Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen:

Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer

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Beginnings

Poetry, in a very narrow sense, can never be completely removed from all worldly systems of influence as close-reading may at first suggest. The poem exists neither in a vacuum of its own making, completely severed from the world of the critic, nor pressed between the pages of the era in which it was written. This should not mean that the poem may be read only within literary confines of the milieu that created it. The reader of a poem must always start from the outside in. Language already exists as a communicative system and it is the primary scaffolding of almost all thought. The poet's task and remedy is to remake language as she writes in order to suit her unique requisites.[1] Language exists independently outside of the poem but once it becomes part of a poem, it attains new dimensions and contexts: "But for the word, as the poet uses it, has to be conceived of, not as a discrete particle of meaning, but as a potential of meaning, a nexus or cluster of meanings."[2] Any word used by the poet diverges from its accepted meaning and may acquire one or more new meanings within its new context. The new potentiality emerges from the structure and logic of a particular poem, which has sprung from the experiences that the poet has translated. Her translation becomes an experience unto itself:

> [The poet's] task is finally to unify experience. He must return to us the unity of experience itself as man knows it in his own experience. The poem, if it be a true poem is a simulacrum of reality—in this sense, at least, it is an "imitation"—by being an experience rather than any mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience.[3]

[1] Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1947), 74.

[2] Ibid., 210.

[3] Ibid., 212-213.

The lived experience becomes, as closely as possible, unified with a linguistic experience. Although the poet may reimagine her language each time she writes, it remains at least superficially related to a dominant communicative system. For this reason, the poem can never truly stand alone. It is trapped in a web that connects it to other texts and the experience those texts communicate. During the twentieth century, it also remains vulnerable to the effects of the communicative crisis that followed World War II, and modernity generally, when the nature of experience and community were radically altered.

Although the poem may not stand alone in terms of language and literature, it nevertheless achieves a rareness not reached by most other texts. The poem is a unity of content and form. The content is derived from the experiences of the poet, although in an indirect manner as Cleanth Brooks suggests:

> [The poet] explores, consolidates, and "forms" the total experience that is the poem. I do not mean that he fashions a replica of his particular experience of a certain May morning like a detective making a moulage of a footprint in wet clay. But rather, out of the experiences of many May mornings…and possibly out of a hundred other experiences, he fashions, probably through a process akin to exploration, the total experience which is the poem.[4]

The experience that the poet fashions in this sense is both one of self-exploration and that of an "ideal" experience, as she often has the benefit of hindsight. She stiches together a multitude of experiences to produce a singularly penetrating one. As William Wordsworth so famously remarked: "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility."[5] The poem is both passionate and reflective; it has been

[4] Ibid., 75.

[5] William Wordsworth, "Preface to Lyrical Ballads," in *Prefaces and Prologues: To Famous Books*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14), np.

cultivated over time. The form that the poem ultimately takes is dictated by the content of the experience. Form is not limited to traditional metrics but is expanded to mean the flow of the overall poem, an internal structure: "The structure meant is a structure of meanings, evaluations, and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes, and meanings."[6] The form informs the meaning by helping to structure the content in a meaningful way, highlighting, juxtaposing, and offsetting key terms to determine a novel meaning. Because the form is so integral to the content of the poem, it becomes an ineffective gesture to attempt to separate the two through paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is an attempt to isolate the "content" of a poem that frequently occurs when trying to interpret a poem solely according to historical, biographical, and even religious conditions of the time in which the poem was written. It severs the poem from the present and alienates contemporary readers as well as prohibiting modern critique.

Deriving the meaning from a text where form and content are so closely related to one another becomes a precise art form and a challenging endeavor. Form is not simply the shape the content chooses to take but one of its defining features: "It is as though poetry above all discloses the secret truth of all literary writing: that form is *constitutive* of content and not just a reflection of it. Tone, rhythm, rhyme, syntax, assonance, grammar, punctuation and so on are actually generators of meaning, not just containers of it. To modify any of them is to modify the meaning itself."[7] The poem is a self-contained unit as it is written. To alter any one line or letter is to transform the meaning, creating, in fact, a new poem.[8] Brooks adds:

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[6] C. Brooks, 195.

[7] Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem* (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK; Victoria, AU: Blackwell, 2007), 67.

[8] Anne Carson, "Writing on the World: Simonides, Exactitude and Paul Celan," *Arion* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1996), 16: Paul Celan once withdrew a book of poetry from publication after numerous misprints: "Misprints on the printed page were only a foreboding of what Celan came to regard as misprints in the soul of his poetic language."

> As we have made this exploration, it has become more and more clear that the poem is not only the linguistic vehicle which conveys the thing communicated most 'poetically,' but that it is also the sole linguistic vehicle which conveys the things communicated accurately. In fact, if we are to speak exactly, the poem itself is the *only* medium that communicates the particular 'what' that is communicated.[9]

Although the interpretation of a poem is open-ended and may continually change, the poem is a fixed entity. Like a sculpture, it is a singular expression that can be viewed from many angles.

The possible perspectives a reader may take are dictated by his place in time. His perspective may be altered by the tides of literary movements or by historical events. "Modernity" set in motion by the Romantics and catalyzed by the onset of industrialization had already caused one shift in tradition. Life assumed a frenetic urban pace completely at odds with life as anyone had experienced before. New means of expression, including new forms of media, became necessary to describe this change. Language, among other mediums, required a transformation to remain meaningful. The evolution taking place was met with both enthusiasm and disdain. According to its detractors, modernity deprived the individual of his identity:

> The warning that experience itself is fading from the world has been issued all the way from Heidegger to Benjamin and beyond…modernity has stripped us of many things – myth, magic, kinship, tradition, solidarity; but now it has finally succeeded in denuding us of ourselves. It has delved into the recesses of our very subjectivity, and emptied us out like so many rich plums for scooping. The Eternal Now of modern urban existence, for which everything that happened up to ten minutes ago is ancient history, has eroded what for Walter Benjamin was the most precious medium of experience: tradition.[10]

For its supporters, however, modernity was an opportunity for humankind to separate from traditions that were not always so charming: "Tradition and experience are not just repositories

[9] C. Brooks, 74.

[10] Eagleton, 17: Eagleton's own use of metaphor in this citation provides an immediate clue that Benjamin's argument may be flawed.

of value; they are also vehicles of violence and oppression."[11] The prevailing attitudes against women, people of color, or any other characteristic, including religion, that denote "difference" are often aspects of culture and tradition as well as individual opinion and habit. Hate crimes, war, and genocide are frequently the byproducts of such prejudicial "traditions."

Historical events sometimes occur that fundamentally alter the way in which the reader receives language – to say nothing of the way in which the poet writes. One inescapable event of the twentieth century was the Holocaust. This event in particular caused a trauma so devastating as to permanently change the way people relate to language. The Holocaust exacerbated the distrust of language already set in motion by modernism: "There is a skepticism of the extravagant metaphor and the histrionic verbal gesture in an age which has good reason to be suspicious of manipulative rhetoric, whether it stems from autocrats or advertisers."[12] The suspicion grew exponentially over the course of the twentieth century that had already begun with the Russian Formalists attempting to restore "materiality" to language:

> They therefore took as their object of inquiry the materiality of language, or what they called "literariness." "Literariness" meant language which is peculiarly conscious of itself as such – or, to put it another way, language which has been "made strange," so that it becomes newly *perceptible* to the reader or listener. Instead of being a transparent medium through which we stare at the world, it is now a tangible object in its own right.[13]

Much modern poetry stereotypically takes on unusual forms, an exercise in "typewriter gymnastics" in order to restore tangibility and strangeness to the language. It is no longer an invisible lens through which the world is seen and of which the reader is unaware. Instead

[11] Ibid., 18.

[12] Ibid., 44: Consider the role of advertising in its relationship to the sale of mass produced consumer goods as well as the propaganda utilized by oppressive, often, Communist regimes as well as the National Socialists.

[13] Ibid., 48.

language becomes a translucent filter whose texture and colors distort the way the world is perceived. Its presence is unmistakable and deliberate. The linguistic nexus of meaning in the poem has become even broader. Each time the reader encounters this changed language, he is forced to consider it anew.

Poetry, however, has a long history of setting itself apart from "ordinary" language, although for somewhat different reasons. Medieval poetry also sets itself apart from the mundane vernaculars of day-to-day expression but it goes farther and deeper than even this. Poetry had to differentiate itself so that the gods would understand it: "Poesie ist die Muttersprache der Götter. Sie ist viel zu schön, um von Menschenherzurühren."[14] Poetic and religious language would continue to separate themselves from ordinary language for centuries, even when they happen to be written in a vernacular: "Notwendig ist lediglich, *dass* sich die Sprache der Poesie von der Alltagssprache unterscheidet; nicht notwendig dagegen ist, *wie* sie sich davon unterscheidet."[15] This leaves considerable latitude available for poets with any number of intentions to make themselves heard by their peers and their higher powers. Indeed, the language even of an individual poet changes over the course of her career as her craft improves and her perceptions change.

Rose Ausländer's poetry is no different. She is already a representative of many of the changes made to the face of tradition in the twentieth century. Ausländer was a German-speaking Jewish woman, dispossessed from her homeland, as well as a survivor to the Holocaust. All of these descriptions are categories of a subversive history and new voices to literary tradition. Her early poetry is lengthy and metric. It bears the distinctive stamp of so-called "traditional" poetry and yet it is typical for the condensation and self-reflexivity of modern poetry. As Ausländer

[14] Heinz Schlaffer, *Geistersprache: Zweck und Mittel der Lyrik* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2012), 44.

[15] Ibid., 53.

aged and she experienced dramatic changes, so too did her poetry. When she arrived in America and became inspired by form, writing pattern and prose poetry, scattering English phrases in between German lines – attempting to capture streams of thought and the quick passage of time in the city. After surviving the Holocaust in the Czernowitz ghetto with her mother, her language changed once again. It became sparser. When her mother died, her native language failed her altogether. Overnight she began to write in English, not penning a single German poem for a period of eight years. Once she returned to German, the language became even further truncated with most poems taking up less than a page. This German was substantially changed from her language of her early days. Each word possessed a new potency and potential.

Ausländer's poetic language began to undergo one of its major changes, like that of many other Jewish poets, in the wake of World War II:

> Was später über uns hereinbrach, war ungereimt, so alpdruckhaft beklemmend, dass—erst in die Nachwirkung, im nachträglich voll erlittenen Schock – der Reim in die Brüche ging. Blumenworte welkten. Auch viele Eigenschaftswörter waren fragwürdig geworden in einer mechanisierten Welt, die dem "Mann ohne Eigenschaften," dem entpersönlichten Menschen gehörte. Das alte Vokabular musste ausgewechselt werden. Die Sterne – ich konnte sie auch aus meiner Nachkriegslyrik nicht entfernen – erschienen in anderer Konstellation.[16]

Ausländer's statement echoes both the discourses on the nullifying effects of modernity in general and the "prohibition" of poetry after the Holocaust in particular. She speaks of the emptied-out individual subsisting in a mechanized, industrialized world. In the multitudes of the city, the individual becomes lost among the masses and overwhelmed by the rash pace of urban

[16] Rose Ausländer, "Alles kann Motive sein," in *Hügel / aus Äther / unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975*, ed. Helmut Braun. Vol. 3. (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1984), 384.

life.[17] Additionally, Ausländer acknowledges the need for language to change after the war but not as radically as some other poets:

> Ausländer's approach to language differed from that of Paul Celan. Celan's poems, by calling German language into question and undermining its "tropisms" from within, enact the personified resistance of symbolic processes not as a structural or functional, but as a differential and thus virtually self-deconstructive potentiality. Ausländer, in contrast, does not comment on problems of imprinting or deformation. She seems to retain a vitalist confidence in the magic power of verbal creation.[18]

Although a reduced language, Ausländer's poetic language retains a crucial tie to language as the rest of us know it to be, thereby remaining more accessible than much of Celan's work for the lay reader. The eight-year break from the German language, quite possibly the side-effect of several personal traumas, proved to be a productive one for Ausländer. The substantial amount of time away from the German language gave the poet enough distance and pause for reflection in order to take it up anew once she finally returned. It may be due to this long pause that she was able to retain so much of her, although somewhat altered, poetic vocabulary. This return to her native language was ultimately punctuated by Ausländer's move to Düsseldorf in 1965, where she remained until her death.

Rose Ausländer, like many artists, was deeply affected by events in the world around her and had an insatiable interest in other art forms and literatures. Her writing naturally displays these influences, whether they are in form or content. The product of the form and content remains, however, distinctly her own. It is the product of the multitude of her experiences and the uniqueness of her perspective that I have attempted to keep in mind when analyzing her

[17] See: Georg Simmel, "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben," in *Die Berliner Moderne: 1885-1914,* eds. Jürgen Schutte and Peter Sprengel (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1987). Page range??

[18] Annette Runte, "Mourning as Remembrance: Writing as Figuration and Defiguration in the Poetry of Rose Ausländer," in *German and European Poetics after the Holocaust: Crisis and Creativity,* eds. Gert Hofmann, Rachel MagShamhráin, Marko Pajević, and Michael Shields (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011), 74.

poems in a most holistic way. The primary method used in this analysis is the close reading approach. These readings, however, have not wholly been divorced from the historical and biographical circumstances that undoubtedly influenced Ausländer. The historical circumstances, especially two World Wars, continue to exercise their influence over much literature and many readers of the present day. The poet's personal biography, profoundly affected by these historical events, becomes nearly inextricably entwined with the poetic work, often running parallel to it. Ausländer's poems also do not exist in complete isolation from all other literature in general. They branch out and co-opt well-worn figures from mythology and fairy tales, reclaiming and reinventing them, in an intertextual gesture.

Die Vergangenheit hat mich gedichtet

Ausländer's work is well-known to be closely related to her lived experience. In this sense, it becomes necessary to familiarize the reader with critical biographical information about the poet to enable a fuller understanding of the works analyzed in this dissertation. Chapter 1 begins by focusing on Ausländer's origins in Czernowitz, Bukovina. Czernowitz constitutes a unique territorial, cultural, and temporal condition that would cease to exist as Ausländer experienced it after World War II. The former Crown City of the Habsburg Empire was an intersection of nationalities, ethnicities, and religions that coexisted rather peacefully for many years. The Jews arrived as bearers of the German language and culture into a milieu of Ukrainians and Romanians, who were indigenous to the area. Their Christian and folk customs influenced the artistic endeavors of the region long after the arrival of the Austrians. Czernowitz was also home to a university that fulfilled a duty to indoctrinate its students with the knowledge

and culture of the West. The transmission of this knowledge took place in German, the language of the intellectual elite even long after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Ausländer's youth was marked by an expulsion from this idyllic homeland due to two World Wars. Her primary schooling was completed in two cities in two different countries, Vienna, Austria and Budapest, Hungary. After the death of her father, Ausländer would travel to the United States for the first of several long stays. Her first trip abroad was with her future husband, Ignaz Ausländer. The marriage lasted for seven years and was ended by Rose during a return trip to Czernowitz to care for her ailing mother. Her second trip to the United States was with her long-time companion, Helios Hecht. The two trips are marked by considerably different emotional states that find their way into poetry written at these times. Once again she would return home to Czernowitz and separate from her lover. This particular trip home was at a most inauspicious time as the occupation of Czernowitz by German troops began in 1941. Ausländer and her immediate family managed to survive the ghetto with the help of a family friend. During this time she was also drawn to other poets who shared her experience of survival, including Paul Celan.

After the Jews were finally freed in 1944, Ausländer eventually made her way back to the United States. After the death of her mother, a dramatic switch occurred in her poetic language and for nearly a decade Ausländer wrote in English before she returned to her native language. This period of her life was marked by travel abroad and by a visit to her religious 'homeland,' Israel. Ausländer ultimately chose to return her linguistic homeland, Germany, in which to grow old. Although a young Rose Scherzer was discovered in Czernowitz by Alfred Margul-Sperber, and published her first collection of poetry in 1939, it was not until after 1966 that Ausländer began to write and publish most prolifically. She also enjoyed significant recognition from her

peers. Her collected works, which did not appear until the mid-1980s, consist of nine volumes of poetry and short prose that she wrote over her lifetime. This chapter also includes a discussion of selected previous research on Ausländer.

The Topography of Identity

Chapter 2 focuses specifically on the importance of place, namely Bukovina, in Ausländer's development as a poet. The physical space of Bukovina enters into a special type of relationship with both poet and poetry and their process of becoming. Czernowitz, the capital of Bukovina, was a melting pot of cultures, languages, and religions in which a unique brand of German language poetry by Jewish writers was forged. Unfortunately, the poetry that emerged between the World Wars enjoyed little recognition. It was difficult to categorize these poets with other German-speaking poets at a time when anti-Semitism was already flourishing. Additionally, the readership of poetry in general was on the decline. The natural beauty of Bukovina, however, enjoyed a high status in much of this poetry.

The forests surrounding Bukovina are often endowed with magical and mythical properties, like the forest of a fairytale. The trees and streams are treated as living beings with their own agency and who speak their own language. They are sometimes magical beings, other times they are more mundane. Nature becomes mother and father to the people who populate it. It provides them with fresh air and milk, sustenance that is taken in by the body and transformed into poetry by the skillful hand. To experience this place is to experience a place outside of time, in a kind of eternal garden. And its inhabitants live harmoniously with one another despite their many differences. Their language is as song.

Ausländer also attempts to divulge the history of Czernowitz through her poetry but it is a remembered history and not always reflective of actual history, as some scholars have pointed out.[19] Poetry is not a means of accurate historical record keeping but a matter of experience, reflection, and memory. It is a craft that in this case endeavors to preserve a place as it once was and will never be again. Poetry produces its own brand of truth that may or may not be related to historical fact. The remembered truth of these poems are still framed by elements that characterize the strictly landscape poems. Geographical features such as mountains and rivers not only anchor the poem to a specific place but provide metaphorical points of perspective and reminders about the passage of time. The once celebrated diversity demonstrated most clearly in language becomes tense as war dominates the backdrop.

The mythical aura about Bukovina instills it with the sensation of a primal origin for the poetic speaker. It is, after all, the location of her birth both physically and poetically. Place for Ausländer is also anchored in time. Poems about her childhood form another swath that runs throughout her oeuvre. The process of growing up ran parallel to the expulsion of her family from her native land. The chaotic events of this era compromised the child poet's sense of safety and as a result she began to escape into a world of her own making. The poet's isolation was also due largely to her upbringing. Her parents forbade her to play with the other children in the street, so she remained inside and alone. The poems of her childhood are divided between those that depict a special, safe moment in time and those that are wildly fantastic but are evidence of a deep loneliness. These texts represent attempts by the poet to anaesthetize the past by rendering

[19] See Maria Ivanytska, "Czernowitz und die Bukowina im Leben und Schaffen von Rose Ausländer," in *"Immer zurück zum Pruth": Dokumentation des Czernowitzer Symposiums 100 Jahre Rose Ausländer*, eds. Michael Gans and Harald Vogel (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2002) and Eva Reichmann, "Czernowitz in der Lyrik von Rose Ausländer: Erinnerung oder/und Fiktion," in *Gebt unseren Worten nicht euren Sinn: Rose Ausländer Symposium Düsseldorf 2001*, eds. Helmut Braun und Walter Engel (Köln: Rose Ausländer-Stiftung, 2001).

it in a more palatable way. The adult poet keeps the idea of fantasy alive by finding an alternate homeland in her dreams to which she can retreat when the world becomes unbearable.

Ausländer's poetry about home reveals the strong influence of philosophical works by both Baruch de Spinoza and Constantin Brunner.[20] Her poetry portrays the world as a unity—a network of living things that are bound to one another and are capable of sharing their experiences with each other. The poetic text is part of this network of experience. The text may become the place it represents or it may become the poet herself. External forces transform through the body of the poet into a concrete text that is once again sent out into the world to be devoured by another. The world communicates with the poet on a symbolic level. They are proof of life from the most mundane to a spiritually elevated level. The texts also control and validate the poet's existence and constitute another place that she can call home.

Aquatic Mythology

Ausländer took a great deal of inspiration from other artists. Musicians, painters, composers, philosophers, and other poets feature prominently in her work. Some of her poetry is intended to mimic a particular genre, such as music, through form. Other times a connection may be made through themes and leitmotifs. The most significant influence on her work comes from German language authors like Goethe and the German Romantic movement. Among the poets featured in her work are Heinrich Heine and Annette Droste-Hülshoff who become linked through the mythical figure of the Loreley.

[20] A pseudonym for Arjeh Yehuda Wertheimer (1862-1937) whose concept of "holism" and advocacy for Jewish emancipation that were widely recognized during his lifetime. He developed an especially strong following among philosophy students during Ausländer's years at the university in Czernowitz.

The Loreley is the name for a cliff near a particularly narrow and treacherous stretch of the Rhine River. Loreley as the siren-like figure of legend sprung from the imaginations of Clemens Brentano, although clearly there are some precedents for the threatening, aquatic female in folklore and religion. Although Heine's version of Loreley was written as a kitsch parable to a fading Romanticism, it has managed to make an indelible and enduring mark on not just the German cultural memory but much of the rest of the world as well. Loreley continues to appear in new forms in both the literary and pop culture realms. Ausländer reclaimed this particular figure, bestowing upon her motherly and nurturing traits rather than duplicitous ones. Droste-Hülshoff also invoked the wild spirit of the maenad, a figure loosely related to the siren, in her poem "Am Turme" (1842). Droste-Hülshoff's poetry is infused by the strong presence of water as she considered the shores of Lake Constance home.

Although Loreley is an intriguing figure she is rather a means to give agency to the water she inhabits and that plays such a dominant role in Ausländer's work. Ausländer herself was frequently in motion, crossing the Atlantic many times as she traveled from Bukovina to the United States and back to Europe. Rivers often dominated the landscape she describes: Pruth, Rhine, Danube, Hudson, Mississippi, and the Venetian canals. Rivers are representative of movement. They are borders that demarcate what is home and what is otherwise. Rivers can also be dangerous. Other poems describe sinking and its aftermath, since the water possesses a will and consciousness of its own.

Water also assumes a symbolic meaning as a keeper of tradition and cultural purity in the German national consciousness. It also becomes a metaphor for the movement of folktales and literature through time. Disparate tales flow into and contaminate one another; river water does not remain still. The waters still flow today although their original springs might be unknown.

The mystery of the water's source is also the mystery of the subconscious. Profound waters are able to conceal and reveal their depths at whim much as the subconscious mind works. As reservoirs of memory, especially cultural memory, they are not accessible at will. It takes a gifted and skilled individual, such as the poet, to penetrate the depths of the psyche in order to reveal lost songs and truths. These profundities are divulged often during sleep or half-sleep when the poet is closer to death and the materials gathered in this state may be remembered as dreams. It should be noted that the water's depths are not always an indifferent and benign source of inspiration from which the poet simply draws whenever needed. The depths must also consume in order to provide. They consume the cultural production and experience of the same authors who wish to draw from their resources. The water may rage in its hunger, leading to unpredictable results and unhappy dwellers at the bottom of the sea.

The Tapestry of Identity

Much of today's literature developed out of a diverse collection of myths. Mythology has provided a rich history from which newer texts may evolve, thus providing new material for future literature as each author reimagines these myths. The oral tradition from which many myths, legends, and fairytales finally finds concrete expression as text through the body of the author conferring upon the myth a degree of authority. The poems themselves, moreover, seem to exercise a degree of autonomy over their own existence.

Ausländer describes the words themselves as having their own agency. They come to her or they do not. In an ironic turn the poet's authority is undermined by her own text. It asserts authority over itself, allowing the reader to assume ownership of any subsequent interpretation.

The words emerge from a liminal space, somewhere between the sign and symbols of nature and the mind of humankind. The poet in particular is able to decode the natural language and transcribe into human language. Language, conversely, binds the speaker to a specific human community.

It is the language in which the author writes that binds her to a specific place and time. Ausländer's poetic language connects her to Bukovina as it existed prior to two World Wars. It was an ethnically diverse land with a proclivity for the arts. Bukovina is well documented through the works of its poets and it is their language that survives. Bukovina, politically, no longer exists and many of its Jewish inhabitants perished during the Holocaust. Language is often the only souvenir that the survivor can carry with her and evoke a sense of materiality. With the language, she carries her own origins.

The poet is part of nature and nature is of divine origin. As the poet decodes the symbolic language of nature, she is able to look ever deeper into herself. It is through writing that the poet discovers her authentic self. This self is not static but rather dynamic as she reinvents herself in each subsequent poem. The mutability of identity became especially important after World War II, when the old relationships between signifier and signified began to break down. It was necessary for the poet to renegotiate her own relationship to this medium in order to continue growing as an artist.

Among the other poets to whom Ausländer was drawn was Else Lasker-Schüler. Lasker-Schüler's poetry, like Ausländer's, demonstrates a strong autobiographical inclination. Lasker-Schüler was singular among Expressionist poets being an older female among predominately younger men. She was also extremely independent for a woman of her time, using her writing as a means to support herself and her son. Like Ausländer, Lasker-Schüler used her writing as a

means of survival during difficult times. It was a place in which she could develop characters who exhibited the self-confidence, autonomy, and freedom that she so strongly desired. Lasker-Schüler's strong personality alienated her from many of her contemporaries. She was able to partially reclaim membership in an older religious community through the use of Jewish symbolism throughout her oeuvre.

Ausländer dedicates two poems to Lasker-Schüler in which she explains her affinity for the other poet. In one of these poems, Ausländer likens her to the archetypal storyteller, Scheherazade. Although Scheherazade does not appear explicitly in Lasker-Schüler's work, a kind of "magic carpet" does in "Eine alter Tibetteppich" (1910) evoking the *1001 Arabian Nights.* Lasker-Schüler's likeness to Scheherazade includes her in the community of storytellers whose ancient lineage cannot be exactly traced. Moreover, the act of spinning tales bears a distinct relationship to the actual spinning of tapestries since they were often composed at the same time and in the same place.

Chapter I:

"*Die Vergangenheit hat mich gedichtet*"

Life and Language

Rosalie Beatrice "Ruth" Scherzer was born in Czernowitz on May 11, 1901. She attended elementary and middle school in Czernowitz and Budapest. Rose finished high school in Vienna during World War I. From a very early age, she experienced the trauma of a lost home and began writing at age 17 to help negotiate that loss. After the First World War she returned as a young woman to Czernowitz where she worked in a law office and attended philosophy classes at the university. During World War II her family relocated to Budapest and then Vienna, because of the Russian occupation of Czernowitz.

Her philosophical interests gravitated strongly towards Plato, Baruch de Spinoza, Constantin Brunner, and Friedrich Nietzsche. The influence of these philosophers, especially Brunner and Spinoza, is evident in much of her poetry, for example, in "Spinoza II" (1979) that recalls the German translation of "Baruch":[21]

> Mein Heiliger
> heißt Benedikt
>
> Er hat
> das Weltall
> klargeschliffen
>
> Unendlicher Kristall
> aus dessen Herz
> das Licht dringt

[21] Rose Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz / des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-197*, ed. Helmut Braun. Vol. 5 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1984), 263.

In this work the philosopher is conflated with his philosophy by becoming the part of the polished lens through which the world more clearly shines. This image demonstrates the philosophy itself, of an interconnected whole made of many heterogeneous parts. The philosopher and the philosophy are facets of a single world that help illuminate one another. Additionally, Ausländer elevates Brunner to the level of a personal saint.

Brunner's philosophy is more clearly articulated in lines from a poem written by Ausländer in his memory in 1947:

> Er sah der Welt unendliche Gestalten
> zu einem Garten sich zusammenfalten,
>
> sah, was getrennt erschien, heimlich sich verbinden
> und sich in Einem Wesen wiederfinden.[22] (13-17)

This poem evokes the more traditionally Judeo-Christian elements of life emerging from the garden created by God's own hand. It also implies the transience of life on earth. All life must return to the garden, to the earth itself, from which it sprang. Metaphorically and concretely, every part of reality is related. One figure may return to its origins only to be reborn in another form. This illusion of diversity is created by faceting the form of a single greater being whose radiance lends the philosopher his own inner glow: "Sein Schritt war leicht bewegt und sein Gesicht / belebt von einem starken Innenlicht."[23] Although differently worded, this belief system echoes the Romantic sentiment of the interchangeability of the inner and outer worlds. They also suggest the poetic practice of projecting the poet's inner world onto an exterior landscape.

[22] Rose Ausländer, "Constantin Brunner: In Memoriam," in *Die Erde war ein atlasweißes Feld: Gedichte 1927-1956*, ed. Helmut Braun. Vol. 1 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1985), 191.

[23] Ibid., lines 1-2.

Water is another productive metaphor for Brunner's view of being and thinking, as well as a trope that frequently appears in Ausländer's work.[24] Brunner writes in *Die Lehre vom Geistigen und vom Volk*:

> Das Wasser, ganz besonders das Meer erscheint mir die wunderbarste Versinnlichung der Bewegung, Verwandlung…der erhabenste Anblick der flüchtigen Erscheinungen, ewig sich verbindend, ewig unendliche Gestalten wechselnd…das reichste Bild der ewigen Verwandlung des Einen.[25]

The way in which water can be separated and seamlessly rejoin the whole was not only an ontological metaphor on humankind's relationship to God but also a means to describe the process of thinking. The whole ocean exists simultaneously alongside each individual raindrop that is but a facet of a single whole. In the same way an idea exists as but one form of the unity from which it emerged. This philosophy informs the aquatic mythology present in Ausländer's oeuvre where water functions as a repository for the world's many literary fictions and from which the artist can continually draw.[26] In both cases, a seemingly lifeless element is transformed into a kind of life-giving force demonstrating that not just all beings, but all objects and beings of the world are interconnected.

Ausländer was compelled by dire financial circumstances caused by her father's death in 1921 to leave Bukovina and make her way to the United States. Some scholars suggest that Rose may have borne some hidden animosity towards her mother for the necessity of this move.[27] At the time it was customary for young men to leave the family when these situations arose but her

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[25]Constantin Brunner, *Die Lehre vom Geistigen und vom Volk* (Stuttgart: Cotta Verlag, 1962), 468.

[26] This idea will be examined in depth in chapter 2.

[27] Cilly Helfrich, *Es ist ein Aschensommer in der Welt: Rose Ausländer, Biographie* (Weinheim and Berlin: Quadriga, 1995), 91.

mother preferred to have Rose's younger brother Max stay behind instead. Rose left, accompanied by her future husband Ignaz Ausländer. They settled first in Minnesota where Rose worked at a German language newspaper, the *Westlicher Herold*. Later, the couple moved to New York and married in the fall of 1923. In New York Rose worked in a bank, a grim experience, which found its way into her poetry. These lines from "Bankfabrik" (1965)[28] are representative of the bank's sterile atmosphere:

> Eine kalte, starre öde,
> rußverrauchte Mauer spannt
> steinern vor der Morgenröte
> ihre schwere Vorhandwand (11-14)

The walls are impenetrable to both light and hope. The bank physically resembles a prison but it is likely that Rose's outlook was colored as much by her personal circumstances as her work environment.

Five years after she first arrived in the United States, Rose became an American citizen. In the same year she also became a founding member of the Constantin-Brunner-Circle in New York. At the end of 1926 she and her husband returned to Czernowitz where they formally separated. The following year, Ausländer traveled to Berlin where she was able to meet the philosopher Brunner for the first time in person. [29] She returned to New York in 1928 accompanied by graphologist Helios Hecht. It was a short visit and the couple returned to Czernowitz the same year. Ausländer worked as a journalist, translator, English teacher, and an advice columnist for *Der Tag*, a local newspaper in which some of her poems first appeared. In

[28] Rose Ausländer, *Die Erde war ein atlasweißes Feld: Gedichte 1927-1956*, ed. Helmut Braun, Vol. 1 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1985), 21.

[29] Selected titles from Constantin Brunner: *The Tyranny of Hate, The Roots of Antisemitism, A Translation into English of Memsheleth Sadon.*

1934 she relocated to Budapest and separated from Hecht. The separation was a result of Hecht analyzing and publishing her poetry without her consent. Additionally, Hecht was unable to secure a divorce from his first wife, destroying Ausländer's deepest desire of establishing a family with him. Although separated, Hecht would remain one of the great loves of Ausländer's life and the source of much of her poetry. Her love for Hecht comes together with Brunner's philosophy in "Liebe VI" (1980):[30]

> Wir werden uns wiederfinden
> im See
> du als Wasser
> ich als Lotusblume
>
> Du wirst mich tragen
> ich werde dich trinken
>
> Wir werden uns angehören
> vor allen Augen
>
> Sogar die Sterne
> werden sich wundern:
> hier haben sich zwei
> zurück verwandelt
> in ihren Traum
> der sie erwählte

The two separate entities, the water and the water lily, are connected by the act of simply living. One cannot exist without the other. Furthermore, they coexist in a manner apparent to everyone. This single line, "vor allen Augen," connotes Ausländer's wish to lead a lawful life together. At this time it was illegal for an unmarried couple to live together and their entire relationship had been carried out in an illicit manner. Ausländer also forfeited her American citizenship at this time due to her long absence abroad.

[30] Rose Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, ed. Helmut Braun, Vol. 6 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1986), 54.

Ausländer's poetry about New York functions as a barometer of her emotional state-of-mind during her two long-term romantic relationships. The poetry written during her first visit with Ignaz Ausländer suggests an emotional barrenness and longing for home. For example in "Die Stunden nach der Sklaverei" (1932)[31] she writes: "Ich wohn in einem Wüstenland, / nichts grünt dem Herzen Freude" (10-11). The title itself is indicative of a pervasive hopelessness. The "greening" of which she speaks, and which characterizes all her poetry about Bukovina, is conspicuously absent. The magical and protective forests of her homeland stand in sharp contrasts to the deserts of a new world in which she finds herself alone, at least figuratively. Ausländer's poetry during her second visit to New York with Hecht bears a distinctly different character. They are hopeful and content rather than wistful and melancholy. In "Seliger Abend" (1932):[32] "Meines Herzens Grenzen reißen -- / keine ferne ist mehr weit" (11-12). Her heart is now so full as to overflow with emotion and nothing is as far away as it had once seemed. She no longer experiences the alienation and loneliness that characterized her first visit to the United States.

Soviet troops occupied Czernowitz once again in 1940 and Ausländer was arrested and held for four months on the charge of spying for the United States. Her brother Max was forcibly enlisted by the Russians and one of only 37 of those enlisted to return to Czernowitz in 1944. Following her imprisonment she worked briefly as a nurse until SS troops began their occupation of Czernowitz in 1941. Ausländer along with all the other Jews remained in the Czernowitz ghetto until April 1944. It is during this time that she came to know a young Paul Antschel, who returned to Czernowitz at the end of 1943 from a work camp in Romania and would later be celebrated as one of the greatest poets of the German language under his pen name, Celan. The

[31] Ausländer, *Die Erde war ein atlasweißes Feld: Gedichte 1927-1956*, 27.

[32] Ibid., 47.

death transports were briefly halted by the severe winter of 1942 but resumed the following summer. Ausländer credits a family friend, Hanna Kawa, for assisting with her family's survival during these years. Kawa was able to smuggle clothes and food into the ghetto once a month. The Scherzer family was fortunate as Rose, her mother, her sister-in-law and a young child all survived. In the spring of 1944 Soviet troops occupied the city again and the remaining Jews were finally freed. In October of 1945 Ausländer travelled to Romania and the following year returned to New York.

After the occupation, a group of surviving poets formed a writer's circle. Rose Ausländer, Paul Celan, and Immanuel Weißglas, among others were members of this small group of surviving writers. The Holocaust caused not only a profound break with history and language but also many small, individual breaks between individuals. This refers not just to the real loss of family members and friends but also the loss of understanding or connection between victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. The survivors formed a special kind of community, a community of loss.[33] It became difficult to communicate with those who did not share the same trauma. Everyone had transformed:

> When we lose certain people, or when we are dispossessed from a place, or a community, we may simply feel that we are undergoing something temporary, that mourning will be over and some restoration of prior order will be achieved. But maybe when we undergo what we do, something about who we are is revealed, something that delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that these ties constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us. It is not as if an "I" exists independently over here and then simply loses a "you" over there, especially if the attachment to "you" is part of what composes who "I" am. If I lose you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself. Who "am" I, without you? When we lose some of these ties by which we are constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do. On one level, I think I have lost "you" only to discover that "I" have gone missing as well.[34]

[33] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London, New York: Verso, 2004), 20.

[34] Ibid., 22.

Her experience altered her relationship to the philosophical "heroes" of the past as well as to her social environment. The web that connects the world is not eternally fixed. Although always subject to transformation, the changes which occurred during WWII caused irreparable damage to the tapestry of being. The whole from which humankind descended had become newly constituted, in a diminished and profaned form, and that colossal change tainted every individual thread. The indescribable loss of life as well as the territorial and political changes that took place both before and after the war, created an unbreachable rift between those who had experienced the conflict first hand and those who remained at a distance. The Bukovina that Ausländer experienced as a child had been wiped from the map. It became imperative to assemble as survivors, especially as surviving artists, to recapture any sense of community, both the lost and the new, and to renegotiate the connection to a radically altered reality. It was only in the company of other writers from Czernowitz that Rose and others could hope to avoid the feelings of immense desolation and guilt that accompanied the act of survival: "Heimat finden sie bei den Menschen, die mit ihr in die andere Wirklichkeit, die geistige übersiedeln. Paul Antschel ist für Rose so ein Mensch, da sie sich bei ihm nicht allein fühlt, weil er mit ihr in diese geistige Wirklichkeit reist."[35] The alternate intellectual reality referred to is the reality created by poetry, the reality that ultimately preserved the lives of these writers during the war.

In 1947 Ausländer's mother died in Satu Mare, Romania. Her mother's death triggered a linguistic switch from German to English as her poetic language for the next eight years. Ausländer herself was unable to explain this sudden change to which she alludes to in her essay "Alles kann Motiv sein" (1971) explaining: "Nach mehrjährigem Schweigen überraschte ich mich eines Abends beim Schreiben englischer Lyrik…Mysteriös, wie sie erschienen war,

[35] Helfrich, 199.

verschwand die englische Muse.“[36] Losses as tremendous as these cannot help but leave their imprint on the psyche as well as language, particularly poetic language:

> I might try to tell a story here about what I am feeling, but it would have to be a story in which the very “I” who seeks to tell the story is stopped in the midst of the telling; the very “I” is called into question by its relation to the Other, a relation that does not precisely reduce me to speechlessness, but does nevertheless clutter my speech with the signs of its undoing.[37]

Each loss affects the individual’s identity and consequently, the expression of that self through language and text.

Ausländer’s English language poetry lacks the adeptness ultimately attained in her German work. It was also written relatively early in her overall poetic career, meaning that it is both structurally and linguistically bulky. Thematically, the English language poetry tends to focus on either scenes of New York or themes concerning endings and death, which are then often connected to Greek or Roman references. Some exemplary titles include: “The girl of today” (1954), “Columbus Avenue” (1956), “Nothing matters” (1950), “After his burial” (1950), “And looking for a final start” (1950), “Death of a poet” (1954), “Rome” (1959), “O dust and skeleton and sun…” (1955), and “After the world was atombombed” (1959).[38] It is noteworthy that many of these poems still deal with transformations, i.e. endings which are also a form of rebirth. For example in “Death of a Poet”:

> But suddenly the tension breaks: Serene,
> fixed in relief, unfettered by death’s chain

[36] Rose Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975*, ed. Helmut Braun, Vol. 3 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1984), 384.

[37] Butler, 23.

[38] Ausländer, *Die Erde war ein atlasweißes Feld: Gedichte 1927-1956*: 328, 335, 322, 323, 324, 327, 342, 330, and 340, respectively.

his verses rise, returning from the dead! (15-17)

In lines evocative of Edgar Allan Poe,[39] the poet returns from the dead transformed into his own verse. Whatever, or whoever, returns from death returns in a fundamentally altered state. This is evidence of Brunner's continual influence on Ausländer's worldview.

Ausländer spent some of her years in New York working as a foreign language correspondent at a logistics firm. With the exception of a long overdue reunion with her brother's family, this visit to New York was marked by extreme loneliness and alienation and Ausländer found herself drawn to others like her. She found solace in a small group of German-speaking immigrants from Czernowitz, as well as groups of other writers. At this time some of her English language poetry and her translations of Else Lasker-Schüler, Adam Mickiewicz, and Christian Morgenstern were published. At the "City of Writers Conference of Staten Island" at Wagner College, Ausländer met Marianne Moore for the first time. Moore was among the modern American poets to become important in the development of Ausländer as a poet and a proponent of Ausländer returning to the German language. The long break from the German language was ultimately productive for Ausländer in that she was able to approach her old language, the perpetrator's language, in a reconciliatory manner: "Diese intensive Auseinandersetzung erlaubt es ihr, ihr erschüttertes Sprachvertrauen auch sprachlich zu überwinden und der mißbrauchten Sprache den verlorenen Sinn und die verletzte Würde zurückzugeben."[40] Ausländer travelled to Europe in 1957 during which she was able to reconnect with Paul Celan in Paris. Most importantly, this trip would establish Italy as a second poetic homeland for Ausländer. She did

[39] Although several of Ausländer's English language poems are reminiscent of Poe, she never names him as an influence upon her work.

[40] Helfrich, 232.

not reside for any extensive period of time in this country but felt an emotional attachment caused by the warmness of the land and its people.

Ausländer returns many times to the Italian landscape, treating it often as a dreamland, but in a poetically manner similar to Bukovina. Characteristic of the Bukovina poems, as examined in chapter two, are references to language and the way it makes the speaker feel. In "Italien I" (1982), for example:[41]

> Immer träume ich zurück
> zu deinen Städten
> Venedig Rom Florenz
> Siena Neapel
>
> Zum Armalfiweg
> zu San Michele
> zu deinen Schätzen
>
> Ich verständige mich
> mit vier Worten
> ja nein rechts links
>
> Die Menschen verstehen mich
> antworten mir
> mit gütigen Gesten
> jeder Blick ein
> Willkomm-Gruß
>
> Italien
> mein Immerland

Words such as "träumen" and "Märchen" appear frequently in the poems about Italy. The speaker of this poem emphasizes that she always returns in dreams. The word always, "immer," appears at both the beginning and end of the poem. In the first case it is related to the action of the speaker and in the second instance it is used to create a descriptive compound noun. The repetition suggests a perpetual return. The speaker names specific places; Venice is of particular

[41] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 239.

importance as it is the subject of at least four poems: "Venedig I," "Venedig II," "Auf der Sichel," and "Mein Venedig." Its antiquity and canals render it a suitable dreamscape, where fantasies are likely to occur. Then it is the Italian people and their language that are described. There does not seem to be a linguistic barrier between the speaker (though Ausländer did not speak Italian) and the people she comes into contact with. They smile and gesture and she makes her way through the country with minimal language. In Bukovina, she describes four different languages coexisting harmoniously but they have now been reduced to only four words.

In 1964, Ausländer visited Israel before moving to Vienna, preferring to reside in a linguistic homeland rather than a religious one. A year later she relocated to the Nelly-Sachs Hausin Düsseldorf where she would remain until her death with the exception of an eight-month visit to the United States in 1968.[42] In 1966 she received restitution and a pension from the German state, which allowed her to travel again. She visited France, Switzerland, and her beloved Italy for the last time. During the last ten years of her life, Ausländer was bedridden, this state began as a voluntary withdrawal from the outside world. From June 1967 onward she chose to live in isolation. It is unclear as to when this withdrawal became involuntary: "Ob Rose das Bett wirklich nicht mehr verlassen kann oder ob sie es nicht mehr verlassen will, um all ihre Kraft auf ihr Schreiben zu konzentrieren, bleibt offen."[43] She entertained only a few visitors between the years of 1975 and 1988, including her brother Max and her editor Helmut Braun who took dictation from the poet for many of her late works. During these years she also refused much contact with the outside world, deliberately avoiding newspapers, television, and the radio. Between the years of 1981 and early 1983, Ausländer was physically disconnected from her

[42] The Nelly-Sachs-Haus was established in the 1960s by the Jewish congregation of Düsseldorf as a rest home for members of the local community as well for Jews from any other corner of the world.

[43] Helfrich, 298.

world by the side effects of a strong medication for her kidneys. Braun continued to visit her weekly although she could not interact with him for more than a few minutes at a time.

Alfred Margul-Sperber: Literary Beginnings

Alfred Margul-Sperber (1898-1967) is one of the best known journalists, poets, and editors to emerge from Czernowitz. He was also one of the most persistent supporters of the German-language poets of the former Austrian crown land Bukovina, which included Paul Celan, Alfred Kittner, Alfred Gong, Immanuel Weißglass, and Rose Ausländer. Sperber is credited with the early discovery and promotion of both Ausländer's and Celan's careers. As an advocate of these poets and a poet himself he understood the unique position that they occupied both politically and geographically. Bukovina in general, and Czernowitz in particular, was a kind of crossroads. Many ethnicities, religions, and languages coalesced in this region, producing a unique multicultural experience. German was the official language during the Habsburg Empire and continued to be the language of culture and education long after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. After World War II and the decimation of the Jewish population, who had been the primary carriers of the German language, the German-language poetry of this region fell into a void.

One of the most aptly named collections of the German poetry from the early twentieth century of this region is *Versunkene Dichtung der Bukowina: Eine Anthologie deutschsprachiger Lyrik* (1994) edited by Amy Colin and Alfred Kittler. The writers collected in this volume, along with their work and the cultural milieu in which it was created, have all sunk into history. This collection begins suitably with a dedication to Sperber: "Gewidmet dem Andenken des Initiators

und geistigen Anregers dieser Sammlung, dem Lyriker und Mentor der deutschsprachigen Lyrik der Bukowina."[44] Sperber edited an earlier collection of poetry, *Die Buche: Eine Anthologie deutschsprachiger Judendichtung aus der Bukowina*, but died before it could be published. The collection was finally release posthumously in 2009 by George Guţu, Peter Motzan, and Stefan Sienerth after languishing for decades in the archives of the Romanian Culture Ministry.

The geographical and cultural isolation that the Bukovinian poets experienced is projected onto the poetry itself by Sperber in his *Ars Poetica*:

> Das Gedicht ist ein langsamer, lautloser Tanz des Heimwehs in der Einsamkeit, ein mondsüchtiges, gelöstes Schreiten durch die gläserne Helle der Einsamkeit, die dem Dichter Welt, Leben und Schicksal ist…Die Sprache des ersten Menschen tönt im Gedicht, der zum erstenmal die Dinge benannte, und das große kindliche Erstaunen der Augen leuchtet in ihm auf, die Dinge zum erstenmal sahen.[45]

This captures the essence and sentiments of a poet permanently in exile, whose work is constantly engaged with the search for home. Sperber's citation addresses the condition of the German-speaking, Jewish poets of Bukovina, whose fate is projected onto the community of poets as a whole. The second half of the citation reflects a different kind of solitude that of the first humans in Paradise who in their own way were also alone. The experience of these two populations, those who are exiled and those who will be exiled, are conflated with that of the poet whose gifts isolate him from the mundane world.

[44] Amy Colin and Alfred Kittler, eds., *Versunkene Dichtung der Bukowina: Eine Anthologie deutschsprachiger Lyrik* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 1998).

[45] Alfred Margul-Sperber, *Das verzauberte Wort: der poetische Nachlass, 1914-1965*, ed. Alfred Kittner (Bukarest: Jugendverlag, 1969), 5.

Publication and Literary Recognition

Ausländer's work did not appear with any regularity until the early 1930s when she returned to Czernowitz. Her work appeared frequently in publications such as *Klingsohr* in Kronstadt and *Der Tag* in Czernowitz. Helmut Braun, however, alludes to an earlier publication date, perhaps 1921 or 1922, in German-language periodicals in the United States.[46] These poems would have been submitted during her first stay in America. There is unfortunately no clear record of which titles these may have been. Her first book, *Der Regenbogen*, did not appear until just before the outbreak of World War II in 1939. The timing of this book and the religious disposition of its author were likely among the major reasons it did not receive much recognition at the time. Ausländer would turn out to be a late bloomer.

From 1966 onward Ausländer enjoyed extensive recognition of her work. During these years she received many literary prizes and published prolifically until her death. Ausländer received the Heine-Taler des Verlages Hoffmann und Campe (1966), Droste-Preis der Stadt Meersburg (1967), Ida-Dehmel Preis (1977), Gryphius-Preis (1977), Roswitha-Medaille der Stadt Bad Gandersheim (1980), Literaturpreis der Bayerischen Akademie der Schönen Künste (1984), and the Literaturpreis des Verbandes der Evangelischen Büchereien (1986) specifically for the sixth volume of her collected works, *Wider ein Tag / aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982.* Other honors included the Ehrengabe des Bundes der Deutschen Industrie (1978) and the Großen Verdienstkreuzes des Verdienstordnens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (1984).

Ausländer's first volume of poetry, *Der Regenbogen*, appeared in 1939with the help of Alfred Margul-Sperber but garnered little recognition. The first volume of poetry to be published

[46] Helmut Braun, Afterword to *Gedichte*, ed. Helmut Braun, 3. ed (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2002), 295.

after both World Wars was *Blinder Sommer* in 1967 from the Bergland Verlag followed by *Inventar* in 1972.[47] After 1972, new volumes of poetry emerged regularly, occasionally with multiple volumes appearing in the same year. *Ohne Visum*[48] appeared in 1974 and *Andere Zeichen*[49] were published in 1975. Ausländer's long professional relationship with Helmut Braun began in 1976 when Verlag Braun in Cologne published her *Gesammelte Gedichte*. Several more volumes appeared from Verlag Braun in the following years: *Noch es Raum* (1976), *Doppelspiel* (1977), *Aschensommer* (1978), *Mutterland* (1978), *Es bleibt noch viel zu sagen* (1978), and *Ein Stück weiter* (1979). At this time the first volume of poetry to appear outside a German speaking country was published, *Selected Poetry* (1977) appeared in London. In 1980 Ausländer's relationship with the S. Fischer Verlag began, although Helmut Braun continued his work as her editor. S. Fischer published Ausländer's work until her death including the multi-volume collected works first appearing in the mid-eighties.

Other individual titles to appear by the S. Fischer Verlag (SFV), S. Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag (FTV) and Pfeffenweiler Presse (PP) during these years were: *Mutterland / Einverständnis* (1980) (PP), *Mein Atem heißt jetzt* (1981) (SFV), *Im Atemhaus Wohnen* (1981) (FTV), *Nacht* (1981) (PP), *Einen Drachen reiten* (1981) (PP), *Mein Venedig versinkt nicht* (1982) (SFV), *Südlich wartet ein wärmeres Land* (1982) (PP), *So sicher atmet nur Tod* (1983) (PP), *Ich zähl / die Sterne meiner Worte* (1985) (FTV), *Ich spiele noch* (1987) (SFV), and *Der Traum hat offene Augen* (1987) (FTV). The first several volumes of her collected works, edited by Helmut Braun, were published in 1985 and include: *Hügel / aus Äther / unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975*; *Im Aschenregen / die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa:*

[47] Verlag Literaria

[48] Sassafras-Verlag

[49] Concept Verlag

1976; *Ich höre das Herz / des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979.* The next two volumes of earlier work appeared in 1985: *Die Erde war ein atlasweißes Feld: Gedichte 1927-1956*; *Die Sichel mäht die Zeit zu Heu: Gedichte 1957-1965.* One new volume of collected works was published in 1986, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*. This was followed by another volume in 1988, *Und preise die kühlende / Liebe der Luft: Gedichte 1983-87*, and *Jeder Tropfen ein Tag: Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß: Gesamtregister,* in 1990. In 2007 a ninth and final volume was added, *Deiner Stimme Schatten: Gedichte, kleine Prosa und Materialien aus dem Nachlaß.*

Selected Scholarly Works

Although Ausländer has become one of the best known German-Jewish poets to emerge from Bukovina, eclipsed only by Paul Celan, the number of scholarly works about her is relatively limited and few scholars have attempted thus far to introduce her to English speakers. This may be because the sheer measure of her work was not known until the mid-1980s. Although her poetry began appearing as early as 1931/32,[50] it did not appear in a comprehensive collection until 1985 in a seven, now nine, volume edition by Helmut Braun. Many of the existing scholarly works on Ausländer focus primarily on the catastrophic events of World War II and present their arguments necessarily through the lens of the Holocaust. Ausländer is frequently analyzed exclusively in comparison with other Jewish poets from her native Bukovina or with other female Jewish poets from Germany. While the traumatic historical context in addition to these particular religious and sexual identities are essential for a complete reading of Ausländer's work they are not the only defining feature of her oeuvre.

[50] See note 26.

Other scholars have organized her work in a thematic manner in order to highlight the multitude of topics and questions her work poses. These careful groupings draw attention to a broad range of themes that include Ausländer's childhood and family, Judaism, Bukovina and Czernowitz, travel, exile, music, the visual arts, philosophy, poetry, love, and German literature. Two thematic collections of Ausländer's work that are especially insightful. The first is *Rose Ausländer lesen: Lesewege und Lesezeichen zum literarischen Werk* edited by Michael Gans and Harald Vogel.[51] Gans and Vogel have organized Ausländer's poetry into thematic groups, providing supplemental materials such as handwritten manuscripts, additional readings, and short analyses of the accompanying texts. Their introduction provides key details that underpin my own analysis, "[Ausländers] Leben und ihre Gedichte bilden eine unverwechselbare Einheit und repräsentieren ein ebenso eigenständiges biographisches wie literarisches Profil."[52] Ausländer draws inspiration directly from her life experience whether present or remembered. These experiences are sometimes anchored in her surroundings – Czernowitz, New York, Venice. They may also be reflections on the past such as her childhood or her survival in the Czernowitz ghetto. Other poems are ruminations on writing, on womanhood, on Jewishness, or on exile. In every case the subject is the life experience of the poet herself. The poet Rose Ausländer and the poetic voice that emerges in her work are difficult to separate. It becomes necessary to know Ausländer's biography in order to have a fuller understanding of her work. There is an essential reciprocal relationship between poet and poetry from the very beginning.

This is not to suggest that Ausländer's work reflects a mundane or uninspired reality. It is not an unbiased translation of the real world but is rather mediated through the poet and her

[51] Michael Gans and Harald Vogel, *Rose Ausländer lesen: Lesewege und Lesezeichen zum literarischen Werk* (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 1997).

[52] Ibid., 6.

development: "Rose Ausländer erlebte eine Metamorphose der Selbstbewußtwerdung *in* Sprache, mit der sie gelebte und geträumte Wirklichkeit poetisierte."[53] Over the course of her work an alternate reality is created in which the poetic identity resides and in which the poet herself will come to identify as home. This alternate reality is continually becoming and newly negotiated in each poem, each time revealing aspects of itself that were not visible before. The language itself becomes a substitute site of belonging and community that interacts with a broader German literary tradition, endowing the text with roots even while the poet herself remains disenfranchised.

The second collection gathers together Ausländer's work in a less didactic and more holistic manner. Helmut Braun, whom Ausländer met in 1972 and who supported her poetic endeavors and production until her death, writes:

> Hätte sie ein anderes Leben gelebt, also in anderen Umfeldern, mit anderen Menschen, andere Erfahrungen, wäre ein anderes Werk entstanden. Alle Dichter schöpfen in ihren Texten aus ihrem Erleben. Eine so enge Verknüpfung von Leben und Werk, wie bei Rose Ausländer ist aber ungewöhnlich, selten, vielleicht einmalig.[54]

The chapters of Ausländer's life, i.e. her interests and movements, correspond to the six primary chapters that Braun establishes in this short anthology: home and family, exile, Jewishness, the Shoah, language and poetry, and love and death. These categories, he grants, are not exhaustive. In several interspersed chapters he treats more nuanced and differentiated aspects of the overarching topics. This collection also reveals the importance of figures such as Baruch deSpinoza, Constantin Brunner, e.e. cummings, and Marianne Moore to the development of Ausländer's identity and work. The significance of writing and language become especially clear

[53] Ibid., 6.

[54] Helmut Braun, Afterword to *Gedichte*, 291.

in this collection. The topics that Braun selects also demonstrate that she had a well-rounded education and broad intellectual interests – characteristics that are sometimes overlooked when it comes to the evaluation of literature by women and which is occasionally evident in secondary literature.

Braun's collection begins with Ausländer's (1975) essay "Alles kann Motiv sein" that answers the question as to why she writes poetry. This essay describes in the poet's own words her motivations and thoughts about the poetic drive. It describes how she "receives" poetry and some of the functions it has come to fill over the course of her life. She names her birthplace, cultural milieu, philosophical and literary interests, the dire historical conditions that shaped her sensibilities, and recounts an encounter with Paul Celan. All are cited as possible explanations for her compulsion to write. The title of the essay, however, provides the most significant clue of all, in that everything and anything can be motivation and motif for writing. It is perhaps because her poetry bears such a close relationship to her life that, unlike Celan, she maintains a strong relationship with language itself even after the Holocaust destabilized many symbolic systems. Braun, among many other scholars, observes: "Ihr Urvertrauen in die Sprache aber, die Gewissheit, alles sei sagbar, blieb unbesiegt."[55] In her case to subvert the meaning of language as she knew it before the Holocaust would undermine and threaten her way of living and her remembrance of the past. She relied not on a new language but an altered language to negotiate her relationship with the world.

As previously acknowledged, Ausländer's biography is essential to a fuller understanding of her work. Cilly Helfrich's biography, "*Es ist ein Aschensommer in der Welt: Rose Ausländer"* is an intimate retelling of the poet's life, interweaving poetry and analysis into the currents of

[55] Ibid., 291.

Ausländer's lived experience. The book begins with a survey of Ausländer's homeland and childhood. Helfrich also carefully examines Ausländer's romantic relationships with both Ignaz Ausländer and Helios Hecht and their effect on her writing and worldview. The effects, both positive and negative, become most visible in her New York poems. Additionally, the powerful lifelong influence of Constantin Brunner's philosophy and the teachings of Elieser Steinbarg are analyzed. While Ausländer's ghetto experience receives some attention, it does not dominate the book. The poet's decision to settle in Germany and her long convalescence there, close out the memoir. Helfrich's tone often assumes that of a personal friend, as she had personal contact with members of the poet's family and other colleagues, including extensive contact with Braun. It is with this personal tone that the author incorporates the poetry and analysis into the text. This type of intimacy may be seen as a weakness, rendering the readings less objective, but it places Ausländer's poetry in close contact with her life.

Kathrin M. Bower's *Ethics and Remembrance in the Poetry of Nelly Sachs and Rose Ausländer* (2000) is a comparative study of Nelly Sachs' and Rose Ausländer's poetry. [56] Bower frames her readings of these poets using the works of Theodor W. Adorno, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas. Bower structures the works of these two female, German-speaking, Jewish poets dialectically so that each work is in dialogue with itself as an Other. The Other becomes significant in the interpretation of the works, although not necessarily as a process of ethics. Instead Bower establishes the poetic language of Sachs and Ausländer as defining features of a primal separateness in the form of a lost homeland, lost language, lost identity, and lost family: "In the absence of the motherland, the mother tongue has become a surrogate home. Tending their mothers, biological and linguistic, provided a center and a purpose in their lives that had

[56] Kathrin M Bower, *Ethics and Remembrance in the Poetry of Nelly Sachs and Rose Ausländer* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000).

otherwise been completely disrupted."[57] Language becomes a medium, or rather, a recuperative space for memories lost in the wake of the Holocaust. The poems become laments for unknown victims and broken communities. Language is not just memory, but becomes mother, muse, and a silent testimony. Bower's work necessarily centers on post-Holocaust poems by both poets and relies heavily on life experiences that the two women often shared. Bower emphasizes the influence of a catastrophic historical event, with the help of philosophies written in response to the Holocaust, and concentrates little on the literary traditions that influenced Ausländer's work and the self-referentiality of the poetry.

Claudia Beil's analysis, *Sprache als Heimat: Jüdische Tradition und Exilerfahrung in der Lyrik von Nelly Sachs und Rose Ausländer* (1991),[58] seeks to place Sachs and Ausländer within a longer and richer context of Jewish history and emphasizes their status as literally a "people of the book," beginning with the *Exodus*. Beil remarks:

> Auf diesem Weg in die Freiheit – so will es die Erzählung – hält die Schrift zum ersten Mal ihren Einzug beim Volk der Juden. Denn hier, nicht in der Heimat, empfängt Moses Gottes Gebote als Zeichnen seines Bundes mit Israel…So zeigt sich schon zu diesem frühen Zeitpunkt die enge Verbindung von Exilerfahrung und Schriftlichkeit, die sich bis hin zum modernen Judentum zumindest teilweise bewahrt hat.[59]

This long written tradition is also conflated with Jewish mysticism, or Kabbalah, where human language and even nature itself, becomes a highly coded language of the divine into which poetry naturally falls. Beil then connects this idea of a natural language to another, albeit newer, tradition of German Romanticism by which both Sachs and Ausländer were strongly influenced.

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[57] Bower, 10.

[58] Claudia Beil, *Sprache als Heimat: Jüdische Tradition und Exilerfahrung in der Lyrik von Nelly Sachs und Rose Ausländer* (Munich: Tuduv-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1991).

[59] Ibid., 18-19.

Heinrich Heine becomes a symbol of the German-Jewish poetic outsider, whose traditional writing style carefully disguises quintessentially modern ideas of exile and a necessarily, and solely, linguistic home. Beil emphasizes Friedrich von Hardenberg'sidea of the world as language and language as a power to order and create new worlds.[60] She principally analyzes Hardenberg's influence on Sachs' works but does not note interesting parallels between the content of his ideas and Ausländer's oeuvre. Beil bases his argument chiefly on a religious reading of Ausländer and Sachs, among other mystical and literary traditions that support it. My own approach is to utilize modern and secular sources alike in reading Ausländer's work.

In her book-length study *Im Zeichen der Shoah : Aspekte der Dichtungs- und Sprachkrise bei Rose Ausländer und Nelly Sachs* (1999),[61] Annette Jael Lehmann analyzes Sachs' and Ausländer's work as framed by the impossibility of art, particularly poetry, after the Holocaust postulated by Theodor W. Adorno. Poetry becomes the only medium that can begin to bridge the abyss over this historical trauma. Poetry written after the Holocaust, according to Adorno, should necessarily be poetry about the Holocaust. Language, even poetic language, is inadequate to express the horrors of mass murder and perhaps even the attempt to describe such horrors could be understood as inappropriate. Although Adorno's popular taboo was debated vividly, objected to, and finally revised by its author, Lehmann analyzes the inadequacy of language as observed in the poetical works using topics such as: death and the dead, remembrance, death drive, home, transcendence, mysticism and magic, religion, subjectivity, silence and testimony, and love. The problem of expression results not only from the inability to describe the experience of the Holocaust generally but is connected to the broader crisis of modernity and an already broken

[60] Hardenberg frequently used the pen-name Novalis.

[61] Annette Jael Lehmann, *Im Zeichen der Shoah : Aspekte der Dichtungs- und Sprachkrise bei Rose Ausländer und Nelly Sachs* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1999).

literary tradition. Poets have abandoned the practice of mimesis and are struggling to define new modes of subjectivity, although Lehmann does not examine this crisis of modernity's possible relationship to the problem of art after the Holocaust. The Holocaust becomes both immanent and omniscient in the works of these two Jewish poets, if not in all poetry, in the wake of this event. It affects the poet at every level from the most personal remembrances to the way one fits into the changed world. Lehmann describes,

> Die historische Referenzialität erhält einen Doppelcharakter aus dem kosmisch-universalisierten Bild und dem Bezug zur persönlichen Leidensgeschichte. Mikrokosmos und Makrokosmos der Poetik und der Texte sind historisch durchdrungen und besitzen ein gemeines Zentrum in folgender Perspektive: für beide Dichterinnen stellt sich die Geschichte als Katastrophe in Permanenz und somit als eine Anhäufung von Trümmern dar.[62]

The historical tragedy becomes enmeshed in the personal experience of the two poets and becomes a repository for all future traumatic events from which their poetry is continually drawn.

Leslie Morris takes a novel approach to the concepts of home and exile in Ausländer's work in her 1998 article, "*Mutterland / Niemandsland: Diaspora and Displacement in the Poetry of Rose Ausländer*."[63] These often-used concepts become fluid as Morris (correctly?) asserts that Ausländer could never have returned home. Bukovina/Czernowitz becomes an ambiguous point on the map as the borders and even the existence of various nations change during her life time. The city of her birth itself is an unstable entity that in turn destabilizes the identity of the poet. Since Bukovina occupies no stable boundaries it can no longer offer the poet a stable point of

[62] Ibid., 237.

[63] Leslie Morris, "Mutterland / Niemandsland: Diaspora and Displacement in the Poetry of Rose Ausländer." *Religion and Literature* 30, no. 3 (1998).

reference, Ausländer must turn to language in search of a new home and an identity. But language itself is also unstable, as the empty signifier "home" has already demonstrated. This instability results in a certain residual "porousness" of other identifying binaries often applied to Ausländer's work, such as Jew/German, male/female, and self/other. Morris suggests in a reading of "Mutterland" (1978) that:

> The slippage from Vaterland to Mutterland…does not signal a substitution of patriarchal with matriarchal constructs, but rather calls into question fixed binarisms of gender and fixed oppositions of home and exile, insisting that language can only create meaning through slippage…the stripping away of signifiers that might enable the reader and poet to find some sort of transcendent meaning.[64]

The linguistic signifiers have not lost all meaning but rather their significance continuously fluctuates, becoming relative to the poet's own time and place in the world. There is meaning in difference. While this article suggests a more dynamic notion of identity is possible, it does not fully explore the hybrid readings possible using these constructs.

In another essay, "Poesie und Verlust: Zur Ästhetik in Rose Ausländers Lyrik" (2008), Morris analyses Ausländer's late abbreviated style proposing that it is not writerly melancholy, as Jens Birkmeyer would later suggest, but rather a characteristic of the modern problem of authenticity and a symptom of lifelong trauma that manifests itself as a kind of banality and "deterioration" of language.[65] The quality and object of Ausländer's later writing, and to an extent most of her earlier work, demonstrates a strong relationship between language, memory, and place, which is deceptive in its simplicity. This simplicity, which Birkmeyer later describes, owes its existence to self-referentiality and narcissism, and presents itself as emphasized

[64] Ibid., 50.

[65] Leslie Morris, "Poesie und Verlust: Zur Ästhetik in Rose Ausländers Lyrik," in *Blumenworte welkten: Identität und Fremdheit in Rose Ausländers Lyrik*, ed. Jens Birkmeyer (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2008).

repetition, which is required in order to exorcise the trauma of the Holocaust. Morris asserts instead:

> Dieser Beitrag geht demzufolge dem Dilemma nach, ob die Banalität als ein Moment von Durcharbeitung angesehen werden soll – als Teil der Wiederholung, die notwendigerweise stattfinden muss, um vergangenes Trauma zu bewältigen – oder ob die Banalität die ästhetischen Grenzen jeglicher Repräsentation von Auschwitz in Frage stellen soll.[66]

The truncated style and repetition of tropes in Ausländer's later works also calls into question the notion of authenticity in artwork in a similar way to Andy Warhol's *Mona Lisa, Thirty are better than one*, even if the circumstances are vastly different. Ausländer raises in her poems essential questions that touch upon the nature of art and writing. Once again, Morris introduces a tantalizing concept without fully exploring its consequences.

Jens Birkmeyer's essay "Melancholie der Verknappung: Sehnsucht und Erinnerung in Rose Ausländers Lyrik" (2008) concentrates on Ausländer's later works taking into careful consideration their length and style.[67] Much like Paul Celan, Ausländer's poetry becomes shorter and increasingly cryptic as she ages. Instead of analyzing the change in style as an aspect of Ausländer's poetic maturation, Birkmeyer feels a need to respond to accusations that the style change occurs solely because of infirmity. This is problematic and limits the insights of his otherwise plausible arguments. Birkmeyer explains that the truncated style is rather an aspect of writerly melancholy that presents itself when the poet attempts to resolve the tensions between memory, time, character, and language in metaphor:

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[66] Ibid., 72.

[67] Jens Birkmeyer, "Melancholie der Verknappung: Sehnsucht und Erinnerung in Rose Ausländers Lyrik," in *Blumenworte welkten: Identität und Fremdheit in Rose Ausländers Lyrik*, ed. Jens Birkmeyer (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2008).

> Nicht Allegorie ist hier zentral, sondern die zerbrochenen Gedankensplitter, die nur noch ein verkürztes Bild und komprimierte Metapher werden können. Melancholie hieße am Material Ausländers eine Textfiguration nachzuvollziehen, in deren Zentrum ein Gedanke steht, welcher nicht mehr hinlänglich im Bild aufgehoben scheint, diese jedoch selbst immer nur auf dem Erinnerungsraum des Gesamtwerkes verweist.[68]

The metaphor, however, does not necessarily need to be complete because it uses the entire body of works as an antecedent; it is self-referential, as I will argue. It is this extreme self-referentiality that signals a regression in the poet's works, a narcissism that experiences itself as hollow, needy, and unworthy. This negativity then taints the poet's narration, casting a somber mood over all of Ausländer's late works.

In "Czernowitz in der Lyrik von Rose Ausländer: Erinnerung oder/und Fiktion" (2001), Eva Reichmann examines another meaning of home. Reichmann first evaluates Ausländer's home city historically, providing the reader with a more accurate picture of the city than available in the poetry alone. Czernowitz may have been a city of many languages but it was not as harmonious as much poetry would lead the reader to believe. It was made up of heterogeneous groups of people – German speakers, Jews, Romanians, Ukrainians, Roma, poor, middle-class, and an educated elite – that did not always mix well with one another. There were prejudices against every group, by every group, and a prevalent anti-Semitism. Notably, none of this divisiveness finds its way into Ausländer's work. Instead it is, and perhaps necessarily so, an ideal, almost idyllic home, where the child poet was and remains safe and secure. Reichmann conflates these notions of home, safety, childhood, with the mother figure in Ausländer's poetry, which, she explains, produces not a lost homeland but a wishful fiction in the minds of the reader and even the poet herself. Reichmann also postulates that this "fiction" is only meaningful to those readers who share the memories of this forgotten city: "So wird die fremde Erinnerung

[68] Ibid., 93.

automatisch zu Fiktion für Leser, die den Bezugspunkt nicht kennen – der Schritt zur Fiktion der Erinnerung durch die Dichterin ist dann nicht weit."[69] This seems obvious. Ausländer's work is heavily reliant on her biographical experience but is not limited to it. The meaning of the work that emerges finds itself somewhere between reality and personal experience. More broadly, no literary work can claim to be a reproduction of a historical reality, because it is already once removed by being translated into language and subject to the bias of its authors. A more productive analysis might have incorporated a psychological element that investigated the meaning of the apparent schism between the imagined city of Ausländer's poetry and the so-called real Czernowitz found in non-literary documentation.

In "Czernowitz und die Bukowina im Leben und Schaffen von Rose Ausländer," Maria Ivanytska, much like Eva Reichmann, attempts to compare the Bukowina/Czernowitz poems of Ausländer to the historical reality of the country and city. Ivanytska also suggests that a majority of these idyllic *Heimat* poems are actually negative reminders of the place. Although Ivanytska is conducting a historical comparison between poetry and reality, she does not take into consideration that certain catastrophic historical events may have contributed to this negative viewpoint and that the presence of negativity may have less to do with place itself but rather the way in which war changed those places. She also fails to consider the effect of personal circumstances, including intimate relationships, on the poet's worldview when she compares Ausländer's early and late New York City poems. Ivanytska acknowledges that these poetic works are exercises of memory and fiction yet still proceeds to compare them to historical fact.

Timofiy Havryliv's essay "Erinnerung und Erfahrung: Die 'bukowinischen' Gedichte von Rose Ausländer" focuses on the biographic nature of Ausländer's poetry and the noticeable discrepancies between historical fact and fiction in the poetic portrayal of the Bukovina of

[69] Reichmann, "Czernowitz in der Lyrik von Rose Ausländer: Erinnerung oder/und Fiktion," 93.

Ausländer's youth.[70] Havryliv examines the similarities between biography and poetry, noting that poetry resembles a personal memoir in its ability to capture the essence of present moment. He astutely observes that the remembering "Ich" of Ausländer's poetry is also the poetic speaker. Even though the poetic speaker is closely related to the poet, they remain separate and in recurrent dialog with one another. The author's memory is mediated by the poetic speaker and therefore, by poetic language and license. Additionally, the idyllic nature of the Bukovina poems is not the sole result of a faulty memory of factual circumstances but is a mixed expression, which includes the experience of youth and the end of idyllic childhood by catastrophic historical events.

In "Vom Traumreich nach Kimpolung: Die Bukowina in Rose Ausländers Landschaftsgedicht" Klaus Werner focuses on the lyrical landscape in Ausländer's Bukovina poems.[71] The idyllic nature of this landscape is a common theme among other poets from this region. However, in Ausländer's poetry geography takes on a mythical nature as a kind of original landscape, like another Eden. In this type of setting every object and living thing is endowed with meaning and everything is interconnected. This enchanted description becomes an evocation of the land itself in poetic form, which has been internalized as a formative component of the poet herself. Her poetry paints an exact picture of a remembered country:

> Es kann hieraus zunächst geschlossen werden, dass die in Rose Ausländers Dichtung uns anfänglich entgegentretende Natur und Landschaft eine abbildende und zugleich idealtypische Morphologie besitzt – sie spiegelt Elementar-Bukowinisches wider, ohne, jedenfalls nicht allein und durchweg, bukowinisch zu sein. Das hat Rose Ausländers

[70] Timofiy Havryliv,"Erinnerung und Erfahrung: Die ‚bukowinischen' Gedichte von Rose Ausländer," in *Identität und Integration: Rose Ausländer als Dichterin,* eds. Michael A. Hainz and Clemens K. Stepina (Vienna und St. Wolfgang: Edition Art Science, 2010).

[71] Klaus Werner, "Vom Traumreich nach Kimpolung: Die Bukowina in Rose Ausländers Landschaftsgedicht," in *Endlos von neuem Anfangen: Die Dichterin Rose Ausländer,* ed. Helmut Braun and Klaus Hampel (Münster: Franz Hitze Haus, 1999).

> frühes Natur- und Landschaftsgedicht mit den anderen Lyrikern ihrer Heimat gemein, mag der eine oder andere von ihnen, in erster Linie Margul-Sperber, auch in einem viel direkteren Sinne als Sänger des Buchenlands gelten.[72]

The Bukovina landscape left an indelible imprint on all its poets. As these others did, Ausländer reshaped the Bukovina of her past into an intensely personal and unique place to be found only in her lyric.

Gabriel Köhl's essay "Rose Ausländers lyrische Landschaften: Darstellung der Heimatlosigkeit und Versuch ihrer Bewältigung"[73] emphasizes, as other scholars have done, the intimacy between the poetic voice and the poet Ausländer – the poetic oeuvre and biography. As an exile poet Ausländer strove to recreate a homeland within her work. This homeland was sometimes the remembered Bukovina of her youth and at other times it was another landscape altogether. Both types of landscapes were often fictionalized, idealized, often taking on dreamlike characteristics. In order to function as a home, the poetry about these disparate places had to share at least some common qualities. According to Kohl, there are three essential elements that constitute home for Ausländer. The first characteristic of home is the physical or geographical place which it occupies. These places need not be real, they may be fanciful or entirely fictional. This also means that they need not occupy real time but rather are remembered in another time. The idyllic poems about the Bukowina of Ausländer's youth, along with other place poems about New York, Venice, and Israel, are all poems of this kind. They are imaginative, oneiric remembrances of times past, and colored by the poet's current state of mind. The second element of home has to do with a linguistic-cultural space and is characterized by

[72] Ibid., 90.

[73] Gabriel Köhl, "Rose Ausländers lyrische Landschaften: Darstellung der Heimatlosigkeit und Versuch ihrer Bewältigung," in *Worte stark wie der Atem der Erde: Beiträge zum Leben und Werk der jüdischen Dichterin Rose Ausländer (1901-1988),* ed. Rainer Zimmer-Winkel (Trier: Kulturverein AphorismA, 1994).

people speaking or of descriptions of the languages occupying a particular space. The third element has to do with the human capacity for friendliness and hospitality. It is the amenable nature of its inhabitants that makes a place feel like home.

Josef Billen's essay, "Ahnung und Erinnerung: Paradiesmotive in der lyrischen Bildwelt Rose Ausländers"[74] reflects and analyzes the natural world of Ausländer's work, while examining its place in German literary tradition. Billen first concentrates on the aging poet's change in style to a more truncated form. He suggests that this change into a modern, reductive style is evidence of an internal change in the poet that has to do with the way she saw the world and her place in it. Despite the modern form, Ausländer's work follows closely in the steps of the German Romantic tradition, particularly (progressive) Universalpoesie. Ausländer fulfills the role of the poet as truth-bringer, poeticizing the present world where poetry has become absent.

Annette Runte's essay "Mourning as Remembrance: Writing as Figuration and Defiguration in the Poetry of Rose Ausländer" describes in succinct subsections the role of language and specific tropes of Ausländer's poetry. Runte describes an enhanced if not reduced language that characterizes Ausländer's late work, which are more personal in character than her early writing:

> It was no longer the demons of the big city or modern life, which had haunted Ausländer's early Expressionist poems, but instead feelings of loss and melancholy that dominated her lyrical output from the 1950s on. Existential anxiety was purged of pathos, because formal reduction favored a reflexive, even ironical distance. As her poetry became increasingly self-referential, a series of "sublimated" lost objects (parents, native country, trust in humanity) came to be substituted by language itself.[75]

[74] Josef Billen, "Ahnung und Erinnerung: Paradiesmotive in der lyrischen Bildwelt Rose Ausländers," in *Endlos von neuem Anfangen: die Dichterin Rose Ausländer (1901-1988), eine Tagungsdokumentation*, ed. Helmut Braun and Klaus Hampel (Münster: Verlag der Akademie Franz Hitze Haus, 1999).

[75] Runte, "Mourning as Remembrance: Writing as Figuration and Defiguration in the Poetry of Rose Ausländer," 73.

Language becomes not only a substitute for home but for all the personal connections which have been lost with time. She hypothesizes that it is for this reason that Ausländer switches to English for a period of eight years after her mother's death. The linguistic switch provided the distance necessary to cope with the loss of the "primary signifier" from which the poet herself had originated. The status of language in Ausländer's life and work also bears a philosophical significance that displays traces of a Romantic heritage:

> Although the transmission of Jewish identity passes through the maternal body, only the letter, Holy Scripture, represents the divine law; Ausländer rejects this gendered dichotomy, favoring pantheism (One = all) and a Spinozist equation of God and nature, realized in the evocation of the "green mother" of Bukovina. The "black Sappho of the East," as Alfred Margul-Sperber called Ausländer, was using philosophical discourse as a strategic master-trope.[76]

Indeed, this pantheism is a pervasive force throughout Ausländer's oeuvre although it manifests itself in different guises, some of which will be examined over the next several chapters.

[76] Ibid., 73: Peter Hille, introduction to "Kampf. Zeitschrift für – gesunden Menschenverstand," *N. F.* Nr. 8 (1904), 238: The poet Peter Hille described Else Lasker-Schüler with the following words, "Ihr Dichtgeist ist schwarzer Diamant, der in ihrer Stirn schneidet und wehtut." Female Jewish poets are frequently marked as other by the description "black."

Chapter II:

The Topography of Identity: Landscape Poems of Rose Ausländer

According to Novalis, a text correctly read is capable of unfolding into an actual, seeable reality: "Wenn man recht ließt, so entfaltet sich in unserm Innern eine wirckliche, sichtbare Welt nach den Worten."[77] Many readers of fiction might take this assertion for granted. A book, after all, is an object that takes us on a journey. The page itself takes on the value of whatever is inscribed upon it. Language offers an equivalent, or at least a clever substitution, for a place and time that when well written, draw the reader in. Explained in this way, the process of textual world-making is a reciprocal one. The author or poet transcribes her experience into text and the reader-receptor later deciphers this world according to her/his cultural condition.[78] There are several forms in which the world may manifest itself poetically:

> There are essentially three orientations toward landscape description in the lyric: (1) the kind that describes an external place, a locale that is meant to serve as a backdrop, ornament, or illustration for the poet's thinking; (2) the kind that transforms an external scene into a region of the poet's mind; and (3) the kind that claims to be a habitable region in its own right.[79]

Peucker's claim develops Novalis' reflection that an observable world develops in the mind's eye of the reader to collapse all appearances of the world-likeness into a poem that has become a place unto itself. In all three cases the world, or a minute part of it, becomes the landscape within the text serving as a medium for the poet's intentions as if it were an actual organ of the poet

[77] Friedrich Hardenberg, "Das Allgemeine Brouillon," in *Novalis: Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe Friedrich von Hardenburgs,* eds. Hans-Joachim Mähl and Richard Samuel, Vol. 2 (Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser, 1978), 614.

[78] Hans Robert Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutic*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: U. Minnesota P, 1982).

[79] Brigitte Peucker, "The Poem as Place: Three Modes of Scenic Rendering in the Lyric," *PMLA* 96, no. 5 (1981): 904.

herself. These poems of place are particularly important in the work of Rose Ausländer. Ausländer's birthplace, Czernowitz in Bukovina, is especially significant in her development as a poet. This place becomes internalized and fixed in the poet's memory during the process of expression. It bears a distinctly different, almost fairytale-like quality in the memory of the writer.

Homeland Bukovina

Bukovina itself deserves some explanation. Far removed from Germany, Bukovina formed part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until its collapse in 1918. Its capital city, Czernowitz, is today located in the Ukraine near the Romanian border. Czernowitz was a university city and a crossroads for many cultures of which the German-speaking community was only one. There were also Romanians, a Slavic population, as well as Roma and Sinti – making it linguistically diverse. The city was also of a mixture of religions and folk traditions. Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, and traditional symbolism pervade the poetry of all Czernowitz's literary inhabitants.[80] The diversity inherent to the city's writers, especially its poets, has made their contribution to German literature difficult to categorize. They often belong to more than one group and experienced varying levels of acceptance by the literary world depending on which part of their identities they choose to reveal or conceal. Alfred Margul-Sperber, a preeminent Czernowitzer poet, encountered the difficulty in classifying these poets when he first sought to compose an anthology of German language poetry by Jewish poets after

[80] Alfred Margul-Sperber, Itzahk Manger, Paul Celan, Alfred Kittner, Alfred Gong, Immanuel Weißglass, et.al.

the Austrian government collapsed and the Romanian government took over. The problem is described as follows:

> Who should be included? The selection was ruled by the poets' place and culture of *birth*, but some of the most important poets who were approached declined precisely on this very basis. Thus Bukovina-born Victor Wittner, a poet living in Vienna since the First World War responded: "Unfortunately I cannot contribute to your collection out of principle. Writing, I feel myself as a *German* poet and not as a Romanian, or Jewish poet, nor as a Romanian Jew." Joseph Kalmer declined because, as someone supporting himself with his writing, he could not publicly declare himself a Jew.[81]

There were further difficulties encountered when it came to publishing the anthology. Publishers were simply not interested in German language poetry written by Jews from a place nowhere near Germany, especially at a time when poetry as a genre had begun to lose its readership generally. Even worse, rampant anti-Semitism caused most readers to avoid Jewish literature and Germany had begun to expel its own Jewish writers. For this group of German-speaking Jewish poets the effort required to continue writing and seek an audience was difficult but not insurmountable.

In her essay "Alles kann Motiv sein" (1971),[82] Rose Ausländer ruminates on the origins of her poetic instincts. She cites among other reasons the city of her upbringing:

> Warum schreibe ich? Vielleicht weil ich in Czernowitz zur Welt kam, weil die Welt in Czernowitz zu mir kam. Jene besondere Landschaft. Die besonderen Menschen. Märchen und Mythen lagen in der Luft, man atmete sie ein. Das viersprachige Czernowitz war eine musische Stadt, die viele Künstler, Dichter, Kunst-, Literatur- und Philosophieliebhaber beherbergte.

[81] Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (Los Angeles and London: U. California P, 2010), 94.

[82] Ausländer, *Gedichte*, 8.

In addition to Ausländer, Czernowitz takes on a central and nearly mythical role in the works of many other Jewish poets this region produced.[83] In this excerpt, Ausländer describes a literal coming into the world or her physical birth into Czernowitz, which includes another metaphorical awakening, in which the poetic voice is born. The moment of birth intimates a moment in which the world and the poetic self come to experience one another directly. This special knowledge of one another comes from the experience of the self in the world and the world within the self and develops over the course of a lifetime.

"Bukowina II" (1976)[84] begins with a powerful proclamation of birth, which is curiously echoed by Ausländer's "Alles kann Motiv sein":

> Landschaft die mich
> erfand (1-2)

It is not only the child but also the poet who is invented in this place. This is the only instance within the poem to refer directly to the poetic voice itself, which leads to the curious observation that it is environment, i.e. the external, that is a constitutive ingredient in the making of the poet and suggests that this poetic process may have little to do with the poet herself, even though the poems are born within her. The remainder of the poem, perhaps most suitably for this interpretation, describes the inspired nature of the Bukovina countryside, which is seemingly inhabited by fantastic creatures:

> wasserarmig
> waldhaarig
> die Heidelbeerhügel

[83] See note 4 above.

[84] Rose Ausländer, *In Aschenregen / die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976*, ed. Helmut Braun, Vol. 4 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1984), 72. Line numbers shown in parenthesis.

honigschwarz (4-7)

The next lines, "wasserarmig / waldhaarig" (4-5) impose an uncannily anthropomorphic character onto the natural features. The waters and woods have converged to create a mythical being like a forest spirit or Green Man with arms and hair that bear the living pulse and flow of a sylvan heart and blood. Ausländer does not fail to mention the more mundane, if not also beautiful, aspects of the landscape alongside the more magical characteristics. George Guţu indicates that this method of personification through metaphors merges nature with culture as a form of, "Genesis innerer Wohlbefindlichkeit," a genesis of inner well-being.[85] The poet and the landscape develop harmoniously alongside one another. Furthermore, the human image of nature presented in the first half of the poem opens up easily to the following lines describing a human community:

Viersprachig verbrüderte
Lieder
in entzweiter Zeit (9-11)

The third stanza addresses human elements of Bukovina as well as the substance of myth itself. These lines describe the multilingual character of the city Czernowitz and at the same time infer the character of worldwide myth, the cross-contamination of myths among different peoples over time. It most directly refers to the divide between mythical and historical time, meaning the primordial time of gods and magic versus the time in which the poet actually resides. It suggests the historical position of Bukovina, the Austro-Hungarian vs. the Romanian eras and the looming pre-, post-, and interwar periods, which divided the people against one another, as well as the

[85] George Gutu, *Stundenwechsel: Neue Perspektiven zu Alfred Margul-Sperber, Rose Ausländer, Paul Celan, Immanuel Weissglass* (Bucuresti [Romania]: Editura Paideia/ Konstanz/ Hartung-Gorre, 2002), 96.

living from the dead. Conspicuously, of the Holocaust itself Ausländer writes relatively little. She survived by hiding in ghetto basements, all the while secretly writing poetry: "Der unerträglichen Realität gegenüber gab es zwei Verhaltensweise: entweder man gab sich der Verzweiflung preis, oder man übersiedelte in eine andere Wirklichkeit, die geistige."[86] The alternate extremes include an intellectual or poetic time, when the writer is outside herself, i.e. in her writing. The primordial time or timelessness that exists within the bodies of the Jewish poets during the Holocaust is necessarily outside of conventional time and is created by writing. This element will be discussed in detail later.

The final stanza addresses exclusively the matter of time in which it flows as a river over and past bygone coastlines:

> Aufgelöst
> strömen die Jahre
> ans verflossene Ufer (13-15)

The sensation of passing time fades and the notion of time becomes irrelevant as the poetic voice occupies an island, motionless within the currents of time. Harald Vogel and Michael Gans suggest that time is still flowing but backwards into the past, where it retreats ever further into the distance.[87] Words like "aufgelöst" and "verflossen" may suggest a type of punctuation or end-point, even an apocalyptic one, as time continues on the outside and the mythical landscape of Bukovina remains accessible only to those skillful enough to see it.

This process of poetic knowing is self-reflexive, shared between the poet and the environment. In fact, it would seem that becoming a poet is an inescapable consequence of being

[86] Ausländer, *Gedichte,* 9.

[87] Michael Gans and Harald Vogel, *Rose Ausländer, Hilde Domin: Gedichtinterpretationen,* 2nd ed. (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 1997), 103.

born into Czernowitz. The city experience is filtered through the poet, mediated through a continually increasing body of metaphors, increasing its hold on the poet's imagination as time passes, and is ultimately raised to a mythical status. This effect is unavoidable as Ausländer has noted because present in the very atmosphere is the magical breath of "Märchen und Mythen" exalted by so many of the other local authors. The mythical quality of the city lies not just in the fact that it is inhabited by so many unusually talented people but also in that it is surrounded by a profoundly beautiful natural landscape. The landscape powerfully inspires its admirers and begins to take on its own living, breathing persona in their works.

> Was abwesend ist, wird als anwesend, was taub ist, als hellhörig vorgestellt. Gedichte halten an der animistischen Überzeugung fest, dass alles auf der Welt von Geistern belebt sei, die geneigt sind, Versen zu lauschen, ihnen mitunter sogar zu willfahren. In der archaischen, nur im Rahmen des Gedichts noch gültigen Denkweise sind Materie, Pflanzen, Tiere, Menschen, Seelen, Geister nicht scharf voneinander getrennt, sondern miteinander verwandt, ineinander verwandelbar und deshalb auf gleiche Weise ansprechbar.[88]

Heinz Schlaffer asserts in *Geistersprache* that poetry has strong religious origins and purposes. The uniqueness of its lexicon as well as its form are important in distinguishing poetry from everyday language as it was, and is, the language of the gods. This divine language was endowed with special powers, which could invoke deities as well as other objects at will. The relatedness of people, nature, and the spiritual world to one another creates a unity that within the context of the poem makes all subjects equal, and through metaphor, interchangeable: "All diese seinsorientierten Haltungs- und Definitionsangebote schlugen auf die bukowinische Dichtung durch, wo sie zum verwunderten und jubelnden Ausdruck der Verschwisterung mit allen Wesen

[88] Heinz Schlaffer, *Geistersprache: Zweck und Mittel der Lyrik*,21.

gerannen."[89] The poem calls forth what it names. A landscape poem has the power to summon that landscape. The landscape in turn gives birth to the poet – in this way the poet is beckoned in her own song of nature.

"Bukowina IV" (1982)[90] is dedicated solely to the evocation of the natural landscape and focuses little on the poetic voice. It does, however, share some of the motifs of the previous poem:

> Grüner Walddiamant
> Laubwälder im Norden
> voll jubelnder Vögel
>
> Im Süden
> nördliche Kühle
> Fichten Dreieckgebirge (1-7)

Bukovina is this time a "green forest diamond," a talisman instead of a figure with agency, as in the previous example. The forests and mountains are physically located in the north and south, respectively. They are also named, pinning the verses back down to earth. This poetic description now occupies a decidedly more physical space than before. Once again the poem must integrate the human inhabitants into the description of the landscape:

> Vierliederland
>
> Langsame Menschen
> ihre runden Blicke
> kreisen
> um die vielgestaltige
> Heimat (9-15)

[89] Werner, 93.

[90] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 347.

The notion "Vierliederland" once again forms the bridge between the first and second halves of the poem. These halves focus alternatively on nature and myth or timelessness and history. Bukovina was a borderland and as such was a meeting place for many cultures and a crossroads between myth and history. The repetition of this neologism suggests that Bukovina's multilingual character was for Ausländer an essential element of the place that produced so many "singers." Gabriel Kohl reminds us that "die Dichterin in verschiedenen Gedichten über die Bukowina die Vielsprachigkeit, mit der eine besondere Kommunikationssituation entsteht, stärker betont als ihre eigene Muttersprache, obwohl sie selbst nicht alle Sprachen ihrer Heimat beherrscht."[91] The final stanza concentrates only on these human features. The inhabitants of Bukovina are distinguished by their slowness and simple "rounded" gaze. The shapes evoked here, roundness and slowness, bespeaks a special kind of time. Although history is made by people, people in this timeless place have slowed down. The circularity of their gaze alludes to ritual and repetition, a temporal droning that could be described paradoxically as a static movement.

Kohl describes three reappearing elements of Ausländer's poetry that are integral to the definition of home: "Geographie, Sprache und menschliche Beziehungen…Die Menschen und ihre Sprache als Mittel der Kommunikation bieten die Möglichkeit einer ideellen Heimat."[92] The physical contours of nature may be exceptional but it takes a community to make the home. The human inhabitants of Bukovina are just as necessary to the development of the poet's identity as its enchanted forests.

[91] Kohl, 99.

[92] Ibid., 103.

Ausländer's landscape poems are not strictly the simple landscapes that foreground a line of thought, as in Peucker's description, but linger in a strong depiction of nature as they evoke the missing landscape, where the poet herself is still found. In these poems, Ausländer both establishes and binds herself to her place of origin. They are a means of memorialization to a place to which she can no longer return. Werner continues, "Was sich in dieser Landschaftslyrik neueren Datums mithin entfaltet, ist der Prozess des Eingedenkens, eines Eingedenkens der Herkünfte, dessen Verbindlichkeit aus Konkretisierung, Namhaftmachung und dem Einzelgewicht des Aufgerufenen erwächst."[93] The original landscape is invoked as it is named by the poet and manifests itself as a concrete place in her memory and within the writing itself. Through these poems, Bukovina is once again made real.

In "Bukowina III" (1976)[94] the landscape is assigned a maternal role by the poet, once again underscoring the reciprocal nature of being:

> Grüne Mutter
> Bukowina
> Schmetterlinge im Haar
>
> Trink
> sagt die Sonne
> rote Melonenmilch
> weiße Kukuruzmilch
> ich machte sie süß (1-9)

This time the landscape is personified as an earth mother, or another munificent figure providing an abundance of sweet nourishment for poetic inspiration. The first stanza is allusion to her forest crown and life-giving powers. The wholesome milk provided by the mother figure acts in

[93] Werner, 105.

[94] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976*, 130.

much the same way as the air in previous references; it is taken into the body and liberated as verse. The milk as a maternal fluid supports the idea that the land invents or creates the poet, not just by giving birth to her but also through sustaining her as she grows and develops. This is in distinct opposition to Paul Celan's "Todesfuge" (1948). The "schwarze Milch der Frühe" of Celan's poem alludes to the Holocaust and the smoke of the ovens in which countless corpses were rendered into ash. Ausländer was the first of the two poets to use the term:

> Dass Paul die Metapher "schwarze Milch", die ich in meinem 1925 geschriebenen, jedoch erst 1939 veröffentlichten Gedicht "Ins Leben" geschaffen habe, für die "Todesfuge" gebraucht hat, erscheint mir nur selbstverständlich, denn der Dichter darf alles als Material für die eigene Dichtung verwenden. Es gereicht mir zur Ehre, dass ein großer Dichter in meinem bescheidenen Werk eine Anregung gefunden hat. Ich habe die Metapher so nebenhin gebraucht, er jedoch hat sie zur höchsten dichterischen Aussage erhoben. Sie ist Teil von ihm selbst geworden.[95]

Paul Celan was a younger colleague of Ausländer and they remained in contact throughout Celan's years in Paris until his death. She respected him deeply as a fellow poet and valued his opinion of her own work, which she sometimes shared with him. That he elevated this particular expression of hers to become one the most recognized metaphors in poetry is a hefty compliment to its originator. The metaphor indeed became part of Celan himself through the fame of the "Todesfuge."

In the same manner as the previous two poems, the personification of nature here serves as an introduction to the second half. The next lines form a bridge, which is characterized by terrestrial and distinctly human elements:

> Violette Föhrenzapfen
> Luftflügel Vögel und Laub
>
> Die Karpatenrücken

[95] Helfrich, 164.

väterlich
lädt dich ein
dich zu tragen (11-17)

The third stanza is a simple but obligatory description of the surrounding forest, the birds and leaves gently oscillating in the wind. The mountains take on fatherly traits, able to physically support the poet upon their sturdy backs, the way in which a father might support his child upon his shoulders. The final element of this formula is the human inhabitants:

Vier Sprachen
Viersprachenlieder

Menschen
die sich verstehen (19-23)

Human voices coalesce once again into "Viersprachenlieder". This is the echo of the previous poems, voices as transmitters of myth and as the means by which the inhabitants of Bukovina create understanding among one another and which creates the milieu that is home to the poet.

Although Ausländer's lost homeland is brought to life through her poetry, the reader must resist any urge to make a comparison of the historical Bukovina with the poetic Bukovina:

> Selbstverständlich können und sogar müssen die bukowinischen Gedichte zum Anlass genommen werden, sich die damalige Wirklichkeit anschauen zu wollen, aber auch sie wäre ein Konstrukt, gestützt auf Fakten und noch mehr auf ihre Interpretation. Was nicht geschehen darf, die Gedichte durch die Probe der Wirklichkeit abzubauen. Wir müssen bedenken, dass die Kunst, auch die Kunst der Lyrik ihre eigene [*sic*], die so genannte poetische Wirklichkeit und Wahrheit evoziert.[96]

Timofy Havryliv continues his assertion that all art, including poetry, produces its own type of reality and truth. As such, they remain constructions of their authors that are not always

[96] Havryliv, 13.

comparable to or compatible with a historical reality, nor should they be. It is an interesting task, if not an ineffective one, to compare history and poetry as Maria Ivanytska and Eva Reichmann have done. To do this, however, is to filter out the contribution of the artist and to ignore the truth inherent in the work of art itself.

There are landscape poems in which Ausländer attempts to address the historical aspects of Czernowitz, as she remembers them. One of them is "Czernowitz II" (1963) which describes the place of the Jewish poet in the city.[97] Like many landscape poems, this one begins with a description of its natural setting:

> Silberne Pruthsprache
> Buchen – Weidengespräche (1-2)

The Pruth river that defines the landscape has its own language – a clear, silvery speech. The birch trees for which Bukovina was renowned also have their own language. The manifold natural features of this idyllic landscape live and are engaged in a lively conversation with each other and the poet as a counterpart to other discourses of the city. It continues with a familiar reference to the multilingual condition as described in the Bukovina poems:

> Zarter und derber
> Viersprachenklang
> von Deutsch beherrscht (4-6)

"Czernowitz" is named for the capital city of Bukovina, a university city dominated by philosophers, artists, authors, and other intellectuals. In Ausländer's youth, German was a status language. It was the language of government officials and of the university, where German culture was taught. Of the intellectuals that Czernowitz produced, Aharon Appelfeld recounts:

[97] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 346.

> It's no wonder that such a vibrant community gave birth to such acclaimed journalists as Elias Weinstein, public leaders like Benno Sternberg and Avraham Mark, actors such as Theodore Bikel and Sidi Tal, famous singers like Yozef Schmidt and also countless writers, poets and scholars, including art historian Moshe Barasch and of course Paul Celan, the greatest poet of all to emerge from the city.[98]

The city could therefore be said to be dominated by different types of discourses as well as various languages. The next lines allude to the acoustics of these languages running together, a cacophony of words and worlds. The character of these languages is described as both tender and coarse, a whole spectrum of sound. The "Viersprachenklang" is a defining feature of Bukovina and Ausländer's youth:

> Jiddische
> deutsche
> Dichter
> heimattreu (8-11)

This was the Bukovina of Ausländer's memory, when German-speaking Jews were the primary carriers of the German-speaking culture and were dominant in the milieu that gave birth to her poetic voice. This point is emphasized in the final lines – these four words constitute a unity, depicting the German-speaking Jewish poets as the most patriotic of the Austrian state.

Another poem to focus specifically on political matters is "Czernowitz vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg" (1972).[99] It begins idyllically enough with a description of the landscape which is so characteristic of the poems about Czernowitz and Bukovina. The surrounding forests and the river Pruth isolate and protect the city from outside influence and make it island-like amidst the

[98] Aharon Appelfeld, "A City that was and is no longer," *Haaretz* (05 Mar 2008), 18 May 2015.

[99] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 348.

flow of time. The river signifies the flow of life for a single person, in this case the speaker, whose origin is in Bukovina:

> Friedliche Hügelstadt
> von Buchenwäldern umschlossen
>
> Weiden entlang dem Pruth
> Flöße und Schwimmer
>
> Maifliederfülle (1-7)

Additionally, "Maifliederfülle" communicates a biographical connection to the city. May was the month of Ausländer's birth and the flowers are reminiscent of her childhood home, where she once imagined she was a flower by night.[100] Then the mood abruptly changes, darkness settles upon the scene and is illuminated by lanterns – small and uncertain points of light that draw insects in to their deaths. The insects are linked biographically once again to the poet by her birth month, "Maikafer." They are the Jews who perished in the death camps. The insects' movements around the fire become a death dance:

> um die Laternen
> tanzen Maikafer
> ihren Tod (9-11)

Darkness represents the horrific events of the war, a time marked profoundly by death and despair. It is also the general passing of time and the death of a singular era of safety for the poet. The languages or presence of diversity within the city also reappear now, foregrounding the events that would change this peaceful state:

> Vier Sprachen
> verständigen sich

[100] Gans and Vogel, *Rose Ausländer lesen: Lesewege und Lesezeichnen zum literarischen Werk*, 22.

verwöhnen die Luft

Bis Bomben fielen
atmete glücklich
die Stadt (13-19)

The multiple ethnicities had once coexisted harmoniously but the air is eventually spoiled by the presence of such diversity. The formally amicable community is now divided by the same elements which had before contributed to the city's unique character. War ends the illusion of paradise and destroys the once placid landscape.

Bukovina was not the only landscape to appear in Ausländer's work, although it is certainly among the most often mentioned and likely the most significant in her poetic development. Other places in Ausländer's work, like Bukovina, tend to be defined by geographical features first such as mountains, forest, rivers, and other bodies of water and the next poem is no different. This is a list poem that brings together a number of landscapes, which the poet has experienced over the course of her life. She has experienced these landscapes in a direct way, internalized them, and transformed them into poetry. In "Landschaften" (1982) she reflects on the importance of her myriad experiences:

Als ich Landschaften sammelte
waren Berge
Meine bevorzugten Freunde
Nie vergeß ich den
Heimatberg Raréu
die herrliche Gipfelschau
in die Tiefe (1-7).[101]

One of her fondest memories is of mountains, particularly Raréu in Bukovina. This literal point on the map is a marker for home. Raréu's peak provides the speaker with perspective from which she can survey her present and past. It is an anchor in the deep waters of time. The next element

[101] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 378.

characteristic of Ausländer's poems is water, normally rivers, which has the ability to outline the spaces it occupies:

> Dem Atlantischen Ozean
> danke ich für die Lust
> geschaukelt zu werden
> und die Freude an seinen
> tanzenden Wellengebirgen (9-13)

Water is a keeper of memories and an agent of movement. In this case, a much larger body of water is required to define the collection of spaces of which she speaks. It is instead the Atlantic Ocean, rather than the Pruth, that facilitates the speaker's voyage between continents and connects the various landscapes together. The ocean rocks her in mountain-like waves, a primordial fluid that carries the child-poet from one destination to another and oversees the journey as a mythical guardian. The final element is the forest, green and alive with birds; here it is the forests of Bukovina and Vienna, which form protective boundaries around the cities:

> Dankbar bin ich den Wäldern
> in Wien und der Bukowina
> ihrem singenden Laub und
> den jubelnden Vögeln (15-18)

The forest is the home of spirits and magical beings that are bound to the poet, as seen in previous poems. They are the source of myth and inspiration that breathe life into the city. The final stanza is an apostrophe, addressed to the speaker herself:

> Was war das Schönste
> fragst du
> Ich weiß nicht
> will nicht vergleichen
> Berge Wälder Meer
> vollkommen

ein Märchen Wirklichkeit (20-26)

"Was war die Schönste" is the question that the poet must answer, while alluding to the all-too-famous question from the Brother Grimm's tale of *Snow White*: "Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand, wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?"[102] The mirror is the poet's very own past self but the focus shifted from the original "who" to the "what," indicating the search for the poet's inner landscape. She replies that the landscapes that she discovered in her search are not comparable to one another. They each possess distinctive characteristics and the poet's experience in each location was unique. The poem ends with the enigmatic statement, "ein Märchen Wirklichkeit." The landscapes in Ausländer's poetry as a rule take on a mythical aura, one which claims no anchor in historical reality, and is a bearer of its own unique truth as mediated by the poet. The nature present in these places was the source of poetry. Kohl reiterates: "Von Rose Ausländer aber stammt der Satz, die Bukowina habe wegen ihres Reichtums an Gestalthaftem unausweichlich die Assoziation der Ursprünge bewirkt, so dass man den Eindruck gewinnen musste, Märchen und Mythen lägen in der Luft und man brauche sie nur einzuatmen."[103] For Ausländer, there was no distinction to be made between reality and fiction.

Although the Bukovina poems are anchored in nature, it is often a backdrop for the tale of physical and poetic becoming by the speaker of the poem, who is the poet herself. These poems demonstrate a strong connection between the poet and place, so much so that the place becomes a defining attribute of the poet's identity. The landscape, particularly the natural features, takes on an extraordinary quality that becomes intertwined with the poet's origins,

[102] Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen, 2 Bände*, Vol 1 (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung 1812/15), 238.

[103] Kohl, 91.

imbuing the poet and her language with the power to invoke the physical setting in the poet's memory and within the text itself. Characteristic of these poems are identifiable descriptions of mountains, woods, rivers, and oceans as well as the multilingual component of the borderland.

"Bukowina I" (1957-63) has a more historical feel and traditional form than the other poems with which it shares its title. The structure is representative of Ausländer's earlier works that adhere to metrical structures and embrace rhyme. Her later works, as we have seen, are truncated and rely on the German language's natural rhythm and sound for their structure:

> Tannenberge. Grüne Geister:
> In Dorna-Vatra würzen sie
> das Harzblut. Alte Sommermeister
> treten an ihre Dynastie
>
> Felder im Norden. Buchenschichten
> um Czernowitz. Viel Vogelschaum
> um die Verzauberten, die den Geschichten
> vertrauen, ihrem Trieb und Traum. (1-9)[104]

The first lines have a concrete quality; the green spirits of the fir trees take physical root into the mountains. The "Harzblut" alludes to a blood oath in the German-speaking culture that in reality lies far from Bukovina. The "Alte Sommermeister" are the country folk and farmers who have worked their northern fields for generations. The birch trees form a layer of insulation around Czernowitz isolating the enchanted city. The trees, people, and Austrian customs are firmly rooted in this land.

The movement of time is also noticeable in this poem. While the first stanza refers to summer, the second half of the poem is frozen in time as in an eternal winter. No longer green

[104] Rose Ausländer, *Die Sichel mäht die Zeit zu Heu: Gedichte 1957-1965*, ed. Helmut Braun, Vol. 2 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1985), 21.

but a white landscape dominates the verse. There is snow, frozen breath, people wrapped in furs and above all, darkness:

> Die Zeit im Januarschnee versunken.
> Der Atem raucht. Die Raben krähn.
> Aus Pelzen sprühen Augenfunken.
> Der Schlitten fliegt ins Sternverwehn. (11-14)

The last stanza, however, is largely symbolic in its imagery and introduces a religious aspect to the environment. The character of the people is an observant one, whether it is Catholic, Jewish, or a deeply entrenched folk religion:

> Der Rosenkranz in Weihrauchwogen
> rinnt durch die Finger. Sagentum
> und Gläubige. In Synagogen
> singen fünftausend Jahre Ruhm. (16-19)

The first two stanzas create movement to an end – a circular development owing its form to repetition as rituals of cultivation or changes of season. The second half is still, indicative of an unchanging or eternal condition which is verified in the final lines of the poem in the assertion of 5000 years of glory, a number which roughly corresponds to the Jewish calendar year. It instills a spiritual element to the text. "Den Geschichten" (8) alludes to a trust in history or a trust of the people who participate in the cyclical form of living in touch with the earth, as the Jews kept a lunar or agricultural calendar before the diaspora. The glory of Jewish history is in opposition to the terrifying experiences the Jews during the Nazi rule. The second half, nonetheless, seems to dissolve into history and tradition like fine sand running through one's fingers.

Ausländer's place poems do not just describe the ornamental beauty of the countryside as if it were an eternal object, like a painting. Many of her poems consider time in the experience of

place. Ausländer describes her childhood in Austrian Bukovina as a kind of idyll. As she grew, Bukovina and her relationship to it changed. As an adult she was never able to return to this protected childhood place and instead tries to recreate it poetically. This is not to say that these poems are mere inventions, fictional recreations of her childhood, but should rather be read as lyrical memoirs:

> Das lyrische Sprechen ist mit dem Autobiographischen eng verwandt und kann sogar für eine besondere Form des autobiographischen Sprechens gehalten werden. Diese Verwandtschaft stützt sich auf Identität zwischen dem Ich des Autors und dem lyrischen Ich, sowie der Tatsache, dass das lyrische Ich nicht jemandes, sondern seine Gefühle, Regungen, Gedanken, Momentaufnahmen der Wirklichkeit und des eigenen Befindens ausdrückt.[105]

The poetic voice in Ausländer's work is closely bound to the actual life the poet herself. In other words, there are no theoretical or literary boundaries between the two genres as far as Ausländer's work is concerned. This means that Ausländer's verse can be read as her actual account of her life, her memories, and her making as a poet. Her poetry has already been read extensively in this manner by Cilly Helfrich, who used Ausländer's biography as an explication for her poetry and vice versa. Ausländer's works relating specifically to Bukovina should then be read as an essential commentary of not just her relationship to her homeland but also her growth as a poet and her experiences in exile. The poetic voice is never speculative but rather nearly always reflective of its own life. These poems are tiny vignettes of memory; a stream-of-consciousness captured in verse that constitute formative moments along Ausländer's poetic journey.

[105] Havryliv, 12.

Childhood Paradise

Closely related to the Bukovina poems of place are the poems of childhood. Ausländer's poems about childhood center on not just a geographic location but also a specific temporal period that coincides with place. This unique era in the her life also takes on a special aura in much the same way nature did in the previous section: "Jede literarische Autobiographie und schon gar das Autobiographische in der Lyrik arbeiten mit der gleichen Matrix—Kindheit als Paradies und das Erwachsenwerden als Vertreibung aus dem Paradies."[106] Childhood takes on a special meaning in the poetic act of life. It is a time of great wonder and safety. I have already indicated that the longing present in the Bukovina poems are locked in the past, in descriptive metaphors of poetic birth, and the preservation of that birthplace. The poems that follow in this section have to do with the poet's personal past. They mediate the loss of not just a place but a way of living and encountering the world. They record the experience of alienation, while permitting a new negotiation of identity in an increasingly unstable world.

In the same way that the poetic landscape should not be compared to the historical, the poetic biography will differ from a factual account:

> Diese Aufgabe, das Leben aus den Worten zu schreiben, ist durchaus biographisch angelegt: in einer Autobiographie schreibt das Ich sein Leben aus Worten, erfindet bzw. erdichtet es erneut als *erinnertes* Leben. Kindheit und Glück sind gleichgesetzt. Auf der Flucht aus der Kindheit erstickt das Glück…Es handelt sich um den Mythos Kindheit, um einen Paradieszustand und um den Verlust dieses Zustandes durch das Erwachsenwerden, dass mit dem Auswanderungsversuch in die USA zusammenfällt.[107]

[106] Havryliv, 14.

[107] Ibid., 22-23.

For Ausländer, happiness is identified with her childhood home in Bukovina; the place and the experience were the same object. It was both the act of growing up and her father's death that first cast the poet out and away from the home. Her childhood years were a time outside time in much the same way Bukovina became a place outside time: "Der Anfang der Zeit, der Geschichte, d.h. das Ende der Kindheit, fällt zusammen mit der Erfahrung des Todes – mit einer traumatischen Erfahrung: weil der Tod nicht als natürliches, sondern als unvorstellbar gewaltsames Phänomen auftritt."[108] It is death, whether small and personal or catastrophic and historical, that causes the rupture, which separates the author from her original space and time. The childhood era now assumes the same idyllic status as the landscape and is in the same way only reachable in verse. If in Ausländer's case biography is poetry and poetry is fiction, then the biography itself becomes a construct. Words become the building blocks of the poet's remembered experience and are reassembled anew in each work.

In "Kindheit II" (1978) the speaker employs a melancholy tone.[109] Instead of remembering childhood as a wholly joyful time, it takes on a painfully lonely cast. Ausländer's parent's directive to "Sei nicht zugehörig" affected the way in which she experienced childhood.[110]:

> Milch des Morgens[111]
> sickert durchs Fenster
> die Gasse ruft die Kinder
> ich will mit ihnen spielen
> in meinem Königreich

[108] Johann Holzner, "Ikarus-Variationen. Gedichte von Rose Ausländer," in *Die Bukowina: Studien zu einer versunkenen Literaturlandschaft,* ed. Dietmar Goltschnigg and Anton Schwab (Tübingen: Francke, 1990), 271.

[109] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz / des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979,* 114.

[110] Helfrich, 63.

[111]

Es darf nicht sein
Allein ich verwalte mein Reich:
das Puppengeschlecht
Steinbaugüter
den papiergeschnittenen Pruth

Ängstlich bewache ich
meine Schatzkammer
Engel mit gespreizten Silberflügeln (1-15)

Once again in contrast to Celan's "Schwarze Milch der Frühe" RA uses the phrase "Milch des Morgens." Although the mood here is melancholy it is not associated with the historical trauma addressed by Celan. Helfrich clarifies the source of Ausländer's isolation: "Beim Nachspüren des Gehörten erfährt man, dass Rosalie in einer sehr behütenden, sie verwöhnenden und liebenden, aber auch stark einengenden Umgebung aufwächst. Die Behütung geht so weit, dass sie nicht mit den Kindern auf der Straße spielen darf, um sich nicht deren rohe Manieren und derben Dialekt anzueignen und um nicht irgendwelchen Gefahren ausgesetzt zu sein."[112] Because she was also not allowed to invite these children inside, she invents a substitute world, an imaginary kingdom of dolls and cut-outs over which she is master. The Pruth reappears, this time, cut from paper.[113] The speaker imagines that her solitude is imposed by a dark, magical figure:

Der Zauberer mit schwarzem Bart
verwandelte mich nachts
in eine Spielkarte
Piquedame das Zepter in der Rechten
Ich darf nicht weinen
weil mein Amt so hart ist
behüte da und dort die Zeit

[112] Helfrich, 56.

[113] Chapter 3 will examine the significant role that water plays in the formation Ausländer's oeuvre.

ein Pendel zwischen
Milch und Schatten

Unter dem Balkon
spielen Kinder
meine Untertanen (17-29)

She imagines this role was imposed on her by a stern parental figure and she must obediently carry out her duties in isolation, regarding the other children as her subjects. As a child she never lacked material playthings but her parents' generosity was in opposition to their strict rule that prohibited Ausländer from interacting with these so-called lesser human beings outside. This experience results in an emotional loss that will only be compounded when she is forced into real exile as an adult.

Every poem reveals something about the poet and her past that may not be accessible in any other way. It is a wish for the way things could have been: "Ihre Werke passten zur Definition von Margul-Sperber, der schrieb, 'ein Gedicht (sei) nichts anderes als eine Erinnerung an etwas, dass nie existierte, eine Hoffnung auf etwas Unerfüllbares und die Verkörperung des Geheimnisses durch ein Wort, das aus dem Brunnen des Schweigens erschallt.'"[114] Ivanytska corroborates the idea of poetry as longing for what no longer, or ever, existed. This adds to Havryliv's assertion that poetry represents a remembered life. Like all other narratives, memory is selective. The poem is then a wish for what remains absent. It is an unfulfilled wish for completeness, for home and belonging, which has escaped an internal well of silence from which the poet continually draws. This past then is a malleable substance and the poet is at liberty to reshape it to suit her innermost hopes and needs.

[114] Ivanytska, 39.

The next poem reveals another version of childhood. It is a wistful recollection of a relatively joyful childhood from the distance of adulthood. The speaker describes the wonder and promise of her earlier years in comparison to the present time. This poem also appears in an earlier prose form, "Doppelleben" (1976),[115] which describes the alternate lives of the poet as she dreams. She imagines herself as various objects and animals and sees the world from each of these non-human perspectives, which include a bug, a cup of milk, a sculpture, a lilac, and finally, the queen of spades.

"Kindheit I" (1965)[116] begins with a clear recollection of a time passed, addressed to an unknown companion, perhaps even the poet herself. This first stanza recalls the passing of years in a non-formal way, according to past birthdays rather than dated years:

> Vor vielen Geburtstagen
> als unsre Eltern
> den Engeln erlaubten
> in unsern Kinderbetten zu schlafen –
> ja meine Lieben
> da ging es uns gut (1-6)

The time of childhood is closed but not fixed in a real time since it is not counted within the poem itself. Like the forests of Bukovina, this time is populated by enchanted beings, specifically by angels who watch over the child as she sleeps. The wonders continue to appear in the second stanza:

> In jedem Winkel
> war ein Wunder untergebracht:
> Heinzelwaldberg aus Marzipan
> Fächer in dem der Himmel
> gefaltet lag (8-12)

[115] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976*, 227.

[116] Ausländer, *Die Sichel mäht die Zeit zu Heu: Gedichte 1957-1965*, 321.

There are mountains of marzipan and the entirety of the sky is folded neatly into fans. Minute objects assume gargantuan status and vice versa. It is a child's topsy-turvy world. The third stanza recounts many friends and the riches, including islands and even the stars themselves, available to bestow on them:

> Ja meine Lieben
> da hatten wir viele Freunde
> Begüterte wir konnten's uns leisten
> einen Stern zu verschenken
> eine Insel
> sogar einen Engel (13-18)

The fourth stanza begins with a repetition of the first lines, emphasizing that what follows is not just another time but a fundamentally different place. The past lacked the hard edges and worries of the present. There was an ease and speed of movement; to live was to play. The final stanza also starts with a repetition meant to call the speaker's companion back into focus, although what follows has a distinctly different tone:

> Vor vielen Geburtstagen
> als die Erde noch rund war
> (nicht eckig wie jetzt)
> liefen wir um sie herum
> auf Rollschuhen
> in einem Schwung
> ohne Atem zu schöpfen
>
> Ja meine Lieben
> im Eswareinmalheim
> da ging es uns gut
> Die Eltern flogen mit uns
> in den besternten Fächer
> kauften uns Karten ins Knusperland
> und spornten uns an
> die Welt zu verschenken (15-30)

The "Eswareinmalheim" should equate childhood with a living fairytale but is unconvincing. The same word that should imbue the text with a magical quality instead robs the text of it. The preceding text should be a fairytale, a remembered fiction, not just a fanciful remembrance. What follows is the happily ever after of the tale, with the parents riding shotgun on the starry fans. It is the world the way the poet wishes to remember it.

Although they vary in tone, both poems are necessary to reconstruct a version of Ausländer's childhood that may resemble the truth. The fantastic quality that is so characteristic of the Bukovina poems is also clearly present here. Katalin Horn surmises: "Hier stellt sich gleich die Frage – eine Frage, die sich auch wie ein roter Faden durch die Dichtung Rose Ausländers zieht-, wieweit die Märchen uns die Wahrheit sagen, wieweit sie ein zwar überhöhtes und ideelles, im Grunde aber zuverlässiges Bild der Wirklichkeit bieten."[117] Reality, like truth, is a relative concept in Ausländer's work.

"Luftschlösser" (1976)[118] connects another idea of place to childhood innocence. Place in Ausländer's work is not just a physical place upon the earth, or even in the mind, but also contains a temporal dimension of the speaker's experience in that place. Memories of place exist within a specific time-based framework that is unique. Home for Ausländer means not just Bukovina but her childhood Bukovina before the events of both her personal life and greater European history could intrude. Ausländer's formative years were spent in the idyllic Bukovina landscape. This poem recalls the innocence of that lost place and time:

Die Schwalben

[117] Katalin Horn, "Heimat und Identität – Märchen und Märchenmotive in der Dichtung von Rose Ausländer," in *"Mutterland Wort": Rose Ausländer 1901-1988*, ed. Helmut Braun (Üxheim/Eifel : Rose-Ausländer-Dokumentationszentrum, 1996), 172.

[118] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa*, 56.

sind ausgewandert
aus dem Kinderland

Ausgewandert
das Kinderland

Die Kinder
alt geworden (1-9)

The swallows are the innocents who have flown away from their childhood home for good. The participle "ausgewandert" suggests a diaspora. The finality of their movement away from childhood's place and time is emphasized by the repetition of "aus" – "aus" in lines two and three. The second stanza repeats, "Ausgewandert / das Kinderland" (4-5). These lines become an abbreviated echo of the preceding lines, emphasizing place and the movement away from it. The reason for this outward movement has to do with the passing of time. The children have simply grown up. Bukovina may still be a place but it is no longer the place of Ausländer's childhood and is inaccessible to her as an adult:

Ich
im Niemandsland
baue Luftschlösser
aus Papier (11-14)

The alternative to the "Kinderland" is "Niemandsland." The adult speaker occupies a place of estrangement and alienation, unable to find comfort in her new location. "Niemand" indicates a lack of personhood – as a compound noun it becomes indicative of lack of location. This constellation of no person-no place-no time expresses a real struggle with identity as it is bound to the childhood space. In a real sense, the speaker no longer exists: "Rose Ausländer denkt in ihren lyrischen Gegenentwürfen zur Heimatlosigkeit an kein real existierendes Land mehr. In ihren abstrakten und idealisierten Vorstellungen von Heimat wird der mögliche Lebensraum

nicht mehr mit konkreten Namen wirklich existierende Orte versehen."[119] The "Luftschlösser" that the speaker builds are the poems, castles of memories that are the ruins of the kingdom in "Kindheit II," which are meant to fill the void brought on by adulthood and change.

In a poem that echoes "Luftschlösser," "Das Vergangene" (1981)[120] describes the expulsion from and a longing for an unreachable home. Much like the swallows of the previous poem depart from their youthful home, the past itself is now in flight. Their plumage is constructed from lost home and lost youth:

> Auch das Vergangene
> hat Flüge
>
> Ihre Federn sind Zellen
> eines verlorenen Leibs (1-5)

In the next stanza, the poet's homeland, the forest, once again blooms, perpetually becoming green. It is a symbol of hope, rebirth, and a wish for eternal youth. An unnamed lover with light blue eyes, reminiscent of clear sky and running water of other poems, resides in this place. This mysterious figure may also be the poet or another nature spirit, who inspires the poet to write. The river Pruth resurfaces:

> Im Buchenland
> grünen die Wälder
>
> Die Geliebte hat
> lichtblaue Augen
>
> Kinder spielen mit Nüssen
> die vom Himmel regnen
>
> Im Pruth schwimmen

[119] Kohl, 102.

[120] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 84.

die nackten Erinnerungen (7-17)

Previously, the Pruth had been a living organism unto itself, symbolic of all of Bukovina and the passing of time. Here it becomes instead a reservoir of intimate memories from which the poet draws. These memories are not all good; some are bare and raw and contain past pain. Her parents' death marks permanently the end of childhood, driving the child away forever. Their deaths allude to the deaths that occurred at Buchenwald, a concentration camp whose name bears an uncomfortable similarity to the nickname for Bukovina - Buchenland. These particular lines also have a more somber tone than the rest of the poem. They are interruptions, factual punctuations of an unavoidable personal reality intruding on the poem, whose flow continues in the final lines:

Der Vater stirbt
die Mutter stirbt

Der Schmerz ist ein Baum der
bittere Früchte trägt (19-23)

The pain of loss is depicted as a fruiting tree. And while the tree bears only the bitterest fruits, it is rooted, suggesting that pain may be the only constant in life and that one must grow past it. The pain of the past is, after all, constructive. It compels the poet to write.

The memories of childhood and the Bukovina of the past form an often visited paradise in Ausländer's poetry. Much like her nature poetry, her childhood poems contain an aura of magic and wonder. This enchanted aura fades as the poet grows into adulthood and is driven away permanently by external events. These poems may at times also negotiate the past in terms of an imaginary landscape that Ausländer invented as a child and explains in "Doppelleben." Her childhood existence in the context of these poems becomes a place in which the past can be

rewritten into a more savory tale than what may have constituted reality. These poems tend to be somber in tone, their gaze fixed on a painful past.

The external world exerts a strong influence upon the poet and her expression of it in lyrical form. These poems become living autonomous beings, whether or not they originated from a geographic place. The following passage implies that some stories, poems, are born at the same time as the poet and reside within her until they can be expressed. In a peculiar manner, the poet is invented by Bukovina with the texts about Bukovina already formed inside. This becomes a self-reflexive act when the poetry must be released back into the world from which it and the poet first emerged. It is a perpetual unfolding of place into poet into place again, i.e. a perpetual becoming. Ausländer writes:

> In mir wohnen viele alte Geschichten, die mir manchmal zusetzen, sie aus dem embryonalen Gefängnis zu befreien. Nun, ich hoffe, es noch zustande zu bringen. Aber mein eigentliches, zentrales Interesse ist doch das lyrische Erlebnis. Ein Wort, eine Wortkonstellation, eine Versekonstellation – kein anderes Medium öffnet so die Türen zur Welt, zum Leben, zu den Menschen, manchmal sogar zu mir selber. Ein erregendes Spiel, kein Spiel: Weltwerdung, Menschwerdung, Ichwerdung.[121]

Ausländer's primary interest was "das lyrische Erlebnis," indicating that for her to live was already a poetic act, like writing a poem, and allowing the poem to become life. The constellations of which she speaks can be continually redefined and rewritten to suit any new circumstance. In this way the poet can repeatedly examine her life from many perspectives that allow her special insight to the world around her as well as herself. She rediscovers herself anew each time she writes. This place of discovery, the poem, eventually assumes enormous importance for her, becoming a solace and sanctuary for her in a dangerous world.

[121] Helfrich, 10.

The World in the Word

The borderline between the real remembered world and a fictional past is a blurry one.[122] The relationship between reality, memory, and fiction is further complicated by another type of experience; dreaming. In the same way that remembered experience is translated into poetry, the dream is also translated. During this transformation, however, the dream is made into a reality:

> Ich habe, was man Wirklichkeit nennt, auf meine Weise geträumt, das Geträumte in Worte verwandelt und meine geträumte Wortwirklichkeit in die Wirklichkeit der Welt hinausgeschickt – Poesie: dies gesteigerte Lebensgefühl, diese sonderbare Gedankensprache. Und siehe: die Welt ist zu mir zurückgekommen.[123]

The dreams of Ausländer's statement may be interpreted as the lived experience transformed into memory. In other words, it is the world as experienced through the filter of the self and as it is mediated by the poet into words. This action is an inherently self-reflexive one. The world flows into the poet through the senses and flows back into the world through the pen. It is a stream-of-consciousness that unfolds into disparate moments, individual poems, which make it more representative of the world no matter how it is mediated. The moment as it is experienced in these poetic vignettes is one of a numinous consciousness, which transforms into a language of its own when it is received by the poet– a metalanguage somewhere in between experience and expression – a *Bildsprache* – the means by which the poet encounters the world directly. Rainer Maria Rilke also comments on this phenomenon: "Ich sitze und lese einen Dichter. Es sind viele Leute im Saal, aber man spürt sie nicht. Sie sind in den Büchern. Manchmal bewegen sie sich in

[122] See Sigmund Freud, "Screen Memories," in *The Uncanny*, trans. Hugh Haughton (New York: Penguin, 2003) for an interesting discussion on the unreliability of dreams and memory.

[123] Helfrich, 263.

den Blättern, wie Menschen, die schlafen und sich umwenden zwischen zwei Träumen."[124] The text becomes a dream into which the reader may also enter. The lines between dream, reality, memory, and fiction are hopelessly blurred.

As a university student in Czernowitz, Rose Ausländer was strongly influenced by the Berlin philosopher Constantin Brunner, whose teachings were based heavily on Baruch Spinoza. The primary concept that links these two thinkers is a unity of being: "'Beide glauben' an die Idee des All-Einen, d.h. an die Einheit allen Seins. Spinoza nennt diese 'Substanz' bzw. 'Gott,' während Brunner sie als 'das Denkende' bezeichnet."[125] One places his trust in a higher power and the other in rational thought. However, it is not just that all things are connected to one another through an ontological network but also that we, as "things," are interchangeable. Brunner exclaims: "Dies ist ein Ding und du bist ein Ding; und wie du Ding bist in dir, so ist dieses das ebenfalls Ding in sich…Dies Alles ist wie du bist, dies Alles bist du! Alles, Alles wahrhaft in Einem Bewegungswandel! Darum ja ist es, dass alle Dinge aufeinander wirken und ineinander übergehen: weil sie Eines sind […]."[126] One way to understand this transformation is to consider Ausländer's short prose work "Doppelleben" in which the child assumes the perspective of many different objects and is able – upon waking – to assume her human identity again. She can speak from all perspectives simultaneously because everything is part of a single unity. The experience from any entity within this single macro-organism, or universe, is accessible to every other. This capability suggests that any boundaries between subject and object, the self and other, have been abolished. By extension then, the text expressing these

[124] Rainier Marie Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000), 35.

[125] Helfrich, 74.

[126] Gans and Vogel, eds., *Rose Ausländer, Hilde Domin:Gedichtinterpretationen* (Baltmannsweiler : Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 1997), 20.

myriad experiences is also a thing, and as Brunner would argue, a thinking thing. Thing, poet, and text are part of the unity and share their experiences with one another.

This kind of thinking alludes to other older mystical and religious discourses. The first is Judaism itself. Ausländer's education involved both secular classics of German literature as well as a familiarity with religious texts:

> Dieses liberale Elternhaus bietet ihr eine Sphäre geistiger Aufgeschlossenheit und damit die Chance, ihre intellektuellen Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln. Auf der anderen Seite ermöglicht ihr dieses Elternhaus, durch die Wahrung der jüdischen Tradition ihre achtungsvolle Scheu vor dem Wort, aus diesem religiösen Ursprung, zu erfahren. Ihre jüdischen Vorfahren werteten das Wort als machtgeladen und wahrheitsspendend, denn die Glaubenswelt des jüdischen Volkes besteht allein in der Überlieferung durch das Wort.[127]

The Jewish religion has survived in diaspora and in isolation only through written texts. Hebrew, once a dead language, was maintained and resurrected by the power of the text. It is primarily through the dedication of the Jewish people to their texts that this community continues to exist. The other discourse involves an even older belief system. It is a variety of animism in which the entire world and all its objects possess a spirit or another means with which to experience each other. Incorporated into this belief is also an undeniable pantheism, since all objects belong to a higher unity that is God. Reiter elucidates:

> Die im Geiste der Brunnerschen Lehre entstanden Gedichte Rose Ausländers, die das geistige Prinzip der Welt in Bilder übersetzen, scheinen von einem immanent-transzendenten Pantheismus getragen zu sein, erinnern aber auch an die innere Schau (ming) des Taoismus, die erst dann möglich wird, wenn die Unterscheidung zwischen Innen und Außen, zwischen dem Ich und den Dingen aufgehört hat.[128]

[127] Helfrich, 50.

[128] Gans and Vogel, *Rose Ausländer, Hilde Domin: Gedichtinterpretationen*, 21.

The way in which the experienced world is communicated among its objects is through images. This language, furthermore, is only available once the poet has been able to experience herself as part of the world instead of separate from it. In other words, the world invents the poet with her poems already within.

"Mein Gedicht" (1976)[129] is an example of the numinous interchange between the poet, Earth, and the poem itself. The poem is inhaled and exhaled by the poet, her creation that comes from within, with which she was born. The same occurs as the earth breathes, but in this case the earth exhales both the poet and the poem, having created both simultaneously.

> Mein Gedicht
> ich atme dich
> ein und aus
>
> Die Erde atmet
> dich und mich
> aus und ein
>
> Aus ihrem Atem geboren
> mein Gedicht (1-10)

These few lines recall the unity hypothesized by Brunner. The experience of each thinking thing flows into every other, including the act of creation which is shared between the earth, the poet, and her poem. In progression each of them is inhaled and exhaled by the other until the poem is expressed. As such it is a creation belonging to a web of being and part of the web for others.

"Das Ende" (1976)[130] takes a somewhat foreboding view of the world in writing. The speaker either invites or warns the reader to write his own world. It becomes imperative to write an individual life to the end, in much the way Rose Ausländer wrote her own, in order that no

[129] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976*, 18.

[130] Ibid., 27.

life is lost. It is through the act of writing that one bears the agency of having shaped, or written, their own life:

> Schreib
> deine eigene Welt
> zu Ende
>
> ehe das Ende
> dich abschreibt (1-6)

As demonstrated in the previous poems, it is necessary to write in order to verify one's existence and to create a space for it in eternity. The verb "abschreiben" means to eliminate or to copy. If one does not participate in the writing of their own life they risk being eliminated from their own tale. Alternatively, they risk losing their authenticity and autonomy. Writing is the way in which one chooses his life story; it is a means of control.

This notion of unity also firmly places Ausländer in the Romantic tradition, which has been often suggested in previous research, such as Klaus Werner's and Claudia Beil's, where the boundaries between observer and observed are regularly transgressed. Novalis writes of this transcendent exchange in *Das allegemeine Brouillon*: "617. Cosmol[ogie]. Die innre Welt ist gleichsam mehr Mein, als die *Äußre*. Sie ist so innig, so heimlich – Man möchte ganz in ihr Leben – Sie ist so vaterländisch. Schade, dass Sie so traumhaft, so ungewiss ist. Muss denn gerade, das Beste[,] das Wahrste so scheinbar – und das Scheinbare, so wahr aussehn? / Was außer mir ist, ist gerade in mir, ist mein – und umgek[ehrt]."[131] There is a marked uncertainty as to which world, the internal or the external, is real and which is illusion. Rilke illustrates the ongoing tension between these so-called opposites:

[131] Hardenberg, *Novalis:Werke*, 614.

> Heiß und zornig stürzte ich vor den Spiegel und sah mühsam durch die Maske durch, wie meine Hände arbeiteten. Aber darauf hatte er nur gewartet. Der Augenblick der Vergeltung war für ihn gekommen. Während ich in maßlos zunehmender Beklemmung mich anstrengte, mich irgendwie aus meiner Vermummung hinauszuzwängen, nötigte er mich, ich weiß nicht womit, aufzusehen und diktierte mir ein Bild, nein, eine Wirklichkeit, eine fremde, unbegreifliche monströse Wirklichkeit, mit der ich durchtränkt wurde gegen meinen Willen: denn jetzt war er der Stärkere, und ich war der Spiegel.[132]

The mask is the illusion of reality and when presented with a strong reflection of that reality in text, it forces one to reconsider just what side of the mirror he is on. The paradox and problem is that the observer, the poet, actually occupies both worlds, and perhaps more, all of which are "real" and subject to revision. Within the poem, however, this ambiguity diminishes. Peucker states: "The external landscape disappears from view and reappears as vision…the poet himself becomes the place."[133] Or rather, the poem becomes the place, a moment of stasis for its audience. For the reader, at least, there is some certainty.

"Briefe I" (1979)[134] bears an interesting similarity to "Papier I." There is an immediate exchange between the concrete and the inner world. In this case the poet herself declares that she is the journey around the world, both in the form of a letter and the experience of travel:

> Ich bin eine Weltreise
> aus Briefen
> fliege zu euch
> mit meinem Wort
>
> schenke euch
> Länder Wälder Vögel
> nur der Atem
> bleibt noch bei mir (1-9)

[132] Rilke, 89.

[133] Peucker, 906.

[134] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 273.

Indeed both she and the letter undergo their own journeys; however, the various letters that describe her travels are meant to be understood as an entirety. The story is her own but it is manifest in the letters themselves. These letters, like her poems, are meant to invoke what they describe, i.e. the forests, birds, and different countries. The implication of the lines, "nur der Atem / bleibt noch bei mir" (7-8) is that the script contains the poet's essence. In this incarnation she has assumed the form of the letter, which in turn transforms into a place. She cannot commit her own living breath to the page, the printed words being the value of what was once spoken:

> Eure Briefe denken mich
> bis in den Traum
> der aus ihnen
> Märchen macht (11-14)

In an interesting turn, the return letters come to imagine the poet, their addressee. It is as if by reading them she becomes real. Her audience's impression, or rather, expressions, have reinvented the poet as a fairytale.

In "Briefe IV" (1979/80)[135] the poet occupies the space created by writing, by the letters which she has sent out into the world. These letters have collectively formed a place of residence for the speaker, both those she has written and those that she has received, as in the previous poem:

> Ich lebe in einem Raum
> aus Briefen
> schreibe
> mein Leben
> an fünf Kontinenten (1-5)

[135] Rose Ausländer, *Jeder Tropfen ein Tag: Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß: Gesamtregister*, ed. Helmut Braun. Vol. 8, (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1990), 172.

In the second stanza she reverses this line of thinking and instead asserts that her life has been inscribed onto five continents, an exaggeration. The continents become a substitute for the page, blank locations waiting for life to be inscribed upon them, waiting for the meaning of experience to be verified by language. This is a reiteration of her life lived as a poetic life. She is not alone in this space made by paper, as many of her friends – including the reader, accompany her in this world composed of words:

> Verwandte Freunde Bekannte
> wir begegnen uns
> auf dem Papier
> reisen zueinander
> in die Wortwelt
>
> fragen antworten
> was es noch gibt
> was wir verlieren gewinnen
> was wir sind
> auf unseres Stückchen
> Kosmos (7-18)

This is an affirmation that the world is reduced to text. Everything that exists, remains, is lost or found, including our essences, can be relocated and organized in this tiny space – the page. The reduction of the world into a letter or other text alludes to a degree of control by the document's author. Control over one's life is a matter of illusion and through the texts at least, a measure of this control is restored.

The act of becoming place for the poems that follow is self-reflexive. These poems are about poems and writing; they become their own place. Peucker comments: "We cannot literally walk into poems, and yet the notion of poem as place is fascinating precisely because it shows what poetry cannot logically do or be. To make a poem a place would be to perform the magical

act traditionally associated with sacred words, the act that transforms signs into things."[136] In this case the poems have the ability to become of what they speak, i.e. poems. They are specific in their reduction of the world into a text and do not invoke the place as in the previously examined works. Yet they do provide a place in which the poet and reader are free to dwell and contemplate the wider cosmos. They provide a necessary space for the poet to change her perspective and to develop a greater understanding of herself and the world. In doing this these poems often create a commentary of the role of what is written in the world and its importance in determining identity and verifying experience.

In "Papier I" (1957-63)[137] Ausländer acknowledges the transformation of place into page. The world is already a place where existence is substantiated through documentation:

> Länder aus Papier
> Die Welt wird
> dokumentarisch beglaubigt
>
> Wir schreiben uns wund
> Legitimier deinen Atem
> schwarz auf weiß (1-7)

Instead of the green living forests of Bukovina, this myriad of documents will form their own paper jungle, authenticating the speaker's status in the world. The people of the world have a need to legitimate their existence upon paper, to manifest their condition in language:

> Papiergewordener Wald
> Es regnet Rechnungen
> Zertifikate Zeitungen
> Passierscheine Papierscheine

[136] Peucker, 907: It should be noted that Peucker does not comment on Ausländer's works but rather the poetry of Thomas Gray, Heinrich von Kleist, Barthold Heinrich Brockes, and Rainer Maria Rilke. Rilke being the only contemporary of Ausländer examined.

[137] Ausländer, *Die Sichel mäht die Zeit zu Heu: Gedichte 1957-1965*, 196.

Scheine
ein Sintmeer

Die Arche wo (9-16)

The act of writing is a way in which lived experience is concretized, although the documents listed in the poem do this in a decidedly non-poetic way. Writing is proof of existence. These mundane documents, in an ironic turn, become the stuff of poetry.

While this seems to be a lament about the wearisome nature of existence, especially Ausländer's own restless movement through the world, it is also a description of the original Bukovina landscape in reverse. The forest and seas, among many of the selfsame natural features of her other poems reemerge here in an altered state. Instead of mythical characteristics, they have become man-made and mundane, documentable. And although this seems to be a reduction in their former scale of grandeur, the world now possesses a community of authors, who mediate their lives through words even if monotonously so. Ausländer herself has performed a similar function through her poetry, creating instead a lyrical record of her life.

"Buchenblatt" (1981)[138] repeats the motives found in "Das Vergangene." The leaf itself is representative of the missing forest of Bukovina. It is a material manifestation of a faraway homeland that has found its way back to the speaker:

Ein Buchenblatt
wie aus dem Wald
meiner Heimatstadt
fliegt in mein Zimmer

Es kam
mich zu trösten (1-7)

[138] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 115.

The leaf is also the empty page, sent out by the forest to her in its rawest form. It is a remembrance of her origins and an invitation to write. The third stanza is the most significant for its depiction of many kinds of loss. The speaker recalls her youth, where each moment is a memorial, and lost friends and monuments are still found:

> Jene junge Zeit
> ein Gedankenort
> da wohnen die verlorenen
> Freunde und Berge
>
> Feines Geäder
> eine Widmung
> für mich (8-15)

The political status and geographic boundaries of her homeland have changed, divided by two World Wars. The mountains of Bukovina technically no longer exist as they are now part of the Ukraine. Her friends and family have been lost to illness or the Holocaust. Ausländer also loses her poetic language. She is unable to write in German for a period of eight years. The words had also been her friends and in the time after the war they need to be remembered. The leaf is a reminder of mortality, of dead people and dead words. The fine veins of the leaf recall the living tree or living, a writing hand that writes itself.

The concept of hiraeth is continually present in Ausländer's work both before and after the war. Hiraeth captures the isolation and longing for a home that no longer exists. It is word of Welsh origin that is difficult to translate directly into the English or German but roughly describes a state of intense homesickness. According to some definitions of this word, there is a temporal element to this longing, e.g. one pines for the country of their youth. Ausländer longs for the German-speaking Bukovina of her childhood, a place made unreachable by the passing of years, catastrophic wars, and political unrest. At the time of Ausländer's death, this Bukovina

could no longer be found on any map. For her, language and place were intimately connected to each other and the act of writing. Although the German language would ultimately become a home for Ausländer, language itself would never quite correspond to the physical home. German was not an indigenous language in Bukovina, although Ausländer grew up speaking it. The German spoken in Bukovina was even subject to some ridicule. Ausländer recalls: "Obwohl seit 1918 Rumänisch als Landessprache galt, blieb bis Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs Deutsch die Mutter- und Kultursprache…Wir bleiben Österreicher, unsere Hauptstadt war Wien, nicht Bukarest. Die Wiener – ach, wie sie das 'Buko-winer' Deutsch verspotteten! Wir litten an sprachlichen Minderwertigkeitsgefühlen."[139] Later, Ausländer would be writing in German in New York, or as a German speaker in English, or as a Jew in Germany. In "Daheim" (1980)[140] the speaker attempts to resolve this problematic relationship between language and place, suggesting that linguistic fluency does not always ensure belonging and that belonging is, in fact, not necessary:

> In der Fremde
> daheim
>
> Land meiner Muttersprache
> sündiges büßendes Land
> ich wählte dich
> als meine Wohnung
> Heimatfremde
>
> wo ich viele
> fremde Freunde
> liebe (1-12)

The speaker begins from an unnamed foreign place, which is strangely like home. The speaker then addresses a country, Germany, the land of her "Muttersprache." Notably, Germany is not

[139] Ausländer qtd. in Helfrich, *Es ist ein Aschensommer in der Welt: Rose Ausländer, Biographie*, 60.

[140] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 27.

the speaker's home but the home of her language, a place selected for a residency. Like the "Fremde" from which she began speaking, Germany is a curious mixture of familiar and strange elements and faces, which the speaker seems to lovingly adopt despite their horrific past. The word "fremde" appears three times in combination with words like *Heimat*, *Freunde*, and *daheim*. It confounds the meaning of words that should designate home and belonging, indicating in a circular manner that the speaker cannot be comfortable in spaces which offer this quality.

What this particular explication is designed to illustrate is that Ausländer was precisely what her name suggests, an outsider. She moved twice from Czernowitz to New York and travelled widely throughout Europe. It was not just her personal movement, however, that altered the perception of place in her work. Bukovina was part of the Austrian Empire from 1775 to 1918. After World War I, Bukovina became part of Romania, which included a change in the official language from German to Romanian. Between 1941 and 1944, Czernowitz was occupied by German troops and the city organized into ghettos. In 1940, the northern part of Bukovina, which included Czernowitz, was annexed by the Soviet Union. Today Bukovina remains split between the Ukraine and Romania. Ausländer's long life allowed her to experience many of these political changes firsthand, but the magnitude of these same changes would prevent her forever from definitively identifying with the one place that was home and would, furthermore, complicate her relationship with other places in which she attempted to settle.

"Selbstporträt" (1979)[141] narrates a complex problem of belonging. The identity of the speaker is conflated with place, or rather, the lack of place and, therefore, identity:

> Jüdische Zigeunerin
> deutschsprachig

[141] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 203.

unter schwarzgelber Fahne
erzogen (1-4)

These lines foreshadow Ausländer's own life, at home both everywhere and nowhere at once. The Jew and the Gypsy are historic wanderers, agents of perpetual movement over the earth. In this poem, they are connected by language. Ausländer grew up speaking German, the official language of the Austrian state of her childhood. It was the cultural and linguistic conditions of this German-speaking state that ultimately produced the poet that Ausländer became. However, like the Gypsy, this particular poet was not destined to set down permanent roots in this place but rather was compelled to remain in motion. The second stanza specifies borders which drive the speaker towards other ethnic and national groups:

Grenzen schoben mich
zu Lateinern Slaven
Amerikanern Germanen (6-8)

These borders are the political changes that propelled the speaker's movement in her own country and abroad. The "Lateinen Slaven" of the poem are the Romanians and Ukrainians of the Bukovinan borderland. The "Amerikanern Germanen" are from Ausländer's later life in the United States and her final years in Germany. These borders are the political changes that propelled the speaker's movement in her own country and abroad:

> Im "Dritten Reich" führt diese Schicksalsgemeinschaft sowohl die Juden wie die Zigeuner, die als "minderwertige Rasse" im nationalsozialistischen Sprachgebrauch gekennzeichnet werden, in die Konzentrationslager, wo sie geschändet und ermordet werden…Auf dem Hintergrund dieses von Menschenhand mitleidlos geplanten Völkermords ist ihre *Jüdische Zigeunerin* zu verstehen.[142]

[142] Helfrich, 63.

These borders also speak of turning points in the speaker's personal life, events which end one way of living and send her in another direction, e.g. the death or sickness of a parent. It was these types of personal events, illness and death, that compelled some of Ausländer's most critical movements. The final stanza alludes to a return, or rebirth, in her European homeland in much the same way Ausländer was invented:

> Europa
> in deinem Schoß
> träume ich
> meine nächste Geburt (10-13)

It is not unusual that Ausländer would choose a figure like the "Jüdische Zigeunerin" with whom to identify: "Juden und Zigeuner sind beide Wanderer der Erde, entwurzelt und doch überall Wurzeln schlagend. Doch ihre Wanderschaft erfolgt aus einer grundsätzlich anderen Motivation: Die Wanderschaft der Juden ist eine unfreiwillig erzwungene, während sie bei den Zigeunern trotz Verfolgung immer eine selbstgewählte Lebensweise darstellt."[143] According to Helfrich, Ausländer arrived for the first time in the United States not by her own choosing. She was rather obliged to leave her homeland after her father's death in order to make her own way elsewhere. This decision was allegedly made by her mother, who decided it should be Rose, and not her younger brother Max, who made the journey. This was but the first trip that was compelled by external reasons and one of the journeys that would shape her life and work. The Gypsy figure is restless by choice. She is a willful wanderer and a spirit of independence. Ausländer was a fiercely independent woman of her time.

[143] Ibid.

This independence, or perhaps reluctance to freely socialize, began early. As a child, her parents instructed Rose, "Sei nichts zugehörig."[144] This meant not to associate with other children that were from other social groups. As a result, Rose spent many childhood hours alone, developing a rich internal world. This particular sentiment would seem to confound the notions of home and belonging that have so come to dominate her oeuvre. She had always felt herself to be an outsider. It is precisely the absence of belonging from her childhood years that makes the idea of home so important in her writing; she was always trying to recover home – to belong somewhere. Since home didn't exist in the conventional sense, it was continually reinvented in her writing – so much so that the poetry itself would eventually become the site of belonging

There is another reason that Ausländer chose the Jewish Gypsy: "*Die Zigeunerin* steht als Identifikationsfigur für sie als Dichterin. Sie ist Metapher für den Zeichen lesenden, deutenden und wahr-sagenden Menschen und somit einem Dichter verwandt. Ihre Kunst des Kartenlesens oder Handlesens ist Sinnbild für die Möglichkeit, ein sprachliches Zeichensystem in ein anderes zu übertragen aufgrund der durchgängigen sprachlichen Einheit der Welt."[145] Helfrich notes that the Gypsy figure for Ausländer is an "Identifikationsfigur" not only for her propensity to wander but for keen insight into the signs of the natural world. In this way the Gypsy is kindred to other types of prognosticators, such as oracles and poets, able to read and translate natural signs into language so that other may understand. This ability bears a strong resemblance to the poet's ability, "etwas Göttliches aus dem eigenen Innern [zu] ergreif[en]."[146]

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., 62.

[146] Schlaffer, 45.

This rare proclivity is evident in Ausländer's Bukovina poems in the idyllic readings of the natural environment. Helfrich's observation also presupposes that another symbolic language can be located in nature, one which reveals a higher truth to the poet. This sentiment echoes the Romantic belief that there is an overarching unity found in nature. The Gypsy poet reads the poem that is nature -- and understands nature, in the words of Friedrich Schelling, as a poem:

> Was wir Natur nennen, ist ein Gedicht, das in geheimer wunderbarer Schrift verschlossen liegt. Doch könnte das Rätsel sich enthüllen, würden wir die Odyssee des Geistes darin erkennen, der wunderbar getäuscht, sich selber suchend, sich selber flieht; denn durch die Sinnenwelt blickt nur wie durch Worte der Sinn, nur wie durch halbdurchsichtigen Nebel das Land der Phantasie, nach dem wir trachten.[147]

Nature requires translation, the intervention of someone who is initiated into its secret language. Only then can one begin to understand the workings behind the veil of reality.

There are many kinds of places to be found in poetry. As Ludwig Tieck explains, these places are not meant to be direct translations of the physical world but rather the artist's interpretation of it:

> Denn was soll ich mit allen Zweigen und Blättern? mit dieser genauen Kopie der Gräser und Blumen? Nicht diese Pflanzen, nicht die Berge will ich abschreiben, sondern mein Gemüt, meine Stimmung, die mich gerade in diesem Moment regiert.[148]

Nature will take on the radiance or shadows of the poet's own mood and memories and these affections are subject to change. The innumerable perspectives that these changes create allow for an enhanced understanding of the world and the poet's place in it. Peucker continues: "The

[147] Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Werke*, Vol. 2, Zeno.org (Leipzig: n.p. 1907) 301, n.d. Web, 20 May 2015.

[148] Ludwig Tieck and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, "Sternbalds Wanderungen II." *Tieck und Wackenroder: National Litteratur historisch kritische Ausgabe*, eds. Joseph Kürschner and Jakob Minor, Vol. 145 (Stuttgart and Berlin: W. Spemann, n.d.), 300.

purpose of poetry, the poet discovers, is to describe the being, not the action, of the human subject…the poetry of place has never ceased to have a human center."[149] The poet's experience of being in world mediated by language, with its manifold and mystical propensities, is what unites the world in its being and makes the poem.

The philosophies and theories discussed in this chapter have revealed the ability of poetic language to transform the universe into a living, thinking network and to alternatively transform itself into the world and the world into text. It has the power to invoke places and times that have been lost to the poet and to exist eternally in the poetic memory. These may be real places, like Bukovina, or moments in the past that are now closed. Ausländer also writes of other landscapes in which she lived that were not examined explicitly in this chapter like New York, Minnesota, and Germany. She also wrote about places that she only briefly experienced such as Jerusalem, Palestine, and France. Then there was Italy, a country she considered her "dream" home and in which she felt unusually at ease. The experiences recorded and recalled in poetry are so powerful as to seem real regardless of whether or not they ever were. Indeed the poem itself has the ability to become a place in which one can deeply ruminate on the many nuances of life.

[149] Peucker, 912.

Chapter III:

Aquatic Mythology: Lorelei, Heine, and Droste-Hülshoff

A distinctive type of poem found in Ausländer's oeuvre is one dedicated to or inspired by other writers, artists, and musicians. "Fünf Dichter" (1976) is an example of this type of work and is representative of the way in which Ausländer attempts to characterize and emulate the creative process of other artists:

> Fünf Dichter[150]
>
> Hölderlin
> um Gerechtigkeit ringender
> Götterfreund
>
> Trakl
> seine herbstliche Melancholie
>
> Rilke
> der Gott erschafft
>
> Der Verzweifelte
> Celan
>
> Li-Tai-Po
> der fröhliche
> singt

The purpose of this mirroring of creativity within the linguistic artwork is to illuminate the substitute home that Ausländer found in her poetic language. Among other poems are references, for example, to painters like Francisco de Goya, Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne, Marc Chagall, Paul Klee, and Salvador Dalí that translate the visual aspect of their art into language. Similarly,

[150] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976*, 38.

Ausländer refers to musicians. Among her favorite composers were Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The unique styling of her stanzas about these artists was meant to invoke their music, a key element of poetry – Ausländer's genre of choice. Not surprisingly, writers play an eminent role in the artistic self-referencing in her work. Yiddish-speaking writers from Bukovina like Iztahk Manger and Eliezer Steinbarg were included into the list of poets and Ausländer translated a number of Manger's works into German. During her stay in the United States she discovered the writers of the American Modern, for example e.e. cummings and Marianne Moore, with whom she exchanged letters. In fact these writers were of particular significance to Ausländer's development as a poet. There are also poems dedicated to writers outside the aforementioned canons, such as Pablo Neruda and Li-Tai-Po. Ausländer was inspired by all forms of art and literature from many different cultural traditions even if her choices indicate sensitivity for specific topics and artistic techniques. The writers, however, who exercised the greatest influence on her work were the German language writers, particularly of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These writers included Friedrich Hölderlin, Georg Trakl, Franz Kafka, Marie Luise Kaschnitz, Peter Huchel, and Günter Kunert.

The most quoted authors seem to provide a historical overview of German poetry. Her individual approach to history is supplemented by a specific mythology of Ausländer's own invention. The mythology is created by the recurring use of specific leitmotifs throughout her oeuvre, the significance of which is often interwoven with her own personal experience. Connecting historical with mythological aspects of her own writing, Heinrich Heine and Annette Droste-Hülshoff are the most emblematic representatives of a tradition that reflects upon the art of writing through the lens of poetry itself. This chapter will focus on the influences of Heine and Droste-Hülshoff as read by Ausländer and included in her poetry. Heine and Droste-Hülshoff

share a birth year and a specific thematic in Ausländer's poetry although they differ in their upbringing, education, and careers. These poems to Heine and Droste-Hülshoff are meant to invoke their poetic essence through the imitation of themes and tropes.

The Loreley and Heine

Heine's "Loreley" and its extensive influence on German literature as well as Droste-Hülshoff's take on the siren of the Rhine stand out in this context. "Loreley" as inherited from Clemens Brentano has cast her spell over many artists and writers and may possibly have even more ancient origins. The semi-demonic figure finds her place in pre-biblical memory entrenching her in not just German consciousness but a worldwide consciousness as well. This may account for her special longevity in world artwork. It is only natural that an encounter with the Loreley-character is a tragic one; it is as natural as the landscape she calls home. The Rhine river landscape has often been romantically reimagined as a pure and unbroken source of German national consciousness. Even the ostracized Heine had difficulty breaking the Loreley's spell and cherished the romantic image of the Rhine landscape until his death.[151] Droste-Hülshoff focused on the Bodensee but is remembered by Ausländer in the Loreley-figure. The Loreley, it should be noted, is recreated in Ausländer's work as a positive figure. She is a nurturing mother,

[151] Heinrich Heine tried, unsuccessfully, to conceal his Jewish origins during his time as a student at the Georg-August University in Göttingen. This was at a time of growing intolerance towards Jews that eventually peaked in the rabid Anti-Semitism that would characterize the first half of the twentieth century. He eventually had to change universities to escape the hardships his religious origins caused. In a move he hoped would help his career, he had himself baptized (this will be examined in the current chapter). However, this action only contributed to the non-Jewish sentiment that he, as a Jew, lacked strength of character. Later, a heated personal conflict developed between himself and August von Platen. The conflict was based largely on Heine's concealed Jewish origins and Platen's alleged sexual 'deficiencies', i.e. his homosexuality. Neither of them fully recovered from this affair. Afterwards, Platen remained in exile in Italy. In addition to this conflict, Heine supported the July Revolution of 1830, which made his harsh criticism, sharp sarcasm, and excessive wit even more unpalatable and threatening to the German authorities. As a result his published work was often censored. Heine eventually relocated to Paris where he remained until his death.

a singing sage, accessible to all poets German or otherwise. Ausländer reclaims the damaged femininity as embodied by the Loreley and her watery realm.

The importance of fluid imagery in the poems dedicated to Heine and Droste-Hülshoff, and in Ausländer's work generally, cannot escape the reader's attention. Rivers and seas characterize these poetic landscapes but also possess other special meanings. Water is foremost an agent of motion that enabled Ausländer's own movement across Europe to the United States and then back again. It also performs a second function as a reserve and protector of tradition although not specifically German tradition. The Loreley oversees this lineage from her solitary perch upon the cliff. This authoritative and sometimes menacing image is transformed into the would-be maenad who pines for freedom from her tower in a poem called "Am Turme" (1842) by Droste-Hülshoff:

> Ich steh' auf hohem Balkone am Turm,
> umstrichen vom schreienden Stare,
> und lass' gleich einer Mänade den Sturm
> mir wühlen im flatternden Haare;
> o wilder Geselle, o toller Fant,
> ich möchte dich kräftig umschlingen,
> und, Sehne an Sehne, zwei Schritte vom Rand
> auf Tod und Leben dann ringen… (1-8)

She is secure in her tower but lonely, all too aware of the boundaries imposed upon her by social convention. Additionally, the tower is a traditional motif in Romantic literature as a place of isolation and contemplation; as such it becomes an anchor for the poetic subject, a vantage point from where all of time, past and future, can be surveyed.[152] It is also a point of identification. The tower, unlike the river, is fixed and is therefore an important point of reference from which a lifetime and a landscape can be surveyed.

[152] For an interesting discussion of the tower image see: Theodore Ziolkowski, *The View from the Tower: Origins of the Antimodernist Image* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1998).

Droste-Hülshoff and Heine shared this vantage point from above, both overseeing scenes of nature and exploring the inner landscape. Often, water is what they see – literally and metaphorically. Water, too, is one of the hallmarks of Ausländer's landscape poetry, especially the nature of rivers. Rivers are symbolic features of the cities and countries they occupy. Ausländer wrote an "Autobiographie in Flüssen" (1966),[153] which begins: "Auf vielen Flüssen / meine Jahre gefahren" (1-2). In this poem the rivers become synonymous with the countries they occupy, often also exemplifying her experience in these places. The Pruth represents her homeland, Bukovina; the Danube, Vienna; the Mississippi and the Hudson, for Minnesota and New York, respectively; and lastly, the Rhine, for Germany. Typically in poetry, rivers stand for passing time, invisible powers under the surface, an obstacle to be overcome, or a threshold to be crossed. In Ausländer's lyrics, they are also reservoirs of cultural memory and a slippery medium that permits the subject to move with ease. This movement is not just physical but also metaphysical. The poet is able to slide between the waking and sleeping worlds into the water to draw from its vast resources. Water is also a primeval fluid, maternal and amniotic with a long history in not just lyric, but in related forms of story-telling such as myth and legend. These myths include those of the origins of the world itself, a topic I will examine later. Ausländer altered the meaning of this symbol to suit her needs, ultimately shaping it into something intensely personal. For example "Im Zelt" (1975):[154]

> In den Rhein
> werf ich die ausgegrabenen
> Wurzeln des Pruth
> da schwimmt mein Haus (4-7)

[153] Ausländer, *Hügel / aus Äther / unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975*, 15.

[154] Ibid., 258.

Home for Ausländer is found in the moving water of these rivers as well as in the flow of poetic language. It is not solely a matter of physical place, Bukovina versus Düsseldorf, but additionally a matter of origins. Ausländer grew up steeped in a German tradition of literature and philosophy. The Rhine represents both of these origins. Water also occupies a prominent place in the poems dedicated to Heine and Droste-Hülshoff and when taken together, water and myth contribute to a more nuanced and complex reading of these works.

The rivers named in Ausländer's poetry bear significance not only to her own personal narrative but are also national symbols. The Rhine, in particular, bears an important relationship to German national identity and the founding myths with which it is enmeshed. The tradition of the *Rheinromantik* began for political reasons: "Die deutsche Rheinromantik wurde wesentlich gefördert durch die napoleonischen Kriege mit denen der Rhein – der freie deutsche Rhein – nationalen Symbolcharakter erhielt und die Rheinlandschaft zur alten deutschen Landschaft par excellence erhoben wurde."[155] During this revolutionary time, the Rhine landscape came to be associated with German national identity and a pure German lineage against the backdrop of attack, invasion, and contamination by foreign, especially French, elements. It was a natural border and protector of Germany. The Rhine transformed into more than a simple geographical feature to be cherished and revered; its flowing waters became a metaphor for the unbroken tradition of German culture and language.

Bernard Dieterle examines many types of art that focus on the Rhine, including the myth of the Loreley which has assumed an almost legendary status in German literature. Dieterle explains how this elevated status affects a reading of this work:

[155] Bernard Dieterle, "Der Rhein – Landschaft, Kultur, Literatur," *KulturPoetik*. 1, no.1 (2001): 96-113.

> Als solcher lässt sich die Mythisierung oder die Trivialisierung des Rheins zum romantischen Abzieh- und Stimmungsbild nur insofern charakterisieren, als die Naturalisierung in der Tat zu seiner Wirkungsträchtigkeit gehört. Naturalisierung bedeutet, dass eine kulturelle Hervorbringung – also hier die Lorelei – als Naturprodukt erfahren wird, dass also ein Gedicht von Heine als Naturpoesie (im Sinne der Gebrüder Grimm) konsumiert wird.[156]

The nature poetry to which Dieterle refers is the tradition of folktales that Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected. Although these tales were collected from educated elite, it was the common people who were thought to be the true carriers of these stories. Because they worked the land, they were closer to nature and the divine source of the stories, an aspect I will come to shortly. Dieterle's elucidation combines several definitions of the word "naturalization" although he overlooks the relevance of several of them. The first definition of importance is political, for it admits citizenship. This would generally mean that the subject at hand has met sufficient criteria in order to obtain the rights of a national, which includes at least a bit of assimilation to, and therefore a certain familiarity with, a non-native culture. "Loreley" has become evocative of all German literature – a symbol for the German canon and culture—without consideration of its author or the influences and motives that may have originally shaped its invention. A second definition is linguistic, meaning to introduce into the vernacular or otherwise common usage. "Loreley" has become so common as to have infiltrated the popular cultural subconscious. Poems such as Guillaume Apollinaire's "La Loreley" (1904), Paul Celan's "Todesfuge" (1948),[157] and Sylvia Plath's "Lorelei" (1960) are evidence of the Loreley's ongoing influence

[156] Ibid., 104.

[157] Paul Celan, "Todesfuge," in *Die Hand voller Stunden: Gedichte*, ed. Michael Krüger (Munich: DTV, 1991), 31: The "golden" hair is reminiscent of the long, blonde locks of Loreley, although here associated with the name Margarete, a name that appears in Goethe's *Faust I*. The gold is often contrasted with the color black, or with ash, colors to be associated with the death of the Jews in the camps during World War II at the hands of the fair-haired Germans.
"Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken sie abends
wir trinken sie mittags und morgens wir trinken sie nachts

on diverse poets. "Loreley" has broken into the vernacular of many languages. Naturalization is also a botanical process, with significant metaphoric potential, meaning to become established as if a native. This definition perhaps best describes the circumstances of the "Loreley" as written by Heine and continued by others, who have created and perpetuated her story as part of the German cultural landscape. It is also true for the folktales gathered by the Brothers Grimm and their own, particularly Wilhelm Grimm's, discourse about the tales.[158]

The definition of naturalization that Dieterle most directly invokes is "to bring into conformity with nature." The story of the mythological character of "Loreley" is bound to its location in nature as it is named for the cliffs, the "murmuring rocks," where the poem takes place. Heine's poem represents simplicity akin to the simplicity striven for in the Grimm's fairy tales. The Grimms tried to capture the essence of a simpler time in which humankind was less corrupted and closer to nature and God:

> These tales that were not the Grimms' tales—that is, all the tales in their corpus were not theirs and were not even the property of the informants—fascinated the Brothers, and they felt that the unique qualities of the tales ultimately came from some divine source. They also believed that the common people were the carriers of these narratives. This is the reason why they insisted on their purity while rewriting or even censoring them so that the stories would illuminate and enlighten readers. Moreover, to their credit, the Grimms brought diverse tales in dialogue with one another and let them "speak" different views within the corpus of their editions.[159]

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wir trinken und trinken
wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften da liegt man nicht eng
Ein Mann wohnt im Haus der spielt mit den Schlangen der schreibt
der schreibt wenn es dunkelt nach Deutschland
dein goldenes Haar Margarete" (1-8)

[158] For an useful examination of this discourse see: Isamitsu Murayama, *Poesie—Natur—Kinder: Die Brüder Grimm und ihre Idee einer "natürlichen Bildung" in den Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005).

[159] Jack Zipes, *Grimm Legacies: The Magic Spell of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2015), 18.

These tales were collected with the preservation of this purer lifestyle in mind and later rewritten in order to teach morality. This process of reinventing the tales to exemplify German culture or even a folk culture becomes ironic since they were neither strictly German nor were they collected from peasants. In a similar manner the "Loreley" utilizes Romantic motifs par excellence to mock a literary movement that has already become kitsch and stale. "Loreley" captured the Romantic image so well that its intended irony is often overlooked and is instead regarded with heartfelt nostalgia.

Heine's methods of seeing and incorporating nature in his work are quite unusual for his time. Heine had a different worldview as Walter Silz explained as early as in 1942:

> [Heine] sees things with his inward eye, rather than with that physical vision which brought to other poets the teeming richness of the outer world. For all his personal susceptibility to his environment, Heine's poetic world is not "naturhaft:" it has the brilliance and the unreality of dreams…He may start with a real person or situation, but from this he soon passes to those dream-visions with which he began and ended his career, and which run as a hidden stream all through it.[160]

Heine has an internalized version of the world – a modern world, given the priority of his visual sense. He uses an "internal eye" which transforms the seen world into something else, a dream and a poem, an element that becomes an integral part of the poet. This sentiment is not unlike the reciprocal relationship I described between the world and poet in the previous chapter. Like Ausländer's Jewish gypsy,[161] Heine was able to see and understand more profoundly the hidden language of the world. His work shares with Ausländer's an alternate reality in which poetry takes place, although he does not go as far as to assume the perspective of the non-human. Heine may see so deeply into the world that his poetry foregoes any naturalness whatsoever, i.e. it does

[160] Walter Silz, "Heine's Synaesthesia," *PMLA* 57, no. 2 (1942): 478.

[161] Jüdische Zigeunerin, see pages 95-98.

not appear to reflect an accurate image of the world as shared by other poets. This is not entirely true as nature becomes a poetic context for the negotiation of feelings:

> It has long been recognized that Heine's treatment of nature, so central to the nineteenth century lyric, is peculiar. He rarely describes nature plastically, realistically, but uses it as a background for something else: for human emotions and moods. He does not call us back to the harmony and organic health of nature as do the poets who write in the romantic tradition.[162]

However, the Romantic notion of experiment, as proposed by Novalis, suggests that there is no boundary between the observer and observed. Friedrich Schelling states: "Die Natur soll der sichtbare Geist, der Geist die unsichtbare Natur sein. *Hier* also, in der absoluten Identität des Geistes *in* uns und der Natur *außer* uns, muß sich das Problem, wie eine Natur außer uns möglich sei, auflösen."[163] The inner world and the outer world are parts of a single whole, indivisible from one another. It is then but a short jump for Heine to mediate human feelings with natural descriptions. These feelings have been projected onto nature by a Romantic subject and nature has become instead a medium for an internal landscape to be depicted. Natural features, especially water features, become metaphors for other objects. The Rhine, for example, which plays such a significant role in the "Loreley," is an important site of German identity and a stronghold of tradition, albeit one which has become contaminated. The river is also central to Silz' own description of Heine's vision – the stream that runs through his oeuvre. The river is not just a leitmotif to be found in the poetry itself but is also a metaphor for the German literary tradition and its transmission.

[162] Harry Steinhauer, "Heinrich Heine," *The Antioch Review* 16, no.4 (1956): 457.

[163] Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur, Werke,* Vol. 2. Zeno.org. (Leipzig: n.p. 1907), 151.

During Roman times the Rhine was considered to be the border of the civilized world; it was the edge of the Germanic frontier. The world beyond it remained a largely unexplored, lush wilderness. Parts of the Rhine were, however, more easily traversed than others and both the Romans and Germanic tribes eventually breeched its shores, establishing cities and kingdoms on both sides. The Rhine became the backdrop for Medieval Legend such as the *Nibelungenlied*; the site of Siegfried's dragon slaying and the location of Niebelungen's sunken treasure. The river became a historically successful trade route and was often a line of contention during wartime. By the tenth century it was located within the Holy Roman Empire. After the Thirty Years War (1618-48), the Rhine fell to France. Attempted rule of the Rhine region by French leaders became a catalyst for developing German nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Elements of the Romantic movement are generally viewed as being nationalistic in nature and specific works, "Loreley" among them, are believed to be emblematic of this movement. Other works such as "Die Wacht am Rhein" (1840) by Max Schneckenburger and Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1876) symbolize the solidifying German cultural identity. After World War I, the Rhineland was occupied by Allied Forces as per the Treaty of Versailles. The momentum caused by continued resentment created by the near continual occupation of this area by foreign forces may have helped Hitler's later rise to power.

Loreley itself is most concretely a rock located 120 meters above the narrowest point of the Rhine Gorge, where many boating accidents have occurred due to heavy currents and rocky terrain. The "Loreley" as a figure first emerged in Clemens Brentano's "Zu Bacharach am Rhein" (1801) and is of his own invention. Heinrich Heine appropriated "Loreley"[164] for his ironic poem in 1824, which was later set to music by Friedrich Silcher in 1837:

[164] Heinrich Heine, "Die Loreley," in *Heinrich Heine Sämtliche Gedichte in zeitlicher Folge*, ed. Klaus Briegleb, (Frankfurt a.M. and Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1994), 164.

Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten,
Daß ich so traurig bin;
Ein Märchen aus alten Zeiten,
Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn.

Die Luft ist kühl und es dunkelt,
Und ruhig fließt der Rhein;
Der Gipfel des Berges funkelt
Im Abendsonnenschein.

Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet
Dort oben wunderbar,
Ihr goldnes Geschmeide blitzet,
Sie kämmt ihr goldnes Haar.

Sie kämmt es mit goldnem Kamme,
Und singt ein Lied dabey;
Das hat eine wundersame,
Gewaltige Melodey.

Den Schiffer, im kleinen Schiffe,
Ergreift es mit wildem Weh;
Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe,
Er schaut nur hinauf in die Höh'.

Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen
Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn;
Und das hat mit ihrem Singen
Die Loreley getan.

A fisherman approaches the Loreley and becomes enchanted by the singing emanating from atop the cliff. He believes he sees a beautiful woman combing her long blonde hair in the evening sunlight. The fisherman becomes so distracted by this sight as to overlook the rocks and strong currents below, which destroy the small vessel and its lone passenger. The irony begins in the first stanza, as the tale refers to itself as a "Märchen aus alten Zeiten" (3), alluding quite directly to the overused motifs that follow with a romantically predictable outcome. Irony is inherently

subversive and literary movements and genres that find themselves as the object of such ridicule are already, metaphorically speaking, on the rocks.

This type of commentary extends well beyond literary production and into the realm of political thought and action of the times. The Romantic worldview was partially a knee-jerk reaction to the sterility of the Enlightenment. It sought to reunite man with nature as parts of a single whole. To achieve this, the Romantics staged both a return to the past, to the *Volk*, and their simple beliefs. The beliefs of the common people were often steeped in natural mysticism and religion, especially Catholicism, that rejected any scientific thought that might impinge on God's, or the Church's, authority. This reverence for myth and rejection of rational thought left the Germans sorely unprepared for the deluge of political upheavals of the nineteenth century, including the French Revolution. The fisherman is representative of the German people, who become so distracted by the song of the Loreley as to drown amidst the rocky political circumstances surrounding them.

Origins

Water precedes the creation of land in many myths on the origins of the world – the amniotic fluid of all creation. So essential is this element that it has become embedded in the psyche of the poets themselves:

> In seinen Studienjahren hat Heine in Bonn beides kennengelernt: das literarische Rheinlied und eine Emphase für Deutschland, die dann später immer mehr politisch andere Züge angenommen hat, kritische, demokratische und soziale. Das literarische Rheinlied blieb für ihn von ungebrochener Dauer. Bis zu seinem Lebensende hält er an einem romantischen Rheinbild fest, über die nationale Auseinandersetzung hinaus. Das Rheinlied wird bei ihm zum Liebeslied, spielerisch einfach, voller Klischees, aber schön, wie bei Eichendorff.[165]

[165] Ibid., 88. Is this Briegleb?

Despite the alienation that Heine experienced personally and politically, the romantic Rhine as a German symbol was an image that he continued to cherish despite its kitschy reputation. In all these instances the enchantment of the water exerts an essential and long lasting influence over the poet, often in spite of prevailing social circumstances or overwhelming physical distance. These watery images are worked out and over again poetically, captivating the reader.

The importance of the Rhine river landscape to Heine makes the allegation that his work is not "naturhaft" debatable. The distinctly German nature or naturalness that the Brothers Grimm had in mind when they collected their folktales also needs to be considered. The myth-like quality of both the "Loreley" setting and the style of its narration place it closer to nature and the common people. The Grimms used the metaphor of tributaries joining to produce a much larger river to describe the transmission of folk tales. The preface to the second volume of the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1814) states:

> Nichts ist bewährender und zugleich sicherer, als was aus zweien Quellen wieder zusammenfließt, die früh voneinander getrennt, in eignem Bette gegangen sind; in diesen Volks-Märchen liegt lauter urdeutscher Mythus, den man für verloren gehalten, und wir sind fest überzeugt, will man noch jetzt in allen gesegneten Theilen unseres Vaterlandes suchen, es werden auf diesem Wege ungeachtete Schätze sich in ungeglaubte verwandeln und die Wissenschaft von dem Ursprung unserer Poesie gründen helfen.[166]

The Grimms believed that this "flow" of tales was an uninterrupted current from the original source of Germanic poetry. Although they recognized that all cultures shared similar myths, it is not suggested in this citation that the tales appearing in their collection have experienced any

[166] Jakob und Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen. 2 Bände*, Band 2 (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung 1812/15), 6-7.

kind of non-German contamination.[167] Rather the tributaries referred to here are all German, even if their specific accents varied. Fluid imagery is important in works by Heine as well, including "Der Rabbi von Bacharach" (1840). Of particular interest to my analysis is the scene of the rabbi and his wife in flight upon the Rhine. In this scene the rabbi's wife, Sara, experiences the words and melodies of traditional German folk tales mixing with biblical stories emanating from the depths of the river:

> Because *Rabbi* depicts the threat not only to the perpetuation of folkloric heritage, but to the very existence of the Jews of Bacharach in such a graphic manner, it is all the more remarkable that Heine's narrative at the same time explores a radically different view of folktales: he shows their lines of transmission as defying confinement within any narrowly defined community, reveals their permeability and openness to hybridization with other folktale traditions, and indeed emphasizes that they are always already contaminated by exogenous traditions. In doing so, Heine's *Rabbi* stages a powerful intervention in the Grimms' ideology of folkloric purity.[168]

The small rivers that join one another do not spring necessarily from Germanic sources but have flowed across many lands, picking up stones and wreckage along the way, before reaching one another in the German literary imagination. Over the course of their journey, these stories have already assumed many forms and will continue to change as the river's course is altered. The Rhine that passes through Heine's "Rabbi" is the Rhine that swallows the fisherman in the "Loreley." Not only does this river suggest the text's close relationship to nature but it also serves as the medium for transmission of the tales. These tales, the Grimms were sure, can take on the form of poetry and indeed their Children's and Household Tales, which were published in two volumes for a scholarly audience between 1812 and 1815, included several poems. The idea

[167] Zipes, 2: Zipes argues that this distinction is an extraneous one.

[168] Elliot Schreiber, "Tainted Sources: The Subversion of the Grimms' Ideology of the Folktale in Heinrich Heine's 'Der Rabbi von Bacharach,'" *The German Quarterly* 78, no.1 (2005): 22-34.

of fluidity, including the flow of one genre to another, connotes a peculiar type of transient permanence and suggests the ease at which these texts are able to adapt to new environments and influences – as well as the inherent danger in doing so. While the water often provides a safe haven, it is also capable of producing wreckage-inducing illusions, which can contaminate and destroy the audience the tales are intended to entertain and indoctrinate.

Additionally, the way in which the secondary texts communicate the transmission and development of the Grimms' tales also reflects a fluid agency:

> Given the Grimms' great erudition and aesthetic concerns…that the tales in all the editions need to be considered as a collective whole because these stories, according to the Grimms, originated in antiquity and continued to be formed and reformed in a flowing process of retelling and remaking that enabled words to come alive and remain alive as part of the popular cultural memory.[169]

Even modern day scholars cannot escape the use of fluid imagery and natural metaphors to describe the transmission of these tales and of all texts more generally. This suggestion indicates that all texts naturally flow from a source and are in some manner altered downstream. Indeed, all secondary literature may be viewed as small tributaries flowing away from the primary text to join and diverge from a myriad of other discourses. In this case, the flow springs from some primal source and is continually renewed by transformation and change – not corrupted by it. This citation also suggests that the Grimms' collection of tales be considered an organic whole, which continually thrives, never reaching completion. All these texts, whether they are poetry, folktales, or academic discourses, form their own kind of *Universalpoesie* that replicates the particular essence of the "nature" and time from which they sprung.

The Grimms themselves were already building on a tradition. A collection of folktales by Clemens Brentano (1788-1842) and Achim von Arnim (1781-1831) preceded that of the

[169] Zipes, 6.

Grimms. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* appeared in three volumes between the years of 1803 and 1807. The Grimms would later share their budding collection with Brentano in 1810, although he would not use the material for any of his own projects. The Loreley, or "Lore-Lay," however, was not part of either of these collections but part of an original work by Brentano. The poem "Lore-Lay" appears within the text of his novel, *Godwi.* In Brentano's version Lore-Lay first appears as a sorceress but a penitent one. Like Heine's Loreley, she is found on the Rhine:

> Zu Bacharach am Rheine
> wohnt' eine Zauberin,
> die war so schön und feine
> und riß viel Herzen hin. (1-4)

Every man who looks upon her is lost. One day she encounters a bishop, who also becomes enamored with her, but who nevertheless agrees to help her become Christian as she does not wish to be damned. He sends for three knights who shall accompany Lore-Lay to a convent but as they are descending the cliff over the Rhine, Lore-Lay spots the image of her long lost lover:

> Die Jungfrau sprach: "Da gehet
> ein Schifflein auf dem Rhein,
> der in dem Schifflein stehet,
> der soll mein Liebster sein!
>
> Mein Herz wird mir so munter,
> er muß mein Liebster sein!"
> Da lehnt sie sich hinunter
> und stürzet in den Rhein. (105-113)

In this version, it is Lore-Lay who leaps to her death toward the fisherman. She is an imperfect individual, who hopelessly strives for an unreachable goal. The metaphorical value of this outcome is not as critical or cynical as that of Heine's version, which appeared 23 years later.

The high status of Heine's "Loreley" among German readers from the past to the present day becomes problematic when one considers Heine's own national and religious identity. Although a gifted German-language poet, Heine's character was suspect not just for his unconventional political views but for his Jewishness as well. He wrote the "Loreley" in the wake of French-German upheaval and the undoing by the Germans of the Napoleonic codes that endowed Jews the same rights as other citizens. From 1831 onward, Heine no longer resided in Germany for political reasons, living in exile in Paris until his death. There he married a French woman, who understood no German, and observed the events transpiring in Germany from a distance. For the reasons only briefly alluded to here, the story of the "Loreley" becomes a sad one, feeding Ausländer's interest in it:

> Sein Wort sollte nur "singen" und damit heilen und glücklich machen, muss jetzt aber gemäß der neuen notwendigen Lesart seiner Botschaften die bittere Wahrheit verkünden und prophetische Drohungen ausstoßen, weil die Heimat sich von ihm, wenn auch für eine gewisse dunkle Zeit, abgewendet hat. Damit berührt Rose Ausländer den neuralgischen Punkt auch für das eigene Schreiben: den ungewollten Heimatverlust, ein Thema, das ihr Leben und Schreiben stets grundiert und hohe metaphorische Bedeutung gewonnen hat.[170]

Despite the estrangement that Heine experienced, his poetic expression ought to remain joyful, able to both sing and heal not just his audience but also the poet. This wish was doomed to remain unfulfilled. The problem of alienation complicates Heine's sense of identity, as well as those of many other German Jewish writers, particularly those after World War II. What is called an "ungewollte[r] Heimatverlust" is the resulting paradox of these writers, who are able to find no other home than in their language – a language which causes estrangement between them and all notion of home or belonging. Having a language that remains unmatched to ethnic or

[170] Joseph A. Kruse, "Heimatverlust. Die Lyrikerin Rose Ausländer (1901-1988)," in *Manche Worte Strahlen: Deutsch-jüdische Dichterinnen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Norbert Oellers (Erkelenz: Altius, 1999), 62.

territorial status creates a permanent outsider status for those who speak it, wherever they go, particularly for a Jewish writer who is already an outsider in his own linguistic sphere. He can be at home nowhere. Heine attempted assimilation by conversion which only complicated his relationship to the Jewish community and garnered him no additional acceptance in the German one. Like Heine's, Ausländer's status was similarly complicated, calling German her native language, although this language was alien in the region in which she was raised. She was a born outsider in linguistic, ethnic, and religious terms.

Although Ausländer used many rivers in her work as a reminder of her vagabond condition, she, like Heine, contextualized the Rhine in particular as a linguistic and cultural home despite her outsider status. The Rhine's metaphorical significance as her *Heimat* in these terms supersedes its over-used and overly-sentimental reputation that had developed even during Heine's lifetime:

> Der Rhein ist viel besungen worden, vor allem im vorigen Jahrhundert. Der Rhein, insbesondere der mittlere Rhein, wurde zu einer Landschaft der Romantik, und damit wurde auch Deutschland romantisiert: der Rhein als Sagen umwobener Flusslauf mit dem versunkenen Nibelungenhort, den Rheintöchtern, der Rhein zwischen Bergen, Rebenhügeln, Häuserfronten und hochgelegenen Burgen…Eine ganze Summe von Bildern und Metaphern haben sich angesammelt.[171]

The Rhine is a veritable reservoir of German literary tradition which beckons the reader and poet even to the present day. The literary figures from long ago thrive under its waters and continue to populate its depths as their stories are frequently reimagined.

[171] Wilhelm Gössmann, *Heine und die Droste: Eine literarische Zeitgenossenschaft* (Düsseldorf: Grupello, 1996), 85.

In "Lorelei"[172] (1982) the first of two poems that focus on Heine and the Loreley, Ausländer restates the origin of the siren's song. Unlike Heine's version, this poem is not the kitschy story of a tragic encounter between a fisherman and the unreachable woman upon a cliff. In the newer version the Loreley sings from beneath the Rhine. The fisherman-poet is in no danger from her but rather becomes the messenger who will propagate her song:

> Unter dem Rhein
> singt die Lorelei
>
> Fische
> verschweigen das Lied
>
> Ein hellhöriger Angler
> fängt es heraus
> schenkt es
>
> uns allen (1-11)

Instead of her traditional perch upon the cliffs overlooking the river, the Lorelei now dwells beneath the water, hidden from all passers-by and heard only by the fishes – silent witnesses to her secret song. Like Sara, the Rabbi's wife in Heine's later prose transformation of his poem "Loreley" into a part of "Der Rabbi von Bacharach," the fisherman is able to hear the song emanating from the water but to him it is clear and concrete. The clear-hearing fisherman is none other than Heine, the well-known singer of the myth, who is able to draw the lost song out of the depths and return it to the world in a revitalized form. The Lorelei's song, in Ausländer's reading of Heine's poem, had never actually been lost but parts of it had been suppressed for a time under the currents of Anti-Semitism. The true singer, as it were, was silenced although his song

[172] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 375: Rose Ausländer uses an alternate spelling of "Lorelei" instead of "Loreley" or "Lore-Ley" that are both based on historical conditions. In this chapter I will use "Loreley" to designate Heine's poem and the figure within them. I will use the alternate spelling, "Lorelei" when referring to Ausländer's work.

continued to flow quietly through the subconscious of the German people, the reticent fishes. Ausländer reminds the reader that this song is a gift to us all in her reprisal of Heine's role as storyteller.

In another poem that is dedicated to Heine, the poet is transformed into a song and the Lorelei assumes a darker character, which has been influenced by historical conditions. Instead of a cherished mythical figure (although dangerous), she comes to represent all the most sinister qualities of the German nation. The witch, "die Hexe," is a threatening character who uses Heine's words against him. Instead of an enchanting song, the words become a curse, casting him out of the fatherland forever:

Heinrich Heine[173] (1974)

Er war ein Lied
seines Landes

jener Hexe
mit goldenem Haar

die sein Vaterlandswort
verwandelte
in einen Fluch (1-9)

The magic in this poem begins with the title. Heine has already undergone a transformation from a poet into the poem that bears his name. The first two lines of the poem verify this metamorphosis but, with specificity, he is the poet of his country whose name is cleverly avoided but suggested in the following lines. The golden-haired Loreley appears in the second stanza, distorted and possessing power to transform with the power of the poet's own words. She makes

[173] Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975,* 139.

the poet disappear from his country and for a time, its history. However, she is not fated to remain so sinister.

In "Freude I" (1979),[174] a third poem that picks up the topic of identity by referring to Heine, the Lorelei undergoes yet another, more benevolent conversion. The childlike speaker asserts that Lorelei comes to her bedside and combs her black hair as she sings, raising the child's spirits. Her song is productive and comforting to the speaker rather than destructive as before. Instead of the indifferent or menacing sea spirit who sings a siren song of death, this Lorelei is tender and cares for the child who is distinctly unlike her in appearance. The child, likely an image of Ausländer herself, has black hair unlike the Lorelei's golden hair but nevertheless receives the same attention and inspiration from the symbol, which elevates her to a poetic high point. This short poem is an ode to the myth itself and the role that the Loreley figure played in Ausländer's poetic development:

> Wenn ich mich freue
> Kommt die Lorelei
> an mein Bett
> Kämmt mein Ebenholzhaar
> und singt mich
> bis an den Gipfel (1-6)

The benevolent image of "Freude" is to be directly contrasted to the threatening image in "Heinrich Heine." The dark image of the Loreley connotes the Anti-Semitism that characterizes Ausländer's experience in exile and in the Czernowitz ghetto. It is this experience of alienation and exile because of faith that she shares with Heine. The Loreley as canonized embodied a distinctly "Aryan" demeanor – blonde and pure with her golden comb – a product of Germanic imagination. Although Heine had intended his poem to be an ironic tribute to Romanticism, its

[174] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 271.

contents are darkly foreboding. Ausländer acknowledges this tainted past and reclaims the Lorelei as a figure benevolent and nurturing towards all people.

The Siren Annette Droste-Hülshoff

Water is a metaphor not just for the depths and continuity of tradition but also how that tradition finds itself within the body of the poet. Just as Heine transformed the exterior landscapes into projections of an inner world, Annette Droste-Hülshoff manipulated bodies of water into contemplative mirrors, scrying pools of the soul. The process by which the external landscapes become internalized becomes apparent in Droste-Hülshoff's poems about Lake Constance on the Rhine: "Am Bodensee, wie ihn die Droste in ihren Dichtungen aufscheinen lässt, kann man erleben, in welcher Weise ein Stück Landschaft als Großmetapher in den Prozess der poetischen Verwandlung gelangt: von der alltäglichen Erfahrung über mehrere Stufen der Fiktionalisierung bis hin zu einem Inbild von Erinnerung und Seelenerkundung."[175] The landscape undergoes several transformations before it is internalized but it never fully disappears for this poet situated between Romanticism and Realism: "Sie intensiviert, arbeitet bestimmte Eindrücke überdeutlich heraus, sucht nach Vergleichen, ohne jedoch die vorgegebene Realität aus dem Auge zu verlieren. Sie poetisiert."[176] The poetic viewpoint of the author is imposed onto the outside world through her special language. In the process of comparison by analogy and metaphor something interesting occurs. It is not just that unlike objects are brought arbitrarily

[175] Gössmann, 115.

[176] Ibid., 117.

together for poetic purposes, but this bringing together reminds the poet and reader alike of their divine origins:

> Metaphern bezeichnen das, was dem Menschen grundsätzlich mangelt: Er wird nie so groß sein wie der Himmel, so fest wie ein Fels, so rein wie eine Lilie. Immerhin haben die Götter ihm gestattet, in einer irdischen Welt zu leben, in der sich Spuren der göttlichen finden lassen. Die metaphorische Sprache der Gedichte will die Menschen an diese Gnade erinnern.[177]

The purpose of the poet using metaphors, especially concerning the natural world, is to recall his divine origins. By poeticizing, Droste-Hülshoff brings the internal and external worlds back into harmony. Likewise, this spiritual essence is echoed in Grimms' introductions and the stylized rewriting of their tales.

Rivers and seas occupy a psychic realm as well as a physical one. Their currents are symbolic for the cultural transmission of texts but the depths of these entities also signify the texts' psychological reach. The mode in which Heine and Droste-Hülshoff depict their landscapes, as projections of inner subjectivity, emphasizes the interconnectedness of the human spirit with the physical earth, or as creations that are somewhere between the purely divine and the purely animal. Droste-Hülshoff's reflective waters are designed to focus on what is hidden below the surface. These underlying and indistinct figures, whether hidden desires or repressed memories, are no longer accessible by conventional means:

> Auch hier geht es einfach nicht um etwas Allgemeines: Seele des Menschen wie gleichst du dem Wasser. Es ist die Seele der Dichterin selbst, die den Vergleich und Klärung der emotionalen Kräfte, eine Konfrontation mit psychischen Tiefenschichten, kann sie Erwartungen und Sehnsüchte freilegen, die von der Welt des Verstandes unterdrückt und gehemmt sind.[178]

[177] Schlaffer, 57.

[178] Gössmann, 119.

The waters of these poems are meant to wash away the external barriers which obscure the content beneath. The water's murky depths, like the unconscious mind, disclose only partial histories and truths, disguising the vast reservoir of memory available there. These partial profundities are only revealed to the poet through the act of writing; writing which has been bound to the image of water from the earliest times. Water as a poetic trope is able to help reconcile the diverse facets of a problematic identity.

One need not be Jewish to experience alienation in German society – just a woman who chooses not to conform to traditional standards of living. Annette Droste-Hülshoff was born into an aristocratic Catholic family and was extremely well educated. She was precocious and began writing at an early age despite ever receiving support for her talents. She also appears to have been an intensely private person, although she may have been driven into this self-imposed solitude by some difficult events early in her life. As a young woman, Droste-Hülshoff fell in love with a Protestant man of a lower class. Her family, as expected, disapproved but her aunt took it upon herself to discourage the young Annette entirely from any romantic affairs by staging an intrigue involving another aristocratic young man. The course of events was designed to expose the impropriety of the young poet and may have damaged her marriage prospects for life once exposed. It remains unclear whether her aunt staged the intrigue as some kind of punishment for selecting the wrong kind of man or out of sheer jealously, as her aunt was actually four years Annette's junior. It is also likely that Droste-Hülshoff's intellectuality and propensity for writing were considered unseemly for a woman at this time. She simply needed to be put in her place. Much later in her life, Droste-Hülshoff met Levin Schücking, a much younger man who became her muse. She was most prolific during the years of their friendship

although it would not last. She would never marry or have any children. Her poetry reflects her keen observation of the world and her outsider status in it.

Twice Annette Droste-Hülshoff functions centrally for Rose Ausländer. In both instances the Loreley theme is the initial bond. This powerful woman ultimately assumes the status of an oracle or sage for Rose who is endowed with certain divinely given gifts, particularly of clear sightedness. Her insights initiate the reader into a poetic way of thinking. In poems dedicated to Droste-Hülshoff Ausländer identifies her with the positive image of the Lorelei in "Freude I." Droste-Hülshoff was among the German poets whom Ausländer admired and among the only available role models for a woman poet. "Droste I" (1981)[179] begins by alluding to Loreley's blond hair, inviting the reader to remember this hair as it crowns her forehead. The domed formed head is an exaggeration meant to call to mind the image of a being greater than a mere human. It is also evocative of the heavens, a kind of biological planetarium, especially given the phonetic similarity between *Stirn* and *Stern*, the constellations of which Ausländer was so fond:

> Gedenk der Locken
> blond war ihr Haar
> über gewölbter Stirn (1-3)

The second stanza directly indicates a connection between Loreley and Droste-Hülshoff. The connection to the heavens is made stronger by the compound noun, "Himmelsstirnwölbung" suggesting the heights to which the poet can aspire. The "innere Lorelei" is evidence of an internal muse who sings from the heart of the poet. The Loreley's voice in this case is only audible to the poet; unlike the boatsman, however, she is not doomed to perish. Those who sleep are references to the perished boatsman or to the sleepers who have access to the water, as noted

[179] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 132.

in the previous poems. The time-line in this stanza begins in an unspecified past but continues to the present and is indeed, always present:

> Unter hoher Himmelsstirnwölbung
> sang sie
> innere Lorelei
> keinem Schiffer
> sich selber
> und dir der damals noch schlief
> und dir der heute noch schläft
> sang sie (5-12)

The next stanza begins with an apostrophe to "du," likely Droste-Hülshoff, in her tower from "Am Turme." She must awaken in order to hear the song salvaged during sleep from Loreley. The ravens and fog form a dark romantic image of the tower juxtaposed with the lighter images of grapevines and trout. The fog creates a liminal state somewhere between wakefulness and sleep and also demonstrates a romantic influence, as the tower was a common romantic trope. The grapes are blond like the Loreley's hair, locks of the surrounding hills, characteristic of the viticulture of southern Germany. The grapes show the productivity that emerges from the liminal state, the dark soil, where the seeds were once planted. The fruit is now ready for harvest. Together these images construct the Rhine river landscape, home to the Loreley. The trout that populate the waters are here not the silent witnesses to the song as they were in the poem dedicated to Heine but rather they dance in celebration of the song and so should be allowed to live:

> Erwachst du
> wirst du sie hören
> im Turm
> wenn die Raben flattern
> wirst sie hören
> im Nebel

wenn die Rebe blond wird
wirr ihr Haar
unter dem Stein
die Forelle tanzt (lass sie leben) (14-23)

Ausländer seems to have a well-established relationship with the fish as she mentions them in other poems. For example in "Wann beginnt" (1979/80)[180] she writes: "Mit den Fischen / versteh ich mich gut / ich warne die Forelle / vor dem Menschen" (25-28). The storm of Droste-Hülshoff's "Am Turme" still rages around the tower but reveals its colors as poetry hewn from stone. The poem that emerges from the storm is the rainbow, somewhat quieter than the storm but possessing its own voice. The poet casts her song inland from the tower for those who need to hear it. Droste-Hülshoff's poetry could be critical of social convention, religion, and politics so the reasons her work should be shared are not necessarily kind. The stones of this stanza may represent the resistance that Droste-Hülshoff encountered as a female poet of the nineteenth century as the next lines urge the poet to forget her place:

Regen und Wind
um den Turm
der Regenbogen wächst
in seine sieben Strophen
klirrende Strophen
steingehaun
vom Turm ins Land geschleudert
(traf dich kein Stein)
Vergiss die Forelle
im Wasserkristall
den Weinberg über dem See (25-35)

The poem continues with an invitation to remember Droste-Hülshoff and the Loreley. The blond hair is another reference to Loreley. In "Droste II" Ausländer identifies Droste-Hülshoff with an

[180] Rose Ausländer, *Deiner Stimme Schatten: Gedichte, kleine Prosa und Materialien aus dem Nachlaß,* ed. Helmut Braun (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 2007), 162.

oracle or sage of ancient times. The dark stone forms a third eye and acts as a mirror, not unlike the dark reflecting waters of her poetry.[181] It is also a reference to Droste-Hülshoff's own solitary character:

> Vergiss nicht
> blond war ihr Haar
> dunkler Diamant
> unter gewölbter Stirn (37-40)

The penultimate stanza alludes to the physical nature of poetry. The verses that emanate from the pen resemble a lasso that can be slung far inland. The stones are in this case words, spoken and written, carried on the poet's breath as well as inscribed upon the page:

> Verse
> ein Lasso aus klingenden Steinen
> von ihrem Atem
> ums Land geschlagen
> um dich der noch schlief (42-46)

The final lines suggest that the poet continues sleeping and a wish for her to avoid any burdens that may come to her as she dreams.

> Schläfst du
> traf dich kein Stein (48-49)

"Droste II" (1979/80)[182] was collected by Helmut Braun among Ausländer's work that remained unpublished after her death in a folder marked "1980." It was later determined that these poems were written between 1979 and 1980. "Droste II" is written in a more truncated style than

[181] Hille, 238: The poet Peter Hille described Else Lasker-Schüler with the following words, "Ihr Dichtgeist ist schwarzer Diamant, der in ihrer Stirn schneidet und wehetut," which likewise suggests a third eye making the poet receptive to mystical communications. I believe this has carried over into a description of the female poet in general.

[182] Ausländer, *Jeder Tropfen ein Tag: Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß: Gesamtregister*, 20.

"Droste I" and is more representative of Ausländer's mature poetic style. The poem begins with a reference to place and mood. The images of castles are images of Droste-Hülshoff's ancestral homes. Peace would come to Droste-Hülshoff only later in life when she was able to purchase her own home away from her family:

> Die Burg
> Burgfrieden
> mit der Zeit (1-3)

The next stanza describes Droste-Hülshoff's geographical origins on Lake Constance which is bordered by Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. Ausländer cleverly alludes to Droste-Hülshoff's perspective as well as the land where she found her footing and the waters in which she found her inspiration:

> Droste
> hier
> ihr Blick
> ihr Boden
> See zwischen Grenzen (5-9)

"Der Bodensee ist für die Droste zu einem poetischen Urerlebnis geworden."[183] Bodies of water become inner springs from which the poet continually draws, including Droste-Hülshoff. Lake Constance occupies an extensive portion of Droste-Hülshoff's poetic work, as do rivers in Ausländer's oeuvre, and the Rhine in Heine's poetic production beyond its ironic currents. Conversely, the tower is a space which allows a perspective unhindered by political boundaries and geographical limits that rivers sometimes become. It is a place of contemplation, for the freedom of thought. Ausländer refers to Droste as a witness of her times, a time in which

[183] Ibid., 118.

Germany was divided between those states allied with the French and those which were not. Language and literature are among the elements that can hold these opposing entities together for posterity's sake:

> Vom Turm
> ohne Grenzen
> ihr Ruf
> Zeuge der Zeit
> eint was entzweit (11-15)

The fourth stanza suggests a classical figure, one cast in bronze as a tribute to an oracle of the gods. From her lips, legends and poetry fall and are cast out to the sea to join with the other songs that are sunken there:

> Ihre Bronzelippe
> erzählt
> Sagen
> der Höh
> dem See (17-21)

The final lines of the poem indicate Droste-Hülshoff's special status. Her silver lips speak the truth that initiates her readers into the cult of poetry:

> Sein Silbermund
> weiht uns ein (23-24)

"Beute" (1979)[184] is about water as a source of real and poetic nourishment as told from the perspective of an experienced fisherman. The title is once again suggestive of Droste-Hülshoff's poem "Am Turme" as she speaks there of gathering her own "Beute." The poem begins realistically enough with the fisherman and his catch in the boat – a shark which will

[184] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 272.

become food for his waiting family. This quickly changes and takes on a mythological element. The sea god is also hungry and sends a storm replete with lightning to secure his own catch:

> Der schuppige Meergott
> ist hungrig
> Blitzzeichen
> Treffpunkt der Winde (5-9)

These lines are also a statement of the reciprocity of the poetic process. The work of one poet feeds another poet. The water becomes not only a reservoir but a stage – which devours – in which legend repeatedly plays itself out, providing the dreamer-poet with a never-ending supply of poetic fodder to be re-recorded for posterity. I will discuss this motif in depth later. The poetic speaker, as if stating a prophecy, remarks how the fisherman will never reach the port, because of the god's hunger:

> Glücklicher Fischer
> du und dein verendeter Hai
> werden den Port
> nicht erreichen
>
> Daheim glüht der Herd
> bald wird der Topf
> mit Tränen gefüllt
>
> Heimchen singen
> die Kinder in Schlaf (11-20)

At home the hearth is already aglow in anticipation of the fisherman's return with his catch – and who will soon be disappointed. This scene bears a certain resemblance to those places where fairy tales are traditionally told, suggesting that the preceding story could easily become just one of these tales. The housewife sings, eternally waiting, the children asleep in this otherwise idyllic

scene. All the while the clock "beats" itself to death, suggesting that the fisherman's own time has come to an end or more broadly, that his story is a timeless one:

> Die Kuckucksuhr
> schlägt die Zeit tot (22-23)

There is also the remaining question of what constitutes the "Beute" in this poem and for whom. The fisherman has a shark, the sea-god has the fisherman, and the poet has a tale.

It is this singularity and timelessness of this event, analogous to the story in Heine's poem, which imbues it with a mythical mood and legendary status, qualities it also shares with Ausländer's poetry:

> What also sets Heine's Lore-Ley manifestly from similar legendary or pseudolegendary figures is the fact that she is shown in "action" on one man only. It is *the* boatsman who is in the fairy tale and in Heine's mind. The uncertainty about the victim's fate, expressed in the last stanza, would carry no weight if the "fairy tale" related the shipwrecks of many men, if it were about a frequent evening happening on the Rhine, a routine shipwreck accompanied by music. The "I" sees only one man in the picture, and makes no generalization.[185]

The singularity of the event contributes to an archetypal effect to the story, an effect which carries over into Ausländer's poem about Heine as if *he* were a singular event. The tale of the Loreley is unattached to a specific event in time as a fanciful recollection of something singular, which happened long ago to a single man on an undetermined evening. The only fact of this tale that can be substantiated is its location along the Rhine, a detail which adds the aura of Romanticism and makes this tale specifically German. The golden haired maiden has become an icon profoundly enmeshed with German identity. She is a paradox, chaste and seductive, formative to the German identity but destructive to any outsider who dares venture near her. In

[185] Ignace Feuerlicht, "Heine's 'Lorelei': Legend, Literature, Life," *The German Quarterly* 53, no.1 (1980): 85.

this way the Loreley becomes metaphorical for the Jewish experience in Germany, for those who strived to assimilate but were doomed from the beginning by the siren's alluring song. The river itself transforms into a strange kind of protector. It is a medium by which the stranger can approach and observe but never fully embrace the woman on the cliff. The pure waters of the Rhine, however, then become contaminated with the wreckage of these outsiders, who, according to the mythological constructs in Ausländer's poetry, continue to reside in the water. Moreover, these sunken figures still have the ability to alter the flow of literary and cultural discourse from within.

The fluid myth of origins has roots in both religious and scientific discourse. At their heart, however, these religious tales often feature threatening female figures, which may be demonic in nature. Some of the earliest myths originate in Greek and Byzantine writings about a sea-dwelling she-demon responsible for migraines. This demon later becomes responsible for all of humankind's maladies and misfortunes, not the least of which includes the unexplained deaths of small children. It is here that the menacing female becomes conflated with the biblical figures of both the soulless Lilith and the whore of Babylon. It is the demonized figure of Lilith that later becomes blended with another demon, Abyzou, whose origins tie her directly to the primal seas. A. A. Barb clarifies this connection:

> It is one of those words which the Greeks borrowed and naturalized from the higher civilizations of the Near East, the Assyrian "Apsu" or Sumerian "Abzu," which in Sumerian mythology was the primeval Sea out of which the world was created, later corresponding to the Babylonian Tiamat or the Hebrew Tehom of the first chapter of Genesis, the "waters underneath the earth," both source of all rivers, lakes and seas, but also representing the Nether World and the realm of death.[186]

[186] A. A. Barb, "The Mermaid and the Devil's Grandmother: A Lecture,".*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 5.

This primary and singular source of all water and all creation also represents the world of the dead. Water is both a creative and destructive force, capable of giving and taking life. As a realm of the dead it is also a depository for the souls who have passed, or rather, for the past itself. It is through the transformation of this past from which the present springs. This kind of power can be frightening, especially when wielded by a female. The asexual Tiamat was later split into male and female entities, Tiamat remaining female and becoming the "evil mother" who was to be slain by another Babylonian god, Marduk. The splitting of Tiamat is echoed in the biblical story of Genesis, in the "splitting" of Adam to make Eve from his ribs and in Eve's own diminished character since she would ultimately be responsible for the Fall. These early myths suggest a close relationship between water, mortality, and the threatening feminine. The women in the water were the source of untold maladies and a danger to all mankind. Ausländer shapes her own mythology in which these symbols, water and woman, are reclaimed and redefined as nurturing and productive entities.

The Rhine River becomes a reservoir for the multitude of Germanic tales and legends which it has inspired. Loreley, the siren of the Rhine, is but one of the guardians of the mythical treasures sunken there. Many artists have become implicated in the poetic construction of this locale, including Heine and Droste-Hülshoff. Moreover, the popularity of figures like the Loreley has contributed to the literary riches submerged here. This literary stronghold is made up of not just characters of the Rhine landscape but is more broadly populated by historical, mythological, and fictional figures from all over the world. The examination of Ausländer's oeuvre as an aquatic mythology suggests that these many products of narration are at rest beneath the waters and become accessible to gifted individuals under specific circumstances. Artists and poets are able to access the reservoir in their sleep and communicate their findings to

a waking audience in their chosen mediums. This underwater realm is the realm of all sleepers as well as the dead. Early Christian mythology confirms that the dead were engaged in an unusual type of sleep: "How can we, whose outlook has been shaped by the discoveries of Freud, fail to take note of the identification by the early Christians of death with sleep, untroubled rest, and a secure sojourn in the maternal womb? In the view of those Christians, paradise before the resurrection meant the silent peace of the cozy nest provided by a pregnant woman."[187] The sleepers float in a primeval fluid waiting for awakening as if awaiting birth. Rainer Maria Rilke makes a similar assessment in *Die Aufzeichnung des Malte Laurids Brigge* conflating gestation with death: "Und was gab das den Frauen für eine wehmütige Schönheit, wenn sie schwanger waren und standen, und in ihrem großen Leib, auf welchem die schmalen Hände unwillkürlich liegen blieben, waren *zwei* Früchte: ein Kind und ein Tod."[188] It would seem that death accompanies us in sleep but this need not be a foreboding condition. Death precedes productivity and reward.

Death and the Fisherman

The next poem introduces key motifs of Ausländer's aquatic mythology, the boatman and death. "Der Kahn" (1978)[189] tells a different story about a meeting on a boat than the "Loreley." This poem directly suggests a connection between the water and the netherworld. An initial reading of this poem alludes to an encounter with death in which the river is the Lethe or the

[187] Jean Delameau, *History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition*, trans. Matthew O'Connell. (New York: Continuum, 1995), 35.

[188] Rilke, 19.

[189] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 116.

Styx instead of the Rhine. There is, however, another possible reading from a different liminal space. The first lines are expectant but ambiguous:

> Deiner Ankunft gewärtig
> mein Kahn
> kennt deinen Schatten (1-3)

The speaker is waiting for the arrival of someone he does not know. An interesting aspect of these lines that will continue in the poem is the lack of the control of the boatman-speaker. The boat and its crew are familiar with the mysterious "you" but he is not. This unknown visitor is never described but only appears as a shadow, a figure without any real substance such as the Grim Reaper. In the second stanza, an unseen force splits the water at a specific, magical nexus and the speaker loses all control:

> Wo das Wasser sich spaltet
> im Kahn geborgen
> überlaß dich den Rudern
> sie wissen den Weg (5-8)

Despite the loss of direct control the speaker is secure in the boat allowing the shadow to assume full control and direction of the boat. The last stanza is the most puzzling:

> Ich ziehe die Sonnenuhr auf
> sie liegt schon im Kahn
> zeigerbereit (10-12)

A sundial may be next to useless on a boat without direction, especially in the company of shadows. The speaker even adds that it is awaiting direction, for hands, for a point of reference. It also suggests the timelessness of the account just presented. It is as if this tale is told from the perspective of the fisherman who has already been lost to Loreley and retells his experience from

a liminal state. The other spirits of lost boatsmen reach out to him from the depths, issuing a warning about their collective fate – "they" who know the way because they too have been down this path. The song of the Loreley is perhaps as much a warning as a lure for these men, indicating that they approach a gateway from which there is no return. No one and nothing returns from the water unchanged.

The next poem "Struma" (1976)[190] describes a different kind of tragedy at sea based on an historical event. Although it does not directly refer to Heine or Droste-Hülshoff, it is one of a number of poems that build the fluid mythology at work in Ausländer's poetry. The individual mythology that is at work in these poems originate in the Heine poems, which form the core of Ausländer's poetic dialogue with her artistic ancestry on identity, "Heimat," and the magic of language. Described is not the fate of a single fisherman but a boatload of refugees. It begins in the wake of World War II with the tragedy of the MV Struma, a horrific chain of events that ultimately lead to the fatal sinking of the schooner. It is only one of the transformations that the aquatic mythology undergoes and results in some of the wreckage found beneath the murky cultural waters of the other poems. The MV Struma was a three-masted schooner that left Romania bound for Palestine carrying 800 Jewish refugees. The ship was detained in Istanbul in December 1941, towed to sea and set adrift by the Turks, where it was sunk by a Soviet submarine in February 1942. Phonetically the name resembles the German word for storm, *Sturm* as well as the word for a wide river, *Strom*. Etymologically the name originates from the Latin for tumor or goiter, *struere* to heap up – a meaningful but unfortunate association. More romantically, the name for the ship may have originated from the name of a Danish mermaid and it is the name of a river that flows through Bulgaria and Macedonia.

[190] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976,* 118.

The poem begins with a question. The poetic voice asks after a seagull, the ship's faithful guide until it sank. The seagull seems at first a positive sign, possessing the freedom to move without care over the ocean and to even draw its sustenance from it. It is only when the bird disappears that the ship is lost. Thus the seagull becomes an allusion to Coleridge's albatross in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

> At length did cross an Albatross,
> Thorough the fog it came;
> As if it had been a Christian soul,
> We hailed it in God's name. (78-81)
>
> …
>
> And a good south wind sprung up behind;
> The Albatross did follow,
> And every day, for food or play,
> Came to the mariner's hollo! (88-91)[191]

The mariner's ship is plagued by ice and poor weather until the bird appears. The albatross brings with it good fortune and warm winds. As soon as the poetic speaker shoots it with his cross-bow the ship becomes stuck in the doldrums. He realizes only after his mistake that the bird had been a good omen, a guardian sent to aid the ship in its travels. The misfortune of the *Struma* was not caused by anyone on-board – it is rather outsiders who have forsaken them. The poetic voice explains:

> Die Zeugen
> haben sich zurückgezogen
> im Wasser (5-7)

The witnesses have retreated into the water, or rather, pulled themselves back into it. The primeval waters that feed the rivers of the world and meet in the ocean have swallowed the 800

[191] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1847), 11.

victims of a violent historical act. These witnesses do not disappear without a trace but are rather transformed into unfortunate denizens of the depths, who now reside on a curious island upon the sea floor:

> Es heißt sie wohnen
> auf einer Insel
> die schläft bei den
> Tiefseefischen (11-14)

These passengers, like those on the riverbed in Heine's song, have been relegated to the dark seabed of unconsciousness, further obscured by the relentless passing of time – pressed and repressed in an extreme and distinct manner, becoming the silent fish that hear the echoes of Loreley and everything else that is sunken in this place. The last stanza suggests that this poem is not a lament to a historical injustice but a more personal event. The speaker indicates:

> Ich höre nicht auf
> an dich zu denken (17-18)

This two-line statement is set apart from the body of the poem indicating that there is real distance between the event of the poem and the speaker's position. Since Ausländer's poems are often biographical it may be that she knew some of the victims involved. More likely though is that she identified with the fate of the victims and saw this event as an inescapable part of her personal story – aimlessly adrift in the immense ocean, perpetually homeless, in constant danger of attack and the horrors of sinking into oblivion.

The next poem diverges from the historical context and returns entirely to the mythical construct. "Schlaffarben" (1979)[192] alludes to the actual role of the water as a keeper of the wreckage and the drowned in history and myth. These sunken figures and events contaminate, or

[192] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979,* 309.

rather, infuse the waters with their essence creating a productive, although murky, reservoir. The moon exerts his power over the water (literally, as in real life), seemingly directing the actions of the other figures in this poem. He speaks in hushed tones to the figures who occupy his kingdom:

> Mit schlaffarbender Stimme
> murmelt der Mond
> seinen Hof (1-3)

The moon speaks softly as to not wake the sleepers. The remainder of the poem describes the figures occupying this water, both real and fictional. Sharks plunder the dark sea suggesting that the water is something else than figurative, at least initially. They are reminders that the water is not a sanctuary devoid of any danger. The fictional characters begin to appear:

> Ophelia schaukelt
> den Wahnsinn
> von Welle zu Welle (8-10)

Ophelia from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is reborn into the water – where she first gave up her life. In this stanza, she is stuck in a kind of purgatory, like Sisyphus, swinging her lovesickness from one wave to another – never free from its weight or from the water. The moon sings in order to summon another lost figure, Orpheus:

> Schlaffarbendes Mondlied
> die Leier treibt
> taub im Wasser
>
> Orpheus träumt seine Leier
> sucht Sang
> bei den Fischen (12-18)

The lyre goes silent in the depths, becoming the dream of Orpheus. He dreams of finding a new song among the fish, like Ausländer's Heine. Having lost Eurydice and been torn to pieces he lives on in the water, surfacing in someone else's song. Like Ophelia, he is condemned to forever search the underworld, or rather, underwater, for his lost love. The next poem suggests the link between the water and the present time.

"Liebe II" (1967)[193] depicts the link between sleep and the watery store of literary influence. Images of water are combined with the description of two lovers suddenly awakening from a deep sleep in which they visited the poetic waters. The poem has a fairy tale-like quality as it is told in the preterit:

> Erwacht
> als Stimme uns trafen
>
> flogen Fische durch unser Haar
> zartfarbig die Flossen
> fast Blumen (1-6)

Two lovers awake as they are startled by voices. In their half sleep, brilliantly colored fish still fly through their hair. They have brought part of the waters back with them, the fish with fins like flowers entangled with the lovers, who are tangled up with each other. The proximity of the fish to their heads alludes to the dreams and water in which the fish were moving.

> Wasser schäumte herauf
> aus begrabenem Brunnen
> mit hohler Hand
> schöpften wir
> tranken einen Schluck
> der Rest rann
> durch die Finger (8-14)

[193] Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975,* 70.

Water foams out of a hidden source and as the dreamers drink it, it escapes through their fingers. Interestingly, "schöpfen" means both that they ladle the water with their hands and that in the same instance, they create, and connotes both the creativity itself and its physical manifestation. The water leaves them refreshed with renewed courage to make sense out of the voices that awoke them. In this case, the water functions as an unseen but collective well from which the dreamers drink as they sleep.

It is the shared memories that flash across the dreamers' minds as fish, as the dreamers return to wakefulness. The waters are a source of strength to which the sleepers can continually return. The speaker continues to describe the voices from above. They are strong and frightening, not compatible with the watery dream world from which the dreamers have just emerged. Lived reality is not compatible with the strange otherworld where memories are kept. The two lovers fall back into sleep allowing the words from above to become abstractions and filter into the dream world along with their own words and made available to the next dreamers who enter there. The next poem is a warning for these other dreamers.

"Schlaf nicht" (1981)[194] is a cautionary tale to someone who would draw from the collective waters. The speaker warns someone who is already on the water, carried by a storm. Here the warning appears for the first time, "Schlaf nicht im Schwimmen" (3), which will be later clarified. The storm continues overhead:

> Ein Blitz spaltet
> das Herz der Wolke
> sie stürzt sich ins Wasser
> wäscht deinen Traum weg (5-8)

[194] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 122.

Lightning tears out from the heart of a cloud as it empties its rainy contents back into the sea – washing the dream away. These are not the calm waters of previous poems but a dangerous raging sea capable of taking one's dream of inspiration and swallowing the poet whole. The shore is an unhelpful companion, continually shifting and pulling away – pushing the drifter-dreamer from its steady shores into the next torrent – the "nothing." The sea as a source of inspiration is both everything and nothing at once; it is pure chaos. You have to be able to read its signs to create a coherent whole, which is the poem that will communicate with the world. The warning is repeated:

> Schlaf nicht im Schwimmen
> das Wasser ist wach (14-15)

Although the poet-dreamer is technically asleep as in previous poems – one must be a vigilant, lucid dreamer and exercise control over the images lest she be swept away in the flood. The water, the speaker knows, is awake. The water possesses its own agency. As a depository of the collective unconscious the sea has developed its own will. It is aware of those who wish to draw from its stores and jealously guards its resources.

"Auf einer Insel" (1981)[195] recalls the images from "Struma" about a lone island of shipwreck survivors at the bottom of the ocean. Islands have long been imagined as utopias or as a type of near-paradise. The "Happy Isles" were placed on maps before the shape of the world was known and at a time when many people believed that the biblical paradise was still an earthly place but inaccessible to the majority of humankind.[196] Additionally, the underwater islands and realms of Ausländer's poetry resemble a waiting place for souls that have passed on.

[195] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 116.

[196] Delameau, 98-99.

The existence of this strange purgatory is supported by both early Jewish and Christian beliefs: "The Jewish tradition long maintained the belief in an intermediate paradise in which the souls of the elect await resurrection and entry into the kingdom of heaven."[197] Gervase of Tilbury, among other scholars, asserted in *Otia imperialia*, which was dedicated to Emperor Otto IV in the early thirteenth century, that heaven and hell were both divided into two parts for the less good and the less evil, respectively.[198]

The poem begins idyllically. The summer is imagined as a fanciful purple-winged creature that gently caresses the speaker's heart, while lying upon an anonymous island in an unnamed sea. The creature represents the poetic imagination and the desire to commit horrific events to the realm of fantasy in order to assuage the pain of their reality. The lack of names suggests an archetypal landscape. Unlike the fishes of the "Lorelei," these fishes emerge from the water speaking poems from the depths. The poet-speaker, who is unable to access the water, endeavors to learn their poetic language:

> Fische besuchen mich
> und sprechen Gedichte
> Ich bemühe mich
> sie zu erlernen (9-12)

The large air-breathing marine mammals seem to have special access to the thoughts and greetings of friends, whose messages they bear with them to the lonely island. They beckon the speaker to accompany them but she cannot:

> Ein Delphin bringt mir
> Grüße von Freunden
> Sie laden mich ein

[197] Ibid., 25.

[198] Ibid., 37.

allein ich
kann nicht schwimmen (14-18)

If taken in context with the earlier poem, the speaker is a survivor of a shipwreck who has found safe refuge upon this mysterious island. The sea creatures are not silent witnesses to a forgotten song but rather the bearers of the song itself, delivering it to the poet, who is now a passive figure. The poet has become part of the liquid unconscious and will not deliver the song to another audience – the song remains known to only the poet. She is unable to navigate the water, cannot swim, and must remain in exile upon an anonymous island– lost to time, unable to return the song to reality. Ausländer is well aware of the experience of many Holocaust survivors as well as Jewish artists long before the war who were unable to find a audience. Her poem alludes to this experience of ostracism, discrimination, and contempt.

"Eine Linie" (1981)[199] is another poem told by the souls trapped under the water. It begins with an apostrophe to an unknown "you" who is unhappy in this damp place who is likely the speaker herself. She compares herself to a line, a link, which leads into the secret past of death. It is a line that references the line as drawn by the writer's pen, able to communicate with the past and other inaccessible places:

Ich bin eine Linie
die führt
ins Geheimnis (4-6)

The dead consume sea salt with other watery worlds, apparently mixing and melding with the essences of the other myths and fictions already there. These figures are reflected in their eyes, passing over and through them as they are slowly consumed, fleeting over what remains of their consciousness:

[199] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 80.

Wir essen Salz
wir trinken flüssige Welten

Menschen
wandern in unsern Augen

Liebe und Angst
das Paradies (12-19)

Love and fear constitute this paradise which is the resting place of all things. It is the end that is the beginning, suggesting that we must come full circle in order to create. The ocean is the stuff of creations, ashes made from death waiting to be reformed. Our lives are not lines but circles.

In "Staubmeer" (1980)[200] the movements of the ocean become synonymous with the life force itself. The ocean that is the repository for the dead is also the source of life. The speaker begins by invoking the ocean, its movement, sound, and color. The enjambment creates ambiguity as to whether these features belong to the life force or are the characteristic of this force moving through the speaker and her companions – suggesting that they may be one and the same:

Das Meer
seine Bewegung
sein Rauschen
seine Farben

Durch unsern immerbewegten
Körper
rauscht der Lebensstrom (1-8)

The life force bears all the colors of the world, which tinge the thoughts that the currents paint upon the shore. The last stanza suggests that these thoughts or their agents flow into and join with the sea of dust, or rather, a sea of death. The ocean as a reservoir of the past makes it

[200] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 45.

perpetually open to death and appears as a kind of purgatory – although with the promise of clay and rebirth.

> Weltgefärbt
> färben wir die Welt
> mit Gedanken
>
> münden
> ins Staubmeer (10-14)

This poem reinforces the notion of water as the original element out of which all else springs. The dust and water combine to make clay, a malleable medium, with which the poet can shape whatever she desires. It is the primordial creator.

"Unter eine Decke" (1987)[201] does not specifically mention water but it does establish a link between dreams and history by way of the figures who seem to reside in waking sleep. The speaker describes how the dead emerge from their hiding places at night as her thoughts begin:

> Nachts
> wenn die Gedanken
> einschlagen
> treten die Toten
> aus ihren Verstecken (1-5)

She indicates that these characters are realistic, although they are not real; their eyes are compelling and their old mossy voices are convincing as they occupy the dreamscape while in conversation with the dreamer herself – over all manner of earthly topics in which these figures still interest themselves. The dreamer is not prepared for their questions as these dreamlike characters are far too educated for her but there are also moments when they indulge in conversations about Spinoza or Hölderlin, where the speaker is better equipped to take part:

[201] Rose Ausländer, *Und preise die kühlende / Liebe der Luft: Gedichte 1983-87, e*d. Helmut Braun, Vol. 7 (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1988), 150.

Wir unterhalten uns
über irdische Dinge
alles interessiert sie
ich kann ihre Fragen
nicht beantworten
sie sind besser unterrichtet
Manchmal ergibt sich
ein Gespräch
über Hölderlin oder Spinoza (12-20)

The conversation never turns to death. They are all simply under the covers talking to one another, all the while the speaker does not doubt whether or not she still lives. Notably, there are some doubts as to whether or not she sleeps:

Nie ist die Rede davon
daß sie tot sind
Ihre Rede ist klar
Licht und Schatten
verteilt

Wir vergessen den Zwischenfall
Tod
wir sind ja hier
unter eine Decke beisammen
nichts hindert mich anzunehmen
daß ich noch lebe (22-33)

The speaker occupies a lucid dream-state in which the poet-dreamer is accessing the underwater realm in which the figures of the past are preserved. The otherworld now opens up to the poet and she is not only able to draw from the experience generally but is actively able to engage with people as they were, even if they only existed in fiction. The water proves to be a tremendous reservoir where all information exists and remains in constant dialogue with itself. Although a liminal medium since only its surface is visible to the viewer, the underwater world is accessible to the poet who receives information from the water as much as the fluid medium continually

receives information from the realm above its surface. Hence, the poet as an intervening figure is a translator and mediator who can use her experience in this place as poetic fodder that will contribute material for the sleepers yet to come.

Ausländer also dedicated poetry to Friedrich Hölderlin and Baruch Spinoza. In some cases the poets and philosopher share Ausländer's sentiment and imagery of water, for example in Hölderlin's "Hälfte des Lebens" (1804).[202] The first half of the poem focuses on an idealized world. This world is wholly described as mirrored in a lake:

> Mit gelben Birnen hänget
> Und voll mit wilden Rosen
> Das Land in den See,
> Ihr holden Schwäne,
> Und trunken von Küssen
> Tunkt ihr das Haupt
> Ins heilignüchterne Wasser. (1-7)

The swans dip their heads into the water as if attempting to access the reflected landscape and an alternate reality: nature, incomprehensible, the language of a deity that always remains distant. Such "reality" is inaccessible and untouchable: "heilignüchtern." The remainder of the poem concentrates on the hollowness of existence, implying that the land below the water is more desirable than the so-called reality in which the poetic voice is trapped. Hölderlin also writes of two specific rivers "Der Neckar" (1797-1801)[203] and "Der Rhine" (1797-1807).[204] The Neckar was to Hölderlin as the Pruth was to Ausländer, associated with home. Interestingly, the poem about the Neckar refers to the Rhine with which it lovingly joins:

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[202] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Gedichte*, ed. Gerhard Kurz (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2000), 361.

[203] Ibid., 212.

[204] Ibid., 294.

Der Berge Quellen eilten hinab zu dir,
Mit ihnen auch mein Herz und du nahmst uns mit,
Zum stillerhabnen Rhein, zu seinen
Städten hinunter und lustgen Inseln. (11-14)

…

Zu euch, ihr Inseln! bringt mich vielleicht, zu euch
Mein Schutzgott einst; doch weicht mir aus treuem Sinn
Auch da mein Neckar nicht mit seinen
Lieblichen Wiesen und Uferweiden. (41-44)

Hölderlin also alludes to the river's nature as a onetime protector, indicating a strong personal affinity for this particular body of water. "Der Neckar" finishes with a fond reference to its islands. Like Heine and Droste-Hülshoff, Hölderlin became part of a literary network of that provided Ausländer with a linguistic symbolism revolving around water, especially the rivers that frequently come to signify home. The rushing waters of the river keep everything in flux and yet remain joined to an ocean of literature that can be called Ausländer's element of choice. In this element, particular topics, areas, and genres stand out and point at a particular approach to the world that is specific to Ausländer and yet connected to a literary tradition.

The waters of Ausländer's poetry create an intertextual literary reservoir in which past myths and legends point to a specific literary tradition of the nineteenth century, commonly associated with the era of Romanticism. This era influenced her lifelong poetic production. Ausländer treats this Romantic heritage as a kind of sunken treasure, always waiting to be rediscovered. She freely transforms various aspects of an established and conservatively viewed tradition, allowing them to become infused with broader and more diverse currents belonging to the twentieth century. The waters now proclaim an emancipated historical context in which the Jewish and female experiences play a major role and are related to themes of death, dreams, and

discrimination in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Ausländer also imbues these tropes with a personal element, allowing the individual to become part of the historical experience and making the historical intensely personal. The Loreley also figures strongly in her poetic mythology. The sometimes maligned figure is reestablished as a nurturing mother and queen of poets. She is not a passive muse but a woman with her own voice as it emanates from female poets, like Annette Droste-Hülshoff. In the case of Heinrich Heine, cultural and political conditions turned Loreley into a witch, an image from which she is only now recovering.

Chapter IV:

The Tapestry of Identity: Else Lasker-Schüler and Self in the Poetry of Rose Ausländer

The definition of mythos has undergone substantial change through the centuries and among diverse disciplines. Translated from the Greek, *μῦθος* (mythos) may mean any report, story, or tale, especially those that are transmitted by mouth. The word in this sense does not bear the negative connotation of untruth or fiction but rather focuses solely on the means by which a story is transmitted. Mythos may also refer to any body of beliefs, substantiated or not, as they pertain to religion and nation building. The Oxford English Dictionary adds that mythos has a special meaning in literary criticism as "[t]he general structuring of events presented in a text, esp. interpreted with regard to certain archetypal themes or patterns." It adds that "[t]he term appears in Aristotle's *Poetics*, where it is used with reference to ancient Greek drama. It was adopted in the formalist criticism of Northrop Frye (1912–91), who applied it more broadly to any narrative form."[205] Specifically, mythos describes the well-ordered unfolding of events, or plot, in a tragedy, which further suggests the word's relationship to a report or tale. It has been adapted to the modern age to refer to more loosely organized plots, which extends its meaning to many new forms of texts and their accompanying narratives. Ausländer directly addresses the nature of mythos in the following lines from "Unbeschriebenes Blatt II" (1979/80):[206]

> Mythos –
> hier kann er Wurzel fassen
> im unbefleckten Papier
> aus dem Holz geholt
> aus gefällten Blättern
> und Wohlklang

[205] "mythos, n.," OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press, (accessed January 22, 2016).

[206] Ausländer, *Jeder Tropfen ein Tag: Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß: Gesamtregister,* 61.

Hier bekommt
der Gedanke Kontur (6-13)

Those oral traditions which today are referred to as myths are understood to possess a substantial fictional component, regardless of whether they were originally intended as historical narratives, scientific, or religious texts. All lacking a nameable origin or individual author, these myths lack both authority and authenticity due to their orality. Most of what would later become literature owes its existence to these anonymous stories and texts. Religious stories and fairytales in particular are strongly connected to oral traditions, whose origins are as old as humankind itself. What Ausländer suggests in the above passage from "Unbeschriebenes Blatt II" is a modern form of transmission with a more reliable transmission than the Latin "mythos." Myths are invited to set down their roots upon the unmarred sheet of paper from which it can grow, bloom, and endure. More importantly, its permanence invites citation from those who have shared in the poetic narrative, allowing it to spread among many more leaves.

Poetic Agency

In the above poem a third entity is created from material paper and the incorporeal mythos: the poem. The poem is a product of a long oral tradition finally finding a concrete resting place. It now has an author and a degree of corresponding authority. It becomes a resource for posterity. However, it remains unclear as to which is extracted from the wood, the fallen leaves or euphony – the paper or the poem. In the previous chapter, I examined the fairytale's relationship to nature and the possibility that these tales are an ethereal expression of that natural essence. The paper as a product of trees is a concrete expression of nature as

manipulated by humankind. It creates a "natural" setting in which the mythos can take hold. This time the physical contours will be inked in by a human creator, whose signs are readable by other humans, unlike the vein-inscribed leaves collected from the forest floor.

The first few lines of "Unbeschriebenes Blatt II" verify that the poem is a mediation of natural signs onto paper:

> Du triffst
> in die weiße Scheibe:
> Zeichen aus dem Viel
> ein Weniges machen
> ein Wort (1-5)

This stanza reveals that the signs that become the poem have their origin in the wider world, in the atmosphere that the poet breathes in – the "All." These signs then coalesce within the poet, they make words, which the poet can interpret and finally record. These words are both foreign and yet constitutional parts of the writer and they are addressed in the familiar form as if they are old friends, hinting at a peculiar kind of agency. They do not originate within the poet herself yet she is the medium through which they are transformed and rendered intelligible. The myth that is ultimately set down bears her unique perspective. The mythos is now owned by the poet.

There are other texts which allude that the poem possesses its own agency. In "Nicht vergessen I" (1977),[207] a reciprocal relationship is produced through the creative act. The poem begins:

> Heute
> hat ein Gedicht
> mich wieder erschaffen (1-3)

[207] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 62.

These lines reveal the dependence and interchangeability of the poet with her poetry. In this case, the poet asserts that the poem has created her, again. It is in the act of writing poetry that makes one a poet and each time she writes, the poet is created anew. The second and third stanzas demonstrate the mere humanness of the poet:

> Ich freute mich
> am Leben
> bewunderte die Landschaft
> vor meinem Fenster
>
> Ich vergaß
> das Gedicht zu schreiben
> vergaß es (5-11)

Unexpectedly and unpoetically, the poet becomes distracted by the outside world. She loses herself in the "untranslated" world and forgets to write down the poem. In other words, she forgets to be a poet. One may expect that the poem is completely lost but then something interesting occurs:

> Es hat mich
> nicht vergessen
> kam zurück zu mir
> und schrieb sich
> in meine Worte (13-17)

The poem returns unexpectedly. It exists autonomously but requires the intervention of the poet in order to manifest itself. The poem requires the poet's words in order to exist and the poet becomes a poet through the act of committing the poetry to paper.

There are many other examples in Ausländer's oeuvre which suggest that the poem exercises an agency of its own. These strange creatures exist apart from the poet, out in the ether, and are sometimes difficult to control. In "Alles kann Motiv sein"[208] Ausländer explains:

> Warum ich schreibe?
> Weil Wörter mir diktieren: schreib uns. Sie wollen verbunden sein, Verbündete. Wort mit Wort mit Wort. Eine Wortphalanx für, die andere gegen mich. Ins Papierfeld einrücken wollen sie, da soll der Kampf ausgefochten werden. Ich verhalte mich oft skeptisch, will mich ihrer Diktatur nicht unterwerfen, werfe sie in den Wind. Sind sie stärker als er, kommen sie zu mir zurück, rütteln und quälen mich, bis ich nachgebe.

The urge to compose originates in the words themselves. They demand their place upon the paper; they demand materiality. They know better than the poet as to their places upon the paper and demonstrate a need to exist in groups. It becomes the scene of a battle, the words battling the poet, the battle undoubtedly to survive revision. Ausländer attempts to discard some of them, scattering them to the wind like holy ash but some of them resist this return to the ether. They return to her, antagonize her, until she gives in to their demands.

It may seem a flight of fancy to assign such active agency to words before they take on the form of a text. It is not so strange, however, to think of texts having their own agency. They take on a life of their own once they are committed to the page, subject to a multiplicity of interpretations, criticisms, and translations, all which attribute an assumed perspective and character to the text which may not be intended or even true. The acts of reading, writing, and interpreting are all suspect: "Narrating is never innocent, and the narrative that frames another allows the writer to dramatize the results of the telling. And this no doubt gives a signal to the reader that the tale told can and should reflect on his own life: that literature is not

[208] Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975,* 384.

inconsequential."[209] To imagine the words themselves as free floating autonomous entities may be the poet's means of escaping the responsibility for their existence and any claims to a correct interpretation. The poet attempts to dodge her own authority in the matter, allowing the reader to assert ownership of his own explanation and retelling much like the storytellers who retold their tales over generations. In doing so the reader or interpreter is forced to consider and reflect on the circumstances of his own life by the way in which those conditions alter his perception of the tale. It allows the poet and the poem their freedom.

Another work of this type is "Mein Gedicht" (1976),[210] in which the poem is an essence to be breathed in by the poet. This metaphor attests to the oral nature of poetry. The poem is breathed in and out – suggesting that the poem is an airborne entity that hangs in the atmosphere waiting to be inhaled by the poet who can give it form through some kind of ritual. The second stanza implicates the earth itself in the creative act. The earth's respiration involves both the poet and poem. The poet herself is the breath of the earth along with the poem. The poet and the poem are constituted of the same materials which emanate from all creation, the center of which is the earth. There is an unmistakable similarity here to God's creation of man.[211] Another example is "Auf Befehl" (1979).[212] In this case, the poem is fickle. It makes the poet work for it, even claiming that the poet is not worthy of the poem. It is a difficult poem. The poet finally asks why the poem appears at all to which it replies, "Auf Befehl / meiner Muse" (13-14). The poem is obligated to mediate between a higher power and the mortal poet.

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[209] Peter Brooks, "The Tale vs. The Novel," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 21, no. 2/3, (Winter/Spring 1988): 286.

[210] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976*, 18.

[211] Genesis 2:7: And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

[212] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 238.

The poet stands in between human existence and the exterior world, referred to here as the "All." The All represents what is known to some as creation or the universe. It communicates in signs that are mostly incomprehensible to humankind. In order to be understood these signs must be decoded by an individual with special insights and abilities. These individuals, as previously discussed, may be poets, prophets, mediums, oracles, and sages. Their authority, and very identity, in this matter relies on their ability to occupy a liminal space:

> [Es] verweist [] unmittelbar darauf, dass die angestrebte Selbstbehauptung des Ich…auch die Selbstbehauptung der Poesie, nur dann realisierbar erscheint, wenn der Mensch zwischen Himmel und Erde, Sonne und Wasser, d.h. zwischen Mythos und Geschichte keine Grenzlinie zieht, anders formuliert: wenn er bereit ist, auf Märchen sich einzulassen und somit die gewohnten Grenzen der Wirklichkeit zu überschreiten.[213]

The poetic act of self-authentication through the interpretation of natural signs and committing them to paper as poetry, suggest that the self must occupy a special liminal observation point. The poetic voice needs to be able to undo the arbitrary borders of human experience and the greater universe. Human knowledge such as history or philosophy is a narrated event, subject not only to interpretation and bias but also the limits of human knowledge. Many stories now classified as myths were once the best means by which to explain phenomena and events that were at the time inexplicable by any other means. These explanations bear with them traces of a natural world that was wholly imbued with a magical air that seems suspect to the modern reader. This is not to suggest that they hold no kernel of truth.

Jakob Grimm explains the discrepancy: "Daher alles, was wir in ihnen für unwahr erkennen, ist es nicht, insofern es nach der alten Ansicht des Volkes von der Wunderbarkeit der

[213] Holzner, 268.

Natur gerade nur so erscheinen, und mit dieser Zunge ausgesprochen werden kann."[214] They were expressed in the best way possible for the times in which they were written. Mythology, as a means of understanding the world, has fallen to the fringes of our collective memory as science has continued to improve and provide alternate, logical explanations. History, particularly ancient history, becomes entangled in these myths already blurring the lines of myth and history as suggested even by the Grimms.[215] The borders of physical existence as well as fictional planes are more difficult to trespass. This is when it becomes necessary to allow the fairy tale to infect the poet's reality with its aura.

Language and Exile

Among the fundamental connections between language and the physical tangible world, the immediate relationship of language to and among groups of people stands out. As with many other writers in exile who are disconnected from their linguistic cultural context, Rose Ausländer focused on the communal and communicative function of language. Language indicates membership in a specific community bound in time and space. The poet as a mediator for the signs of the nature could be generally said to belong to a second community of specialized individuals set above and apart from the majority of language-speakers. More concretely, specific human languages, whether dialects, registers, or jargons, show membership to a community that exists, or existed, in a particular region and era. For the exiled this membership

[214] Jakob Grimm, "Gedanken, wie sich die Sagen zur Poesie und Geschichte verhalten," in *Theorie der Romantik*, ed. Herbert Uerlings (Stuttgart: Phillip Reclam jun., 2000), 168.

[215] Grimm, "Gedanke, wie sich die Sagen zur Poesie und Geschichte verhalten," 176: "Ferner ergiebt sich, wie Poesie und Geschichte in der ersten Zeit der Völker in einem und demselben Fluß strömen, und wenn Homer von den Griechen mit Recht ein Vater der Geschichte gepriesen wird, so dürfen wir nicht länger Zweifel tragen, daß in den alten Nibelungen die erste Herrlichkeit deutscher Geschichte nur zu lange verborgen gelegen habe."

takes on a special significance: "In exile proper, language is not (or not only) what needs to be forged for oneself but, above all, what must be kept alive for a community which is real only in memory. Having ceased to be compelling as an ongoing operation, the community becomes for the exile all the more important as a symbolic entity to be contemplated."[216] For an exile writer, their language is not only reminiscent of the lost community but becomes symbolic of the poet's prior membership in this community. Membership in these linguistic communities are necessary both to verify one's own existence when displaced and are a means of establishing self-worth during times of extreme hardship. Language is the means by which the community continues to live in the heart and the head of the poet as well as in the memory of the world, because language is inextricably enmeshed with the culture of the lost community. It is capable of carrying with it signifiers unique to that lost enclave. The particular blend of ethnicities and religions as they existed in the Czernowitz of Ausländer's time would be forever lost if not for the artistic and literary production of its inhabitants, which are the only available records of this exceptional city. The poetic language thus becomes the frame for the ongoing discussion of literary works which emerge from this time.

The poet becomes a self-contained unit in which all her experiences of exile are embedded. These experiences ultimately find their expression through her hands or through her very breath. The fullness and importance of her language becomes apparent in the following lines excerpted from "In einem Atemzug" (1974):[217]

steh ich in meiner Bewegung

träge Länder in der pochenden Kapsel
und meine Landlosigkeit

[216] Vytautas Kavolis, "Women Writers in Exile," *World Literature Today* 66, no.1 (1992): 43.

[217] Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975,* 158.

Stehen und wundern in einem
Atemzug (3-10)

The exile poet is in perpetual motion, moving from one country to another and is self-contained not only within the train car but also within the poet herself. The experience of exile, of being without a homeland, is literally encapsulated in the poetic space, which regularly traverses boundaries. The train's purpose is to create movement, to be movement; it need not by definition belong anywhere. The poet at this moment is bound to the train and her movements are encapsulated in another way, in the poem. The play of words "Atemzug" suggests that the breath of air, that breath which contains the poem, also has the power of movement.

The strength of poetic language exceeds individual experience and seeks rather to communicate the status of the world and humankind's place in it. The poetic language attempts to convey to humankind a much more holistic perspective as described in "Gib mir" (1977):[218]

Gib mir
den Blick
auf das Bild
unsrer Zeit (1-4)

The poem begins with an apostrophe. The poetic voice expresses a wish for perspective on her times which seemingly can only come from somewhere outside herself – the "All" in which the poem resides. It is not enough for this outside view to merely present itself:

Gib mir
Worte
es nachzubilden (6-8)

[218] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 45.

The perspective needs to be imitated, recreated in the poet's own words – a minor creator in her own right. These words must have the power to manifest:

> Worte
> stark
> wie der Atem
> der Erde (10-13)

The poet's words need to possess, at least metaphorically, the same strength that God's own words had to make the Earth manifest.

Before an epoch of war and tremendous social, political, and cultural changes in the early twentieth century with its linguistic ruptures and communicative discontinuities, there was a biblical relationship between the word and the world. Ausländer takes on this relationship between language and being, especially after World War II. In "Das Wort I" (1981)[219] she cites John 1:1 establishing a biblical context:

> Am Anfang
> war das Wort
> und das Wort
> war bei Gott (1-4)

This asserts a fundamental connection between narrative and creation, the word and the world, between authorship and life itself. The building materials of human experience are the words of divinity and through poetry are translated into the human vernacular. The second stanza continues:

> Und Gott gab uns
> das Wort
> und wir wohnen
> im Wort (7-9)

[219] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 140.

This alludes to the laws given to Moses upon Mount Sinai. The people live by and in his word. In doing this the status of the material text is established. The physical text represents a binding law but it binds only humankind. The third stanza begins to alter this relationship:

> Und das Wort ist
> unser Traum
> und der Traum
> unser Leben (11-14)

The biblical context is abandoned and another relationship is suggested between words and the world, which implicates reality itself. By referring to a *topos* of world literature that was most prominently displayed in *La vida es sueño* (1636) by the Spanish Baroque author Calderón de la Barca, Ausländer implies that neither word, nor dream, nor life are concrete objects. The existence of life can be scientifically determined by certain biological factors but spoken of in more holistic terms, "life" can become extremely difficult to define. Consciousness and emotions, especially happiness, are among many characteristics which help to establish a quality of life. Life as defined in Ausländer's poem derives from the dreams of a distant author. In these terms all that humankind experiences is immaterial; life is only words. The authority of the word as well as the materiality of the world is subject to doubt. There is hope that the same words that establish an oneiric existence can be utilized by humankind to create a different dream. The word is also the tool of humankind with which she imagines her own life.

The relationship between the word and the world is an ancient one, not just in religious texts but in historical texts. The invention of language is when history began. This profound bond has undergone considerable alteration over time. One of many major changes occurred during the Romantic movement during which a new generation of writers sought less to connect

with a veritable literary tradition and began looking forward in time. Their break with the past was not complete as they tried to reclaim the withering oral tradition before it completely vanished. In doing so they were able to commit these tales to paper, transforming them once again and fulfilling the prophecy of "Unbeschriebenes Blatt II." The tales have indeed set down their roots and continue to this day to exert influence from their place in the canon. This is perhaps a romantically anticlimactic outcome, but not entirely. Some would suggest that it continues to be the modern author's duty to claim ownership of these tales through their constant reinvention: "The fairy tale is in a perpetual state of becoming and alteration. To keep one version or one translation alone is to put robin redbreast in a cage…You are at perfect liberty to invent other details than the ones I've passed on, or invented, here. In fact you're not only at liberty to do so: you have a positive duty to make the story your own." [220] This is what keeps the tales alive.

Novalis describes the rift between humankind, the world, and language that emerged during his time. He writes in *Neue Fragmente*:

> Alles, was wir erfahren ist eine Mitteilung. So ist die Welt in der Tat eine Mitteilung – Offenbarung des Geistes. Die Zeit ist nicht mehr, wo der Geist Gottes verständlich war. Der Sinn der Welt ist verloren gegangen. Wir sind beim Buchstaben stehen geblieben. Wir haben das Erscheinende über der Erscheinung verloren. Formularwesen.[221]

Two forms of communication are distinguished here. The first form is the language of the world that is the manifestation of divinity. This is a lost language and the truth of the world has been lost with it. The second language is that of man. Humankind is left to his letters. He has become

[220] Phillip Pullman, introduction to *Fairy Tales from the Brothers Grimm: A New English Version* (London and New York: Penguin Viking, 2012), xix.

[221] Novalis, *Novalis Werke*, ed. Gerhard Schulz, (C. H. Beck: Munich, 1981), 401.

a slave to his own fictions which he believes are truths. In standing by these fictions he has lost contact with the present. Ironically, the writing down of the folk tales cements the separateness between humankind and the divine world. This is perhaps why some Romantics such as Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel were committed to the ongoing project of *progressive Universalpoesie*.[222] They understood that in order to remain in contact with a world that continually changes, that humankind and our fictions must change. They must be compatible with a new variety of experience. A book that remains unfinished resists the permanence which would render it obsolete and dogmatic, separate from divinity and the world.[223]

Ausländer suggests yet another relationship between language and the current world. In this case, human language impresses its form upon the world making it recognizable and readable. It is instead a case of interpretation. "Sätze" (1975)[224] begins:

> Kristalle
> unregelmäßig
> kompakt und durchsichtig
> hinter ihnen die Dinge
> erkennbar (1-5)

Sentences merely spin a transparent web of meaning in front of the "things" they represent. Their structure is what makes the signs of the world comprehensible. The poet, as discussed previously, is a mediator of the signs of nature. She is among those who are able to read the signs

[222] Friedrich Schlegel, "*Fragmente,"* in *Theorie der Romantik,* ed. Herbert Uerlings (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2000), 79: "Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie… Sie umfasst alles, was nur poetisch ist, vom größten wieder mehrere Systeme in sich enthaltenden Systeme der Kunst bis zu dem Seufzer, dem Kuss, den das dichtende Kind aushaucht in kunstlosen Gesang. Sie kann sich so in das Dargestellte verlieren, dass man glauben möchte, poetische Individuen jeder Art zu charakterisieren, sei ihr Eins und Alles; und doch gibt es noch keine Form, die so dazu gemacht wäre, den Geist des Autors vollständig auszudrücken: so dass manche Künstler, die nur auch einen Roman schreiben wollten, von ungefähr sich selbst dargestellt haben."

[223] Forms of continuance that could be explored are the cases of multi-volume works, as well as online platforms such as Wikipedia, which are open to continual editing and which are stored in a place that is nearly infinite in storage capability – it is both concrete and not.

[224] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976*, 189.

and transmit them to the wider world. Language is therefore not separate from creation but an integral step in the process that renders it coherent to those unable to decipher it in its original form. Poets who are able to bind the words to the signs are themselves closer to nature. The poem continues:

> Diese Sucht
> nach bindenden Worten
> Satz an Satz
> weiterzugreifen
> in die bekannte
> unbegreifliche
> Welt (7-13)

The sentences are threads sent out into the world, looking for connections with which they might create an even more complex and near complete meaning. With these connections the text can reach farther into the unknowable world, making as much of it comprehensible as possible. The text stretches itself to the limits of understanding. The word may be a superficial imprint but it allows the shapes behind to become recognizable and in the same way the signs conceal the divinity behind them.

The poet as interpreter is able to spin her own symbolic tapestry from the world of signs. It is through her own hands and intellect that this web is spun, making it a unique work at the center of which is the poet herself: "This…suggests an acutely strong sense of identity and an awareness of her own ability to create a symbolic world based on the self as primary signifier."[225] The web of text becomes a powerful tool not only for refining the poet's worldview but also in defining her own personal narrative. The text is a record of personal and historical events, thoughts and dreams, origins and losses. From this record a myth of origin begins to

[225] Mary-Elizabeth O'Brien, "'Ich war verkleidet als Poet…ich bin Poetin!!' The Masquerade of Gender in Else Lasker-Schüler's Work," *The German Quarterly* 65, no.1 (1992): 5.

emerge. The mythologies of origin are ultimately formed from the threads of human experience which stem from the perception of the individual who writes. The symbolism is borne of her experience alone and is rationalized through the formation of these myths. Since these myths are shared as texts the experience of the single author becomes internalized by its readers. In this way the tapestry of human experience is ever widened and embellished.

The Myth of Self – The Self as Myth

The myth of self-origin serves another purpose; it cements the poets claim to authority, "The myth of origin functions as legitimation for the narrator's own claim to being an artist."[226] The act of myth-making in relationship to one's own identity is the ultimate expression of creative ownership and authority. The narrator of these identifying myths becomes the creator of the artist themselves. In the case of Ausländer where the poetic voice is so closely identified with aspects of the self, the poet becomes the creator of her (poetic) self. She can assert ownership of not just her creative work but also her own experience. It is rather not myth-making but the making of the authentic self.

The signs which the poet makes visible are divine in origin and part of the creator itself. Language is the link between creation and the creator. With the insight produced by this connection, the poet sees deeply into the world and its creator as well as herself. Assuming the role of a minor creator through her act of interpreting and transmitting the signs of the world, the poet is able to see herself in the godhead. The gift, or drive, to make the world readable also

[226] Antje Lindenmeyer, "'I am Prince Jussuf': Else Lasker-Schüler's Autobiographical Performance," *Biography* 24, no.1 (Winter 2001), 32.

renders God more accessible and present. Ausländer was by no means the only poet to attempt this:

> Insbesondere der frühe Rilke, der Rilke des „Stundenbuches“ mit seiner Gottsuche hatte sie beeindruckt, da er Gott eins mit seiner Schöpfung sah, ihn pantheistisch im Universum auflöste. Diese Idee war R. Ausländer sehr nah, sie korrespondierte mit der Lehre ihrer Lieblingsphilosophen Spinoza oder Konstantin Brunner, aber auch mit der inneren Substanz des Chassidismus, der die göttliche Präsenz auf Erden in Form unzähliger, in der ganzen Welt verstreuten Funken sah, die es zu sammeln gilt.[227]

Indeed, Rose Ausländer also dedicated poetry to Baruch Spinoza and Konstantin Brunner, two philosophers with a pantheistic worldview. This worldview was informed by ancient philosophers. Ausländer took university courses on philosophy, writing papers, for example, on Plato. Although the philosopher Brunner remained in Berlin, a strong affinity for his work developed among the philosophy students in Czernowitz. He later became Ausländer's personal friend. Brunner considered Spinoza to be a kind of genius similar to figures like Plato, Socrates, Jesus, and Moses. For Brunner, genius embodied a distinctly spiritual element. A philosophical genius was not so unlike a poet, who discovered God through the signs of nature.

The pieces of the divine presence are gathered by the poet. These are the signs provided by nature, which become words in the right hands. Indeed, these divine embers are what gives the poetry its life and are its very essence:

> Und ist nicht dieser milde Widerschein der Gottheit im Menschen die eigentliche Seele, der zündende Funken aller Poesie?...und wenn Ihr den alten Kram auch millionenmal durcheinander würfelt und übereinander wälzt. Das ist nur der sichtbare äußere Leib, und wenn die Seele erloschen ist, gar nur der tote Leichnam der Poesie. Wenn aber jener

[227] Peter Rychlo, "Rose Ausländers poetische Korrespondenzen mit der deutschen literarischen Tradition," in *Identität und Integration: Rose Ausländer als Dichterin,* ed. Michael A. Hainz and Clemens K. Stepina, (Vienna and St. Wolfgang: Edition Art Science, 2010), 133.

> Funken des Enthusiasmus in Werke ausbricht, so steht eine neue Erscheinung vor uns, lebendig und in schöner Glorie von Licht und Liebe.[228]

The poet cannot subsist solely on the antiquated forms of her craft. The old forms of poetic language, and this will be true especially for post-World War II poets, is an empty and lifeless vessel for what should be a passionate endeavor. According to Schlegel, a transformation and renewal of mythology was required in order to reanimate their craft. The enthusiasm, love, and light are synonymous for the divine spark which is everywhere present and which is the soul of the poetic endeavor. For twentieth century poets, it required a renegotiation of the relationship between all modes of communication and the artist. It requires the poet to fall in love again with her medium.

Ausländer imagined Rilke as one with his creation in her poem dedicated to him. In "Rilke" (1982)[229] she envisions him having deep insight into creation and it begins with a plea to return him to the material world:

> Holt ihn wieder zurück
> jenen
> der mit Göttern sprach
> wie mit seinesgleichen (1-4)

Rilke possessed a natural talent for interpreting natural signs. It came easily to him, poetry flowing from him as if he were conversing with the divine elements themselves – as if he were one of those divine elements with transformative powers:

> Ekstatisch
> elegisch

[228] Friedrich Schlegel, "*Mythologie,"* in *Theorie der Romantik,* ed. Herbert Uerlings (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2000), 86.

[229] Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 316.

heiter
atmete er
das Leben
und seine
Wandlungen
ins Gedicht (6-13)

Like a storyteller, his very breath carries the story with it; he transforms life into a poem. Indeed, he transforms into a poem and transcends the physical plane. His reputation and essence are one with his poetic production.

Ausländer's works should be viewed as the means with which she determined her own identity and place in an increasingly incomprehensible world. Other authors and personalities often use the autobiography as a means of imposing a narrative structure upon their lives. For many poets, including Ausländer, another genre is more appropriate. The poetic voice becomes an alter-ego and confidant in the negotiation for identity and struggle for narrative coherence. Since this poetic voice is once removed from the self and works as a mediator of experience, it is useful in establishing one's own personal myth of origin. It attempts to uncover the origin of the individual and encode those symbols out of which the poet is formed. More importantly, it is where the poetic voice itself experiences becoming: "Autobiography, as a genre, can be used as a way of formulating a personal myth of origin: a recreation of the forces that create the narrator."[230] Ausländer's multivolume oeuvre can be read as an extended autobiography in poetic form. Her short biographical fragments may be woven together in a myriad of ways to form a unique tapestry in which one identifies many possible narratives, all of which contain the poet.

[230] Lindenmeyer, "I am Prince Jussuf!," 32.

The Storyteller Else Lasker-Schüler

Else Lasker-Schüler (1869-1945) was singular among the Expressionist poets. A woman and a Jew, she struggled lifelong against the social conditions of her time for acceptance and recognition. Her very identity was a source of conflict: "Lasker-Schüler's defamiliarizing quotations of the discourses of gender and identity signify her concern with the concrete possibilities of identification for a German-Jewish woman at the beginning of the twentieth century, which she finds problematic because they depend on modes of exclusion."[231] Part of her struggles had to do with her unorthodox manner of living. Her life began conventionally enough as the daughter of a banker and married physician Jonathan Berthold Lasker in 1894, although she would be separated from him before her son Paul could be born in 1899. She never named the child's father. Her divorce from Lasker was finalized in 1903. The same year she married Georg Lewin, whom she would rename Herwarth Walden. They separated in 1910 and divorced in 1912. After divorcing Walden she relied on the goodwill of her friends and colleagues for financial support necessary not just for herself but to pay for her son's boarding school and medical care, as he was often sick. Paul died in 1927, sending her into depression. She was forced into exile during World War II, traveling between Switzerland and Palestine. It was due to difficult conditions such as these that she developed a vivid alternate reality within her literary work with which to occupy her imagination. Many of her works featured characters of her own invention like Prince Jussuf and Princess Tino. These characters were masculine or gender fluid and their homes were often in the anonymous deserts of the Middle East. Her protagonists possessed an autonomy that she did not. The characters reappeared and developed emotionally

[231] Herbert Uerlings and Joachim Ghislain, "Ethnicity and Gender in Else Lasker-Schüler's 'Oriental' Stories: 'Der Amokläufer' ('Tschandragupta') and 'Ached Bey,'" *Women in German Yearbook* 18, (2002): 238.

across her texts but they were not content to remain there. Lasker-Schüler adopted eastern modes of dress and cut her hair to appear more boyish. She even signed her letters to her friends with their names. Lasker-Schüler utilized the poetic voice in order to negotiate an alternate reality and create alternate identities for herself. The narrative of her life as a whole must then include these other disparate webs of intimate experience since her poetic voice was often focused inward. The symbolic worlds of her texts require careful analysis as she incorporates a special reading of the world around her.

Like Ausländer's Jewish Gypsy,[232] Else Lasker-Schüler demonstrated a special proclivity to the reading of signs from a young age. The world that Lasker-Schüler occupied was a middle-class world – it was embedded in the middle-class household and populated with practical items. The objects with which she played were not natural things per se but nonetheless speak their own language. These playthings communicated with her sensually and later this quality would be commuted to her poetic production:

> She reminisces that during this time (childhood) she also played with colored buttons, arranging them in seemingly limitless configurations. Her favorite button was black amber covered in stars, and she named it Joseph of Egypt. Lasker-Schüler reports than vowels and consonants carried the same significance as colors and shapes, each endowed with symbolic value, beauty, and an essence of its own.[233]

Lasker-Schüler's imaginative life, much like Ausländer's, started in her childhood – consider Ausländer's own poems about childhood playthings. During play, she configured – or composed – colorful arrangements of buttons. As an adult she exchanged these bright buttons for language, words and sounds, which she claims took on the same qualities as the concrete playthings of her youth. This should rather be interpreted to mean that she took the same joy and playfulness in her

[232] "Jewish Gypsy," see pages 95-98.

[233] O'Brien, 2.

vocation as a writer as she did as a child playing. The buttons, like words, have both aesthetic and practical qualities. Both objects are fasteners, which bind texts and textiles to one another and to the self. Evidence of this childlike spirit can be observed in her adoption of alter egos such as Prince Jussuf and Princess Tino in her adulthood. For her, play was a means of survival.

Interestingly, Lasker-Schüler identified with a dark button that bore a star, like the Star of David, and named it Joseph, the biblical character with which she always claimed to identify. The exotic or Eastern aspects of her alter-egos have long been assumed to correlate with her Jewish heritage. The use of these symbols represents a reach backward in time in order to find a lost community. A product of her exile at the onset of World War II, her feelings of alienation began much earlier as a twice-divorced, single mother, and woman poet in a male dominated literary movement. Her eccentricity only exacerbated her outsider status. Her poetic voice, by necessity, adopted pseudo-religious symbols: "[S]ome German-Jewish poets of the anti-Nazi exile (even Else Lasker-Schüler) have discovered or more deeply affirmed their rootedness in Hebraic symbolism…The exile begins in the contemporary, horizontal dimension; the relevance of the transcendental—or…of the primordial—is discovered later."[234] The primordial element being the grasping at of symbols related to an ancient lineage and that can positively identify the speaker as belonging to a group. In the creation of her individual mythology of self, the poet in exile is drawn inward and to the past to look for the constitutive elements of her identity. In the case of Else Lasker-Schüler and Rose Ausländer, these formative elements included symbols of their Jewish faith. These symbols become especially powerful retroactively as they, along with language, become substitutes for the lost community.

[234] Kavolis, 46.

Else Lasker-Schüler was among one of the poets with whom Ausländer identified and to whom she dedicated two poems. "Else Lasker-Schüler II" (1977)[235] describes Ausländer's special affinity for Lasker-Schüler in greater detail. This poem begins by referring to one of Lasker-Schüler's alternate personas, Prinz Jusuf:

> Im Morganland
> als Prinz Jusuf geboren
> aufgewachsen auf dem Mond (1-3)

It is the poet herself that is reborn as Prince Jusuf in the East, home of her ancestors. The earthly locale suggests a kind of belonging and community that the third line subverts. Even though the Prince should belong s/he assumes an outsider, although perhaps magical, status by having grown up on the moon. The use of the moon blatantly suggests alienation and great distance caused by an earthly exile. The Prince both belongs and yet does not belong to his community. The following stanzas, however, confirms her/his belonging in yet another group:

> Mit melodischer Stimme
> tausendundein Märchen erzählt
> bunt wie ihre Träume
>
> Verschwistert mit andern
> Märchenerzählern
> ihre Freude ihren Kummer
> geteilt (4-10)

Although she displays a proclivity for poetry, Lasker-Schüler is foremost a storyteller. In this role she belongs to a long line of storytellers such as Scheherazade, the archetypal storyteller.

The figure of Scheherazade emerges from the legendary collection of folktales, *One Thousand and One Nights*. Scheherazade's father served as vizier to the fictional Persian king,

[235] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 44.

Shahryar. Shahryar developed a pathological distrust of women after he caught his wife having an affair. From this point onward, when Shahryar took a wife he would have her beheaded the morning following their honeymoon. He had slaughtered 1000 women by the time he met Scheherazade. Scheherazade, under the pretense of telling her sister Dunyazade a bedtime story, enthralled the king, who spared her life, with tale after tale. After one thousand and one nights, the king had fallen in love with Scheherazade and she became queen. Scheherazade was no ordinary storyteller:

> [Scheherazade] had perused the books, annals and legends of preceding Kings, and the stories, examples and instances of bygone men and things; indeed it was said that she had collected a thousand books of histories relating to antique races and departed rulers. She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart; she had studied philosophy and the sciences, arts and accomplishments; and she was pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred.[236]

Her story grew from the stories of others and her survival depended on the collection and retelling of these tales. The tales she tells are strangely eternal, passing from mouth to mouth, generation after generation, composed of breaths rather than pen strokes. Scheherazade has an immediate imperative to continue her narrative in order to live.

These tales were a matter of life and death for Scheherazade, whose husband had nearly decimated the population of virgins by their wedding night. The voice that speaks, and continues speaking, is a voice that desires to survive: "The narrative voice that wishes never to stop speaks not only against its own death but against the deaths of its father, sisters, future husband—and readers. It stresses the communal nature of the narrative act."[237] The community of literature is not just a community of authors but also a community of readers since the narrative ultimately

[236] Sir Richard F. Burton, trans., *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, vol. 1 (1885-88), 14-15.

[237] Wendy B. Faris, "1001 Words: Fiction Against Death," *The Georgia Review* 36, no.4 (Winter 1982): 813.

affects us all. The narrative strives to resist its own death but at the same time attempts to prolong the life of others because the tapestry of human experience is also the domain of the narrative. The narrative, poetic narrative included, prolongs life because its final form cannot be imposed until the moment of death. Literally, as long as one writes, one lives. Other writers and poets also compose as a means of survival during a catastrophic historical event.

Rose Ausländer wrote "Alles kann Motiv sein" during her time in the Czernowitz ghetto: "Und während wir den Tod erwarteten, wohnten manche von uns in Traumworten—unser traumatisches Heim in der Heimatlosigkeit. Schreiben war Leben. Überleben."[238] As explored in chapter two, language and writing became an alternate reality for some writers during these dark times but the narrative extends life in another way: "When Scheherazade staves off her death for 1001 nights by telling a continuously enthralling chain of stories to her captor, the king, she dramatizes an intriguing aspect of all literary discourse: its capacity to simulate the postponement of human death through the prolongation of fictional life."[239] Lasker-Schüler was able to live many lives through her inventive stories. Although written texts have a physical permanence beyond the spoken act, it is the orality of Scheherazade's tales that are the key component of her survival.

Additionally, the narrative can never be complete until the moment of death which determines and finalizes the living narrative. The act of writing authenticates life. Its form and purpose can only be known retroactively, a single narrative thread selected from many possibilities of human experience is finally revealed: "Man's desire for endings can be seen as a particular instance of his desire for form. The imposition of form on chaos may represent the

[238] Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975*, 384.

[239] Faris, 811.

affirmative power of life over the dissolving power of death."[240] This form that is imposed on chaos is the narrative that is evidence both of a life lived and the stories it contained. The end, death, is a form of punctuation which adds its authority to the story – pointing only to a single narrative among the many residing in the tapestry of experience. The continuation of the narrative for as long as possible allows the breadth and depth of this tapestry to be examined in greater detail. As separate yet related entities Ausländer's poetry can be read in an infinite number of ways, the narrative changing form each time. Thus the fragmental multi-volume work subverts its own authentication through death.

Another lineage is invoked through the use of "Märchen." Although Scheherazade represents a specifically eastern type of heritage appropriate to Lasker-Schüler as a Jew, the Märchen tradition of Europe, especially Germany, is not to be overlooked in this context. A unique storytelling stereotype is evoked in this context. The traditional storyteller was a craftsman (or woman), a weaver of tapestries and tales. The home workshop was essential to the survival of this particular craft; the mindless spinning allowed the tales to make an even deeper impression on the weavers. Thus the tale could be recalled at will and passed on to other craftspeople. This relationship will be examined more deeply shortly. It is only appropriate that the next lines would not only directly reference Lasker-Schüler's work but that this work would focus specifically on a rug:

> Fäden aus Liebe geknüpft
> ein wundertätiger Teppich (11-12)

[240] Faris, 811.

In Lasker-Schüler's poem, "Ein alter Tibetteppich" (1910),[241] the Oriental rug becomes a metaphor for what she experiences with her own lover. They are, as a couple, woven into the rug beneath their feet. The rug tells the story of the lovers in the same way as the poem. They are both tapestries that communicate a specific kind of experience.[242]

The final four stanzas of the poem deal with death. The fifth stanza refers specifically to the death of Lasker-Schüler's son, Paul. The remainder of the poem deals not just with the poet's death but the death of others:

> Den Sohn verloren
> ihr Herz fiel ins Feuer
>
> Engel begleiten
> ihre Worte
>
> Nach vielen Toden
> begraben auf dem hellsten Stern
> in Jerusalem
>
> Auferstanden
> im Herzen der Zeit (13-21)

[241] Else Lasker-Schüler, *Die Gedichte 1902-1943*, ed. Friedheld Kemp (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp:1997), 164: "Ein alter Tibetteppich"

"Deine Seele, die die meine liebet
Ist verwirkt mit ihr im Teppichtibet

Strahl in Strahl, verliebte Farben,
Sterne, die sich himmellang umwarben.

Unsere Füsse ruhen auf der Kostbarkeit
Maschentausendabertausendweit..

Süsser Lamasohn auf Moschuspflanzentron
Wie lange küsst dein Mund den meinen wohl
Und Wang die Wange buntgeknüpfte Zeiten schon."

[242] Schlegel, "*Mythologie,"* 87: "Die Mythologie ist ein solches Kunstwerk der Natur. In ihrem Gewebe ist das Höchste wirklich gebildet; alles ist Beziehung und Verwandlung, angebildet und umgebildet, und dieses Anbilden und Umbilden eben ihr eigentümliches Verfahren, ihr innres Leben, ihre Methode, wenn ich so sagen darf."

The deaths Lasker-Schüler experienced could either refer to the concrete fact of six million deaths during the Holocaust, which she survived, or the innumerable times in her life in which she lost someone personally and was forced to start a new life. This includes the textual death of her primary protagonist, Prinz Jusuf. Significant personal events included her son's death; the death of her mentor, the poet Peter Hille; and her perpetually poor existence following her second divorce. Lasker-Schüler spent the last years of her life in poverty in Jerusalem and was ultimately buried there. The references to angels and resurrection contextualize this poet in a decisively religious manner. This suggests that she bore a lifelong bond with Judaism. It also suggests that her muse – which was poverty and hardship – was divinely motivated.

Ausländer's "In alle Winde" (1983)[243] reimagines Scheherazade and indicates a direct connection to the works and life of Lasker-Schüler:

> Einst war ich
> Scheherazade
> rettete mein Leben
> mit klugen Worten (1-4)

The first stanza indicates that the poetic speaker, much like the figure of Scheherazade, wrote in order to survive, "*Schreiben als Leben, Überleben*."[244] Writing was one of Ausländer's means to survive the Czernowitz ghetto as it was for many other poets. It is a testament to the power of stories and storytelling – and that words and narratives have the power to alter reality and to even resist death. In the second stanza the poetic voice adds that the words are not directed to the captor but rather to the image in mirror, the poet herself:

[243] Ausländer, *Und preise die kühlende Liebe der Luft: Gedichte 1983-87,* 39.

[244] Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975*, 384.

Heute
richte ich meine Worte
an keinen Kalifen
ich vertraue sie
meinem Spiegel an
er strahlt sie
in alle Winde (5-11)

She no longer needs to save herself from a concrete threat, whether from a vengeful husband or the Third Reich during the Second World War. Instead the words are entrusted to her reflection, or rather, to her poetry. The poem itself corresponds directly to a characteristic of *Universalpoesie* as described by Friedrich Schlegel:

> Nur sie (Universalpoesie) kann gleich dem Epos ein Spiegel der ganzen umgebenden Welt, ein Bild des Zeitalters werden. Und doch kann auch sie am meisten zwischen dem Dargestellten und dem Darstellenden, frei von allem realen und idealen Interesse auf den Flügeln der poetischen Reflexion in der Mitte schweben, diese Reflexion immer wieder potenzieren und wie in einer endlosen Reihe von Spiegeln vervielfachen.[245]

"In alle Winde" and "Gib mir" then become metatexts for the creation of this universal poetry, which reverberate and become stronger as they are breathed out or reflected into the world. They demonstrate a working poetic reality, the reality being the "Schweben." In Novalis' thoughts, reality occupies the liminal space in this definition between the free and conditional reflection of the self and the not-self, the tension between being free and simply being.[246]

[245] Schlegel, *Fragmente*, 79-80.

[246] Novalis, "*Lichtpunk des Schwebens,"* in Uerling's *Theorie der Romantik*, 137: "Frei sein ist die Tendenz des Ich – das Vermögen, frei zu sein, ist die produktive Imagination – Harmonie ist die Bedingung ihrer Tätigkeit – des Schwebens zwischen Entgegengesetzten. Sei einig mit dir selbst ist also Bedingungsgrundsatz des obersten Zwecks: zu sein, aber frei zu sein. Alles Sein, Sein überhaupt ist nichts als Freisein – Schweben zwischen den Extremen, die notwendig zu vereinen und notwendig zu trennen sind. Aus diesem Lichtpunkt des Schwebens strömt alle Realität aus – in ihm ist alles enthalten – Objekt und Subjekt sind durch ihn, nicht er durch sie.
Ichheit oder produktive Imaginationskraft, das Schweben bestimmt, produziert die Extreme, das wozwischen geschwebt wird. Dieses ist eine Täuschung, aber nur im Gebiete des gemeinen Verstandes. Sonst ist es etwas durchaus Reales; denn das Schweben, seine Ursache, ist der Quell, die Mater aller Realität, die Realität selbst."

"Else Lasker-Schüler I" (1976)[247] handles some of the same themes as the version which came a year later and confronts some of the same issues as Rose Ausländer. Lasker-Schüler and Ausländer lived very long and productive lives and they both also struggled with their German identity:

> Ihren langen Atem
> schenkt sie Welten
> die sie erkennen
> von Wort zu Wort
>
> Bäume verknüpft
> mit ihren Wurzeln
> sprechen ihr Deutsch (1-8)

Lasker-Schüler was an extremely prolific artist, writing numerous poems, letters, novels, and plays as well as illustrations for her own work. It is this broad oeuvre and long career to which the "long breath" refers and in which Lasker-Schüler developed her familiar cast of characters. These alter-egos had a great deal of time to grow and mature in her writing, becoming ever more recognizable to colleagues and friends who were familiar with her work. These figures populated worlds of her invention and which she attempted to bring to life sartorially. The worlds that Lasker-Schüler created did not vanish after a single work but rather lived on in her person as she often seemed to inhabit the alternate realities of her own creation in order to escape a sometimes bleak existence.

The reference to roots brings us back to "Unbeschriebenes Blatt II" by Ausländer that began this chapter. The roots are both of the individual poem upon the paper as well as the forest of tradition from which the individual poem springs. It is as if the roots form a subterranean tapestry that speaks to the poet. Interestingly, they speak German to Lasker-Schüler as if she

[247] Ausländer, *In Aschenregen die Spur deines Namens: Gedichte und Prosa: 1976,* 40.

could not freely choose the specific medium in which she wrote but that the medium chooses her. This lends some credence to the notion of words as autonomous entities that choose their author. The German language was an inextricable part of both these poets' identities and the only language in which the muse could be understood. The next verses also bear some commonalities with Ausländer:

> Ihr Reim hat Raum
> für alle Kreaturen
>
> Wenn sie weint
> trösten sie Träume (10-14)

The third stanza suggests that the poetic works create space for all manner of characters and landscapes. The words themselves are also kinds of creatures which populate these poetic works. Lasker-Schüler was no stranger to linguistic inventiveness, creating compound nouns and strange metaphors in order to communicate her ideas and to assume the perspective of her characters. These diverse creatures and new worlds provided solstice for the poet in her times of need. Ausländer refers to them in the fourth stanza as "dreams." Ausländer often associates words and dreams with one another; "Traumwort" is a common expression in her work. Both words seem to express a desire for the world to be other than it is. Words have the power to manifest an alternate reality, a safe space, which is real enough to preserve the poet's well-being during times of trauma. The final stanza imagines another such reality:

> Der Himmel hängt an einem Haar
> das spinnt ihr Wort
> bis an die Augen unsrer Blindenzeit (16-18)

The divine status of the poet as interpreter of divine symbols seems is affirmed here. The relationship suggested, however, is a tenuous one. The link between them is fragile: hair breaks. The hair is also a thread with which the poet can begin to spin the text which stretches out into the world and attempts to make it coherent. The last line suggests that the creator of the tapestry is blind unto its final form until death, like the Greek Fates who blindly spun and cut the threads of life when it reached its end.

Literary discourse is a communal enterprise and asks that we recognize the interdependence of ancient and modern texts. Scheherazade suggests her implicit awareness of this literary communality early on, when she claims that the only stories she knows are the ones she tells Dunyazade at bedtime—'the ones that everybody tells.'"[248] Literary discourse, whether written or spoken, continues to be a communal enterprise. Stories were told and retold in communal settings, each listener embellishing the story as it was retold. Nor can the printed story escape the original tapestry from which its threads were drawn.

Death and the Narrative

Death, especially during the historical catastrophe of the Holocaust, is what gives the text its authority: "Death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death. In other words, it is natural history to which his stories refer back."[249]

[248] Faris, 825.

[249] Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*, ed. Dorothy Hale, trans. Harry Zohn (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 369.

The natural history identified by Walter Benjamin[250] is composed of those often catastrophic historical events that end in the death or overthrow of particular governments and religions, and especially, their constituents. These events, whether they are earthquakes or wars, lend their authority to any text which writes them into its framework. This historical citation need not be overt. If one considers Ausländer's complete body of work, direct references to ghetto life or the Holocaust comprise a remarkably small number of poems in comparison to other poets of the time. The Holocaust was an event whose scale changed not only history but the way in which art could be created and consumed. A restructuring of language, and of all communicative symbols, ensued and silence itself became a primary signifier of the catastrophe. Ausländer's avoidance of the subject and her earlier assertion that writing was survival indicate that this conspicuous absence of the historical event is its own form of authentication. The silence of six million deaths hangs about her work and impresses its authority by proxy, especially a work dedicated to Else Lasker-Schüler.

As a reflection of experience, Ausländer's poetry is capable of carrying her experiences beyond herself and out into the world in which they can have an effect on other people: "[S]torytelling belongs to the world of the living word, the world of a communication that is authentic because it concerns the transmission and sharing of experience, and that can thus become wisdom, the counsel of man to his fellow man."[251] Benjamin differentiates the sharing of

[250] Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) was a German-Jewish literary critic and philosopher. He received his doctorate from the University of Bern in 1919 with a dissertation entitled, *Begriff der Kunstkritik in der Deutschen Romantik.* Benjamin fled to Paris from Germany in the wake of World War II. When the Germans began to occupy France he attempted to flee this time to the United States by boat but did not have the necessary visa. He later joined a group attempting to escape to Spain through the Pyrenees, turned back at the border, he committed suicide. Benjamin wrote considerably on poetry and literature by authors such as Hölderlin, Baudelaire, Kafka, and Brecht, he focused largely on Romantic philosophy. His dissertation concentrated on the works of Fichte, Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and Goethe. Notably, his focus was on the relationship of literary critic to the work of art itself.

[251] P. Brooks, 288.

experience through storytelling from the transmission of mere information that requires too much explanation such as through news agencies and other mass produced media outlets. A good story, he emphasizes, does not explain itself to the reader but rather allows the reader to come to his own conclusions. This is often the case with poetry generally and with certain poets specifically – Celan for example. The form, sound, and lexical selections of the poet are not explained to the casual or even the expert reader but must be carefully unraveled before their meaning is revealed. In this process it is possible to unpack the poem in a number of ways and the reader may take away whatever meaning he prefers. Ausländer's poetry, which is biographically rooted, is exactly the kind of text which can become wisdom.

Caught in a curious niche between the oral tradition and its concrete representation, the poem is perhaps among the most self-conscious of textual forms. The poem's very own expression is the first context that it creates inked upon the page. At the time of Ausländer's writing it was no longer possible to return to the traditions of the past because the historical chasm of the Holocaust breaks all connections in this direction. This is perhaps the reason why Theodor Adorno asserts that there can be no more poetry after World War II,[252] because there can no longer be a meaningful connection to the past: "Paradoxically, where it is a question of modern narrative, Benjamin's argument points the way less to an impossible return of the past than to a new attention directed towards the most subtle signs of context in the most highly elaborated texts, those that the most self-conscious about their communicative situation and

[252] Theodor W. Adorno, *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft I*, vol. 10, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997), 30: "Kulturkritik findet sich der letzten Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und Barbarei gegenüber: nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch, und das frißt auch die Erkenntnis an, die ausspricht, warum es unmöglich ward, heute Gedichte zu schreiben."

status."[253] Post-war poetry reinvents and reclaims language, specifically the perpetrator's language, in a highly self-conscious way from the moment the poet selects German as her medium.

The events of World War II changed the relationship of authors and poets to their linguistic medium, especially those with any relationship to the German language. Ausländer's poem "Nachher" (1979/80)[254] addresses this problematic relationship directly:

> Nach der Nullstunde
> tauten auf
> die gefrorenen Worter
>
> Unser Atem
> wurde tiefer (1-6)

The first stanza alludes to the communicative break caused by the Holocaust, from which language has only recently recovered. The German language itself had shared in the blame heaped upon the perpetrators of the Holocaust, although many other nations had been compliant co-perpetrators. So language occupied an ambiguous station for a time, as if not to speak German should help heal the gaping wounds left to fester after the war. As the time of silence begins to pass there is an air of expectancy and "deep breaths." The language did not return unchanged:

> Die alte Sprache
> kehrte jung zurück
>
> unser verwundetes
> geheiltes
> Deutsch (8-13)

[253] P. Brooks, 290.

[254] Ausländer, *Jeder Tropfen ein Tag: Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß: Gesamtregister,* 169.

The old language had in the meantime been subjected to a vigorous and radical transformation by many poets, most notably by Paul Celan. It had been redefined and renewed in order for these writers to make peace with the language and the culture behind it. Ausländer describes her return to the German language in "Alles kann Motiv sein:" "Verwandelt tauchte die versunkene Welt wieder empor; in ein anderes Licht. Veraltete Formen waren in den Schatten getreten. Viele dieser modernen deutschen Gedichte wurden für mich von bleibender Bedeutung."[255] The outdated forms of the language fell away, revealing new and healed forms of the beloved language in its place. This change allowed poets like Ausländer to renew her craft and continue to grow as an artist.

Benjamin explained that fine crafts such as weaving and storytelling are being lost to the modern world. Industrialization and its trappings have replaced the solitary craftsperson and author. Many goods, including works of art and literature, have become mass produced commodities. This mechanized atmosphere lacks the intimacy required for the existence of storytelling:

> For storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this art is lost when the stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving and spinning to go one while they are being listened to. The more self-forgetful the listener is, the more deeply is what he listens to impressed upon his memory. When the rhythm of work has seized him, he listens to the tales in such a way that the gift of retelling them comes to him all by itself. This, then, is the nature of the web in which the gift of storytelling is cradled. This is how today it is becoming unraveled at all its ends after being woven thousands of years ago in the ambience of the oldest forms of craftsmanship.[256]

This is the domain of the fairytale. Benjamin refers to the genre of fairytale by using "spinning" and "weaving" as metaphors for storytelling and by doing so translating the Latin "*textus,*"

[255] Ausländer, *Hügel aus Äther unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975,* 384.

[256] Benjamin, 367.

texture, fabric, into a poetic sociolect. That familiar kind of story repeated ad infinitum at the spinning wheel to other members of the family who are also at their looms. These stories become part of the individual tapestries of the listeners, a part of their personal narrative, because they are so deeply impressed upon their psyches. This is different than the childhood button game of Lasker-Schüler; Benjamin discusses here a more sophisticated and learned art. This form of craftsmanship is not unlike the child's artful composition. Spinning and weaving in particular involve the careful placement of colored threads alongside one another to create the textile, or for the poet, the text. The ability to reproduce the tale was reliant on the listener's attention being focused elsewhere so that the story could be cleanly imprinted upon "his" memory. It is not that the listeners of times past were focused on the story in a way that today's listeners are not but rather that their attention was not divided as the modern listener's.

Ausländer considers her poetic work to be its own kind of craft and writes of this refined nature in two poems, "Handwerk" (1977)[257] and "Verfolgt" (1979/80).[258] "Handwerk" begins by directly stating: "Gedichteschreiben / ein Handwerk" and continues, "Die Hand das Werk / des Schöpfers" (1-4). The first two lines assert that the act of writing a poem is comparable to the art of spinning and weaving. The second two lines set the hand and their work equal as creations to one another and, furthermore, attribute these creations to a higher power that moves through the hand of the poet. The final three couplets affirm this observation:

> Er schreibt
> deine Finger
>
> freut sich
> an ihrem Zusammenspiel

[257] Ausländer, *Ich höre das Herz des Oleanders: Gedichte 1977-1979*, 503.

[258] Ausländer, *Jeder Tropfen ein Tag: Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß: Gesamtregister,* 196.

spielt dir seine Hände
in die Hand (5-10)

It is this higher power who writes, the poet's fingers merely mimicking the master's movements as if at play. It is, however, the master poet who plays through the medium of the poet. No doubt in this act, the poet herself is able to rather mindlessly copy the work of the great creator and in the process it becomes impressed upon her mind as her own.

"Verfolgt" begins with a description of how the poetic work may differ from more concrete endeavors:

Mein Handwerk hat
einen papierenen Boden

Er bricht
nicht (1-4)

Unlike ceramics or glass the poem is durable, flexible like a tapestry but etched onto paper. This resistance to wear is emphasized in the last two couplets:

Unverwüstliches Wort
immer auf der Flucht

verfolgt
vom Wahn der Ewigkeit (5-8)

The word is incapable of wearing away but is constantly fleeing or resisting the encroachment of eternity.

A superficial reading of "Verfolgt" stands at an ironic distance to the historical imperative. The work of the poet cannot be broken because it is not fully concrete, unlike so many valuable artworks and heirlooms lost by Jewish families during World War II. The text,

the very language, attempts resistance. The "Wahn der Ewigkeit" is a solemn reminder of the thousand-year reign promised by the National Socialist when they gained power. The poetry left behind endures as a reminder of the dead for posterity, although it will always be haunted by the memory of the Holocaust.

In spite of the historical break caused in part by the Holocaust, the literary tradition has found new ways with which to form connections to the past. Among these available threads are the mythologies and fairy tales that pervade all languages and cultures, making the figure of the storyteller a pervasive one:

> In the first place among these [epic arts] is the one practiced by the storyteller. It starts the web which all stories together form in the end. One ties on to the next, as the great storytellers, particularly the Oriental ones, have always readily shown. In each of them there is a Scheherazade who thinks of a fresh story whenever her tales comes to a stop.[259]

These often oral traditions predate the written traditions that later enabled some languages to be standardized out of many dialects. Nations would later be built on these languages and the efforts to create founding national myths, connections with these early oral tales, are largely artificial. Because these tales resist authorship they can be continually rewritten in order to more accurately reflect the prevailing conditions, whatever and whenever that may be.

Ausländer exploits the malleability of these texts in order to pay tribute to poets that she admired. She utilizes archetypal storyteller, Scheherazade, who resists death through the telling of her tales. Scheherazade is reimagined in the body of Else Lasker-Schüler, an independent woman of modernity who ensured her survival and the survival of others, like her son, through

[259] Benjamin, 371.

the writing of stories and poems. Scheherazade and her disciples Ausländer and Lasker-Schüler, continue to resist death through the continual retelling of their tales and the reinvention of the storyteller through poetry.

Home

Ausländer's poetry reaches out to establish a connection to something greater than itself – to find its origin and community. These poems are attempts to construct belonging. At times, they make connections to a specific physical place that becomes conflated with the memories of the poet's time spent there. This land takes on the glittering aura of fairytale and becomes the subject of its own unique mythology. It is a timeless sanctuary where the child-poet's memory remains safe, although lonely. Ausländer's poetry of place and childhood connects her to her biographical origins. More abstractly, it connects her to a psychic origin. Her most formative years were spent in Bukovina among family. This is the condition that made the earliest and most primal impression upon her. It is also a factor that will continue to shape her experience in the wider world.

There is more to belonging than just geographical location, particularly for a writer. Other poems reach out to the venerable tradition of German literature and legend. Ausländer was steeped in the German tradition since childhood. She names Friedrich Hölderlin and Franz Kafka, among many others, as her favorite influences and inspirations. Heinrich Heine and his poem "Loreley" figure conspicuously in Ausländer's work, especially in her poetry dedicated to Annette Droste-Hülshoff. Loreley, the siren of the Rhine, although invented by Clemens Brentano, is related to substantially older mythical figures, and therefore, taps into those stories which portend to tell the origin of the world itself. This is a remarkable heritage that is fraught with problems of belonging for Ausländer and her subjects, which whether for reasons of their religion or their gender, prevent them from falling neatly into German tradition during their

lifetimes. These poets' refuge remained necessarily their art and their language. Fortunately, the modern canon has expanded to welcome all of them.

Ausländer's art connects her to another esteemed tradition that of the storyteller. She invokes this tradition in the way her poetry mimics her life so closely, yet with a difference. The poetic voice of her work is nearly the same as the author herself. The nature of the stories she tells require some portion of fictionalization as her poetry emerges from memories. It is finessed and romanticized, presenting the reader with the best possible outcome. Its truth, to an extent, is negotiable but in no way wholly refutable. Ausländer directly invokes the storyteller in her poetic tribute to Else Lasker-Schüler by comparing her to Scheherazade of *1001 Arabian Nights*, who saved her head and transformed a king with her words. Lasker-Schüler's literary production reflected her life as she wished it to be. It was an autobiographical fiction and a means of survival, as was Ausländer's own writing also.

Ausländer's work strives to make many other connections that are examined only briefly in this paper. The most intimate connections are made with other people, especially lovers. The character of her relationships was powerful enough to color her work not only in poems about love but poems about place. An unhappy marriage tainted her first experience of New York City, while her second journey there was far more joyful accompanied by a new romantic interest. This phenomenon, which may seem unremarkable at first, suggests something interesting about perception and memory. New York became an expansive paradise instead of a dank prison for no other reason than whose company she kept. Her memories of her childhood with her parents in Bukovina are likewise idyllic. The character of the land shares a great deal with the character of those who surrounded her, implying that home may have little to do with a specific location or even familiar people.

Ausländer considered Italy to be a second home. Like Bukovina, Italy possessed a surreal beauty. Cities such as Venice enjoyed an ancient and almost legendary history – perfect for storytelling. Her trips to Italy were not a product of forced exile but undertaken for the sheer joy of traveling and she was often accompanied by a friend. The people were as warm as the Mediterranean climate but whose language she could not speak, save for four words and hand gestures. She nevertheless felt deeply understood and welcome. Language, which had played such a vital role in her earlier odes to home, was not at all necessary for the same feeling she now had. Without the specificity of place, person, or language – what remains that can signify home? Home for an exile, as well as for all of us who have been uprooted under less tumultuous circumstances, is immaterial. Time passes, as do people, and those hallmarks that to us had once defined home become faded, ghostly parts of indistinct memory. The emptiness must be filled in somehow lest our own identity become lost as well. In order to return home under these conditions some imagination is required. Home transforms into a special type of fiction.

Without a stable signifier for home, then what becomes of the self without an origin from which to start? Identity is thus something dynamic and malleable according to the myriad of influences acting upon the individual. Ausländer recognized this paradox all too well:

> Hier und dort
>
> Wäre ich nur ich, wie einfach wäre alles. Aber ich bin auch jedes mögliche Du und Er und Sie. Ich habe mich nicht in der Hand. Die Hand reicht mich weiter, wem weiß ich nicht immer. Das Wo ist ebenso gewiss. Es sagt zwar: hier bin ich, aber wer weiß, was *hier* ist. Auch das Dort kann hier sein. Hier und dort gibt es Augen. Lichtaugen, Nachtaugen. Auch dort ist Sauerstoff in der Luft. Ich atme hier und dort mein fremdes Daheim.[260]

[260] Rose Ausländer, *Hügel / aus Äther / unwiderruflich: Gedichte und Prosa 1966-1975*, 185: Interpolation between "Lichtaugen. Nachtaugen" gives the reader "Nichtaugen." Compare to "Luftschlösser" in Chapter 2, pages 77-78, as well as Paul Celan's "Niemandsrose."

The poetic voice begins by lamenting that everything would be so much easier if she only knew who she really were. Her particular poetic voice, as we have seen, is capable of assuming any number of perspectives other than her own. Additionally, she may be the "du" of many of her own poems, as well as the "ich." Much like the autonomous words in "Alles kann Motiv sein," the "ich" of the poem exercises its independence in unexpected ways. The subject and the words, however, share the hand of a creator – a poet – to guide them. The subject, like the words, may insist on manifestation through the medium of the handwritten verse but ultimately cannot control its fate that is in the "hands" of a higher power. The only certainty it may have is of presence, an observed presence, much like a poem being read. There is little difference between here or there as they are both equally home.

Ausländer frequently writes about a foreign homeland or strangers who are friends. Her efforts may be an attempt to both rationalize and make palatable the uncomfortable situation that she frequently finds herself in – of being nowhere at home and at home everywhere, which mean arguably the same thing. Another nexus of home, homelessness, self, and poetry is found in Heimat III:[261]

> Heimatlosigkeit
> dir fremde Heimat
> bleibe ich treu
>
> Stimmen
> kommen geschrieben
> umarmen die Erde
> halten den Himmel
> schenken mir
> Frühling und Schnee
>
> Aus meiner Heimatlosigkeit
> komme ich

[261] Rose Ausländer, *Wieder ein Tag aus Glut und Wind: Gedichte 1980-1982*, 381.

mit meinen Worten
zu dir
fremder Freund
streue Glanzlichter
über das Dunkel
unsre gemeinsame Heimat

The first stanza, once unscrambled, name the state of homelessness itself as the strange home to which the poetic voice will remain true. The voices, once again reminiscent of the words or the poems that hang about in the atmosphere,[262] arrive to build a home for her. They tenderly support the heaven and earth and make gifts of spring and winter – which can alternatively be read as life and death. The voices create these world-shaping elements from writing, as it appears first among their acts. The last stanza indicates that the voices are what make it possible for the poet to leave her homelessness. It is actually the condition of being a poet that is her home and that lights her path in a wider world.

Ausländer reclaims and reinvents notions of exile and homelessness through her poetry. She embraces the uncertainty that she must continually confront as she moves from country to country and city to city. This permanent liminal state becomes the home to which she must accustom herself. Ausländer uses her poetry to add ornamentation to this condition by giving it, and herself, a history and mythology. Other poetry locates and deepens her condition by branching out and touching other people and traditions. Her home – by means of her craft – has become part of her being that she can take wherever she goes.

[262] See Chapter 4, pages 153-157.

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