INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700  800/521-0600
RICE UNIVERSITY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH
FROM FONTANE TO CAROSSA:
FOUR CASE STUDIES

by

BETTY HEITZMAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE

Klaus H. Weissenberger, Director
Professor
Dept. of German and Slavic Studies

Michael Winkler
Professor
Dept. of German and Slavic Studies

Robert Patten
Professor
Dept. of English

Houston, Texas

November, 1998
Copyright
Betty Heitzman
1999
ABSTRACT

The Autobiography of Childhood and Youth
from Fontane to Carossa:
Four Case Studies

by

Betty Heitzman

The literary autobiography of childhood is an extension of the literary autobiography, portraying the distilled essence of the author's life. The autobiography of childhood is distinct from autobiographical fiction but includes more than the "poetical" childhood. Jean Starobinski's model of the elegiac and picaresque forms of autobiography applies to the childhood autobiography. While the structure of autobiography is preserved, there are distinct features resulting from the limited time frame. The forward movement of the autobiography is accentuated, and the teleological aspect is enhanced by the distance from the time described and the greater sense of completeness. The extremely elegiac autobiography is similar to the extremely picaresque autobiography in that both desire a break between the past and the present. The moderate forms show continuity between the past and the present. Both extreme forms are contrary to the intention of the childhood autobiography. The autobiographer may end with his childhood as a matter of convenience or to avoid embarrassment, but the early closure may reflect the author's purpose.
Theodor Fontane, by means of coming to some clarification of the conflict between the principled and empathetic sides of humanity, achieves convalescence through the writing of Meine Kinderjahre. Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach illustrates the principle of repetition in Meine Kinderjahre through the theme of "Abschied," as well as displaying contentment in her understanding of her relationship with her Heavenly Father. Hans Carossa attempts to create a new childhood in Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend, in that he melds an imaginary childhood with his own, while omitting essential components of his own childhood. The result is the illusion of childhood autobiography. Jugend in Wien is Arthur Schnitzler's confession and bid for absolution for the hypocrisy and snobbery of his youth; Schnitzler's atheism, however, leaves him no alternative but pretense.

As with any literary work, the reader needs to be careful to understand the author's intent, not read his own intent into the work. The autobiography of childhood is not uniform, but rather, rich and diverse.
While the dissertation is a project one must complete oneself, I could not have done it without much encouragement from others. I am grateful to the faculty of the Department of German and Slavic Studies for the supportive environment that they have maintained during my years of study. Many thanks to my family and friends, who have encouraged me regularly along the way in various ways, by listening, commenting, showing interest, speaking kind words, writing notes of encouragement, and praying. Special thanks to Carole Gibson and Betty Jean Larson for their proof-reading assistance. I am grateful to members of my committee, Dr. Winkler, and Dr. Patten, for their insight and interest in my topic. I am especially thankful to my "Doktorvater," Dr. Weissenberger, for introducing me to the topic of non-fictional literature. I appreciate his great patience, kindness, encouragement, understanding, and friendship over these now many years. And thanks be to God, my Heavenly Father, who delights in answering the prayers of His people — the One with whom "nothing will be impossible" (NKJV Luke 1:37) and "... who able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us" (NKJV Eph. 3:20).
Table of Contents

Preface .................................................................................................................. vi

Introduction .......................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 1: Theodor Fontane’s Meine Kinderjahre:
An Autobiography of Convalescence ......................................................... 49

Chapter 2: Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s Meine Kinderjahre:
An Autobiography of Contentment ............................................................. 116

Chapter 3: Arthur Schnitzler’s Jugend in Wien:
An Autobiography of Commutation ............................................................ 180

Chapter 4: Hans Carossa’s Eine Kindheit and
Verwandlungen einer Jugend:
An Autobiography of Confabulation ......................................................... 216

Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 250

Works Cited ..................................................................................................... 255
Preface

The presuppositions a scholar has with respect to literature, in general, will influence his study of any particular work. What I have tried to do in this investigation, however, is to approach the texts with as few preconceived ideas as possible about the results of a study on the autobiography of childhood. The four case-studies on which the conclusions are primarily based are a small sample of autobiographies of childhood and youth written in German during a relatively limited period. These may be considered representative of the potential for the autobiography of childhood, that is, of the substantive nature of the autobiography of childhood. The works were chosen, not as mere random samples of the various nineteenth-century autobiographies of childhood but because of their literary quality. The authors are well-known, respected writers of literature, so it was expected that their autobiographies would be literary, as well. The specific authors were chosen with an eye to showing an array of possibilities for the autobiography of childhood. For the reader interested in one particular author, the chapters following the introductory chapter are essentially independent, each consisting of an empirical analysis of a particular author's autobiography. The breadth and variety of the autobiography of childhood will, however, be better appreciated by a reading of one author in light of the others. The arrangement of the chapters is chronological,
and implies no other progression of thought or style. While Carossa is placed last chronologically, his work might well be placed first because of its anachronistic tone.

In the following discussion, for ease of terminology, the “autobiography of childhood” will be considered to encompass both the autobiography of childhood, where the work ends at some time around puberty, and the autobiography of youth, which may extend up to the point of adulthood or the entrance into the adult world and corresponding responsibilities.
Introduction

The long-standing dearth of scholarship on the subject of autobiography has been remedied. The same cannot be said, however, of the autobiography of childhood, particularly of those autobiographies in the German language. While books on the general topic of autobiography abound, almost nothing has been written on autobiography of childhood. Scholarship on the latter is lagging at least a generation behind its parent.

That a relationship exists between the two forms of non-fictional literature is immediately apparent from their names. The words "autobiography of childhood" indicate that there is some connection between that form or structure, and autobiographies in general. Thus, before looking specifically at the autobiography of childhood, we shall discuss the broader genre.

It should be noted that the discussion here shall be limited to the literary autobiography. The works chosen for discussion were all written by well-known literary figures. Certainly, despite any expectations to the contrary, the quality of a work is not assured because the author is, by profession, a writer. It will be seen in the following chapters that, just as with other literature, the quality of the autobiographical writings will vary. Good authors write in such a way that the understanding and
enjoyment of a work improves upon another reading. That is, the story is more than mere plot. The form complements the content. The use of literary forms and conventions, symbolism, and structures should enhance the substance presented.

In the simplest terms, an autobiography is the writing of one's own (life) story. That the definitions of autobiography are many should surprise no one. Like any other genre study, some cases are unambiguous, while others fall into a gray area. In his foundational Design and Truth in Autobiography, Roy Pascal describes the autobiography as "... a shaping of the past. It imposes a pattern on a life, constructs out of it a coherent story. It ... defines, implicitly or explicitly, a certain consistency of relationship between the self and the outside world ..." (9). Providing more specificity and shape to this basic idea is Phillipe Lejeune, who considers an autobiography to be a "[r]etrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality" (4). James Olney bases his definition on the autobiographer's understanding of "bios," that "... is both the course of a life seen as a process rather than a stable entity and the unique psychic configuration that is this life and no other" ("Ontology" 241). The license Olney grants in this definition is so great that he threatens to render the definition of autobiography useless. On the one hand, he
finds that the teleological aspect can be key, since "... the autobiographer is in a position to see, recall, and compose; and it is up to the autobiographer to cut it where he will so that the process will be complete and unified" ("Ontology" 240). On the other hand, Olney allows that memory may be excluded entirely, with the result that autobiography

... will be a purely formal affair, without historical, biographical, or narrative content—indeed, without any necessary content—and insofar as it adheres to an imitation of la conscience pure and thus succeeds in attaining to the state of l'autobiographie pure, it will sing the same exquisite, senseless sound as la poésie pure: the inexplicable and lovely music of consciousness that, if it means anything at all, means only itself. ("Ontology" 242)

To permit this latter definition to stand brings the genre to the point of nonsense.

Ingrid Aichinger similarly finds a difficulty with Pascal's definition, in that his insistence that the autobiographer present the meaning for his life "... trifft nun in gewisser Weise auf Werke des 'klassischen Zeitalters' der Autobiographie, wie Pascal es nennt, zu, keineswegs aber auf jene der späteren Jahrzehnte" (Selbstdarstellung 33). Aichinger contends that autobiographers following Goethe were, in some way, writing in response to his pivotal work, the most important factor being that "... die Konstanz der Ich-Konzeption Goethes ...; das Werden der eigenen Persönlichkeit wird als eine bestimmte Form der 'Entwicklung'
gestaltet” (Selbstdarstellung 33). Instead of Pascal’s requirement that the author display “Vertrauen in eine allumfassende kosmische Absicht.” Aichinger proposes that an autobiography will have three primary elements: an


This last definition is helpful in broadening the scope without losing the focus. Aichinger points out in her definition the necessity that the author communicate the meaning of the experiences he presents.

Central to enduring literature is that it touches something of the human experience. It also “... admits us to experiences other than our own” (Lewis, Experiment 139). This may be nowhere more clearly the case than in the literary autobiography. While there may be something of a plot in a literary autobiography, it is not the events that are primarily in view, but rather the response of the author to those experiences.

Contrasting this form is the proletariat autobiography. In his article on the autobiography during the period from Fontane to Carossa, Volker Hoffmann centers much of his discussion around the latter form.
Although this type of autobiography may be of historical interest and value, its focus is on the role of the individual in society, not the individual as a human being. The literary autobiography, negatively understood, is not the mere recounting of biographical facts in order to describe a bygone era for the historical record. The proletariat autobiography may be considered more like the memoir than the literary autobiography, since both the memoir and the proletariat autobiography concentrate more on the external person or the historical context, the events experienced and the people the author has known, than on the inner person of the autobiographer.

One of the peculiarities of the autobiography is that its focus, the inner person, is both its subject and object: “Es besteht sowohl Identität zwischen dem Aussagesubjekt (erzählendes Ich) und dem Aussageobjekt (erzähltes Ich) als auch Differenz: die Differenz der Zeit, der Erfahrung und des Wissens” (Tarot 30). The present writer writes about the past person, but cannot divorce himself completely from the past. Because a person undergoes continual change, the past and the present may seem to be two separate worlds, but there is continuity from one to the next. The contrast between the two spheres provides a backdrop for the author’s reflection on his life, for him to study the change itself and how it occurred.
Of course, the author has limitations to his ability to understand and recount his experiences and their significance in his life. These barriers will be discussed later in more depth and, therefore, only briefly mentioned here. Two significant obstacles the author encounters are those of perception and memory. First, he is unable to perceive completely and correctly evaluate what he has experienced. His judgment is colored by his temperament, mood, and prior experiences. To a certain extent, he "sees what he wants to see." He is further hampered by gaps in memory. The inability to fully remember the incident and the circumstances of the event result in disjointed snapshots of the past. Thus, the picture the author presents will, to some degree, be a distortion of what he experienced. The challenge for the autobiographer of childhood is compounded by the great difference in time from the past to the present, as well as the lack of experience, knowledge, and maturity during the time the incidents were experienced.

Aichinger's definition is a good basis for defining the childhood autobiography. The autobiography of childhood,¹ as I define it, is one in which the author engages himself to explore and examine the years of his

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the term "autobiography of childhood" will, in this discussion, specifically refer to autobiographies of childhood written in German, regardless of the nationality of the writer.
childhood (the termination point of which is variable, but which is some
time before he is established in the adult world) and by doing so, to
present in the work a comprehensive statement about his life or those
years, either positive, negative, or neutral. That is, the work must be
more than a listing of childhood activities, as in memoirs, and it must
deal with the author's own, real existence. It is not written as a
sociological document to inform the reader of conditions of childhood,
but is, rather, first a literary form.

As in autobiography, the teleological perspective is foundational to
the autobiography of childhood. The autobiographer must show himself
engaged in dealing with the events of his childhood, as they relate to his
life. This expectation is created in part by the autobiographical form.
The autobiography is an open form. Just as with the diary, the
autobiographer is prevented from writing the end of his life. However,
the autobiography allows, indeed, actually demands closure where the
diary does not. There may be reflection on the past in the diary, but it is
not as complete in its form. The autobiography more closely resembles a
truly closed form, in that the attempt is made to present a
comprehensive statement. The author is expected to draw some
conclusions about his life in an autobiography, whereas in a diary, the
judgments an author makes one day may be contradicted in the next
day's entry if the author has continued to reflect or has gathered new
data. The diarist looks at the constituent parts of life individually. The autobiographer takes those parts and integrates them into a whole. By doing this, he may make life seem to be unrecognizably understandable to himself or to others. Even in writing about childhood, which may be in the distant past, it is impossible to be certain about all the ramifications of particular events. Certainly C. S. Lewis is correct when he states “... real things are not simple. They look simple, but they are not” (Christianity 46). A fourteen-year-old can readily answer many questions in life that would perplex a much older, more experienced person. Nonetheless, the autobiography, without the teleological perspective, becomes a mere collection of anecdotes or facts, having lost its raison d’être.

Childhood autobiographies are relatively recent, compared to the more broadly defined autobiography. This statement holds true whether one considers, with Georg Misch, that “... das erste literarische Dokument der Gattung... stammt von Isokrates...,” and that “... das Werk Augustins ist nicht ein Anfang, sondern ein Vollendung” (9), or whether one is more inclined to agree with Pascal that the autobiography “... is a creation of European civilisation, and really begins with Augustine” (21). Examples of childhood autobiographies span some two hundred years, some even gaining great popularity. The childhood autobiography of the nineteenth-century German artist, Wilhelm
von Kügelgen, while not acclaimed as a literary masterpiece, was quite popular for a time.

Despite the number of works of this type, though, little critical study has been done with respect to them as a group. Individual studies on autobiographies of childhood have been undertaken, either as part of a critical study of an author or from the perspective of autobiography proper. However, apart from these studies or other investigations from a particular perspective (such as German women authors in the nineteenth century), little material is available on the topic with particular consideration of the literary aspect. Just three books have been written on childhood and autobiographical material, the first in 1981.

First, Irene Hardach-Pinke makes use of autobiographies as a basis for studying childhood from a socio-historical perspective. She acknowledges the literary aspect, but it is not the focus of her work. In the eighteenth century, childhood is detailed "[i]n den Autobiographien, die aus aufklärerischen Motiven geschrieben wurden" as well as in autobiographies that were written as "Erinnerungsblätter" for the family (Hardach-Pinke 16-17). The primary purpose for their inclusion in the autobiography is to serve "... als Vorspann zur Darstellung der erwachsenen Person. Es werden in erster Linie die Kindheitserinnerungen berichtet, die für die spätere Entwicklung des Autors bedeutsam erscheinen" (Hardach-Pinke 16). According to her,
childhood begins to be presented for its own sake in the nineteenth century (16). The nineteenth century is later than I would place it, considering Jung-Stilling's contribution, although that is in the late eighteenth century. More interesting, though, is Hardach-Pinke's assessment of the nineteenth-century presentation of childhood in the autobiographies:

Hier wird das Kind, das der Autor einmal war, distanziert als das "fremde Kind" dargestellt. Nicht mehr die Bedeutung für das spätere Leben ist das Prinzip, nach dem aus den Erinnerungen eine Auswahl getroffen wird, sondern Auswahlprinzip soll allein die Erinnerung sein, d.h. alles, was aus der Kindheit in der Erinnerung gespeichert ist, soll berichtet werden. (16-17)

This is, in essence, a step backwards from the literary aspect of purposeful selection. While Hardach-Pinke may consider it a progressive step, in that the didactic element is eliminated or decreased, and therefore the literary element is more prominent, the structure of a good literary work seems to have been thrown overboard for the random memories that surface. It may be that assessment does not accurately reflect the author's intent behind her description of the differences. The works that I have looked at, however, are not products of an autobiographer's rambling thoughts or merely collections of disjointed memories; each of the stories under consideration in this study exhibits a distinct pattern.
Second, Werner Brettschneider (1984), in his study titled *Kindheitsmuster*, centers on the literary aspect of childhood autobiographical material. He includes not only autobiographies of childhood, but other fictional works and autobiographical material with the theme “childhood,” such as Kafka’s “Brief an den Vater” (69-72). It should be apparent that a work that encompasses such a breadth of material in 108 pages can do no more than introduce the topic. Although he focuses on the literary aspect of childhood autobiography, Brettschneider erases the distinctions between autobiography and autobiographical works. He asserts correctly the goal of autobiography: “Seit den Anfängen unserer europäischen Kultur bedeutet das Aufzeichnen des eigenen Lebens eine Möglichkeit der Suche nach dem Ich” (10). Nonetheless, he follows this closely with:

Die modisch gewordene Zweiteilung der Literatur in fiktional oder nichtfiktional bringt wenig Gewinn. Jede Art von Autobiographie ist soweit nichtfiktional, wie sie die realen Fakten des gelebten Lebens als Fundament alles Erzählten beibehalten muß, und soweit fiktional, wie sie nicht nur auswählen, sondern auch dazuerfinden muß, sowohl um der Komposition und Glaubwürdigkeit willen, als auch, weil die Erinnerung kein wissenschaftlicher Detektor, vielmehr eine ungemein persönliche und vom Willen geleitete Kraft ist. (11)

His understanding of the nature of autobiography is correct insofar as he sees the “search for the self” as its basis. However, the failure to discriminate between fiction and non-fiction causes him to fall into the
same trap as Olney. Brettschneider fails to take into account the very personal nature of autobiography as a document that reflects one's life, and the related issue of integrity. Before moving to further discussion of the role of integrity in the autobiography, let us turn to the third scholarly work on autobiographies of childhood.

Richard N. Coe (1987) has written on autobiographies of childhood from a comparative viewpoint, with sources including some six hundred autobiographies of childhood written in several languages (xi-xii). Using these, he is able to make some sweeping generalizations (which will be discussed in detail in this chapter), but he does not analyze any work in particular. His attitude displays more than mere confidence in his topic. Alan Davies likewise seems to discern an overbearing attitude in Coe, for he subtly observes that Coe "... feels ready to tell us what he thinks has 'worked best' in the genre" (54). The same attitude is seen in Coe’s disdain for the less poetic types: "[T]he child who is destined to be a poet or a writer is exceptional in the first instance, and therefore alienated willy-nilly from the average run of research chemists and electrical engineers, pineapple growers or airport controllers" (52). It is true that "exceptional" can mean not only "intelligent," but also "different," both of which might apply in this sentence. "Different," though, in this case, means unequal:
. . . what is it, in heredity, in environment, in education or in experience, that will transform one human being into a poet and his brother into a real estate salesman? Here, the dreaded specter of inequality rears its Medusa-head; for the poet can tell us something about himself, whereas the real estate salesman cannot. (Coe 275)

One might suppose that Coe means that the poet is simply better able to articulate something about himself than the salesman. He betrays his real belief, however, when he writes:

In the majority of cases, our children—the future poets—are a great deal more intelligent than the adults who once encompassed and "guided" them; and the crass, unimaginative incompetence employed by these adults to introduce the child to what will, for the rest of its life, be of supreme importance—the sense of something greater than self—will appear in retrospect as wholly unforgivable. The resulting atheism is, at bottom, a refusal to perpetuate human, rather than to condone divine, stupidity. (Coe 47)

I quote this at length — to let him speak for himself because one's attitude is foundational to the observations one makes. That truth holds in both autobiography and secondary criticism. Davies, noting "a sense of aimlessness" in Coe's work, insightfully remarks: Coe "... is interested — really just because his authors turn out to have been interested . . ." (56). I would add that Coe is interested in particular in what they are interested in, because he sees poets as superior to "average" people. In essence, Coe is sentimental about the poet-authors he studies.
Sentimentalism, when carried too far, leads one off the path of integrity. This weakness is one that Anna Robeson Burr finds to be prominent in the German writers of autobiography:

The chief cause for partial or defective sincerity, leading to a lower value in the finished work, is the sentimental point of view. It is most strikingly present in the German examples. . . Sentiment, the sentimental attitude toward what concerns oneself, hangs like a hazy cloud over the narrative, obscuring facts, distorting experience. (68)

Writing in his diary less than ten years later, Schnitzler identifies the same weakness: “Las neulich Spielhagens Erinnerungen. (Finder und Erfinder’.) Kein sehr erfreuliches Buch; umständlich, von einer altjungferlichen Discretion, gerührt von sich selbst, kurz sentimental, was in Autobiographien ganz unleidlich” (TB 20.IV.1917).

One may take exception to Burr’s criticism of Goethe: despite “pages of magnificent and penetrating criticism,” he has the “. . . mental habit of confusing sentiment with fact . . .” with the result that “. . . Wahrheit und Dichtung is the weakest autobiography the world has ever had from so strong a hand” (68). And, while I disagree with her conclusion that “. . . the German autobiography, . . . as autobiography in our sense of the word, . . . does not exist” (208), the tendency of any author to minimize the negative and accentuate the positive (beyond all recognition) for reasons of nostalgia, pushes integrity to the side, “besmearing, hiding all it touches” (Burr 208). If the subject of
sentimentality has significance for the German autobiography, then it has all the more significance for the autobiography of childhood.

Goethe's autobiography is pivotal in the history of German autobiography. Aichinger chronicles the many attempts at imitation that have failed: Hebbel's is one (Selbstdarstellung 62). She refers in particular to a statement Hebbel made after reading Dichtung und Wahrheit (Selbstdarstellung 64). Hebbel's position is, namely, that "[w]er sein Leben darstellt, der sollte wie Goethe, nur das Liebliche, Schöne, das Beschwichtigende und Ausgleichende, das sich auch noch in den dunkelsten Verhältnissen auffinden läßt, hervorheben und das Uebrige auf sich beruhen lassen" (TB 2516). Writing in response to Hebbel's assertion, Aichinger observes rightly: "Damit wäre eine Dimension ausgespart, die wesentlich zur Lebenswirklichkeit gehört" (Selbstdarstellung 65). That is precisely the problem with sentimentalism. The sentimental "autobiography" becomes like so many pictures of the same smiling face — limited in its ability to display the many dimensions of the person.

Sentimentalism excludes the truth for the sake of harmony. Objectivity in evaluation of the facts takes a secondary position to emotion. This raises the question that has often been asked, namely of the writer's ability to be objective, to know the truth. But the question regarding truth is not a new one, for Pilate questioned: "What is
truth?” (NKJV John 18:38). While an autobiography is much more than a chronicle of a series of facts or incidents, as in a police report, too much emotional involvement by the writer hinders objectivity. Hartmut Scheible criticizes Schnitzler as being too distanced, of writing “Anti-Autobiographie” and of not disclosing enough of himself (“Diskretion” 213). Schnitzler's method, though, as I shall maintain, is necessary for the pursuit of his goal. Schnitzler is not coldly detached, as if he were not at all involved. He is not merely a disinterested reporter or an innocent bystander. He wants to distance himself from his earlier dependence on emotion. Indeed, it is the author, himself, who holds that sentimentalism has no place in the autobiography. Furthermore, Schnitzler declares his aim to write the truth, with the explanation: “Es gehört nicht zur Wahrheit im höheren Sinn, über alles Nebensächliche, insbesondere rein Physische Bericht zu erstatten, doch gibt es Fälle, wo das Verschweigen geradezu Fälschung wäre” (Notizen 323).

This “Wahrheit im höheren Sinn” can be understood as “integrity.” The spirit of the truth and the letter of the truth are not dichotomous, and integrity is as much a matter of the former as the latter. Schnitzler, for instance, might have revealed what his symptoms were, while concealing their psychological nature. Was it necessary to state the exact nature of his symptoms to maintain integrity? No. It is virtually impossible to write or explain everything that could be said, or that can
be remembered. It is also unnecessary to say everything. Integrity is neither simply the “. . . minuziös[e] Aufzählung von Fakten in chronologischer Folge: eine Karikatur der Autobiographie,” nor is it the “. . . genaueste, stets erneuerte Analyse einer bestimmten Situation, ja eines Augenblicks,” for “. . . Aufrichtigkeit, ins Extrem gesteigert, schlägt ins Gegenteil um” (Aichinger, “Probleme” 423). The form requires limitation. With that limitation, the author exercises his discretion to present a picture of himself.

The selection process that must come into play with any writing, fiction or non-fiction, does not diminish the reality of the experience, as Brettschneider supposes. We each experience many things that do not affect our perception of an event. Since we do not remember everything, the necessary selection process is already achieved to some degree by this natural means. We cannot relate what we do not recall. At the same time, some things that we do remember may not seem significant. On the other hand, they may have significance, for a reason that we do not perceive or understand. Even such matters may give one some insight into himself. Why a certain event stands out to one and not to another has a reason, whether we know what it is, or not. The autobiographer’s purpose is not to record the details of everything that has ever happened, but to present the distilled essence of his life, to give
an account of his perspective on his life. To "... differentiate between accuracy in detail and accuracy in portraiture" is the key (Burr 53).

The picture is a portrait, rather than a photograph. But the portrait should be reliable; there should be a distinct resemblance to the autobiographer. Of course, what the author reveals of himself may be different than what the reader expects. It is the author's task to convince the reader that what he writes is accurate, if not historically, then at least according to his memory. Ebner-Eschenbach includes in the foreword to Meine Kinderjahre a statement of this kind. Her declaration and Schnitzler's statement in his "Autobiographische Notizen" are examples of a "referential pact" that Lejeune finds essential to autobiography: "In autobiography, it is indispensable that the referential pact be drawn up, and that it be kept..." (22). While he stipulates that integrity is essential to the work, he adds that

... it is not necessary that the result be on the order of strict resemblance. ... The "resemblance" can be found on two levels: ... at the level of the elements of the narrative — the criterion of accuracy intervenes; ... at the level of the whole narrative — what we will call fidelity intervenes. Accuracy involves information, fidelity meaning. (22-23)

Without the intent of integrity, the work ceases to be autobiography.

Integrity in one's life is difficult to achieve with any consistency. The author knows himself better than anyone else knows him, but that person can also be unaware of some of his own weaknesses or strengths.
It is sometimes difficult to gain a perspective with enough distance, with respect to oneself and one's actions, to be able to see a situation clearly. Performing surgery on oneself is a nearly impossible feat, in part because of the inability to gain the proper perspective. It is certain that we do not fully understand the motivations for our actions and words.

It only complicates the matter to realize that it is likewise true that we are master deceivers, not only of others, but of ourselves. Although "... der Autor meist den besten Willen zur Aufrichtigkeit hat ..." (Aichinger, "Probleme" 424), if we do not want to see the truth, we cannot fully uncover it. That thought is well expressed by Samuel Butler when he states: "He that complies against his will / Is of his own opinion still ..." (84, l.547-48). The author must resist any temptation to present himself as he wants to be remembered, and not as he remembers himself. That includes either glamorizing the past or making the past worse than it was, in order to show, for instance, that one has had a steep hill to climb to arrive at the present heights. The temptation may also be present to believe what one writes to be the whole truth, so that the work becomes "the truth." In this way, the fictional past becomes "history." Consider Carossa's disclosure:

... unmöglich ..., auch nur einen Tag seines eigenen Lebens genau so zu schildern, wie man ihn erlebte: unter den Händen verwandelt sich einem alles, man erzählt plötzlich Dinge, die man in dieser Weise nie erfahren hat und was das Schönste ist: diese neuersonnenen Erlebnisse
verwachsen mit dem Alten Wirklichen zu so unaufloslichen Einheiten, daß man beim Durchlesen gar nicht mehr im stande ist zu sagen, wo das wahrhaft Erlebte aufhört und das Erfundene anfängt. (Briefe 1: 94)

 Nonetheless, of any autobiographer it may be said: the autobiography will reveal

... jene Vorstellung von seiner Persönlichkeit, deren Wahrheit er oftmals versichert. ... Nicht nur der Inhalt zeigt dies: vor allem an der Formgebung wird vieles deutlich. Die Vorgangsweise des Autors ist in mancher Hinsicht aufschlußreich. (Aichinger, "Probleme" 424)

Thus, just as "[die Wirkung der Echtheit . . . geht aus dem geschlossenen Gefüge, der sinnvollen Gestaltungs der Persönlichkeit hervor," so it is that what the author hides from himself will show through in spite of his "Verbergen, Verschleierungen, plötzliche Abbrüche, Verstecken vor sich selbst, Eitelkeiten, [und] Widersprüche . . ." (Aichinger, "Probleme" 425).

Finally, integrity becomes all the more difficult in an increasingly secularized culture and in a contemporary climate of uncertainty about whether one is even able to "say 'I.'" Arthur Melville Clark (1935) anticipates the current difficulty:

... if metaphysics is the chasing in a dark cellar of a black cat which isn't there, may not the quest of self-knowledge be no less vain? There may be no integrated self to know, but only a congeries of jarring motives and desires, appetites and sensations—a psychological nebula. (13)
The authors under discussion here — Fontane, Ebner-Eschenbach, Schnitzler, and Carossa — however, do not labor under the threat of the disintegration of the self. They are confident of their ability to see themselves as themselves. They are confident of the link between the self of the past and the self of the present.

Memory provides continuity between past and present. Integrity and the representation of self require memory. The autobiographer is writing about his self — both present and former. The autobiography reflects an oscillation between the present and the past, a linking of the memory of one's experiences and their consequences. Brettschneider implies that one's memory must be perfect in order to demand the differentiation of fiction from non-fiction (1.1). But since, as Pascal writes, "... autobiography is a shaping of the past" (9), more than memory is required. To be able to remember each of life's experiences or observations might actually impair one's ability to write a good autobiography. The ability to forget provides assistance with the necessary distillation of experiences, a prerequisite of good autobiography. Forgetting some of the more trivial memories, of course, is accompanied by lapses in memory with regard to other more weighty experiences. But, that one has forgotten some experiences does not negate one's memory altogether. What we remember, even if it seems an
insignificant thing, can provide clues to ourselves, what has affected and shaped us, what we find important.

While it is true that our memory may be faulty at times, the importance of memory is not diminished. Likewise, one's experience and perception retain their legitimacy. Ebner-Eschenbach draws attention to the processes of memory, asserting the memory of the event, not the event itself, has the primary effect: "Das Schwergewicht liegt auf dem Eindruck, den sie [die Menschen und Begebenheiten] hinterlassen haben, und ihn bestimmt die Beschaffenheit des Wesens, das ihn empfing" (Kinderjahre 8). People have varying abilities to remember, based not only on intellectual capacity and previous experience, but also on temperament. Additional factors, such as concomitant experiences, stress levels, or expectations also contribute to what one remembers from any particular experience. Indeed, our perception even at the moment of an event is sometimes incorrect and/or incomplete. Consider the examples of those who give conflicting reports at the scene of an accident.

The autobiographer of childhood must overcome the even more difficult challenge of the greater distance of years, as well as the difference in the cognitive abilities of a child and the adult. The memories one obtains as an adult differ from those obtained in childhood, based on the wealth of experience, having as an adult a better
idea what is important to remember. Consider the experience of trying to imitate words in a foreign language that one does not understand. The speaker may be able to approximate some of the sounds, but it is difficult to reproduce them precisely. More experience with the language and phonetic system will improve the speaker's ability to better imitate what he has heard. Similarly, the memory of an event for which one has little background experience will be more nebulous than the memory of a trained observer. Writing about her own writing of fiction on the theme of youth, Elizabeth Jolley echoes the thought: "Perhaps the slow realisations which distance the mother and father from the child are necessarily slow. It has taken me a great many years to think more clearly about the old car which rushed me to the Hamburg docks on that particular day" (14).

The child does not know how to interpret a situation. To have a child write a childhood autobiography about yesterday may not yield a good result because the child does not yet understand how to interpret what he is seeing or experiencing. He needs many more experiences to be able to make more accurate judgments. So, while it is true that the memory of an event may be somewhat distorted, especially one in the distant past, the conclusion drawn from it may be far more accurate with the distance of years. But for Brettschneider, the inability to remember perfectly suffices to put fictional and non-fictional literature in the same
category. Time, experience, and wisdom, however, provide balance to memory.

This is particularly the case when one feels compelled to tell the truth because one is writing an autobiography. Burr details, for example, the correspondence between Rousseau and Madame d'Épinay and contrasts it to their respective "memoirs": while d'Épinay's "... Mémoires, written under the form of fiction, have no serious intention, ..." in Rousseau's Confessions "... we find him describing the difference exactly as it was ..." (62). The letters they had written in the emotion of the moment were the texts that contained the exaggeration (Burr 62-63). Memory itself is not discredited by any subsequent changes in perspective. It may be the initial perception that is incorrect. One may perceive an event incorrectly because of insufficient knowledge or experience. If, subsequently, new information becomes known, the perception of the event may then actually be more accurate than the initial perception.

The author's attitude towards writing a fictional work differs from his outlook about writing a non-fictional account of his life. The "referential pact" is evidence of this. Thus, even though the author does not remember in detail the events he portrays, and in some measure deceives himself about an event or its consequences, about his role in or reactions to that event, it is important to distinguish fact from fiction.
Hans Carossa’s *Eine Kindheit* is one example of this. In Ingrid Aichinger’s lucid discussion of distinguishing characteristics between fictional and non-fictional works, she points out that, in contrast to fictional works, the autobiography must have a link to reality, and the author will also attempt to make the representation of himself credible (“Probleme” 427-428).

The designation fiction or non-fiction also affects the reader’s understanding of a work and the conclusions he draws with respect to how the author relates to his work. Except in third person narratives, which are rare, the identification of the author with the protagonist of the work is unavoidable in a non-fictional work, setting non-fictional works apart from fiction. The author remains present within the work as both protagonist and narrator, oscillating between the two realms. All this affects the understanding of the author’s motivation for writing and interpreting what he says.

To recount his story, the autobiographer may employ many of the same techniques of story-telling available to the writer of fiction. Ebner-Eschenbach’s *Meine Kinderjahre* reveals the structuring of the story; the work is constructed around the phrase: “Alles wiederholt sich im Leben” (103), which the author illustrates through the theme of “Abschied.” She ends the work at the point when the protagonist is fourteen years old, which is different than the earlier version, which she
ended with age twenty. The work contains a series of “fourteens,” adding to the theme of repetition. The works are all organized — each differently, but in no case is the suggestion apparent that the work is constructed of randomly flowing thoughts. Fontane has a relaxed style that almost makes it seem as if he is simply writing down the thoughts as they come to him. For example, he gets “ahead of himself” in his account of his childhood. That is merely part of the composition, as well, in the positive sense. Fontane shapes his work by first asking a series of question: “how?” in relation to various aspects of his childhood, and then answering those questions. Schnitzler’s autobiography has some structural similarities to Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, if only to show that his life does not resemble Goethe’s, and he is not going to pretend that it does. Carossa uses many leitmotifs, such as snakes, “the arm,” the bat, and forms of the word “Zauber” in order to lead the reader to enter into the world he creates.

Structure is necessary in writing, even in police reports, since some details are more pertinent to the story than others. It is not a particular structure that designates fiction or non-fiction. The distinction between the fictional and non-fictional autobiographical mode might be aptly illustrated in the difference between seeking help for a friend and asking one’s question outright. The level of vulnerability and exposure in these two situations is quite different. In addition, integrity
becomes the issue, if in asking help "for a friend," one is actually asking for oneself. It can be argued that the author reveals more about himself in a fictional work because he lets down his guard, and writes more freely than in a more personal work. At the same time, however, one can rightly assert that the author, when writing fiction, feels less compelled to reveal himself. The result is that, while the reader may gain some insight about the author, it may be mere snippets of understanding. The extended exposure will reveal something about the autobiographer, too.

In fiction, the author may base his story on an event or any number of particular events. However, he is free to add details, change the outcome, put the event in a different context. All of these adjustments can change the way the event, and thus the story, is understood. With respect to autobiography, such invention by the author would demonstrate that he is unwilling to face his life. This is the case — and major flaw — in Carossa’s Eine Kindheit. While much of what he says corresponds to his childhood situation as seen in Eva Kampmann-Carossa's Hans Carossa: Leben und Werk in Texten und Bildern, Carossa does not face the harsher realities of life, the ones more conveniently left unsaid. In contrast, Schnitzler writes that he is committed to telling the truth in his work. He sees this, not so much as a matter of specific dates, but as a broader issue of integrity. That is, it is deception to omit something because of a purely personal desire to
withhold that information, whereas inadvertently mixing up dates or events would not be. One might surmise that Schnitzler would have preferred not to include many of the revelations he related, even when one reads the work as a confession to obtain absolution or atonement. But Schnitzler is exacting with the truth. He often stipulates, even during the writing, what he remembers, and how he remembers it, or that he does not recall a certain situation. In autobiography, the author needs to be willing to deal with his own life, as he lived it.

Having discussed issues such as integrity and memory with regard to autobiography in general, we now turn again to focus more specifically on the autobiography of childhood. We have seen that Brettschneider's inclusion of autobiography with autobiographical fiction is too broad. Coe, on the other hand, narrows his focus to the poetic childhood, the one that exhibits itself in the glorification of the childhood years — those years "[w]hen the [g]rass was [t]aller." His limitation proves to be too restricted to accommodate the breadth of even the four works under discussion in this study. All three works by Hardach-Pinke, Brettschneider, and Coe are of some value to the field. They are limited, however, in their usefulness to help one understand the relationship of autobiographies of childhood to the broader genre of autobiography. That will be the focus of the remainder of this study. Far from putting too strict a generalization on the autobiography of childhood, this author
will show that the autobiographer who chooses such a form has broad freedom to select his focus. This investigation will concentrate on some of the conditions and limits of childhood autobiography, based on the childhood autobiographies of Fontane, Ebner-Eschenbach, Schnitzler, and Carossa.

Everyone who reads an autobiography of childhood has, most likely, lived a childhood. Thus, the reader has his own concrete experience by which to assess what he reads. The reader’s experience affects his understanding or reception of the work greatly, which is demonstrated particularly well by the reception Hans Carossa’s works enjoyed following both world wars. Expectations regarding childhood will vary, especially with regard to education, parental involvement in the home, and/or the amount of time allotted for recreation or work. But it should be recognized that childhood is a time when less is required or expected of a person, that especially in early childhood, there is a time when play is work. To give hope for the future, the Bible speaks of a time when “[t]he streets of the city / Shall be full of boys and girls / Playing in its streets” (NKJV, Zech. 8:5). Although that is not a reality in its positive connotation for many in the present, it points to one difference between children and adults. That freedom from full responsibility is one of the two sides of childhood.
Childhood is, in one sense, a time of "innocence," perhaps better understood as "naïveté." The "innocent" child has not yet been jaded by disappointments in life. This attitude that is so winsome to the adult is childlikeness. But there is also the negative side of childhood, namely "childishness." While some people look back with no apparent pangs of conscience, for others, childishness is the side that is less pleasant to remember. In contrast to Fontane's apparent lack of remorse about some of his childhood antics, Ebner-Eschenbach writes with chagrin about her behavior toward her teacher (Kinderjahre 159). Coe seems to see only the positive side of childhood when he pits "Christ's wonder at the inspired innocence of children . . ." against the Apostle Paul's perspective, claiming that Paul "... saw the thoughts and feelings of the years preceding manhood as mere irrelevance . . ." (10-11). By setting these two in opposition, Coe reveals his gross misunderstanding of the attitudes of both Christ and the apostle. Jesus's focus was on childlikeness. Paul's statement, "... when I became a man, I put away childish things" (NKJV, 1 Cor. 13:11) is centered on the aspect of immaturity in the child. It is not a condemnation of childhood for being irrelevant, but it confirms that the time for childhood is limited.

Childhood is a time of constant change and growth. The child is not content to stay for long in the same state. Although there may be
some reluctance to change, since change is often difficult, the child still
desires to grow, to progress to the next stage, to join the adult world.

There are similarities in the maturing process of childhood and
youth, but no two childhoods are identical. Even siblings, twins, or
triplets will not have identical experiences. Coe supports that idea:

... it might have been anticipated either that the
experiences of childhood would prove to be absolutely
universal, ... or else substantially affected and determined
by the political, social, religious, economic, and
environmental conditions surrounding the early life. Neither
presupposition, in the event, is borne out in any clear-cut
fashion. (276)

However, the commonalities of childhood are in some ways greater than
the differences that separate them. For instance, most children learn to
walk, to talk, to read and write. Certainly the majority, if not all, of those
writing an autobiography have experienced these things as well. It may
be the case that the autobiography exaggerates the differences, as
Herbert Spencer asserts:

"[A]n ... autobiographer ... is obliged to omit from his
narrative the commonplace of daily life and to limit himself
almost exclusively to salient events, actions and traits. ... 
But by leaving out the humdrum part of the life, forming
that immensely larger part which it had in common with
other lives, and by setting forth only the striking things, he
produces the impression that it differed from other lives
more than it really did. This defect is inevitable."
(qtd. in Clark 16)

Some shared experiences are portrayed in the four cases at hand. One
such experience, death, demonstrates that even though the details are
different, the underlying experience is similar. What distinguishes the experiences, in part, is when they happen, under what circumstances, and what the author draws from them.

Although the lives of the authors may be more similar than they appear, it is a mistake to attempt to lump them together. That is a weakness of Coe's book. The events of the children's lives, though apparently similar, may have vastly different consequences. The examples of Fontane, Ebner-Eschenbach, Schnitzler, and Carossa, exhibit some of the breadth of style and subject that can be displayed in the autobiography of childhood. The concentration by Coe on childhood as the "alternative" world to the adult world, where "[t]he former self-as-child is as alien to the adult writer as to the adult reader" (1) is a limitation that is too strict. Although Coe has an extensive bibliography of primary works upon which his work is based, he has included only one of the four writers in this study — namely, Carossa, the one whose autobiography glorifies the world of the child. The case studies here show that the autobiography of childhood is more than an attempt to recreate what life was like from the child's perspective. Such a perspective would be a denial of all that had gone on since.

The inner structure of the autobiography is essentially preserved from the literary autobiography. Specifically, the perspective oscillates from the past narration to present reflection. The author writes from the
position of the present, and the reader understands that there have been
change and growth in the writer's life between the time of writing and the
time written about. One should also recognize the child does not usually
perceive his life to be poetic. It is only the perspective of age that brings
about this understanding. The poetic childhood can only be described as
such through the eyes of an adult. Richard Hoggart calls this kind of
description the style of "poeticised-shimmer', or the style of rampant
sensibility," noting that "[i]f a poet is writing, the sensitive observation is
likely to obtrude like large raisins in a sweet rice pudding . . . " (74). His
objection to such a style " . . . is first, that life is not like that and never
was like that, even for the autobiographers. Life is being seen through a
retrospective haze . . . " (76). The desire to see childhood as "syrupy
sweet" does not represent life as it was. This is the principal mistake
that Carossa makes, and it weakens his work. Fontane,
Ebner-Eschenbach, and Schnitzler, in contrast to Carossa, do not
attempt to cover over the past.

In discussing the autobiography, Jean Starobinski has described
two opposite "tonalities" with regard to the treatment of the past: "the
elegiac and the picaresque" (292). The former " . . . expresses the feeling
of lost happiness. . . . [T]he writer takes refuge in the memories of the
happy hours of his youth" (Starobinski 292). The latter is "the
picaresque type" in which it is the " . . . past which is 'deficient': a time of
weaknesses, errors, wandering, humiliations . . .” (Starobinski 292).

These two “tonalities” are present in the autobiography of childhood, as well. The elegiac form is best seen in Carossa’s *Eine Kindheit*. That accounts for his heavy-handed use of the word “Zauber” and related forms to describe his childhood. Carossa idealizes the past, perceiving that the present is only manageable by finding his footing in the memory of the past. Although Carossa began writing *Eine Kindheit* before the war began, he wrote most of it during the years of World War I. Writing from the perspective of a generation that had not known war, he found the peaceful past overly inviting:

... wenn ich ganz fernhin in den Himmel sah, blieb auch alles in leidlichem Gleichgewicht; sobald aber das Auge zur Nähe heranschlich, brach der Turm gewissermaßen in die Knie....
Glücklich aber, wem Erinnerung den irrenden Blick befestigt! (259)

Writing at essentially the same time was Schnitzler, who, like Carossa, was a physician, but wrote from the opposite perspective. Of the four authors being studied here, these two differ by far the most. Carossa grew up in the southern part of Germany, near Austria, and Schnitzler is, of course, from Vienna. Their family backgrounds were quite similar, with both fathers being physicians. These two authors illustrate in part the truth of Goethe’s words, that the difference in a decade can make the difference in the person (14). Schnitzler shows the
total inadequacy of the past. He wants to discard it completely. As if examining another person, he detaches himself in a clinical way from the self he describes. He does not deny that he is describing one and the same person, but his ironic tone suggests his dissatisfaction with his former behavior.

The others, Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach, display a more moderate style. Both authors examine their years of youth with the ability to take the positive from them while including the negative in a substantial way. Ebner-Eschenbach is more at peace with her youth than is Fontane. He is still attempting to clarify the relationships in the home of his youth. Neither one of these authors is attempting to break the connection with his youth. Instead, they illustrate the continuity of the past with the present. Ebner-Eschenbach does this with the phrase "Alles wiederholt sich im Leben" (Kinderjahre 103). The past is preparation for the future. The present is a repetition in kind of the past. Fontane explains that the whole of one’s life can be told by a description of what one was like in the first years of life (Kinderjahre 9).

Although the elegiac and the picaresque styles are presented as being on opposite ends of the spectrum, they are in one sense more alike than the more moderate forms. Both postures are a result of seeing a break with the past. For the picaresque writer, the division is desired, for the elegiac, it is not. For the latter, memory is the foothold for the
present; for the former, memory is the bane of his life. Susanne
Craemer-Schroeder describes essentially the same poles and attitude in
autobiography, contrasting "das Bekenntnis" with "die Dichter-
bzw. Autorenautobiographie" (10). The former is organized around the "Zäsur
der Ich-Figuren," while the latter is the "reinster Ausdruck" of the
"Kontinuüm der Ich-Figuren" (Craemer-Schroeder 10).

The extreme picaresque attitude is foreign to the autobiographical
form, especially that of the childhood autobiography. The autobiography,
to keep from being merely a collection of anecdotes or memories, needs
to create a "whole." The author needs to make a comprehensive
statement. Just to laugh at antics from childhood that serve no purpose
is antithetical to the teleological perspective of the childhood
autobiography. The extreme picaresque attitude does not complete an
autobiography, because there is no way to construct disjointed episodes
into a whole. Unless one has found a meaning to attach to his present
life, there is no fitting place to end a work that begins with a picaresque
attitude. However, by a simple declaration, either pronounced or by
implication, that one has changed during the past years, one exhibits an
attitude that reveals that one is ready to put away childish behavior, to
abandon that which is unprofitable, in order to move to worthwhile
activity. Schnitzler makes that declaration. The need for growth
demonstrates an ordered perspective.
The extreme elegiac perspective is likewise contrary to the intention of the childhood autobiography. Carossa demonstrates this well. Where the childhood is seen as beautiful for its own sake, it detaches itself from the remainder of life. Therefore, the teleological aspect is brought into conflict with the desire to glorify the past. The true teleologic perspective does not use the past as an escape from the present, since the present must have meaning, as does the past. The past is connected with the present, which memory reveals, even though the author detects a break. The past actions have bearing on the present.

We have seen that the autobiography is an open form, because the autobiographer does not write his own death within its pages. The autobiography is also a closed form, in that the book has a beginning and an end with a certain structure designed by the author. The author has selected the specific contents that will be included within its pages. In contrast to the autobiography, the autobiography of childhood always has a point of termination prior to the present. Aichinger observes that the decision to end the work with "... die Topik der 'Lebenswende' (der Autor erzählt nur bis zu einer bestimmten Lebenssituation, die in irgendeiner Weise einen bedeutsamen Einschnitt markiert)," is one solution to the problem of how to conclude the autobiography (Selbstdarstellung 41). So, in this sense, ending the autobiography with
one's childhood or adolescence may be seen merely as a convenience to the writer. There are, however, other reasons for which an author might choose the earlier ending point.

The early ending allows the author to avoid discussing uncomfortable topics. Issues arising later in life do not need to be broached, even though these may be known to the reader through other sources. Schnitzler does not explain what the ambiguous “allerlei” is that he “… zu erleben hatte, um das zu werden, was ich werden sollte…” (Jugend 322). His book ends a few sentences later. Schnitzler is able to escape having to discuss the issue of his current marital problems by ending at a point prior to his marriage. His frequent mention of the various women with whom he had a short-lived relationship points to the current difficulty — but he does not mention it. Without external documentation, one would not be able to ascertain or perhaps even guess his marital difficulties at the time of his writing. Likewise, Carossa, concentrating on the nostalgic, magical quality of childhood, is unable to maintain that tone past the second volume of his four-volume autobiography. He is only able to find that tone at all, though, because he studiously avoids the parts of his life that he finds too negative.

Ebner-Eschenbach, being part of the elite society, may have ended her autobiography with her childhood years, in part, to avoid being an
undue embarrassment to her family and others: "... es war damals fast unerhört, daß eine Adelige die literarische Tätigkeit als Beruf im wahren Sinne des Wortes ausübte, die adeligen Damen sollten ... die Literatur nur als einen Teil des Bon tons treiben" (Veselý 215). From her earliest years, Ebner-Eschenbach lacked the support of her family for her writing. Her cousin Moritz, later her husband, was the first one to give her encouragement to write. However, her dramas did not fare well in the theater, and Moritz took issue with her, as she has recorded in her diary: "Du trägst meinen Namen, ich will ihn nicht alle Augenblicke mit Geringschätzung u[nd] Spott in den Zeitungen genannt finden" (TB 2: 16.V.1874). Veselý establishes, though, that

... es handelte sich gar nicht um Erfolge oder Mißerfolge, die Schriftstellerei war eine grundsätzliche Frage, und die Stellungnahme der Verwandten vor allem egoistisch gefärbt. Das ewige Gerede über die Notwendigkeit, die dramatische Tätigkeit aufzugeben, über ungünstige Kritiken, die den geehrten Namen kompromittieren – das alles war hauptsächlich nur ein Vorwand, ein Deckmantel des Egoismus. Die Umstände änderten sich, der Widerstand der Verwandten gegen die Schriftstellerei der Ebner blieb. (217)

Moritz died before she began writing her autobiography, and she had attained to a high level of success and recognition in her writing, so his personal concern was not an issue for her anymore. Perhaps in part out of consideration for her family she decided to end her autobiography with her youth. The work itself, though, points to a different reason.
The first two reasons given for ending with one's childhood or youth — convenience for the author who lacks a better way to conclude the work, and avoidance of a situation — are both negative reasons. The third reason is positive. The early ending is a reflection of what the autobiographer desires to communicate in the work. Ebner-Eschenbach writes about her childhood because she wants to illustrate the principle "Alles wiederholt sich im Leben" (Meine Kinderjahre 103). That principle applies to nature, in general, and it applies to her specifically. Her assertion "Ich war kein Kind mehr" can be understood in two ways — from the perspective of the child, and from the perspective of the adult writer. The child has a realization that she is truly different from what she was, particularly emotionally. The adult has the understanding that she will always be a child — a child of God. Both are statements of a realized progression. Her childhood was preparation for and a representation of all that she would encounter in her later years.

Fontane wrote only about the years before he went to school, because this was the period in which he was in greatest contact with his parents. Once he began formal instruction at the Gymnasium, he was less under their constant discipline. One point he stresses is that there is a proper way to raise children. He sees himself as an example of that. Fontane writes to clarify his youth, his parents' relationship and his relationship to them. He does not deny the negative part of his youth,
but earnestly tries to discover what it was that he experienced. In this way, he is able to convalesce as he comes to terms with the questions he faces.

Schnitzler and Carossa also write with a positive motive. Both of these writers, as we have discussed, endeavor to illustrate the perceived break with the past. For Schnitzler, the separation is not complete. His writing indicates that, although he claims to see something different in his past than in the present, he is also attempting to create or complete the break by means of his writing. Schnitzler writes as a matter of confession, of sorts; he wants to evidence that he has changed, but he is also writing as a matter of correcting the past. This is not to say that he is re-writing history, but that he is trying to "atone" for his past by the writing of the autobiography. He is meticulous in the details, trying to get the facts straight, documenting his activities with the use of the diary. The detailing of the transgressions is a way for him to confess, and the confession is intended to suffice for, or at least show, repentance.

Carossa, on the other hand, does try to re-write history. He is far more aware of his pretense than is Schnitzler. At the same time, though, he seems to believe that he has been able to deceive both the public and himself. But the autobiography reveals what he himself does not see or chooses not to see. He ends his autobiography at childhood because he
wants to return to it. Carossa concludes the second volume already looking back to his youth. Up in the tower with his friends from school, he cannot look out into the distance. He has a fear of the future. Writing during the war, he finds that the years of his youth are not substance for him, but an illusion. Carossa is left to pretend, trying to blend his imagination into his memories, to make a seamless whole. He strives to create a new childhood, just as the nineteenth-century fairy-tale writers tried to create a new reality. He sees himself cut off from the past, and wants to re-establish a connection with his childhood. But in the writing of his autobiography of childhood, he demonstrates his connection with the past, since he continues to follow the pattern of his youth. His identification of the two arms during the years of his childhood is symbolic of the identification of the childhood he lived and the childhood he creates in Eine Kindheit. Thus, the pattern for his life is set in the beginning. The break that he attempts to show is, in reality, non-existent.

Although Carossa’s attempt to convey his sense of loss with regard to the past is flawed, he reveals, as does each of the others, that he has a distinct outlook about the past. While Schnitzler sees the break with the past as positive, Carossa bemoans it. For Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach, “... the narrow focus on childhood reflects less a nostalgic longing for lost innocence or joy than the belief that the story of one's
entire life is already manifest in childhood” (Goodman, *Dis/Closures* 168). But they write with a different viewpoint. Both Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach write from the perspective of continuity of childhood with the present. Ebner-Eschenbach writes with a sense of contentment. The difficulties of the past are put into a framework that gives her a sense of peace. Fontane writes for clarification. He regards his past realistically. His understanding, although not completely clarified, is improved, evidenced by his convalescence during the writing of the work.

But, among these four authors, Carossa stands alone in his difficulty with facing the future. Fontane, Ebner-Eschenbach, and Schnitzler all look forward. Fontane considers the future generations and their upbringing. Ebner-Eschenbach’s motif of repetition acknowledges that the pattern established will continue. She welcomes the changes in the relationships between the generations. Schnitzler looks forward fifty or one hundred years, knowing that it will take that long for his worth as a writer to be determined.

The forward-looking perspective is fitting for the author of an autobiography of childhood, because one of the peculiarities of the form is that the forward movement of a life is accentuated. The autobiographer of childhood or youth, while pointing back to his youth, is, at the same time, pointing forward. The knowledge that the writer is not the child, but the adult, points ahead many years:
"... the phrase 'a small past' paradoxically points to its opposite 'a great future'..." (Rose 171). The writer who brings his reader back to his youth to leave him there is doing a disservice to the reader. Ebner-Eschenbach indicates that she is willing to accept the changes that are coming upon her country and to accept the changing relationships between the generations. She even welcomes some of the changes. While she remembers fondly some of the things about her youth, she does not stop there. Children, by nature, want to grow, to change. They are acutely aware that they are small. Young children notice other children their age. At the same time, their eagerness to grow is evident in many ways. To take the stance that childhood is a stage in which children want to remain is not true to life. Children do not really appreciate the life that they have until they are no longer in the situation. Whatever comes their way is what they expect; they know nothing else. Thus, the reveling in childhood is not really from the child's perspective, but necessarily from the adult perspective. It is also essentially impossible to re-create it with complete accuracy, as Brettschneider asserts (11). If one did, there would have to be as little perspective on it as the child would have if writing at a young age. It is only the seed that is being seen in the childhood. It always points ahead to the person writing. Childishness is not pointed out for its own sake, but in order to show what needed to be changed. As we have observed,
the extreme-elegiac writer has the most difficulty looking forward, since he looks to the past, not for answers to the present, but as an escape from the present.

Another of the singularities of the childhood autobiography is that it lends itself to giving a sense of completion or wholeness. That effect is brought about because the autobiography has a greater sense of closure than the autobiography, in general. Thus, it accentuates the teleological perspective of the work. The sense of completeness, with the closure, indicates that there is order. The distance of years in the perspective intensifies the sense of order. In one way, viewing a life through the autobiography of childhood is similar to looking in a microscope: one sees in the very first few years the form of what will later appear more distinctly. As one can tell much about a tree by looking at the roots, so one can tell much about a life by studying the child. As Schnitzler shows, that which he sowed in the beginning was harvested, albeit unexpectedly at the time of sowing. While Fontane does not condense his work to encompass only the first year of his life, he prefaces his work with the statement “... in [dem] ersten Lebensjahre ‘stecke der ganze Mensch’” (9). Coe discusses the effect that toys have, being miniature of the real thing:

... “the closed world of toys” is not only different from the real world, but it intensifies the fascination of that otherness by being at the same time exactly parallel to that real world:
a miniature reduction of it, and hence—being itself, and yet existing in a different dimension both of size and of experience, controllable instead of being out of control—it is a symbol of the real world, and a symbol which “represents” it “perhaps at the highest pitch of intensity.” In other words, the effect of the contrast between two alternative dimensions is intensified many times over... when the appearances of the two worlds are identical. ... (263)

Just as the image is an intensification of the real object, so is the depiction of childhood an intensified image of one’s real life. It is, in a sense, a way to “play” with one’s life; one can see the outworking of what was there at the beginning with greater clarity; there is the ability to see the whole scope, rather than “miss the forest for the trees.” Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach both relate ways in which the simple repetition of a phrase would trigger a certain memory. The memory or the phrase becomes emblematic. The memory is condensed in the phrase.

Likewise, the childhood is a distilled story of one’s life. Scheible uses the imagery of looking “... durch ein verkehrt gehaltenes Fernglas” to convey the effect Schnitzler achieves in Jugend in Wien when he juxtaposes a seemingly static situation with one that passes “mit beängstigender Geschwindigkeit” (“Diskretion” 211). The effect of looking through binoculars backwards, is an apt one for the childhood autobiography, in general. Scheible sees the result is one of exhibiting “Vergänglichkeit” (“Diskretion” 211). The effect is broader than simply to show the transitory nature of life. It enhances the teleological
perspective because one's life can be viewed from a distance. The
purposefulness of life is in view. Even Schnitzler is looking for a purpose
in life that he senses must exist. He does not find it in his youth, and is
still searching during the years of his writing. His premise, however, is
that purposefulness exists. Just as the newer histories of literature are
considered in some ways to be more accurate, because one is better able
to see patterns develop, so it is that the additional years are often
equated with greater wisdom. Although this is not always the case, it is
still true in the main.

The examples of Fontane, Ebner-Eschenbach, Schnitzler, and
Carossa exhibit, in a small way, the flexibility of the autobiography of
childhood. It is not limited to the poetic, elegiac childhood, but rather
encompasses the whole spectrum from elegiac to picaresque. Neither the
extreme elegiac nor the extreme picaresque writer, however, is able to
write a true autobiography of childhood. The autobiography does not fit
into a small mold, as if to say that all autobiographers of childhood write
for the same reason or in order to achieve the same result. It is
incumbent upon the critic to discover what the author intends by the
work. Eva Becker offers superficial criticism of Ebner-Eschenbach's
*Meine Kinderjahre*: "Ich lese die Geschichte der Marie von
Ebner-Eschenbach wie die der anderen Autobiographinnen als eine der
Selbstbehauptung zwischen den unmöglichen Alternativen: 'Nur
gescheit!’ und ‘Sei ein Mann!’” (317). C. S. Lewis warns us about the attitude that wants to stamp one’s own perspective on a work instead of attempting to understand the author: “And since a text is ‘but a cheverel glove’ to a determined critic—since everything can be a symbol or an irony, or an ambiguity—we shall easily find what we want” (Experiment 85). For the critic who wants to dig deeply into the autobiography of childhood, the rewards will be rich and diverse.
Chapter 1

Theodor Fontane's *Meine Kinderjahre*:
An Autobiography of Convalescence

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach aphorized that "[d]ie Kritik ist von
gerinder Qualität, die meint, ein Kunstwerk nur dann richtig beurteilen
tzu können, wenn sie die Verhältnisse kennt, unter denen es entstanden
ist" ([Aphorismen](#) 54). One may, however, understand the justifiable
reluctance of scholars to completely ignore the circumstances of the
writing of Fontane's autobiography of childhood. It is well known among
Fontane scholars that Fontane began work on *Meine Kinderjahre* on the
advice of his physician. Fontane in a letter from 1892 describes himself
as "... eine ganz gebrochene Kraft, zurzeit kaum fähig, ein paar
Briefzeilen zu schreiben ..." ([Pniower](#), 290-91). Ohff reports that at the
beginning of 1892, Fontane's illness "... ist unterschiedlich
diagnostiziert worden, zeigt aber alle Symptome eines totalen
Nervenzusammenbruchs" (384). An attempt at an "elektrische Kur" was
ineffective in relieving the symptoms, but following his doctor's advice,
"... besiegt Fontane nicht nur seine Nervenkrankheit, er erringt auch
seinen ersten wirklichen Erfolg als Erzähler" (Ohff 386). Because he
recuperated so well during the writing of *Meine Kinderjahre*, there is
much speculation among scholars as to the specific reason behind Fontane’s recovery. One might ask whether, in this case, Ebner-Eschenbach’s aphorism might not be better set aside. It is apparent from an overview of the critical literature on Meine Kinderjahre that it can be grouped into two broad categories: those that try to identify the reason behind the author’s convalescence, and those that do not.

Among those in the latter group is Andrea MhicFhionnbhairr. Including Meine Kinderjahre in a broader study of the function of the anecdote in Fontane’s works, MhicFhionnbhairr observes that it “enlivens the straight narrative” (245) as well as serves as a structure for recurring motifs that enhance the unity of Meine Kinderjahre (260).

Concentrating on Fontane’s two objectives or assertions in the foreword, Günter Niggl focuses on what is new in the work with respect to the history of the autobiography: “... gerade der Versuch, Selbstcharakteristik und Zeitbild als zwei gleichwertige Themenkreise in einer Darstellung zu verbinden, begründet die gattungsgeschichtliche Sonderstellung vor allem der Fontaneschen 'Kinderjahre' am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts” (266). Niggl notes that Fontane succeeds because he limits the span he covers to childhood. Another perspective relates to the Mohr incident in Meine Kinderjahre, in which Fontane relates the story of how Mohr murders an elderly woman, and also a young girl with his wife’s assistance, in order to obtain a clock in which money is stored
(96-99). In her analysis of *Meine Kinderjahre*, Margaret Walter-Schneider documents how Fontane altered the facts of the incident in order to make his account correspond to his total experience of life, not as it happened in his childhood (236-37). Criticizing Pascal's assessment of *Meine Kinderjahre*, she writes: "Er hat Fontanes Werk, wie man annehmen muß, als historischen Bericht und nicht als Dichtung gelesen," concluding "... daß es notwendig ist, auch Fontanes autobiographischen Roman als Dichtung zu lesen, daß es nicht genügt, daß man diesem Werk nicht gerecht wird, wenn man es auffaßt als historische Darstellung eines Lebensabschnitts" (247).

Approaching the work from the psychoanalytical angle are Paul Irving Anderson and Martin Stern, who attempt to identify the source of Fontane's rapid convalescence. Anderson proposes that the answer to the question is that Fontane was finally able to fantasize about Minna, the girl with whom he had been infatuated as a boy:

> Endlich gab er dem Drängen seiner Phantasie nach, endlich erlaubte er sich, über Minna und Swinemünde ausführlich zu phantasieren. . . . Wie Goethe in seiner Autobiographie, führte Fontane seine Inspiration auf die frühe Liebe zurück; aber ganz anders als Goethe verschwieg er zugleich die Hauptsache und ihren Namen. (173)

He continues: "... das Versteckspiel . . . erklärt, wie Minna in den Hintergrund verbannt wurde. Das Spiel macht es dem Dichter möglich, zugleich die Bedürfnisse seiner Phantasie zu befriedigen wie auch den
kritischen Impuls, der eine gänzliche Verdrängung verlangt hatte" (173). Anderson certainly claims to have found the proverbial needle in the haystack from the offhand mention of the young Minna. It may be argued that Fontane's style of nonchalance and spontaneity are deceiving. But, while it may be that the Effi Briest character resembles Fontane's young love, it is nonetheless a stretch to attempt to link Fontane's recovery to his fantasizing over the unnamed Minna. Anderson attempts to explain away too much with the use of the "Versteckspiel" rationale.

Martin Stern's attempt comes closer to the mark of credibility when he looks for the cause of Fontane's recuperation in the Intermezzo. He sees the work to be "... eine Versöhnung mit der Mutter, aber auch ... eine 'Entschuldigung' beider Eltern . . .," as well as a "... Versöhnungsversuch post mortem zwischen den Eltern, . . . vor allem als Beschwichtigung der toten Mutter . . ." (128). In particular, he asserts that the work is Fontane's way of communicating to his mother what her estranged husband had finally acknowledged (128).

Peter Goldammer considers Meine Kinderjahre as Fontane's attempt "... sein Verhältnis zu dem Menschen [seinem Vater] zu überprüfen und ins reine zu bringen, dem er lange gezürnt und gegrafft hatte, weil er ihm die Schuld gab an den Unzulänglichkeiten und Unzuträglichkeiten der eigenen Existenz" (688). But at the same time,
Goldammer takes issue with those who too closely associate Fontane's convalescence with the writing of *Meine Kinderjahre*. He writes: "Mögen Krankheit und Rekonvaleszenz den Anstoß zur Arbeit an dem autobiographischen Roman gegeben haben: die eigentlichen Ursachen für das Reflektieren über sein Leben waren sie nicht" (676). Coinciding with this view is Walter Keitel's note that the last chapter of Fontane's unfinished "Sommers am Meer" "... stellt den ersten Ansatz zu 'Meine Kinderjahre' dar..." (1068). Goldammer further establishes that Fontane had settled on the "gemäße Methode der selbstbiographischen Darstellung" by June 1891, and that since the sixties he had decided "... daß der Gegenstand der eigenen Lebensbeschreibung - falls er sich entschlössse, eine solche zu Papier zu bringen - die Kindheit sein würde..." (676-77).

Planning is also evident in the structure of the work. Although Fontane appears to write in a casual manner, as if he were simply writing thoughts down as they come to him, *Meine Kinderjahre* is anything but unplanned. Indeed, a survey of the chapter titles and beginnings indicates that the author is concerned with the idea of "process," not simply "results." That concern evidences itself in the opening sentence of Fontane's foreword to *Meine Kinderjahre*, where he

---

2 Further references to Fontane's works may be understood to denote *Meine Kinderjahre* unless otherwise specified.
jumps over the implicit question of why he has decided to write the book: “Als es mir feststand, mein Leben zu beschreiben, stand es mir auch fest, daß ich bei meiner Vorliebe für Anekdotisches und mehr noch für eine viel Raum in Anspruch nehmende Kleinmalerei mich auf einen bestimmten Abschnitt meines Lebens zu beschränken haben würde” (9). Although he tells the reader that he has determined to write about his life, he does not supply the fundamental reason for the undertaking. Elaborating further the reasons for the specific choice of limiting his autobiography to his younger years, he gives within the foreword only a secondary reason of what he hopes to accomplish by this work if his primary goal of presenting his life story is not realized.

Fontane points out that his love for the anecdotal and for detail requires that he limit himself to a certain few episodes in order to fit given publishing criteria. Using a different method of description, another author might be able to more fully depict a broader period of time. Every author faces restrictions that remain, in many cases, unspoken. Fontane’s explicit discussion of the publishing considerations in the foreword points out all the more clearly, and from the start, that for Fontane, the “what” that is told is clearly subordinated to the “how.” He does not first choose what he wants to cover, then determine to change his style accordingly. Moreover, he remarks on his own choice of style, further drawing attention to the process. That the “how” of a story
is as important to the “what” is a principle of literary writing, but here Fontane chooses to govern the material he covers by the process.

Fontane’s explicit expression of the importance of process in the foreword is complemented by a somewhat more subtle approach within the body of the text. This can be seen in the barest structure of the work, namely the chapter titles. Several of these, especially the latter ones, do not signal a change of scene or a break in the action, but rather introduce the description of a process: chapter 5: “Unser Haus, wie’s wurde;” chapters 9 and 10: “Wie wir in unserem Hause lebten;” chapter 13: “Wie wir in die Schule gingen und lernten;” chapter 14: “Wie wir erzogen wurden — wie wir spielten in Haus und Hof;” and chapter 15: “Wie wir draußen spielten, an Strom und Strand.” Even the earlier chapter titles, however, are consistent with this structure, albeit less plainly. Fontane begins *Meine Kinderjahre* with a chapter called “Meine Eltern,” which can be understood as: “How I came to be what I am.” Fontane then moves back one generation to show the cultural and hereditary influences on his parents.

The text builds on the same foundation as the chapter titles. A chapter often begins by repeating the title as a question, as if the author were having a dialogue with the reader or with himself. In the telling of the anecdotes, Fontane frequently introduces what he plans to tell before actually relating the incident. More than half the chapters follow this
general structure. Two examples will suffice. Chapter 1 opens with a short statement of Fontane's parents as they arrive at the "Löwen-Apotheke," after which Fontane writes: "Ich gebe zunächst eine biographische Skizze beider [Eltern]" (10). In chapter 16, Fontane gives more detail about his plan:

Wie der Leser schon aus der Kapitelüberschrift entnehmen wird, habe ich vor, in dem unmittelbar Nachstehenden mich weit jenseits der hier zu schildernden Swinemünder Tage niederzulassen, welches Vorhaben mit dem Wunsche zusammenhängt, das Charakterbild meines Vaters nach Möglichkeit zu vervollständigen, will sagen nach oben hin abzurunden. (151)

One purpose of giving the objectives beforehand is to orient the reader, as if the material were a lesson. The author is not primarily concerned with keeping the reader in suspense, as if the anecdotes depended heavily on a punch-line, for instance. Fontane, as the elderly author, is a spectator of his own family. He does give the reader the opportunity to experience with him the growth in his relationship with his father by withholding some information for a time. For example, he relates his father's explanation for the failure in his life and waits to tell the reader the truth about his father's dislike of playing cards, even though the opportunity presents itself. By doing so, he permits, or leads, the reader to believe that which he had long believed — that card-playing was an irresponsible, albeit enjoyable, pastime for his father. But in the Intermezzo, we see the elder Fontane revealing to his son that card
playing was merely preferable to interminable boredom. More often though, Fontane uses the didactic approach, which is certainly in keeping with Fontane's promotion in *Meine Kinderjahre* of the "enlightened" perspective on life, especially in the arena of raising children, as we shall see. But he is also writing for himself.

Initially, Fontane was reluctant to write about himself:

> Aber können Sie sich denken (ein Fall, der in der Literaturgeschichte vielleicht noch gar nicht dagewesen ist), daß ich lieber über die Bredows als über mich selber schreibe, trotzdem mein Leben, in seinem bunten Wechselgange, auch ein sehr guter Stoff ist. (Brinkmann 817)

He laments that "... man mich, nach meinem Jubelfeste, selber zu einer kleinen Größe raufgepufft hat und nun auch von mir etwas wissen will. Mit anderen Worten, ich soll durchaus eine Autobiographie schreiben ..." (Brinkmann 817). Hans-Heinrich Reuter notes that in response to other authors who wrote about their lives, "[a]uch wo sie, wie im Falle Storms, durch Leistungen legitimiert war, wurde Fontanes Ironie durch sie herausgefördert. Fehlte diese Legitimation, so schlug die Ironie in offenen Spott um" (2: 765). The critical attitude toward others is also self-directed: "Selbstironie und Selbstkritik ... waren für ihn mit jedem Rückblick auf sein Leben untrennbar verbunden" (Reuter 2: 765). While it would seem that Fontane might be encouraged that others wanted to know about his life, "[s]ein eigenes Leben, an sich durchaus nicht
alltäglich verlaufen, erschien Fontane nicht bedeutend, wohl auch nicht repräsentativ genug als Stoff einer besonderen Darstellung” (Reuter 2: 765). The desire of others to know his story was inadequate motivation for him to be able to or to want to write it down.

When Fontane found himself, however, in the position of being “... kaum fähig, ein paar Briefzeilen zu schreiben ...” (Pniower 291), and fearing that he might die soon at the same age as his father (Reuter 2: 767), Fontane’s physician made “... den Versuch, den Dichter zu weiterem und vor allem zu neuem Schaffen anzuregen” by recommending that he write about his life, beginning with his childhood (Reuter 2: 767).

Fontane’s ability to begin writing Meine Kinderjahre, which he had begun thinking about long before, may be because his physician legitimized the project. Indeed, it was more than encouragement. It was more like a prescription from the doctor. In this way, the pressure to produce a masterpiece was perhaps reduced. He did not need to feel that he was writing it for his personal advancement or to fulfill the expectations of his audience. Instead, he wrote in order to adhere to the doctor’s instructions, and also for himself.

Fontane is seeking in the writing clarification of his childhood. We have seen that the author attempts to explain how he lived his childhood. But that explanation does not give the answer to the deeper question “why?” regarding his childhood. He must, however, answer the
question "how?" before he is able to answer the question "why?" It may be that the "how?" provided the foundation for the more unrelenting question "why?" — the question that he perhaps could not ask directly. One can get to the same answer a different way. One puts together the pieces, as Fontane has in his life, a life that he characterizes as "Stückwerk" (177). The didactic tone present in Meine Kinderjahre is consistent with the author relating the process of his growing. The question "why" is much more personal than the question "how." He delineates behaviors and scenes, rather than describing feelings. It may be that Fontane uses the "how" to point to the "why" — so as to be more objective in his descriptions. The critic likewise looks first at the process and then for the reason behind the process. We have seen in part the manner in which Fontane recounts his childhood. Let us proceed to the findings of his review.

The association of childhood with poesy is the prominent theme in Fontane's Meine Kinderjahre. Fontane essentially sums up the entire work, declaring that his entrance into the Gymnasium was a line of demarcation between his first years at home and his life that followed: "Damals aber, . . . damals war ich unschuldigen Herzens und geweckten Geistes gewesen, voll Anlauf und Aufschwung, ein richtiger Junge, guter Leute Kind. Alles war Poesie. Die Prosa kam bald nach, in allen möglichen Gestalten, oft auch durch eigene Schuld" (176). The
combination of circumstances and attitudes that created the poesy of childhood is one that is precarious. While many things could upset the balance and cause life to become prosaic, all of the elements Fontane mentions need to be present in order for the poesy to be maintained.

Before turning to these specific elements, we shall first examine how Fontane carries the poetic theme into the structure of the text. The whole text is a poetic, literary expression of the author’s childhood, which he intends to represent his whole life. Fontane relates a comment from a friend that “. . . in d[em] ersten Jahre ‘stecke der ganze Mensch’” (9). He extends the principle to his own work: “. . . so darf vielleicht auch diese meine Kindheitsgeschichte als eine Lebensgeschichte gelten” (9). Niggl sees this as one of Fontane’s contributions to the genre of autobiography:

\[
\text{Fontane hat . . ., um seine Beschränkung auf das erste Lebensjahrzehnt (nachträglich?) zu rechtfertigen, die ältere Vorstellung vom kindlichen Charakter und Weltverhalten als einem alle Lebensstufen repräsentierenden Miniaturbilde wieder aufgerufen und es so, wenigstens vom Programm her, plausibel erscheinen lassen, die ‘Kinderjahre’ als ein in sich geschlossenes Erinnerungsbuch zu konzipieren, das zwar der Fortsetzungen fähig, aber nicht bedürftig war. (261)}
\]

McFhionnbhairr observes a similar effect in Fontane’s use of the anecdote: “This initial portrait of Fontane’s father contains almost all the elements of the more detailed presentation of his personality in the rest of the autobiography” (247).
Fontane nonetheless differentiates between the portion that he depicts and that which came later. He identifies his childhood with poesy. Just as the text as a whole is a poeticization of his life, so the author likewise chooses individual moments or features that express the distillation of a larger span of time or an accumulation of memories. He is able to condense many memories into a single scene or a word or phrase.

Fontane confesses that he loves the anecdotal. Some of these anecdotes are about specific episodes, but there is also the anecdote as a distillation of many events. For example, he writes:


The "wenn" with past tense clearly refers to a routine, repeated event, not a single event. But consider the detail: "Ein paar Fliegen summten um ihn her." While it is likely that there were indeed flies buzzing around at certain times of the year, this undoubtedly would not be the case every time. Whether flies were there is not particularly important, but writing it in this fashion eliminates the variables. The assistant is sometimes present, but that is the only variable in the scene. If it had been written
that "when it was summer there were flies," or "when the weather was warm," or "except in the winter there were flies," the sameness of the event would be disturbed. What Fontane wants to convey with this type of scene is the appearance of uniformity, of predictability, which is necessary for children to have a sense of security. This kind of event might be recalled by the sound of flies buzzing around on a quiet afternoon. Likewise, a single color might evoke a whole scene, as is the case with regard to his mother and his grandfather. Fontane recalls how the colors red and black, and yellow and black prompt him to think of these two figures in particular ways. At each level, the color, the phrase, the anecdote — even the childhood autobiography — is employed to create a poetic effect, \textit{pars pro toto}.

Let us now look more closely at the elements that Fontane identifies as being significant to his poetical situation, namely innocence, being the child of good people, and enthusiasm or animation (176). His statement, "[d]amals aber, als ich in Haus und Hof umherspielte und draußen meine Schlachten schlug, damals war ich unschuldigen Herzens und geweckten Geistes gewesen . . ." (176), reveals a sense of satisfaction, yet it has an echo of sadness. The repetition of "damals" emphasizes the distance between then and now. This statement follows immediately the admission that most of his life has been marked by only intermittent happiness. He expresses, perhaps, a desire to recapture the
naivete of youth and the enthusiasm he once had. That he fondly recalls his former energy and zest is not surprising, considering that he is writing this at over seventy years of age, as well as during a period of illness. One might even expect such nostalgic feelings for the time when play is considered part of one's work, when the routine has not become mundane. Even though the "damals" suggests that the author perceives the separation of "then" and "now," he seems able to enter into the spirit of youth once again.

Alliteration is a poetic device Fontane uses to convey the sense of completeness and enthusiasm of his boyhood years. In his summary description of his childhood, he characterizes himself as being "voll Anlauf und Aufschwung" (176). The description of the games he played enjoy the same poetic treatment. He busied himself with "... Klinker und Knut und Anschlag und Versteck ... mit einer Lust und Leidenschaft ..." (139). Fontane depicts the garden in the same manner: "Die erste Hälfte, mit Reseda und Ritterspornbeeten, mit Rabatten und Rondeelen ... besetzt, war ein richtiger Garten ..." (41). While Fontane does give some specifics about the games he played, he primarily intensifies the emotion of the description, indicating the enthusiasm and animation of his childhood, by alliteration.

Another element of his childhood is innocence. One must first ask what Fontane understands or intends by this word, whether he means to
use it in the sense of "guileless" or "guiltless." He contrasts his childhood years, when he was "unschuldigen Herzens" with the later years that he denotes as prosaic, "oft auch durch eigene Schuld" (176). It is possible that Fontane simply means that he was unfettered in his earlier years by the knowledge of his guilt, or the consequences of his actions, just as people generally become more aware of themselves with added years, and develop a more complex view of life. Indeed, to the extent that children are naive and inexperienced, free of critical self-examination, they can be considered innocent. If that is what Fontane intends, then he is not claiming to be without fault as a child, that is, guiltless, but simply ignorant of the greater evils of life.

The poetic aspect of ignorance is seen in the delight the child finds in locating a hiding place from the others. It is also depicted in the contrast of the knowledge of father and son. Fontane writes of his father: "... er plauderte mit mir, weit über meinen Kopf weg, über allerhand merkwürdige Sachen, die mich, vielleicht gerade deshalb, entzückten" (50). Just as one might ponder a difficult poem, Fontane contemplated "... diese wunderlichen und mir für mein Leben verbliebenen Gespräche" (50).

It can be both a problem and a benefit to be ignorant. An unenlightened individual can continue to believe that he knows and understands more than he does. To make assumptions on limited
information does not always lead to the right conclusions. But it can also shield a person from the harsher realities of life. Consider, for example, the use by father and son of the word “Glück.” It is not that the general matter or the context was too difficult for the son to understand. It is a word that both of them used liberally.

In *Meine Kinderjahre*, Theodor Fontane occasionally uses “Glück” in such phrases as “[z]um Glück” (33) oder “[e]in Glück” (32), but he does so as an adult writer. For the child, “Glück” holds primarily the meaning of “happiness,” as in: “Ja, das waren glückliche Stunden” (50) and “bescheidene[s] Glück[k]” (40). His father’s understanding of “Glück,” however, is more ambiguous, as exemplified by: “... ein Sarg bedeutet Glück überhaupt” (32). Fontane’s father may mean by this either “good fortune” or “happiness,” or both, as if the two were inextricably linked. Fontane has already called him “ein Glückskind” (22), and we have seen that he plays cards habitually. One might lean toward the impression that “Glück” means “happiness,” but when it comes to playing jeu, luck may be perceived as more important than money, since continued good fortune can, in the long run, overcome a temporary shortage of cash.

Since the marital discord between Fontane’s parents is fueled in large measure by financial matters, money, happiness, and luck are closely intertwined, even though Fontane’s father asserts that “Glück” and “Geld” can be easily prioritized: “Und bei allem Respekt vor Geld, Glück
ist noch besser. Glück ist alles” (32). Later, Fontane’s father asserts unambiguously: “Ohne Freude geht es nicht, ohne Freude geht nichts in der Welt” (131). However, one cannot be certain that a similar meaning should be applied to the earlier statement. The lack of clarity in the intended meaning of “Glück” remains. The vagueness of the intended meaning for “Glück” in this case may be present because Fontane’s father himself is unclear what he means. The meaning of the word cannot be ascertained by mere repetition.

While the elder Fontane may understand the range of meanings, “good fortune” and “happiness,” his son understands the word primarily to mean the latter. The use of the word by the two parties indicates the separation of the two worlds in which father and son live. Fontane writes that his father “... nahm ihm vorschwebende Glücksfälle für Tatsachen ...” (22). This language resembles a description Fontane gives later of himself, as he describes how he used to swing in the yard. He ends with: “... es erfüllte mich mit dem wonnigen und allein das Leben bedeutenden Gefühle: Dich trägt dein Glück” (42). While for Fontane’s father “Glück” is always just out of reach, this illustration shows Fontane being supported entirely by “Glück,” that is, happiness. After hearing his father sing the praises of “Glück”, the younger Fontane is apparently convinced that it is enough for him as well. But the meaning they attach to the word varies. While the difference in
understanding points to a lack of complete communication between father and son, it may have been this very lack of understanding that assisted Fontane in maintaining his sense of serenity as a child.

Another element that Fontane considers necessary to his poetical childhood is to be "guter Leute Kind" (176). This statement indicates the author's general endorsement of his parents. As part of the "summary" statement regarding his childhood, Fontane professes a sense of satisfaction with his parents and with the way he was raised.

Many years before writing *Meine Kindheit*, Fontane expressed in an 1856 letter to his wife his feelings regarding his mother: "Ich gebe Dir darin recht, daß es gewiß nicht leicht ist, mit meiner guten Mama (gegen die ich in bezug auf meine Person immer nur Liebe und Verehrung zu fühlen habe) eine Ruppiner Winterkampagne durchzumachen..." (Erler 168). Supporting this declaration is Fontane's statement near the beginning of *Meine Kindheit* that he has a different perspective on his mother's words and actions from that of his childhood days:

Erst in meinen alten Tagen ist mir der Sinn für ihre Superiorität aufgegangen. Als ich selber noch jung war, erschien mir vieles in ihrer Haltung, besonders meinem Vater gegenüber, zu hart und zu herbe, später indes habe ich einsehen gelernt, wie richtig alles war, was sie tat, vor allem auch was sie nicht tat, und beklage jetzt jeden gegen sie gehegten Zweifel. (16)
These words, according to Fontane, repeat the sentiment expressed by Fontane’s father, in a statement made shortly before his death: “‘Sie hat Recht gehabt in allem, in ihren Worten und in ihrem Tun’” (161). It is possible that this statement by Fontane’s father enabled his son to begin thinking more positively about his mother. It is also possible that Fontane’s own “Nervenkrise” made him more sympathetic to his mother, who, he repeatedly reports, also suffered from the same condition (30, 79, 117).

The general support of his mother is contrasted by the special relationship the author had with his father. We have already seen that the use of the word “Glück” illustrates a bond between father and son. MhicFhionnbhairr identifies a similar expression of their attachment in that the two Fontanes “. . . share a sense of humour regarding their past exposure to ridicule from schoolmates, and a personal rapport and similarity between them is indirectly indicated through this first pair of personal anecdotes, given in the form of a conversation between father and son” (246). The relationship between Fontane, “eine Poetennatur,” as he calls himself (110), and his father, a man by whom “[alles Allitterierende und Spondäische . . . bevorzugt [wurde]” (47) was a soul-kinship. They shared a love for language and poetry. Fontane notes with fondness, and in detail, his father's love for an unusual turn of phrase and his delight in the sounds of speech. Fontane nearly invites
the reader to vicariously share in his childhood as he recalls: “Es war
eine Lust ihm zuzuhören, . . . wenn er, sobald von Schill die Rede war,
hinzusetzte: ‘Schill, der in den Straßen von Stralsund fiel’” (47). Their
bond of poetry expresses itself in this work in the oft-quoted line from
Schiller’s ballad “Die Kraniche des Ibykus.”

The line “‘Und in Poseidons Fichtenhain, Tritt er mit frommen
Schauder ein’” is an expression of their mutual love of poetry and of their
relationship, a line to which Fontane repeats the reference (131, 158).
Fontane begins by showing how he first learned the poem with his
father’s help, and later how he “. . . die zwei Zeilen bloß ihm zuliebe
zitierte” (158). This poignant moment is recalled as Fontane writes of his
father’s death: “. . . da, wo wir von ‘Poseidons Fichtenhain’ gescherzt
hatten, ruht er nun . . .” (162). There is a sense that his father, just as
Ibykus “tritt . . . mit frommen Schauder ein’” is now part of the
mythological realm. That he is buried in the “Bergrücken” evokes a faint
image of the Barbarossa legend (162). This line, by itself, encapsulates
their relationship.

The relationship matured over the years. In the earlier years, the
elder Fontane perhaps needed only a sympathetic ear to hear his
comments. In the later years, there was more confession from Fontane’s
father, but it came with the realization that his son would be able to
understand with the mind of an “alter Knabe” (160). What was evident,
even from the earlier days, was a communication of souls, perhaps even a zest or sense of adventure for life, which Fontane contrasts with the prosaic in life. One can see this in the words Fontane writes of his father’s death: “[D]a wo wir von ‘Poseidons Fichtenhain’ gescherzt hatten, ruht er nun aus von Lebens Lust und Müh” (162). This sentence contains the two elements characterizing their relationship — the poetical and an ability to enjoy life. The change of the idiom “Last und Mühe” reveals the optimism and the adventurous spirit for life that they shared. Life is not just pain, but offers both joy and sorrow.

The poetical realm is seen as something akin to a romantic relationship, which is exclusive. The poetical experience is only shared by the like-minded. In this case, it is Fontane and his father. Niggl concurs in noting that “… das Kind selbst den Vater zum Erzählen auffordert und damit sich und ihm die ihnen beiden notwendige Atmosphäre des Poetischen schafft. Noch in manchen weiteren Zügen betont Fontane eine Wesensverwandtschaft zwischen Vater und Sohn . . .” (Niggl 269). Fontane underscores the uniqueness of this poetical relationship in several ways throughout the work. First, Fontane omits practically all reference to his siblings. He does mention playing or walking with his brother, and also his youngest sister’s baptism. He does not mention her name, but only calls her “ein Spätling” (21). The timing of the ending of the book also points to the
poetical relationship, for the author concludes with his entrance into the Gymnasium, at which point the relationship with his parents, especially his father, changes.

Nonetheless, the bond father and son shared was an imperfect one. Even though Fontane imitated or adopted the attitude of his father, he was still, in some respect, alone in his poetical world. Theirs was a special bond in a world where Fontane found himself brought back to reality by the presence of less imaginative minds: "Es war zauberhaft. Nur meine Truppe verdroß mich beständig, denn jeder einzelne, mit seiner höchst zweifelhaften Räuberanlage, stellte mir die gewöhnlichste Prosa des Lebens wieder vor Augen" (167). The separation of father and son can be illustrated by recalling the difference in their understanding of the word "Glück." While exhibiting a vital understanding of the other, the bond forged through their reliance on "Glück" had a defect, and necessarily so, for their understanding of this word was fundamentally different. But even with someone like-minded, the poetical experience is primarily one of individual perception: "... immer ist es ein einsames Erlebnis des Ich, das die dabei empfundenen 'geheimen Schauer' als individuell erfahrene Poesie (im Unterschied zur 'Prosa der Umgebung') begreift" (Niggl 268).

Fontane attempts to demonstrate to us his affection for his father by showing us the extent of his father's influence in his life, similar to the
pattern of Jung-Stilling’s adoration of his grandfather. Indeed, one of the main purposes of *Meine Kinderjahre* is to enable the author to express his deep affection for his father. But Fontane goes a step beyond Jung-Stilling in that he also shows us himself in the picture of his father. He wants to impart to the reader that he is indeed his father’s son. They both loved the anecdotes about the French military, they loved poetry; both of them hated playing cards. Fontane seeks to display the better side of his father, to persuade the reader that many of his father’s faults were based on immaturity rather than on poor character. His mother criticizes her husband for wanting to tell his favorite stories. He could see a benefit to his penchant for these stories, but she could only see the negative. Fontane sees that his father was not mean-spirited in his shortcomings as a husband. So, while admitting that his mother also suffered in the relationship, he defends his father in *Meine Kinderjahre* against the criticism of his mother. Noting his mother’s bitter comment about his father’s lack of romance, he admits that “... sie litt darunter, daß mein Vater, so sehr er sie liebte, von Zärtlichkeitsallüren auch nie eine Spur gehabt hatte” (29). This sentiment is repeated later: “... bis zu seiner letzten Lebensstunde verharrte er in Liebe und Verehrung zu der Frau, die unglücklich zu machen sein Schicksal war” (50). Again, his father is presented as the positive, more tolerant one in the marriage: “Mein Vater, den dabei, neben einer kleinen Baupassion, auch wohl eine
gewisse Courtoisie gegen seine, trotz aller Kriegführung sehr geliebte Frau beseelen mochte . . ." (42). He defends his father's genuine love for his mother, and strives all the more to present the success he had as a father.

The general appreciation of his mother and the admiration for his father Fontane expressed by Fontane is only part of the truth. The difference in his relationships with them is one of a series of contrasts that Fontane presents in this childhood autobiography. The contrasts center around his parents, their personalities, attitudes, and ideas. They held opposite views on almost all the priorities of life, especially regarding education and upbringing.

Fontane's presentation of his parents reveals that the compassion he has for his father and his weaknesses is greater than that for his mother. One indication of this is that Fontane includes many quotes of conversations between himself and his father, a sampling of their many conversations, which the author states "remain with him." This allows, of course, the words of the speaker to come alive in a way that indirect speech does not. We can "hear" the quaint manner of speech he had, with the intermittent French phrases and the mispronunciation of an unfamiliar foreign name. His custom of calling the earth "dies[e] sublunaris[ch]e Welt" (37) is repeated on occasion, with the result that his father becomes endearing. Examples from his lessons are brought to
life by the quotes. Even if these are not the actual words of his father, using quotes allows the reader to "sit in" on one of the lessons, which were repeated so often that they can still be written as if they had just been spoken.

In direct contrast to her husband, no anecdotes complimentary to his mother, and no real conversations between Fontane and his mother are recorded in Meine Kinderjahre. That is, she is rarely given opportunity to express herself. When she is quoted, the conversation generally ends with a disparaging remark. Along with the example about her husband's lack of romance, the following references are almost all the different occasions in which she is quoted: "Ich weiß schon. Du bist deines Vaters Sohn" and "Wie immer" (108); "Wirst du das auch können, Louis?" and "Es ist noch keine 24 Stunden, daß du selber voller Zweifel warst" (118). And finally, after quoting from a "love" letter from her husband, she states sardonically: "Da habt ihr euren Vater als Liebhaber. Ihr seht, er hätte einen Briefsteller herausgeben können" (29). In response to this Fontane writes: "Dies alles war seitens meiner Mutter nicht bloß ziemlich ernsthaft, sondern leider auch bitter gemeint" (29).

When Fontane does present a conflict, he sides with his father. In the following example, Fontane supports his father's statement, and shows his mother unwilling to take even legitimate criticism. In a
discussion between Fontane’s parents, Fontane’s father rightly points out to his wife that she does the same thing she is accusing him of doing, namely, repeating himself. Fontane establishes this when he writes that the fire in the Petrikirche “... einen bevorzugten Gesprächsstoff für sie bildete” (16). And “[s]ie entsann sich jedes Kleinsten, das dabei vorgekommen war” (16), as her husband did in the case of his favorite topic, the French military. To the general charge against her, though, she responds, “‘Bitte, nichts davon’” (94).

Fontane does not lay all the blame for the turmoil in his home on his mother. He reveals that the weaknesses and failures of his father contributed to the problems in their home, but he does so with more compassion for his father than for his mother. One could not be mad at him, as Fontane writes, “[d]enn er wußte das alles [his problems] und gab seine Schwächen mit dem ihm eignen Freimut zu” (50). His mother simply stands in the background in most scenes, stern and unbending, apparently with no real weaknesses, other than her “Nervenzustände” (30) and her unwillingness to listen to criticism: “‘Bitte, nichts davon’” (94). Fontane, like his father, has admitted that she was right in her statements. Fontane does lend her some sympathy for her attitude and plight, but she is presented as being self-sufficient. While excuses or reasons are given for his father, none are given for his mother, except to say that she was right. His repeated reference to trips she took for a
"Nervenkur" (30, 79, 117) may be his way of defending her. That is to say, he reveals just how deeply she felt the stress of her situation in her family. But it seems more likely that Fontane’s emphasis on his mother’s nervous condition is a statement on her failure to bend — that because of her rigidity she ultimately buckled under the stress of the situation. Her rare tender comment is mixed with a belittling attitude. On his return from his adventure to the mainland: “Sie küßte mich mit besonderer Zärtlichkeit, dabei immer vorwurfsvoll nach dem Vater hinübersehend . . .” (108). When he reports that he failed to bring some pancakes home to his sister, despite his good intentions, she responds: “Ich weiß schon. Du bist deines Vaters Sohn” (108). The conversation breaks off when she responds to her husband: “Wie immer” (108).

Fontane also indicates his greater compassion for his father by giving the portrayal of his father’s last days special emphasis. He does this, he says, “[d]enn wie er ganz zuletzt war, so war er eigentlich” (151). He wants us to see him, not only in his immaturity, but after he had come to see and acknowledge his mistakes. He shows us his father regretting some of the former days. The tenderness with which Fontane evokes the memories of his father contrasts keenly with the jabs he makes at his mother, despite the assertion he makes about his change in attitude toward her. He reveals that his father is one who has learned from his mistakes. Fontane states that his father was at times “. . . von
einer ihm sonst gar nicht eignen Zärtlichkeit gegen mich” (50). But Fontane suggests evidence of much more tenderness in the later years: “Und nun nahm er mich unterm Arm und ging mit mir . . .” and “Er klopfte mich sofort zärtlich auf die Schulter, weil er heraus empfand, daß ich die zwei Zeilen bloß ihm zuliebe zitierte” (158).

In light of the father’s development, we get a less positive glimpse of his mother. When the author hears his father’s confession about jen, Fontane is hopeful, at first, about helping to rekindle the affection between the estranged couple. But he drops the subject when he hears that it is not new information to his mother. She knows about her husband’s admission of mistakes, but exhibits no interest in trying to make their marriage work. Instead of progressing in wisdom and affection toward her family in her older years, Fontane notes that she regresses. On the way to the Gymnasium, he and his mother visited the house in which he was born. He reports: “Sie war nicht gern von dieser Stelle weggegangen und ist als eine Frau von über fünfzig, äußerlich getrennt von ihrem Manne, dahin zurückgekehrt, um dort, wo sie jung und eine kurze Zeit lang auch glücklich gewesen war, zu sterben” (176). The same attitude that may have caused her to suffer the “Nervenkrise” continues to plague her existence, so that she can only find happiness by retreating from the present difficulties.
The author shows his mother’s pessimistic attitudes of the past, as well. While he associates his father and himself with “Glück,” his mother is characterized by the attitude “leider.” After a social evening, in which the elder Fontane’s friends tried to corner him on a statement, his wife is chagrined that he would not be embarrassed by them. In response to his triumph, that they were unsuccessful in embarrassing him, she says: “Leider nicht. Und das ist das Schlimmste von der Sache” (95). Fontane writes about his mother’s decision regarding discipline: “Leider jedoch hatte meine Mutter . . .” (137). Fontane uses her criticism of her husband to characterize her. By adding his own “leider,” he compounds the polarization of the attitudes in the household; the contrast is between “Glück” and “leider.” Not only is luck or happiness contrasted with misfortune in these two persons. Fontane’s mother is also the serious one, that is, she lacks the playful, animated spirit that drew Fontane to his father:

... ihr war die Sache gerade dann am widerstrebensten, wenn sie ins Leichte und Heitere gezogen werden sollte. ‘Was ernst ist, ist eben nicht heiter.’ Übrigens bestritt sie ihm nicht, daß er, als glücklicher Humorist, es immer verstanden habe, die Leute auf seine Seite zu ziehen, setzte dann aber hinzu ‘leider’. (82)

His mother stands, for the most part, on the outside of their poetical sphere, in her prosaic world, only able to spoil the magic of the days and years of childhood.
Additionally, Fontane associates his mother with images of fire and war. He deduces his mother's character in part from her origins in southern France:

... meine Mutter anderseits war ein Kind der südlichen Cevenne, eine schlange, zierliche Frau von schwarzem Haar, mit Augen wie Kohlen, energisch, selbstsuchtslos und ganz Charakter, aber, wie schon in dem Einleitungskapitel erzählt, von so großer Leidenschaftlichkeit, daß mein Vater, halb ernst- halb scherzhaft von ihr zu sagen liebte: "wäre sie im Lande geblieben, so toben die Cevennenkriege noch."

(18)

Her eyes, "the window to the soul," are like coals, ready to ignite a fire with a "vorwurfsvoll" look (108). Fontane describes her as "meine kritikübende Mama" (122), and more potently, as one with a habit of "Kriegführung" (42). He describes his memory of his mother on the night of a fire in vivid terms. His mother is in the center of a vivid visual memory, in which the author correlates red and black with the night of the fire, "... das dunkelrote Brokatkleid meiner Mutter, und das schwarze Haar das darüber fiel, und dies Rot und Schwarz und die flackernden Lichter drum herum, das alles blieb mir bis diese Stunde" (26).

To characterize his father's outlook, Fontane uses an altered idiom "Lust und Mühe" (162); he uses another to characterize his mother's temperament. Fontane records the tense situation surrounding his father's financial trouble at the pharmacy: "Das Bedrückliche der
Situation zu steigern, sahen sich diese Vorwürfe [of Fontane’s paternal grandfather] durch meine ganz auf schwiegerväterlicher Seite stehende Mutter unterstützt . . .” (22). Surely it is no coincidence that Fontane concludes the description with “. . . je weiter die Sache gedieh, je mehr geriet mein Vater zwischen zwei Feuer . . .” (22).

Attitudes regarding education were another cause of disagreement in the Fontane household. Fontane presents their contrasting views of education as positive and negative. While his father had no great admiration for “hominis literati” (12), he revealed himself to be a “real” student, interested in learning for himself and in sharing his learning with others. His father was not particularly concerned that he did not have a formal education: “Es darf aber aus dem Umstande, daß er zeitlebens selbst von einer mangelhaften Schulbildung sprach, nicht auf eine Trauer über diesen Tatbestand geschlossen werden. Beinah das Gegenteil” (11-12). He felt that his education was useful, and was worth passing on to others; his son shows the same interest, reporting “. . . daß ich in einem fort befliessen bin, nützliche Kenntnisse zu verbreiten. Ich bin kein elender Witz- und Wortspieljäger, ich kultiviere Historisches und helfe nach, wo nachzuhelfen ist” (94-95).

His father was progressive in his approach, personalizing the instruction for the pupil, allowing the student to become actively involved in the process of learning. Fontane’s father has words of praise for Dr.
Lau when Fontane reports on his first day in class with his first teacher. He admired the fact that the teacher was not primarily interested in intimidating the students, but instead wanted to develop rapport with them, asking them questions that they would be able to answer with confidence. Fontane’s father had a similar method to engage his son’s interest in the topic he was interested in himself. Fontane expresses his great appreciation for his father’s role and interest in his education.

... ich verdanke diesen Unterrichtsstunden, wie den daran anknüpfenden gleichartigen Gesprächen, eigentlich alles Beste, jedenfalls alles Brauchbarste was ich weiß. .... [W]enn ich gefragt würde, welchem Lehrer ich mich so recht eigentlich zu Dank verpflichtet fühle, so würde ich antworten müssen: meinem Vater, meinem Vater. ... (121)

His mother’s contribution is regarded in a positive light only in that she was not overly concerned about educating her children. The negative aspect of her attitude is more pronounced. Fontane’s father liked the method of “[l]immer peu à peu. Nicht quälen, nicht einschüchtert, Vertrauen wecken und Liebe’” (125). His mother was more traditional in her approach, for which her son criticizes her: “Sie hatte aber in ihrer in diesem Stück und auch sonst noch ganz konventionellen Natur total Unrecht ...” (121). Her semi-tolerance of her husband’s educational methods and her ability to detach herself from the situation with a skeptical smile was positive in that it spared the family further grief. But she also expressed her disapproval of her husband’s educational
methods. For example, she made it evident “durch ihr Mienenspiel” what she thought of her husband’s “sokratische Methode” (121). When she helped Fontane with his reading, she “... war aber nicht leicht zufrieden zu stellen und ging außerdem davon aus, daß loben und anerkennen den Charakter verdürbe, was ich übrigens auch heute noch nicht für richtig halte” (24). The difference between the two methods is plain. While his father attempted to spur an interest in his son for the material, his mother did “ihre Pflicht,” with the attitude “nur nicht weichlich” (24). One can see that it was primarily his mother’s attitude that Fontane found offensive, since he praises Dr. Lau’s method of education characterized by “Konsequenz und Logik” (Aichinger, Selbstdarstellung 138).

Fontane’s parents had virtually opposite views about what was essential in life. His mother prized the material, superficial things in life as a means to social standing and stability: “Ernste Studien erschienen ihr nicht als Mittel, sondern umgekehrt als Hindernis zum Glück, zu wirklichem Glück, das sie von Besitz und Vermögen als unzertrennlich ansah” (122). His father was forced to rethink his ideas about money. He came to value it more highly, because he realized what he had lost by misusing it. He realized he could have satisfied his wife by handling his money better, instead of throwing it away. Without means, he is without
her, and thus left with a world of ideas but has no one with whom he
who can discuss them.

Fontane’s father was convinced that ideas were of fundamental
importance in life. His mother believed this, too, except that she was
convinced that what other people thought of her was what counted. That
is, the substance is created only by the form. For his father, though, the
form was what conveyed the substance of the message. Regarding a
pistol that no longer functioned, his father says that whether it works is
not what counts: he says he learned later in life that “Die moralische
Wirkung entscheidet dabei. Das Moralsche entscheidet überhaupt”
(155).

It was far more important to Fontane’s mother that her children
had good manners and a good appearance than that they had an
education: “Es kam, ihrer aufrichtigsten Überzeugung nach, im Leben
auf ganz andere Dinge an, als auf Wissen oder gar Gelehrsamkeit und
dies anderen Dinge hießen: gutes Aussehen und gute Manieren” (122).
The relative importance that Fontane’s mother placed on appearance
over education is one of several ways she reveals that she prefers
superficiality to substance.

Another is that she is more interested in appearance than in
character, as Fontane attests:
... dessen entsinne ich mich deutlich, daß sie, vielleicht weil sie in hohem Maße den Sinn für Repräsentation hatte, von den Lebensgewohnheiten ihres Vaters, und zwar viel viel mehr als von seinem Charakter oder sonstigem Tun, mit einem gewissen freudigen Respekte sprach. (15)

That her father ate two biscuits while drinking his wine, and that he did this twice daily, brought more comments from her than his underlying character. The only virtue she mentions is that he was moderate in eating just two biscuits with the wine. But the way he ate them, "mit den zierlichsten Handbewegungen" garners as much attention from her as his moderation.

Even Fontane's own appearance was important to his mother. He says that he was the "favorite." because his birth was so difficult. But he harbors more than a suspicion that his curly head of hair affected her behavior, so that he was, at least in one instance, "useful." Fontane was allowed to travel with his father regarding a business decision after "[m]eine Mutter stimmte meines Vaters Vorschlage sofort zu, was ich mir nur so deuten kann, daß sie von ihrem Lieblingskinde mit den schönen blonden Locken einen guten Eindruck auf den Großvater, zu dem die Reise ging, erwartete" (26). Fontane's conviction of his mother's attitude is underscored as he repeats at the end of this episode, "... daß meine blonden Locken, auf deren Eindruck meine Mutter so sicher gerechnet hatte, ganz und gar versagten" (28). Not everyone was as enamored with his curls as she. Not everyone valued appearance as highly as she.
A glimpse of her in her earlier days reveals the same pattern. She preferred to use select expressions such as "Docken" rather than "Zeug nach der Elle" when referring to their business (15). Because appearance mattered to her, she wanted to be known as reformed, even though she had no real interest in religion (19). Both Fontane's father and mother engaged in searching for ties to more prominent or promising relatives. They did not insist on maintaining their heritage, but instead looked for "einer[n] wirklichen oder eingebildeten Familienanhang . . ." who was more prominent (19). Fontane's mother is the one who more doggedly pursued the "right" connections. His father seemed to enjoy the investigation more as a game, and could approach the subject with humor. His mother was vehement in her attachment to her "relatives:"

... [M]ein Vater ... erging sich gern in mitunter grotesken Ausmalungen, über die er dann auch wieder zu lachen verstand. Aber daß meine ganz auf Verständigkeit und beinahe Nüchternheit gestellte Mutter, ihm in allem, was alt-französische Verwandtschaft anging, nicht bloß nacheiferte, sondern ihn darin wo möglich noch übertrumpfte, das durfte füglich überraschen. (20)

Fontane explains further how she would especially cherish being a relative of a rich or influential person — as long as that influence lasted:

Jedenfalls bildeten die Beziehungen zu den Mummes einen besonderen Stolz meiner Mutter, vielleicht nur deshalb, weil 'Onkel Mumme' Rittergutsbesitzer auf Klein-Beeren war und unter anscheinend glänzenden Verhältnissen lebte. . . . Später schlich das alles ein. Ich glaube Onkel Mummes Stern verblaßte. (15-16)
The superficial is intended to denote substance, or at least create the impression of substance. Fontane recognizes the appeal that substance had over form, especially for his parents. He is not so surprised at his father’s attitude, that the “Beweis des Nebensächlichen” functioned “zugleich als Beweis für die Hauptsache” (19). That his mother actually outdid his father in zeal in such matters — this surprised Fontane. But that his mother’s attitude regarding her history should be a surprise to Fontane is somewhat of a puzzle, considering her record on other matters regarding the importance of appearance.

The same attitude is seen when she is entertaining. Whereas Fontane’s father loved the dinners for the opportunity they gave him to get dressed up, tell stories, and test his wit against the others, Fontane’s mother had an attitude more like those she entertained. Fontane hints at the superficiality of the bourgeoisie in describing the room at his home in which they held their social dinners during their season of celebration: “Der der Tafel Präsidierende kehrte dem großen Spiegel aus der Schinkelzeit jedesmal den Rücken zu, während alle anderen Gäste sich in dem Spiegelglase mehr oder weniger bequem betrachten konnten” (89). The guests could be entertained as much by the enjoyment of seeing themselves as by being seen.

The emphasis placed on appearance over substance receives Fontane’s criticism. Fontane’s attitude is consistent with Schmidt’s
statement in Frau Jenny Treibel: "Das Nebensächliche, so viel ist richtig, gilt nichts, wenn es bloß nebensächlich ist, wenn nichts drin steckt. Steckt aber was drin, dann ist es die Hauptsache, denn es gibt einem dann immer das eigentlich Menschliche" (360), as Walter Müller-Seidel observes (402). But even though this contradicts the sentiment of his father, Fontane shows more understanding for his father because of his father’s greater personal warmth. The aspect of personal relationship likewise has a great deal to do with Fontane’s attitude toward how he was raised.

Equally important to the discussion of the author’s attitudes about his upbringing is his attitude about the innocence of children. Unlike Ebner-Eschenbach, who tells of a time she was disciplined and accepts the punishment meted out, Fontane still cannot accept the discipline he was given. Ebner-Eschenbach understood herself to be a sinner in need of repentance, even as a child. She recounts in her autobiography the sentiment that led to jumping out the window after her first confession: "Ach – wer sterben könnte, gleich nachdem er sündenfrei geworden ist! Er wäre gerettet, er würde pfeilgerade auffliegen in den Himmel . . ." (Kinderjahre 97). Fontane, on the other hand, does not consider the incidents he relates from his childhood as serious in themselves or in terms of producing later problems. In general, the anecdotes he tells about his childhood are met with no sense of remorse or regret, even
about foolish, childish behavior. In the recounting of his recreational activities, Fontane regales the reader with his cleverness in teasing Ferber, an old man in the town who drank too much. His only statement of sympathy for this man is "der arme Hauptmann," who, he notes "... hütete sich, seine Drohung wahrzumachen, weil er sich, in seinen guten Stunden, nicht gern an die schlimmen erinnern mochte" (148). Fontane does not see or, at least, admit to seeing the ugly side of his behavior here either. To him this was just the routine part of play: the chapter is entitled "Wie wir draußen spielten, an Strom und Strand" (142). Thus his failures are related as information, but not as a confession.

That which made Fontane's life prosaic, that which came about "oft auch durch eigene Schuld" (176) is shielded from the public eye. In notable contrast to his father, who "... gab seine Schwächen mit dem ihm eignen Freimut zu" (50), Fontane does not see his activities as weaknesses. Only once does he clearly admit a fault: "... so hatte ich das Vergnügen, zu guter Letzt noch als Lügner entlarvt zu werden. Ich schämte mich. Aber freilich wohl nicht genug" (174). Even here, though, he relegates at least part of the blame to "[d]es Schicksals Tücke" (174).

Since the attitude Fontane displays with regard to his childhood is that the shortcomings of a child are essentially harmless, it is consistent that what he advocates is fundamentally an approach of "non-
interference” for raising children. He promotes a more or less pain-free, unencumbered process of learning by example, allowing “... einen jungen Baum bei kaum fühlbarer Anfertigung an einen Stab, in reiner Luft frisch, fröhlich und frei auf[zu]wachsen...” (134). The alliterative use of the adverbs fosters a poetical tone to the idea. Parents should be a good example, and he expects that children will follow their actions without needing a harsher approach:

... Erziehung ist Innensache, Sache des Hauses und vieles, ja das Beste, kann man nur aus der Hand der Eltern empfangen. “Aus der Hand der Eltern” ist nicht eigentlich das richtige Wort, wie die Eltern sind, wie sie durch ihr bloßes Dasein auf uns wirken - das entscheidet. (133-34)

Upbringing must involve the whole person, and should not be seen as merely a program of punishment, a series of reprimands and punishments for infractions of rules. His idea could be summarized as: “Do what I do, and not what I say.”

The son was, and the author remains, opposed to punishment as a means of correcting behavior, and criticizes those “beschränkte Leute” who deemed that the only effective form of discipline was punishment (138). He gives praise to his parents for their method of upbringing, insofar as they followed what he calls the “Nicht-Erziehungsprozeß.” (135). After asking, “Wie wurden wir erzogen?”, he gives his own answer:

“Gar nicht erzogen und ausgezeichnet erzogen”, so sagte ich und dies scheinbar sich Widersprechende paßte ganz vorzüglich zusammen. Es paßte zusammen und hätte noch
besser gepaßt, wenn der Zustand des sich gar nicht oder
doch nur wenig um uns Kümmernein permanenter
gewesen und jederzeit in seiner vollen Reinheit aufrecht
erhalten worden wäre. (135)

The criticism he hints at here is one that he applies to both
parents. He makes the censure more penetrating when he writes: "Ich
kann mich nämlich nicht entsinnen, jemals mit einem vollen Recht
bestraft worden zu sein, entweder war es im Maß verfehlt, oder ganz und
gar ungerecht fertigt" (135). The author equates their deviation from the
"normaler Nicht-Erziehungsprozeß" with "herkömmlich[e] pädagogisch[e]
Mitte[l]" that were "teils nutzlos, teils geradezu schädigend" (135). While
he criticizes both parents to a certain degree, the criticism of his mother
stands out.

The deliberate intent of the contrast of negative and positive in
regard to his mother and father, particularly in the realm of discipline, is
nowhere more clearly seen than in the beginning of the seventeenth
chapter: "Ich schloß das vorletzte . . . Kapitel mit einem glücklichen
Erziehungsakt meines Vaters, mit einem nicht glücklichen meiner
Mutter, habe ich dies neue Kapitel zu beginnen" (162). We read these
words directly after reading that his father is resting "von Lebens Lust
und Müh" (162), so that the contrast between the sanguine,
understanding character of the father and the harsh, insensitive mother
is highlighted.
She is portrayed as being far from maternal, except on a rare occasion. When there was a fire in the church, she came home, overjoyed to see her children safe, and then fainted. The author depicts his own mother as being detached and aloof. Although she is the one who should know him best, he sees her as the one who understood him the least. Her attempt at a joke of giving him a whip, a disciplinary instrument, for Christmas came across as thoughtless and ineffective, and betrayed "... eine volle Wesens- und Charakterverkennung" of her son (164). He claims, though, to understand her, and the basis of her actions, especially in how she approached discipline: "Bei dem kleinsten Fehler zeigte sie die "rasche Hand", über die sie überhaupt verfügte. Von Laune war dabei keine Rede, sie verfuhr vielmehr lediglich nach dem Prinzip, "nur nicht weichlich". .... "Nur nicht weichlich." Dies ist gewiß ein sehr guter Grundsatz ..." (24-25). He reiterates "nur nicht weichlich" to emphasize her rigid approach and the principled way in which she approached her relationship with her son. He found the inflexible rules difficult to live with, and criticizes her militaristic methods. He characterizes her method as one who "abkommandiert[e]," a criticism he repeats (135, 151). The author’s choice of the "ab-" prefix intensifies his mother’s sense of authority and superiority.

In her defense, Fontane also depicts her as being as hard on herself as she is on others. This small credit, however, pales in
comparison to the praise Fontane lavishes on the family housekeeper and cook, Frau Schröder. While Fontane at times almost grudgingly accepts his mother, twice in his initial description of Frau Schröder he calls her “ein Schatz” (79-80). Like his mother, she was principled; but unlike his mother, who “... ging außerdem davon aus, daß loben und anerkennen den Charakter verdürebe” (24), Schröder was merely “sparsam in ihrem Lob,” making her praise all the more effective (81).

Schröder also had an astute understanding of the author’s character and had the ability to manage his childish and arrogant tendencies: “Was mich anging, so wüßte sie, daß ich gut geartet aber empfindlich, eitel und von einer gewissen Großmannssucht beherrscht war” (80).

Schröder seems to strike the balance between principle and feeling.

Fontane’s parents, though, are on the opposite ends of the spectrum with respect to principle and feeling. Fontane appreciates his father’s more emotional approach to discipline. His father gained no admiration from him by following through on punishment dictated by his wife “... wie in Ausführung eines richterlichen Befehls ...” (137).

Fontane was able to discern the difference between discipline his father carried out as a matter of obedience or duty, and that which he carried out as a matter of conscience, and states that those “... die bloß auf Befehl erfolgten, schmerzen mich bis diesen Tag” (135). The pain the grown son continues to feel may be a sense of betrayal by his father or
disappointment in him, seeing that his father allowed his own actions to be dictated by his wife. It may also be bitterness toward his mother, whose attitude it was, he conjectures, "... mein sehr zur Bequemlichkeit neigender Vater sei eigentlich 'für gar nichts da' und daß sie mit dem allen den Zweck verband, ihn auf den Weg des Pflichtmäßigen hinüberleiten zu wollen" (137-38). His sympathy for his father's situation is seen in the tender expression "mein Papa" in explaining the predicament his father faces (137). Fontane expresses no such support for his mother.

The times when Fontane's father found it necessary to discipline his son independently are mentioned, but Fontane does not dwell on them. They were: "... kleine Executionen, die vielleicht auch hätten wegbleiben können, aber gegen die ich, wie schon gesagt, in meinem Gemüte nicht länger murre" (137). Instead, he concentrates on the times when his father was more lenient, moments that Fontane seems to view as evidence that his father was then more understanding. After Fontane broke a tooth while being disobedient, his father did not "add insult to injury" but said: "Nun das ist nicht schlimm. Da muß die andere Hälft auch raus. Dann bist du's los. Weh tut es. Aber das ist die Strafe" (142). Here, natural consequences are considered sufficient punishment for the offense. In another case, Fontane again acknowledges his apprehension about the forthcoming punishment; he recalls his father's

Wie gerne denk’ ich daran zurück, nicht um mich in meiner Heldentat zu sonnen, sondern in Dank und Liebe zu meinem Vater. So muß Erziehung sein. Der liebenswürdige Mann, wenn er zum Strafen abkommandiert wurde, traf er’s nicht immer glücklich, wenn er aber seinem unmittelbaren Gefühle folgen konnte, traf er’s desto besser. (151)

Fontane liked such leniency. When he writes: “Leider jedoch hatte meine Mutter ... den Entschluß gefaßt, nur immer Strafmandate zu erlassen, die Ausführung aber meinem Vater, wie einem dafür Angestellten, zuzuweisen” (137), he reveals that his objection to her method was likely due, in some measure, to physical pain. He wanted a childhood that did not hurt. And he admits as much when he writes: “... die Hand einer Mutter, die rasch dazwischen fährt, tut nicht allzu weh ...” (137).

The essential difference, however, between Fontane’s ability to accept his father’s discipline and punishment better than his mother’s is rooted in the attitude with which they approached their duty. Fontane distinguishes between “[d]er Charakter” and “der Mensch” (134). One must possess and build character, but it takes more than character to be a person. That is, one cannot equate living by a prescribed set of rules with being a whole person. It was not merely the leniency that Fontane appreciated. It was that his father, instead of being rigid in his methods
of discipline, viewed each situation separately. The author claims that
his own experience in the home was only made worse by attempts to use
traditional pedagogical methods (135). What he valued about his father
was the "human" element, the mercy that he extended to him, the
empathy, the ability to identify with him in his struggles, from learning
poetry to being afraid of the punishment that was due. His father lived
with a sense of inadequacy, dependent on luck, for his success. His
mother, on the other hand, lived by her principles, but only rarely could
she break through to identify with her son on the personal level.
Fontane draws the comparison clearly: "... sie waren auch beide von
einer vorbildlichen Gesinnung, die Mutter unbedingt, der Vater mit
Einschränkung, aber darin doch auch wieder uneingeschränkt, daß ihm
ejeder Mensch ein Mensch war. Noch weit über seine Bonhommie hinaus,
ging seine Humanität" (134). His mother, in contrast, earns only
ambiguous praise for her attitude on a rare occasion. When Fontane is
about to leave for the Gymnasium, she was "... ganz gegen ihre
Gewohnheit, ungemein weich und nachsichtig gegen mich ..." (176).
His mother wins an acknowledgement that she was right, but his father
wins his son's admiration and appreciation.

A final contrast to be discussed is that of heredity and
environment. Paralleling the other sets of counterparts seen in this work
— his father and mother, feeling and principle — heredity and
environment are at odds. The contrast is not a new one, but the manner in which Fontane presents these opposites is one that reveals something about the author.

The subject of heredity is broached in the foreword, where Fontane discloses the reason he chose his years of youth to depict his life. *Meine Kinderjahre* is the extension of the principle asserted by one of his friends, namely that "in [dem] ersten Lebensjahre 'stecke der ganze Mensch'" (9). Heredity is also a dominant subject in the first chapter, when Fontane reviews his parents' French colonial background. Noting that his parents were from "zwei grundverschiedene Volksstämme," the author makes the claim that the "Stammesverschiedenheit" of these two groups that were "... völlig unbeeinflußt durch die inzwischen erfolgte Verpflanzung ins Brandenburgische, sich auch noch in meinen Eltern zeigte" (18). The environment, far from overcoming their inborn traits, did not even influence them, he asserts. The author makes essentially the same claim explicit when he writes: "... so darf vielleicht auch diese meine Kindheitsgeschichte als eine Lebensgeschichte gelten" (9).

While the author makes an assertion about the primacy of heredity, he makes the opposite declaration about the influence of environment. Even though Fontane finds his friend's statement in the foreword "bestätigt" (9), Fontane does allow for the possibility of change in a person. He presents his father in the *Intermezzo* as he was in his
later years, expressly for the reason that "... \textit{wie er ganz zuletzt war, so war er eigentlich}" (151). He thus asserts that life is not predetermined by genetics alone:

Fontane wie Kafka beschreiben eine komplizierte Dialektik von Anlage, Milieu und innerer Erfahrung, die nicht auf einen determinierenden Nenner gebracht werden kann. ... Kafka wie Fontane zeigen die \textit{Individualität der Kindheit}, die sich in der Erfahrung ja erst aufbaut und nicht etwa als determinierende Kraft immer schon wirksam ist. (Oelkers 50)

Fontane's perspective is consistent with the teaching of his father:

"... \textit{die Verhältnisse machen den Menschen}" (159).

If Fontane were consistent about the importance of heredity in his life as stated in the introduction, one might expect the author simply to relate the anecdotes that reveal the traits present in the earliest years of his life. But he uses a different approach. The environment enjoys a much broader presentation than merely the situation in the home, the interaction of the individuals within the family or with the hired help. Fontane shows the local society as well as the events in the world at large, and he presents his world in this order. Chapters 9 and 10 show life at home, chapter 11 has to do with experiences at home and in the city, and in the twelfth chapter, the author enlarges the perspective to the world. The particular significance of the world events is that they were things that "... \textit{nicht durch unser Zutun geschahen, sondern von außen her an uns herantretend, das von uns geführte häusliche Leben}
nur begleiteten, beziehungsweise modelten" (95). The environment is important for more than a means of finding things that one is interested in and learning about them. The author wants to show that he is shaped by the influences of the world about him.

Much in the milieu of the Fontane household was negative. The author's goal is not to pretend that he lived in the perfect home. Indeed, he holds some of the same attitudes and feelings from his earlier days. As we have seen, Fontane exposes weaknesses and failure, both those of his parents, and his own. But where there is a change in his attitude, or an apparent acceptance of imperfect behavior, it is because the behavior is excused on some basis.

The author finds himself unable to hold his parents or himself ultimately responsible for negative behavior or attitudes. For example, he uses the excuse of heredity. His mother's fiery temper is dismissed because he considers it a hereditary trait, and it therefore must be accepted. After giving a rather thorough introduction to the heritage of his parents, he refers to typical characteristics: his mother was endowed with "südfranzösische Heftigkeit" (16), whereas, with respect to his father, he writes that "[da]s Gascognische in ihm schlug immer wieder durch" (49). His father blames his own weaknesses and mistakes on his youth. Fontane implicitly concurs with this: "... in seinen alten Tagen aber... waren des Lebens Irrtümer von ihm abgefallen..." (151). He
takes pains to demonstrate that his father is more mature, having learned from his earlier mistakes. This is the "enlightened" approach; education is the key to being better. He does not discuss forgiveness, employing instead an attitude of tolerance or resignation. But he cannot hide the note of bitterness or disappointment, any more than Fontane's mother hid from her son her own bitterness over the disappointment about her husband's unromantic love letters. Manufacturing excuses does not bring him satisfaction. Although he is able to give an intellectual reason for the negative, his emotions do not concur.

The disparity between his intellect and emotions causes the "komplizierte Dialektik" Oelkers observed to be a prevalent pattern in Fontane's portrayal and discussion of other aspects of his childhood (50). Fontane presents the negative, but at the same time he avoids it. He does this by granting a superficial acceptance of a proposition, which is quickly followed by its negation, giving "den Eindruck der Harmonisierung" (Aichinger, Selbstdarstellung 136). Aichinger correctly observes that the author's conflict surfaces "... zunächst als kaleidoskopartiges Schillern der Meinungen, bei näherem Zusehen aber geradezu als Verschiebungen von der Position zur Negation; und nicht selten läßt sich sogar die Rückkehr zur ersten Aussage feststellen" (Selbstdarstellung 137). For example, Fontane explains his attitude toward his mother's maxim "Nur nicht weichlich": "Dies ist gewiß ein
sehr guter Grundsatz und ich mag ihn nicht tadeln, . . .” but then immediately repeals the endorsement by saying that it did nothing to help him (25).

The conflicts on which Fontane focuses are primarily those between his parents. While revealing that they were not able to reach a resolution, he shows his father willing, but his mother unwilling to mend their differences. MhicFhionnbhaírre concurs:

Notwithstanding the fact that Fontane generously vindicates his mother of blame for the unhappy relationship, the charm of the picture of Louis makes the reader wonder if Fontane did not secretly question the wisdom of her acerbic reactions to her husband’s escapades, great and small. (248 n.1)

The same mixed message is given in the author’s presentation of friction between his mother and himself. Fontane, the writer, asserts resolution where apparently none has been reached. Fontane’s father made the simple and unequivocal declaration: “Sie hat Recht gehabt in allem, in ihren Worten und in ihrem Tun” (161). It is, however, apparent that Fontane is not ready, even in his old age, to unswervingly hold such a position. Fontane begins well: “. . . später indes habe ich einsehen gelernt, wie richtig alles war, was sie tat, vor allem auch was sie nicht tat, und beklage jetzt jeden gegen sie gehegten Zweifel” (16). Unlike his father, though, he then qualifies his emphatic assertion: “Ihre ganz südfranzösische Heftigkeit, die mitunter geradezu ängstliche Formen
annahm, war vielleicht nicht immer zu billigen . . ." (16). The inclusion of "südfranzösische" acts to soften the criticism somewhat, as if to imply that she somehow is not quite responsible for her behavior because of the hereditary factor. He likewise softens his self-reproach. He laments "... daß diese mir jetzt klar zu Tage liegenden Vorzüge von uns allen zwar immer gewürdigt, aber in ihrem vollen Wert und Recht nie ganz erkannt wurden" (17). Of particular interest in this quote is "von uns allen." That Fontane uses the plural rather than the singular form indicates that he is not taking complete personal responsibility for his actions and attitudes. Instead, he is really hiding behind a collective responsibility. It is difficult, therefore, to be convinced that he has greatly changed his attitude toward his own admitted errors. One can wonder whether Fontane considers his previous attitude a mistake, based on a flaw in his character, or whether he sees it simply as ignorance. But even then, what he writes does not indicate that he regards his present attitude lacking in any way. It is possible when he states that "... ich ... beklage jetzt jeden gegen sie gehetzen Zweifel" (16), that he means his own doubts, silent or voiced, but "meinen" rather than "jeden" would have made this clearer.

In conjunction with the above quote, Fontane writes that they all "nie ganz" recognized the quality of the character their mother possessed. This might be understood as true strictly in the past tense, so that now
after reflection, Fontane could consider that he really does have a solid, complete recognition of the benefits of having such a mother. Perhaps Fontane regrets that he did not appreciate her enough as he was growing up. The "nie ganz erkannt," however, is also true in the present tense, meaning that even at the time of writing, Fontane still lacks understanding and appreciation of her character. He claims to esteem his mother’s “... Charakter, auf den doch immer alles ankommt” (16), but he displays a different attitude later when he asserts that “[d]er Charakter mag gewinnen, der Mensch verliert” (134).

This is one example that gives evidence to support Aichinger’s assertion that “... Aspekte des Verhältnisses von Ich und Umwelt auf der Ebene des erinnerten Ich ohne Kollisionen dargestellt werden, sich hingegen auf der Ebene des erinnernden Ich in besonderer Weise thematisiert und problematisiert zeigen...” (Selbstdarstellung 137). Children are resilient, accepting a broad range of circumstances without question. As a child he accepted his situation without much thought. It is the later reflection that causes him to wonder about the things he experienced. Oelkers likewise states: “Erst der alte Fontane bezeichnet ja rückblickend diese Zeit als ‘glücklich’; das Kind, biographischer Zusammenhang vorausgesetzt, hat dieses Glück gelebt, nicht gewußt” (51). That does not mean that he enjoyed everything about his childhood as he lived it, but he accepted life as it was. The source of the divergence
of opinions is not the difference between childhood and adulthood. The
difficulty lies in the adult author Fontane. The inconsistent message
that Fontane communicates, especially about his mother, reveals that
Fontane is attempting to clarify his feelings and understanding about his
family and the various relationships among the three principal
characters.

The same pattern is evident with respect to his statements about
his upbringing. The approval Fontane expresses is only part of the truth.
Fontane claims that his parents' "Nicht-Erziehungsprozeß" was the way
that it should be and that he liked the policy of non-interference with his
play-time. The parents' example is of prime importance for the children,
he asserts. But he also implies that he did not need their concrete
example, since he preferred to be among his own peers. Contact with his
parent was an interruption of his play. He preferred that his parents
continued their practice, "...unsere Kreise nicht zu stören und wenn
ich nicht in die Schule ging oder gerade Schillersche Balladen lernen
mußte, so gehörte meine Zeit der Beschäftigung nach freier Wahl an, der
Ungebundenheit, dem Spiel" (138).

Thus it is of great interest to note that he undercuts his own
position as he praises Frau Schröder:

Ja, sie [Schröder] war ein Schatz im Hause, noch mehr aber
ein Segen für uns Kinder, ganz besonders für mich. Unsere
Erziehung seitens der Eltern ging sprungweise vor, war da
He did indeed need more than the poetic sounding “kaum fühlbar[e] Festigung” (134). While there is a certain appeal to the freedom he experienced, “[d]er Autor kann nicht umhin, hier die Sorge um ‘Kontinuität’ und die positive Wirkung einer gewissen Lenkung, einer methodischen Leitung zu bedenken” (Aichinger, Selbstdarstellung 138). The writer can recall with fondness the sense of autonomy, but freedom without boundaries does not give a sense of security.

It is the very experience of sensing danger within an environment of known security that Fontane distills in the statement “Alles war Poesie” (176). Fontane’s understanding of the poetical is not a sugar-coated existence, but is instead based on a juxtaposition of the negative and positive, namely underlying security, with enough instability to create a thrill. The poetic childhood is, for Fontane, an expression of the paradoxical elements of the world.

Fontane’s ideas about “Glück” have changed in the intervening years, but he still is “eine Poetennatur,” still governed by his “poetisch[e] Empfindungen” (110-11). The essence of the poetical world for him was the element of potentiality, especially the possibility of danger in the face of established security. Aichinger concurs: “Handelt das Kind dabei auch immer in ‘kluger Abmessung’ seiner Kräfte, so bleibt ein Rest von
Ungewißheit, der aber erst das Ganze reizvoll macht” ([Selbstdarstellung 135]). Consider the following passage from Meine Kinderjahre, which portrays the two opposing elements:

Schöner aber als alles das, war, für mich wenigstens, eine zwischen zwei Holzpfeilern angebrachte, ziemlich baufällige Schaukel. . . . [D]ie Haken, an denen das Gestell hing, saßen nicht allzu fest mehr. Und doch konnt’ ich gerade von dieser Stelle nicht los und setzte meine Ehre darin, . . . die Schaukel derartig in Gang zu bringen, daß sie mit ihren senkrechten Seitenbalken zuletzt in eine fast horizontale Lage kam. Dabei quietschten die rostigen Haken und alles drohte zusammen zu brechen. Aber das gerade war die Lust, denn es erfüllte mich mit dem wonnigen und allein das Leben bedeutenden Gefühle: Dich trägt dein Glück. (41-42)

This situation of danger and security is parallel to his family life. The ups and downs in the family were analogous to his experience on the swing. The family enjoyed a certain amount of stability, at least during the years Fontane was at home, but there were also intermittent disruptions of the equanimity. The insecurity caused by the strife between the parents is illustrated by the rickety supports for the swing. The author expresses the bewilderment and helplessness he felt when he would find that his father had been crying, knowing “. . . daß wieder ‘eine große Szene’ gewesen war” (50). Although his father was a person eager to confess his faults, he was unable to change his actions. The friction in the home was apparent and upsetting. Keitel notes that Fontane’s statement: “gute Tage . . . Friedenszeiten” is “sehr bezeichnend dafür, wie schwer Fontane an der Disharmonie trug” (1082). But, as a member of
the family, he is nonetheless bound to them, he knows nothing else. His relationship with his father, especially, provided enough security for him to be able to see his childhood as poetical, despite the evident disharmony.

Two statements from a parallel scene shed some light on his attitude about “Glück” and “Poesie.” As Fontane attempts to cross the partially frozen waterway to the mainland, he muses:

\[
\ldots \text{“wenn die überfornte Stelle den Bootsmann getragen hat, } \text{dich trägt sie gewiß”. Und das war richtig. Freilich kamen Stellen, wo der Strom so stark ging, daß nicht einmal Schülbereis das Wasser bedeckte, aber solche freie Strömung war immer nur zwischen zwei verhältnismäßig naheliegenden Eisschollen. . . . (108)}
\]

Here we see childlike trust. Like father, like son. The worlds of father and son were separate; the ability to understand the words of the adult world, but not the meaning, was a mystery. The adult world was clearly fraught with problems and ideas that he could not understand or deal with, but his father was managing them day by day. His father was leading the way through the difficulties with a zest and equanimity that yielded more security than fear for his son. His father relied heavily on “Glück” and it seemed, at that time anyway, that it was enough for his father. He encountered rough spots in crossing the ice, just as in his childhood experience, but never enough to really threaten his life. He recalls, as on the swing, “. . . ich empfand nur soviel von Gefahr, wie
nötig war, um den ganzen Vorgang auf seine höchste Genußhöhe zu heben" (108). His childhood, in retrospect, was like this. It was not so peaceful as to be "dull" and predictable, but filled with enough tension to make a good story. That parallels the situation on the swing: the threat of disaster made the experience all the more exhilarating for him. The poetical in the situation is the threat of danger combined with the challenge to succeed.

Yet another scene expresses the same idea:

... ich nahm sie [die Schlußworte] aber sehr ernsthaft und hörte nur heraus, daß es mit dem alten Geisler doch auch etwas auf sich haben müsse. Trotzdem konnt' ich nicht davon lassen, mich immer wieder an die Stelle zwischen Ofen und Schrank zu setzen, von der es hieß, da sei er gestorben. (101)

The same poetical, spellbinding element is found here. Even though he often sat in the same spot, and has swung on the swing many times without an untoward occurrence, there is the potential that something may interrupt the normal event. The challenge of overcoming the odds keeps him riveted to his spot. Unlike Moritz’ Anton Reiser (1785), Fontane’s account of his childhood years is not a case of pure misery or terror; instead, there is a mixture of much pleasantness with a touch of the unknown. Just enough disruption of the routine makes him aware that there is the possibility for something else. Even a fairy tale has the dangerous, unknown element. Every story has a conflict, or there is no
story to tell. But conflict within an established relationship has a basis for resolution.

Meine Kinderjahre is a search for the resolution of the conflicting emotions the author expresses. We have seen various contrasts that the author employs in describing his childhood years. But, the work is not a statement of settled satisfaction with his life and childhood: "[d]as Nachher erscheint so nicht als Fixpunkt einer — zur Zeit der Niederschrift erreichten und eindeutig bestimmmbaren — Lebensansicht des Für und Wider, sondern aufgespalten in ein 'Einerseits-Andererseits' bzw. ein 'Sowohl-Als-auch’" (Aichinger, Selbstdarstellung 137). The whole autobiography is an illustration of the paradox Fontane experiences between the necessity for order and the desire for the spontaneous. Brigitte Neumeister-Taroni recognizes the same pattern: "Dass durch das Prinzip der Relativierung Gegensätze und Widersprüche nicht aufgehoben und gelöst, sondern im Gegenteil in ihrer notwendigen Existenz bestätigt werden, ist einer seiner [Fontanes] wichtigsten Aspekte" (111). It contains an implicit expression of the paradox, as well. For instance, he asserts that the first years give a hint about the rest of his life; but to be able to accept that they are an accurate foretaste of a whole life requires the presupposition that what follows will really be consistent with what has gone before. Such an assumption is based strictly on principle. By presenting his father's life, first how he was in
his younger years and then how he was in his later years, Fontane
demonstrates that there can be a great change in a person, that one
needs to be ready and willing to accept the presence of the spontaneous,
or the possibility of change. Life is not completely predictable. These
two elements are represented in his parents: Fontane’s father operates
according to “das Freiheitsprinzip,” that is,

Mißtrauen gegen Methodik, Originalität, der Vergleich des
Lebensschicksals mit dem Glücksspiel. Ebenso eindeutig ist
die Biographie der Mutter dem Bindungsprinzip zugewiesen;
Repräsentationsbedürfnis, Ordnungssinn und
Pflichtbewußtsein sind wichtige Charakterzüge.
(Aichinger, Selbstdarstellung 144)

It is the combination, not one or the other, which creates the whole. A
person must have character, but character alone does not make a
person.

Neither are the parts mutually exclusive, but one can be stressed
to the detriment of the other. Fontane is unable to harmonize the two
sides. His heart rules his head. Fontane’s acquiescence to his mother’s
ideals points to his acceptance of their necessity while he maintains an
emotional distance from them. He gives his mother her due, but more in
form than conviction. On the other hand, while he sees the weaknesses
his father had, he sympathizes with him. He cannot claim that his
father’s way is truly better; nonetheless, his heart is with his father.
The structure of the work confirms the necessity of form with spontaneity. As has been stated, Fontane admits freely his love for the anecdotal. His chatty style gives the impression that the work is somehow the result of a conversation, that the order is just as he first wrote everything out. The stories are intertwined so that it becomes impossible for him to finish one without digressing to another facet. He does not tell the story completely in chronological order, even though he claims he would like to wait to reveal a certain piece of information: “Allerdings trifft es sich dabei so, daß ich, um der Chronologie willen, meine beste Karte gleich zuerst ausspielen muß” (95-96). His style corresponds to the spontaneous element.

These anecdotes, however, are not randomly told. Supplying as examples the “almost total unity of place” and that “… the characters are not shown as developing, but as they were…” MhicFhionnbháirr observes that “[i]t is mainly through the static nature of the past evoked that Fontane is able to impose artistic unity on the story” (259). Furthermore, “… the recurrence of certain motifs… aided by the employment of anecdotes under different sections of the autobiography … added to the unity of the work” (MhicFhionnbháirr 260). The intertwining of the anecdotes indicates in part “… the carefully planned method of the autobiographer” (MhicFhionnbháirr 248). The author has shown us some pieces of a part of his life. But he is concerned that there
be order to the telling: “... ‘ja, wie lebten wir?’ — Ich gedenke es in einer Reihe von Bildern zu zeigen und um Ordnung und Überblick in die Sache zu bringen, wird es gut sein, das Leben, wie wir es führten, in zwei Hälften zu teilen, in ein Sommer- und in ein Winterleben” (81). The “how” and the “what” are both necessary. The structure is necessary for the spontaneous element to function.

Fontane discovers this confirmed in society as well. A system provides a framework for personal growth. Fontane finds his own expectations challenged when considering some men who had grown up under a rigid, militaristic system. He notices that these men had strong feelings of self-confidence. Contrary to what he would have surmised, the constraints did not damage their identity, but instead enhanced it. By the same token, he admits to a sense of “Nichtigkeit des Ichs” during his younger years while growing up in a more loosely controlled environment, stating that in the current environment, such a sense of one’s identity is difficult to develop. The more highly structured system, although difficult to live under, does have its positive side in developing character.

Fontane himself embodies the paradoxes he describes. He strove to show us the similarity and bond between himself and his father. The resemblance is present indeed, even to the point where Fontane emulates his father in that which he did not approve. Richard Kersting, an
“Apothekerkollege” of Fontane’s, writes in a letter to his brother about the young, twenty-two year old Fontane:

“. . . er liebt auch das Schöne und strebt nach dem Guten, aber sonst ein kurioser Kautz. Um Wissenschaft kümmert er sich gar nicht, Charakter habe ich noch nicht viel bemerkt, und daher sind seine Grundsätze schwankend, ohne inneren Halt. Er verteidigt nicht selten die niederträchtigsten Maximen, aber nicht eigentlich, weil sie die seinen sein, sondern weil es ihm Gelegenheit giebt, seinen Scharfsinn glänzen zu lassen.” (Eberlein 83)

Like his father, who loved social occasions to test his wit, so Fontane is seen defending that which he may not even care about.

The author is described in that letter as lacking the one thing — namely character — for which he praises his mother. It is somewhat ironic that he also exhibits one of the major flaws he sees in her character. He criticizes his mother’s bias for form without substance, but he himself emulates her in this. When he writes: “Und so fuhr ich denn mit meiner Mutter . . . in die Welt hinein” (176), it is true not only in the literal sense, but also in terms of his implicit support for his mother’s viewpoint about “. . . die Macht der rein äußerlichen Erscheinung” (112-13). He continues later: “Das Ästhetische hat eben auch sein Recht, . . .” although he admits that there is a danger in following this idea (113). In discussing these ideas, Fontane bases his thoughts on his “Ordnungsgefühle,” not a well thought-out principle. His perspectives may have been influenced by one of his father’s favorite
topics, namely "... die Rang- und Ordensverhältnisse des preußischen Staats" (91). But, in giving the argument for his point, his reasoning is based on what he considers common experience, noted in the "we"-phrasing of the observations: "Wenn sich zwei Jungen auf der Straße schlagen und der ganz Kleine siegt über den ganz Großen, so freuen wir uns über den Kleinen, ärgern uns aber über den Großen..." (112n).

His only real defense for these ideas is that this is the way that he was brought up: "... muß das aus unserer Seele heraus, so müssen wir nach ganz anderen... Prinzipien erzogen werden" (113n).

Fontane has maintained that "... wie die Eltern sind, wie sie durch ihr bloßes Dasein auf uns wirken - das entscheidet" (134), and he substantiates in Meine Kinderjahre that he is truly the combination of both his parents. It is questionable, however, whether Fontane sees himself as such. He identifies more with his father than with his mother. But Fontane is making overtures to come to terms with both sides. He is at least beginning to understand that rules and principles are helpful, certainly, in providing a foundation for the humane element to function. Fontane accepts the negative side of his father, instead of only wanting to see the positive; he is seeing the positive side of his mother’s influence, instead of only the negative. He understands better that the planned is necessary for the unplanned element to flourish.
The writing of *Meine Kinderjahre* is Fontane's attempt to clarify the questions regarding himself by the indirect means of reviewing his home life. The termination of the work at the time when he leaves for the Gymnasium points to the significance of the role of his parents and their relationship to his unresolved questions. Asking the question “how?” in personal matters is less intimidating than asking “why?” Instead of writing about the equivocation within himself, he writes about his parents: “Indem Fontane das Vorbild des Vaters objektivierte, gelangte er zu letzter Klarheit über sich selbst,” Reuter declares (1: 70).

Reuter is, however, only partly correct in this assessment. Writing his childhood autobiography enables Fontane to gain only partially the clarification about himself that he seeks. He continues to equivocate, while only rarely acknowledging that a contradiction appears to be present. Neumeister-Taroni is correct in writing: “Wer Fontanes Weltbild erarbeiten will, darf deshalb nicht davor zurückschrecken, uneindeutige und sogar sich widersprechende Aussagen als Grundlage wie auch als Strukturgesetz seiner Weltanschauung anzuerkennen” (112). Nonetheless, while Fontane may see that the paradoxes must be accepted, it is not clear that he is fully able to do so when the issues are personal.

Even though the autobiography does not necessarily result in complete clarification for the author, the author has realized
convalescence through the work. Indeed, "Mit den Kinderjahren besiegt Fontane nicht nur seine Nervenkrankheit, er erringt auch seinen ersten wirklichen Erfolg als Erzähler" (Ohff 386). Beyond that, he is able to finish Effi Briest, the work he had started before encountering his crisis of writing. In that novel, Fontane continues the discussion of the central conflict of Meine Kinderjahre between principle and humanity. Effi expresses the same attitude the author recalls of his own youth when she says: "Ich klettere lieber, und ich schaukle mich lieber, und am liebsten immer in der Furcht, daß es irgendwo reißen oder brechen und ich niederstürzen könnte. Den Kopf wird es ja nicht gleich kosten" (34). And it is Effi whose words echo those of both Fontane and his father when she says regarding her estranged husband:

Und es liegt mir daran, daß er erfährt, ... wie mir hier klar geworden, daß er in allem recht gehandelt. ... Und dann, womit er mich am tiefsten verletzte, ... so hart es mir ankommt und so weh es mir tut, er hat auch darin recht gehabt. Laß ihn das wissen, daß ich in dieser Überzeugung gestorben bin. (294)

While Fontane may not have achieved full resolution of his conflict, he has been able to make the conflict productive.
Chapter 2

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s *Meine Kinderjahre*:

An Autobiography of Contentment

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach enjoys the interest of present day German scholars, but relatively little has been written specifically about the literary aspect of *Meine Kinderjahre*. And much of what has been written about this autobiography of childhood has been written from the feminist perspective, a perspective that shows itself to be painting in one color. Reading the work from more of a socio-cultural perspective than a literary one, Eva Becker writes: “Ich lese die Geschichte der Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach wie die der anderen Autobiographinnen als eine der Selbstbehauptung zwischen den unmöglichen Alternativen: ‘Nur gescheit!’ und ‘Sei ein Mann!’” (317). While this critic may think she has found what she was seeking, she has misunderstood the author’s intention. Becker’s thought is an echo of Agatha Bramkamp, who asserts that Grandmother Vockel’s “Nur gescheit” is merely “. . . adopting the dominant way of coping: she is imitating male behavior, the rational, detached way of approaching life” (13). Ferrel Rose criticizes that notion, asserting that Ebner-Eschenbach presents

[t]he capacity for self-discipline . . . as an indispensable trait for the artist. While Bramkamp would see a mimicry of
male behavior in such a method of coping with emotions, it is a value Ebner also shared with the more successful women writers of her time, even those of differing temperaments. (178)

Adding to the triteness of the feminist criticism of Ebner-Eschenbach, Edith Toegel reveals her open bias: “She also was too intelligent not to know that personal setbacks, alienation and loneliness were part of the woman artist’s fate” (119). Toegel indicates she has failed to realize that personal setbacks and alienation from the theater are not a matter of discrimination. Recall that Grillparzer had many difficulties in this regard, as did Schnitzler, who complained: “Ich glaube wohl, dass ich heute der meist ‘beschimpfte’ deutsche Dichter bin” (TB 12.XII.1915).

Far from finding women’s issues at the fore, Katherine Goodman observes that Ebner-Eschenbach “...most consistently attempts to avoid associations with history or with issues of social injustice, including those particular to women” (181). Helga Harriman’s observations correspond on this point: she notes “... that Ebner-Eschenbach’s feminist inclination lessened as she grew older” and “... that she worked for the dignity of the female sex in an understated yet impressive way” (35).

Those who resist interpreting Ebner-Eschenbach as a feminist fare better in understanding her work. For example, Klaus Weissenberger gives a mythical interpretation of Meine Kindergarten, and interprets the
work as a farewell to the decaying Austro-Hungarian empire. Goodman and Rose, on the other hand, focus on Ebner-Eschenbach’s difficulties being or becoming a writer.³

Ebner-Eschenbach’s intent behind Meine Kinderjahre is not to present an account of suffering and dissatisfaction. Instead, she indicates that she has gained by experience and insight contentment and satisfaction about her life. We shall see that the contentment is gained when she turns her focus from herself to her relationship with God, which is one of child and Father. In order to do that, she begins by showing her own childhood, which provides the backdrop to her later understanding.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach states the goal of her childhood autobiography succinctly: to show the development of a child’s soul (Kinderjahre 8).⁴ Meine Kinderjahre gives us an abundant sampling of the activities and interactions that took place in Ebner-Eschenbach’s childhood home. Most notably, it is people — her sister, her caretakers, father and (step-)mother(s) — who make up her world. John Dewey makes a similar observation regarding children in general:

³ Rose’s work is insightful in this regard. See his work for a detailed discussion of Ebner-Eschenbach’s development as a writer.

⁴ All further references to Ebner-Eschenbach’s works, unless otherwise noted, will refer to Meine Kinderjahre.
The child lives in a somewhat narrow world of personal contacts. Things hardly come within his experience unless they touch, intimately and obviously, his own well-being, or that of his family and friends. His world is a world of persons with their personal interests, rather than a realm of facts and laws. Not truth, in the sense of conformity to external fact, but affection and sympathy, is its keynote. (5)

This closely corresponds to how Ebner-Eschenbach presents her childhood world. She uses language similar to Dewey's in describing “Anischa, mein[e] ehemalig[e] Amme. . . . Sie war der lichte Stern unserer Kinderstube . . .” (17). Pepinka, Anischa, and Mademoiselle Hélène were the ones “. . . die unsere Kindheit schön und glücklich gemacht haben” (46). Also notable is the use of the plural possessive in the first of these examples. It is a pattern for Ebner-Eschenbach to speak of “we” and “our.” She evidences from the beginning an especially close relationship to her sister Friederike, perhaps because of their age, perhaps in part because of their similar experience regarding their mother’s death. Throughout the work, the author gives characters, rather than things or events, the position of primacy.

Pepinka, her governess, plays a primary role in providing stability, a much-needed component in the child’s world. As Dewey notes, stability is not based on information but rather on relationships. Fontane defines a poetical world based on the conflicting elements of danger and security, where the underlying security allows the dangerous element to be exciting. For Ebner-Eschenbach, the security is not only
primary, but it allows the negative elements in her world to be overcome. The innocent curiosity of the children turns to fear because of a lack of knowledge regarding blood-letting. The children's fears are not allayed by the minimal information the assistant gives them along with her threat of punishment. It is not education but the familiar sound of Pepinka's voice and command that restored their equanimity. Even though she often threatened the children, and was "temperamentvol[I]" (16), the children knew her, and knew what to expect from her. And yet, in a game setting, it is exactly the situation Fontane describes that provided so much enjoyment in the chase game "Partie 'au loup:'" "wir fühlten uns schon zerfleischt und zerrissen — und das war ein großer Genuß" (153-54). But this was clearly in the context of a game. In their own lives they had already tasted of the soberness of life.

The many deaths and separations that Ebner-Eschenbach details might have been cause for instability in the home, but a definite authority structure also provided a measure of constancy. The author accepts the authority of adults over children and understands that children need discipline. The wielding of authority is not depicted as a power-play on the part of the parents, since their role as protectors and guides for the children is necessary and right. Her father's authority in the home was dominant and unquestioned. He was strict and militaristic, and she feared him, but while she likens him to
“ein Orkan” (35), she saves the term “tyrant” for their governess, Henriette, because of the governess’ attitude in general, rather than her disciplinary methods (56). Most of the discipline was done by Pepinka, which they accepted: “Wir nahmen sie [ihre Schläge] ohne Widerspruch in Empfang und liebten unsere Pflegerin und Richterin” (16).

Furthermore, the author does not dwell on finding fault with it later. Although children are ignorant and lack experience, she does not view them as innocent. She is candid about her attempt to manipulate the situation with the Käferservice, for example. Consider the following introduction of a new teacher: “Fräulein Karoline war edel und gut, sie hat mir alles verziehen” (159). Having already given us a general description of her overall behavior, she indicates Karoline’s gracious attitude and forgiveness, adding “Ich aber fühle mich durch ihre Großmut nicht entsühnt” (159). Thus she reveals that it was a real offense, not a trifling detail of childish behavior to be rationalized by the hurt she experienced. Ebner-Eschenbach does, however, make her admission a little more restrained and distanced by writing “was das Kind ihr angetan,” not “was ich ihr angetan” (159). She thus implies that there should be some understanding applied because she was only a child. Ebner-Eschenbach also implicitly grants the appropriateness of parental authority in depicting the scene after her first confession when
she tries to jump out the window. The knowledge of boundaries is part of what provides security.

Children are neither innocent, nor are they in a position to alter their circumstances (Ebner-Eschenbach, *Kinderjahre* 35). Ebner-Eschenbach writes of her own situation: “Wir meinten, daß man an der Handlungsweise seines Vaters Kritik nicht üben kann. In späteren Jahren verwandelte das ‘kann’ sich in ein ‘darf’” (35). Her role as a child is to trust those who take care of her and to submit to their authority. She had been taught regarding her parents: “... was sie tun, ... ist immer das Rechte” (139).

As a child, she accepts her role, even though some matters raised questions. The sad news of the death of her grandmother “... ließ sich nicht begreifen” (62). The adults in this instance were as helpless as the children were to alter this situation. At other times, the adults were the cause of a painful situation. When Ebner-Eschenbach’s brothers are sent off to school, the child asks: “Warum schickt man sie fort? ...” (139). No other protest is recorded; the next paragraph begins: “Der Wagen wurde angemeldet ...” (139). The child does not understand; however, the situation is not to be altered, but only accepted.

This situation is more tolerable, though, than when questions of integrity arise. Although the author depicts her parents and other adults to be trustworthy as a whole, she also describes several incidents of
betrayal. Two such cases are presented, one right after the other. The first involves their English teacher, who chooses not to deliver their letters, although she told them she would “als Belohnung” for their accomplishments (154-56). Recall the situation when the young girl is summoned to appear before her father. He claimed that “Wer kein schlechtes Gewissen hat, fürchtet sich nicht” (32). She was convinced that she must have a guilty conscience because of her fear. The English teacher, however, was far more sophisticated: “Die Unglaubliche, auf einer langen Reihe von Wortbrüchen ertappt, kam nicht einen Augenblick außer Fassung” (156). Maintaining her composure, this adult was even able to place the blame on the children. A similar situation arises with someone inside the family, namely Ebner-Eschenbach’s stepmother, which elicits the question from the author: “Wußten denn die Menschen nichts Besseres als uns zu belügen und zu betrügen?” (158). The instance she describes here involves only her mother, but the use of “die Menschen” recalls both situations, and perhaps many more untold incidents. Despite these episodes of betrayal, the structure of authority of parents over children is upheld. In contrast to Fontane, she indicates that she believes children need discipline.

Giving the reader a view of her home-life is only a small part of showing the development of a child’s soul. Thus the question remains to what degree Ebner-Eschenbach fulfills her own goal. Rose’s work
suggests that the author actually focuses more on the matter of the
development of the writer than of the child. In Ebner-Eschenbach’s case,
one can be separated from the other in perhaps only a limited way.

The author declares in her final statement of Meine Kinderjahre
that she had reached the point that she was “kein Kind mehr” (221). In
the beginning of her account, Ebner-Eschenbach states matter-of-factly
that she was fourteen days old when her mother died. But, by beginning
the next sentence with “[d]ennnoch,” (12), the author infers that the initial
facts or statement may be misleading. Likewise, her poor behavior
toward one of the new teachers was out of loyalty to the previous one,
not out of bad intentions toward the replacement (159). The very young
Marie could speak articulately in the subjunctive about her bravery
when she heard the story of the “hlava,” the rolling head: “Ich würde
nicht davonlaufen, o nein! o nein! Ich würde stehen bleiben . . .” (21-22).
But her proclamations of her brave actions were merely hypothetical.

Ebner-Eschenbach’s untested declaration, “. . . ich habe eine
große Courage” (22) was not necessarily a good indicator of the truth. In
the same way, her confident assertion, “. . . ich war kein Kind mehr”
(221), could be misleading. It may be understood in two ways.

The declaration of her maturation follows real suffering. Like other
fourteen-year-olds, however, she had little idea what lay ahead of her.
The wiser, more experienced writer recalls: “An jenem Juni...
vor nun einundsechzig Jahren trübte nicht die leiseste Furcht vor der Möglichkeit eines Mißlingens meine freudige Zuversicht" (220). Her naive confidence told her that since she was no longer a child, all would be right. She was looking forward to entering the adult world with an attitude of determination and purpose, to write "Mein Stück" (220) to contribute to the world. The closing paragraph of the text may thus be understood as self-irony, as the untested, naive statement of one who thinks she is ready to enter the world because of her insight, but who will find with further experience that she still had much to learn.

The statement "Ich war kein Kind mehr" (221) is, however, better understood as the voice of the confident fourteen-year-old, who then, and now in retrospect, really proved to have made a transition. She had much more to learn, but the insight she had gained was sufficient for her to conclude that it indeed marked a turning point in her growth. While this is merely the first "repetition" in the process of life, Ebner-Eschenbach views the transition as having been truly complete. The author has already criticized her own naivete in her ambition before she makes this statement. Her statement comes from the perspective of having nearly finished her life. The change she had experienced at that time was real, not just imaginary. Though yet untested in the adult world, the fourteen-year-old was no longer a child. While living with mere inklings of what that involves, she knows, "es überkam" her as a
revelation, that she had changed (221). Nevertheless, there are many steps to follow, both in her work as a writer and in her understanding of her relationship to God.

Let us turn now to focus on the specific experiences and insights Ebner-Eschenbach had that enabled her to say with certainty: "Ich hatte gedacht und gelitten . . ." (221). These are the two hallmarks of the transition from childhood to adulthood that Ebner-Eschenbach singles out. It is not one or the other, but both together. Certainly the author does not mean "thinking" in an ordinary sense. At the deathbed of her stepmother, the seven-year-old gives evidence that she is able to follow instructions, agreeing to follow the unusual and serious instruction of her aunt. But, the instructions she receives are far too vague for her. What we are told is that her aunt only mentions non-specifically "die Vorwürfe" (60). She does not mention that the accusation is lying, considered in this household among the worst of transgressions. Thus the child is unprepared for the immediate future. Unable to understand the circumstances of her stepmother's illness, she cannot adjust to the situation. A greater level or a different kind of thinking must be in view.

The knowledge of a child needs to be developed in both rational thinking and experience. As we have seen, "hatte gedacht" implies more than intellectual capacity for knowledge. It indicates that, in addition to the natural ability to reason intellectually, one also sees oneself in
relationship to others and sees how one's actions affect others. That is, one's world is expanded beyond one's personal world. This can be demonstrated by the changes Marie expresses with regard to experiences with death.

The children were acquainted with the concept of death, at least intellectually, but they have not had to deal with it first-hand. Ebner-Eschenbach had a life-sized picture of her mother to remember her by, but she really could not remember her; she could really only imagine what she was like from that picture and what others said about her. So it was with death. When Mssr. Just, the children's companion fainted, the siblings misinterpreted the situation: "Wir weinten und jammerten und hielten ihn für tot" (136). They apparently have learned that dead people are unresponsive. Even after Mssr. Just had recovered, the younger brother asks: "Mais pourquoi avez-vous été mort, Monsieur Just? . . ." (136). His experience has not taught him that people can appear to be dead and then return to life.

The opposite situation occurs when Grandmother Vockel dies, and the two sisters are afraid of disturbing the body by crying in her presence. Never having been face to face with a corpse, the child Marie is unsure of what to expect and can only speculate: "Eine Leiche — das muß etwas furchtbar trauriges sein. Man hätte uns sonst, als unser kleines Schwesterchen starb, nicht so ängstlich von ihm ferngehalten
und es nicht so rasch fortgetragen" (205). She is able to reflect later that her fear about disturbing the body is irrational, but it is not until they witness the adults mourning the loss of this one dear to them that the children feel free to express their own grief. Marie no longer really believes that she can make her grandmother come back by blinking her eyes. She hopes she can, and tries to make it happen. But "[i]ch wollte mir einbilden" (212) is different than believing it to be so. These examples exhibit the growth by experience of learning, particularly about death, but the other facet is growing in understanding and concern for someone other than themselves.

Ebner-Eschenbach shows a small step in first being concerned that she is not sadder about her stepmother’s death. She takes a further step when Mssr. Just dies. Now she is the one, not her brother, who "... kam von der Frage nicht fort: Was wird geschehen, was wird man tun?" (182). She surmises an answer: the usual, namely a little sympathy and then forget the person. But she follows the conclusion a step further. She realizes it is not just "one" who will forget, but that she herself will also forget. She sees that she is no different than the others in this regard. This time she is determined to do something more than the usual, and follows through by carving a cross in the tree under Mssr. Just's name.
The final step in demonstrating her growth is just prior to her grandmother's death. Marie's first reaction to the news of the delay of their trip is a self-centered one. She is not particularly concerned about her grandmother, she admits: "Wir waren über die Verzögerung unserer Abreise so unglücklich, daß wir ihre Veranlassung im ersten Augenblick kaum erwogen" (199). It is not until two days later that she begins to reconsider her reaction. When she finally is able to see her grandmother, it dawns on her that Grandmother Vockel may actually die. Her reaction is, in part, selfish. But her thoughts in this moment are focused on what she has been given by being a recipient of her grandmother's unselfish love. She had accepted the love as "etwas ganz Selbstverständliches" (204). She had taken her situation, assuming that it would always be that way. She recalls a similar attitude when the children had enjoyed a two-week vacation earlier, after Mssr. Just left. She confesses that their attitude was thoughtless and selfish: "Wir undankbaren, leichtsinnigen und eitlen Kinder . . . bildeten uns viel ein auf die Mühe, die unsere Eltern sich gaben, uns zu zerstreuhen" (137). The child who had taken life for granted had come to realize that it need not always be this way. Her "klein[e] Gedankenwelt" had been expanded (157). She "hatte gedacht."

The other facet of transition from childhood to adulthood, "hatte gelitten" is related to "hatte gedacht" (221), in that it is not a physical
suffering that is meant here, but a suffering resulting from insight. It is also related because it is suffering in regard to knowledge about oneself. One must know oneself in order to suffer in the way that the author means. Rose asserts of the author that “[a]s a young girl she knew grief only vicariously, through her vivid imagination . . .” (171). If Rose is thus suggesting that her pain was “vicarious” because it was neither self-induced nor sustained, and that she had not yet become aware of “. . . the value of adversity . . .” (170), then in this he is partially correct. Ebner-Eschenbach describes how she and her sister were able to play despite the atmosphere of mourning about them. She does, however, also recall the “. . . Qual, die damals mein Kinderherz zerriß” (62). Her grief in losing her stepmother and other people significant to her was real and personal, thus not merely vicarious. At the same time, the suffering she would later encounter would be of a different kind and degree. The pain of her youth may be considered vicarious to the extent that Ebner-Eschenbach suffered because of losses from death or departure, or suffered by the hand of others; her suffering became more personal when she became aware of her own imperfection.

The young girl longed to suffer, but Ebner-Eschenbach admits that her desire to suffer was selfishly motivated: it was “. . . ein trotziges und selbstsüchtiges Mitleid . . . ein Wille zum Leiden. Nicht weil die anderen etwas davon haben, sondern weil mein Leiden mir das ihre
erleichtert" (78). Suffering of the right kind is something one does not seek. She had seen her step-grandmother, "diese stille Heldin" (63), suffer without a word. Grandmother Vockel follows her own counsel "nur gescheit!" but it is not the father's "easily aroused irrational fury" that motivates the grandmother's controlled attitude (Bramkamp 13). It is instead a matter of maturity. Ebner-Eschenbach illustrates this by contrasting two members of her family: her grandmother bears up heroically under suffering, while she observes that "[d]er starke Mann," her father, "war völlig gebrochen," and "weinte mit seinen Kindern wie ein Kind" (63).

The differing experiences of the grandmother, father, and children are followed by yet another, namely the suffering of Tante Helene, who was personified "[s]chwermütiger Ernst" (64). The explanation for her serious outlook on life is that "[d]ie traurige Jugend . . . warf einen Schatten über ihr ganzes Leben" (64). As we later learn more about Tante Helene's story, however, we can see how this came about. It reveals that she allowed her memories to control her demeanor. Tante Helene's memories still had their same sharpness, even though she had experienced happy times. Her experience appears to contradict Ebner-Eschenbach's assertion on the same subject in the selection "Heimat" from Aus einem Zeitlosen Tagebuch: "Die Erinnerung knüpft ihre feinen, starken Fäden, trägt mir liebe Bilder, liebe Worte zu. Auch
manches begrabene Leid regt sich, ein Widerstreit erwacht. Aber nur der Schatten seiner selbst, ohne Härte und Herbigkeit” (85). A statement from Meine Kinderjahre itself corresponds to the previous assertion: “Was wir gestern gelitten haben, ist nichts; was wir heute leiden ist alles” (118). A clue to the difference between Ebner-Eschenbach’s more contented outlook and her aunt’s bitter attitude can be found in the language Ebner-Eschenbach uses. They had spoken of some recent happy times, but then “. . . auch längst vergangene und sehr traurige Zeiten ließ Tante Helene vor uns aufleben” (113). Her aunt “ließ” the sad times “aufleben.” She was in control of them, and directed them more at will. In Ebner-Eschenbach’s case, it is the memory that is more active: “Wenn aber die Erinnerung . . . lebhaft vor mir aufsteigt . . .” (62). When such vivid memories occur, Ebner-Eschenbach may blush or experience “ein Reflex der Qual” (62), both involuntary responses. This is different than dredging up memories in order to mourn over one’s past loss or suffering. The difference is the focus.

Ebner-Eschenbach is viewing the attitude of her aunt from the present. In the interval she, too, has learned about suffering. Her own attempt at imitation of her grandmother shows that she fell far short of having the necessary inner strength to suffer without a word. Self-selected suffering was not adequate to move her toward adulthood. But, during the crucial interval in the library after her grandmother's death,
she gains new insight into herself and begins to suffer in a different and more profound way: "Es war eine bittere Zeit der Selbstkenntnis, voll Sehnsucht und Kümmernis, diese erste, die ich Aug' in Auge mit den Bewohnern des Bücherschrankes meiner Großmutter zubrachte" (209).

It is the suffering of being humbled. As she opens the Bible to the Book of Revelation, she finds an underlined passage, which she thinks she immediately understands; she assumes that she has been given the ability to discern what no one else, even the most gifted one, has been able to discern (207). The key phrase in the description of her reaction is "schwoll mein Herz" (207). It is not primarily, or even partially, gratitude that floods her heart, but pride. That same attitude had been nurtured already as she suffered the "burden of being a poet" (112). Her assessment of herself on this point is less than flattering: "Die Leiden, die ich dadurch erduldet, und leiden wollte ich ja! erschienen mir nicht wie gewöhnliche, sondern wie besonders schöne und erhabene . . . ; es erweckete aber auch in mir ein tüchtiges Maß Hoffart" (112). Her attitude in response to Marie Kittl's flattery as she replies the girl's outlandish letters is similarly vain: "Ja, dieser Ton gefiel mir, der tat wohl! Von mir aus dürfte denn auch das Mögliche geschehen sein, um mir die Bewunderung und die Teilnahme meiner gläubigen Getreuen zu sichern" (171). Her condition at that point is perhaps best described by one of Ebner-Eschenbach's own aphorisms: "Je kleiner das Sandkörnlein
ist, desto sicherer hält es sich für den Mittelpunkt der Welt” (Aphorismen 45). But, continuing to read in Revelation, the young Ebner-Eschenbach realizes that the more she reads, the less she understands. Then, turning to a biography of Lessing, her condition worsens. After she sees that he had accomplished much more by the time he had reached her age, she becomes disheartened. She wants to be the one with the laurel wreath, but sees her ordinariness in light of these other examples: “So sind die Kinder beschaffen, aus denen große Menschen werden — so war ich nicht” (209). In contrast to her first confession, this was not merely a matter of listing of specific faults that could be forgiven and perhaps corrected, but rather a grave deficiency of her whole person. While her family had burdened her with “… das peinvolle demütigende Gefühl eines angeborenen, geheimen Makels” (112), she is struck later with the realization that she is actually incapable of fulfilling her desire. Having thought about her own condition, she suffers under the consciousness of her apparent insignificance, and sees herself as “[die] von Zweifeln Gequälte” (208).

This is the kind of suffering meant by “hatte gelitten” — that suffering which produces real results. It must cut to the heart, like the initials Mssr. Just had carved in the tree “… tief durch die dicke Rinde, bis aufs Lebendige” (184). The effects will still be seen “[v]on weitem” years later (184). No doubt, the outward signs were lacking here. In
contrast, though, to the painful end of "... eine ganze Menge großer Gemütsbewegungen" (156) caused by the betrayal of her English teacher, she has gained much by her painful insight. She can now rightfully say: "ich hatte gelitten."

This is where *Meine Kinderjahre* ends, but it is not the end of the story. It is merely the end of the first phase. Ebner-Eschenbach describes an overarching principle of repetition: "Alles wiederholt sich im Leben" (103). The principle is illustrated in nature, in the seasons and growth of trees and other plants: "... bei uns zu Hause werden an Bäumen und Sträuchern die Knospen schwellen und Schößlinge in Unzahl hervorsprießen" (12). The principle of repetition does not imply an exact iteration, but instead, a general pattern of "... nothing new under the sun" (*NKJV* Eccl. 1:9). A relatively predictable pattern may be present, as in the case of the seasonal changes or the trees that bud year after year. The trees are the same, yet they are different.

Change is gradual, but it eventually becomes apparent. One is able to mark on the calendar that spring is over and summer has begun. The direction is not always constant, always getting either warmer or colder, but the general direction is clear. The author declares, and also depicts in time elements, her entrance into adulthood. She often registers the time by the season: "Der Winter verrann, das Frühjahr war nahe..." (51); "Der Sommer und der Herbst vergingen" (70). The
cyclical element of life may be more pronounced for Ebner-Eschenbach because of the regular seasonal change of dwelling she experienced: “Es war Spätherbst, und wir waren in Wien . . .” (45). The trip to the country indicated summer had arrived, that school was put aside for the time being.

The pattern of marking time by the seasons is broken twice near the end of the work, where Ebner-Eschenbach makes the reference to time more specific: the month is June, the month in which the transition from spring to summer takes place (206, 220). In Meine Kinderjahre, Ebner-Eschenbach makes use of a natural association between child and images of spring (“das grüne Seelchen” (12): “Reislein” (35): “Sproß” (119)), and the advanced years with winter. Now on the “Junimorgen” (220), she steps across the threshold after, perhaps, a bit of hesitation and a long look into her grandmother’s room. When she was younger, standing at her dying stepmother’s door, she did not dare “[des Zimmers] Schwelle zu verlassen” (62). Even just prior to her grandmother’s death, she is still unready to face the future as an adult: “Ich blieb auf der Schwelle stehen” (201). As we have seen, it is not the death of her grandmother primarily that prepares her for adulthood, but dealing with her pride: “. . . Höhe ist Wende” (29). The veiled reference to the pride of youth is seen in the description of the tree: “Als ich ein Kind war, da strotzte noch ihr Gezewige von Saft . . .” (29). She sees that she has held
herself above others, and is brought low. For her, the period of childhood had really come to an end. The gradual change had become apparent. But, the experiences she had up to that point, along with the lessons learned are, as in nature, merely preparation for the next season of life.

The principle of repetition is seen in nature, and applies, likewise, to individuals. Individual experiences can be repeated by many during stages of life. The author confesses that she once thought her childish notion that the world disappeared when she closed her eyes was unique. Only later does she find out that this is a common experience in children. Ebner-Eschenbach implies further that the principle applies not only to individuals, for example in regard to developmental stages, individual events, such as Pepinka's yearly blood-letting, or family schedules, but also to the different generations. One generation passes, and the next takes its place, but it is not a duplicate of the previous generation. She asserts that distant generations are more similar to each other than the proximate ones. One can infer from this that Ebner-Eschenbach does not see a "progressive" humanity, which fits with the view that children are perhaps ignorant, but they are not innocent.

One exception to the general pattern of repetition is that of individual personalities. Individuals are valued as just
that — individuals, not clones. Ebner-Eschenbach remembers asking one of the men at Zdißlawitz if she looked like her mother. The response was “Ähnlich schon, aber ganz anders” (13). She concludes: “Es sollte sich niemand mit ihr vergleichen wollen, nicht einmal ihre eigene Tochter” (13).

Ebner-Eschenbach asserts that the principle of “Wiederholung” is based on our own actions: “Alles wiedeholt sich im Leben, weil wir selbst uns immer wiederholen . . .” (142). This would seem to contradict one of Ebner-Eschenbach’s aphorisms, namely: “Was geschehen ist, solange die Welt steht, braucht deshalb nicht zu geschehen, solange sie noch stehen wird” (Aphorismen 63). It must not repeat. but she asserts that everything does repeat. It is not that we repeat ourselves because everything repeats, but the converse. The drawings Ebner-Eschenbach made as a child were all strangely alike. They were from her; she repeated herself in them.

The desire in children for repetition is the need for constancy. They delight in hearing the answers to the same questions again and again: Her father’s knife from the war . . . hat immer auf seinem Schreibtisch gelegen, und man brauchte es nur mit der Fingerspitze leise anzutippen und zu sagen: “Nicht wahr, Papa, das hast du in der Normandie gekauft?” Als bald waren die alten Erinnerungen alle geweckt, und er ließ sie vor uns aufsteigen in deutlichen, farbigen Bildern. (40)
Later, it is "Onkel Moritz" from whom they extract the same story time after time: "Meisterlich verstanden wir das Gespräch . . . zu lenken . . .
Und dann hob ein Fragen an, so dringend und so neugierig, als hätten wir von der Antwort, die kommen würde, keine Ahnung gehabt . . ." (114). In both of these examples, it is not information gathering that is so important, since they already know the information. It is hearing the same thing again, in the same sequence.

Older family members repeat themselves, just as the youngsters do. Grandmother Vockel, especially, has her pet phrases, "Nur gescheit!" (170) and "Alles geht vorüber, alles wird gut' . . ." (15). It is not a simple repetition, but rather versatile: "Sie sagte das oft und in der verschiedensten Weise. Liebreich, indem sie mir mit ihren feinen Fingern über die Wangen glitt, streng, wenn sie unzufrieden mit mir war. Lob und Tadel, Aufmunterung und Warnung vermochte sie in die zwei Worte zu legen . . ." (170). Ebner-Eschenbach has her own pet phrase, namely "Alles wiederholt sich im Leben" (103). It gives her the ability to explain succinctly various experiences and to provide reassurance. Such a phrase is not something that one necessarily chooses consciously, but rather it grows out of life's experiences: "In späteren Jahren habe ich das kleine Erlebnis in anderem Maßstab und in anderer Form sich an mir und um mich zahllose Male wiederholen gesehen" (156).
It is these experiences that are later reiterated in one's memories. In memory, we relive the past. Ebner-Eschenbach chose this thought, expressed by Lenôtre, as the motto for Meine Kindergemüt: "Les souvenirs des vieillards a-t-on dit sont une part d'héritage qu'ils doivent acquitter de leur vivant" (7). Memories bring a repetition of experiences, emotions, and unanswered questions. The author asks in regard to her brothers: "Warum schickt man sie fort?" (139). Rose observes: "Narrator and child alike question the wisdom of parents who seem to place their own convenience before the child's needs" (180). The pain of her ailing mother's rejection is present at the writing almost 70 years later (61-62).

Ebner-Eschenbach considers memories to be positive, but they are achieved at one's own expense, whatever the price. And they are personal, one's own inheritance. They are part of the person: "Wie unser Vater hielten auch wir seine Erinnerungen hoch in Ehren . . ." (41). We may share an expression of our memories, but the actual memories are ours.

The author holds that the memories themselves may not exactly coincide with the event as it was lived, and may not warrant the amount of attention or importance she places on it. She maintains, however, that the memory itself has a certain power it exercises over "das Kindergemüt" (8) — that is to say, because of lack of information and experience, the child is less able to sort out the facts of a given situation.
Ebner-Eschenbach finds her memories, once they are awakened, to be “lebhaft,” and although they are not “... wie ein kräftig ausgeführtes Gemälde auf hellem Hintergrund, ...” they are “deutlich und scharf” as discrete pictures (7). However, unclear information can result in distortions of the understanding of a situation while it is being experienced; these may then become indistinguishable from the memory itself. Furthermore, it suggests that children are quite vulnerable to being affected by events and memories. She indicates by Tante Helene’s example, though, that the effect of memories is not limited to children.

Not all memories are active. Just as the city of Rome in winter was lying “[w]ie tot” (10), so her memories seemed to her “nicht besonders lebhaft” (7). They were not actually dead, anymore than Mssr. Just was really dead when he had actually only fainted. Her memories only needed to be stirred to become vivid once again. She had used this method as a child, as we have seen, in rousing her father’s memories of war. Reliving the experience is, however, limited, since it is not the experience itself, but a shadow of it.

Memories allow or cause us to relive the event, in part, according to what we remember. Ebner-Eschenbach reveals how vivid her memories are. Her use of ejaculatory phrases, quoted phrases, and transitions to the present tense (82) shows the immediacy of the story. She quotes herself boldly responding to a challenge regarding the “rolling
head" story: "O ich fürchte mich nicht — ich weiß nicht, wie das ist, sich fürchten; ich hab eine große Courage!" (22). As she recalls a rather inept governess, she lapses into the governess's phrasing while maintaining the third person (152); only the meaning of the words themselves indicates that it is not Ebner-Eschenbach who thinks this way, but the governess. She uses a similar technique to let us listen to the English teacher: "... und wie sie lernt! und wie sie die schwersten Worte ausspricht! Da könnten Sie sich ein Beispiel nehmen, meine kleinen Misses" (154). The intonation and manner of speaking of both the governess and the English teacher have been marked on the author's memory, and she relates it to us.

The power of memory is particularly strong in the advanced years, according to the author. Ebner-Eschenbach writes of her experience: "Einst, wenn der Wind sich durch die Unzahl der Blätter drängte, da gab's ein weiches Rauschen, ein sanftes, harmonisches Flüstern. Anders ist das jetzt. Anders als in den jungen spielt der Wind in den alten Bäumen. Die Stimmen sind rauh, die er in ihnen erweckt" (29-30). There is a clear implication of the correlation with memory by the use of the work "erweckt." The distinction between the two periods is also accented with "einst" and "jetzt." One can hear the voice of experience in the repetition: "Anders ist das jetzt. Anders als..." The intervals are also contrasted by the perception of the experiences or memories; one is
soft and melodious, the other rough and harsh. While one may note
consciously perceive the former, because of its harmonious quality, the
latter harshness commands one's attention. Ebner-Eschenbach found
the difference in twelve years enough to turn her mind toward the past.
The "Unzahl der Blätter" has become thinner, there is less distraction in
life. Before beginning Meine Kinderjahre, her thoughts were still on the
future. When she was much younger, she had dreams of being a poet-
laureate. Now she has her memories; she can review what she has
accomplished. When a memory is particularly painful, as with the
"rauhen Stimmen" above, it may not just be the initial experience that
causes it, but the inability to change what has happened. For the older
person, this is especially poignant, since one is at the end of one's life:
"Mehr noch als nach dem Glück unserer Jugend sehnen wir uns im Alter
nach den Wünschen unserer Jugend zurück" (Aphorismen 31). But
reaching the end means for Ebner-Eschenbach being able to touch the
beginning: "... der Ring des Lebens schließt, Anfang und Ende berühren
sich" (7). The memories become available to her again.

The repetition principle is aptly characterized by a ring. The
author uses the ring as a symbol only in a statement concerning the end
of her years. Not only does its end meet the beginning, but from there,
the path is made for the next generation or repetition. One generation
prepares the way for the next by passing memories and wisdom on to the
next. One generation dies, the next follows. She mentions that both Tasso and Grandmother Vockel die in May, in spring, the symbolic time for the new generation. Her own life was begun at the cost of her mother, which was also the case for the latter's mother. The author's mother and grandmother, by reading and marking a passage, proved to be silent guides for her in an unintentional way (220). Change leads one closer to the starting point. The pathway is already given, and “... Anfang und Ende berühren sich” (7). Just as the seasons change, one after the other, there is no break; the cycle has been determined. The transition between them is gradual, almost imperceptible from day to day, from “Winter” to “Vorfrühling” to “Frühling.” Each day brings one closer to the next season and closer to the beginning of the present season. Relationships undergo transition. The author documents the changes in her relationship with Marie Kittl, for instance. Likewise, the changes between the generations are irregular (35-36), but change is continuous. Change occurs all through life with transitions at many points; the ring of life has no corners.

Another symbolic element the author uses to illustrate the principle of repetition is the number fourteen. The work both begins and ends with a “14:” “Meine Schwester Friederike war vierzehn Monate, ich war vierzehn Tage alt, als unsere Mutter starb” (12). The accuracy of the date of her mother's death is questionable, since Carl Steiner records her
death at sixteen days after Marie' birth (13) while Viktor Aschenbrenner
gives it as three days (101). Thus the literary aspect is highlighted.
Furthermore, before she has been enlightened as to her pride, she notes
later, the 74- or 75-year-old author notes again: “An jenem Junimorgen .
. . vor nun einundsechzig Jahren . . .” (220). She is, or will be, fourteen
years old when she marks her entrance into the adult world. The
re-occurrences of the number fourteen come in increasing intervals,
moving from days to weeks to months. There are no more “fourteens” in
the series that one might anticipate. The changes made in infancy are
more dramatic than at later periods of life. The transformation from
child to adult marks perhaps the last major transition apart from
marriage before death. Before the final “fourteen”, Ebner-Eschenbach
interjects two contrasting fourteen-day periods. When she finds out that
their long-awaited trip to the country is postponed, she exclaims: “In
vierzehn Tagen! in vierzehn Tagen erst? — das ist ja so lang, nicht
auszudenken, wie lang, das ist nicht zu erleben, das Ende dieser
vierzehn Tage” (199). First comes the exclamation of disbelief, then
comes the question, as the information sinks in. It is the upset in their
plans, which makes the time seem to go by so slowly. In contrast to this
is their previous fourteen-day vacation after Mssr. Just's departure. She
reports: “Wir . . . genossen jedes dargebotene Vergnügen . . .” (137). Now
the time seems so long, until she senses that her grandmother may soon die. The final “fourteen” is then introduced.

This “fourteen” will begin the significant transformation in Ebner-Eschenbach’s life. Cataloging the books in her grandmother’s library, she opens the Bible; the underlined passage she sees is in the Book of Revelation. She reads: “Und ich hörte eine Stimme vom Himmel zu mir sagen: Schreibe: Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herrn sterben, von nun an” (207). She is able to understand this text because of the expression of “[e]in unaussprechlicher, unendlicher Frieden” (205) visible in her grandmother’s face after she had died. This verse in chapter fourteen of Revelation gives us the final “fourteen” in the cycle, which represents death.

The final “fourteen” leaves nothing more to fear for the child of God, for it symbolizes blessing. Her stepmother and the English teacher and even her beloved Pepinka had deceived her at some point. In contrast, Ebner-Eschenbach attests to the validity of Grandmother Vockel’s oft-repeated phrase: “Alles geht vorüber, alles wird gut!” (15). The author recalls: “Und wenn es in ihrer Macht lag, das Üble und Traurige gutzumachen, dann wurde es gut” (15). Ebner-Eschenbach’s father had looked for a sign from beyond the grave from his brother: “‘Der zuerst fällt, gibt den Überlebenden ein Zeichen. Wenn eine Möglichkeit dazu vorhanden ist, geschieht’s’” (38). Now the
granddaughter sees the "unaussprechlicher Frieden" on her
grandmother's face that tells her "jetzt ist alles gut" (205). She
understands this as the sign from beyond, "... vernehmbar nur dem
inneren Ohr..." (11), the "... feierliche Sprache des Schweigens" (11).

Excited about understanding this passage, the granddaughter
begins to work her way back to the beginning of the book, which may be
understood symbolically as a re-reading of her own life. She does not
read to the end, but only what has happened up to the fourteenth
chapter. The first fourteen chapters symbolized her first fourteen years.
She finds beautiful verses within, but the more she reads, the less clear
the whole piece becomes. In the process of review, she is humbled by
this text to the point that she admits: "Nein, ich war das gottbegnadete
Kind nicht..." (208). As she continues reading in other books, the
process of being humbled continues.

More obvious than the use of the number fourteen is the number
of deaths and departures in Meine Kinderjahre. Ebner-Eschenbach's
autobiography can, in fact, be summed up as a series of
"Abschiednehmen," the most consistent facet of the repetition principle
in her life. The theme of "Abschiednehmen" has a variety of aspects.
Most of these points have already been touched on or discussed at length
in the preceding pages, so they will only be mentioned. They are: the
"Abschiednehmen" from tradition, specifically here, the changing
interaction between the succeeding generations (35-36); second, she illustrates the departure from her childhood, making the transition to adulthood (221); third, God’s apparent departure from her in her crisis of faith (173-79); fourth, her autobiography is given permission to depart, as a little bird (12); fifth, Ebner-Eschenbach’s own departure from the earth is anticipated (7).

Finally, the departure of friends and loved ones in her world is prominent in Meine Kinderjahre. Ebner-Eschenbach softens the first familial departure by depicting Tasso and his “letzt[e] Abschiedsgrüße” (10). The reader might expect her to start with birth, and that she does, but she gives no date, for her birth is overshadowed by her mother’s death. The longer list of deaths and departures may be recounted individually, but it should suffice to note that the death or departure of virtually every character is recorded by the author. An overview of the widely varying terms and phrases will concisely highlight the prominence of the theme of departure: “Abschied” (148), “uns für immer verlassen” (62), “Abschiedsgrüße” (10), “Abschiedsfeier” (213), Abschiedsfeste” (220), “Entfernung aus dem Hause” (123), “ein letzter Gruß” (205), Abreise (198), “Adieu nun du Wien” (198), and “Lebewohl zuwink[en]” (32). In addition, more such terms relating to deaths are included. The author even makes reference to three farewells within the context of the “Buchstabensprühregen” incident with her father (31-34). One of these
is a picture on her father's office wall. Of the various pictures she mentions seeing, she chooses to describe just one in detail. It was that of an old man who had just finished digging a grave for his dog who had just died: "Der [Hund] lag zu seinen Füßen, das gebrochene Auge noch auf den Herrn gerichtet. — 'Ich habe dich schwer verlassen', schien es zu sagen, 'aber ich mußte fort; es war ja hohe Zeit'" (31). Because Ebner-Eschenbach uses little alliteration in her autobiography, an exception to this, God’s seeming departure in the context of her crisis of faith, stands out. In answer to her existential question, she receives only "... ein Gefühl trostloser Verlasseneit, völligen Vernichtetseins ..." in response (173).

The work has a roughly chronological arrangement, but the characters are the focus. The chronological pattern is interrupted when a person departs or dies. Before resuming the chronological narration, the author may discuss any subsequent contact with a character that has moved away, and oftentimes the death of that person is chronicled. This pattern is particularly prominent when the author writes about someone well loved and important to the family. A good example of this pattern is the account of Anischa's departure, visit, and death (52-53). Then, immediately after recounting Anischa's death, Mademoiselle Hélène's departure is announced: She "hatte kaum zwei Jahre bei uns
zugebracht, als es auch von ihr scheiden hieß” (53). The “auch” emphasizes the disappointment they experienced.

The departures were particularly difficult and painful when Ebner-Eschenbach was not able to say good-bye. One example is Anischa’s initial departure, which she records as causing the “... Einzug des ersten bitteren Schmerzes in mein Leben” (53). Though she thought the separation to be final, a “Wiedersehen” eventually took place. Not long thereafter, however, the young girl had to face a more difficult situation in the death of her stepmother (62). It is not until Grandmother Vockel dies, the last death the author records, that the rejection she encountered from her stepmother is symbolically reversed.

In the first instance, as she had entered her stepmother’s room, and “... wollte auf sie zueilen,” her stepmother “streckte ... den Arm abwehrend aus” (60). The visit ends with Marie crying outside the door “Verzeih! Verzeih!” (62). A “lifetime” later, she is summoned again, just as she had been to her stepmother’s room. This time, as the child enters her grandmother’s room, she “stürzte [s]ich über ihre Hand und küßte sie viel-, vielmals ...” (204). Her “viel, vielgeliebt[e] Mama” (62) would not have allowed her to do this. But Grandmother Vockel’s pet phrase “Nur gescheit! Nur gescheit!” (204) brings comfort to the sorrowing child.

Not every departure was upsetting for Ebner-Eschenbach. For example, the young boy to whom Anischa is apparently related, visited
every year. But his disposition was wanting: “... er dankte nicht, er lächelte nicht; er verhielt sich uns gegenüber trotzig wie ein Bock” (17); accordingly, his departure causes no distress. The author reports: “Leichten Herzens sagten wir ihm Lebewohl, wenn er sich wieder empfahl” (17-18). He was “eine Art Bruder von mir” (17), but he did not act like it. Those who did not show an interest in or participate in the family were not missed. Even Anischa is relieved when he leaves. We learn no more about this boy or his relationship to Anischa. The most disliked of characters, Henriette, receives the shortest description of her departure, which is an involuntary “Abschiednehmen” (123). The differing amounts of detail given in the descriptions about the departures clearly exhibit the general correlation of the treatment with the esteem placed on the character. When the boy left, they were merely “[l]eichten Herzens.” Now, when the new stepmother demanded Henriette’s discharge, Ebner-Eschenbach describes this as “eine große Wohltat” (123). No further mention is made of her, not even watching her leave. She is simply gone. After Ebner-Eschenbach’s betrayal by the unnamed English teacher, Ebner-Eschenbach more or less “dismisses” her; she receives no further mention. Instead, Ebner-Eschenbach returns to her longing that Marie would come back; those who have been positive in our lives are remembered and missed; the others are dismissed without a thought.
Against the backdrop of all these transitory, human relationships, the eternal relationship Ebner-Eschenbach enjoys with her Heavenly Father stands out. The significance of the earthly relationships, however, is not diminished, for it is by them, at least in part, that a “sichtbare leise Spur” was left for her to follow (220). Nevertheless, they are temporal. The revelation of the author’s relationship with her Heavenly Father is the capstone of the autobiography.

The author’s relationship with her father set the tone for her understanding of God. Although she and her sister were “meistens freundlich empfangen” when they went to their father’s room, “[m]anchmal durfte er in seiner Arbeit nicht unterbrochen werden” (30). The author briefly interrupts the description of the visit to her father’s room to turn her attention to her thoughts of the trees that stood outside her father’s window. Using this occasion to ponder how some memories become harsher as one gets older, she reveals her attitude about the incident of the “Buchstabensprühregen, . . . die einzige ‘Gewalttat’ . . ., die ich je durch ihn erfuhr” (34). She is not describing a relationship of abuse from her father, since “[s]eine Hand hat mich nie un[s]anft berührt, er hat seine Stimme nie laut gegen mich erhoben . . .”(34). She verifies this in another way with the use of subjunctive: “Den Zorn unseres Vaters zu erfahren, wäre entsetzlich gewesen” (23). However, Ebner-Eschenbach’s relationship with her
father was rather one of distance and ceremony, defined in terms of fear rather than love. She recalls:

Zum Schaden unseres Verhältnisses zu ihm ließ sich Papa in gereizter Stimmung manchmal zu dem unglückseligen Ausspruch hinreißen: "Nicht geliebt will ich sein, sondern geführrchtet!" Wie sehr er sich damit täuschte, lernten wir später einsehen; als Kinder nahmen wir die Sache als ausgemacht an und taten ihm den Willen, weit über seine eigene Erwartung. (23)

Nonetheless, the author did come to understand her father, "dieser fürchterliche, liebe, gute Papa" (34), as "... ein Mann mit warmem Herzen, stark an Leib und Seele" (43).

During her years of youth, however, she saw him as the judge:

"... Papa [setzte] sein Verhör fort, und ein Strafgericht drohte aus seiner Stimme" (28). On the occasion where he defied their expectations of punishment, and instead calmed their fears, she recalls "... wir jauchzten und jubelten ihm zu" (25). The author describes her father's voice being like the sound of thunder: "Gehorsam! Wie ferner Donner rollte das r am Schluß der zweiten Silbe, wenn er dieses Wort befehlend aussprach" (36). That description fits well with Klopstock's description of Jehovah at the end of "Frühlingsfeier," a poem to which she attributes particular significance at the end of Meine Kinderjahre:

Hört ihr Jehovas Donner?
Hört ihr ihn? hört ihr ihn,
Den erschütternden Donner des Herrn? (91)
But, just as her view of her father changed, her understanding of God changed as well. The end of “Frühlingsfeier” expresses the change

_Siehe, nun kommt Jehova nicht mehr im Wetter,_
_In stillem, sanftem Säuseln_
_Kommt Jehova,_
_Und unter ihm neigt sich der Bogen des Friedens!_(92)

The author does not state whether the change regarding her father or God came first. Neither does she state at what age she gained the insight about her relationship with her Heavenly Father; it is not the date of the revelation but the revelation itself that is significant. The present tense “ich weiß” and “ich _durf_ ‘mein Vater’ zu ihm sagen” (221) indicate that the influence of the revelation continues.

The Father-child relationship reveals that she is experiencing the ultimate repetition. At the end of _Meine Kinderjahre_, the elderly Ebner-Eschenbach has nearly reached the end of the cycle of “fourteens.” Although she is unable to turn back the clock, she is actually able to experience being a child again, only in a different dimension than the first time. She has begun to understand herself and life in a new way. Ebner-Eschenbach has returned to the beginning, not only in the stirring and writing of her memories, but also in seeing herself as a child again.

This childhood is different because she has the hope of a truly paradisiacal existence. She recognizes God as the Creator and herself as a creature; she knows “... der Atem Gottes lebt ...” in her (221). She
has the expectation of peace, not suffering. But it is also different because it is a childhood that will not end. She says that she had a “kleine Vergangenheit” behind her (221). Rose maintains that this is a “formula of modesty” that “... paradoxically points to its opposite, ‘a great future,’” a term the text narrowly avoids asserting outright” (171). While it does point to the opposite, its ultimate opposite is the eternal future, one of “unaussprechlicher, unendlicher Frieden” (Ebner-Eschenbach, Kinderjahre 205) for those, “... die in dem Herrn sterben” (207). The knowledge that her mother was “ein zweiter Schutzengel” for her was a source of happiness and confidence (13). The knowledge about her mother was a temporary belief until she learned more. The knowledge about her Creator remains. This time she does not state, as she had previously: “Ich glaubte ...” (207), but instead simply states what she knows to be true.

Ebner-Eschenbach has also returned to the beginning in another way, namely with a child-like attitude of humility. She declares that she is but a minuscule, insignificant part of the world. Her first experience of this notion was a crisis for her. After reading about the stars for the first time, she had to deal with understanding the true measure of herself in relationship to the universe: “Und auf diesem Stäubchen, was bin dann ich?” (173). It was a crisis of faith. She recites what she knows, that the earth and the moon will one day disappear, that not only she, but all
people are as a breath, “. . . ein Nichts in der Unendlichkeit” (174). She echoes this idea in a poem she writes after reading Lessing, when she truly begins to suffer the pain of insight into herself. When she declares that she is “. . . ein Nichts für meinen Gott” (209), she is not a willing participant. Her depression reveals that she is still suffering from self-confessed pride. Only later is the author able to be satisfied with the knowledge of her smallness. Even though she eventually recovers from her depression, it is not until perhaps years later that she finds the knowledge of her smallness liberating. Before, in her crisis, she had queried: “War sie [die Erde] denn nicht dein Lieblingskind . . .?” (174).

Now, the author comprehends something she finds more comforting, a truth that she suspects others who have gone before her have found as well. In Klopstock’s “Frühlingsfeier,” which Ebner-Eschenbach uses at the end of Meine Kinderjahre to give expression to her thoughts, the image of the person is not a tree, which stands alone and grows up independently. Instead, the drop of water mixes with all the other drops of water in the “Ozean der Welten alle” (220). The poem continues, but Ebner-Eschenbach omits most of it. Breaking off after the crucial question: “Wer bin ich?” she answers it by continuing with “Mehr wie die Siebengestirne, die aus Strahlen zusammenströmten!” (221). She explains: “Mehr — weil ich weiß, wie wenig ich bin: — ein verwehender Hauch auf einem Stäubchen im All ...” (221). She has the
direct answer to her question from her earlier years. She may be smaller than the earth, but she is not less valuable. It is she who has been given the gift of grace, a “Gnadengabe des Unendlichen” (221). She embodies “[den] Hauch ewigen Frühlings” (10).

The author demonstrates humility when she writes that she “bedurfte” and received the gift of grace, “ei[n] Lichtstrahl[l] von seinem Geiste” (221). The confession of need is a statement borne of humility. It is evident that it was not by book learning that she obtained the necessary knowledge to be satisfied, even though it seemed to her earlier that such knowledge would satisfy her. In contrast to her father, who “ließ sagen, daß er uns sehen wolle,” her heavenly Father uses no intermediary. He has shown her that her belief that “... er wüsste nicht von mir”’ (175) was wrong. When she writes: “... ich darf ‘mein Vater’ zu ihm sagen” (221), she indicates in another way that she has found the answer to her earlier query: “... wie durfte ich wagen, ihn Vater zu nennen?” (175). She recognizes the privilege she has, just as Lessing “... durfte ... Griechisch lernen und Latein” (210). In her younger days, she had waited for a revelation in regard to her writing; she now has received something better, since she understands the meaning of her life. Her attitude at the end is supported by her statement at the beginning in regard to Tasso, reflecting on his death: “Was galten ihm noch seine höchsten Erdenwünsche, die Dichterkrönung auf dem
Kapitol . . .?” (10). The answer to this rhetorical question is, of course, "Nothing." That answer was not so obvious to her in her earlier years. The child yearns in his heart and mind to grow up, to be part of the adult world, to stretch his wings, as she says of her autobiography (12). But she is quite content in her position of being a child once again.

The author’s humility is further evident in her criticism of others, most pointedly of Marie Kittl. She identifies Marie’s weakness, but only after first pointing out her strength: “Sie erzählte vortrefflich, sobald sie aber ans Niederschreiben des Erzählten ging, zerflossen die Begebenheiten, Gestalten, Landschaften wie feuchte Flecke auf Löschpapier” (194). Anischa, who could write no more than an “X” at the bottom of letters she had dictated, was likewise able to make fairy tales come alive to the young children. While Anischa would not be tempted to write her stories, Marie Kittl is in the unenviable position of having a modicum of talent without the ability to discern her limits. Although Ebner-Eschenbach praises her work, only she and Marie Kittl’s two sisters make any comment, while “. . . alle übrigen schwiegen” (193). Ebner-Eschenbach tried to give Marie good advice regarding her work, but Marie was not interested in listening, contending that not all artists are appreciated in their own generation (194). Since Ebner-Eschenbach herself was unsuccessful at being the dramatist she wanted to be, she is able to sympathize with Marie and others like her, who have “. . . einen
brennenden und unerfüllbaren Wunsch in der Seele getragen" (196). Her long account of the drama demonstrates that it was not for lack of thought or effort on her part that she was unable to bring it to fruition. Her accomplishments have come at a cost, but are a good value. Just as Marie Kittl had never been condescending toward Ebner-Eschenbach as a child, the author criticizes her friend's artistic endeavors from the standpoint of humility.

The author is not attempting to lord it over others, but instead, to show that her work is really work. She reveals some of her suffering, the discouraging words her family spoke in order to hinder her from exercising her gift. At the same time, though, she sees it ultimately as something positive, because the resistance to her art caused her gift to grow. The suffering was to her benefit, just as the trees that must struggle against the elements become stronger. One should not suppose that the calling that she felt was enough to produce a true artist. The artist must be developed by suffering.

Rome, the "Eternal City," is the backdrop for her work, but the intent is not to set her work as the jewel in a setting of gold. Just the opposite is the case. Describing a pose of virtual worship, she tells how she "... wieder auf den Knien gelegen hatte vor dem großen Rom" (Kann 70). While she alludes to aspects of Rome's great military, religious, literary, and artistic history, she contrasts her "Geringfügigkeiten" to the
"Weltgeschichte," her "Geplauder von Puppen und Ammenmärchen" to the "großartig[e] Schauspiel[e]" to which she has been invited (9). Far from being comprised of monumental, world-changing events, Meine Kinderjahre reveals the ordinary events of her life as they unfold. In setting her story in the context of Rome, she does not compete with that which has gone before, or to attempt to fit in the missing piece, but to indicate that her story, by comparison, is small and insignificant. Indeed, she relates in a letter to Julius Rodenberg from 1905 the "Verzweiflungsanfall" she experienced one day in Rome during the editing of her Kinderjahre manuscript:

"Ich kam vom Pincio, und die Beleuchtung war ausnahmsweise schön gewesen, sogar die Wolken, die sich über der Stadt türmten, hatten etwas Monumentales. Unermeßlich war die Größe des Eindruckes, und nun kam ich heim und wollte korrigieren. Es war unmöglich; meine armseligen Kindergeschichten widerten mich ganz einfach an. Wie wenn das schrille Gezirpe einer Grille mir ans ohr schlüge, nachdem ich einen Löwen brüllen gehört hatte."
(Bettelheim 244-45)

The author makes a specific attempt to show that her initial assessment of herself as "something special" in and of herself was wrong. She thought she was unusual because she imagined that she had the power to create her world. She reports: "... ich habe seitdem gehört, daß es sich damit nicht um etwas Exeptionelles bei Kindern handelt" (86). Bramkamp dismisses this "disclaimer of exceptionality" with little concern, and proceeds to contradict the author (18-19). But the whole of
Meine Kinderjahre bears out the author's sincerity in her claim.

Bramkamp again imposes her view on the text when she writes that
"[t]he way to greatness was blocked for her, since in her own eyes she
was an ordinary girl with a gift, and in the eyes of others who really
mattered, that gift was ignored" (22). But Bramkamp also ignores the
end of the book. Ebner-Eschenbach's youth is spent in attempting to
make herself important; in the end, she sees that humility is what is
required. In her old age, the author understands that the suffering she
endured was designed to help lead her to the freedom of humility.

Ebner-Eschenbach's various declarations of humility do not
persuade Rose, who claims that "... Ebner's professing of insecurity is
another reduction strategy, a means of lowering readers' expectations so
that her self-confident childhood will be seen in the 'proper' perspective"
(169). While he does observe that the author "... humbly accepts her
infinitesimal place in the universe ..." (169), he sees her humility as a
guise, and maintains that "... the author seeks to insure herself against
charges that she displays an excess of masculine ambition" (190). Thus,
the effect for him is that "... the avowals of her present modesty appear
merely as afterthoughts to the body of the text" (190). Klostermaier,
though, supports the veracity of the author's declaration, noting that the
author "... was often assailed by doubts as to the worth of the account
of her life" (245) as she made corrections on the manuscript. Evidence of
her misgivings about *Meine Kinderjahre* is in a letter written in Rome to her friend Dr. Josef Breuer in January, 1905, the same time she dates the opening of her autobiography; it echoes the sentiment she expresses in her letter to Rodenberg above:

\[\ldots\; \text{die Korrekturbogen lagen auf dem Tische und ärgerten mich, so oft ich hereinkam vom Pincio oder vom Forum, wo ich wieder auf den Knien gelegen hatte vor dem großen Rom. Also.\ldots\; fort mit diesen Armseligkeiten, bevor ich die Feder ansetze, um etwas zu schreiben, das mich freut.} \quad (\text{Kann 70})\]

Ebner-Eschenbach does ". . . highlight her election to an artistic destiny, . . ." as Rose asserts (170), but the author also emphasizes that it is not the artistic achievements that are of utmost importance to her. It is her relationship with her Heavenly Father that gives her significance in life. She reveals some of her suffering in order to indicate, not that it led to her greatness, but that she learned humility from her suffering. Her ability to throw her drama into the fire reveals her giftedness in that she knows the limits of her talent. Marie Kittl was unable to perceive that her own results were only mediocre, at best.

The author expresses great satisfaction in the last paragraphs of *Meine Kinderjahre* because of the "Gnadengabe des Unendlichen, eines Lichtstrahls . . ." that she has received. She has been chosen by God to receive a gift of grace. This choosing does not have a corresponding negative side, as in the case when she was chosen to see her stepmother. She expresses no hint of concern that she might have to face something
as difficult as being falsely accused at the last "... Wiedersehen mit meiner viel vielgeliebten Mama" (62). Ebner-Eschenbach's initial efforts to make something of herself (207-08), her questions about impressing others, for example, "Und wie wird es erst sein, wenn ich Großes geleistet habe und sie stolz auf mich sein wird?" (204), are answered in a way which, she intimates, is more profound than the art that she created and for which she gained prominence in the world of literature. The author reveals her struggle with pride, envying Lessing's greater endowment of artistic talent. He was "... besitze [e]ines großen Reichtums" (209), wealth that one could not buy, as well-to-do as her family was. The present tense in this passage, with past tense in the sentences before and after, leaves the possibility open for the thought to be either past or present. In the former case, it is the voice of the child who has yet to learn a profound truth. If it is the latter, it is difficult to comprehend the statement as something other than hyperbole without seeing a contradiction between this statement and the general tone of humility and gratitude she expresses in the work, especially at the end, just a few pages later. The author has come to understand that she has been endowed with a greater gift. The look in her grandmother's "... weitgeöffneten Augen, die mit unsagbarer Zärtlichkeit auf mir ruhten" (204), are an earthly illustration of the eyes of God on her, whose child she has been chosen to be.
She finds contentment only when she comes to understand that “... der Atem Gottes lebt in diesem Häuche” (221). Rose sees a strong association between the gift of grace and Ebner-Eschenbach’s poetic work, and that the end is a fitting conclusion to the beginning of the work where “... the remembering I attributes her poetic talent to divine inspiration and the visionary powers that follow from that talent” (169-170). It is true that the author makes the association of grace and understanding in her lament: “Nein, ich war das gottbegnadete Kind nicht, das in Einfalt findet, ‘was kein Verstand des Verständigen sieht’” (208). And: “Von nun an gab es keinen Lichtschein mehr, der mir einen Pfad zu meinem Begreifen und Erkennen gewiesen hätte ...” (208).

However, the reference at the end of Meine Kinderjahre does not refer to poetic insight, but rather to the simple but profound understanding of the very personal, familial relationship she enjoys with God. She is “[m]ehr wie die Siebengestirne, die aus Strahlen zusammenströmten!” (221). She is more than her poetry or poetic insight. Her artistic gift is special, but pales in comparison to the other gift she has received.

Jiří Veselý concurs in seeing the change in Ebner-Eschenbach’s views about God: “Man kann viele Beweise anführen, daß sie ihr ganzes Leben lang fest an Gott glaubte: in den jüngeren Jahren war für sie der Begriff Gott sehr nahe dem Begriff Liebe ...” (212). Continuing the observation, she notes that “[e]rst später, als sie schon hochbetagt war,
war sie dem Schöpfer demütig ergeben..." (212). Wilhelm Bietak writes that, although Ebner-Eschenbach never renunciated or lost her faith in God, the contemporary thinking about the "... Perfektibilität des Menschengeschlechtes im Maße der Vervollkommnung der Vernunft..." was one of the influences that "... die Dichterin bis weit über die Mitte ihres Lebens hinaus dem Kirchen- und Dogmenglauben entfremdet [haben]..." (48). Any estrangement seems to be gone by 1909 when the author writes: "Ich muß einen Herrgott haben dem ich danken kann für die gute Luft, die ich atme, für die Sonne, den Mond, die Sterne für die Bäume das Gras die Berge den Schnee" (TB 6: 199). Notice the similarity between that statement and the experience she had as a child: "Wie oft... hatte ich innegehalten, mitten im Spiel, ... um, erfüllt von einem unaussprechlichen Glücksgfühl, wortlos Gott zu danken... für die Bäume, die Blumen, den Sonnenschein, für alle Schönheit, alles Licht..." (175). She has come full circle: "Alles wiederholt sich im Leben" (103).

The satisfaction she professes at the end of her autobiography is evidence of the change in attitude she experienced before she began writing Meine Kinderjahre. In 1899 in Rome, Ebner-Eschenbach met P. Denifle, who

... was a cleric and scholar who could intelligently respond to her religious quest. A scholar in the field of Church history and mysticism, he helped her to find her way back to
the Church. After many years of doubt about the Catholic faith, she was finally ready to go to confession again. . . . .

She needed an emotional outlet and found it in Catholicism. Gone was her scepticism toward Church doctrine and dogma. . . . She now clung to her faith with childlike simplicity, grateful for the niche she had been able to find in the Church. (Klostermaier 248-249)

This change in attitude was significant in her understanding of the meaning of her life. Ebner-Eschenbach viewed herself with dissatisfaction, as her diary attests: “Was bin ich? Eine alte Kraxe zu nichts gut Gehöre in die Rumpelkammer” (TB 2: 21.VII.1878) and likewise: “Ich kann nicht verlangen daß die Anderen an mein Talent glauben weil ich selbst so oft daran zweifle” (TB 3: 9.VI.1883). In the foreword to Meine Kinderjahre, Ebner-Eschenbach writes: “Meine Erinnerungen an die Kinderzeit, meinte ich damals [vorig, zwölff Jahren], sind nicht besonders lebhaft, und erfahre nun, daß sie, um es zu sein, nur geweckt zu werden brauchten” (7). She reasons that “. . . so alt ich schon war, lag doch noch etwas wie Zukunft vor mir . . .” (7). That she has a new outlook on life in the meantime may have also contributed to the change in her ability to call out her memories. Perhaps her memories have come alive in a new way because she understands herself as a child again, and she finally sees the pattern of her life fitting together.

Meine Kinderjahre is an illustration of Ebner-Eschenbach’s sense of order. First is the selection process, necessary in any work. In
recounting her sight-seeing tour of Rome, she notes that it was only "ein
eiliges Vorüberwandeln" (11) of a city rich in history, both positive and
negative. Similarly, as one embarks on writing about one's life, even
limited to childhood, one can only touch the surface of a whole
experience. As she is led by the professor's book to the different sites at
Rome, so we are given a tour of some of the high points of her life. The
markers of her life are things she remembers and lessons she learned.
While these may seem insignificant to her in comparison to what she
sees in Rome, her story awakens the interest of those who love her.
Some may perceive a certain amount of artificiality in the ability of the
author to see such order in her own life, and may construe this to be a
result of the form of autobiography, rather than the author's real
understanding about her life. However, it is also true that the form is
chosen by the author, about which Rose records: "Unlike her earlier
autobiographical writings, Ebner began Meine Kinderjahre on her own
initiative" (160).

Those who have encouraged this work are "bei uns zu Hause" (12).
She is "ein dankbarer Gast" (9) in Rome, but her "Heimat" is in Bohemia.
The sense of belonging, the aspect of "Heimat" indicates order, as well,
and is created in part by repetition. By the same principle, she can say
that "[d]as ist dann . . . der richtige Augenblick" to release her
manuscript (12). If there is no order, then any moment would be right,
or one could not say it with certainty. But "the" right moment is definite and singular. Similarly, by beginning with a historical perspective, she indicates that she has a place in history. By the end of the work, we see that she knows her place with respect to eternity.

It is also repetition that makes certain experiences memorable. When order is established, then it is the break in the routine that stands out. Both aspects are seen in the following example: "Ein anderes Ereignis wiederholte sich gleichfalls alljährlich, dieses aber im Frühjahr und fast unmittelbar nach der Ankunft auf dem Lande" (18). The author describes the usual scene of Pepinka's preparation for her blood-letting, and then continues: "Einmal aber..." (18). The "einmal aber" is what makes the mention of the routine event more significant here.

This blood-letting incident was an "insignificant" event when it is considered in the context of world history. World history is the backdrop for Meine Kinderjahre. The autobiography is filled with other small events and details. In recounting her memories, Ebner-Eschenbach does not just list names of people in her book, as she does of the famous sites in Rome. The people in her story need explanation. She reveals their character, at times in quotes, giving details of the people and specific events. As has been demonstrated, the work is a series of "Abschiednehmen." There are small "good-byes" and more traumatic ones. She also depicts small, happy moments in her life, lessons with
Pater Borek, playing with dolls, listening to stories. She sometimes sketches large blocks of time, for example, her correspondence with Anischa. After writing of her father's remaining years, she writes: "Von diesem, in wenigen Zügen nur entworfenen Bilde eines Starken, wende ich mich wieder den kleinen Erlebnissen seiner Kinder zu" (45). One may understand from her statement the high esteem she had for "dieser fürchterliche, liebe, gute Papa" (34). The "klein[e Erlebniss[e]," however, may still be understood as being "small," but not insignificant.

Ebner-Eschenbach explicitly asserts her belief that the small things of life are important. She writes in an aphorism that "[d]ie Herrschaft über den Augenblick ist die Herrschaft über das Leben" (Aphorismen 33). She had to learn the alphabet, one letter at a time in order to be able to read. She has to learn to read in order to become a writer. She was able to hear by a single letter, when her father said "[d]er Gelehrten" instead of "der Gelehrten" that he had little regard for their position (116). She needed to learn the alphabet to be able to distinguish the meaning. By the same token, if Ebner-Eschenbach is able to demonstrate that there is order in her childhood, then she is able to show that there is order in the world, and therefore, meaning in life.

Life is made up of individual moments; the order or design is not immediately apparent. One needs perspective and distance. The events portrayed are not seen as "life's lessons," so that there is a correlation
between every incident and a lesson learned. Instead, the experiences of a lifetime add up, one by one, so that one's perspective changes over the years. The principle of repetition is not learned or believed by book-learning alone. One must view the life as a whole. As the elderly Ebner-Eschenbach awakens her memories, they are fuzzy pieces, "... nicht wie ein kräftig ausgeführtes Gemälde auf hellem Hintergrund, in einzelnen Bildern nur ..." (7). When the pieces begin to come together, she is able to see the pattern. *Meine Kinderjahre* is written as essentially one chapter interrupted by pauses, but there are no chapter divisions or titles. Some obvious linking of episodes is present, and transitions are generally smooth, following the ring analogy. For example, the rolling-head tale and the child's assertions of courage lead directly to the incident about breaking the window, and the girls' fear of their father. In this way, the contrast between the episodes is highlighted, and demonstrates in form the necessity of viewing more than a "chapter" or incident to gain the proper perspective.

The question may then arise whether the depiction of one's childhood allows the author to demonstrate the needed perspective. The author, in this case particularly, has achieved a great deal of distance between herself and her years of childhood and youth. Moreover, the author saw her life planned as of the age of fourteen. Referring to *Meine Kinderjahre*, she explains in a letter,

This justification by the author may seem too easy, considering the more recent disclosures about the marital difficulties Ebner-Eschenbach experienced. Bramkamp notes that Ebner-Eschenbach’s “... plays are seen as a political liability for members of the family, especially for her husband Moritz” (30). Veselý supports the claim:

Nicht einmal ihr Mann Moriz [sic] hatte für ihre künstlerische Tätigkeit Verständnis. Er war ein hoher Offizier und Wissenschaftler (Physiker), und er war zu eitel zu erlauben, den Namen seiner Frau und dadurch auch seinen eigenen Namen im Zusammenhang mit negativen und manchmal auch boshaften und ironischen Besprechungen in der Presse zu finden. (215)

While Ebner-Eschenbach “… had the consolation that in old age her husband finally seemed to have begun to understand and to appreciate her urge to write” (205), many years of frustration were spent prior to that time. Klostermaier labors to shatter the prevailing understanding that Ebner-Eschenbach was blissfully married: “Marie and Moritz von Ebner-Eschenbach had not been as happily married as they had made it appear. The fact that Moritz objected for a long time to his wife’s writing put a strain on their marriage which made them practically lead separate
lives" (205-206). She further detects "cynicism" in Ebner-Eschenbach's views of marriage (223).

Further motivation to write only about her youth was Ebner-Eschenbach's own desire for privacy: "Ebner guarded her privacy jealously, especially as she grew older" (Rose 157). Klostermaier reports, though, that the privacy issue was more a matter of maintaining a "... façade and avoid[ing] everything that could be considered offensive to the public as well as to her own family members" (244). Rose concurs with this assessment, noting that the author held "... back from merciless truthfulness, the one element that gives weight to memoirs" (161). She observes that she revised her original so that "[w]hile the original sketch of Kinderjahre shows spontaneous feelings, the published version exhibits a very high degree of circumspection" (244). Klostermaier attributes these changes to needing the "family's approval" (244), but it may also be that seeing what she wrote, she disliked the tone of it, and changed it for herself, not just for her family.

The desire to limit the amount of information the author wanted to reveal about her adult life in order to protect herself, her reputation as the "Dichterin der Güte" (Rose 161), and her family may have been weighty incentives for the author, as Klostermaier maintains:

It was a tool to provide her first biographer Anton Bettelheim with material to propagate the public self she wanted to project. It was further a means to prevent the biographer
from drawing his own conclusions of her less than idyllic childhood. It was moreover an opportunity for her to hide her private self. (245)

However, the author also desires to illustrate in her work the principle of repetition. Limiting the autobiography to her childhood allows her to do that in a singular fashion. The author demonstrates the theme of repetition in the imagery of nature and experiences, but more importantly, she shows that she has returned to the state of childhood. Katherine Goodman correctly observes that for both Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach “... the narrow focus on childhood reflects less a nostalgic longing for lost innocence or joy than the belief that the story of one’s entire life is already manifest in childhood” (168).

The principle of repetition also allows the work to fulfill a representative function. The author purports in *Meine Kinderjahre* that “Alles wiederholt sich im Leben” (103). She presents human experience as repeating itself, within the life of one individual, but also among individuals. Despite differing individual experiences, the commonality of human experience allows autobiographies to be appreciated for more than their biographical value. Her belief that reality existed because she had her eyes open was dispelled. She learned later “... daß es sich damit nicht um etwas Exzeptionelles bei Kindern handelt” (86). Her experience was her own, but it was unexceptional.
From the representative function flows a subtle didactic element. If one finds the author's story to ring true, then one may be encouraged to learn more from what she says here. The author herself was challenged and helped by reading books that others before her had read. They, the people and the books, were silent guides for her. Many of the lessons or insights on life that Ebner-Eschenbach has woven into this work are distilled in her aphorisms that touch on similar themes seen in *Meine Kinderjahre*. But the continuous narrative form more closely illustrates the continuity of life as she lived it, where transitions and transformations are gradual. At times, one is able to capture a lesson in a condensed format, but the narrative confirms the experiences behind the maxim. Maxims can be useful, teaching is necessary, but teaching by example is more useful than a mere lecture. In the same way, the illustration of one's life can be more instructive and illuminating than a recounting of a list of lessons learned. Father Borek wanted to know who had written the book that claimed that God had not created the earth. Similarly, one wants to know on what basis a maxim is propounded. She sets out her own experience as the support. At the same time, she reveals in her own story that one does not learn the most important lessons of life from a book. One receives them by revelation. It is the elderly author, not the fourteen-year-old, who
writes: "Um das zu begreifen, bedurfte ich einer Gnadengabe des Unendlichen . . ." (221). Her autobiography may be a bit of counsel for the next generation: "As Rome saw its mission in civilizing the world of the barbarians, so she believed that she had to remind her age—an age she felt was sliding into a new barbarism—of its moral destiny and its humanistic inheritance" (Klostermaier 246).

One foundational lesson is that life has meaning. She uses the principle of repetition as one tool to illustrate the teleologic principle she perceives to be present in the world. The cyclical rhythm of experience does not make life predictable, but understandable. But the author also wants to evidence that the repetition of suffering has meaning, that suffering has effected positive results in her life. For the author, writing Meine Kinderjahre "... was part of the process ... of coming to terms with her past, of reassuring herself that the problems she had encountered had been solved, that her suffering had not been in vain" (Klostermaier 245). Weissenberger declares likewise that Ebner-Eschenbach's autobiography is "... eine der letzten sogenannten großen Autobiographien im Sinne des mit dieser Gattung intendierten Theodizeecharakters" (247). But he also notes that it was necessary for Ebner-Eschenbach to limit her autobiography to childhood, "... um das von ihr angestrebt, aber vom Zeitgeist immer stärker angezweifelte Ideal einer Sinnganzheit des Lebens aufrechterhalten zu können" (245). We
shall see in the next chapter an example of this in the difficulties Hans Carossa encounters in attempting just that. Ebner-Eschenbach, however, is still able to show that there is order by explaining that there is meaning in suffering, that suffering has positive results in her life.

She views hardship and suffering as a means to grow. Her understanding of the world as an ordered place is evident in this belief. Even as a child she had an instinctive perception of the order in the world: everything should have a purpose, nothing should be "um nichts" (156). She was not in a position to change many situations, nor was she able to prevent similar experiences as an adult. Meine Kinderjahre is not a nostalgic look into the better days of the past. She had many happy moments within them, but the strict tone of the household and the many painful experiences are not the kind of experiences that the author wishes to repeat. It is the learning as a result of a particular experience that she sees as positive. That is why she answers as she does when she contemplates her reaction to the hypothetical question she poses to herself. Wondering whether she would go again through what she had gone through with respect to her failed drama, knowing then what she knows now, she answers: "Fast glaube ich: Ja" (220). It is not an unqualified "Yes, of course!" It is, however, the voice of one who sees the good that came from her experience. Suffering is part and parcel of our existence: "Wir sträuben uns gegen das Leiden, wer aber möchte nicht
gelitten haben?” (Aphorismen 69). Said in another way: Would we want to go through life without having learned anything? We all suffer, but we need not be controlled by our memories, especially the painful ones.

The disparity between what she professes in her diary and in her autobiography with regard to her attitude about the changes she witnesses is evidence, though, of the difficulty that Weissenberger identified. Meine Kinderjahre reveals that the author welcomes many of the changes she observes. Instead of focusing on the past as her aunt had done, Ebner-Eschenbach points to the better practice of accepting the present. She is learning, “... je tiefer ins Greisenalter ich hineingerate” not only to accept, but to appreciate “was ist” (36). When she writes “ich hineingerate,” she suggests that there are some things that cannot be changed, such as aging. But she also wants to demonstrate that she can control her attitude. With respect to the differences in generational values, she does not define good, better, best, but rather deals with the present as it is. At the beginning of Meine Kinderjahre, she asserts she is still vitally engaged with the present, not living only in her memories. Each part of the ring can be considered a starting point, or likewise, “ein Höhepunkt.” At the same time that she validates “what was,” Ebner-Eschenbach acknowledges her increasing respect for “was ist” in regards to the new manners and customs of inter-generational interaction.
Ebner-Eschenbach’s description in Meine Kinderjahre of rather rude behavior of the newer generation makes her respect for “was ist” seem incongruous. And her own words outside of the autobiography reveal that she mourns the loss of what she considers good and right:

Um mich her hat alles sich verwandelt was ehrwürdig genannt wurde. Selbstverleugnung Herrschaft über seine Leidenschaften, Patriotismus, Eltern- und Kinderliebe Treue, Dankbarkeit das alles wird lächerlich genannt u. verhöhnt, das Schöne ist uninteressant, man malt, bildet, schildert u[nd] besingt das Häßliche u[nd] abjekte. . . . (TB 6: 122)

This discouraged musing of 1908 gives a different impression of her attitude toward some of the changes she witnesses. Although it is possible that the author underwent a change of heart since the writing of Meine Kinderjahre, Richard von Schaukel remembers her otherwise. Her statement seems out of character with the receptivity he observed:

Sie, die winzige alte Frau, die eine große Dame und einen ganzen Philosophen — Weltklugheit und Lebensweisheit — zu einer still herrschenden Persönlichkeit vereinigte, lebte trotzdem nicht als ein verschlossene Muschel, sondern wie ein in Sonne umsummter Hausgarten, der, dicht in duftendes Kraut geschlossen, allem offen steht. . . . (224)

The message she wants to leave with her readers is one of satisfaction. It is not satisfaction with herself and what she has achieved, but rather with what has been revealed to her. Bramkamp asserts that the vignettes of this autobiography “. . . clearly deal with the growing awareness of her own worth and her need for self-development” (8). This is exactly the opposite of what the author intends for us to
infer. One must read right to the end to find out that Ebner-Eschenbach asserts her need of humility. It is the author's exaggerated sense of her own worth, which, she confesses, has given her so much trouble and pain. Kay Goodman observes that the autobiographies of women can be characterized as "die Enthüllung unterdrückten Schmerzes" (133). Although Ebner-Eschenbach does disclose her pain, she also indicates that the suffering she experienced was worthwhile. She thus gives the evidence to prove that there is order and meaning to her existence. The satisfaction she conveys about her life and about the revelation she has received is not feigned, but real.
Chapter 3

Arthur Schnitzler’s Jugend in Wien:
An Autobiography of Commutation

At first glance, one does not suspect that there might be any difficulty in considering Schnitzler’s Jugend in Wien as “Kindheitsautobiographie.” The title, however, is not the author’s original intent, but rather the decision of the editor. The author’s intended title, Leben und Nachklang, Werk und Widerhall, as the editor writes, does not fit with the contents of the work (Nickl 8). Schnitzler writes about the period from his birth to 1889, his first twenty-seven years, stopping short of his original intention to cover the period to 1900. Even the period to 1889 is far more than one might anticipate would be covered in an autobiography of childhood or youth, particularly in comparison to Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach. Consider further the structure of the work. The seven books are approximately equal in length, but the span of time covered in each book varies from just over one year to thirteen years, the section covering thirteen years being his childhood. Although the work is considered a fragment by some, it was not stopped by circumstances, but was put aside by the author.

The work does, however, stop at a natural breaking point, namely, about the same time that Schnitzler begins his work as a physician, and
begins writing more seriously. It becomes evident in this work that the
definition of youth cannot be delimited precisely by age alone.
Presenting the development of the author's character is paramount.
Schnitzler's uneven time distribution in the chapters may be in part due
to the lack of aids to memory, and his desire to be truthful. It is more
likely, however, that the attitudes he wants to expose are more evident in
the latter years of his youth. Jugend in Wien, even though it extends to
Schnitzler's twenty-seventh year, can be properly considered to cover
only his childhood and youth, since the protagonist demonstrates
essentially no change in his attitudes, and virtually no maturation —
except for greater sophistication in matters of sexuality — despite the
number of years covered. The youth does progress in some ways, but
this is limited to his sexual exploits and to superficial academic progress
in the school system that he slides through. He becomes more
sophisticated in his romantic relationships, from Fännchen to Jeanine
(and beyond). As a point of contrast and comparison, Ebner-Eschenbach
covers fourteen years, and at the end of Meine Kinderjahre is ready to
cross the threshold into adulthood, even though she still has much to
learn. Schnitzler, at almost twice the age of fourteen, confesses that he
still had much to learn before he would be ready to marry. Thus, though
their age spans differ widely, the two authors still cover their youth, and
no more.
Schnitzler's emphasis on memory and accurate recollection is seen in the many references to his process of recollection. It is not the physiological operation of memory, but the credibility of what he is recalling that is significant to him. Schnitzler relied heavily on his diaries in the writing of his autobiography to assist his recollection. Phrases such as "[i]ch wüßte gewiß nicht mehr, . . . wenn mir nicht . . ." (21) run like a thread through his autobiography. Sometimes his memories flow together (19-20); at other times, the author admits that he has recorded names and events in his diary about whom and about which he has no recollection (283). While he may report in his autobiography what he has written in his diary, he does not attempt to tell more than he knows about the topic. By doing this, he lays a special emphasis on his accurate reflection of his life; furthermore, he wants that accuracy to be clear to the reader. He places a higher premium on the accuracy of the memory than does Ebner-Eschenbach, who admits that what she recalls may not be the actual way it happened, but that the effect of the recollection on her is more important than the way an event or episode transpired.

In addition to Schnitzler's many comments on memory throughout the text, his style of writing reflects his purpose. His detached, clinical

---

6 All further references to Schnitzler's works, unless otherwise specified, refer to *Jugend in Wien.*
style more closely resembles a doctor recording a patient’s history in a medical chart than the fond remembrances of a family member writing his memoirs. In the notes to the autobiography, rather than explicitly in the text itself, Schnitzler expresses his desire to write the truth: “Nicht nur Wunsch, auch tiefes Bedürfnis in diesen Blättern wahr zu sein” (Notizen 323). While it is not necessary to be completely detached in order to express the truth about something, appearing detached gives the impression of greater objectivity. The work does begin with a note of humor, but a more sobering observation is given almost immediately: the humorous prediction was “... eine Prophezeiung übrigens, deren Erfüllung er [mein Vater] nur in bescheidenem Ausmaße und keineswegs in ungeteilter Freude erleben sollte” (13). The descriptions of Schnitzler’s family are not meant to acquaint the reader with the members in a personal way, in order to show personality. Instead, the author summarizes the relatives’ existence in a succinct statement.

Furthermore, the author seems to make a point of saying little positive about the family members. The contrast between Schnitzler’s description of his heritage and Fontane’s is instructive. In Meine Kinderjahre, Fontane reveals the typical attitude of pride regarding one’s heritage. He relates how his parents sought out relatives who could claim some elevated status, to the point of claiming unrelated “relatives” (19-20). Schnitzler, on the other hand, does not even attempt to tout any special
forebears. Instead, he presents a portrait of his family that is less than flattering, admitting that his own grandfathers had problems, one with drinking, the other with gambling. In aiming at objectivity, the author wants not only to provide an accurate portrait for the reader, but also for himself. Schnitzler desires to be true to his own experience and is taking a long, hard look at his childhood.

The author’s aim at objectivity has led to Scheible’s criticism that Schnitzler is too distanced. Scheible suggests that Schnitzler has parodied the form to produce an anti-autobiography: “Mit seiner Autobiographie hat Schnitzler zugleich auch die Parodie auf diese literarische Form geschrieben. Ohne weiträumigen Aufwand, durch kommentarlose . . . Ironie werden die Grundsätze der Autobiographie zersetzt” (“Diskretion” 210). Indeed, Schnitzler does defy expectations from the very start. The beginning of Jugend in Wien resembles Goethe’s Dichtung und Wahrheit, where fate is the focal point of the birth stories. The formal structure of the two books is likewise similar, both being comprised of several “books” that are simply numbered, not named. The dates included in Jugend in Wien were added by the editor. The reference to the opera glasses is another obvious similarity to Goethe’s story about how he threw dishes out onto the street. But the likeness between the two autobiographies is short-lived. The author has no intention of writing an epigonic version of Dichtung und Wahrheit for the
nineteenth century. Nonetheless, it is the backdrop for his work. Schnitzler had read it three or four times before and during the writing of his autobiography. But the harmonization that Goethe presents in his work is conspicuously absent in Jugend in Wien. Still, Schnitzler is not aiming to be unconventional. He is not writing parody for parody's sake.

Within the text, Schnitzler plainly states his goal in writing the autobiography:

\[
\ldots \text{mit dem, was ich hier schreibe, maße ich mir keineswegs an, die Entwicklung eines dichterischen Genius zu schildern, sondern die einer menschlichen Seele, in der künstlerische, dilettantische und mancherlei andere Elemente einander bedingten, störten und förderten.} \ (46)
\]

What the "mancherlei andere Elemente" were, is not explicitly stated within the autobiography. As previously mentioned, it is in the notes that he records his wish to write the truth. It is also there that he more succinctly and explicitly declares his distaste for the attitudes of the liberal society in which he grew up. He writes:

\[
\text{Erziehung charakteristisch für liberales Regime: Guter Wille, Neigung zur Pose, Gerührtheit über sich selbst, Hochachtung vor allem Äußerlichen, kein eigentlicher Sinn für Wahrheit, kein rechtes Verständnis für Diskretion. Minderwertige Eigenschaften werden als Tugenden hingestellt.} \ (\text{Notizen} \ 326)
\]

Snobbery is discussed in another note, as well. Putting together, then, these statements that Schnitzler makes, one can see the connection between the "mancherlei andere Elemente" and the list of attitudes he
specifically mentions. Schnitzler's goal of showing the development
"einer menschlichen Seele" involves more than relating a few key
episodes in his life. It entails presenting the attitudes of those around
him, the same attitudes he exhibited in his own life. The expressed goal
is part of a larger, unexpressed goal, namely exposing those attitudes he
disliked — in society, in the lives of his family and friends, but primarily
in himself. Schnitzler's distaste for these attitudes is fundamental to
understanding the attitude that he displays in his descriptions
throughout the autobiography.

The work is a confession with the purpose of correcting the past.
From this standpoint, Schnitzler's statement that his desire for truth was
"Nicht nur Wunsch, auch tiefes Bedürfnis . . ." (Notizen 323) becomes
more significant. The desire is present, but the need is greater than a
simple desire. If one is to clear one's conscience, a confession must be
truthful. A lie only adds to the guilt. This is all the more fitting for
Schnitzler, since the attitudes with which he deals primarily, namely
hypocrisy, pretense, and snobbery, are essentially issues of integrity and
humility.

Schnitzler, known for exposing the faults of society in his
literature, makes his criticism intensely personal in writing the
autobiography. It is well known that some of his works, such as Anatol,
are quite autobiographical. Michaela Perlmann writes:
"Gesellschaftskritik ist bei Schnitzler Kritik an der eigenen Schicht und
damit auch Selbstkritik. Der Ansatz bei der psychischen Verfassung
seiner Helden soll keineswegs den Blick auf kollektive soziale Phänomene
verstellen" (61). But Schnitzler moves a step closer in self-criticism when
he writes his autobiography. The criticism Schnitzler levels at himself in
this work is more pointed than Perlmann suggests, for it is not just
himself, as one of many, that he is targeting. Whereas in his works prior
to World War I, Schnitzler writes stories of "... der falschen Ehre
('Leutnant Gustl'), der falschen und verlogenen Moral ('Vermächtnis' und
'Reigen'), der falschen Liebe ('Liebelei'), ... der falschen Ehe und falschen
Treu ('Zwischenspiel' und 'Das weite Land')" (Urbach 10), in Jugend in
Wien he directs his attention to "das falsche Ich." In this he aims
primarily at himself.

One attitude that Schnitzler despises is "Gerührtheit über sich
selbst" (Notizen 326). Schnitzler's use of detached language in
discussing his past is to evidence that he is not overly caught up with or
sentimental about himself. Consider his comments about another
author: "Las neulich Spielhagens Erinnerungen. ('Finder und Erfinder'.)
Kein sehr erfreuliches Buch; umständlich, von einer altjüngferlichen
Discretion, gerührt von sich selbst, kurz sentimental, was in
Autobiographien ganz unledlich" (TB 20.IV.1917). Schnitzler wants to
avoid the same mistake. The objectivity and clinical reporting indicate
that Schnitzler wants to distance himself from the attitudes of his youth. He is not moved by the remembrance of them, as if the antics were “cute,” but reveals that he has a dislike for them. He candidly describes his change of attitude:

Bis in die ersten Universitätsjahre trug ich mich mit einiger nicht ungewollter Nachlässigkeit. . . . Leise Verachtung gegen alles, was man als Eleganz bezeichnete. Diese Abneigung stammt aus verschiedenen Jugendeindrücken . . .

Veränderung im Freiwilligen Jahr. Der Snob in mir erwacht und entwickelt sich aufs lächerlichste. . . . Ehrgeiz, elegant zu werden. Gebe mich im allgemeinen mit der nachlässigen Eleganz zufrieden. (Notizen 326)

These particular descriptions are not contained within the autobiography proper, but his objectivity remains consistent. He reveals himself to be an indolent, self-serving dandy. In school, he does not apply himself with diligence, but tries to do as little as possible, somehow sliding by, all the while making sure that he has time to carouse and play cards. Although one teacher thinks he is a genius, Schnitzler knows that he did not make use of the talent that he has to the fullest degree.

Schnitzler mentions in the description above the snobbery that he practiced. He recognizes snobbery in himself primarily as a concentration on or high regard for externals, and he specifically identifies this as part of the liberal mindset that he dislikes. Schnitzler sees “Snobismus” as “die Weltkrankheit unserer Epoche” (18). His own attitude as a youth reflects snobbism. He gives a specific example of how
he felt such "Freude, im Fiaker zu fahren und darin gesehen zu werden" and that he could not fathom ". . . daß man in einem Einspänner fahren kann, bin verwundert, wie Dr. Schiff einmal im offenen Einspänner an mir vorüberfährt" (Notizen 326). He sees he has been afflicted with snobbism, too, and he seeks to put it behind him. Snobbery is related to "Gerührtheit über sich selbst" in that the concern over oneself is too great — one regards oneself too highly. During the writing of his autobiography, Schnitzler notes in his diary the disastrous effects of snobbery on artistic production, even when one has a measure of talent: "Lese Martha Karlweis' Insel der Diana. Was für eine schüchliche Sache kann Talent sein; wenn es auf dem Boden von Snobismus, Afferei und Streberei wuchert" (TB 31.V.1919). Similarly: "Las Kornfeld's 'Himmel und Hölle', Drama. Talent Gewiß. Aber welche Praetension! Affectation! Hochmut! Wichtigtuerei!" (TB 13.VI.1919). And again: "Dann Casimir Edschmids 'achatne Kugeln'. Gewiß nicht ohne Talent, aber doch dummies Zeug, affectirt, versnobt, unwahr" (TB 23.I.1920). Franz Baumer sees that Schnitzler has had a complete change in attitude since his youth: "Vollkommen geheilt aber wurde sein Snobismus schließlich durch alle die Snobs selbst, denen er im Laufe der Zeit begegnete" (32).

A showpiece of snobbery is anti-Semitism. It is no accident that, as Schnitzler writes about snobbery in his notes to the autobiography, he
states that anti-Semitism will be much discussed in the work.

Schnitzler’s friend, Sol Liptzin, recounts that Schnitzler thought that
anti-Semitism or racism was not just a Jewish problem, but that it was a
universal problem. Liptzin writes of Schnitzler:

He holds that any human group which lives in the midst of a
numerically larger group, and which retains its own
peculiarities, must inevitably arouse in the majority a
consciousness of difference. This consciousness usually
gives birth to dislike, resentment, contempt, and hate. . . .
This anthropological law will apply to all peoples irrespective
of their specific characteristics. Thus, if Aryans should
happen to be in a minority in any country, anti-Aryanism
would immediately develop. Attention would be focused
upon all the faults of the Aryans from the dawn of history up
to the present time. (132)

Evident, as well, in those displaying anti-Semitic attitudes was
inconsistency, to wit hypocrisy. Liptzin recalls being “. . . aware of his
[Schnitzler’s] treatment of this theme before the World War in his novel
Der Weg ins Freie and in his drama Professor Bernhardi (190). Thus,
Schnitzler made the association of anti-Semitism with hypocrisy and
snobbery before the writing of his autobiography. Scheible sees “. . . die
neue — rassische — Form des Antisemitismus . . .” as “. . . nur Mittel zum
Zweck, zur Verschleierung wirtschaftlicher Interessen . . .” (Schnitzler
28). He is somewhat skeptical of the extent of Schnitzler’s insight into
the problem: “Schnitzler hat diesen Zusammenhang vielleicht nicht ganz
durchschaut, aber seine Zurückweisung der zweideutigen Haltung
Luegers zeigt, daß er die eigentliche Gefahr gerade in der vorgeblichen
Trennung des Privaten und des Politischen ahnte . . ." (Schnitzler 28). But Liptzin notes that Schnitzler realized that "... anti-Semitism was not a Jewish problem. It was a Jewish misfortune but a problem for non-Jews who had to reconcile their ideal beliefs and their love for mankind with their hatred and discrimination against their fellow men of Jewish origin" (190). The issue that Schnitzler addresses in Jugend in Wien is not primarily the business or political interest but rather the matter of integrity. That is, one cannot divide the spheres of one's life. There should be no divide between what one professes and what one practices.

That division is the heart of the problem with all forms of hypocrisy and pretense, as well as snobbery, for these attitudes are closely related. The "Neigung zur Pose" and "Hochachtung vor allem Äußerlichen" are due to lack of integrity, "... kein eigentlicher Sinn für Wahrheit ..." (Notizen 326). The war years gave Schnitzler the opportunity to see that hypocrisy is a widespread problem: "Heuchelei — überall!—" (TB 15.1.1916), he notes in his diary. Schnitzler had, however, first learned the importance of the outward show at home, where "... Anerkennung für wichtiger galt als die Leistung und die Meinung der Welt höher gewertet wurde als die Selbsterkenntnis . . ." (45). He confesses that pretense was also part of his own writing. While he recognizes a "dichterischer Drang" in himself, he reckons that his efforts
at imitation and the applause he received for his attempts at writing played a large part in his becoming a writer (40). Schnitzler admits “. . . daß ich oft genug ohne inneren Drang irgendeinen sich bietenden Anlaß ergriff, um mich vor den Eltern und anderweitigem Publikum oder auch vor mir selbst aufs neue als Dichter auszuweisen” (45). He learned pretense in religious matters as well, as the family gathered for the Day of Atonement, where he saw that “. . . ihre [der Großmutter] Kinder und Kindeskinder, wenn und solange sie es überhaupt taten, feierten den Bußtag hauptsächlich ihr zuliebe und nach ihrem Tode nur aus Pietät weiter” (19). Schnitzler’s father liked to be a part of artistic circles — not so much for the art, itself, but the atmosphere: with respect to music, Schnitzler writes that “[a]uch hier war es eher der gesellschaftliche Dunstkreis, in dem er sich behagte” (32). Similarly, Schnitzler enjoyed the atmosphere at the racetrack more than the sport itself:

“. . . und wenn es auch gewiß nicht ein eigentlich sportliches Interesse war, das mich in die Freudenau lockte, so lag doch nicht im Totalisator ihre einzige oder auch nur ihre Hauptanziehungskraft für mich beschlossen. Es war vielmehr dies ganz wunderbare Atmosphäre von Leichtigkeit, Eleganz und Spiel, die meinen Sinnen schmeichelte” (160).

Schnitzler confesses that he once defended suicide, “. . . mich wahrscheinlich mit Absicht in Widerspruch zu einem der Gesprächsteilnehmer setzend . . .” (184). He states that his father kept current on medical advances, “. . . als käme es ihm mehr darauf an,
Pretense is likewise obvious in Schnitzler’s relationships. Men were supposed to maintain their composure, to take whatever came “... ohne mit der Wimper zu zucken ...” (255), since “[d]as gehörte mit zur Eleganz” (251). In relationships with women, Schnitzler is able to predict the “halb” and “dreiviertel Aufrichtigkeit” with which the relationships will begin and end. The young Schnitzler is likewise hypocritical, as well as playing a charade, when he expects that his partner in the affair will be faithful while he is not.

Even in his relationship with Olga Waissnix, Schnitzler does not now pretend that he was completely upright in his attitudes toward her. Part of the difficulty for him is trying to understand how honest she was being in the relationship. He cannot be sure of her love; Dora tells him one story; Olga tells him another. It is not strictly hindsight that causes him to doubt. In his diary, Schnitzler reveals his bewilderment about her. Olga’s attempted suicide does not persuade Schnitzler of her integrity, either. Schnitzler’s skepticism is apparent in his comments about Olga’s suicide attempt using morphine: she took some. “... allerdings nicht so viel, daß der rasch herbeigerufene Arzt sie nicht außer Gefahr hätte bringen können” (235). In his diary, he also records his skepticism: “Ich glaube nur denen, dass sie sich umbringen wollen,
die es wirklich tun . . . ” (TB 11.X.1914). His sentiment in the autobiography may have been strengthened as a result of his friend Stephi, who did take her own life.

Schnitzler has difficulty deciphering Olga’s intentions and integrity, because her reactions do not seem to him to correspond to the situation: “. . . hatten diese Blutstropfen nicht doch einen allzu großen Aufwand bedeutet im Verhältnis zu dem, was Olga empfand?” (239). He continues to question her reactions, which at times seem too strong to him, but other times are not strong enough: “Immerhin nur einen Teller [zerbrochen], aber wäre es ein ganzes Porzellanerservice gewesen, so hätte logischerweise auch eine gewisse Morphiumlösung stärker sein müssen, als sie nun einmal gewesen war . . .” (245). He might have hoped for honesty in this relationship, although he should not really expect it, since it was based on deception. But he is not completely honest with her either. He continues to write her letters, but admits that they are more fervent than what he feels. In these letters, he had “. . . ein Ton festgehalten, als wäre das einzige wahre und starke Gefühl meines Herzens meine Liebe zu ihr . . .” (321). Schnitzler indicates plainly that he finds his past actions and attitudes objectionable. At the same time, he does not give every detail he might have given.

In attempting to correct the past, Schnitzler sees the need to exercise discretion, a virtue found by him to be lacking in the liberal
generation. Schnitzler's tendency to use a double negative, instead of a more emphatic positive, is consistent with the tone of discretion. For example, "... nicht immer ohne väterliche Absicht ..." (34) is more moderate than "manchmal mit väterliche Absicht", and likewise "... zu einer nicht unwichtigeren Rolle ..." (38). In addition, the author's clinical detachment lends a tone of discretion, since the emotional element is largely removed. His aim is not to shock the audience or to provide the titillating details of his life, but only to provide as much information as is necessary to write the truth. Scheible's criticism that Schnitzler is too distanced rests perhaps on the assumption that autobiographies are meant to be "warm" and inviting. Schnitzler does indicate, by the occasional use of present tense that he is involved with his material (cf. 232, 252). But Schnitzler's priority is not only to dissect and examine the past, but also to correct it. He wants to prove that he can exercise discretion. Despite the many opportunities he had, especially considering the content of his autobiography, Schnitzler writes in a manner consistent with his censure of the previous generation.

While upholding his commitment to honesty, Schnitzler maintains a level of circumspection in his descriptions, making it unclear to the reader at times what actually transpired. He is forthright in disclosing his attitude about his past actions and attitudes, but does not always provide all the details of a situation. The author asserts that there are
"... zweierlei Arten, wahr zu sein. Die eine: was man mitteilt völlig rückhaltlos und präzis auszusprechen; die andere: überhaupt alles mitzuteilen, dessen man sich zu erinnern vermag" (Notizen 324). There is no doubt that Schnitzler has not chosen the latter option. It is the former option that some find Schnitzler has failed to fulfill. Scheible is one: "So offenherzig Schnitzler erzählt — mit gleichsam grillparzerscher Diskretion vermeidet er es, die Gefährdungen, von denen er sich betroffen sieht, auszubreiten oder wortreich mit ihnen zu kokettieren" ("Diskretion" 214). He writes further:

Wenn trotzdem die Geschichte von Schnitzlers Jugend die Bezeichnung ‘Anti-Autobiographie’ provoziert, dann in dem Sinne, daß der Erzähler ein "inneres Ich" so konsequent im Dunkeln läßt, daß seine Erinnerungen... merkwürdig unpersönlich wirken. Das Ich des Autobiographen bleibt im Hintergrund" ("Diskretion" 213-14).

This idea finds support from Perlmann:

Mit Recht weist Hartmut Scheible (1981) darauf hin, daß die Autobiographie, bei aller Selbstkritik, dennoch vieles verdrängt. ... So läßt er beispielsweise die Lösung prekärer Situationen, wie der angedeuteten ungewollten Schwangerschaft eines mit ihm befreundeten "süßen Mädels", im Dunkeln. (20)

Baumer, on the other hand, sees that Schnitzler “... unterwirft sich auch persönlich einer ungeschminkten Selbstanalyse” and that “... sein Vorsatz zu rückhaltloser Ehrlichkeit ...” is evident (14).

Whereas Baumer credits Schnitzler with “selbstkritische Offenheit” (15), Scheible complains that Schnitzler is not specific enough when he writes
about his hypochondria ("Diskretion" 212). He suggests that Schnitzler was afraid to name the problem, for fear of giving it credence ("Diskretion" 214).

Schnitzler addresses this objection in a note regarding his autobiography. He notes that to be truthful in his autobiography does not necessarily entail being correct about every detail; it does mean, however, that one may not avoid reporting about certain details: "Es gehört nicht zur Wahrheit im höheren Sinn, über alles Nebensächliche, insbesondere rein Physische Bericht zu erstatten, doch gibt es Fälle, wo das Verschweigen geradezu Fälschung wäre" (Notizen 323). The question, then, is whether Schnitzler’s failure to name the specific symptoms of his hypochondria, for example, is avoidance or repression on his part, or merely the author’s discretion. One might ask the question in a different way: Would the information add to the understanding of the author, or the author’s understanding of himself, or would it merely serve to satisfy the curiosity of Schnitzler’s "Nachfolgerschaft?" I think the latter.

Schnitzler has admitted to himself and to the reader that his particular illness is due to his own imagination, not from some physical cause. That revelation is far greater than disclosing a variety of symptoms while failing to discuss the true source of the illness. It may be that the author found the nature of the symptoms too embarrassing
to divulge, even though he admits: "Keineswegs gehört ein besonderer Mut dazu, alle häßlichen Wallungen oder bösen Taten niederzuschreiben, deren man sich schuldig weiß, wenn man überzeugt ist, daß vor dem Tode des Schreibers keiner von diesen Aufzeichnungen Kenntnis erhalten wird" (Notizen 324). Another possibility is that the symptoms were of such a varied or fleeting nature, because of Schnitzler's exposure to so much medical information, that the naming of the symptoms would prove to be a case of getting lost in the details. In that case, the significant truth would be muddled because of the focus on the incidental, purely physical matters (Schnitzler, Notizen 323).

Schnitzler has reported the important element of his illness. The details would, perhaps, only provide fodder for endless divergent speculation about their relevance.

The details in this case do not lead him closer to the truth, because for Schnitzler, the significance of his hypochondria does not lie in its symptoms, but rather in its consequences. "Mit meinem Arbeitsfortgang im ganzen bin ich nicht recht zufrieden: es mangelt an absoluter Concentration; hypochondrische und begründete Sorgen stören den reinen Lauf der Gedanken" (TB 1.I.1909). That inability to concentrate points him to a deeper truth: "Jener nicht ganz Herr werden zu können ist natürlich nichts als ein Talentmangel; wo das Hindernis war, bleibt am Ende immer gleichgültig — der Künstler hat sich mit den
Resultaten auszuweisen—" (TB 1.I.1909). As we shall see, the author’s estimation of his artistic ability and the matter of consequences are both of central concern to the author. His hypochondria is of secondary importance. Schnitzler does not bog himself down with details regarding his hypochondria, because it obscures more the important issues.

In regard to pregnancies, however, Schnitzler does explain. He alludes to needing the assistance of a gynecologist over the years, which can only mean that he fathered some children. He does not mention these cases specifically; thus it might be assumed that he called on the gynecologist to do abortions — which would indicate a failure to take responsibility. In one case, Schnitzler suggests that the woman is really lying about her situation:

Ihr Bruder, der angeblich Oberleutnant, vielleicht aber auch nur Handlungsgehilfe in einem Modewarenhaus war, würde sie nun wahrscheinlich töten, wie sie behauptete. . . . Ihre neuesten Lügen und Drohungen aber. . . ließen es ratsam erscheinen, nun ein entschiedenes Ende zu machen. (261)

His statements about her situation, with the use of terms such as “angeblich,” “würde . . . wahrscheinlich,” and “behauptete,” call into question the credibility of the woman’s story. In a second situation, Schnitzler does not claim to have any question about what the woman is trying to communicate, but he does nothing. He admits: “Trotzdem ich den Ausdruck nicht gekannt hatte, verstand ich ihn sogleich, und ich
wurde nun noch kühler gegen sie, als ich es schon vorher gewesen war. Sie verschwand übrigens aus dem Boarding, noch ehe ich selbst . . . abreiste” (304). He acknowledges that he breaks off ties with her, just as he did with the first woman. Thus, he does in both cases actually relate the end of his involvement in the situations. The first situation shows more the negative character of the woman; in the second, Schnitzler highlights his failure to take responsibility.

Schnitzler is likewise candid about his failures and his lack of maturity. The lack of maturity, itself, is not a concern for him. At the end of the work, he ponders the reasons why he did not marry Helene. The end result is that there were things he needed to experience first. His answer is simply stated as a fact: “Der wahre Grund war der, daß es noch zu früh für mich war, um in den Ehestand zu treten, daß ich noch als Junggeselle allerlei zu erleben hatte, um das zu werden, was ich werden sollte . . .” (322). One can understand “zu erleben hatte” in the obligatory sense, that is, in a fatalistic, determined sense. But the author dismisses such a notion in the next paragraph. It is better understood as the author’s understanding that he was not ready to take on the responsibility of marriage. Thus, in contrast to the author’s perspective about some of his previous behavior and attitudes, here he writes with no condemnation or critical tone to his explanation. A lack of maturity is understandable in one’s youth. A lack of integrity is not.
Schnitzler's candidness nearly matches the courage he and his friends admired in their colleague who admitted he was afraid to take part in a duel. Had the author published his autobiography, he would have demonstrated even more courage than his friend. The reason why he did not actually publish his autobiography remains open to speculation. Whether he was exercising more wisdom and discretion by not publishing it while he was alive, or whether he simply lacked the courage to do so can be debated. But it is apparent that he wanted to tell his own story. Two specific instances are mentioned where Schnitzler finds out information about his family members, but not until after they have died: he learned from his father of his grandfather's problem with drinking; he learned from a friend of his father's failed courtship. He knows that the information about himself, at least much of it, will one day also be known. Those who know can — and do — tell. Schnitzler wants to tell his own version. He wants to prove that he is different than he used to be.

To change takes discipline — a virtue Schnitzler lacked in his youth. In his earlier years, he saw no reason to change. Schnitzler admits that he operated not only on pretense, but that he liked what he was:

Und während ich mich in meinem Tagebuch weitläufig und schonungslos über allen Zwiespalt und Jammer ausließ, war ich gleich wieder bereit, mich der Pose zu beschuldigen,
glaubte mir in meinen inneren Kämpfen irgendwie zu gefallen, während ich sie niederschrieb. . . . (309)

Writing was a tool to satisfy himself in his pretense. Over time, writing becomes for him a tool for change. Renate Wagner observes the process where “[d]as Schreiben wird zum Akt der Befreiung” (56). What Wagner sees regarding Schnitzler’s writing of Anatol is namely that

Anatol selbst ist vielleicht am besten zu verstehen, wenn man seine durchaus klägliche Existenz nicht als die einer Lustspiel-Kunstfigur nimmt, sondern als Ergebnis einer Lebensanschauung, die Schnitzler, indem er “Anatol” schreibt, überwindet. Früher mag er, wie Anatol auch, nur “genossen” haben — und ist dabei nicht weitergekommen. Seit er ernsthaft schreibt, bewältigt er den Anatol in sich selbst. . . . (55)

Earlier, Schnitzler was not willing to exert himself to erase the conflict. What he sees now, is that it is not enough just to see the problem; one must try to correct it. The autobiography is his effort. The question is whether writing is sufficient to help him to change all that he wants to change, or to help him change what he does not truly want to change.

Schnitzler’s diary gives evidence of the difficulty he had getting started on the autobiography: “Anzugreifen wäre wohl endlich die Selbstbiographie. Ein Titel ging mir heut durch den Kopf: ‘Leben, Kunst und Widerhall —” (TB 15.XI.1914). He expounds on his difficulty getting started:

Wäre mir nur nicht jede Geduld so völlig abhanden gekommen. Dieser Urfehler meiner Natur wirkt immer bedenklicher. Drei geordnete Sätze hintereinander

Time is passing him by; he seems powerless to accomplish his intentions. Finally, several months later, he is able to write: "Nun begann ich 'systematisch' eine Art von Autobiographie" (TB 24.V.1915).

He writes for two reasons. One, already mentioned, is to prove that he has changed, and furthermore, to show that the values he previously had, he now despises. A second reason is that he continues to look for an anchor in life. Schnitzler lacks confidence — in himself and in his calling. The several descriptions of Rudi, the fellow rival of his for the attention of Olga Waissnix, indicate his sensitivity to his physical appearance. He describes Rudi four times — more than any other character in the book: "schlank" is the key word. Rudi is "... der Rax, schlank, hager, schneidig, mit keiner Wimper zuckend ..." (231). Just six pages later, Schnitzler tells us again that Rudi is "... schlank, heiser [sic], blond und undurchdringlich ..." (237). This is the third time; he has just described Rudi a few sentences before in the same paragraph: "Aber ich gehörte zu denjenigen, die nicht mit der Wimper zuckten, und verstand, ebenso höflisch-kühl und undurchdringlich zu sein wie er, ... nur freilich so schlank, so heiter und so beiläufig zu sein, das war mir versagt" (236). The final description reiterates the same image: "... Rudi Pick, in dem elegantesten Sommeranzug, der sich erträumen ließ[,] nahm
gleich neben uns Platz, war amüsant, beziehend, blond, schlank und
heiser [sic]" (248). Schnitzler claims to be an able contender in the battle
of elegance, but he seems to think he would get his prize, if only he, too,
were "schlank." The insecurities he reveals about his physical
appearance are connected to this one particular relationship. The
insecurities he has with respect to his art are deeper yet.

Despite Schnitzler's confident assertion that he has a
"... dichterischer Drang, an dessen Vorhandensein ich freilich nicht
zweifeln darf..." (40), he is on a constant search throughout his
autobiography for reassurance. In contrast to some authors who want to
present "... die Entwicklung eines dichterischen Genius...," Schnitzler
denies that intention (46). He does write often about his development as
a writer, frequently attaching a comment that the actual quality of the
work he mentions is not under discussion. He addresses his writing,
because writing is his life:

Leben und Schreiben gehen ineinander über, die Grenzen
verfließen. Leben drängt ins Schreiben, und umgekehrt
gewinnt Leben die Qualität eines Textes, welcher den
Betrachtenden bewegt. ... Diese bewußte Vermischung
fast bis zur Identität von Leben und Text, von realer
Erfahrung und Fiktion ist ein Merkmal, das Schnitzlers
gesamtes Schreiben durchzieht und Leben und Werk
wechselseitig zu erhellen hilft. (Tarnowski-Seidel 16)

Thus, even though the work is not focused on his writing, it is essentially
impossible for him to be truthful in writing his autobiography, if he
ignores the fact that he is a writer. The close connection between his life and writing is seen in the parallel construction in the title he chose for his autobiography: "Werk und Widerhall, Leben und Nachklang."

Schnitzler's investigation of his own works focuses on determining whether he has any talent. Although he says that the quality of a particular work is not an issue, Schnitzler is looking for hints that there is truly talent in his writings. At the same time, he knows that a dilettante can create a piece that rivals art, and a true artist can produce an inferior product. There is no guarantee that one will judge correctly based on a single work. Instead, one must view the whole life's work in order to be able to assess properly the quality of an artist's work (72-73). Schnitzler also knows that it takes more than just talent to make a good writer. So, while he can see inklings of true artistic talent, he still lacks confidence in what he produces. Ultimately, it must be left up to his "Nachfolgerschaft" to decide the quality of his work, which, in a sense, is his life, "— so viel oder so wenig es am Ende war" (322). Gaining even in international recognition, the author is keenly aware that he has been accepted as a good writer. But, according to his own aphoristic declaration, "[n]ur Richtung ist Realität, das Ziel ist immer eine Fiktion, auch das erreichte - und dieses oft ganz besonders" (Aphorismen 131:45).

Thus, he must remain unsure of himself:
Um wieviel tiefer fühlt sich die Schwächen meines Talents im ganzen, so wie im einzelnen. Wie wenig ist mir jemals wirklich gelungen. Stücke von einem Dichter,— am Ende von einem großen Dichter; und keiner geworden—keiner zu werden fähig. Hindernisse—? Das heißt ja eben Mangel an Talent.— (TB 20.XII.1914)

He writes this in his diary at about the same time he begins thinking more seriously about writing his autobiography. Within the autobiography, he writes a section from his diary concerning his doubts about his artistic talent: "Ich weiß es noch nicht...ob in mir ein wahres Talent für die Kunst steckt....[D]as ich etwas wie Heimweh nach jenem Gebiet empfinde, das fühlt ich deutlich.... Ich bin heute unhärter noch,...denn das, als was ich heute gelte, bin ich ja doch nicht..." (192). Since that time, he reveals, he has had no settled conviction that he is truly an artist (192). The acclaim that he receives is insufficient to convince him. Even though he is confident that he will still have readers in fifty or a hundred years, and takes the time to make "Bestimmungen über meinen schriftlichen Nachlaß" (Nickl 7), Schnitzler is still torn with his insecurities. Earlier in his youth the question did not loom as large as now: "...immer wieder blieb es der einzigen Fanni Mütter vorbehalten, mich ermutigend und mahndend auf meine eigentliche innere Berufung hinzuweisen, an deren Betätigung und Bestätigung mir selbst vorläufig so wenig zu liegen schien" (213). A certain confidence is likewise seen in his letter to Olga Waissnix in 1888:
"Aber ist es nicht doch möglich, daß ich wirklich etwas zu sagen habe —
 daß ich es sagen kann, und daß ich es einmal sagen werde?!" (Briefe 36).
He sees, though, "... daß zu der Ausübung dieses Berufes mir ebenso
der redliche Wille als das wirkliche Talent fehlten" (294). This problem
still hounds him. He looks within himself as he writes the autobiography
in the same way that he later reads his diaries in order to find out
whether there were signs leading to his daughter's death.

The drive to find out whether he has talent is motivated by the
desire to determine whether he is on the "right" path. At the end of
Jugend in Wien, Schnitzler points out that he does not believe in
"... eine Vorsehung, die sich um Einzelschicksale kümmert" (322). He
often uses the term "Schicksal," but he specifically denies the idea that
individual lives are predetermined. The author does, however, believe
that there are some individuals who, even while they think they do not
know where they are going, are "... stets auf dem rechten Weg ..."
(322). He does not clarify the term "right." Either he assumes that the
reader will understand without further explanation what he intends by
this term, or he is unsure himself how to define it. He senses though,
that there is a right track. Similarly, he senses that there is meaning in
life: "Manchmal möchte man glauben, dass auch ein Lebenslauf
künstlerischen — oder wenigstens rhythmischen Gesetzen folgt"
(TB 12.XI.1916). He wants to know where he belongs.
Despite Schnitzler's apparently carefree lifestyle, he greatly lacked a sense of belonging. He wanted desperately to belong to someone, and to have someone belong to him. The detachment with which he describes his family indicates, in part, the lack of emotional intimacy with his family. Schnitzler's friends have a greater place in his autobiography than his family. This partiality is particularly noticeable with respect to his mother. Scheible finds this to be "... ein Phänomen, das um so bemerkenswerter ist, als die Autobiographie, wenigstens in der äußeren Anlage, den 'klassischen' Exemplaren dieser Gattung nicht unähnlich ist," but believes that her absence in the work is due to "... die völlige Identifizierung der eigenen Interessen mit denen des Ehemannes" (Schnitzler 13). Wagner holds that the mother's near exclusion is due to her regular presence in the author's life:

Sie war in dem Sinn vorhanden, daß ihr Dasein eine Selbstverständlichkeit der Art darstellt, über die man nicht mehr reflektiert. In Schnitzlers Tagebuch taucht sie auch erst in ihren letzten Lebensjahren und kurz vor ihrem Tod verstärkt auf, als ihr Verhalten Abweichungen von der Norm erkennen läßt. (18)

This argument does have some merit, particularly because Schnitzler does not mention much about the regular occurrences in his life, especially his childhood. But the little positive Schnitzler has to say about his mother in the brief mention that she receives better supports the impression that her influence on the author was not particularly
strong. His father was the one that had more bearing on Schnitzler, if only to irritate him in the advice that he gave. The author does write some warm letters later to his parents, which belie the idea that he did not have a very good relationship with his father. But Schnitzler has said that the general tone in the family was cordial “... eher als herzlich, denn als innig zu bezeichnen...” (44) — which does not mean business-like, but friendly, just not very intimate. With respect to one of the letters that Schnitzler wrote at about the age of ten, Wagner is probably correct when she notes that Schnitzler was assisted by his teacher in the writing of “... einen formvollendeten Geburtstagsbrief. ... Man könnte es als erste ‘dichterische’ Ambition betrachten, sich so blumig auszudrücken, doch scheint es sicher, daß hier der Hauslehrer mitgeholfen hat, das damals durchaus übliche Pathos niederzulegen” (21). Schnitzler was not much closer to his brother than to his parents. Schnitzler admits that his brother was more studious and a better doctor. The author’s time at the racetrack provided a common interest for them, which helped him to feel closer to his brother. But such an attachment is superficial, at best. He has not found the “right” way through relationships.

This includes the relationship with his wife, Olga. She is not mentioned or alluded to in his autobiography. In his diary, however, the marital problems during the course of writing are almost constant. The
stress the author lays on the relationships with women, and the catalog
list of the various women with whom he had a relationship, give one
cause to wonder whether Schnitzler pondered the question of why his
previous relationships did not work, and if his earlier behavior was
beginning to yield its consequences.

Schnitzler’s behavior is picaresque in that he presents various
episodes from his youth with no particular coherence or organized
perspective. He appears to slide through his youth with minimal effort,
gaining that for which others seem to have to work much harder. The
autobiography as a whole, though, displays the picaresque attitude that
Starobinski defines as seeing the past as “‘deficient’: a time of
weaknesses, errors, wandering, . . .” (292), for the author demonstrates
that actions have consequences. Scheible’s analysis leads to the same
conclusion, but from the vantage point of motivation rather than
consequence: it “. . . wird sichtbar, was den Autor vor allem beunruhigt:
die Frage nach der Motivation menschlichen Handelns. . . . Sei der
einzelne Augenblick so geringfügig wie auch immer, er motiviert
seinerseits andere Handlungen” (“Diskretion” 212). Schnitzler sees this
principle regarding actions and consequences illustrated in the venereal
disease contracted as a result of sexual promiscuity. He considers
syphilis to be the “. . . symbolische Krankheit einer Epoche, mit Folgen,
This focus on the consequences of deeds, which can also be seen as a focus on the end of one's life, is for Scheible a parody of the form: "Die Autobiographie parodiert hier sich selbst, indem sie ihrer eigenen Intention: Vergänglichkeit zu bannen, entgegenwirkt" ("Diskretion" 211). For example,

... nachdem die Zeit in der ausführlich beschriebenen Situation stillzustehen schien, auf diese Weise Vergangenes gegenwärtig werden lassend, läuft sie auf einmal mit beängstigender Geschwindigkeit ab; was eben noch gegenwärtig war, rückt unversehens in den Hintergrund und wird bildchenhaft isoliert, betrachtet wie durch ein verkehrt gehaltenes Fernglas. (Scheible, "Diskretion" 211)

That is not a parody of the form, but rather an effect of the autobiography of childhood and youth due to the limitation of years covered. It magnifies the teleologic perspective. The certainty of consequences points to an ordered world.

Schnitzler cannot find with absolute certainty the meaning he is looking for in life. When he was in his year of military service, he participated in war games. He and his colleagues found no sense in those activities. They were "verloren und ziellos," and would "wahrscheinlich in einem mörderischen Kugelregen hin und her irren" (173). As Wagner describes the situation, "[d]er Einundzwanzigjährige, von einem Lebensplan weit entfernt, fühlt das Episodische seines
Daseins genau" (35). In that military exercise in his youth, Schnitzler was able to withdraw from that which he found inane. Even the "Chefarzt" ". . . schien ebenso widerrechtlich dem Schlachtgetümmel entflohren zu sein als wir . . ." (173). But that was a military exercise. He is in a different battle now — one with greater consequences. His solution this time is not to flee on foot, but to escape to the world of pretense.

Pretense is one of the vices that Schnitzler condemns, but he has no other choice but to participate in pretense himself. He must pretend, in order to provide a sense of meaning for his life. The work ends with the question: "... aber wie sollte, ja wie könnte man überhaupt leben, schaffen und sich manchmal des Lebens freuen, wenn man sich’s nicht einbildete, zu diesen Auserwählten zu gehören?" (322). He finds his sense of belonging by pretending. Liptzin sees Der Weg ins Freie (1908) as Schnitzler’s “confession of faith” (140). Liptzin understands Schnitzler to be expressing himself “through the mask of Heinrich Bermann” when he writes: “It is up to each person to find his inner path. To do so, it is, of course, necessary for him to attain clarity within himself, to light up the most hidden corners of his soul, to have the courage of following his own nature, and not to let himself be led astray” (140). That is, ". . . each Jew will have to find his own way out of despair . . ." (Liptzin 140). Thus, Schnitzler is holding a cord that is secured to himself. He has dismissed
the possibility that there is a God who rules the world: “Und wenn es schon keinen Gott gab, in dem man sich beruhigt und beschlossen fühlte . . .” (276); he has no hope that there is fate with concern for individuals. Likewise, he sees the “Vaterland” as “. . . ein Gebild des Zufalls — eine völlig gleichgültige administrative Angelegenheit . . .” (276). Similarly, as much indication that he has that he is truly a talented artist, he still cannot find peace in it. How much more difficult it is for him to know that he is on the right path when he does not know what it is. Schnitzler is desperate for an answer to his question of which way to go: “. . . fiel in diese innerlich von so vielen flackernden Lichtern unsicher erhellte Dasein kein mächtiger Schein von draußen . . .?” (276).

But he sees faith as another form of pretense: “Was die Gläubigen glauben oder zu glauben vorgeben oder zu glauben sich einbilden, ist an und für sich in keiner Weise wunderbarer als was der relativ Wissende glaubt oder zu glauben pflegt. Es ist nur minder wahrscheinlich und unbewiesen” (Aphorismen 259). He accuses them of “Hochmut” and “Intoleranz” (Aphorismen 255). Liptzin sums up Schnitzler’s views on faith: “. . . the difference between human beings is really very slight, for even so-called atheists merely substitute an equivalent concept for that which others call God—a different name, another guess” (138-39).
The problem with Schnitzler's system is that he ends up where he started. This correlates with Martin Swales' observations regarding Schnitzler's cyclical dramas:

Schnitzler at times is able to relativize the irony and self-awareness of his characters, to see their very sophistication for the evasion that it is. At other times, he himself, as author, remains imprisoned within the psychological dialectic that encapsulates so many of his characters. (231)

Schnitzler wanted to do away with all hypocrisy and pretense. Yet, in the end, he is left with "pretending" that he is different and better than those who do believe. He is, however, merely substituting "... a different name, another guess" (Liptzin 139).

He has charted the past, searching for evidence of talent to give him a sense of belonging, and looking for a way into the future. He ends the book with a question, or cannot continue beyond that question. Schnitzler has demonstrated that he has changed, but only to a certain degree. He finds himself no more certain of his calling than at the beginning. In order to be able to tolerate his uncertainty, he has exchanged the hypocrisy and pretentiousness of his youth for a more sophisticated form of pretense.

The necessity of his choice is evidence of Schnitzler's futile search for meaning in his life. In contrast to Ebner-Eschenbach, who definitively states the source of the meaning she has found in life, Schnitzler is only able to conclude that the meaning of his existence will
be determined by the next generations. Judgment is certain. The verdict is not. One needs the distance of time to provide the proper perspective to be able to determine the consequences of previous actions. Even though Schnitzler is beyond his youth, he is still experiencing the effects of his earlier years. But, his life is not over, even though he projects a final assessment in the statement “... so viel oder so wenig es auch am Ende war” (322). The author has tried to distance himself from his actions and attitudes of his youth, forming the autobiography as both a confession of and corrective measure for his past. While he has shown that he has corrected some of his earlier problems, Schnitzler is still struggling with the consequences of his lack of discipline. That lack of discipline, along with the other problems in his life, such as marital difficulties, may be the reason the author did not continue with the autobiography any further. The end of the work leads to the conclusion that Schnitzler, in some sense, continues to follow the pattern of the character in his “Märchen:” “Er bleibt der Gefangene der Konventionen, die er so stolz überwinden wollte, er wird als theoretischer Schwätzer entlarvt” (Wagner 56). Were it not for Schnitzler’s denial of God, one might think he were writing his story to illustrate the truth that “... whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (NKJV Gal. 6:7).
Chapter 4
Hans Carossa's
Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend:
An Autobiography of Confabulation

An investigation of Carossa’s Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend should first establish the legitimacy of including these works in the discussion of non-fictional autobiography. As their titles indicate, both appear to be general rather than individual accounts, thus precluding the notion of autobiography. This constitutes the main tenet of Henning Falkenstein’s argument: Carossa “... hatte ... bezeichnenderweise niemals an den Titel Meine Kindheit gedacht, was bereits andeutet, daß es Carossa gar nicht darum ging, seine eigene, möglicherweise ereignisreiche oder historisch aufschlußreiche Kindheit dokumentarisch zu überliefern ...” (36-37). But certainly one must look further than the title.

Falkenstein supports his argument with Carossa’s clear omission and alteration of facts, noting in addition that Carossa had considered publishing the work anonymously (37). Thus, even beyond the first glance, it would appear that Carossa’s intent is that the works be considered fiction. He openly admits that they contain fiction: “Alles könnte wahr sein - und es ist das reine Märchen”, notiert Carossa im
Tagebuch über ein Kapitel der Jugendgeschichte" (Kampmann-Carossa 291). Considering the similarities as well as obvious discrepancies between the author's life and his presentation of the protagonist's story, one could read these works as factually based, but primarily fictional stories.

But Falkenstein is too easily satisfied. That Carossa omitted some significant facts of his life, and changed the name of the town is not enough evidence to conclude that the works are not meant as autobiography. Consider the case with which the author could have chosen a different birth date for the protagonist. A change by even one day would have pointed more clearly to a fictional character; instead, Carossa chose to use his own birth date. Along with many other scholars, Willi Vogt agrees with the premise that Carossa's work is to be considered autobiography, taking a stance nearly the opposite of Falkenstein's view: "In diesen Texten spricht er [Carossa] unverhüllt von sich selber. Allerdings sind auch sie viel mehr Komposition, lang überlegte Auswahl und Einordnung der erzählten Fakten, als es etwa die Formel 'Ein Schriftsteller erzählt sein Leben' vermuten ließe" (104-5).

Before looking at the other points of Falkenstein's argument, which opens the way to understand Carossa's work, we shall settle the matter of the author's intent by looking at Carossa's own words on the subject. They give evidence that, despite his assertion that he is writing a fictional
work, especially with regard to *Vorspiele* — a claim made in his diary — it is fair to consider these works as an autobiography of Carossa’s childhood and youth, and not merely as autobiographical fiction. Falkenstein overlooks the following statement on the very page from which he quotes Carossa considering the anonymous publication of biographical material: “Gestern löste ich mich von der ‘Beichte’ los ... Man muß die größten gefährlichsten Dinge mit aller Unschuld erzählen, als wäre gar nichts dahinter ...” (*Briefe* 1: 271). This statement reveals the true nature of the work; the subjunctive mood of “wäre” indicates unequivocally that there is something behind his apparently fictional story. Indeed, that quote from Carossa’s diary continues: “Jetzt ist es noch leicht; später wird es schwerer sein, d. h. mehr Kühnheit brauchen” (*TB* 1: 15.V.1915). Furthermore, in writing about *Verwandlungen einer Jugend*, Carossa acknowledges more explicitly that he is actually writing a poetized confession: “... in dieser Darstellung eines jugendlichen Lebens ... ist ja alles ohnehin Bekenntnis, freilich fast immer in Dichtung verwandelt, da kann nicht leicht nebenbei noch eine andere Form von Konfession aufkommen ...” (*TB* 2: 26.XII.1927). That telling statement is the necessary link to the two different aspects of the same work, and provides clues to understanding the whole work. The work is indeed autobiography, a confession that dances around “die größten gefährlichen Dinge,” a confession both incomplete and veiled.
The comments above have centered on the first two volumes of Carossa's autobiography of his youth, namely *Eine Kindheit* and *Verwandlungen einer Jugend*. While one may, as many have done, consider all four volumes together, the first two will continue to be the focus of the remainder of this chapter's discussion. Although they were published independently, the first two volumes form a unit of sorts, with regard to content and style, especially when compared to the latter two volumes. The second carries the same motifs as the first, and incidents from the first are carried over into the second, so it is helpful to discuss both together.\(^5\) There is less carry-over from these volumes to the third and fourth volumes, which also have a distinct change of tone. Therefore, little is lost, and much is gained by confining the discussion to the first two volumes, since they cover most of the author's childhood and youth. The discussion will center on Carossa's use and view of the magical, rather than on the development of the protagonist. This will demonstrate the works to be true autobiography, and show their appeal to his generation, as well as reveal their weakness.

There are many reasons for a person to undertake the writing of an autobiography. Certainly the desire to gain recognition and financial

\(^5\) References to *Eine Kindheit* and *Die Verwandlungen einer Jugend*, both in Vol. 2 of *Sämtliche Werke* will be cited as a single work; all references to Carossa's works, unless otherwise specified, may be considered to be from these two works.
reward must be counted among those reasons. There can be no doubt that Carossa was writing to appeal to his generation. During the same period that he was working on Eine Kindheit, Carossa notes in his diary: "Zur Prosa: es sollen nur Schicksale erzählt werden, wie sie in jedem Leben vorkommen können. Das Ganze soll verständlich fälschlich sein, wenigstens in den Einzelheiten. Soll ein Erfolg bei vielen Menschen möglich werden, so müssen die Kapitel kurz sein" (TB 1: 28.II.1918). In taking care to avoid being obscure and esoteric, he reveals he wants to attract a traditional audience. The letter he wrote to his sister about keeping the writing of Eine Kindheit confidential demonstrates that he is concerned and feels pressure about the reception of the work, since he has gained a reputation in poetry.

Carossa did enjoy a positive reception. Wolfgang Kopplin states that with regard to both his poetry and prose, Carossa "... hat sehr bald ein freundliches Echo von hohen Autoritäten seiner Zeit hören dürfen" (352). Herbert Günther, writing in 1973, concurs with the positive reaction: "Wie Goethe ist er ein Zeitgenosse aller Zeiten" (393). Despite such affirming words, Carossa has, overall, received spotty acclaim. The periods of his best recognition coincided with his fiftieth birthday, which was near the beginning of his career, and with his death, respectively. Since that time, the appreciation for Carossa's work in general, and his autobiography more specifically, has not improved much, if at all.
Kopplin, a Carossa enthusiast, finds little that is positive to say about the various approaches to criticism of Carossa. He focuses on the lagging understanding in the intervening years, bemoaning “... daß die Aussagen des Dichters zu naiv und ungebrochen als Selbstaussagen des Menschen Carossa gesehen ... werden” (Kopplin 374). In summarizing his remarks (1968), he laments: “... dieser Dichter wurde in seiner Weite und Tiefe noch immer nicht recht verstanden ...” (Kopplin 375).

Within the last several years (1991), almost twenty years after Kopplin’s article, Hartmut Laufhütte has edited the collection Hans Carossa: Dreizehn Versuche zu seinem Werk, which covers a spectrum of Carossa’s letters, poems, and prose. Laufhütte recognizes that many in the past have tended to view Carossa’s literature as “Seelenbalsam,” (1) a view that he asserts Carossa did not appreciate (2); the collection is an attempt to correct the imbalance, and re-evaluate Carossa’s works in their proper historical framework (4, 6). The more recent effort renews the question whether the Carossa devotees have discovered a “treasure” or whether the more general apathy of German scholars will remain the dominant attitude for decades to come.

There is a reason for the inconsistent popularity of Carossa among readers. It is not unusual for authors to receive acclaim as milestones are achieved. But it is also significant that Carossa’s recognition came in the two post-war periods. His generation, as he states in Eine Kindheit,
grew up in an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity. The shock that the world war brought to this generation is certainly well documented. Carossa mentions it himself in *Verwandlungen einer Jugend*:

... einer wunderlichen Täuschung erlagen die Kleinen wie die Großen. Wir glaubten, nämlich, daß alles bisher auf Erden Geschehene, Eis- und Flutzeiten, Erdbeben, Heilandsopferungen und Erfindungen, auch alle großen Aufbrüche, Kriege und Empörungen der Völker, durchaus nichts anderes bezweckt habe, als den gemütlichen Zustand herbeizuführen, in welchem wir gerade dahnlebten und den wir für unabänderlich hielten. In fertigem Staat und fertiger Kirche lebten wir wohlgeborgen. . . . (222)

The security that Carossa describes here is the feeling that he attempts to recall in *Eine Kindheit* and *Verwandlungen einer Jugend*. These works provided a refuge of sorts for those who had endured either or both of the wars. Günther writes: “In den Jahren nach 1933 und im Zweiten Weltkrieg fanden Ungezählte bei ihm Stärkung und Trost. Jüngere und künftige Generationen können nicht mehr ermessen, was seine Lauterkeit damals bedeutete” (393).

That statement, however, shows the inconsistency of Günther's critique of Carossa, for he goes on to say: “Carossas Werk ist dem Zeitgenössischen entrückt ins Zeitlos-Gültige. Wie Goethe ist er ein Zeitgenosse aller Zeiten” (393). But a timeless work should be just
that — timeless. Each generation should be able to understand the appeal of the work to readers, because it appeals to the person, not only to persons in certain circumstances. Kopplin suggests that Carossa “... wird vielleicht erst dann den Interpreten finden, der alle richtigen Ansätze zu einem richtigen Gesamtbild vereint, wenn die Menschheit aus dem Umbruch der Maßstäbe und Anschauungen in unserer Zeit einmal zu einem neuen, umfassenden Weltbild gefunden hat” (375). Must an “author for all time” require such defense? Should not the works speak for themselves? Before looking at the works themselves, let us look at the setting in which they were written, and one of Carossa’s purposes in writing them.

Although the story is Carossa’s own, he makes it plain that he views himself as part of his generation. In Eine Kindheit, the use of “wir” sometimes reflects an appeal to common human experience:

“... während sich das niedrigste Tier als abgeschlossen und vollkommen empfinden darf, spüren wir Menschen das ganze Leben lang, daß wir nur ein Entwurf sind ...” (36). The “author’s ‘we’” is non-specific, but less universal in its application: “Wie gerne würden wir berichten, daß dieses Abenteuer den störrischen Sinn des Knaben verändert habe ...” (131). In Verwandlungen, “wir” is sometimes pointedly much narrower still. Carossa refers to the students at his school: “... aber wir hatten auf diese Rufe nichts zu erwidern als gleichfalls Gedichte, und diese konnten
begreiflicherweise nur Nachahmungen sein. . . . Wir merkten dies, wenn gewisse Lehrer von Goethe sprachen . . .” (223-24). Here he is referring to the “Menschen meiner Umgebung” (223). But these students are representatives of Catholic students in his generation: “Das Nachgeborenenschicksal, das auf der Zeit lag, hatte für uns katholisch erzogene Söhne eine sonderliche Beschwerung” (225). Finally, Carossa sets his generation apart. He begins his musing with the general “Ein junger Mensch . . .” (222) but shifts the focus to a much more restricted group: “ Unsere Entwicklungen fielen in eine scheinbar beruhigte Epoche; wenige Jahre vor unserem Erwachen war das Reich gegründet worden, das größte Heer der Erde schützte es . . .” (226). His generation is different than the ones that went before. He makes his representative function explicit: “Der reifende Knabe, der hier manchen andern vertritt, kann über seinem Alltag jenes abgelegene waldumhangene Tal nicht vergessen” (223).

Carossa’s story is meant to give himself and his generation, in particular, a point of reference for the difficulties they face. In the tower, the youth experiences vertigo when he looks too close to the bottom of the tower, which represents the present. When he looks out into the distance, though, he is able to regain his sense of balance and his composure. In taking the longer view of history, the experience is less disquieting: “Glücklich aber, vem Erinnerung den irrenden Blick

The view inside the tower precedes the vertigo before reaching the top, but is likewise uncomfortable: “Ungewohnte Blickhöhe, schmale Umrahmung, vielleicht auch die Beschattung der Seele durch ein so nahes Leiden, dies alles bereitete die Stimmung einer Sonnenfinsternis” (255-56). It may have seemed to him to be the end of the world. His description may be an allusion to the passage in Matthew 24:29, where Jesus says: “Bald aber nach der Trübsal derselbigen Zeit, werden Sonne und Mond den Schein verlieren, und die Sterne werden vom Himmel fallen, und die Kräfte der Himmel werden sich bewegen” (Lutherbibel). The eclipse of the sun is an unusual, almost unnatural, perhaps even eerie event. When the regular pattern of the sun rising and setting is interrupted, it causes attention. His generation had grown up with this regular pattern; there was continual peace, and no great interruption. Although the years Carossa was writing Eine Kindheit encompassed World War I, and Verwandlungen was published in 1928, the war itself was not the impetus for these works. Carossa claims that he began writing in August 1914, just after the war broke out, but his diary entries indicate that he had begun the year prior (TB 1: 8.XII.1913; 24.XII.1913).
There are no entries in the diary after April 1914 for that year. Undoubtedly, though, the experiences during the war greatly influenced his thinking during the writing of his autobiographies. He is writing for and about his generation.

The postwar generations prized both Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend, as Günther mentions, finding "Stärkung und Trost" (393). Their love for the works was based on the escape they found in the fairy-tale world that is presented. Fairy tales are closely linked with "Zauber." The theme is unmistakable in Carossa’s Eine Kindheit und Verwandlungen einer Jugend: the stem "zauber" is used in various forms nearly eighty times in this work. In addition, there are many more uses of words that carry similar or related meanings, such as "magisch," "verhext," and "wunder." The connection with fairy tales and "Zauber" is manifest in the following passage from Eine Kindheit. The uncle states:

"Um zaubern zu können, wie sichs gehört, dazu brauch ich den Zauberstab. Der aber liegt weit von hier in einer dreifach versperrten Truhe in den Zaubermantel eingewickelt. Nun höre! Wenn du mir gehorchst und drei Tage lang meine Stube nicht betrittst, so will ich dir gern ein paar von meinen Künsten zeigen." (43)

The number three is repeated by name and in the form: locked three times, three days, then the uncle calls three times in the performance:

Zauberer" (38) knew just how to capture the boy's attention. Carossa likewise captures the attention of his generation.

Presenting the child's world as "das reine Märchen" (Kampmann-Carossa 291), Carossa exclaims: "Wie glücklich sind wir, solang die Dinge noch keine Namen haben, solang uns alles zum einzigen und ewigen Mal erscheint, solang wir noch nichts wissen von der unergründlichen Wiedergeburt der Formen!" (22). Up to this point in the story, most of the characters are types. Carossa rarely says "mein Vater" or "meine Mutter;" rather, it is "der Vater," "die Mutter" (9-10). Other characters in Eine Kindheit include "die Forelle" (12), "eine Jägerstochter" (12), "der alte Sünder" (16), "die Magd" (20), "der Jäger" (20), "die Kinder" (16), "Kirchgänger" (15), and "der Postillion" (15). Just as in a fairy tale there are certain position or character roles, the individuals themselves here are not as important as the character-types. Also "Eva" can be understood as a character name associated with paradise, particularly since Carossa refers to this character's name in his "Konzeptblätter" first as Else (TB 1: 558).

Carossa's works present a world of extreme order, where all the pieces drop almost effortlessly into place. In this world, Carossa's father or another adult figure steps in at just the right moment to extricate the boy or adolescent from his latest misjudgment. It is the world where the evil of paradise is not all that evil, where the "Teufelsfigur" can be a
consolation rather than a threat. Carossa dreams of a world that does not require suffering of the innocent baby Jesus. It is not a return to paradise proper that Carossa suggests, for in his less-than-perfect paradise, the Eve of his childhood is tom-boyish. Amalie is the one who is more the fairy tale princess; she is at one with nature. In the country, the snakes are not ominous but even treated as pets.

Nothing really bad happens in this work. The worst incident is the unjust accusation against Carossa at the Gymnasium, but even here, his acquiescence to the accusation is redressed in the end. Carossa’s prank against Reisinger is punished, but it turns out that the incident actually helps Reisinger and his relationship with Carossa. Both volumes are comprised largely of neatly packaged vignettes, linked by motifs, such as snakes and the arm. One piece from one episode fits into another: Carossa tells of getting some beeswax in one of the first chapters; in a later chapter he uses it to make figures in a creche. Similarly, the bat he finds in the attic comes into play on several occasions. Carossa omits, in large measure, “heavy” material of the kind that Ebner-Eschenbach and Fontane both include, but does include an occasional criticism of his parents — the silence of his father, and his mother’s (over)emphasis on outward appearances. The author includes little real confrontation with unanswered disappointment and confusion. Carossa’s view of the child’s life is one that leaves out the more difficult questions of life. Such
matters should be for the later years. Carossa writes: "Das Kind lebt jeder Augenblick seines Daseins ganz; es blickt mit einem Ernst, einer Geradheit, einem hellsichtigen Vertrauen dem Leben entgegen, die wir später fast nur noch im Traum erfahren" ("Entstehung" 971). Carossa's sense of order is real, but tentative and weak, in that it is not able to handle real-world situations.

Instead of dealing in the real world, the protagonist deals in the world of the magical. The magical world is the world of secret understanding. In that realm, deer talk and are able to console the disconsolate child. Things happen "wie von selber" (67, 82), not with arduous work. All the boy's efforts to make the figure for the creche frustrated him until he was able to see how to do it in a dream. When the boys are fighting, "[d]a war wie durch magischen Spruch die Zwietracht gebannt . . ." (76). Because young people have an almost natural affinity for the magical, one can find one's youth is renewed in that world, albeit only temporarily. Carossa's uncle, "der Zauberer" (59) appears young again when he is performing for the boy, but his youth fades again when the performance is over.

Carossa presents three facets to the magical world: the uncle's magic, his father's medical art, and the poetic world. His uncle employs sleight of hand in order to achieve the effect of magic. His ability to mesmerize the boy is apparent; he makes his craft look quite easy. He is
reportedly even able to exercise his power merely by looking at someone. The protagonist is initially drawn into believing that his uncle really can do “magic,” that his uncle has special powers. The accoutrements necessary for this magical power are the cape, the wand, and, of course, the secret words to effect the desired end.

Second is his father’s medical world. Like the magician uncle, the doctor also worked with his hands — not to wave a wand, but for palpation and percussion, to dispense medicine, to heal. He had a practiced and diligent hand, and so also made his work look easier than it was. But the healing power was a result of more than the practiced hand, it was the doctor himself: “Diesen frommen Starrsinn finden wir nicht selten bei solchen Ärzten, die weniger nach dem Buch als aus ihrem eigene Wesen heraus zu heilen suchen, und in der Tat ist es manchmal so, als ob gewisse Mittel unter ihren Händen erst wahrhaft wirksam würden” (178). The uncle’s magic was a source of entertainment; it also had the power to temporarily restore youth. His father’s magic was a source of healing for the physical body.

The third type of magic is poetry, which is meant for the healing of the soul and spirit. Poetry is like the magical words of the uncle. Carossa was introduced early to poems his mother had copied down. At the Gymnasium he finds poetry to be an escape: poets “... wußten um ein Reich unermeßlicher Freiheit, worin Lehrer, Schüler, Rügen und
Strafen unwichtig wurden und keinerlei Auflehnuung notwendig war” (134). The youth attempts to return to this realm when he is facing difficult experiences at the Gymnasium. He looks for a poem that will fit his circumstances, as if the poems themselves are the magical words for a particular situation (142). Eventually Carossa makes a shaky attempt at poetry by imitation:

Es war, als hätte ich ein feines nachhaltiges Heilgift in mich aufgenommen.... Ein geistiges Pilokarpin trieb das Blut geschwinder durch die Zellen; die Flügel, die sich das Kind gewünscht hatte, die Zauberworte, die der sterbende Magier ihm schuldig geblieben war, hier glaubte ich sie erreicht. (224)

The correlation among the three realms of “Zauber,” medicine and poetry is evident in this statement. The three are distinct in their purpose, but similar in their essence. Failing to understand the skill required in each of these arts, the boy has attempted up to this point to gain access to these realms by imitation.

The attempts at art by imitation were near disasters. Carossa tried to reproduce his uncle’s tricks by wearing the cape and waving the wand, emulating his actions, but the result was failure. Later, he tried to do what he thought he saw his father doing, but he lacked the necessary skill to distinguish the sounds in the sick boy’s chest and to determine just how much medicine to dispense. In the first case, he was more confident that he knew what he was doing. In the second, he was simply
unwilling to admit that he was incompetent to correctly assess the boy’s condition.

In both cases, Carossa’s failure became evident. In the first case, to have his belief ripped from him, to have his worldview exposed as so much fallacy was more than painful. He could not readily accept it. His belief ebbed, but only temporarily. It was not long before he again returned to the tools that would help him to believe, by looking and playing the part. But the belief could not be sustained, and the result was disillusionment.

That attitude is conveyed throughout the works. The first time the author had a sense that the “magical” world is a farce is after riding with the postilion: he was spellbound by the scene, where he seemed to be the one floating, “... und irgendwo in der Unendlichkeit flog das Wort Ogolür” (18), that is, the “Zauberwort” of “die Forelle” (14). His desire to run across the water remains: “... ich hatte über die Loisach laufen wollen” (18). When he hears the music and is aware of other motion, “[d]a verlor sich das Trügende, das Wasser floß wieder...” (18). Here Carossa breaks the illusion for the reader. The adult writer makes the reader acknowledge with him that it is only imagination. If the boy does believe in the magical, the adult writer has forgotten that. When the boy comes back to his home, though, he indicates that he already realizes that the whole world of the magical is a sham: “Ich aber, ohne zu
überlegen, . . . log aus Herzensgrund: 'Ogolûr! Ogolûr! Ich fürchte mich nicht! Über die Loisach bin ich gelaufen. Bei den weißen Hirschen bin ich gewesen’” (19). Not only does he include walking across the river, his once desire and thought at the moment while on the bank, but he embellishes even that. The reaction from his friend “die Forelle” reveals that she, too, knows that the magical world is not real (19). She is territorial about her “knowledge.” When the child Carossa claims to have the same secret knowledge, she exacts revenge by withholding information from him. For her, the magical is a means of escape, but also a means of feeling special, and even superior in some way to the others.

The boy had been waiting for “Erleuchtung,” (19), that secret knowledge that others seemed to have. Now, he has a sudden insight. But the insight is not what he had expected. It is, merely, that the magical world is really just a lie. Carossa uses the girl’s own words against her. The secret knowledge is merely the knowledge that one is presenting illusions to others. In order to protect the secret, one must deceive others. He learns the illusionist’s tactic from Eva: “Sehen Sie mir in die Augen, meine Herrschaften, so betrûge ich Sie mit den Händen! Sehen Sie mir auf die Hände, so betrûge ich Sie mit den Augen ...' . . .” (68).
Carossa's disillusionment is seen in how he describes his uncle's tricks. His uncle's world is one of illusion, one that entertained temporarily but was of no lasting value. The author begins to describe through the child's eyes the magical evening with his uncle, and participates in the illusion as he reports the ventriloquist's effect as "[e]in kläglicher Ton" that "antwortete vom Ofen her" (44). The author then breaks the illusion of his uncle's ability. Even though Carossa wants to recall the show his uncle planned for him as spell-binding, he is unable to maintain the illusion. He describes the scene further: "Eine sehr leise Musik, die wohl von einer verborgenen Spieldose herkam, begann zu tönen" (45). The origin of the sound has been identified with a plausible, logical explanation. In Verwandlungen, Carossa often mentions Hugo employing "Bauchreden" to create an effect. He demystifies the magical again by not merely describing the effect but revealing the source of the effect. Instead of bringing the reader into the world that he is describing, Carossa breaks the illusion for the reader, demonstrating that he understands the situation differently as an adult than as a child; he is no longer fooled by it. The reader is distanced from the event the author describes. The author draws back the curtain beforehand, so that the reader sees along with the adult, instead of sensing with the young child, what the outcome is. By doing so, he removes the wonder from the story.
The description of the scene with his uncle displays well the ambivalence of the author with respect to the magical. That ambivalence began in the author’s early years. Just as “die Forelle” reacted strongly when her fantasy was exposed as non-reality, so does the child Carossa when Eva tries to explain that the “magical” is really an illusion: “Ich merkte, wie mein Glaube schwand, und fühlte zugleich den äußersten Haß gegen die ungebete Aufklärerin . . .” (68). But the young boy is reticent to accept Eva’s explanation, and continues to embrace the idea of the magical. And the adult Carossa has as much difficulty as the child Carossa accepting the denial of the magical.

On the one hand, the magical world is only an illusion. In the above quote, the author writes: “. . . hier glaubte ich sie erreicht” (224). The statement indicates the contrary. Had he written that he had actually attained it, and not just “believed” he had attained it, he would give evidence that the world he was looking for actually existed. But the view the author holds does not coincide with what he has actually experienced.

On the other hand, the author presents the view that there is hope that the magical world does exist. One must find one’s sphere. His uncle, his father, and he himself all had different spheres of art. Carossa exhibits his optimism by writing his autobiography with the hope that by it he could recreate his previous years. When he writes, he brings
himself back to his childhood. And yet, it is not his real childhood to which he returns. It is a substitute childhood, replacing the one he wishes he had had. This childhood he identifies with his own, much as he identified the "tote Arm" with the one he later saw in the church. No matter that they were not alike in every respect:

Phantasie hatte ihr Werk vollendet: jenes unseelige weggeworfene Glied aus der Gerümpelkiste und das fromm geschmückte hier im gläsernen Schrein, schon waren sie eins in mir geworden, und ich wußte, daß ich mir künftig das eine nur noch als das andere denken würde. Das war ein großer neuer Besitz; ich beschloß, ein Geheimnis daraus zu machen, auch vor mir selber, und der Wirklichkeit nicht weiter nachzuforschen. (106)

Carossa similarly avoids reality when he meets Line, his professor's housekeeper. Hugo compares Line's beauty with the legendary Phryna. The discussion is apparently enough for Carossa to identify the Line with Phryna; when Line walks into the room, Carossa says, "Ach, nur die Phryna" (243). Carossa then begins to glorify, almost deify Line, so that "[s]chließlich suchte ich mir einzubilden, daß sie alles nur in höherem Auftrag tue, um die Herzen derer zu prüfen, denen sie diente . . ." (247).

The ability to identify two different objects is something that he apparently learned from his parents. Carossa had two sisters by the name of Stephanie: the first one died; the next daughter born was also given the name Stephanie. He asserts that he is able to keep the matter
of the arms a secret, even from himself. Is he keeping the information secret from his memory or from his intellect?

By confessing the secret in his autobiography, Carossa reveals his inability to do either. To keep a secret from oneself is only possible if one is divided, if one is denying something, suppressing the information from consciousness. Carossa makes no claim that the two arms are really the same, but that they are identical by virtue of his imagination. Fantasy fuses the two arms. Likewise, the author's purpose for using fantasy in the present case is to be able to unite his childhood story with the story of the protagonist. The imagination about his childhood would then be fused with the real experience: whatever can draw one's attention to the imagined experience can be considered one with the experience, so that one's memory becomes a fusion of the two. Carossa writes that it is

... unmöglich ..., auch nur einen Tag seines eigenen Lebens genau so zu schildern, wie man ihn erlebte: unter den Händen verwandelt sich ihm alles, man erzählt plötzlich Dinge, die man in dieser Weise nie erfahren hat und was das Schönste ist: diese neuersonnenen Erlebnisse verwachsen mit dem Alten Wirklichen zu so unaufloslichen Einheiten, daß man beim Durchlesen gar nicht mehr im stande ist zu sagen, wo das wahrhaft Erlebte aufhört und das Erfundene anfängt. (Briefe 1: 94)

The result is “... daß man unmerklich zu dem wird, was man künstlerisch darstellt ...” (Carossa, Briefe 2: 435). For Carossa, “[d]as im literarischen Werk neugewonnene Leben erscheint als das eigentliche Leben, als höhere Wahrheit” (Weber 104).
Carossa's manner of allowing his imagination to direct the writing of his autobiography mirrors the experience of his caricature of Reisinger that appears "wie von selber" (82). Describing his trip home after an eventful day at school, he assesses that "... der Fuß ... lenkte wie von selber auf einen Umweg ..." (82). It would seem that words likewise have the power to express themselves, that the author is merely the instrument of the words. Thus, Carossa does not really claim responsibility for the outcome of his autobiography. He makes no effort and sees no need to search for reality; reality does not matter as much as one's belief. Carossa remains consistent in avoiding reality, admitting his resignation after running out of other alternatives: "So bliebe nichts übrig, als die Wirklichkeit zu befragen" (241). Reality is his last choice.

He demonstrates in his autobiography that he still prefers the other options, since he continues to fuse the events of adult life with his childhood. One example of this is the story of Line. He draws it from a second-hand story of a servant girl that he had recorded in his 1925 diary (TB 2: 4.XI.1925). He combines this story with that of "... Jole, das dienende Mädchen. Ihr Name ist griechisch, ... im Altertum würde man etwas Göttliches an ihr gespürt haben" (TB 2: 30.IX.1925). He speaks of the lowly work she must do, musing "... zuweilen ist es so, als tue sie dies alles freiwillig, um die Herzen derjenigen zu prüfen, denen sie dient" [TB 2: 30.IX.1925]. The author's glorification of the housekeeper
is transferred to Verwandlungen as "[s]chließlich suchte ich mir einzubilden, daß sie alles nur in höherem Auftrag tue, um die Herzen derer zu prüfen, denen sie diente . . ." (247). However, in spite of Carossa's claim of apparent identification of the two spheres of imagination and reality, he shows that he has not been able to fully convince himself of the reality of the imitation.

Carossa uses the word "Zauber" and its various forms like a mantra, hoping to accomplish what the fairy tale writers of the romantic era also hoped to achieve as they sought to write the fairy tale that would make illusion reality. In their case, fairy tale writing was not a reflection of their world, but an attempt to create the world. In the same way, Carossa's writing of "Zauber" is not the reflection of the true world, but wishful thinking on his part. His uncle, "der Zauberer," and Carossa's friend, "die Forelle," each had their own word that would open up the magical world to them. For Carossa, that word is "Zauber." He wants to believe that when he was a child, so many incidents in his life were magical. That they were less than that has little bearing on his story. He wants it to have been that way, that is what matters in the telling of this story.

The generation for which he wrote was of the same mindset. Recall Günther's statement: "In den Jahren nach 1933 und im Zweiten Weltkrieg fanden Ungezählte bei ihm Stärkung und Trost. Jüngere und
künftige Generationen können nicht mehr ermessn, was seine Lauterkeit damals bedeutete” (393). The surprising word in the quote is “Lauterkeit,” since Carossa is re-writing his childhood in Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend.

In any autobiography, it is important that one be aware not only of what is said, but how it is said. In addition, one can look at what is not said. It is this latter point that shall be attended to first here. In the case of Carossa, it is far more what he does not say than what he says that triggers suspicion about the works. The circumstances surrounding his birth are not even mentioned. That, of course, provokes the question, why not? Vogt writes: “Was kommt zur Sprache? Die lapidaren Lebensfragen, die jeden angehen und mit denen keiner fertig wird: Geburt, Wachstum und Blühen, Krankheit und Tod . . .” (108). Such a statement contradicts Vogt’s earlier assertion that Carossa’s autobiographical works deal with topics that “. . . zwar für den Dichter noch wirksam waren, aber doch abgeschlossen hinter ihm lagen” (106). The question is really whether the whole matter of his birth and childhood was behind him after all. Carossa’s desire to write his book to appeal to a larger audience spurred him to the conclusion: “. . . es sollen nur Schicksale erzählt werden, wie sie in jedem Leben vorkommen können” (TB 1: 28.II.1918). Keeping in mind that it is virtually impossible to write a story in which every event could happen in every
person’s life — merely by naming even one sibling, or the occupation of
the father, it excludes any number of people — one must ask if that is
truly the main reason Carossa omits such a significant fact.

He shows himself as being more typical than he was by ignoring
his illegitimate birth. Though the circumstances of his own birth cannot
be construed to be his fault, they are something he seeks to keep hidden.
It is of interest to note that by the time he wrote the first book, Carossa
also had an illegitimate son. Would the mention of it and any negative
reactions have reflected badly on him? Might the sting of his own
illegitimacy have been exacerbated by feelings of guilt in bringing the
same shame on his own son? The final version of *Eine Kindheit* differs
significantly from the first version with regard to his attitude about his
birth:

> Auf einem Konzeptblatt mit ersten Notizen zu dem Buch
> Eine Kindheit heißt es: ... meine Mutter erzählte mir später
> oft, es sei an einem herrlichen Wintertag bei klarem Himmel
gewesen. Sie gebar mich unter Furcht und Sorge; das
>Gefühl, daß mein Werden etwas sei, was sie verbergen
>müsse, scheint nicht ohne Einwirkung auf mich gewesen zu
>sein; die Neigung mich abzusondern, mich den Blicken der
>Menschen zu entziehen, scheint von daher zu kommen. ...
>(Briefe 1: 181)

As Falkenstein correctly mentions, Carossa had, at one time, considered
publishing *Eine Kindheit* anonymously (37). However, Carossa’s
statement: “Ein biographisches Werk müßte eigentlich anonym
erscheinen” (TB 1: 9.VI.1915) appears early in the writing of *Eine
Kindheit, almost seven years before this book was finally published. By that time, it had taken on a different character from what he had written at the beginning of the project. The very personal disclosure about his feelings had been expunged from the document, so there was no need to publish his autobiography without his name. Furthermore, for the first several printings, Carossa passed the work off as being the story of an acquaintance from the war. Never mind that the protagonist had Carossa’s own birth date. The ruse was finally dropped, but the author had still eradicated enough information to make it “safe” for himself.

Consider, further, the exclusion of the fact of his sister’s death, as well as the birth and death of yet another sister. Carossa mentions only one sister, whose birth he places at about his tenth year. Death is not absent from his story, since he includes the death of the woman in the room whose body he views as his father is trying to help. His uncle dies, but his uncle is older, not the small child his sister was. Thus it is not death itself that Carossa avoids. He does not, however, allow death to come too near to his person. One can see a great difference in the treatment of death in the third volume of his autobiography, where he includes his sister’s death. The “idealism” of the earlier years has been stripped away in favor of a more realistic presentation of life. Ingrid Aichinger explores in part the dearth of close relationships in Carossa’s autobiography; it is not that the protagonist has few relationships, but
"... jedes Abweichen Carossas von seinem Vorsatz, 'unvermischt und frei zu bleiben' führt immer zur Erkenntnis, daß er 'keinem Wesen allzu nah kommen' könne, ohne es sich zu 'entfremden'" ("Erinnerung" 399). The same is true of death. If Carossa keeps death at arm's length, he can deal with it. In other words, he avoids that for which he has no answers. Thus the obvious discrepancies do not, in this case, support the case for a truly fictional account. They point to self-preservation on the part of the author.

Another example of protecting himself is the improbable and awkward incident where he meets Lola again, "eine stadtberühmte Persönlichkeit" (196), who had kept the blunder regarding their first encounter confidential. The second time they meet, she apparently asks him to perform an abortion. Imagine her going to a lung specialist for this request, even though she did not know who he was until they conversed: "... keines wußte zunächst, wer sich vor ihm befand; ... erst im Gange des Gesprächs erkannten wir einander" (201). He asserts that his initial hesitancy to perform "ein Art Freundschaftsdienst" is overcome when he sees it as an opportunity to return the favor of keeping a confidence (201). The oblique reference of performing a "Freundschaftsdienst" may be part of his veiled confession of "die größten gefährlichsten Dinge" told "mit aller Unschuld"
(TB 1: 15.V.1915). His lack of forthrightness in the autobiography stands in contrast to the frankness in his diary regarding his attitude about doctors who perform abortions. The following quote from Carossa’s diary was written in 1927, the same year he finished the Verwandlungen manuscript:


The mixed message here is one of condemnation of doctors as a whole, but acquittal for the individual. It can be read as a defense of his own action that he was reluctant to admit. In the autobiography, he has made the situation seem so improbable that it is difficult to believe. Thus the author cloaks his admission in innuendo and improbability, in order to achieve the affect of harmony and confession where both are lacking.

The author is deceived by his own creation. Carossa’s comment “Es könnte alles wahr sein” (Kampmann-Carossa 291) reveals a certain naiveté about reality. C. S. Lewis writes that “... real things are not
simple. They look simple, but they are not” (Christianity 46). How much more then is this the case, not with things, but with life itself? Carossa’s idealistic presentation of childhood comes across as being unreal, and unrealistic. Consider the bat, the “Teufel,” that the child finds in the attic. He uses it in the creche, then retrieves it later when he trades the nativity for the sword. He quickly “... steckte ihn in die Tasche” (97). After arriving at the Gymnasium, he happens to find it again in his jacket. But this is the same jacket he was wearing at the end of the first volume: “Ich suchte in allen meinen Taschen, ohne Gedanken, aber voll unklarer Empfindungen, ... zog ein paar Mandelsterne und versilberte Nüsse hervor, die mir als Wegzeichen mitgegeben waren ...” (106-07). No mention is made at this point that he has a bat in his pocket along with his treats. In addition, it is the same jacket that he is wearing several years later in which he finds the pilocarpine tablets from his father: “Ein leises Geschepper in meiner alten Jacke brachte mich auf das Richtige” (207). It would be unusual that the jacket of a nine-year-old would fit the same boy five or six years later. But Carossa ignores the details in trying to tie the story together. He is attempting to achieve an effect at the cost of credibility.

Carossa’s seeming ability to harmonize his world has provoked a comparison of Carossa with Goethe. Vogt writes: “Seine [Carossas] Texte sind immer ‘Dichtung und Wahrheit’ im Sinne Goethes, der einmal zu
Eckermann said: "Ein Faktum unseres Lebens gilt nicht, insofern es wahr ist, sondern insofern es etwas zu bedeuten hat" (105). Indeed, when Carossa writes that "... in dieser Darstellung eines jugendlichen Lebens ... ist ja alles ohnehin Bekenntnis, freilich fast immer in Dichtung verwandelt, da kann nicht leicht nebenbei noch eine andere Form von Konfession aufkommen ..." (TB 2: 26.XII.1927), it appears that he is merely reformulating Goethe's famous statement in Dichtung und Wahrheit: "[a]lles was daher von mir bekannt geworden, sind nur Bruchstücke einer großen Konfession, welche vollständig zu machen dieses Büchlein ein gewagter Versuch ist" (312). But one significant difference between these two is that Carossa must pull and tug his material to make it fit his pattern.

Carossa, in his youth, has been accused of being an epigone. In Verwandlungen he records the spiteful criticism from his boyhood friend Hugo, words that Hugo soon after retracted. Albrecht Weber maintains that Carossa "[d]en Vorhalt der Epigonalität ... schon 1918 aufgegriffen und entschiedene abgetan [hatte]" (104) with the declaration that "[i]m Reich des allerhöchsten Geistes gibt es nur eine Sprache, und wenn in hundert Jahren einmal Einer kommt, der sie redet, warum soll man sie nicht <erwidern> mit Freude auf sie horchen und sie nachzusprechen suchen? Alles Andere ist Halbheit, Abfall, Quark" (TB 1: 27.II.1918). But a true artist finds his own language for his message, rather than
being content to mimic the works and words of others. Hugo's criticism fits Carossa's autobiography of childhood: "Zu Goethes Zeit mag das himmlisch geklungen haben; jetzt aber ist es ein abgegriffenes Wort, ... Nachäffung, — verstehst du?" (239).

Carossa studiously avoids certain topics that are too difficult to handle in his worldview. He wants to present a fairy-tale world, but he is not even able to do that. In a fairy tale, the magical happens without needing to be explained. But Carossa, stretching plausibility about the reading of the poems in the attic, feels the need to explain: "... ich vermochte diese Handschrift ... mit einiger Mühe zu entziffern; denn Lesen und Schreiben hatte mich die Mutter bereits im fünften Jahre gelehrt" (32). The doubt he casts on his own creation is written into the text so that it becomes difficult, at best, for the reader to accept the pretense.

Vogt compliments Carossa's "... kunstvolles Geweben aus spontaner Erinnerung und gedanklicher Verarbeitung des Erinnerten," including "die Auswahl und Charakterisierung der zahlreichen Nebenfiguren" (105). Frankly, the weaving of the motifs is hard to miss. Carossa is not content to simply present the motif and let the reader put the pieces together. He mentions the link, as if the reader were not able to decipher such an obvious connection: "Es war nicht zum ersten Male, daß ein Gewand mich verwandelte ..." (156), and "je länger ich schrieb,
um so mehr verwandelte ich mich in den Verfasser, so wie früher wohl in einen König oder Zauberer" (185). What he lacks in subtlety, he overdoes in repetition. The repeated use of the snake motif, for example, makes it seem as if the country were overrun with snakes. Carossa’s work illustrates the truth of Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach’s aphorism: “Der Künstler versäume nie, die Spuren des Schweifes zu verwischen, den sein Werk gekostet hat. Sichtbare Mühe ist zuwenig Mühe” (Aphorismen 33). While Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend appealed to those generations who could identify closely with Carossa’s experience, they fail to portray the broader human experience. In an attempt to get his point across, Carossa overwrites.

He does not re-create his own childhood; instead, he creates a foreign world. He is still convinced in his own mind that he can fuse the two worlds of reality and imagination, as he did the two arms. While the many colors in the work may be a happy thought in the midst of the grayness of war, Carossa does not present satisfying memories that are his. Because the work is an illusion, it cannot satisfy for long, not any more than his uncle’s tricks were able to sustain the appearance of youth. The reader cannot identify with the protagonist, although the author makes claims of writing the most “intime Geschichte” (Brieße 1: 166). It is like trying to get close to his uncle, who uses tricks to keep people away. Young Carossa received the message that his uncle wanted
to talk to him before he died, but Carossa was off imitating the
illusionist, instead of being at his bedside of his dying uncle; in the same
way, he is off doing more "magic" tricks instead of confronting reality.
Thus, his work is, ironically, an illustration of something Carossa
apparently sought to avoid, since he has admonished himself in his diary
by quoting Goethe: "Wer allgemein sein will, wird nichts; die
Einschränkung ist dem Künstler so notwendig als jedem, der aus sich
etwas Bedeutendes bilden will" (TB 1: 9.VI.1915).
Conclusion

The autobiographies of childhood by the four authors Fontane, Ebner-Eschenbach, Schnitzler, and Carossa allow the reader to see the adaptability of the form. The literary autobiography of childhood maintains the structure of the literary autobiography, particularly the teleological aspect and the oscillation between the past and the present. Special concerns regarding memory must be considered, since the child perceives events differently than an adult, based on lack of cognitive skills and lack of experience. Nonetheless, integrity in writing is essential to producing a good childhood autobiography, one that speaks to others regarding their humanity.

The autobiography of childhood is distinct from the autobiography, based on characteristics produced by limiting the number of years the author covers. The forward movement of the narration is greater in an autobiography of childhood than an autobiography because of the greater interval between the narrated time and the time of narration. That increased interval also emphasizes the teleological aspect of the autobiography. The expression of one's life through the events limited to childhood requires a greater degree of distillation of the material presented; this concentration results in a poeticization of one's life.
The poeticization is one aspect of the literariness of the autobiography of childhood. That is not to say, however, that the autobiography of childhood is best represented by the “poetic” childhood that Coe considers. Indeed, the diversity of these four works indicates that the form of the autobiography of childhood is versatile and accommodating to a variety of approaches. Although the poetic childhood may be one expression of the childhood autobiography, it is only one.

Following Starobinski’s model of the elegiac and picaresque autobiography, where the past is preferred for the elegiac writer, but the past is “deficient” for the picaresque writer (292), Carossa and Schnitzler demonstrate the elegiac and picaresque forms, respectively. Both of these writers see a break with the past, but have opposite reactions to that break. Carossa’s two works, Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend, demonstrate how the extreme elegiac autobiography of childhood opposes the form itself, since it opposes the teleological perspective. Schnitzler, Fontane, and Ebner-Eschenbach were more prepared to face the future than was Carossa. His extreme elegiac portrayal of life, despairing of the present, and retreating to the past, is nearly antithetical to the autobiography of childhood, which accentuates the teleological perspective. Neither the extreme elegiac nor the extreme
picaresque autobiography of childhood is compatible with the form, since both perspectives oppose the teleological perspective.

Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach, whose autobiographies of childhood bear the same name, are examples of the moderate form of the autobiography of childhood. One of the differences between Fontane and Ebner-Eschenbach is that Fontane is unable to resolve the dichotomy of principle versus humanity. His heart and his head are pulled in opposite directions. While he sees the humane life more appealing, he realizes that the principled existence is necessary and good. Despite the lack of complete resolution for Fontane, writing *Meine Kinderjahre* is a means to recuperation, and renewed literary production for him. Ebner-Eschenbach, though, has found resolution of the conflict regarding her position in life, and displays that contentment in *Meine Kinderjahre*. The form of the childhood autobiography gives Ebner-Eschenbach the opportunity to avoid embarrassment for her family; but it suits the message which she seeks to convey, namely that “Alles wiederholt sich im Leben” (*Kinderjahre* 103). She illustrates this by means of a pattern of deaths and departures, as well as showing that she sees herself as a child again, but this time a child of her Heavenly Father.

Schnitzler’s *Jugend in Wien*, although portraying the picaresque attitude, both in terms of the episodic arrangement of events and his negative view of the past, reveals that the author understands that there
are consequences to life. Thus, the teleological perspective of life is at least sought, though not found, in Schnitzler’s life. Schnitzler’s autobiography of youth is a confession and an attempt to atone for his past, particularly for his hypocrisy, snobbism, and pretentiousness. But his rejection of any notion of God results in his inability to find his way out of pretense.

Carossa reveals by what he omits that his intention is that Eine Kindheit and Verwandlungen einer Jugend be considered autobiography. These two works, which border on fiction, demonstrate the necessity of distinguishing between autobiography and autobiographical fiction. Integrity is essential to autobiography, whereas autobiographical fiction grants unlimited leeway for the author. Lacking the integrity to face the issues of his life in a straightforward manner, Carossa imagines that he is able to create the childhood that he would like to have lived. He misuses the magical, in essence, when he hits Eva in the face with the “Stab.” He does not say here the “Zauberstab;” he does not admit it himself; it is Eva who says: “’Nun hast du mich mit dem Zauberstab geschlagen.’” (68). He misuses the instrument in his youth, and also in the writing of the story by overwriting. The reader can say with Eva, “‘Das ist schlimm’” (68).

Far from fitting a particular mold, these autobiographies of childhood have displayed a wide variety of form and content, and
"... adm[i]t us to experiences other than our own" (Lewis, Experiment 139). To be able to appreciate the differences in the texts, one must refrain from imposing meaning on the text. C. S. Lewis differentiates between the "many" and the "few" by pointing out that "... the many use art and the few receive it. The many behave in this like a man who talks when he should listen or gives when he should take" (Experiment 19). To be fair to the artist or the author, "[w]e must look, and go on looking till we have certainly seen exactly what is there" (Lewis, Experiment 19). If we insist on imposing our views on a work, it is we who will be impoverished, for we will then see only our narcissistic reflection. Only if we allow the author to speak for himself, and take care not to limit ourselves excessively by drawing the bounds of childhood autobiography too narrowly, can we expect to be rewarded.
Works Cited

Primary Sources

Theodor Fontane:


Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach:


Arthur Schnitzler:


Hans Carossa:


Other:

*Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments nach der deutschen Übersetzung Dr. Martin Luther's.* Trans. Martin Luther. N.Y: E. Hauffmann, n.d. (Cited as Lutherbibel.)


**Secondary Sources**


Walter-Schneider, Margaret. "Im Hause der Venus: Zu einer Episode Fontanes Meine Kinderjahre. Mit einer Vorbemerkung über die Interpretierbarkeit dieses autobiographischen Romans."


