomies come from?” While underscoring the imitative, submissive, rapacious, gluttonous, and evil characteristics of mankind, the images overstate the similarities in order to mock them, rather than seriously questioning what lies underneath:

**Fig. 78. Zur Frage über die Abstammung des Menschen (1868). FB 48.1183: 88**

**Summary**

What conclusions can we draw from the upside-down portrayal of animals in Busch’s picture stories? To begin with, animals tend to get the better of human beings, even if their victory is short-lived. This in and of itself was a new development in pictorial strips. Until the advent of the author’s stories, illustrated examples of anthropomorphism, like those depicted in the catchpenny prints, consisted of single-theme renditions of animals in a series of unconnected motifs, which either co-existed peacefully with their natural animal-enemies in a kind of Schlaraffenland (Egyptian hieroglyphs and papyri), or took part in activities of sanctioned subversion against human and animal oppressors to illustrate a particular moral (marginalia,
misericords). In more recent times, animals have been used to make satirical comments on human vice and foibles (*Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux*). While Busch uses this convention in a couple of his early stories appearing in the *Fliegende Blätter*, he soon develops animal characters with more complex behaviours.

Indeed, we can see the influence of Darwin’s theory of evolution from common ancestors, driven by a process of natural selection that created consternation among some nineteenth-century citizens. Not only did the naturalist’s theories throw cold water on prevailing Judeo-Christian thought regarding the divine creation of man, they also raised the frightening prospect of man’s descent from the apes. Public anxieties also found their way into the illustrated strips of the *Fliegende Blätter*, some of which make use of humour to soften the blow (i.e., child mistaking dressed-up monkey for father), although most of the strips ridicule Darwin by portraying characters in inane situations (e.g., monkey-see, monkey-do flautist’s children) or mocking questions of appearance (e.g., animal physiognomies in human faces). Some of this anxiety was even seen in underground illustrations showing graphic portrayals of naked Caucasian females *in flagrante delicto* with lascivious apes, raising the unsettling possibility of miscegenation and the notion that the women were actually enjoying themselves in the arms of their animal lovers.¹⁹²

Busch ignores these fear-mongering notions, focusing instead on the more complex human emotions revealed by his animal characters. For example, *Schnurrdiburr*’s Tante Linchen tenderly offers a bottle to an infant bee bundled up tight in its cradle (*FW* 562, illus. 6), and the urinating dog in “Der Zylinder” exhibits a carnivalesque *Schadenfreude* as the object of its

¹⁹² Examples include *Transformisme n° 3/Troisième darwinique: Le Prédecesseur* [*Theory of Evolution/Third Darwinique: The Forerunner*], c. 1879, by Félicien Rops (1833–98), where an anthropoid ape performs oral sex on a white woman (Dawson 68–69, fig. 2); and *Gamiani, ou Deux nuits d’excès* [*Gamiani, or Two Nights of Excess*], 1833, attributed to Alfred de Musset (1810–57), where a young girl by the name of Sainte is shown giving herself over to the pleasures of “animal” sex (69).
mischief retrieves his drenched belongings. Even the mischievous Fipps, Busch’s simian prankster par excellence, demonstrates a basic sense of humanity when he rescues his young playmate from a house fire. And, while Busch’s monkey characters take up the ostensibly male pleasure of imbibing alcoholic drinks, it is done with a view of mocking the bad habits and overindulgence of their human counterparts. Furthermore, the animals partake willingly in these behaviours, rather than being forced to do so by well-meaning scientists like Brehm, who wished to observe the similarities in behaviour between man and the primates – apes and monkeys.

With regards to Schopenhauer, Busch’s animal figures demonstrate what the philosopher describes as a strong *Wille zum Leben* and instinct for survival, from the lowliest buzzing insects and cocky mice to feisty goats and independent-minded dogs that upend the traditional master-and-servant relationship between man and beast. Like Busch’s bad-boy and bad-girl characters, naughty animals seem driven by *Bosheit* and its attendant *Tätigkeit*, as Hans Huckebein the raven and Fipps the monkey make abundantly clear. Yet, Busch was not persuaded by Schopenhauer’s notion that pain and suffering lay at the core of life (Galway 109). Ulrich Mihr contends that the author borrowed from Schopenhauer’s philosophy in order to cope with the failure of the revolution and the increasing interference of the Prussian government in everyday affairs (10). Faced with increased censorship and renewed government on the one hand, and with rapid economic growth and urbanization on the other hand, citizens like those in Busch’s picture stories withdrew to an out-of-date notion of *Biedermeierkeit* and a *Kleinstadt* (“small-town”) status quo. A manifestation of these concerns can be seen in Busch’s picture stories, where insects goad their human victims to remind them of the sting of defeat, mice nibble away at the power of a disenfranchised ruler, and a crafty dog lifts a leg on the pretensions of its human victim. Pitting animals against humans in a kind of carnival where all participants enter into a kind of free and
familiar contact, and presented in the form of humorously grotesque illustrations and lofty, yet comic poetic verse, the author’s animal tales subvert the normal course of things as they entertain, making their readers more receptive to their message.

Changes in social and political structures, as well as questions of evolution and human nature, were not the only concerns of the citizenry in post-revolutionary Germany. Indeed, the philosopher and sociologist Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) points to a “late nineteenth-century pessimism” with technical and industrial developments that did not make for a happier existence:

Am steigenden Ruhm Schopenhauers ist die Geschichte der Wirtschaft nicht unbeteiligt. Die Triumphe der Tecknik und die Entfaltung der Industrie, die mit ihr in “Wechselwirkung” stand, (...) brachte den Menschen nicht die erwartete glücklichere Existenz. (203; ellipsis in orig.; qtd. in Ueding, Wilhelm 131)

Part of that disappointment lay in the growing “commodification” of Gründerzeit (“Founders’ Epoch”) Germany, caused by increased industrialization and the advent of mass production. In Busch’s picture stories, this discomfort translates into what Klotz calls the “alienation” of objects meant to serve their owners (38). It is this “Tücke des Objekts” or “object treachery,” whereby things seem to take on a life of their own, that forms the basis of my discussion in chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5: “THE TREACHERY OF THE OBJECT”

It was Wilhelm Busch who first unleashed the comic potential of objects by imbuing them both visually and verbally with a spirit of malice. This in and of itself was a new development in pictorial strips. For, while objects had been seen in art and broadsheets throughout the ages, they functioned more as inanimate props (e.g., musical instruments played by animals in hieroglyphs), symbols of power (e.g., distaffs wielded by housewives against husbands in marginalia, misericords, and marriage satires), and even upside-down objects in catchpenny prints (e.g., bell tower inside bell), in order to illustrate a threatened social order or unsettling reality (Kunzle, “Bruegel’s” 198). Objects also served as comic props (e.g., clown’s paraphenalia) in the popular broadsheets of Busch’s era, including the Münchener Bilderbogen. In addition, objects played a key role in advancing the plot of the story, as seen, for example, in the stories of Busch predecessor Rodolphe Töpffer (1799–1846) and his French counterpart Léonce Petit (1839–84).

In Busch’s picture stories, by contrast, objects “act out” against their human victims in a kind of Bakhtinesque, upside-down carnival world where normal relationships between people and things have been overridden, like the huge tooth of a cross-saw that hooks right into the nostril of an angry farm wife (Der Bauer und der Windmüller, 1861), and the protruding nails that seize the clothing of two prankster lads to keep them fastened to the rolling barrel (Diogenes

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193 “De Toren staet inde [sic] Kloc” [“The tower stands inside the bell”], c. late 1700s, from an untitled woodcut published by Ewout Muller after C. F. Van Veen’s Kinderprenten [Catchpenny Prints], c. late 1700s. See Van Veen, n. pag.; also Kunzle, “Bruegel’s.” 200, 201n2.

194 In Les Amours de M’ Vieux Bois [The Loves of Obadiah Oldbuck], 1839, the rope used by the hero to hang himself when his ladylove spurns his advances does not accomplish the job, as it is too long (“[h]eureusement la corde est trop longue”; Kunzle, Rodolphe 156), leaving Oldbuck free to win her heart in subsequent adventures.

195 In Les Mésaventures de M. Bêton [The Misadventures of Mr. Booby], 1867–68, the hero, a bored provincial taxidermist with the Academy of Sciences, travels to Paris on doctor’s orders with a stuffed crocodile, the symbol of his intellectual aspirations. The illustrator Léonce Petit was known as “France’s Töpffer” (NC 151).
**und die bösen Buben von Korinth, 1862.** In that regard, they embody what Germanists refer to as *Tücke des Objekts* (“object treachery”), a term coined by Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1807–87) in his satirical frame novel *Auch Einer: Eine Reisebekanntschaft* (1879) to identify objects with apparent “evil intentions” (Klotz 38; also *FW* 438). In one instance, the narrator “A. E.” (i.e., the “Auch Einer” or “Also One” of the title) blames his glasses for going continually missing on him, unleashing a flood of swearwords as he destroys them for their “jahrelange unbeschreibliche Bosheit” (“indescribable years of mischief”) and rendering them useless in the process (1: 19; qtd. in Ajouri 216). Subsequent thinkers referred to this dynamic as *Resistentialismus*, a term invented by Martin Heidansiecker (1850–1910) and later reprised by the British humorist Paul Francis Jennings (1918–89) in an essay written after two world wars to describe the concept of a world of things hostile to man that are literally “out to get us.” Busch reinforces the notion of these “new comic dictators” in his stories by using reflexive verbs that literally “come alive” when paired with a corresponding image, creating a live metaphor of sorts. Thus, a nightcap leans (“neigt sich”) toward a burning candle as its owner falls asleep (*Fipps, der Affe, 1879*), and fermenting dough nuzzles (“schmiegt sich”) against the head of a drunken farmer as he settles down for the night in the family dough trough (*Die Haarbeutel, 1878*).

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196 *Tücke des Objekts, f.*, has been translated as “the perfidy of things” (Giammatteo 147) and “malice of things” (Hewett-Thayer 93). I would suggest another translation – “object treachery” – as I believe it best defines the intrinsic capacity of Busch’s object-figures to do real harm to their victims. In narrow terms, the difference between “perfidy” and “treachery” is the difference between wrongful deception and betrayal, as David Rohde explains. He goes on to say that perfidy is making someone believe a falsehood, while betrayal involves an act that actually harms the person (par. 6). While malice comes close to the intended meaning of *Tücke des Objekts*, it does not encapsulate the notion of deception, betrayal, and outright nastiness that treachery does.

197 As Jennings writes in his essay “Report on Resistentialism” (*Spectator* 23 Apr. 1948), the term *Resistentialismus* first appeared in the collected *Werke* (1894) of Heidansiecker to encapsulate a “sombre, post-atomic philosophy of [a] pagan, despairing nobility, advocate[ning] a complete withdrawal from Things [sic]” (par. 8). Jennings uses the corresponding English translation *Resistentialism* as a humorous way of describing the post-war French intellectual vogue of describing a world of things hostile to man, whereby “[l]es choses sont contre nous” (par. 2). He goes on to say that modern, domesticated Western man has far more opportunities for losing the battle against Things – can openers, collar studs, chests of drawers, open manholes, shoelaces (par. 3). More recently, Charles Harrington Elster (1957–), in his essay “Resistentialism” (*New York Times Magazine* 21 Sept. 2003), calls *Resistentialism* a “humorous blend” of the Latin *res* ‘thing[s]’ and the French *résister* ‘to resist’ (par. 7).
Forces of the Day

In the end, the fact that Busch’s characters do not even manage to control the most familiar, everyday objects in their lives suggests that they may be up against forces greater than themselves. Indeed, Volker Klotz has linked instances of symbolic inversion in the author’s picture stories to the political upheaval of the day, speculating that Busch may have used the device in order to allow frustrated citizens to deal with the collective trauma of the failed revolution (46). In addition, Klotz points to the effects of what could be called the “factory, machine, and employee” in the author’s stories, whereby guild masters were shunted aside by the new manufacturing middle class in order to meet the growing demand for affordable goods, and workers were estranged from the very process of production. That many of the objects in Busch’s stories are not the products of an assembly line but rather handcrafted items symbolizing a kinder, gentler time is irony indeed, betraying the trust that users placed in them and showing the futility of clutching onto an imagined idyllic past.

In this chapter, I will examine some of the more prominent examples of Tücke des Objekts in Busch’s picture stories, in order to determine what they might suggest about the economic, social, and political pressures of post-revolutionary Germany. I will start with objects, personal or otherwise, that set out to frustrate and harm their victims after a long night of drinking, a common means of escape (primarily for men) during the Gründerzeit. But, while many objects take on an alcohol-induced life of their own, there is no denying that just as many

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198 Klotz notes that while Busch portrays neither factory nor office in his picture stories, their effects are felt all the same (31). In Balduin Bählamm, der verhinderte Dichter (1883), for example, the hero trudges off to the office at nine in the morning: “Um Neune wandelt Bählamm so / Wie ehedem / auf sein Büreau –” (SW 496.641–43, illus. 108, appearing between shortened lines 642 a and b).

act out against the sober characters in the subsequent sections of my chapter, indicating that influences other than alcohol are at play. While countless objects are clearly animated (i.e., anthropomorphized), giving them licence to act out in unexpected ways, some are nudged into action by human characters, setting off what Frank Pietzcker has called a self-intensifying chain of events over multiple panels that sweeps up the characters in its wake (16; qtd. in \textit{SW} 867).

Adding insult to injury, many objects wreak havoc in the confines of a character’s personal quarters, suggesting that there was nowhere safe to hide from the forces of the day. By contrast, the objects in the \textit{Fliegende Blätter} and the \textit{Münchener Bilderbogen} generally serve as props or like agents in cautionary tales, seemingly ignorant of what was happening outside.

\textbf{The Bottle Beckons}

Object treachery is particularly intense in Busch’s picture stories involving drunkards, observes Peter Bonati, adding that with the blurring of the boundary between drunk and object, readers get a sense of what the victim is experiencing and feeling. This is certainly the case in stories like the captionless \textit{Der vergebliche Versuch} (1867), where we see an inebriated Herr Lehmann at home after a raucous New Year’s Eve \textit{Punschpartie}, unlit cigar in hand, as he contemplates a candlestick with a dancing flame (\textit{FW} 434, illus. 1). A nearby punch bowl, with its “eyes, ears, and nose,” suggests a malevolent presence. As Lehmann tries to light his cigar, the candlestick is shown in multiple exposures, appearing to sway back and forth as if taking evasive action. Leaning on the table to steady himself, he tilts the candlestick toward him, setting fire to his scruffy comb-over:

\begin{quote}
“Eine Steigerung erfährt die Objekttücke, sobald Betrunkene verwickelt sind. Surrealismus äußert sich hier im Wesenstausch zwischen Menschen und Dingen. Gegenständliche Darstellung reicht nicht mehr aus, weil Busch unter Einbezug des Betrunkenen zeichnet, was dieser erlebt und fühlt” (Bonati, “Spielcharakter” 94; qtd. in \textit{SW} 816).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
First published in \textit{FB} 46.1121 (1867): 6–7. In the initial version of the story, Busch included an introductory sentence to set up the action: “Herr Lehmann hat seinen Freunden in der Sylvesternacht eine Punschpartie gegeben, und beabsichtigt nach Entfernung seiner Gäste, sich noch eine Cigarre anzuzünden” (6; also \textit{FW} 434).
\end{quote}
Fig. 79. Der vergebliche Versuch (1867). FW 434, illus. 1; 435, illus. 3, 4

Undaunted, the drunkard puts even more of his weight onto the table, whereupon the flame inclines and burns his nose (236–37, illus. 6, 7). As the table overturns and he falls backwards, the bowl pours its contents all over him, while the erect prongs of an oversized culinary fork make contact with his posterior (437–38, illus. 8, 9). Sporting the now-empty, helmet-like punch bowl as a reminder of his drunken excesses, and removing the fork to reveal three huge punctures spurting blood, Herr Lehmann flops onto his Biedermeier settee, with his legs in the air, as his now-spent objects lie scattered on the floor (438–39, illus. 10–12).

Herr Lehmann’s surname indicates his subservience to his material possessions. To wit, Grimm defines Lehmann (also Lehenmann, m.) as a vassal or owner of a Lehengericht ("fiefdom"), with certain responsibilities toward his lord (DW 12: 541, def. 1). Feudalism may have been abolished after 1848, yet in the upside-down Biedermeier idyll of the story, the drunken Herr Lehmann has become vassal to the array of objects in his personal fiefdom, including his three-pronged fork with its suspicious resemblance to the peasant’s traditional pitchfork-weapon. It would seem that house and home provide nowhere near the safe harbour that Herr Lehmann and bourgeois citizens of the era might have wished them to be.
Similarly, in “Die ängstliche Nacht” from the *Haarbeutel* (1878) drinking series,²⁰² the gentleman drunk and hero of the tale stumbles into his bedroom, whereupon his furnishings appear in duplicate. The bootjack, along with his leg, seems to double as he tries unsuccessfully to remove his right boot, just as his coat rack quadruples as he shakes it:

Was wär denn dieses hier? Ei ei! Der Kleiderhälter, sonst so nütze, Oha! Jetzt wird ihm aber schwach.


*Fig. 80.* “Die ängstliche Nacht” (*Die Haarbeutel*, 1878). *SW* 64.5–8, illus. 3, 4; 65.9–10, illus. 5

Although Töpffer showed the results of specific motions in his panels (McCloud 107), Busch was the first to use duplicate images to indicate double vision and multiple images to show movement. As the gentleman falls into bed, his boot stays trapped in the bootjack, which turns into a giant beetle whose “mandibles” bite and pinch his heel:

Auweh! Der Fuß ist sehr bedrückt; Der Käfer zwickt, der Käfer kneift; Er dreht sich um, so schnell er kann;


*Fig. 81.* “Die ängstliche Nacht” (*Die Haarbeutel*, 1878). *SW* 66.13–16, illus. 7, 8; 67.19–20, illus. 10

²⁰² According to Johann Georg Krünitz (1728–96), *Haarbeutel*, m. (“inebriation”) referred to a member of the Allied army during the Seven Years’ War (1756–63) who was drunk so often that he appeared in front of his commanding officer in a caul (*Haarbeutel*) instead of his pigtail (531; qtd. in *SW* 5). Busch’s nephew Otto Nöldeke (1867–1948) tells how the expression “Haarbüdel! Haarbüdel!” was chanted in unison by local children in Wiedensahl and Hanover whenever a drunkard stumbled down the street. Qtd. in *SW* 5, 812; ellipsis in orig.; see also Schury 323.
The picture is further enlivened by the repetition of “Käfer” (“beetle”) and “zwickt” (“pinches”) in the text, along with the z-alliteration in the Old German iambic tetrameter (x / x / x / x /) and the final rhyme “kneift” (“pinches”) and “abgestreift” (“pulled off”). Turning over “as quickly as he can” to deal with the bootjack-cum-beetle attacking his leg and posterior from below, the “sonst so nütze” (“otherwise so useful”) coat rack, decked out like a human being in nightgown and cap, now seems to come alive as it shoves him from behind, the relative pronoun “wer” reinforcing the notion of something human: “Da stößt ihn wer von hinten an” (ital. mine). As he defends himself against the coat rack, the clock decides to get in on the action as an alliterative third-party interloper, entangling his left leg in its cords: “Heiß tobt der Kampf, hoch saust das Bein; / Es mischt sich noch ein Dritter drein” (69.25–26; ital. mine).

After he finally subdues his feisty furniture, the Gentleman falls into a deep sleep (70, illus. 16), dreaming that his head has turned into a huge metal watering can, upon which a devil drums away with a set of oversized drumsticks (72, illus. 19). The next morning, the victim awakens with a hangover so vicious that each hair on his head has been transformed into a corkscrew: “Wie er erwacht, das sieht man hier: / Ein jedes Haar ein Pfropfenziehr” (72.37–38). Thus, the oenophile implement multiplies into countless instruments of torture that continue their boozy, carnivalesque merriment, winding their way into their master’s pounding skull.

Even though he is faced with imaginary terrors, the gentleman avoids inflicting actual physical harm to himself, unlike Meier (“Everyman”), the pickled hero of “Der Undankbare” from the same Haarbeutel series, who is ejected from the ironically named Bellevue (“Beautiful View”) drinking establishment with two corked wine bottles stuffed into his back pockets (SW 18, illus. 1). The reader watches in amusement as Meier shuffles knock-kneed along a road freshly laid with sharp gravel stones, when, all at once, the road seems to rise up in front of him
Lifting his legs to climb the hill that appears to be there, Meier ends up falling flat onto his stomach, destroying his clothes and cigar. As he picks himself up, the road and the poplars alongside it begin to circle around him, twirling faster and faster, before he, too, spins crazily around, with motion lines (another Busch invention) used to portray the action. The comic effect of the turbulence is compounded in the text with the polytonic repetition of the verb “dreh[e]n” (“to turn”) in both the third person plural and singular, in order to reinforce the similarity between the spinning trees and Meier’s spinning senses:

Aber Täuschung ist es leider.
Meier fällt auf seinen Bauch,
Wirkt zerstörend auf die Kleider
Und auf die Zigarre auch.

Fig. 82. “Der Undankbare” (Die Haarbeutel, 1878). SW 21.13–16, illus. 4; 22.17–18, illus. 5; 23.19–20, illus. 6

Dizzy from gyrating like a top, Meier falls flat on his rear-end, smashing his precious bottles in the process (24, illus. 7). With painful shards of glass and chunks of gravel stuck in his posterior, the drunkard is clearly in need of help: “Hülfsbedürftig voller Schmerzen / Sitzt er da in Glas und Kies” (25.25–26). Once again, the rollicking trochaic tetrameter (/ x / x / x / x), with its formal-fun way of mocking its subject, raises the status of the treacherous objects as it lowers that of their victim. When a kind haut-bourgeois passerby helps Meier to his feet, the ingrate smashes the gentleman’s fancy top hat over his ears with a well-aimed fist, leaving him both figuratively and literally in the dark as to Meier’s reasoning: “Puff! Da trifft ein höchst
geschwinder / Schlag von Meier seiner Hand / Auf des Fremden Prachtzylinder. / Daß der Mann im Dunkeln stand” (27.33–36). While the Good Samaritan asks himself what has caused Meier’s hostile act, the latter may simply be acting out what David Blackbourn has described as the general resentment felt by the working classes towards the bourgeoisie that failed to come to their aid following the failed revolution of 1848 (114). Ironically, Meier does disservice to his good name, for while he is a “Mr. Everyman” of sorts, his name is also a synonym for _Kerl_ or _Bursch_ (“fellow”), with the sense of someone who is _tüchtig_ (“capable” or “competent,” _DW_ 12: 1904, def. 3). In that regard, Meier proves himself to be anything but proficient.

While the previous examples show objects transformed from useful to treacherous, at least in the minds of their owners, they stand in contrast to Busch’s earliest approach to the subject. In the captionless _Ein Abenteuer in der Neujahrsnacht_ (1863), after yet another New Year’s Eve party, the tipsy hero Herr Brandmaier suffers pain and injury from a series of encounters with objects that just happen to be in his way. Thus, he trips over the threshold of his lodgings and falls onto the long stem of his meerschaum pipe, ramming it into his upper lip (_FW_ 205, illus. 4). Once upstairs, he loses his balance twice in an effort to pry off his boots with a bootjack, only to land headfirst in a traditional ash shovel and then buttocks-first onto the flickering flame of his candle:

![Fig. 83. Ein Abenteuer in der Neujahrsnacht (1863). FW 207–08, illus. 7, 8, 10](image)

In this picture story, it is the hero who supplies all of the action, his possessions acting as passive bystanders with none of the malice shown in Busch’s previous stories. Only when Herr Brandmaier finally reaches his bed do the surroundings start spinning out of control (208–09, illus. 11, 12), whereupon he finds himself on the floor beside the bed (209, illus. 13). Whether he has been ejected by his own bed or has fallen out by himself is a moot point. Still, as his surname Brandmaier suggests, this “Everyman” is burnt by the very possessions meant to serve him.

By contrast, the objects encountered by drunkards on the pages of the *Fliegende Blätter* are few in number, and where they exist, function as inanimate props. In the single-panel *Steigerung* (1876), for example, we observe a fatigued carouser, propped up against his dresser with bootjack in hand and arm wrapped around an empty chamber pot. Above his head is a lit candlestick, its handle precariously hooked onto the rim of a basin perched on the dresser. None of the objects appears ready to make a move, as two off-frame commentators describe the hero’s bacchanalia of the previous day, with a pun containing Darwinian overtones. In fact, it is Adolf Oberländer (1845–1923) who comes closest to Busch’s dynamic style:

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 84. In der Morgendämmerung** (1885). *FB* 85.2159 (1886): 191

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In his illustration, the debauched hero beckons a row of city houses, whose windows look like eyes and mouths, with a “Häuser her!” as though he were hailing a cab to take him home.

While Busch’s male drunks survive their ordeal-by-object, the author’s solitary female alcoholic and heroine of *Die Fromme Helene* (1872) does not, suggesting that she is held to a different set of standards. Twice bereaved following the death-by-fishbone of her legal husband, Herr Schmöck (yid. “Mr. S[ch]muck”), and the murder-by-bottle of her womanizing cousin Franz, the heroine takes up a life of penance for her imagined sins. In the penultimate chapter, Helene’s old friend, a bottle of drink that glitters tantalizingly in the light of her petrol lamp, “wartet mit Geduld” (328.642) and “rührt sich nicht” (328.644), waiting patiently and quietly for her to finish her prayers. But, whereas the spirit may be willing, the flesh is weak as Helene succumbs to temptation. As she takes her last swig from the bottle, with the ghostly apparition of her recently deceased aunt issuing a warning from beyond the grave, Helene collapses onto the table, launching the burning lamp and setting fire to her clothing when it lands on her prostrate body:

![Illustration of Helene collapsing onto the table, launching the burning lamp and setting fire to her clothing when it lands on her prostrate body.](image)

Mit geisterhaftem Schmerzgetöne – Umsonst!! – Es fällt die Lampe um,
Helene! – ruft sie – Oh, Helene!!!
Gefüllt mit dem Petroleum.
Und hülfslos und mit Angstgewimmer
Verkohlt dies fromme Frauenzimmer.

**Fig. 85.** “Versuchung und Ende” (*Die Fromme Helene*, 1872). RZ 331.651–52, illus. 165; 332.653–56, illus. 166, 167
While it is Helene’s penchant for alcohol that sets the stage for her downfall, there is no doubt that the bottle-object coaxes her into temptation, unleashing events that fuel her ultimate demise. Despite the images of grotesque realism that are at once humorous in their exaggeration and deadly serious in their effect, Helene’s sorry end begs the obvious question: Why is she forced to give up the ghost (“den Geist aufgeben”), while Busch’s male drunkards live to see another day?

An explanation might be found in the long-standing male prerogative in Germany and other European countries, where drunkenness was accepted with a nudge and a wink (Tlusty 241, 248). By contrast, as Julia Kathryn Skelly writes, female alcoholics were regarded as morally and socially degraded, adding that those who drank concealed their activity as much as possible (2). She goes on to say that public drinking among women of the upper and respectable middle classes, in particular, became increasingly unacceptable in the nineteenth century, as masculine spaces such as the saloon, tavern, and public house were regarded as the “anti-home” and thus irreconcilable with the notion of the good wife and mother (2). Consequently, notes Skelly, alcoholic middle- and upper-class women withdrew from public spaces, becoming “cologne drunkards” (Krasnick Warsh 77) in the privacy of their own homes, or consuming liqueurs kept at home for “medicinal” purposes (2). This view squares with what we see in Die Fromme Helene and other stories by Busch,205 where the heroine’s fate can be seen as proxy for the public censure of “disorderly” (Zemon Davis 147) women who subvert the “natural order of things.”

Psychologically speaking, Helene’s demise can also be seen as the inevitable result of her “sinful” origins (i.e., product of a one-night stand between an older bourgeois partygoer and a young paramour; 228.39–44). Branded from birth, she searches for love and acceptance

205 A hint to the secret life of Madam Kümmel (“Madame Caraway”) in Plisch und Plum (1882) lies in her surname (Zoder 1: 1005; qtd. in SW 379). Similarly, the unmarried Junfer Grete (“Fritze,” Die Haarbeutel, 1878) purchases Kümmellikör (“caraway seed liqueur”) at the pharmacist’s for “medicinal” purposes (Mihr 168; qtd. in SW 39).
throughout her life, only to be rejected by her God-fearing guardians, suffer marriage to a rich but impotent husband, and endure deception by her philandering cousin-priest. At the end of the tale, her hypocritical guardian Onkel Nolte pats himself on the back, thanking his lucky stars that he has not fallen prey to evil like his niece: “‘Das Gute – dieser Satz steht fest – / Ist stets das Böse, was man läßt!’ / ‘Ei ja! – Da bin ich wirklich froh! / Denn gottseidank [sic]! Ich bin nicht so!’” (339.677–80). Nothing could be further from the truth, given his more-than-healthy interest in her love life and her banishment from his household for normal adolescent high jinks.

By contrast, the *Fliegende Blätter* mocks the very idea of women drinking (and smoking, for that matter), as seen in *Entweder – oder* (1870). Here, the dialogue is a mean-spirited exchange between two unseen observers of the scene, likely male: “In my country, the ladies always drink two or three tots of cherry brandy with their coffee.” – “So either your brandy is worthless – or your ladies are”:

![Image](image_url)

“In meiner Heimath trinken die Damen immer 2 bis 3 Gläser Kirschengin zum Kaffee.” — „So, dann ist entschieden Herrschaftsgeizig nicht, aber — Ihre Damen.”

*Fig. 86. Entweder – oder* (1870). *FB 52.1285: 68*

Male characters, in contrast, are allowed to escape what Bakhtin calls the “norms of etiquette and
decency” (*RW 10*) in the carnival-like setting of both home and tavern, indicating that another law applied to them altogether.

**Battle by Proxy**

But, even with no alcohol fuelling the encounters between human and object, Busch portrays objects acting with malicious intent, at times fighting battles on behalf of their owners. In *Der Bauer und der Windmüller* (1861), the dejected Farmer of the title returns home with his dead donkey after the local Miller has hanged the animal from the blade of his windmill (*FW* 90, illus. 11). In the next panel, the Farmer’s wife chases her husband through the doorway of their home at the end of a besom, reproaching him for the loss of the animal. Re-emerging with a large M-tooth crosscut saw over his shoulder to ward off her blows, he grabs onto the front handle with both hands and flips the thing up, with the result that one of its teeth scores a direct hit on his wife’s nostril:

![Der Bauer nimmt die Säge
Und wehrt sich ab die Schläge.

Ein Sägezahn trifft ganz genau
In’s Nasenloch der Bauersfrau.](image)

*Fig. 87. Der Bauer und der Windmüller* (1861). *FW* 91.25–28, illus. 13, 14

Now, it could be argued that the saw tooth would have missed her nostril entirely had the Farmer

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206 First published as two instalments in *MBB* 300 (1860): 1–9 and *MBB* 301 (1861): 10–18.

207 Also known as *Quersäge*, *Trummsäge*, or *Ziehsäge*, f., the *M-tooth* (“M-Zähne”) crosscut saw was invented in southern Germany in the latter part of the fourteenth century (Michael and Vachowski 10).
continued to hold onto both ends of the saw, as he did when exiting the house. Still, the tooth is described in human terms as literally hitting its mark (“trifft genau”). In that sense, it is as though the saw tooth acts “accidentally on purpose” (NC 275), effectively fighting the Farmer’s battles for him. If the nose can be said to represent a phallus, as Hans Ries et al. have suggested, then the once-cowed husband sees his everyday woodcutting tool react in a way he himself would like to, effectively “castrating” his wife for emasculating him. As blood gushes from his wife’s nose, the Farmer walks off nonchalantly with his cutting instrument, which he will use to exact revenge by felling the Miller’s establishment.

While readers of the time may have chuckled at the grotesque domestic scene with its familiar, folksy verse, did they question its underlying premise? As Lynn Abrams has written, aggression between spouses in nineteenth-century Germany frequently centred on the allocation of resources within the household and the balance of power therein, leading to taunts, arguments, or even violence (“Martyrs” 365). She adds that domestic tensions like these suggest a shifting balance of power between the sexes as women began to exert control within the home, both economically and socially (365). Seen in this context, the farmer’s reliance on the sharp edge of a ridiculously huge saw to protect himself against his wife’s sharp broom bristles is an amusing portrayal of his ineffectiveness as a patriarch.

In another story, fearsome weapons of old lose their edge over something as “modern” as two ordinary umbrellas. Thus, in Zwei Diebe (1866), the two thieves of the title rob the home of a rich privateer, one with a knife that “laughs at” the victim as he awakens: “Und als der Privatier erwacht, / Ein Messer ihm entgegenlacht” (FW 185.9–10). In the ensuing mêlée, the knife is joined by the privateer’s pistol and sabre, none of which hit their mark, allowing the

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208 See also chap. 2, pp. 31, 47.
thieves to overcome their victim and truss him up like a sausage (188, illus. 11). Wielding two unfurled umbrellas snatched from the closet in which they have taken refuge, the thieves knock over two officers of the law, armed with sword and halberd, as they exit the closet and leap to freedom through the open window (192, illus. 18, 19). But, the improvised parachutes do not act as expected, collapsing during the thieves’ descent and spearing each through the groin with their sharp tips as the intruders land on the ground below (194, illus. 21). As one thief looks miserably at the reader, the narrator “pointedly” remarks, “Punishment never fails!”:

Am Rücken liegt die Polizei,     Doch still! die Strafe fehlet nie!  
Die Diebe stürmen schnell vorbei.     Gesegnet sei das Paraplü!

Fig. 88. Zwei Diebe (1866). FW 192.37–38, illus. 19; 194.41–42, illus. 21

That the privateer and two enforcement officials are so easily overpowered by two members “von der Lumperei” (183.2, illus. 1), that is, from the feared “urban mob and the ‘proletariat’” of post-revolutionary Germany (Blackbourn 114), would likely have caused some disquiet among Busch’s nineteenth-century readership. That the interlopers are literally shafted by two seemingly innocuous household umbrellas, instead of the traditional weaponry of the authorities, would likely have offered a measure of comic relief to middle-class readers with vague concerns about crime and danger in the outside world.

By contrast, another old-fashioned weapon hits its mark, but not before punishing its
vengeful user and his neighbours. In *Fipps, der Affe* (1879), Bauer Dümmel ("Farmer Dimwit") pulls the trigger of the first thing that comes to hand, an old flintlock carbine last used in 1815, just after the German states defeated France, in order to dispatch the simian prankster of the title, who has hidden in a tree: “Schnell faßt er die Flinte, ein Schießeding, / Was da seit anno funfzehn hing” (*SW* 161.503–04; chap. 12). But, the relic of the Napoleonic Wars (*NC* 276) misfires with a loud bang:

As the unexpected recoil of Dümmel’s “Schießeding” ("shooting thing") knocks him onto his backside with a seeming maliciousness, the farmer sets off a domino effect, whereby the village folk lined up behind him fall backwards one by one and spear their derrieres on the sharp tips of the household-objects-cum-weapons that each has brought to poor Fipps’s “lynching” – cobbler’s awl, household shears, and broom bristles (164, illus. 149). In their zeal to silence Fipps for his socially unacceptable behaviour, Dümmel and his cohorts fall victim to the treachery of the objects meant to serve them, suffering a sharp retort and pointed indignities against their persons. That they do not suffer any pricks of conscience at their own brutal response to the annoying antics of a pet monkey is another story altogether.
Myth and Magic

Object treachery is also present in Busch’s reworking of myths, ballads, and fairy tales as they aim to impart lessons on how children, parents, and even lovers should behave. As seen in chapter 3 of this dissertation (pp. 97–98) regarding *Diogenes und die bösen Buben von Korinth* (1862), the two nails protruding from the side of the barrel where the philosopher sleeps are “personified” (Hetzner 24) as they snag the togas of his juvenile tormentors:

The visual effect is enhanced by the heteronyms “Faße” (“barrel”) and “fassen” (“to grab”), where the nails become synonymous with the barrel as they do its bidding. Picking up speed as it spirals down the hill, the barrel squashes the boys “pancake-thin” (“platt gewalzt, wie Kuchen”), bringing them down to earth for their mischief. As David Kunzle has observed, Busch’s readers likely took some sort of vicarious pleasure in viewing the punishment of those acting outside the prescribed rules (*NC* 232), aware that they could meet a similar fate if they did not pay attention.

The author’s pioneering use of gory gags that flatten their characters finds its full expression in the cartoons of Tex Avery (1908–80), Walt Disney (1901–66), and Chuck Jones (1912–2002).  

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210 Examples include Avery’s “Wild and Woolfy” (1945), in which the wolf-villain looks both ways before crossing a desert road, only to be crushed by a speeding car that hurtles out of nowhere. In Disney’s “Touchdown Mickey” (1932), the players on the Alley Cats team are steamrolled by a member of Mickey’s Manglers as the hero races to make a play. In Jones’s “Chariots of Fur” (1994), the body of Wile E. Coyote (i.e., “wily coyote”) is compacted into the shape of an accordion after he succumbs to the forces of gravity and falls to the desert floor below (“Favourite”).
However, the latter pull their punches, as the flattened characters invariably spring back to life.

Compare the crushing of Diogenes’s young tormentors to the world inside out of *Krischan mit der Piepe: Eine Rauchphantasie* from the *Bilderpossen* (1864) series, where various pieces of furniture delight in making the first pipe-smoking experience of the young hero one he will never forget. After Krischan takes a few puffs on his father’s forbidden meerschaum pipe, his head starts to spin as the once-familiar objects in the room – walking stick and umbrella, oven and tongs, night-jacket and chair, table and old *Biedermeier* settee – form grotesque dancing couples, twirling about gaily as if to mock the boy’s growing queasiness:

![Image](image.png)

*Fig. 91. Krischan mit der Piepe (Bilderpossen, 1864). FW 298–99.9–12, illus. 5, 6*

The image is heightened by the anaphoric repetition of the definite Low German article “de” (“der”) of each “couple” in the same dialect of the text: “De Stock […] [d]e Aben […] [d]e
Slaprock [...] de Disch.” When Busch delivered his pencil sketches for the story to his then publisher J. H. Richter of Dresden, he intended that the following image be printed upside down (FW 1257–58). Along with the verse, it illustrates the total upending of the boy’s senses and the creation in his mind of a newly threatening hierarchy of previously “safe” household objects, not to mention the malevolent spirits of “de ole Runkelmunkel” (“old bogeyman,” 300–01.14) and “de swarte Morian” (“black moor,” 300–01.16) visible in the bottom right-hand corner:

Se danzet, dildi, se trampelt, schrum, schrum!
Wupp! dreih sio de ganze Stube um!

Fig. 92. Krischan mit der Piepe (Bilderpossen, 1864). FW 302–03.19–20, illus. 10

For Krischan, we could say that his forbidden experiment in smoking has proven to be “exhausting” in more ways than one.

In chapter 3 of this dissertation (pp. 77–79), we have already seen how, in the story Die Verwandlung (1868), the greedy little boy Karl is turned into a piglet by a witch’s spell and readied for butchering and boiling in a cauldron by her wicked husband. When his sister Ännchen steps into the den of his captor holding aloft her “benignly treacherous” “Wunderblume mit lichtem Schein” (RZ 43.16), the witch recoils in horror, fatally impaling herself on her husband’s knife and knocking him backwards onto a large piece of firewood (shaped like an Ofengabel or “witch’s oven fork,” once associated with superstition and witchcraft; DW 13: 1159) sticking out from under the cauldron, which then launches a stream of boiling water onto
his head and kills him:

Da tritt herein das Ännchen. – Das Schwein quikt [sic] und rennt;  
Die Hexe fällt in’s Messer, der böse Mann verbrennt.  

**Fig. 93. Die Verwandlung** (1868). RZ 44–45.19–20, illus. 13

The gruesome finality of the image – with a judgmental face in the steam – is rendered with a quick climax and anti-climax: “Die Hexe fällt in’s Messer, der böse Mann verbrennt.” Thanks to the “magical agent” (Propp 43) of the *Wunderblume*, a newly animated symbol of Romantic love and longing, a caring young sister frees her brother from his prison of gluttonous misery, while the treachery of objects towards their evil owners saves him from becoming the main ingredient in a witch’s stew. Ännchen keeps her hands clean, allowing the knife and piece of wood to do her dirty work as they demolish the evildoers and their cruelty on her behalf and revive her long-lost sibling. As to where the children’s parents have disappeared, throwing Ännchen into the role of a worried parent when her brother goes missing, is something else altogether.

Even lovers do not manage to escape the treachery of objects meant to glorify them.

Thus, in *Schreckliche Folgen eines Bleistifts* (1860), an unlikely nº 7 graphite pencil (i.e., Eberhard Faber), sharpened at both ends and used by the gifted young artist Pedrillo to draw a portrait of his love interest, pierces his heart and hers when they lock in a passionate embrace:

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211 First published in *FB* 33.792 (1860): 78–79. Busch’s ballad is a parody of the play *Das gebackene Herz* [*The Baked Heart*], written in 1859 by his Jung-München-Verein colleague, Otto Stöger (1833–1900). Stöger was the model for the hero of *Der kleine Maler mit der großen Mappe* (1859), discussed in chap. 3, pp. 126–27. See *FW* 56.
"Au!" schrie plötzlich da Pedrillo,       
Und das Mädchen schrie es auch;       
Tödtlich fielen Beide nieder       
Unter einen Myrthenstrauch. 

Ach! ein Bleistift Nro. 7,       
Den Pedrillo zugespitzt,       
Zugespritzt an beiden Enden,       
Hatte dieses Blut verspritzt. 

**Fig. 94. Schreckliche Folgen eines Bleistifts** (1860). *FW* 59.81–84, illus. 2; 60.93–96, illus. 3

The alliterative combination of “zugespitzt” (“sharpened”), along with the final rhyme of “zugespitzt”/“verspritzt” (“spurted out”), is a humorously catchy reminder of the dangers posed by sharp objects, even those as seemingly harmless as pencils. It would appear that the budding artist has only himself to blame, for had he listened to his teacher, Don Murillo, he would have chosen a safer and more suitable instrument to produce his drawings: “‘Denn ich glaube, daß Du hierin / Sehr auf falschem Wege bist, / Weil es erstens sehr gefährlich, / Zweitens auch nicht nöthig ist’” (58.61–64). As a *Romanzenparodie*, the story sets out to deliberately mock the *Minnelieder aus dem schwäbischen Zeitalter* (1803) by Johann Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853), with their antiquated German verse and scenes of knights defending their ladies’ honour at the end of a lance (1068). Busch’s story uses exaggerated images and *spanischer Romanzenvers* (i.e., trochaic tetrameter), the hallmark of songs and ballads (Frank 110), in order to skewer an old poetic form. Incidentally, the tale marks the first time that Busch used stanzas and refrains (*FW* 56), a rhyming scheme that enables a writer to “work out an argument” (Cuddon 736). It was a model he repeated in *Trauriges Resultat einer vernachlässigten Erziehung* (1860), as well. On the face of things, Busch’s the ballad achieves what Harold Bloom (1930–) calls the objective of all
good poems – the ability to pierce the heart – although the metaphor might be inappropriately
tasteless in the case of Pedrillo and his love interest, who literally “never get over it.”

Equally painful, but not deadly, is the hard graphite “Bleistift Numro 5 von Faber” (SW 547.428) that Kuno uses in Maler Klecksel (1884) in order to poke holes into both the posterior
and the devastating review of the pompous art critic Dr. Hinterstich (“Dr. Stab-in-the-Rear”)
during a humorous pen-and-pencil duel. While not an example of Tücke des Objekts per se, we
could say that the mighty pen has been undone by the lowly pencil, with apologies to Edward
Bulwer-Lytton (1803–73) for updating his adage. Ries et al. speculate that Busch may have
been poking a little fun at himself with the pencil-and-ink fight (FW 1070). Indeed, Busch used
hard graphite Faber pencils to draw the artwork for his illustrations, many of which were so
finely executed that they served as Reinzeichnungen (“final art,” 969) for transfer onto
woodblocks. With the advent of the photomechanical process, the author adopted Feder und
Tusche (“pen and sepia ink”; 1156, 1352, 1468) in order to provide more contrast in his
illustrations, starting with Herr und Frau Knopp (1876), although he continued to carry
sharpened pencils with him at all times in order to make sketches on the spot (1070).

212 In conversation at the 2011 PEN World Voices Festival, Bloom remarked, “If a poem pierces you enough, in the
heart and in the intellect so that you never really get over it, it qualifies as an immortal wound. Shakespeare, or
rather his Hamlet, speaks of ‘wonder-wounded hearers’ and any poet who wounds you by wonder has given you an
immortal wound” (Bloom, n. pag.).

213 In Bulwer-Lytton’s Richelieu; or, The Conspiracy (1839), Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) proclaims to his page,
François, upon learning of the plot of Gaston, Duc d’Orléans (1608–60), the brother of Louis XIII of France (1601–
43), and the King’s equerry, Baradas, to dismiss him: “True, – This! / Beneath the rule of men entirely great / The
pen is mightier than the sword. Behold / The arch-enchanter’s wand! – itself a nothing! – / But, taking sorcery from
the master-hand / To paralyse the Cæsars – and to strike / The loud earth breathless! – Take away the sword – / States
can be saved without it!” (2.2.306–13). The chief minister of Louis XIII from 1624 until his death in 1643,
Richelieu sought to create a place for himself in the annals of history through clever propaganda and extensive
personal archives (Knecht 10).

214 In addition to the ten (now-framed) pencil drawings for Der Kuchenteig (1863), discovered in 2008, I viewed
numerous Bilderhandschriften mit Text (“pencil drawings and text”) at the Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für
Karikatur und Zeichenkunst in Hanover (May 2011). Virtually none have faded with time, although some of the
paper used for the drawings shows signs of “foxing” (i.e., age-related brown spots) and brittleness. For that reason,
drawings for the more popular stories like Max und Moritz (1865) are no longer available for viewing.
Nowhere Safe

But, sharp pencils are not the only objects that get to the point and do harm to their victims. As we have already seen with Busch’s drunken characters, object treachery unleashes some of its worst malevolence in the sanctity of one’s home. Hence, in Der Schreihals (1869/70),\(^\text{215}\) an old-fashioned wick trimmer/candlesnuffer, sitting on a cabinet, inches its way toward the edge, topples over, and makes its way toward baby Willi as his adolescent sister Lina changes him by flickering candlelight (RZ 144–45, illus. 2–4). As soon as she bundles him up in his diaper, he begins to shriek: “Kaum aber schnüret man ihn ein, / So fängt er auch schon an zu schrei’n” (146.9–10). Willi’s cries attract the attention of his concerned father who, over the course of the following panels, attempts to distract him through a variety of tactics that include getting down on all fours (150, illus. 13). When these misguided attempts to soothe his howling son produce no effect, the frustrated father hands his charge back to his wife. A wise old aunt suddenly turns up, removing the offending diaper and uncovering the reason for all the fuss:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{G’rad kommt die Tante auf Visite} & \quad \text{Voll Weisheit öffnet sie den Bund. –} \\
\text{Und ruft erschreckt: “Du meine Güte!” –} & \quad \text{Da haben wir’s! – Das war der Grund! –}
\end{align*}
\]

\textbf{Fig. 95. Der Schreihals (1869/70). RZ 151.31–32, illus. 16; 152.33–34, illus. 17}

Hers is the voice of experience, punctuated by exclamation marks, which lets the family know

what is really going on. As Willi’s clueless parents show deference to the triumphant aunt, Lina, blushing with embarrassment, slinks out through the open doorway (above). That a trusted and useful object like the family’s candlesnuffer manages to find its way into an infant’s diaper and nearly trim his wick, in a manner of speaking, would seem to suggest that even the tiniest of German citizens were at the mercy of malevolent forces in their own homes.

By contrast, the humungous wick trimmer/candlesnuffer of Gaukel-Linchen (1849), appearing in the Münchener Bilderbogen, opens up its jaws and swallows up a little girl, after she ignores her mother’s warning not to put her hand in a candle flame and sets herself alight:

![Image of Gaukel-Linchen](image)

**Fig. 96.** Gaukel-Linchen (1848). MBB 4 (1848): n. pag.

In a cautionary tale of this sort, we would expect a wick trimmer to assume giant proportions and cause serious injury or death to a naughty child. In the Biedermeier setting of Busch’s tale, however, a wick trimmer is the last thing we would expect to find its way into a baby’s diaper, as the infant has not provoked the situation. Thus, it becomes a truly “tückisches Objekt.”

Even a Saturday-night bath turns dangerous when familiar objects get out of hand. In Das Bad am Samstag Abend (1868), the old-fashioned washtub in which the brothers Franz and Fritz take their weekly bath is described as becoming too small for their horsing-around, a

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noticeable occurrence when the image is compared with those that come before it:

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 97. Das Bad am Samstag Abend** (1868). RZ 58–59.21–24, illus. 11, 12

As the maid Lene returns to investigate the ruckus, the tub overturns and ejects the pair, thereby launching a chain reaction involving household objects that instantly turn from useful to dangerous. Thus, Fritz knocks over the table, tipping the steaming contents of two cups onto Lene’s feet and burning his behind on the lit candle, while Franz falls with his rear-end against the hot stove, knocking both it and the pitcher of hot water onto the head of the unfortunate maid (above). These disastrous events would seem to support Pietzcker’s claim that many of the objects in Busch’s picture stories are jolted into action by human characters (16; qtd. in SW 867).

Yet, the fact that so many ordinary household objects, once set in motion, appear to gang up on unsuspecting victims in their homes would seem to be Busch’s commentary on the sorry reality that no one was immune to events in the outside world.

Nowhere is this troubling fact more apparent than in those stories where citizens are shown reading in the supposed safety of their bedrooms (NC 262). In “Nächtliche Politik” from Der Geburtstag oder Die Partikularisten (1873), the partisan Bürgermeister and Welfenhaus
supporter\textsuperscript{217} is shown perusing the (short-lived) weekly \textit{Deutsche Latern}\textsuperscript{218} by flickering candlelight, growing visibly angry at the reports of Bismarck’s victories in the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71): “Daß nämlich, wie die Sachen liegen, / Die Preußen nächstens Schläge kriegen. – / Nur Einer macht ihm stilles Graun – / Der Bismarck [sic], dem ist nicht zu traun!” (\textit{RZ} 471.74–77). As he falls asleep under the influence of his customary brandy, his nightcap lists toward the candle flame:

\textit{Na, na! das giebt noch ein Malör! – Die Zippelkappe neigt sich sehr. –}

\textit{Die Obrigkei t bemerkt es nicht. –}

\textbf{Fig. 98.} “Nächtlliche Politik” (\textit{Der Geburtstag oder Die Partikularisten}, 1873). \textit{RZ} 472.82–83, illus. 15; 473.86–87, illus. 17

The unlucky “Authority” (“Obrigkei t”) wakes up to a fire raging on top of his head covering, but, after observing his empty washbasin with dismay (475, illus. 20), he quickly immerses his head in his partially full chamber pot (475, illus. 21), subjecting himself to what Bakhtin might suggest to be a “harmless incident” to avoid direct portrayals of events taking place at the time (\textit{RZ} 168).

\textsuperscript{217} As Ries et al. note, the mayor and the other characters in the story are \textit{Partikularisten} or supporters of the \textit{Welfenhaus} (“House of Guelph”) of the former Kingdom of Hanover, forcibly annexed by the Prussian forces in 1866, along with Austria, Saxony, and Bavaria. As a result, George V of Hanover (1819–78) lost his throne, whereupon the \textit{Welfenhaus} supporters regrouped under the banner of the German-Hanover Party, swearing allegiance to the king, now exiled in Austria, and keeping alive hopes for his resurgence (\textit{RZ} 460). Although Busch generally steered clear of politics, with few references in his letters to the events of the day (168, 178), the editors suggest that the comical situations in the story allow him to ridicule the members of the \textit{Particularist} forces, each bound up in his or her own material interests (460).

\textsuperscript{218} Edited by Friedrich Stoltze (1816–91), the \textit{Deutsche Latern [German Lamp]} was a short-lived humorous-satirical weekly (Galway 222), in which Busch published \textit{Wie man Napoliums macht} (23 Oct. 1870, spec. issue 1: 1), \textit{Auch der edeligt seine italienische Frage} (30 Oct. 1870, spec. issue 2: 1), and, in the same issue, \textit{Der alte gute Leibzüchter}. Indeed, note Ries et al., the texts never rise above “das Niveau eines Kalauers” (“the level of a corny joke”) as they rely heavily on overt satire. He goes on to say that Busch did not consider himself a political caricaturist per se, using a “harmless incident” to avoid direct portrayals of events taking place at the time (\textit{RZ} 168).
call a “gross debasement” (*RW* 147). In the heat of the moment, intones the text, there is a first time for everything.\(^{219}\) Can we say that events of the day have transpired to first ignite the passions and then douse the zeal of this ill-fated newspaper reader?

The same risk of fire is seen in *Fipps, der Affe*, where the housemaid Jette (abbr. “Henriette/Hendrike,” *SW* 118) falls asleep next to a burning candle as she reads the *Gartenlaube,\(^{220}\)* a popular nineteenth-century family magazine. The flame reaches out toward the corner of the publication, before igniting her bed curtain and coverlet: “Erst brennt nur die Zeitungsecke, / Dann der Vorhang, dann die Decke” (149–50.443–44; chap. 11). Engulfed in flames, Jette has no choice but to jump out of her bedroom window into the rain barrel below, her shift turned inside out with just her petticoat to shield her modesty (152, illus. 126, 127). Again, we see that the pretence and presumed security of *Biedermeier* house and home was just that, an illusion. In an age where print media was heavily censored, Jette’s post-revolutionary magazine provides innocuous articles on the latest discoveries in science, literature, and art. It may provide cheap entertainment, but it does not hold a candle to the political newspapers and magazines of the time that ignited the passions of their readers – literally, in the case of the newspaper-reading Mayor. Yet, the maid’s publication falls victim to the open flame, as well, serving as a cruel reminder that all attempts at feigning political ignorance and retreating to an imaginary idyll of lost times was just as futile as trying to make sense of it all.

**Risqué Business**

Speaking of private spaces, treacherous objects go even so far as to punish forbidden

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\(^{219}\)”In Ängsten findet manches statt, / Was sonst nicht stattgefunden hat” (*RZ* 475.94–95).

\(^{220}\) As Karin Friedrich writes, the *Gartenlaube [The Arbour]* was a typical product of the Restoration period, introducing a new kind of journalism that went out of its way to avoid censorship and confiscation (101). With the popularization of science, literature, and art for the whole family, the *Gartenlaube* had a weekly circulation of 100,000 in 1860, she notes, rising to 382,000 issues per week by 1875 (101). Along with *Über Meer und Meer*, the publication was one of the most important family magazines of the time (*SW* 149).
sexual curiosity or to reveal naughty desires. As seen in chapter 3 of this dissertation, Hermine, the heroine of “Die Kirmeß” (Dideldum! 1874), attempts to climb the wine trellis running up the wall to her parents’ bedroom window after spending the night at a forbidden country dance, whereupon the top horizontal slat breaks under her weight, leaving her hanging on the trellis post (RZ 577, illus. 26; p. 110). Hermine’s breaking of the slat plays on the expression den Stab über jemanden brechen (“to condemn someone”), an allusion to the seventeenth-century judicial practice whereby a stick was broken above the head of an individual condemned to death as a signal that his or her life had come to its end (Goethe 383:198.4587–95). Today, the expression means to condemn or damn someone for his or her behaviour. In the context of the story, we could say that the trellis censures Hermine’s sexual curiosity by unleashing a humorous chain of events at the end of which she is pricked in a delicate place by the thorns of the rose bush. Hermine’s antics provide fodder for the local gossips, for, as she hangs on the trellis post, a Moritz look-alike signals the neighbours to join him at the garden fence to tut-tut at her behaviour as they secretly delight in it (578, illus. 27; p. 110).

In the same vein, a treacherous watering can trips up the heroine of Die Fromme Helene for her sexual curiosity in the episode “Vetter Franz,” its spout doubling in length as she observes her cousin through the keyhole of the second-storey guest room as he awakens, performs his morning ablutions, and dresses himself (RZ 239–45, illus. 17–30; chap. 3). After Franz lights his meerschaum pipe and opens the door, Helene turns to rush off, but not before “Old Sprinkler” snags her foot and sends her tumbling down the staircase: “Plemm!! stößt sie an die alte Brause, / Die oben steht im Treppenhause” (246.131–32). In her trajectory downward,

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221 Moritz, of course, is one of the two heroes of Max und Moritz (1865), who is always looking for “something to do” (“Was ist hier jetzt wohl zu thun?” FW 333.38).
Helene drags the maid Hannchen in her wake as the watering can continues to discharge its seemingly limitless contents over both of them:

Fig. 99. “Vetter Franz” (Die Fromme Helene, 1872). RZ 247.133–34, illus. 33; 249.137–38, illus. 35

The pair knocks over Helene’s aunt at the bottom of the steps, causing her coffee pot to dump its scalding contents onto the backside of Onkel Nolte (above). Franz mockingly observes the action from his perch on the landing as he smokes his pipe, its bowl suggestively elongated as if to reflect his incipient manhood, just as the long spout of the watering can and its voluminous discharge hints at his youthful stamina. With her desires suddenly quenched, so to speak, Helene will have to wait for another opportunity to take advantage of Franz’s promise of love.

By comparison, the male hero of “Der Zylinder” from the Dideldum! series gets off relatively lightly when he loses his top hat (and his head) to the well-turned calf and derriere of a female passerby, as seen in chapter 2 of this dissertation (p. 44). This time, it is two coat tails that salaciously mirror the ardour of their owner, “lifting themselves gently upward and fraternally westward” in the wind: “So daß die beiden langen Spitzen, / Die hinten an dem Fracke sitzen, / Mit leichtem Schwunge sich erheben / Und brüderlich nach Westen streben –” (RZ 582–83.11–
14). As the wind catches the hero’s top hat and sends it spiralling through the mud/muck that covers the road, a carriage wheel plays mischief as it “scores a hit” and “grabs” the hat firmly: “Oh weh, da trifft und faßt ihn grad, / Doch nur am Rand, ein Droschkenrad” (585.27–28; ital. mine). The hat decides to get in on the fun as it “joyously” quickens its pace, turning “busily” in pretty circles to evade Joseph’s grasp: “Jetzt eilt er wieder schnell und heiter / In schönen Kreisen emsig weiter” (585.29–30; ital mine). To add insult to injury, even the mud ferments, doubling in volume as Joseph slides facedown through it (586, illus. 10, 11).

As visual metaphors for male arousal, vulnerability, and dirty thoughts, the stiff coat tails, missing hat, and seething mud prompt a mild tut-tutting from the townsfolk, not the outright condemnation seen with Hermine and Pious Helene. Indeed, the divergent view of male and female sexuality and propriety in nineteenth-century Germany was based on a double standard whereby men were granted “occasional indiscretions,” while women were “idealized as sexually passive, obedient, chaste, and motherly” (Fout 408). As Linda Kraus Worley explains, this ideology of a dual Geschlechtscharakter (“sexual character”) ruled throughout the era, making its way into novels, etiquette manuals, popular magazines, and school/family instruction (195). Whereas middle-class men were raised to act rationally in the world at large, she notes, middle-class women were restricted to the private sphere, where they were expected to devote themselves to their families (195). Kraus Worley goes on to say that part of female indoctrination included the violent repression of sexual urges (199). Busch mirrors this duality with humour, letting the objects do the talking by exposing both female and male desire.

222 In her article, Kraus Worley explores the duality of male and female behaviour and desire with regards to two heroines of nineteenth-century German literature: Agathe Heidling in Aus guter Familie: Leidensgeschichte eines Mädchens (1895) by Gabriele Reuter (1859–1941); and Tony Buddenbrook in Die Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie (1901) by Thomas Mann (1875–1955). Both heroines are treated as children and “sexless” creatures. For example, Agathe’s father takes away a volume of poetry by Georg Herwegh (1817–75), presented as a Confirmation gift, due to an “anstößige Stelle, die sie verfolgte” (“juicy passage that pursues her,” 8), as part of his mission to keep her pure (199). Tony’s father tells her that she is a “mere child” (“Du bist ein Kind […]; 105; ital. and ellipsis in orig.), who must fulfill the family’s wishes by entering into a loveless marriage with Grünlich (203).
Object treachery can also be seen as a way of alluding to what many considered to be outré behaviour, as the following example makes clear. In the evocatively named “Eheliche Ergötzlichkeiten” or “Marital Deliciousness” (Herr und Frau Knopp, 1876), a post-coital Frau Dorette lovingly surveys the comically changing expressions made by the enormous folds of fabric in the seat of her husband Knopp’s trousers, coyly referred to as a “Beinbekleidungsstück” or “leg covering” in order to poke fun at propriety: “Gern wendet Frau Doris anitzo den Blick / Auf Knopp sein Beinbekleidungsstück, / Welches ihr immer besonders gefiel / Durch Ausdruck und wechselndes Mienenspiel” (RZ 698.85–88). Indeed, the very human emotions of “fierceness and vexation,” “grief and worry,” “pride,” “arrogance,” and, finally, “beaming contentment,” become progressively visible in the shifting creases of the “noble countenance” of Herr Knopp’s trousers as he performs his morning ablutions:

![Image](image-url)

Fig. 100. “Eheliche Ergötzlichkeiten” (Herr und Frau Knopp, 1876). RZ 698–701.89–102, illus. 9–14
Here, Busch uses several tricks with regards to language, rhythm, and metrical patterns. First, he chooses nouns relating to human emotions to describe the patterns made on the trousers. Next, he reinforces the effect by using two binomial pairs (e.g., “Grimm und Verdrüß”/“Gram und Bekümmernuß”), with the added bonus that the half rhymes “Grim” and “Gram” are alliterative. Additionally, he uses three anaphoras, that is, the repetition of the identical adverb “bald” (“soon”) at the beginning of the first three lines to link all of the subsequent emotions. Yet, by the fifth line, the anaphora moves to second position following the conjunction “aber” (“but”), marking a change from arrogance to a gradual softening of the heart and finally to radiating pleasure. It is as if the reader is seeing a metaphorical rendering of the sexual act in cloth. Busch links his progression of images using Paarreime (“rhyming couplets”) for the first eight lines (aabbccddd), with a final Waise (“thorn line”) to depict Frau Dorette’s joy at her husband’s pleasure (“Dorettens Freude hierüber ist groß”). Furthermore, the lines end on a stressed syllable. In poetic terms, this is known as a männliche Kadenz (“masculine rhyme”), reflecting the decisiveness of the male subject on the seat of his pants, although, in Frau Dorette’s case, we could say that the rhyming scheme underscores her very real joy. Similarly, her husband will take pleasure in her “rear view” as she dresses herself (above). All in all, the images and verse work together to intensify the humour, as they paint an intimate portrayal of married life, a definite novelty at the time the picture story was written.

**Dough Boys**

Finally, there is one last category of object that acts to both tantalize and sicken unsuspecting characters: everyday foodstuffs. Thus, a restaurant scene in *Der neidische Handwerksbursch* (1867) shows a large gentleman tucking into a whole roast chicken, with

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223 First published in *MBB* 436 (1867).
cartoonish odour lines wafting across the table to tickle the nostrils of the very skinny, hungry, and bug-eyed Envious Journeyman of the title:

The journeyman finally gives up and takes his leave, paying his measly three silver “Kreuzer” (537.15) to the tavern-owner – a mere drop in the bucket compared to the three “Thaler” (538.17) paid by the Fat Man.\(^\text{224}\) Ironically, the ravenous apprentice soon forgets his troubles during a siesta in sweet-smelling meadow hay (“Der Handwerksbursche froh und frei, / Ruht sanft im duft’gen Wiesenheu,” 539.21–22), while the Fat Man spends the rest of the day bemoaning his “gouty” leg (“Der Dicke aber – autsch! mein Bein! – / Hat wieder heut’ das Zipperlein,” 539.23–24).\(^\text{225}\) While exaggerated for the purposes of the story, the poverty of the journeyman, made comical by the cheerfully folksy iambic tetrameter (\(\text{x/ x/ x/ x/}\)) of the lines, would seem to point to the deteriorating prospects for apprentices and journeymen in an era where the factory had supplanted the guild system. As Blackbourn has written, the increased competition from female sweatshop labour, rural outworkers, financially constrained masters

\(^{224}\) In simple monetary terms, 60 Kreuzer = 1 Gulden and 1¼ Gulden = 1 Thaler. Until it became obsolete in 1871 with the introduction of the Deutsch Mark, the Kreuzer was in use in Upper Italy, Southern Germany (Bavaria, Schwabia, Rheinland, Franconia, Bohemia, Silesia), as well as Austria (Krünitz 49: 374–75).

\(^{225}\) The now-obsolete term Zipperlein, n. (“Podagra” or “gout”), comes from the old verbs zippern and zippeln (“to twitch” or “to tremble”), and is akin to zucken and zupfen (“to twitch”), in order to describe the burning sensation of the inflammation. See Adelung 4: 1723–24; also DW 31: 1564–69.
providing piecework, and craftsmen working under contract to merchant capitalists, journeymen found themselves at loose ends, suffering underemployment and insecurity (85–86). Yet, the rotund gentleman may have more to worry about over the long run. While he may not want for material things, he clearly suffers from gout or “the monarch’s disease” (Porter and Rousseau 173). It is what Bakhtin terms a “gay disease” as the result of overindulgence in food and drink (RW 161), which can lead to chronic kidney failure, as well as heart and circulatory problems (Kaiser 428). But, the reader cannot say that the gastronome has not been warned. Indeed, the roast chicken he devours suggests a grinning skull, while its detached legs look like crossbones, if the reader looks closely enough (illus. 3, above). With the ends of the napkin raised about the Fat Man’s lowered head like a couple of pig’s ears, the image of gluttony is made complete.

Edibles and their containers also engage in hand-to-hand-combat as they provide handy ammunition and punish a nosy neighbour. Thus, in Plisch und Plum (1882), an everyday stool, a pot, and the porridge itself deliberately add a little mischief to the canine-heroes’ fight over the favours of the local Fifi dog as they race into the Fittig kitchen: “Schemel, Topf und Kuchenbrei / Mischt sich in die Beißerei –” (SW 397.221–22; chap. 6). With that is unleashed a disastrous chain of events at the end of which the boys and their dogs upend the “köstliche[r] Salat” (399.232) that Mama Fittig (“Mama Light-Wit”) has prepared for dinner (illus. 74). That is not, however, the end of the food fight, for as Papa Fittig spies the dog’s former owner Kaspar Schlich (“Caspar Sneak-About”) gloating over the mayhem, he dumps his wife’s piping-hot omelette onto the head of his neighbour like a kind of “Pfannenkuchenmütze” (“pancake cap,” 403.248) whose “tentacles” ooze downward. With a “burning” reminder of the consequences of relentless kibbitzing, Schlich is invited to think twice about minding his own business.

226 The mischievous napkin with its tied ends forming pig’s ears also marks Herr Knopp as a glutton as he gorges on Frau Dorette’s Pfannkuchen (Cremer 85; Mihr 136; Rohse 27; Ueding, Wilhelm 116; qtd. in RZ 706–77, illus. 21).
But, in the food sweepstakes, it is the picture stories featuring cake or bread dough, acting in unexpected ways to entrap and bury the curious or the unsuspecting, that are at once humorous and vaguely troubling. Rather than letting the mass of flour and yeast ferment undisturbed after it has been kneaded and placed in a warm, draft-free trough by industrious wives and mothers, the male protagonists seem to be drawn toward it, stepping into it, sleeping in it, sampling it, and even accidentally tumbling into it. In the captionless pencil drawings of Der Kuchenteig (1863), the tale opens with the young hero observing his mother, with his tongue hanging out, as she kneads cake dough in a long wooden trough characteristic of the time (9, illus. 1). Ignoring her warning to behave as she leaves the room for a moment, he smiles and waves knowingly at the reader (9, illus. 2), thereby signalling that he is just about to do the opposite. The boy then stands on a chair and sticks his finger into the fermenting dough, pulling up a strand to his mouth (10, illus. 3). Losing his balance, he is sucked into the depths of the heaving mass before regaining his footing in the trough, covered in dough from the top of his cowlick to the bottom of his toes, and leaving a telltale paste dripping from his arms and fingertips (6, illus. 11):

![Fig. 102. Der Kuchenteig (1863). Illus. 3, 6](image)

Mother screams in horror at the strange apparition as he exits the trough and walks away, leaving a sticky trail in his wake (11–12, illus. 6–7). Suddenly materializing on the scene, Father pulls him up by the hair as Mother wraps her arms tightly around her son’s body in order to scrape away the remaining dough from his limbs (12, illus. 8). Mother completes the cleaning job on
Junior in the bath tub with a twig broom, working it like a butter churn in order to scrub away the vestiges of dough from his exposed legs (13, illus. 9). In the final panel, Father takes him behind the cupboard to deliver the requisite caning as Mother re-kneads the remaining dough (13, illus. 10). Thus, one boy’s attempt to ferment chaos in his mother’s kitchen succeeds in simultaneously getting a rise out of the dough and raising the ire of his father.

It is a humorous picture story that features all of the hallmarks of Busch’s bad-boy tales: wilful disobedience, forbidden behaviour, and punishment at the end. Yet, Der Kuchenteig never made it into print. Sometime before 1865, Busch sent the ten-panel picture story to the Historische Druckerei Seidel of Sulzbach-Rosenberg (east of Nuremberg) for one of its many calendar publications, where it was set aside and forgotten, until it was discovered by chance in 2008. Busch curator Ruth Brunngraber-Malottke (Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst) speculates that one of two things happened: either there was no agreement on the fee or the publisher had doubts about the story, particularly with regards to its aufmüpfige Kinder or “mischievous children” (“Der Kuchenteig,” par. 4). Indeed, the story was created at a time when children’s socially improper behaviour was routinely quashed and denounced in books like Der Struwwelpeter (1845), with its grotesque images of the punishment children could expect for poor personal hygiene and unruly behaviour.

Based on the drawing style, subject matter, facial expressions, and the trademark Moritz-Tolle (“Moritz cowlick”) of the protagonist, Brunngraber-Malottke acknowledges that Der Kuchenteig inspired the Sixth Trick of Busch’s breakthrough Max und Moritz published just two years later (“Der Kuchenteig,” par. 7). Here again, the dough plays a starring role. The episode begins with the hungry rascals breaking into the Baker’s premises through his open chimney during Easter weekend in order to nab a few delicious treats. After falling into a box of flour on
the hearth and turning “chalk-white”, they make their way toward the sugar pretzels or
“Bretzeln”\textsuperscript{227} (sic; \textit{FW} 372.354) on a shelf far above their heads. But, the chair onto which they
climb to grab the treats breaks in two under their collective weight, causing them to tumble
backwards into a trough of rising cake dough. As the miscreants stand before the reader with
dough pooling onto the floor, they present a “Jammerbild,” a picture dripping with misery:

![Image of the boys tumbling into a trough of dough]

\textit{Fig. 103. “Sechster Streich” (\textit{Max und Moritz}, 1865). FW 373.356, illus. 75; 374.357–58, illus. 76}

Seizing his chance, the Baker scoops up the boys, rolls them into loaves, and bakes them in his
oven until they turn “braun und gut” (“brown and good,” 376.366). Yet, the boys thwart his
intentions, eating their way out of the crust (377, illus. 82). Ironically, the coating of flour on
their skin and clothes prevents the batter from sticking as they bake, thereby insulating them
from the heat of the oven and, in metaphorical terms, from the heat of the Baker’s anger.

The amusing images have delighted readers from the time the story was published,\textsuperscript{228} yet
they conceal a darker message. Indeed, countless children from the underclasses, like Max and
Moritz, ran riot during the pre- and post-revolutionary years due to the straitened economic
circumstances of their parents (Schlumbohm 84–85). Many of them went hungry and, with no

\textsuperscript{227} In this instance, Busch uses the older spelling \textit{Bretzeln}, m., rather than \textit{Brezeln}. See \textit{DW} 2: 379; qtd. in \textit{FW} 372.

\textsuperscript{228} \textit{Max und Moritz} met with immediate success, selling 4,000 copies during its first publication. By the time of
Busch’s death in 1908, the story had been translated into eleven languages and published in 56 German editions
numbering roughly 430,000 copies (Galway 29n5).
concern shown by their more fortunate neighbours, stole food wherever they could. To that end, the sugar pretzels play a special role in the tale. As a typical Lenten treat of the time, their “crossed arms” form the symbol of penitence (g. “Brezeln,” it. “bracciatelli” or “little arms,” 1300; also DW 2: 379). In their state of hunger, the boys feel no regret whatsoever for their act of near theft. Yet, the smug townsfolk are just as remorseless, gleefully cheering the end of two mischief-makers and their shenanigans, instead of asking what part they played in it all.

Dough also lies in wait to entrap the unwary, particularly after a long night of drinking. In “Eine milde Geschichte” (Die Haarbeutel), Bauer Bunke (“Farmer Boor”)\(^{229}\) hunkers down for the night in the dough-trough-cum-bed whose delightful softness nuzzles his head, body, and feet: “Oh, wie wonnig schmiegt das Mus / Sich um Kopf, Leib, Hand und Fuß” (SW 33.19–20). That is, until the dough covers his mouth and cuts off his air, causing him the fright of his life: “Doch, wie sich der Mund bedeckt, / Wird er ängstlich aufgeschreckt” (33–34.21–22).

Struggling to free himself, he lands in a doughy heap on the floor with the upside-down trough positioned on his back like a turtle shell and the remainder of the dough spilling onto the floor, before finally managing to catch his breath:

![Fig. 104. “Eine milde Geschichte” (Die Haarbeutel, 1878). SW 35.27–28, illus. 14; 36.31–34, illus. 16](image)

\(^{229}\) *Bunke* is a nickname for “Buno” or “Buniko” (Bahlow 85), related to Middle Low German *bunk* or *Knochen*, m. (Lübben 70), with the meaning of *ungeschliffener Mensch* or *Flegel*, m. (“boor”), in Schleswig-Holstein and North Harz German (i.e., *grober Klotz, Knochen*; Mensing 1: 585; also Zoder 1: 326). Qtd. in SW 29.
Thus, he ruins its nutritious and life-sustaining qualities, not to mention the labour involved in creating it, as the giant tear on his wife’s face shows all too well. The story is a distant echo of *Die Täuschung* (1859), a two-panel story commissioned from Busch at the beginning of his career, where a distraught farmer’s wife discovers her drunken husband sitting up in a trough filled with dough, his trousers and empty wine bottle lying on the floor beside him:

![Illustration of a story](image)

Wo die Bäuerin [sic] am anderen Morgen ihren spät aus dem Wirthshause zurückgekehrten Mann findet.

**Fig. 105.** *Die Täuschung* (1859). *FW* 23, illus. 2; also *FB* 31.745 (1859): 118

Illustrated to accompany text by an anonymous writer, Busch’s story is based on *De Köster up de Kindelbier* (“Der Küster auf dem Kindelbier,” 1853) by Fritz Reuter (1810–74), in which a drunken peasant at a baptism party (*Kindelbier*, n.) mistakes a pile of pig manure in his neighbour’s barn for a nice, warm bed (1028). No doubt tidied up for the genteel readership of the *Fliegende Blätter* where it first appeared, the author’s version, with its realistic illustrations and earnest prose, mocks stereotypical peasant stupidity. It contains none of the subtle humour of “Eine milde Geschichte,” with its humorously animated dough and “cartoony” images of the drunken German everyman, with whom male readers could still identify, regardless of class.

**Social Ferment**

While examples of *Tücke des Objekts* are extremely rare in the *Fliegende Blätter* and
Münchener Bilderbogen, I did find two single panels featuring dough or dough-like substances. Busch’s early illustration Der reinliche Swinegel oder irregelte Reinlichkeit (1862), a peasant farmer wipes his wooden clogs on a cheese pastry cooling on a baker’s doorstep, as he remarks on its softness in Low German:

“Dat Ding is weech!” sagte der Bauer, als er zum Stadtbäcker kam, und hielt einen zur Abkühlung vor die Thüre gestellten Quarkkuchen für den Strohteller oder Abtreter.

Fig. 106. Der reinliche Swinegel oder irregelte Reinlichkeit (1862). FW 778

Scenes of contact between peasant and middle-class citizens like these were common in the post-revolutionary era, as Blackbourn has noted, with the rapid urbanization of Germany, despite the best efforts of the petty bourgeoisie to keep its distance (163–64). With its clichéd portrayal of a daft-looking peasant, reinforced by the pejorative term Swinigel (“hedgehog,” fig. “nichtswürdigen, verkommenen Menschen” or “worthless individual,” Adelung 3: 173–74), the panel falls into the category of corny, illustrated visual puns for which the Fliegende Blätter was famous. Ries et al. have attributed the text to Busch, given that the title and the reported speech of the peasant appear in Low German and that the story involves the motif of rising dough (FW 778). That may be true, although there are examples of strips by contributors other than Busch

that appear in dialect. Still, it may be unfair to blame the peasant, as the cheese pastry lies where a doormat normally would, making it a reasonable target for a pair of dirty shoes. Perhaps he has grown tired of being treated like a doormat by his social superiors and has decided to get his own back. Yet, the fact that the cheese pastry stands between the inner sanctum of the petty bourgeoisie and the outside world of the peasant may contain a subtle allusion to the shifting ground of nineteenth-century German society, as seen in the following panel of the time.

In *Nomen et omen* (1885) by Busch contemporary Adolf Oberländer, we see a haut-bourgeois gentleman, with top hat, pocket watch, umbrella, and a fine suit of clothes, wading through what appears to be a roiling sea of dough-like mud in the *Münchner Burgfrieden* (i.e., the area outside the former city walls of Munich leading to the Isar River), totally oblivious to what is going on around him, with the exclamation, “So! So! Nun weiß ich doch auch, was das heißt: Weichbild der Stadt!”:

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 107. Omen et Nomen** (1885). *FB* 82.2071: 110; also *OA* 48

The single panel is a play on the words contained in the compound noun *Weichbild*, n. (lit. “soft
picture”), that is, the fringe area running outside a town that, in feudal times, was governed by its own set of laws. In Oberländer’s portrayal, however, the outskirts of Munich have turned into the visual pun of a soft picture, with mud burying individuals and animals alike as they struggle to pass through it. Thus, we see a pair of upside-down boots with no owner in sight, an abandoned umbrella, a pair of upturned legs, an unfortunate dog with its hindquarters sticking up into the air, and a half-buried young girl wearing a straw hat and raising her arms for help. On the sidelines, a soldier struggles to pull a woman from the mess. Yet, the rich gentleman remains curiously untouched by the mayhem around him. Is he among the industrialists or businessmen responsible for the growing prosperity of Germany? Indeed, he seems somewhat unconcerned about the welfare of his fellow citizens as he continues on his way. Then again, these latter-day Weichbildleute or inhabitants of the new Vorstädte (“inner suburbs”) may simply be stick-in-the-muds, unable or unwilling to change with the times.

Summary

As the first pictorial strips to feature Tücke des Objekts, Busch’s picture stories portray objects mocking and deriding the pretensions (and best intentions) of their victims, from pieces of furniture that trip up drunken owners and umbrellas that fight battles for their owners, to nails that punish childish shenanigans. Objects even injure their victims at home, from an old-fashioned candlesnuffer stabbing the bottom of a helpless infant inside his tiny diaper to a treacherous candle flame that purposely leans toward the reading material of slumbering citizens in bed. Together, they suggest that individuals like those in the stories were powerless against the forces of the day, even within the supposed sanctity of their own homes.

A trellis punishes its victim for her forbidden sexual curiosity, while a mischievous...
watering can douses the ardour of an adolescent girl awakened to the charms of the opposite sex, and a mischievous top hat demeans a devout parishioner caught peeking at a shapely posterior. Even the very staff of life – rising bread – bubbles up to entrap mischievous boys or unwary drunks who mistake its pillowy softness for a feather bed. But, while some of the carnivalesque aspects of Busch’s picture stories are intended to ridicule and degrade their victims, others regenerate, like the enormous trousers’ bottom that gets into the honeymoon mood, mirroring the contentment of a newlywed owner with his adoring wife. In an age where graphic references to sexual and bedroom behaviour were a rarity, Busch uses the “material bodily principle” of the carnival as he shows universal truths representing one and all (RW 18–19).

To mock a character’s dilemma when faced with treacherous objects, the author does two things. He uses “cartoony” images, exaggerating some objects to ridiculous proportions and shrinking others to near oblivion, in order to underline the humour and the absurdity of the situation. Then, he pairs his images with old metric verse forms that, with their “feigned formality,” succeed in poking fun at the action. In many instances, image and word function singly or in tandem to create original live metaphors, or, to put it another way, revive dead metaphors that have lost their initial meaning and vibrancy through repetition. To that end, objects are portrayed and described as goading, grabbing, snagging, pricking, and smothering their helpless victims. We see no real equivalent of Tücke des Objekts on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter and other magazines of the time, where objects tend to act as incidental props, although there is a glimmer of life in some objects, like the windows in the city houses that “gaze” at a drunken carouser as he wends his way home, and the dough-like ground covering of

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232 Appearing in the French humour magazine Chat Noir, the strip Bonheur passe richesse [Happiness Surpasses Riches], 1883, by Adolphe-Léon Willette (1857–1926) shows Pierrot in one panel seducing a young bourgeois wife in her bedroom as her husband reads the newspaper in the adjoining panel. Thus, the impoverished hero temporarily escapes his life of poverty with his wife and three children, albeit for a short time (NC 196–97).
Munich suburbs that entraps a few unwary citizens. As citizens like those in Busch’s stories sought to cope with the fallout of the revolution by retreating to the imagined sanctity of house and home, they were powerless to stop the forces of the outside world, including growing industrialization and the resulting alienation of humankind from the objects meant to serve it. But, whereas Vischer’s protagonist “A. E.” deals with treacherous objects by swearing at them and destroying them whenever the opportunity presents itself, Busch’s characters are generally undone by the objects they encounter, in a case of Resistentialismus gone wild. By revolutionizing the portrayal of object treachery, the author reflects the powerlessness that German citizens felt living in an economically, socially, and politically repressive society, and provides a welcome laugh from the hopelessness of it all.
CHAPTER 6: “WORLD-UPSIDE-DOWN THEORY EXCLUSIVE TO BUSCH”

With the revolution violently subdued by reactionary governments looking to re-establish their authority, the beleaguered German public beat a hasty retreat to the memory of a halcyon Biedermeier era where all knew their place and acted accordingly. Yet, as they sought to insulate themselves from the stresses of crumbling social and economic structures brought about by rapid industrialization, increasing urbanization, the fall of the aristocracy, and the subsequent rise of a flourishing new Mittelstand, citizens like those in Wilhelm Busch’s picture stories were fighting a rearguard action. The metaphorical horse had started to nudge open the barn door – albeit only a crack – to the very notion of women’s equality and a changing perception of children, from obedient charges to mischievous upstarts, as well as proxies for frustrated adults giving expression to their own frustrated revolutionary impulses. As if upsetting social rank was not enough, Darwinian science mocked the presumption of mankind’s once universally accepted biological superiority, just as Schopenhauer’s notion of the will to live and overriding ego pointed to a depressing capacity for unlimited Bosheit in man and animal alike. Resistentialism oblige, objects acted against humans even within the confines of their own four walls, underscoring the shifting sociological and political winds against which citizens like those in Busch’s stories were all but defenceless.

In any society that trots out the predictable clichés of the good old days as it tries to ignore all that is happening around it, the trick is always to mirror the realities of the time in a way that does not cause offence. To that end, Busch rose to fame with the folksy medium of the woodcut print, once used to disseminate religious and social tracts to the public, creating distinctively amusing caricatures of anyone and everyone, along with humorous verse and aphorisms based on mock-formal poetic forms. In this way, the author manages to tell stories
that both entertain and inform readers from all classes. Golo Mann recognizes Busch’s genius in creating sympathy, not rancour, for his characters, as they reflect the foibles and shortcomings of nineteenth-century German society in a brutally honest yet pleasing way. Similarly, Hans Joachim Neyer singles out the author’s unparalleled brilliance in forcibly opening the eyes of his readers to their deeds and actions because that is what they wanted. Indeed, as he takes on an array of once-inviolable political, social, and cultural sacred cows, Busch uses a “funny way of being serious” (Galway 56) in his picture stories. While Busch may not have been personally acquainted with Mikhail Bakhtin, the author presages Bakhtin’s carnivalesque worldview, becoming a kind of court jester who affords the reader “moments of clarity” (Fox 142) in order to portray the subjugation of once-powerful figures of authority and elevate formerly oppressed characters, much like the modern-day political comedy hosts Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. Lest readers feel excessively discomfited by the subversive nature of Busch’s role reversals or challenges to authority, the author’s child and animal characters, the lowest “creatures” in terms of rank, are usually brought back to heel by the last panel of the story, suffering a punishment that is frequently disproportionate to the severity of their transgressions. But, as the world of the miscreant is turned from upside down to right side up, so that the world has returned to where it was before in an effort to uphold traditional morality, Busch sheds an uncomfortable light on adult hypocrisy.

Marked by the spirit of grotesque realism found in the mediaeval carnival tradition, as described by Bakhtin, and later in satirical literature, Busch’s stories are characterized by a festive laughter that mocks and derides the mental image of a calm, peaceful world. But, as they question the power of the existing social hierarchies, the stories also portray acts of real revolution. Indeed, while society expected women and children to obey male patriarchs or
figures of public authority, Busch gives them licence to do otherwise. Similarly, humans may have fancied themselves at the pinnacle of biological creation, yet Busch’s stories reveal the animal in men, women, and children, just as animals and familiar objects take on distinctly human characteristics. As the author’s tales slyly undermine the fundamental power structures and ancient belief systems of a society in flux, they shift many once-unyielding norms in a carnivalesque inversion from “top to bottom and front to rear” (RW 11), burying and renewing long-standing social conventions. In that regard, the author’s picture stories rise above the strips in the Fliegende Blätter and other humoristic-satirical magazines of the time, with their highly detailed yet stereotypical illustrations, contrived situations and, to the ears of today’s reader, laboured prose.

With the examples of symbolic inversion of the previous four chapters in mind and the ways in which they reflect the changing society of post-1848 Germany, I have formulated the following theory of world upside down exclusive to Busch.

**Women Dominating Men**

By and large, the “disorderly” female characters in Busch’s picture stories come out on top, questioning the long-accepted belief that women were powerless beings subservient to men. With two exceptions, newly empowered wives turn the tables on presumptuous husbands, reducing them to figures of mockery. Furthermore, single young women rebuff male advances, by force or through laughter, although one housemaid is sent packing by the lady of the house for her husband’s momentary indiscretion, a reminder of the very distinct threat of sexual coercion faced by nineteenth-century domestics. Duped by a fraudulent husband, an enterprising female character even engages in a life of crime, proving, despite her questionable methods, that courage is not a male preserve. Moreover, Busch encourages the reader to laugh at the ready wit...
of his heroines as well as the foolishness of their male adversaries. Only the single older women (i.e., “spinsters”) in the author’s stories get a raw deal, underscoring the fact that they threatened the accepted social order by virtue of remaining single. Still, there is no ignoring the fact that Busch’s assertive female characters emerged during a time of real revolutionary change, marked by a shift in public attitudes toward female equality that, while imperfect, saw women as more than champions for Biedermeier values. In that regard, they are at odds with their hyper-feminized counterparts in the Fliegende Blätter who, with few exceptions, repeatedly acquiesce to the harsh demands of their menfolk or suffer undesired male attention in resigned silence.

**Children Getting the Better of Adults**

As the first juvenile heroes in the history of the comic strip, Busch’s child characters thumb their noses at parental and adult authority, thereby exposing the pretensions of their elders. Most commonly seen are young boys, acting either singly or in pairs. Unlike their repressed and submissive counterparts on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter, Busch’s schoolboy characters are masters of the art of pranking. While adult reaction to childish pranks often borders on the sadistic or the bloodthirsty – a potent reminder that children’s misbehaviour was not tolerated in nineteenth-century German society – Busch’s boy miscreants derive special enjoyment from stunts meant to cause bodily harm. As such, they are reminiscent of pea- and water-syringe antics of the youthful August Ludolf Friedrich Schaumann in the run-up to the French Revolution, another period of social turmoil, suggesting that the author’s troublemakers are acting out in response to the fears and frustrations of their elders. That readers of the time took delight in such childish antics indicates that the miscreants stood in as a proxy for the repressed adult desire to subvert the standing order. That they continue to do so even today suggests that the naughty child lives on in adults everywhere.

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233 See chap. 3, pp. 93n100, 97n105.
While fewer in number, Busch’s girl characters also play tricks on their elders, from a young toddler who ruins her father’s toilet articles to older girls who circumvent parental constraints with their comings and goings. Furthermore, the author portrays his adolescent heroines exploring aspects of their nascent sexuality, setting them at odds with the meek, sexless, and obedient creatures on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter. Generally speaking, Busch’s feisty girl characters get off scot-free or with a simple reminder to obey, except for one whose punishment is “intimately prickly” and another who is banished for her japes and adolescent urges by hypocritical guardians more interested in empty moralizing than human kindness. Additionally, Busch’s girl characters avoid the harsh circumstances of the schoolroom and cruel interactions with family patriarchs, unlike their counterparts in the Fliegende Blätter, suggesting that the author had a soft spot for them and that readers were meant to re-examine their preconceived notions of female adolescence.

Animals Besting Humans

Published during the era of Darwin and Schopenhauer, Busch’s animal characters deliberately mock the very real similarities between animal and human in terms of behaviour and motivation. Deliberately mocking the moral and religious outcry raised at the whole idea of evolutionary interconnectedness of the species, the author’s characters focus on the very real similarities between animal and man in the once-immutable Great Chain of Being, from nettlesome insects and cunning mammals to roguish monkeys. To that end, Busch’s animal heroes are driven by a human-like Bosheit in combination with an unceasing Tätigkeit that sets them on a par with his child characters. As such, these “Störer von Ruhe und Ordnung,” (Ueding, Wilhelm 77; qtd. in FW 368) goad, trick, and laugh at their human adversaries. However, it is the author’s simian characters that wreak the most havoc, both physically and psychologically, as
they make monkeys out of their victims through their creative pranks and dogged determination.
Like their child counterparts, Busch’s animal characters ultimately succeed in poking fun at human pretension, hypocrisy, and stupidity. Indeed, they emphasize the “human in the animal” and the “animal in the human,” suggesting that there was little distance separating the two. Additionally, the author’s animal characters shine a light on the negative and brutal aspects of human nature, rather than covering them up, as Schopenhauer advocated. In so doing, they provide a measure of comic relief at a time of tumultuous social change and increasing governmental control over all aspects of daily life.

*Objects Outwitting Owners*

As the first truly “animated” objects in the history of the comic strip, Busch’s treacherous objects literally take on a life of their own, flummoxing drunken and sober victims alike, regardless of age and sex. As equal-opportunity offenders, they range from ordinary household objects that trip up a few drunken masters and one alcoholic mistress, to an old-fashioned candlesnuffer that lacerates the hindquarters of its tiny victim. While some objects are initially prodded into action through human intervention, launching a self-intensifying chain of events that drags along victims in its wake, most of Busch’s treacherous objects need no helping hand in order to cause mayhem. Thus, candle flames reach out and burn their dozing newspaper- and magazine-reading victims within the supposed sanctity of the bedroom, suggesting that the vagaries of the world had a nasty way of intruding into even the deepest slumber. To punish forbidden sexual curiosity or attraction by the opposite sex, a grapevine trellis snags a girl’s petticoat as she sneaks back into her parents’ house, and a watering can lies in ambush to trip up and drench a young girl observing a youth at his morning toilette. Rising coat tails reveal the innermost urges of their male owners, while a trousers’ bottom creases into a face that expresses
a series of emotions from fierceness to contentment, reflecting the bliss of its newly wed owner. Even ordinary bread dough rises up to entrap and bury the curious or unwary in its pillowy, seething mass. As they grab, snag, prick, and smother their helpless victims, many of Busch’s treacherous objects embody live metaphors that have lost their original meaning, coming alive when paired with reflexive verbs. By contrast, there are no genuine images of object treachery on the pages of the Fliegende Blätter and other magazines of the time.

**New Take on Ut Pictura Poesis**

Without his genius in revolutionizing the “ninth art” as he subverted Biedermeier pretensions and norms, Busch would likely have remained a footnote in the annals of sequential art. At the time the author created his stories, the comic strip, with its emphasis on images, was seen as a “childish genre” (NC 2). As Thierry Groensteen writes, comic art like that in Busch’s stories goes against Lessing’s “ideology of purity,” described in his influential essay Laokoon, with its sharp demarcation between art and literature (9). In it, Lessing refutes Horace’s analogy *ut pictura poesis*, arguing that the plastic arts and poetry operate in the two distinct spheres of space and time and, as such, should not be confused. To illustrate his point, the critic cites Winckelmann’s description of the marble group of Laocoon and his sons, comparing the “fleeting moment” of pain (Duby and Daval 10, 97), suffered in stoic silence by the main

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234 The expression “neuvième art” (“ninth art”) was coined by Morris [Maurice de Bévère] (1923–2001), the creator of Lucky Luke, and Pierre Vankeer (collector) for the title of their column “Neuvième Art: Musée de la Bande Dessinée” that ran from 1964 to 1967 in the comic-strip magazine Spirou [Squirrel]. See Morris and Vankeer.

235 This is a reference to the 1766 essay *Laokoon: Oder über die Grenzen der Mahlerey und Poesie* [*Laocoon: An Essay Upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry*] by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81), in which the critic attacks Horace’s analogy *ut pictura poesis* (“as is painting so is poetry”) found in *Ars Poetica* (c. 18 BC). Lessing argues that painting arranges colours and forms in space, while poetry arranges words in time (“*jene nämlich Figuren und Farben in dem Raume, diese aber artikulierte Töne in der Zeit,*” 118). Calling them two distinct forms, he argues that they should never be confused.
character, with his long and protracted cries of pain in Virgil’s epic poem *Aenid* (29–19 BC). Groensteen notes that Lessing’s separation between the plastic arts and poetry led to an ever-increasing gulf between learned culture and popular culture, with the latter dedicated to fiction and entertainment (9). For this reason, he says, the comic strip continues to suffer from a lack of respectability by the “legitimizing authorities” (universities, museums, the media), due to what many see as its “infantile, vulgar, or insignificant” content (3).

To be sure, the literary canon of poetry, fiction, and drama has further contributed to the notion of “high culture” versus “popular culture,” the latter with its undertones of entertainment for the lower classes, including children. Yet, as George Dardess points out, comic art uses two media that characterize “highbrow” theatre and opera – images and words – giving what he calls aesthetic shape to the human experience (214). Where does Busch fit into the argument? With his original draughtsmanship and witty, memorable verse, I would argue that he gives new meaning to *ut pictora poesis* through his novel use of images and word. Instead of maintaining painting and poetry as “zwei billige, freundschaftliche Nachbarn” (“two equitable and friendly neighbours”), whereby “Zeitfolge ist das Gebiete des Dichters, so wie der Raum das Gebiete des Malers” (“time sequence is the domain of the poet, as space is the domain of the painter”), as Lessing counsels (133), Busch mixes them shamelessly together. In his picture stories, we see a succession of “comic-dynamic” images that clearly portray a whole array of moods and emotions, from serene contentment to murderous rage, as the characters rush headlong from one disaster to the next. In some of the stories, the verse gets right into the action, expanding on a

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236 In his essay, Lessing makes reference to the principal hallmarks of “edle Einfalt und stille Größe” (“noble simplicity and quiet grandeur”) found in Greek sculpture, according to J. J. Winckelmann (1717–68) in his 1755 treatise *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malhrein und Bildhauerkunst [Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture]*. Thus, Winckelmann declares, “Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Grösse [sic], so wohl [sic] in der Stellung als im Ausdrucke” (21; also Lessing 2). As such, “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” were the desired attributes of the ideal Greek citizen, with displays “zu feurig und zu wild” (“too fiery and too wild”) considered to be mistakes (23; also Lessing 209).
detail seen in or only hinted at in the pictures, in all of its bald reality. In others, the illustrations belie the mock seriousness of the verse to comic effect. Thus, the author’s pictures transform themselves into what Horace once called “eine stumme Poesie” (“mute poetry”), just as his verse becomes “eine redende Malerei” (“talking art,” Lessing 19), enabling Busch to show a realistic reflection of post-revolutionary Germany, warts and all, in his “sharper kind of mirror.”

We know that Busch preferred to draw his pictures before he penned the accompanying verse, as stated in a letter to an unknown admirer in 1871, who ostensibly asked the author to illustrate some of his work. In a humorously roundabout way that leaves no doubt as to Busch’s ultimate desire to let the writer gently down, he declines the writer’s invitation.237 At first glance, this overture would seem to be an unwelcome reminder of the author’s early days at the *Fliegende Blätter* when he illustrated the text of other authors. Yet, in conversation with his nephew, Adolf Nöldeke (1865–1919), Busch refers to verse as a “necessary evil” of sorts, claiming that he needed to add it, as most people did not understand how to “read” pictures:

> Busch selbst äußerte oftmals, daß er die Verse nur darum zu den Bildern hätte hinzufügen müssen, weil ja die meisten Menschen Bilder nicht zu lesen vestünden; auch ließen sich Bilder, meinte er, nicht zitieren. (*WB* 80; qtd. in *FW* 958)

To be sure, observes Scott McCloud, earlier cultures were adept at reading pictures and “whole-page compositions” and grasping their meaning (11, 12) in a way that the public of the day did (and often do) not. One needs only to think of ancient Mayan or Egyptian art, whose symbolism was readily understood by those who did not read, at least in the traditional sense; or of mediaeval art depicting stories from the Bible and symbols easily recognized by largely illiterate populations, a skill eroded by the invention of the printing press, in order to realize the veracity of Busch’s statement. But, there was another reason why Busch added captions to his stories.

Ries tells of a particularly revealing conversation between Busch and the publisher Hans Müller-Brauel (1867–1940), during which the author said that his first publisher, Kaspar Braun of Braun & Schneider, asked him to put verse to his captionless picture stories (“Verhältnis” 24). He added that he did so with some, but not all of the stories in question (24). During the conversation, Busch claimed that he came to verse “wie der Hund zu den Flöhen” (“like a dog to fleas”), which Ries translates as an unwillingness to do so (24). But, was the author really all that reluctant? The rest of the passage from which the preceding quote is taken deserves a closer look:


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238 In 1907, Busch’s story Meiers Hinnerk [Farmer Hank] first appeared in the artists’ journal Der Heidjer [The Heath-Dwellers] in Zeven (Galway 224). According to Ries, the journal’s publisher Müller-Brauel was the first to make any serious effort in determining the authorship of Busch’s unsigned works in the Fliegende Blätter (Nöldeke, Chronik 374; qtd. in FW 1611).

239 Friedrich Lossow (1837–72) was one of Busch’s closest friends from his Jung-München-Verein days (FW 1459).
Busch told Müller-Brauel that his artist-friend Friedrich Lossow asked him to illustrate a number of captions in 1859, which he enjoyed, giving him the idea to try his hand at it. He justified his decision by saying that he needed to earn “beer money.” In reality, Busch was always short of money; his desire to unshackle himself in 1866 from Braun & Schneider because he believed himself to be poorly paid ultimately failed because of political unrest (i.e., Prussian expansionist policy; Galway 79n47n48). Yet, his “schalkhaftes Lächeln” (“roguish smile”) would seem to indicate that the author was having a laugh at Müller-Brauel’s expense. For, while Busch rightly maintained that he started off by delivering pictures without any accompanying text to meet the demands of his publisher, alleging that he thought in pictures before words, it is equally true that he took pains to develop his talents as a poet and a writer, as seen in his early poetry (Ossa Sepia, 1852), his successful stint as a playwright (Der Vetter auf Besuch, 1861), and the effort spent on his later, albeit unsuccessful, prose works (Eduards Traum, 1891). He may have complained that his readers were always quoting his verse, rather than talking about his pictures, but the fact remains that his verse is just too polished to be passed off as a mere afterthought. Thus, I would argue that when Busch compares coming to verse as a dog to fleas,
he seems to be telling us, in his own droll way, that he came to enjoy writing it.

Granted, the author was disappointed by the lack of public and critical acclaim for his poetry work, *Kritik des Herzens* (1874), and subsequent prose works like *Eduards Traum* and *Der Schmetterling* (1895), as their serious tone did not represent the “Wilhelm Busch” that his readers knew and loved. Yet, as Carol Galway observes, he seems to have come to the conclusion that he could continue to find success with his picture stories, even though he had no sense of having “discovered” the modern comic strip as a new medium to express his thoughts about the problems of the era (6).

I would argue that, as a mirror of the time during which they were created, Busch’s picture stories are revolutionary in their own right. To recap, the author turns upside down the normal relationships between women and men, children and adults, animals and humans, and objects and humans, poking fun at his readers while helping them to deal with their changed circumstances in the wake of the failed revolution of 1848. To do so in a way that appealed to his readers and avoided the long arm of the censor, Busch used caricature and mock-formal verse to skewer assorted political, social, and cultural sacred cows. Working hand in glove, Busch’s pictures and verse subvert the normal course of things over story arcs that span multiple episodes, entertaining readers from all classes and of all ages as they question their assumptions. In that regard, the author’s picture stories easily surpass the hackneyed strips of the *Fliegende Blätter* and other humoristic-satirical magazines, frozen in time and largely forgotten today.

Ultimately, it was the heroes of Busch’s well-loved *Max und Moritz* (1865) that shaped the modern-day comic strip, as we know it. In America, they inspired Rudolph Dirks (1877–1978), a native of the province of Schleswig-Holstein and immigrant to Chicago with his parents in 1884, to create the *Katzenjammer Kids* (Weissweiler 331). Additionally, the influence of
Plisch und Plum (1882), with good behaviour rewarded and bad behaviour punished, prompted Richard Felton Outcault (1863–1928) to produce the Yellow Kid comic strip, with its endearing guttersnipe hero mouthing the German-English slogan “Ich bin gut, denn es bezahlt sich” or “I’m good because it pays” (74), to the delight of German-American readers. The genre continued to expand and develop in America, Europe, and the Far East, giving it a universal appeal.

Ultimately, the author proved that the comic-strip genre could be educationally subversive and humorous as German society struggled to adapt to the post-revolutionary reality. Wilhelm Busch succeeded in portraying a nascent Germany through the pioneering combination of caricature and verse that cut to the chase, exposing the inequities of gender, age, and social hierarchies in a rapidly changing society. His keen eye and gift for observing life in all its aspects continue to guide the pens of today’s comic-strip practitioners. We owe a debt of gratitude to Busch, the father of the modern-day comic strip, for his role in developing the full potential of the genre and laying the groundwork for subsequent practitioners of the ninth art, to the delight of the “subversive upstart” in all of us.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Wilhelm Busch (1832–1908)

On 14 Apr. 1832, Heinrich Christian Wilhelm Busch was born in Wiedensahl, Lower Saxony (FW viii), as the oldest of seven children. From 1841 through most of 1847, he was privately tutored at the home of his uncle, the Lutheran pastor Georg Kleine (1806–97), in nearby Ebergötzen and then Lüthorst, receiving an education in Latin, Greek, geography, mathematics, philosophy, and science, as well as a grounding in German literature and an exposure to Shakespeare (Diers 15; Galway 221; Schury 41; Weissweiler 31–32).

At sixteen, Busch was sent to the Polytechnische Schule (Polytechnical School) in Hanover to learn mechanical engineering, where he spent the next four years. In 1851, he joined Düsseldorf’s Kunstakademie (Academy of Arts) to study painting, enrolling a year later in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Royal Academy of Fine Arts) in Antwerp, where he became acquainted with the works of Adriaen Brouwer (1605–38), Franz Hals (1580–1666), and other artists from the Dutch and Flemish School (Schury 49).

After contracting severe typhoid fever in 1853, Busch dropped out of the Royal Academy and returned to Wiedensahl, dividing his time between his birthplace and Lüthhorst, where he collected and adapted fairy tales, sagas, songs, and folk legends containing various regionalisms and vernaculars (Galway 221). In 1854, the author enrolled at the Königliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste (Royal Academy of Visual Arts) in Munich, where he joined the Jung-München-Verein (Young Munich Group) artists’ association and travelled with his new artist-

\[240\] There is a discrepancy in Busch’s actual date of birth. As Carol Galway writes, the register of the parish church in Wiedensahl records the birth of Heinrich Christian Wilhelm Busch as “geboren d. 14ten April morgens 6 Uhr” (72). She adds that his birth certificate shows the same date (71). In the Familienbuch (“family register”) maintained by Busch’s father, however, the date is recorded as 15 Apr. 1832, one day later (71). See Galway 72; also article by same author “Wann hatte Wilhelm Busch Geburtstag?” Germanic Notes and Reviews 31.1 (2000): 14–18, print.
friends on field trips to Brannenburg, Munich, Lüthorst, and Wiedensahl over the next four years (221).

Starting in 1858, the author made his first contributions to the *Fliegende Blätter* [Flying Sheets] and its companion *Münchener Bilderbogen* [Munich Picture Sheets], published by Braun & Schneider of Munich, providing illustrations drawn to accompany prose captions by anonymous writers. With his talent as an illustrator and writer finally recognized in 1861 by the magazine’s publisher, Kaspar Braun (1807–77), Busch began to create picture sheets with verse captions for the magazine (Galway 222). The author further honed his talents as a writer, actor, and director at the amateur theatre in Dassel (221–22), and as the librettist of three operettas, including *Der Vetter auf Besuch* (1861), put to music by Georg Kremplsetzer (1827–71), although Busch reportedly hated the composer’s music so much that he refused to attend the premiere (Weissweiler 102–09).

With the successful publication of *Max und Moritz* in 1865, Busch became synonymous with stand-alone picture stories marked by humorous caricatures and catchy verse. He went on to create nineteen more picture stories, along with numerous strips for the *Fliegende Blätter*, *Münchener Bilderbogen*, and smaller publications like *Deutsche Latern* and *Über See und Meer*. During this period, he also continued to sketch, sculpt, and paint. In 1869, the author was introduced to Johanna Keßler (1831–1915), a well-known patron of the arts in Frankfurt, by his brother Otto (1841–79), who tutored the Keßler children, Hugo (1856–1929) and Harry (Heinrich Karl, ?–1924), at home (Weissweiler 156). There, Busch also met the Keßler daughters Lina (*Caroline*, 1852–1911), Nanda (*Fernanda*, 1862–1909), and Letty (*Letitia*, 1864–1944), becoming an “uncle” figure of sorts (156). Keßler offered Busch a live-in studio so that he could devote his efforts to painting full-time, including commissioned portraits, after Otto had
shown her one of his brother’s paintings (156, 162). Complaining of “too many distractions,” Busch moved to Munich in 1872 in order to join the artists Friedrich Kaulbach (1822–1903), Lorenz Gedon (1844–83), and Franz Lenbach (1836–1904), the founder of the celebrated *Lenbach-Kreis* and celebrated for his many portraits of Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) in military and civilian dress (Jeffries 184), prompting a break with Keßler that lasted for thirteen years (183, 324).

Despite what Joseph Kraus refers to as a “gewisse Sprödigkeit” (“certain prudery”) in his relationships with women, owing to an absence of maternal love (*Wilhelm* 12), and his dealings with a “gefühlsarmer Tyrann” (“emotionally cold tyrant”) of a father (Beer 11; qtd. in Galway 24), Busch was not immune to female charms. Indeed, the author made his one and only marriage proposal to Anna Richter (1847–?), who Otto Nöldeke called “seine erste und einzige tiefe Zuneigung” or “first and only love” (*Chronik* 246; qtd. in *RZ* 1548). The proposal was thwarted by Anna’s father, as he did not consider the author sufficiently established at the time (Diers 75). Subsequent relationships seem to have been guided by a basic fear of intimacy, reflected in Busch’s choice of unattainable marriage prospects, as outlined by Ries et al. (“Busch als Junggeselle und Liebhaber,” *RZ* 1542–76). Among them was Lina Keßler, twenty years younger than Busch, who rebuffed his romantic advances (Weissweiler 158). An intense friendship with her younger sister Nanda in 1891 remained “platonic,” much to the chagrin of Nanda’s mother Johanna (324, 334). The author also cultivated intense friendships with the wives of various painter- and writer-colleagues in Munich. They included Anna Lindau (1854–?), the wife of the novelist Paul Lindau (1839–1919) and daughter of David Kalisch (1820–72), founder of the humouristic-satirical magazine *Kladderadatsch*; as well as Luise Böheim (1850–1938), the wife of Busch’s long-time friend, the aforementioned sculptor Lorenz Gedon. He may
have had a romantic liaison with Greta Fehlow (c. 1860–1946), whose charms he captured in several nude portraits, as well as with a certain “Fräulein Somara,” a Paraguayan visitor whom he met at one of Lindau’s parties.

A favourable review of the author’s poetry collection *Kritik des Herzens* (1874) by the Dutch journalist Maria Anderson (1842–1917) led to an extended correspondence (fifty-two letters in Dutch and English) in which he poured out some of his innermost thoughts, causing what Eva Weissweiler has called a burning hatred of her by many Busch experts for the access he gave her (not them) to his “awkward soul”: “Maria Anderson [ist] von vielen Busch-Forschern glühend gehasst, das ihr gelungen ist, was ihnen versagt blieb, einen Zugang zu seiner sperrigen Seele zu finden.”

Anderson (pseud. *Veritas* and *F. van Goudoever*) was a member of the *Niederländischen Freidenkervereinigung* [Dutch Freethinkers Coalition], an anti-military organization founded to protest the Crimean War (1853–56). The group was also involved in promoting emancipation for women, marriage law reform, birth control, cremation, mandatory school attendance, corporal-punishment-free teaching, freedom of research and learning, animal protection, and anti-colonialism (238). Anderson had a rich personal life, cultivating a friendship with the eccentric Dutch writer Multatuli (lat. “I have suffered much,” Eduard Douwes Dekker, 1820–87) and bearing a son out of wedlock by Frederic Antonius Hartsen (1838–77), a self-styled Renaissance man, Darwinist, and critic of Dutch psychiatry (239–40). After Hartsen returned to his wife, Anderson launched a career in journalism, at which time she struck up her

241 Eva Weissweiler observes that some of the comments about Maria Anderson are pointedly unkind. Ulrich Mihr (*Wilhelm Busch: Der Protestant, der trotzdem lacht*, 1983) calls her a “hysterische Persönlichkeit (…) die ihre Hysterie ihrem christlichen Glauben verdanke” (“a hysterical personality […] that owes her hysteria to her Christian faith,” 185), while Gert Ueding (*Wilhelm Busch: Das 19. Jahrhundert en miniature*, 1986) says that her letters to Busch “jede weibliche Note vermissen” (“lack any womanly note”). Similarly, Walter Pape (*Wilhelm Busch*, 1977) calls her “durchaus unweiblich” (“completely unfeminine,” 45). For his part, Joseph Kraus (*Wilhelm Busch*, 1970) says of the thirty-something widow that her “questions are the expression of a shallow teenager who feels the need to constantly gush”: “Die Fragen dieser Witwe in ihren Dreißigern (...) wirken wie Äußerungen eines oberflächlichen Teenagers, der gerade mal Lust verspürt, (...) unverbindlich zu schwatzen” (58). All qtd. in Weissweiler 236–37; ital. in orig.
acquaintance with Busch. However, any hopes of a romantic liaison with the single mother of a five-year-old son were dashed at their first meeting in Mainz in October 1875, after which the author returned to his publisher Otto Basserman in “fürchterlicher Stimmung” (“a horrible mood,” 252).

With the death in 1878 of his brother-in-law Hermann Nöldeke (1805–78), the husband of his sister Fanny (*Charlotte Johanne Amalia*, 1834–1922), Busch assumed the legal guardianship of their sons Hermann (1860–1932), Adolf (1865–1919), and Otto (1867–1948), moving to the *Pfarrwitwenhaus* in Wiedensahl with Fanny and her brood a year later (Galway 223). A public “melt-down” in 1881 at the Munich *Kunstgewerbehaus*, caused by what he perceived as “chalatanerie” on the part of the famed Danish hypnotist Carl Hansen (1833–97), led Busch to hurl a large piece of cheese at the wall behind the heads of his tablemates Lenbach and Otto Bassermann (1839–1916), among others (Weissweiler 293–94). Embarrassed by the episode, Busch distanced himself from his friends for a time, plagued by “dunklen Gedanken” (“black thoughts,” 297) already exacerbated by heavy drinking and smoking. After the publication of his last picture story *Maler Klecksel* (1884), Busch focused on writing works of prose (*Eduards Traum*, 1891; *Der Schmetterling*, 1895) and poetry (*Zu guter Letzt* and *Schein und Sein*, started in 1899 and published in 1904 and 1909 respectively), showing his mastery of the German language in all of its forms (Galway 224; Kraus, *Wilhelm* 153). The author also resumed painting, although he continued to doubt his artistic capabilities, a throwback to his Antwerp days (30). Indeed, he would often heap still-damp canvases one on top of the other, causing them to stick together, and burning them in the garden when the pile became too high (Weissweiler 163–64). Busch gave up painting in 1896 when his eyesight started to fail (Galway 224), although he continued to write and sketch. He spent the final ten years of his life with
Fanny and her pastor-son Otto in the Mechtshausen rectory (Galway 224; Weissweiler 334). Otto relates how his uncle was “die populärste Person im Orte” (“the most popular person in town”), exchanging stories and jokes in Low German with the town’s farmers (WBB 142) and often asking for an explanation of local expressions. Otto may have been looking at his uncle’s life through rose-tinted glasses, however, as Busch was largely housebound due to heart problems that made it difficult to get about (Weissweiler 336). During the final two years of his life, Busch suffered from a recurring sore throat and ongoing coronary problems (Weissweiler 344). He died on 9 Jan. 1908 at 8:00 a.m., leaving behind a rich legacy of work that captured nineteenth-century Gründerzeit Germany in all of its nuances.
Appendix B: A Brief History of the Comic Strip

As the art historian and comics scholar David Kunzle (The History of the Comic Strip, 1973–90) explains, the comic strip is essentially a hybrid form, part verbal and part pictorial, with the latter its most prominent feature (ECS 2). With strongholds in Germany (fifteenth through seventeenth centuries) and England (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), he observes, the early comic strip was a broadsheet that reflected what was going on in contemporaneous society (4). While the broadsheets had political or historical themes (i.e., anti-Papist satire of the German Reformation; Catholic propaganda transforming Martin Luther into the devil; civil wars in France and the Netherlands; Thirty Years’ War), notes Kunzle, their later counterparts focused on moral and social themes (4, 7), replete with world-upside-down motifs. He singles out Holland’s marriage strips that preached with concern or chortled in amusement at empowered women, instead of “screaming bloody murder” at them, like their German equivalents (243). Compare, for example, the wedded life of Jan and Griet, where Griet (Meg) wears the breeches and Jan (Jack) stays at home to do chores,242 while her German counterpart is given a recipe for dealing with irascible husbands.243

The seventeenth century saw the rise of the “moral weeklies” designed to correct moral abuses, notes Kunzle, during which time William Hogarth (1697–1764) launched the era of social satire with his paintings that combined the best of the broadsheet and portraiture (ECS 298). The Harlot’s Progress (1732) and A Rake’s Progress (1735) reflected scenes of real life in

242 For example, in Kinderen, ’t geene gy hier ziet, Is het Leven van Jan en Griet [Children, Here You See, the Life of Jack and Meg], c. 1700, the heroes Jack and Meg are shown in the first two panels as cooing lovers and happy newlyweds. In the subsequent panels, Jack is abruptly reduced to handing over the breeches and made to perform an assortment of household tasks, while his wife goes out on business (ECS 248, fig. 8–22). As part of the Jan de Wasser [Jack the Washer] series, the story has many variations, yet the plot is virtually identical in all of them.

243 Weiber Recept, Das ist, Kurzer und ordentlicher Bericht, wie sich die Weiber gegen ihre Hitzige und geschwindzornige Männer verhalten (...) sollen [Wives’ Recipe – Brief and exact report how women should treat their hot-tempered and irascible husbands, and how they can make them pleasant and friendly], c. 1620. See ECS 235, fig. 8–13.
London’s lower classes, while *Marriage à-la-mode* (1743–45) mocked upper-class manners and pretensions (314). Kunzle notes that, during the golden age of British caricature (1780–1820), broadsheets turned to comedy and often farce, as the form increasingly sought to entertain (*NC* 1). Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827) drew *Six Stages of Mending a Face* (1792), in which an aging Georgian society lady makes herself over into a pretty young woman (*ECS* 362). For his part, James Gillray (1756–1815) poked fun at the monarchy with *A Voluptuary [U]nder the [H]orrors of Digestion* (1792), showing a portly and undignified Prince of Wales (later George IV; 1762–1830) using a fork as a toothpick (367). The Napoleonic Wars (1803–15) saw the rise of the most caricatured figure of the century – Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) – as George Cruikshank (1792–1878) reduced the tiny emperor to skin and bones in *The Progress of Boney!!* (1817), exaggerating his already small stature to symbolize his loss of power and stature (*ECS* 385). However, not all sequential art was meant to amuse: in *Los Desastres de la Guerra [The Disasters of War]*, 1810–20, Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) shows the atrocities of war during Napoleon’s invasion of Spain in 1808, with its horrific scenes of mutilation and rape.

Because of the tensions created by the Reformation and the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48), states Kunzle, the German satirical broadsheet had given up the ghost by the end of the seventeenth century and was virtually absent during the eighteenth century, a period characterized by petty despotism when culture moved from the courts to the cities (*ECS* 389). The broadsheet was replaced by the *moralische Wochenschriften* (“moral weeklies”), based on the British *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, which catered to bourgeois tastes, especially in Berlin under Frederick the Great (1712–86), with his admiration of all things French (389). This era also saw the rise of the *Kalender* (“almanach”), with its picture stories that dispensed practical advice, observes Kunzle, adding that, by the eighteenth century, its content had become increasingly
literary and imaginative in appeal (393). Practitioners of the new art were Daniel Niklaus Chodowiecki (1726–1801), who criticized aristocratic laziness, and Johann Heinrich Ramberg (1763–1840), who worked as a court painter to George III (1738–1820), in order to supplement his meager salary as a book, magazine, and almanac illustrator.

The nineteenth century witnessed what Kunzle terms as a “painful and embarrassing knocking about” (NC 1). In France, the cheap broadsheets known as Imagerie d’Epinal [Epinal Imagery], fl. 1800–1900, were sold in huge quantities in both city and village, he writes, with children becoming its main audience (2). During the period from 1848 to 1882, observes Kunzle, the bulk of the French comic strips appeared in the publications of France’s premier political caricaturist Charles Philipon (1800–61). They were the Journal pour Rire and, from 1856, its offshoots, the Journal Amusant and Petit Journal pour Rire, the first French comic magazine with the avowed goal of entertaining and avoiding social and political commentary, especially after the revolution (105). Contributors to the magazines included Gustav Doré (1832–83), with an album sequence featuring the “pleasures” of travel in Germany; and Léonce Petit (1839–84), whose Histoires campagnardes (1872–82) document the continuing conflict between bourgeois and peasant in France (142). Overt political criticism was the stock-in-trade of Charivari, featuring artists like Cham (Charles-Henri-Amadée de Noé, 1818–79), with his tale of

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244 In Das Leben eines schlecht erzogenen Frauenzimmers [The Life of an Ill-Educated Girl], 1780, we see the steady decline of the heroine, a product of parental neglect, who engages in a variety of frivolous pastimes before marrying a rich suitor and frittering away his capital. After his untimely death, she languishes poor and forgotten in a debtor’s prison (ECS 398).

245 In Taschenbuch für Damen auf das Jahr 1801 [Paperback for Women for the Year 1801], Ramberg created twelve caricatures of Wicked Women, which caused offence to his women readers despite the addition of an account of Good Women by J. W. Goethe (1749–1832), a fan of Ramberg (ECS 402).

246 Voyage sur les bords du Rhin [Trip Along the Rhine], 1851, portrays the crumbling ruin of the German city of Koblenz, with its “greedy and pestering guides, carousing students, and swaggering Prussian military” (NC 122).
the dangers of travel;\textsuperscript{247} and Grandville (Jean-Ignace-Isidore Gérard, 1803–47), with his social caricatures.

But, while the Swiss Rodolphe Töpffer (1799–1846) changed the way comics worked by creating the first “interdependent combination of words and pictures seen in Europe” (McCloud 17),\textsuperscript{248} Busch perfected the technique with his new form of comic illustrations accentuating middle-class frustrations that borrowed themes and elements from the topsy-turvy tradition. Like their broadsheet and marginalia counterparts of old, the author’s women and peasant characters rise up in protest against husbands and other authoritarian oppressors, although with better success this time. Sexuality, the foundation of the old world-upside-down prints, remains taboo until the 1870s, making its first appearance in stories like Die Fromme Helene (1872) and Herr und Frau Knopp (1876), and subsequently in Le Chat Noir, a journal based on the raucous Parisian cabaret of the same name (ECS 190). Second only to Busch during the nineteenth century in terms of celebrity and professional status was Caran d’Ache (ru. карандаш or “pencil”), the pen name of the Russian artist Emmanuel Poiré (1859–1909), with his “sprightly, curt, [and] carefully crafted line in the manner of Busch” (NC 178).

Ultimately, it was Max und Moritz (1865), Busch’s claim to fame, that shaped the modern-day comic strip. In Britain, Tootle and Bootle, the stars of Comic Cuts (1896–1953), were a blatant “rip-off” of Max und Moritz, using many direct translations of the original text (Weissweiler 331). In North America, William Randolph Hearst (1863–1951) of the New York

\textsuperscript{247} In Nouveaux voyages et nouvelles impressions lithographiques, philosophiques et comiques de MM. Trotman et Cham [Lithographic Impressions of a Journey by MM. Trotman et Cham], 1846, the hero begins by running afoul of the harshly portrayed national customs and conditions in Spain, Italy, and Constantinople, before regaining safe harbour in France (Cham 1–20; also NC 80).

\textsuperscript{248} In the preface of Histoire de Mr. Jabot [Story of Mr. Jabot], 1833, we learn that the hero adopts “polite manners and good deportment alone” (“sa manière comme il faut, et sa tenue”) in order to succeed in the world (Kunzle, Töpffer 5). The following panels show him in various social situations in which he is not at ease, including a dance with aristocratic guests during which he steps on various toes before wisely taking his leave (Kunzle, Töpffer 8–31).
*Journal* saw Busch’s original tale during a trip to Europe and asked the American artist Rudolph Dirks (1877–1978), a native of Schleswig-Holstein, to create a strip about two brothers, instead of two friends, in order to avoid charges of plagiarism (331). The resulting *Katzenjammer Kids* (1897–) was an immediate hit in the U.S. and enabled Hearst to sell more newspapers than his rival Joseph Pulitzer (1847–1911) of the *New York World* (Neyer, “Böse” 72). Moreover, the influence of *Plisch und Plum* (1882), with good behaviour rewarded and bad behaviour punished, can be seen in *Yellow Kid* (1895–98) by Richard Felton Outcault (1863–1928), with the hero mouthing the German-English slogan “Ich bin gut, denn es bezahlt sich” or “I’m good because it pays” (74). Adaptations of the above strips appeared in German in *Lustige Blätter des Morgen-Journal’s*, *Lustige Blätter des Morgen-Magazins Sonntag*, and *Lustige Blätter des Morgen-Journals Sonntag* (73–103), and were eagerly read by new immigrants to the country.

While Kunzle observes that comics were often seen as “childish fare,” owing to their large number of pictures that supposedly made for easy reading (NC 2), the topics they confronted were often anything but, attracting adult readers who sought more than amusement (2). The entry “Comic Strip” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, based on material from a number of experts in the field, provides a particularly useful overview of the genre, as paraphrased in the following section. In the world of the American syndicated newspaper strip, *Gasoline Alley* (1918–) by Frank King (1883–1969) has followed the life of a single family over several generations, while *Blondie* (1930–) by Chic Young (1901–73), later continued by his son Dean (1938–), portrays the humorous bumbling of the son of a rich industrialist, disowned by his family for marrying the woman he loves. Adventure-comic fans continue to be captivated by new incarnations of *Superman* (1938–) by Jerry Siegel (1914–96) and Joe Schuster (1914–92), featuring the heroics of a man dedicated to improving the lot of humanity by thwarting evil.

In Europe, the hero *Tintin* (1929–76) by Hergé (*Georges Rémi*, 1907–83) explores new lands along with a group of sardonic characters, while *Astérix* (1959–2010), with its clever puns and anachronisms by René Goscinny (1926–77) and Albert Uderzo (1927–), pokes fun at the conquering Romans and their pretensions. In the latter half of the twentieth century, the fare has become edgier, with examples ranging from underground *comix* like *Fritz the Cat* (1960–72) by Robert Crumb (1943–) and the U.S. political commentary of *Doonesbury* (1970–) by Gary Trudeau (1948–), to the *bande dessinée pour adultes* (“adult comic strip”), with examples like *Paul à la campagne* [*Paul in the Country*], 1999, and *Paul déménage* [*Paul Moves Out*], 2005, by the Quebec artist Michel Rabagliati (1961–). Even the blackest moments of history have influenced the comic-strip genre. Originating during the American Occupation of Japan, notes Paul Gravett, *manga* (jap. “whimsical drawings”) have explored themes ranging from U.S. and Japanese cultural influences to sexuality and women’s issues (8), providing a unique appeal to all ages. The iconic *Maus* (1986–91) by Art Spiegelmann (1948–) is a humorous-sardonic memoir of the artist’s father as a Polish Jew and survivor of the Holocaust. All in all, as Will Eisner says, comics have been instrumental in tackling relevant social issues, (xi, 1–2).

Changing the way that comics work, and enabling them to reach new audiences, is the Internet. According to the *Economist*, the funnies pages have decoupled from print as the newspaper industry continues to decline (“Triumph” 129). The editors remind us that *Punch*, once the shining light of British satire, ceased publication in 2002, and, with advertising revenues produced from the cartoon strip at an all-time low since the 1950s, the only publication
remaining in the American EC Comics publishing stable is Mad magazine (129). They add that syndicate-controlled cartoons like Garfield (1978–) by Jim Davis (1945–), with its universal jokes designed to sell merchandise, have given way to a new generation of cartoonists who have set up Web sites and distribute their work by word of mouth on Twitter and Facebook (130). The Economist goes on to say that Internet cartoons tackle subjects ranging from idealistic stick-figure grad students (Hark, a Vagrant, Kate Beaton) and dinosaurs discussing Shakespeare and dating (Dinosaur Comics, Ryan North), to statistics and science (XKCD, Randall Munroe) and a Manga-style soap opera (Megatokyo, Fred Gallagher), with their creators often updating their material daily (130). In their willingness to address the issues of daily life, from its funny moments to its times of crisis, these brave, new strips are not far removed from the picture stories of Wilhelm Busch, who poked fun at the foibles of his countrymen and women as he skewered the sacred cows of his day.
Appendix C: *Fliegende Blätter* and *Münchener Bilderbogen*

Busch was a member of the Jung-München-Verein (Young Munich Group), founded in 1853, as a meeting place for young art students who were not native to the city (Galway 64n26). It was here that he met Otto Bassermann (1839–1916), the son of the member of parliament for Baden, Friedrich Daniel Bassermann (1811–55), and co-founder of the Bassermann publishing house, as well as the painter and illustrator Kaspar Braun (1807–77), who had joined forces with the writer Friedrich Schneider (1815–64) in 1843 in order to found Braun & Schneider (64n26, 82n51). In 1844, the publishing house launched the premier humoristic-satirical magazine of the nineteenth century: the weekly *Fliegende Blätter* [*Flying Sheets*], with its short-story installments, single sheets, and narrative sequences. Four years later, it launched the biweekly *Münchener Bilderbogen* [*Munich Picture Broadsheets*], featuring reprints of the more popular stories in the *Fliegende Blätter*, along with new material (Galway 179n2). While both publications avoided political commentary, Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1807–87) gave them credit for “das Aufleben einer spezifisch deutschen Karikatur” (“the revival of a specifically German style of caricature,” 309; qtd. in Galway 64n26), featuring individuals and types from all social classes.

Each month, the editors of the publication received between 1,500 and 1,600 letters containing story ideas from its readers (Galway 179). The Berlin painter and contributing artist Carl Emil Doepler (1824–1905) recounts how he and his colleagues met weekly to test jokes and spectacularly bad *Kalauer*, m. (fr. “calembours” or “corny jokes”), amassing enough material for the freelance artists working on the upcoming edition (156; also FW 1609). Weak jokes were also the stock-in-trade of *Kladderadatsch* (berl. onom. for sound of breaking glass), one of the few survivors of post-1848 censorship.
Busch was one of many artists, like Adolf Oberländer (1845–1923), Albert Adamo (1849–87), Andreas Müller (1831–1901), and Moritz von Schwind (1804–71), whose works can be found on the pages of the *Fliegende Blätter* and the *Münchener Bilderbogen*. Initially, his pictures were published either without captions or with prose captions written by someone else, as he was not recognized as a genuine writer. While the situation changed with the multi-panel *Das Raben-Nest* (1861), where he paired his own illustrations and verse for the first time (FW 94), it was only with the publication of the multi-episode *Max und Moritz* (1865) as a stand-alone story that Busch became a household name. In addition to picture stories, Busch continued to send contributions to the *Fliegende Blätter* until 1871, with *Der hastige Rausch* marking his last story to appear in the magazine (RZ 190).

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249 First published in *MBB* 308 (1861).
Appendix D: Woodblock and Photomechanical Printing Process

Busch’s early picture-sheet contributions and stand-alone stories were printed according to the old technique of xylography, the relief printing of images carved into wood. The material used was boxwood (Buchsbaum), chosen because of its hard, fine-grained composition that does not wear down and flatten with repeated printing. To begin with, the artist produced rough sketches (Vorzeichnungen) to develop his story ideas (FW 969). Some of these included partial sketches (Pauszeichnungen) showing side views to get the proportions right (970). Next, he drew detailed pictures in pencil (Reinzeichnungen) that were glued onto boxwood blocks (Holzstöcke), whereupon the lines were gouged through the paper, effectively destroying the original image (969). In this manner, Busch chiselled woodcuts for many of his contributions to the Fliegende Blätter and Münchener Bilderbogen, as well as his first stand-alone stories Bilderposen (1864), Max und Moritz (1865), and Schnurr diburr oder Die Bienen (1869). His woodcuts carry his initials “WB”; in later editions of his picture stories, he added the signature “Von Wilhelm Busch” under the title or subtitle (964).

However, Busch reportedly hated woodcarving, feeling that it monopolized too much of his time (1329). With the growing popularity of his stories at the Bassermann publishing house, this task was left to the publisher’s stable of anonymous woodcutters (Formschneider), who followed his pencil tracings drawn beforehand on each woodblock (969). Despite his irritation with woodcarving, the author complained loudly about the work of the anonymous woodcutters, hired by Braun & Scheider and Bassermann to recreate his images (961).

Busch normally delivered his pictures as single, loose pictures in sequential order, with no regards to layout, leaving this task to the editor, typesetter, and layout artist (962). Many of

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250 In 2011 at the Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst, I viewed the boxwood block with the last image of Busch’s Der Eispeter (1864), which was used for a special printing of the story presented to museum patrons in 2010.
the author’s stories were composed of handwritten text and pictures (Bilderhandschrift), which, for all intents and purposes, was considered to be Reinzeichungen (“clean copy”; 967). Busch referred to these as “manuscripts” (967), given their resemblance to the early mediaeval manuscripts incorporating picture and text. Sometimes, he produced illustrations containing text and decorative elements (Zierschrift), as seen in the frontispiece of several stories (967). Otherwise, the author delivered simple written text (Texthandschrift) for typesetting. During his association with Bassermann, the Texthandscrit was copied out by the publisher (Verlegerhandschrift) and pasted underneath copies of the author’s illustrations in order to produce a mock-up of the story in book form (968). The illustrations and text were then returned to Busch so that he could get down to the business of creating the final illustrations, using the text for guidance (968). Before going to press, Bassermann often corrected Busch’s spelling, as well as any grammatical quirks (i.e., Low German object case with no differentiation between “dem” and “den”), as he saw fit (968). Despite in-house proofreading, spelling mistakes often crept into the first and subsequent runs, owing to incorrect transcription or haste on the part of the publisher, particularly during special printings at vacation- or Christmastime (968). As Busch destroyed most of his artwork and text once the corresponding story had been printed, much of his original material is limited and, in the case of his early works, virtually nonexistent (967).

Although Busch’s stories in the Fliegende Blätter were printed in black and white, colour accents were often stencilled into those appearing in the Münchener Bilderbogen, in order to give them extra appeal (962). For selected stories, black Schwabacher typeface with red accents was used (966). While there were special colour versions of some of the author’s stories, a colour reprint of Max und Moritz was cancelled, as it did not meet with Busch’s approval (986).

Once the picture layout and typesetting were completed, Busch received galley proofs
(Korrekturbogen) so that he could view the layout and final text before it went to press (968).

Incidentally, the author got around the problem of mirror images created by printed woodcuts by drawing a reversed image (Konterung), so that the resulting woodcut displayed the image exactly as he wanted it to be seen (975). Today’s printers have the capability of reversing the print after the fact before it goes to press. That having been said, the editor, advisory committee, and woodcutters of Busch’s early works were often at odds as to which way the print should be “pulled” after the first printing (975).

With the advent of the photomechanical printing process, Busch used a black-brown ink (Sepiatusche), formulated from one of his father’s recipes,251 in order to provide better contrast in his illustrations (974). These, along with the typeset text, were then photographed and transferred to a matrix for printing. Herr und Frau Knopp (1876) was the first story to be reproduced using this process (RZ 1631); the final artwork from this and subsequent drawings has survived, unlike the artist’s early pencil drawings (FW 975). In some of the later stories, such as Hernach (1908), Busch used red oil pastel for highlights (975).

With the sale in 1896 to Otto Bassermann of all rights to his picture stories for a one-time payment, there is no final authorized version (Ausgabe letzter Hand) of the author’s works (970). What remains are materials from Bassermann’s archives, including sketches, rough drafts, illustrations, hand-lettered text, wood blocks, and the like, for scholars to pore over and enjoy.

251 According to Busch’s nephew Otto Nöldeke (1867–1948), the author’s father, Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Busch (1801–68) entered verse for a Schauerballade (“thriller ballad”) in a notebook that he started in 1822, along with various recipes for household goods and chemicals (i.e., cleaners). See Chronik 212; qtd. in FW 1080.
Appendix E: Wilhelm Busch Archives

In May 2011, I visited the Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst in Hanover, where I was given access to a selection of original materials produced by and for Wilhelm Busch, including preliminary sketches, pencil drawings and text, final artwork, hand-carved printer’s wood blocks, galley proofs, and first editions. The high point of my research was a special viewing of the unblemished pencil drawings of one of the author’s earliest stories, Der Kuchenteig (1863), first discovered in 2008 in the archives of the Historische Druckerei Seidel of Sulzbach-Rosenberg (east of Nuremberg). Privately owned, the captionless story contains stylistic elements that can be seen in Max und Moritz (1865), created two years later. A large number of Busch’s original drawings and print materials are located in the museum, making it an ideal location for research purposes. Others can be found in the archives of his publishers, in museums, or in the hands of private collectors both in Germany and abroad.

During my stay in Hanover, I met several Busch scholars, all of whom provided valuable assistance to my research. They were Prof. Dr. Hans Joachim Neyer, Frau Ruth Brunngraber-Malottke, M.A., and Frau Monika Herlt, as well as Prof. Dr. Florian Vaßen of the Leibniz Universität Hannover. I also visited the Wilhelm-Busch-Sterbehaus in nearby Mechtshausen, where the author spent the last ten years of his life. In addition to a tour of his living quarters, I viewed several pen-and-ink drawings of his first poetry collection Kritik des Herzens (1874), as well as correspondence, greeting cards, and black-and-white photos from his seventieth-birthday celebrations. By examining an array of original materials and documents, available only in Germany, and, through consultation with Busch experts, I deepened my understanding of Germany’s internationally recognized “father of the comic strip.”

The Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst is housed in the
former Wallmodenschlösschen, built between 1780 and 1782 by Johann Ludwig von Wallmoden-Gimborn (1736–1811) for his vast art collection, and acquired by George IV (1762–1830) in 1818. From then on, it was known as the Georgenpalais. In 1930, the Wilhelm-Busch-Gesellschaft (Wilhelm Busch Society) was founded in Hanover to manage the author’s extensive collection of works. Until 1937, the collection was kept at the Kestner-Museum (now the Museum-August-Kestner), but, with the addition of archival material, the Society moved into the Wilhelm-Busch-Museum on the Rustplatz (today’s Georgsplatz). In 1949, the Georgenpalais was bequeathed to the Wilhelm-Busch-Gesellschaft for the purposes of creating a dedicated museum, which was subsequently opened to the public in 1950 after the completion of repairs to war damage. Since 1963, the museum has acquired various graphic works and collections from Europe and abroad. In 2002, it was renamed the Wilhelm Busch – Deutsches Museum für Karikatur und Zeichenkunst to reflect its vast holdings of four centuries of satirical work by artists such as William Hogarth (1697–1764), George Cruikshank (1792–1878), Honoré Daumier (1808–79), and Ronald Searle (1920–2011). In addition to rotating displays from its permanent collection, the museum hosts regular exhibitions by international cartoonists; in 2011, works by the English political satirist Steve Bell (1951–) and the French humorist Jean-Maurice Bosc (1924–73) were on view. Note: Prof. Dr. Neyer was the director of the museum until May 2012, when he was replaced by Frau Dr. Gisela Vetter-Liebenow. At that time, Frau Brunngraber-Malottke moved into the position of deputy director left vacant by Vetter-Liebenow. Frau Herlt continues to work at the museum as a writer and editor.

252 Wallmoden-Gimborn was the illegitimate son of George II (1683–1760) and his mistress Amalie Sophie von Wallmoden (1704–1765).

253 A diplomat and avid art collector, August Kestner (1777–1853) was the son of Johann Christian Kestner (1741–1800) and his wife Charlotte Buff (1753–1828). Buff’s rejection of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and her subsequent marriage with Kestner was the inspiration for the author’s famed epistolary novel Die Leiden des jungen Werther (1787). See Mandelkow 590–92.