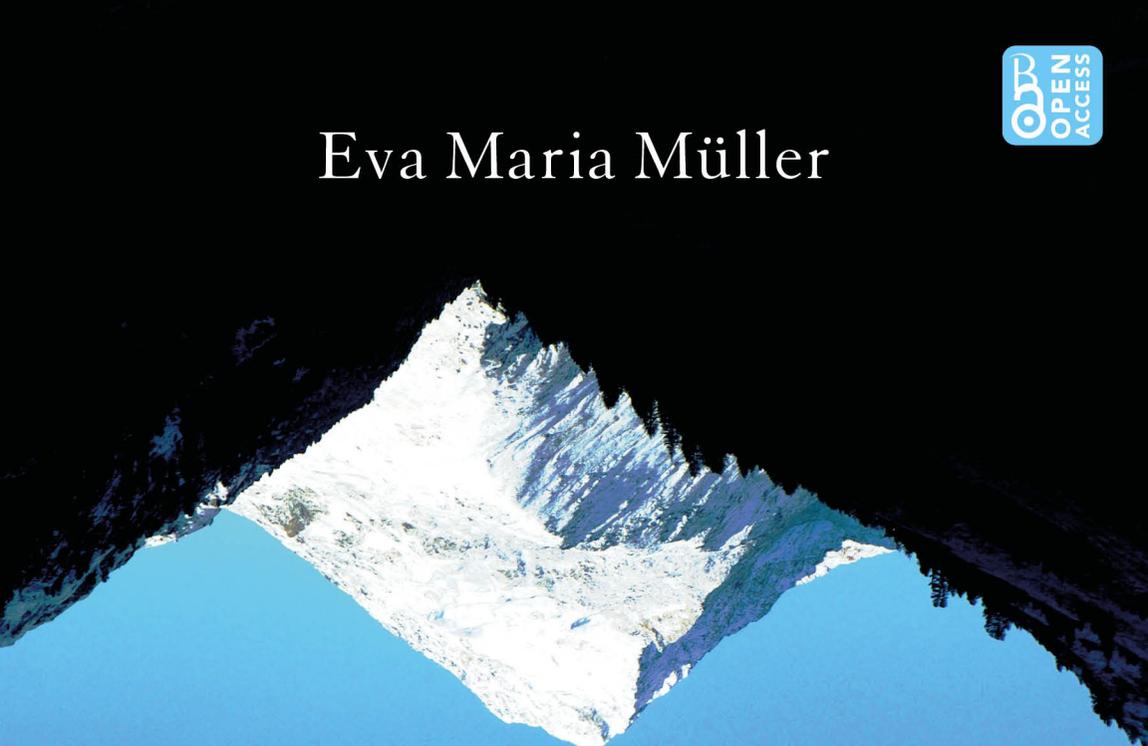


Eva Maria Müller

A photograph of a mountain landscape, showing a snow-capped peak and a valley, framed by dark, silhouetted trees in the foreground. The image is oriented upside down relative to the rest of the cover.

REWRITING
ALPINE
ORIENTALISM

Postcolonial Readings in Canadian and
Austrian Mountain Tourism

Rewriting Alpine Orientalism

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*Postcolonial Readings in Canadian
and Austrian Mountain Tourism*

Eva-Maria Müller

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*For my grandfather,
Matthias Hauser (1936–2020),
who dedicated his life to mountain community.*

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this book engages in: an upsetting and decentering of dominant viewpoints (be they discursive, disciplinary, literary or geographical) that sustain perceptions of mountains. My gratitude goes out to everyone who has supported me in looking at mountains Otherwise and who helped me stay sane, happy and healthy over the past years. While all errors are mine, this ascent is ours.

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This work contains numerous references that were originally printed in German. Unless an English-language version is cited, the translation is my own.

Introduction

CONQUER THE ALPS! What sounds like a battle cry for imperial land grabbing was, in fact, the name of an international ski and snowboard contest hosted in Tyrol, Austria, between 2009 and 2019, advertised widely across the town of Innsbruck. The festival logo draws upon the conquest of the Alps and displays symbols of occupation by flagging iconic peaks. Every year for over a decade, the local organizers of the event annually summoned the free-ride and party crowd by alluding to an availability of mountains in a contest that crowns its winner ‘the Conqueror of the Alps.’¹ While the festival may have come to an end with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the imperial ascriptions to mountains and their symbolic and economic exploitation persist. Ischgl, the Austrian resort town infamous for being a ‘super-spreader’ site in the early days of the pandemic, which clearly highlighted the impact of mountain tourism on the planet, continues to employ imperial language in its promotion of mountains. In the summer of 2023, the Ischgl Ironbike competition, one of the most challenging mountainbike marathon races in Europe that has taken place since 1995, still crowns winners ‘MTB king’ and ‘MTB queen’ in a combined scoring with the M³ Montafon Mountain Bike Marathon.² The organizers promise royal titles and highly prized trophies to those ‘with a bit of luck and a lot of power.’³ The casual dishing out of imperial power becomes evident in the broader social media summer campaign of 2023, in which everyone hiking in Ischgl is phonetically consecrated a “high king”. Ischgl marketing may be high in imperial semantics, but it conceals the ubiquitous buy-in to mountain sport that was more obvious in the promotion of the *Conquer the Alps* festival. Not only did the festival poster evoke alpine treasures with the festival logo sitting firmly upon a mountain-like pile of exposed minerals but the event was promoted on ATM machines across the region, indicating that ‘the capitalist drive that lies at the heart of empire’

¹ ‘Conquer the Alps’, Axamer Lizum, accessed 12 August 2019. <https://www.axamer-lizum.at/de/conquer-the-alps.html> (site discontinued).

² ‘Be the Queen | Be the King’, Ischgl, accessed 4 September 2023. <https://www.ischgl.com/en/Events/Top-Events/Ischgl-Ironbike/Race-details/Silvretta-MTB-King-Queen>.

³ Ibid.

likewise keeps mountains in a tight grip.⁴ The lesson of mountain mass tourism is that money is made whenever mountains are symbolically conquered. Indeed, tourism research demonstrates the profitability of the business with mountains: not only did mountain tourism generate between 100 and 140 billion US dollars in 2014 but 20 per cent of global tourist activity occurs in mountain spaces.⁵

At the same time, and akin to the distribution of wealth along colonial power lines, fewer people benefit from the symbolic extraction of alpine riches, and more pay the price for the commercialization of mountains. These inequalities surrounding alpine riches are not new; neither is the idea of cashing in a profit from mountains, for mountains have a long history of being sources of wealth. During the Renaissance, for instance, silver unearthed from the mountains of Tyrol was traded on the markets of Venice, eventually adorning dynasties and cathedrals across Europe.⁶ Mountains have long been valued for the material resources they can provide – coal, minerals, water, lumber and so on. What is new is that trade no longer exclusively involves the materiality of mountains. What mountains have come to signify now is also an article of exchange. A billion-dollar industry has developed that generates wealth by selling what mountains symbolize. In the parlance of the festival, to be conqueror of the Alps is to become, yourself, a highly priced commodity: a living instance of mountain symbolic capital.⁷

The ecological, social and cultural impact of mountain tourism's symbolic capital on mountain regions and peoples is significant. Extensive tourism has made mountain ecosystems prone to air pollution, changes in water and the alteration of landscape. It has left riverbeds dry after snowless winters and exposed animals to the cruelty of untrained tourist hunters, whose care is for the trophy and not the prey. Laws are bent and broken in the hope of selling nature reserves to the highest bidder, while the high cost of living drives locals out of their homes. Mountain tourism has produced off-season ghost towns

⁴ Helga Ramsey-Kurz and Melissa Kennedy, 'Introduction', in *Uncommon Wealths in Postcolonial Fiction* (Leiden: Brill/Rodopi, 2017), 1. I am grateful to Helga Ramsey-Kurz for an inspiring conversation on the visibility of wealth in postcolonial literature, which provided stimulus for the introduction of this chapter.

⁵ Bernard Debarbieux, Mari Oiry Varacca and Gilles Rudaz, 'Challenges and Opportunities for Tourism Development in Mountain Regions', in *Tourism in Mountain Regions: Hopes, Fears and Realities*, ed. Bernard Debarbieux et al. (Geneva: UNIGE, CDE, SDC, 2014), 9.

⁶ Mark Häberlein, *The Fuggers of Augsburg: Pursuing Wealth and Honor in Renaissance Germany* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 35, 189.

⁷ Stephen Slemon, 'Climbing Mount Everest: Postcolonialism in the Culture of Ascent', in *Postcolonizing the Commonwealth: Studies in Literature and Culture*, ed. Rowland Smith (Kitchener: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 62.

harbouring high-priced seasonal and weekend houses and left mountain communities struggling to find their place and identity in a drugged circle of endless vacation and alpine kitsch. It has led to the commodification of alpine traditions and a fossilization of culture that limits its organic development. It has led to the objectification of alpine bodies and to aborted pregnancies, to avoid babies being born during peak tourist season. There is therefore a pressing need, now, to lower in what ways we can the impact of mass tourism on mountain peoples and regions, and part of this work necessitates an unpacking of mountain tourism's symbolic capital. That is why this book discusses how this symbolic capital is actuated and resisted in mountain representation.

This study seeks to understand the role that representation plays in writing and rewriting the symbolic capital of mountain mass tourism. It does so based on the conviction that representation not only matters, but matters most, in establishing and challenging mountain mass tourism as a cultural economy. It rests on the contention that 'travel writing has constructed an image of the world' and that tourism is an economy built on 'retelling outmoded stories, reproducing stereotypes' and 'replicating fantasy'.⁸ Such stories play a central role in producing an arena of alpine conquest that saturates travel narratives as well as tourist brochures. In the same way that literature organizes mountains into the symbolic order of travel, literature also holds the potential to challenge that order. 'Literatures', Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin famously argue, 'demonstrate most clearly the political and cultural agency achieved by writers' in confronting, transforming and revealing a cultural reality.⁹ The intricate relationship between texts and cultural realities, between writing and rewriting, and between discourse and counter-discourse has been a central concern in postcolonial studies. It comes as no surprise, then, that postcolonial theory is a helpful tool with which to approach this study's analysis of representation in mountain tourism.

This study uses different critical methodologies to unpack the writing and rewriting of mountain travel destinations. Many of them are drawn from postcolonial studies, and will be explained as the book proceeds. Two, however, require some general explanation here: the analysis of discourse and counter-discourse. When I use "discourse" I do so as explored by Michel Foucault, 'sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an

⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), endleaves; Edward M. Bruner, *Culture on Tour* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 21.

⁹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 203.

individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.¹⁰ While I will, at times, point at the hegemonies that assign power to a particular set of assumptions, my focus lies on the rhetoric of the discourse that literally produces mountains as travel destinations. I am chiefly interested in the ‘panoply of words and phrases used’ by travellers to speak about mountains, and in the repetitions and commonalities of certain elements of literary production that emerge from the experience of mountain travel during what David Spurr calls ‘the modern period of European colonialism (roughly 1870–1960)’.¹¹ I see my study on discourse as a kind of genealogy of the rhetorical functions that operate across the range of nineteenth-, twentieth- and sometimes even twenty-first-century contexts of mountain travel and I am mindful about the discourse’s principal organization around exclusion, which makes what is being said seem self-evident while rendering ‘the normalized quiet of unseen power’ invisible.¹² All of these properties of writing mountains are captured in this study through the focal lens of colonial, or rather, Orientalist discourse – a discourse involving markets, possessions, penetrations and an abundance of imaginative projections that create what they describe.

If “discourse” refers to the gestures in language that exercise epistemic violence, then “counter-discourse” situates itself as an Other to that domination. When I use “counter-discourse” in this book, I use it as defined by Richard Terdiman, who coined the term ‘to characterize the theory and practice of symbolic resistance.’¹³ He explains that while ‘the power of a dominant discourse lies in the codes by which it regulates understanding of the social world’, counter-discourse ‘seek[s] to detect and map such naturalized protocols and to project their subversion.’¹⁴ This makes counter-discourse a site from which cultural and social change can occur. As this study analyses not only the discourses that create alpine tourist destinations but also some of the counter-discursive interventions in mountain tourism, it engages with the means by which literature writes an ‘index of resistance, a perceived imperative to rewrite’ the text of continuing

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 80.

¹¹ Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), 21; David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 1.

¹² Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1997), 12; Edward Said, ‘The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals’, *The Nation*, 17/24 September 2001, 31.

¹³ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 67.

¹⁴ Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 149.

domination.¹⁵ While all contemporary texts read in this study stand as ‘symbolic resistance’ against the dominant discourse of mountain travel, they also, and perhaps more insightfully, offer alternative forms of narrating, telling and knowing mountains through their critical rewriting.¹⁶

At this stage, it is important to mention that the way I use “postcolonial” is very specific: as ‘a way of reading.’¹⁷ I consider it neither in its specific ontology nor its chronology, but as a way of reading the continuing engagement with representational power as it befalls mountain spaces. To see postcolonial criticism as a ‘distinct set of reading practices’ and in the light of ‘a new and more generally applicable analytical attitude’ allows for the theory’s most enabling tools to be trained against the violence of representation as it hits mountain regions.¹⁸ In this study, “postcolonial” is stripped of some of its already contested obligations and operates as a critical force against the power of representation in mountain travel in times, places and cultures that are not historically or geographically “postcolonial”. While it is the aim of this study to effect a postcolonial reading of mountains, it is important to mention that this study is not in defence of a postcolonial reading in preference over other modes of analysis. Rather, this study is more than a theoretical experiment for yet another application of postcolonial theory: it is an argument for the recognition of particular colonial codifications that have been written into and onto mountain spaces, of postcolonial interventions by writers against the business of mountain tourism, and for a kind of critical reading that can respond to such readings.

Geared towards this overarching aim, I ask: What codes and concepts have been utilized by travel writing to create mountains as a ‘pleasure periphery’?¹⁹ To what extent are the generalizing assumptions that form the discourse on mountain travel an echo of the aspirations of imperial expansion, and where does the tourism industry reiterate imperial images and rhetoric in promoting their business with mountains? What is the instrumental role of writing within an alpine (counter-)discursive field? How do contemporary authors engage in and approach the discursive codifications from the vantage point of a lived

¹⁵ Graham Huggan, *Peter Carey*. Oxford Australian Writers (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁶ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 67.

¹⁷ Bill Ashcroft, ‘Introduction: Spaces of Utopia’, *An Electronic Journal* 2, no. 1 (2012): 1.

¹⁸ Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London: Verso, 1997), 12; Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: New Orientation in the Study of Culture*, trans. Adam Blauhut (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 150.

¹⁹ Louis Turner and John Ash, *Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976).

alpine reality? How do those writers reject, reclaim, revision and rewrite those codifications? In what ways does the literature produced by these writers operate akin to the general idea of postcolonial “writing back”, and where does that writing transcend the postcolonial field, respond to the widespread criticism of an undifferentiated postcolonial critique and map out literary moves that distinctively undermine the hegemonies at work in mountain tourism?²⁰ I take my claim for a postcolonial reading of mountain travel to an extreme when I explore how the postcolonial lens can be trained even onto alpine regions at the heart of Europe. Because the discourse of mountain tourism is globally predicated, and its critical interventions ubiquitous, this study focuses on the particular ways in which literature of the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps shapes the textual nature of mountains.²¹ Such a globalized comparative approach to mountain mass tourism complies with the demands issued by scholars in the fields of tourism and mountain studies since the 1990s, to account for the internationalization of tourism and the globalization of mountain perceptions.²² This is not to evade the fact that some configurations of mountain tourism play out differently in various alpine regions. Rather, it suggests that in the context of mountain mass tourism, overarching discursive realities ‘can be brought into sharper focus through a comparative analysis.’²³

This could easily be a book about postcolonial mountain literature in its widest sense, and I hope it will be beneficial to not only those who are interested in how mountain tourism engages with the literary record in Austria and Canada but also to those who have a particular interest in the literary production of

²⁰ Postcolonial critical theory has frequently been criticized for providing an undifferentiated approach. For a recent survey on this critique, see Birgit Neumann, ‘Methoden postkolonialer Literaturkritik und anderer ideologischer Ansätze’, in *Methoden der literatur- und kulturwissenschaftlichen Textanalyse: Ansätze – Grundlagen – Modellanalysen*, ed. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2010), 271–92; Robert J. C. Young, ‘Postcolonial Remains’, *New Literary History* 43, no. 1 (2012): 19–42.

²¹ When I refer to “the Canadian Rockies”, I refer to a vast number of mountain ranges of the Rocky Mountains north of the US-Canadian border, mostly composed of sedimentary rock such as limestone and shale. My analysis focuses on the representations of travel in the Southern Continental, Central Front and Central Main Ranges of the Rocky Mountains, as well as the Selkirk and Purcell Mountains west of the Rocky Mountain Trench. My use of “the Austrian Alps” denotes the eastern ranges of the Alpine ridge on Austrian terrain and includes the Tyrolean Central Alps, the High and Low Tauern and the Northern Calcareous Alps, mostly composed of limestone, gneiss and slate.

²² Bruno Messerli and J. D. Ives, eds, *Mountains of the World: A Global Priority* (Danforth: Parthenon, 1997); Jon Mathieu, *The Third Dimension: A Comparative History of Mountains in the Modern Era*, trans. Katherine Brun (Cambridge, UK: The White Horse Press, 2011); Anthony Carrigan, *Postcolonial Tourism: Literature, Culture, and the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2011); Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, trans. Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

²³ Carrigan, *Postcolonial Tourism*, 15.

mountain regions around the world. I am curious about the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps for several reasons. The first is historical and addresses the participation of Austrians in developing a tourism infrastructure and promoting mountain sport in the Canadian Rockies. This participation primarily rests on the shoulders of Austrian alpinists Conrad (Konrad) Kain and Hans Gmoser, who took the skills acquired in the Austrian Alps to the Canadian Rockies: Kain served as the first professional guide employed by the Alpine Club of Canada and is nowadays remembered for several first ascents in the Rockies; Gmoser was a driving force in modern Canadian mountaineering, bringing heli-skiing to the Canadian Rockies, and the Canadian Rockies to a world audience through his films.²⁴ Historical connections between the Alps and the Canadian Rockies could arguably also be drawn with the Swiss Alps. But not only have these links been extensively studied, they also say little about the contemporary culture of mass tourism.²⁵ The second reason for an Austro-Canadian rather than a Swiss-Canadian axis is economic: 'a gradual shift of the alpine "gravitational centre" from Switzerland to Austria' took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, making 'Austria the exemplary model for Swiss tourism entrepreneurs.'²⁶ The third reason relates to cultural perception and frequently drawn parallels between the Canadian Rockies and the Austrian Alps in travel literature. Writers visit Tyrol and often exclaim that 'it looks like Canada,' like 'Yukon or the Rocky Mountains,' or they contend that the 'true comparison of the Rockies is, perhaps, not so much with the igneous rock formations of the great Swiss peaks as with the limestone ranges of the Eastern Alps.'²⁷ The

²⁴ Conrad Kain, *Where the Clouds Can Go* (Victoria, BC: Rocky Mountain Books, 2009); Chic Scott, *Pushing the Limits: The Story of Canadian Mountaineering* (Calgary: Rocky Mountain Books, 2000), 168.

²⁵ See Beat Nobs, *Vom Eiger in die Rockies: Berner Oberländer Bergführer im Dienste der Canadian Pacific Railway* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987); PearlAnn Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise: Making Canada's Mountain Parks, 1906-1974* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2014); Stephen Slemmon and Zac Robinson, 'The Shining Mountains,' *Alpinist* 50, Summer (2015): 115-24; Stephen Slemmon and Zac Robinson, 'Hard Time in the Canadian Rockies,' *Canadian Rockies Annual* 1 (2016): 64-73.

²⁶ Jon Mathieu, 'Stereotyper Alpenblick,' *Akademie Aktuell: Zeitschrift der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 3 (2010): 42; Florian Gasser, 'Sie opfern die Alpen,' *ZEIT Online*, 22 November 2012. <http://www.zeit.de/2012/48/Alpen-Tourismus-Oesterreich-Schweiz/komplettansicht>. See also Wolfgang Straub, *Willkommen. Literatur und Fremdenverkehr in Österreich* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 2001).

²⁷ Andreas Lesti, *Oben ist besser als unten: Eine literarische Expedition in die Alpen* (Berlin: Rogner & Bernhard, 2013), 15; L. S. Amery, *Days of Fresh Air: Being Reminiscences of Outdoor Life* (London: William Brendon & Sons Ltd., 1939), 209. The Canadian writers whose works I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3 draw similar comparisons. Thomas Wharton is reminded of Pyramid Mountain when looking at the Nockspitze near Innsbruck, Tyrol, and Angie Abdou captions the photos of her 2016 Innsbruck visit in a social media post with the words 'Very Fernie-like!' and with 'older buildings.' Thomas Wharton, personal communication, 17 April 2014; Angie Abdou, Facebook, 5 December 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/angie.abdou.1>.

final reason, at last, is personal. My study hinges on the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps because these are the mountain regions I know best. I know these mountains not in the way of knowing an Other, but in the way of knowing home. I have lived, studied and worked in these mountains for most of my life. I know them through the bedtime stories my parents told me about mountain giants, dragons and alpine spirits. I know them through the weekend traditions of hikes and a hot meal in the cabin. I know their geological composition and their plant specimens in the way a student of the natural sciences does. I know them by listening to their sounds and stories. Succinctly, I know them as part of my world. This knowledge is represented in the language that I speak and the way in which I approach this study.

In the following chapters I will frequently write in a style that honours this personal investment. Some readers might find this unprofessionally private or frustratingly subjective. And yet, it seems appropriate. There is a personal dimension to critical thinking and a way of knowing oneself that extends into academic writing. This first came to my attention via colonial discourse analysis in the form of a quote by Antonio Gramsci used by Edward Said:

The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory; therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.²⁸

While I continued to build my inventory, I came to understand that my scholarly interest is informed, my way of thinking enriched, by my experience. I also learnt that I would do well to integrate Scott Slovic's approach that scholarship is as much about smells, tastes and actual experiences as it is about intellectual stimulation.²⁹ 'Ecocriticism without narrative,' he explains, 'is like stepping off the face of a mountain.'³⁰ Mountain travellers, as well as readers of postcolonial theory, are aware that they always tread on unstable ground. Similarly, readers of this document will step on – not stumble upon – the ambiguities that are built into mountains as they are into postcolonial theory. Everywhere in this document one will find evidence of ambiguity and evidence for the personal.

²⁸ Antonio Gramsci quoted in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 25.

²⁹ Scott Slovic, *Going Away to Think: Engagement, Retreat, and Ecocritical Responsibility* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008), 28.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

And one will find, in the words of Stephen Slemon, ‘a profound, in my view enabling, incoherence’ in the stories that enshroud mountains.³¹

My purpose here is to advance a postcolonial line of inquiry into the dominant discourse of mountain tourism in Canada and Austria and its critical interventions. When scholars began to interrogate the relationship between mountain studies and postcolonial studies around the year 2000, it was chiefly through mountaineering’s role in the histories of British expansionism. Peter H. Hansen’s ‘Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: British Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire’ (1996) is one of the first studies to acknowledge the symbolic and geographical relevance of mountaineering in staking out British imperial authority, but it does so almost exclusively on the grounds of history – not discourse. This historic approach is maintained in his latest book, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (2013), which historicizes the cultural motivations behind modern man’s ambitions to stand alone atop a summit. Further pioneering connections between the field of postcolonial and mountain studies are made by Stephen Slemon in ‘Climbing Mount Everest: Postcolonialism in the Culture of Ascent’ (2000), ‘The Brotherhood of the Rope: Commodification and Contradiction in the “Mountaineering Community”’ (2008) and later in ‘Tenzing Norgay’s Four Flags’ (2012). All three of Slemon’s contributions begin to map the discursive field of imperial mountaineering, responding to the ‘colonial continuance’ in alpinism and exploring the literariness of mountaineering as sport and community.³² Slemon addresses what adds the language of conquest to the meaning of “mountain”.³³ But in both Hansen’s and Slemon’s indisputably foundational studies, which are continued in important ways by Caroline Schaumann’s *Peak Pursuits: The Emergence of Mountaineering in the Nineteenth Century* (2020) and Julie Rak’s *False Summit: Gender in Mountaineering Non-Fiction* (2021), the imperial lens is always trained on mountaineering, not on mountain travel in a broader sense. One of the first to show that the more casual mountain tourist also perpetuated the glory of empire undercutting the Romantic cult of the sublime was Ann C. Colley with her book *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (2010). A year later, in *The Third Dimension: A Comparative History of Mountains in the Modern Era* (2011), Jon Mathieu

³¹ Stephen Slemon, ‘Afterword’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Graham Huggan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 697.

³² Slemon, ‘Climbing Mount Everest’, 53.

³³ *Ibid.*, 52.

related colonial travel to the knowledge production on mountains, seeing in colonial exploration a confrontation with different mountain perceptions. Jon Mathieu, Eva Bachmann and Ursula Butz continue this line of argumentation in *Majestätische Berge: Die Monarchie auf dem Weg in die Alpen 1760–1910* (*Majestic Mountains: Monarchy on its Way to the Alps*) (2018), demonstrating that mountains can be imperially approached, although not necessarily in a sporting capacity, when they discuss how the presence of monarchs effectively transformed the tourist landscape of the Alps.

All of the above-mentioned studies have been critical in putting mountains on the map of colonial politics and discourse. Yet, they have done so in the safe space of imperial times or places. One of the few who comes close to leaving this setting behind – both in time and place – is Wolfgang Hackl. In *Eingeborene im Paradies: Die literarische Wahrnehmung des alpinen Tourismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (*Natives in Paradise: The Literary Perception of Mountain Tourism in the 19th and 20th Centuries*) (2004), Hackl analyses the discursive and counter-discursive literary strategies that shaped the Austrian Alps in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While Hackl repeatedly resorts to the language of the (post)colonial, he does not fully historicize or conceptualize postcolonial theory for intra-European mountain spaces; not least because of the ‘belated’ arrival of postcolonial theory to German Studies.³⁴

In this analysis, I make the strong methodological assumption that (post)colonial discourse analysis offers valuable insights into the ways that writing shapes mountain tourist destinations irrespective of whether or not these are situated in traditional (post)colonial terrain. This assumption does, however, entail following some basic rules of travel, or, for that matter, mountaineering: I need to know where I am and I need to know where I am going. I need to know what to take and what to leave behind. I approach the topic of mountain travel from a background in English/American studies and the biological

³⁴ Gabriele Dürbeck, ‘Deutsche und internationale Germanistik’, in *Handbuch Postkolonialismus und Literatur*, ed. Dirk Göttsche, Axel Dunker, and Gabriele Dürbeck (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2017), 38. For applications of postcolonial theory to Germanophone literature and culture see Heinz Antor, ‘Postkoloniale Studien: Entwicklungen, Positionen, Perspektiven’, *Sprachkunst: Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft* 23, no. 1 (2002): 115–30; Wolfgang Müller-Funk and Birgit Wagner, *Eigene und andere Fremde: “Postkoloniale” Konflikte im europäischen Kontext* (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 2005); Axel Dunker, ed., *(Post-)Kolonialismus und deutsche Literatur: Impulse der angloamerikanischen Literatur- und Kulturtheorie* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2005); Axel Dunker, *Kontrapunktische Lektüren: Koloniale Strukturen in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2008); Anna Babka and Axel Dunker, eds, *Postkoloniale Lektüren: Perspektivierungen deutschsprachiger Literatur* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2013); Göttsche, Dunker, and Dürbeck, eds, *Handbuch Postkolonialismus und Literatur*.

sciences, yet it is my training as a student of literature and culture that appears most explicitly in the methodology used. My methodological vantage point is at the crossroads of postcolonial, tourism and mountain studies. I draw on the vocabularies and techniques of these three fields of studies, but the assumptions with which I analyse the writings and rewritings of mountain travel significantly affect how, and how much, I take from each. What links these three disciplines is their shared assumption that travel is not an innocent act; more often than not, travel shapes spaces at the nexus of what Foucault called ‘power/knowledge’.³⁵ It frequently engages in processes of Othering with far-reaching cultural, socio-economic and ecological effects. The assumption that travel does more than move someone (or something) from point A to point B underwrites my readings of the texts’ participation in producing and challenging mountains as tourist destinations. This performative effect also helps to explain why I discuss the way in which critical concepts sometimes “travel” and move beyond their disciplinary confinements.

My methodology is, as already suggested, most strongly indebted to postcolonial theory. I borrow from the field of postcolonial studies its understanding of the central role of literature in meaning-making processes.³⁶ The conviction that ‘texts can *create* not only the knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe’ has been at the core of the – otherwise heterogeneous – discipline since the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978).³⁷ It is this awareness of the power of representation that forms the basis of my methodological approach and informs two central paradigms of postcolonial inquiry: “Orientalism” and “rewriting”. These two paradigms constitute the title of my book and structure its argument. In Chapter 1, I build on *Orientalism*, both the book and the discourse, to map the discursive construction of mountain destinations, while in the four chapters that follow, I analyse its counter-discourse as a form of rewriting. I move in this roundabout fashion to make fully comprehensible the discursive construction of mountain places. Evidently, my reliance on postcolonial

³⁵ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

³⁶ Shohat, ‘Notes on the “Post-Colonial”’, *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (1992): 103; Stephen Slemon, ‘The Scramble for Post-Colonialism’, in *De-Scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*, ed. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (London: Routledge, 1994); Stuart Hall, ‘When Was “the Post-Colonial”? Thinking at the Limit’, in *The Post-Colonial Question*, ed. Ian Chambers and Lidia Curti (London: Routledge, 1996), 242; Slemon, ‘Afterword’; Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Spectre of Capital* (New York: Verso, 2013), 3; John McLeod, ‘Postcolonialism and Literature’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Graham Huggan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 456; Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns*, 136.

³⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 1979, 94.

theory is with two main works: the aforementioned *Orientalism* and *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin.

Said's *Orientalism* follows Foucault in his understanding of discourse, situating it at the intersection of power, knowledge and truth. Its central claim is that non-European places were not 'merely *there*' for the pleasures and fortunes of European travellers but culturally produced through a massive belief system and given precedence via hegemonic networks.³⁸ Said's argument has come to mean different things since it was first formulated and '*Orientalism*, in an almost Borgesian way, has become several different books.'³⁹ I take from the archive of *Orientalism* six critical principles: the first is the conviction that discourse analysis provides insight that helps us to comprehend the systematic discipline of knowing the Other.⁴⁰ The second is the awareness that places are given reality and presence in culture through powerful traditions of representation.⁴¹ The third is the conviction that such kinds of productions, such modes of Othering, situate the writer vis-à-vis those written about in a hegemonic ascription of difference.⁴² The fourth is an appreciation of Orientalism as a Romantically inspired discipline, making it particularly employable within alpine settings.⁴³ The fifth is an acceptance of contradictions within discourse:⁴⁴ the trust that Alpine Orientalism's potential partly lies in not thoroughly resolving conceptual ambiguities and the ability to embrace Alpine Orientalism's discursive heterogeneity. The sixth and last principle is recognizing the 'increasing influence of travel writing' that brings Others into sharper focus.⁴⁵

Most of these dedications are shared by a great number of postcolonial theorists who studied colonial discourse in the wake of *Orientalism*, building

³⁸ Ibid., 4, 71, 72.

³⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995), 330. For a revisitation of Said's *Orientalism* see, for instance, Baidik Bhattacharya, 'Jokes Apart: Orientalism, (Post)colonial Parody and the Moment of Laughter', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 2 (2006): 276–94; Graham Huggan, *Interdisciplinary Measures, Literature and the Future of Postcolonial Studies* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008); Matthew Scott, 'Edward Said's *Orientalism*', *Essays in Criticism* 58, no. 1 (2008): 64–81; Conor McCarthy, 'Edward W. Said', in Götsche, Dunker and Dürbeck, *Handbuch Postkolonialismus und Literatur*, 10–15; Keya Ganguly, 'Roundtable: Revisiting Edward Said's *Orientalism*', *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 65–82; Ziad Elmarsafy, Anna Bernard, and David Atwell, eds, *Debating Orientalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Bashir Abu-Manneh, *After Said: Postcolonial Studies in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

⁴⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 1979, 3.

⁴¹ Ibid., 5.

⁴² Ibid., 20.

⁴³ Ibid., 197.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 28; Saree Makdisi, 'Orientalism Today', in Abu-Manneh, *After Said*, 182.

⁴⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 1979, 3, 4, 5, 1–2, 197, 117.

their case for ‘representational power’ on the analysis of travel writing.⁴⁶ Peter Hulme has written comprehensive studies on the ubiquity of travel in literature and has frequently drawn attention to the conceptual plurality produced by the regulated practices of discourse, highlighting its contradictions and heterogeneities.⁴⁷ Johannes Fabian has elaborated on how the construction of Others follows along the lines of an allochronic discourse that situates the Other in a time outside the present.⁴⁸ Mary Louise Pratt has developed a critical vocabulary of travel writing in a far-reaching study that exposes the inherent violence in the seemingly innocent acts of looking.⁴⁹ David Spurr has studied the rhetoric of empire, identifying the common images, shared figures of speech and rhetorical trajectories which reinforce the colonial project in literature and journalism across historical and geographical divides.⁵⁰ Anne McClintock has written the factor of gender power into colonial discourse.⁵¹ Homi K. Bhabha has formulated theoretical models for the ‘ever-renewing intellectual project’ that is (post)colonial discourse analysis.⁵² This document is indebted to all of these thinkers. It departs from key concepts in the study on travel and literature and diverges from them as it seeks to expand the field of inquiry into mountainous terrain.

While my theorization of Alpine Orientalist discourse relies upon Said, who, with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, forms the ‘Holy Trinity of colonial-discourse analysis,’⁵³ my mapping of the critical, sometimes specifically counter-discursive, interventions of mountain tourism relies on a second, no less influential, trinity: in 1989, the Australian literary critics Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin published *The Empire Writes Back*. They were the first to perform a critical analysis of a wide range of postcolonial texts and saw in literature not just the space upon which imperial violence was

⁴⁶ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 26; Carl Thompson, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2016), 120.

⁴⁷ Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*; Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Peter Hulme and Russel McDougall, eds, *Writing, Travel, and Empire: In the Margins of Anthropology* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007); Peter Hulme, *Cuba’s Wild East* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011).

⁴⁸ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1983).

⁴⁹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

⁵⁰ Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*.

⁵¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁵² Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 2; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁵³ Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 163.

exercised but also the site from which resistance can issue alternative revisions of history through language. *The Empire Writes Back* reveals that 'European linguistic standards and European criteria of aesthetic evaluation become highly questionable when confronted with non-European allegories, forms of irony, discontinuities and syncretic representations, with the inclusion in literature of voice, sound, noise and rhythm'.⁵⁴ Given that the literary machinery which consecrates mountains into travel destinations is so heavily anchored in colonial discourse, it is no coincidence that many of the features of postcolonial writing back are shared by contemporary literature critical of mountain mass tourism.

The Empire Writes Back is instrumental in charting the ground from which contemporary writers confront mountain tourism. There are a number of underlying presumptions in rewriting Alpine Orientalism that are remarkably similar to those displayed in postcolonial writing back. These are as follows: a concern with the politics of place and language; the harbouring of a 'political and cultural agency' that situates literature at its centre; the display of a voice unique to place; the articulation of a noiselessness that makes palpable the silence produced by discursive hegemony; the readiness to disturb binary codifications of the dominant discourse; and the conviction that all writing is geared towards a hopeful future.⁵⁵ This set of techniques and agendas is admittedly expansive and might suggest that rewriting Alpine Orientalism involves a problematic degree of homogeneity. The attempt to develop a functional framework for an analysis of mountain (travel) literature, however, does not have to immediately entail ignoring the unique literariness of texts. While I find that the literature surrounding the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps conforms in certain ways to that of the Orient, the Caribbean Islands or other popular (post)colonial travel destinations, it is not that I choose to overlook substantial differences. I am attentive to the different geographical, cultural and political contexts that distinguish literatures depending on whether they engage with tourism in the Canadian Rockies, in an African savannah or in the Austrian Alps. But, given the obvious differences, I seek to first identify the unexpected shared genealogies, common discursive frameworks and parallels in counter-discursive intervention before examining the strategies, themes and motifs that reflect the uniqueness of place in literary representation. The chapters of this book further establish the parallels between concepts of (post)colonial discourse and the critical rewriting

⁵⁴ Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns*, 138.

⁵⁵ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, 139; 203; 7, 29; 53, 79; 99, 149; 23.

of Alpine Orientalism before moving on to an analysis of uniquely alpine textual and narrative features.

Although it is by now clear that Orientalist discourse analysis and postcolonial critical theory provide the theoretical and conceptual blueprint for the discourse that shapes the ‘textual nature’ of mountains, this book coins and deploys the term “Alpine Orientalism” to locate this textual nature.⁵⁶ Alpine Orientalism is more than a borrowing from, or an application of, Orientalist discourse. Terms such as “alpine discourse” or an ambiguous “alpinism” would not sufficiently express the Orientalist rooting that pairs mountains with the idea of travel and leisurely conquest, for Alpine Orientalism is a travelling theory. Travelling theories, according to Edward Said, are theories that ‘sometimes “travel” to other times and situations’ and in this movement suggest ‘the possibility of actively different locales, sites, situations for theory, without facile universalism or over-general totalizing.’⁵⁷ Said himself was a champion of travelling theory, with *Orientalism* a destination for philologist, Marxist, phenomenological, structuralist and poststructuralist theoretical peregrinations. Often, it was the readiness with which he pulled ideas from one setting to another that landed him in hot water with disciplinary specialists.⁵⁸ Still, Said, conscious of how postcolonial critique was previously enriched through travelling theory, never ceases to praise the performative effect of a travelling theory and claims that to travel is the point of all theory:

The work of theory, criticism, demystification, deconsecration, and decentralisation they imply is never finished. The point of theory is to travel, always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile.⁵⁹

In this journey, Said continues, one acquires a sense ‘of the geographical dispersion of which the theoretical motor is capable.’⁶⁰ Thus, to take postcolonial theory from hot, low-altitude and extra-European regions to cold, high-altitude and at times even intra-European regions is not against the idea of *Orientalism*.⁶¹ It is a celebration of it. It is taking Said at his word.

⁵⁶ Scott, ‘Edward Said’s “Orientalism”’, 66.

⁵⁷ Edward Said, ‘Traveling Theory Reconsidered’, in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 2010), 242, 252.

⁵⁸ Conor McCarthy, *The Cambridge Introduction to Edward Said* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 13.

⁵⁹ Said, ‘Traveling Theory Reconsidered’, 252.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 20.

To consider Orientalism in this light as a theory that lends itself to travel does more than legitimize its use in this study within an alpine setting. It means being mindful of a concept's theoretical journey. It means being aware, for instance, that Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Derrida's deconstruction of polar opposites or a Lacanian investment in the gaze are all steps passed in the theoretical journey towards *Rewriting Alpine Orientalism*. Because this study proposes a postcolonial reading of mountain literature, it does not dig too deeply into the origins of other (or older) critical traditions, but oversteps them, in a sense, and departs from the moment in which a concept or theorem appears on the map of postcolonial theory. As this study highlights the theoretical motor of (post)colonial discourse analysis in mountain tourism, it also investigates how certain concepts interact with new geographies and high altitudes. Not unlike the works of Donna Haraway (1989) and Ann Fienup-Riordan (1995), which brought us 'Simian Orientalism' and 'Arctic Orientalism' and demonstrated the applicability of Said's theory in a wider context, this study explores how the postcolonial adapts to unorthodox settings.

When one thinks of this study as performing travel – as relocating methodologies from the postcolonial to the alpine – then the field of tourism studies makes a stopover worthwhile. Scholars in the field have long demonstrated the 'similarities between mass tourism and colonialism' and theorized their conceptual connections.⁶² As early as 1976, John Ash and Louis Turner situated mass tourism in the 'pleasure periphery', comparing tourism to 'an invasion outwards from the highly developed metropolitan centres into the "uncivilised" peripheries'.⁶³ In 1990, John Urry, borrowing concepts from postcolonial theory, reconceptualized the notion of the gaze for the study of tourism. In 2004, Michael Hall and Hazel Tucker's edited collection illuminated the many links between tourism and postcolonialism, bringing together studies that recognize Othering as an essential practice in tourism, see the search for novelty as a prime motor in the industry and situate tourists and hosts in the hegemonic network of a globalized market. In 2011, Anthony Carrigan approached the intersections of tourism and postcolonialism from the field of literature. Providing 'the first literary study of postcolonial tourism', Carrigan shows that the postcolonial literary archive subverts tourism that replicates colonial power structures.⁶⁴ Even as the texts 'depict the destructive aspects of mass industry expansion,

⁶² Carrigan, *Postcolonial Tourism*, 3.

⁶³ Turner and Ash, *Golden Hordes*, 129.

⁶⁴ Carrigan, *Postcolonial Tourism*, xi.

he explains, ‘postcolonial representations of tourism collectively contribute blueprints towards sustainable, tourism futures.’⁶⁵ I return to these principal assumptions throughout this study, analysing texts that frequently represent mountains as packaged in paradisiacal terms, exposing the vulnerability of natural environments and raising the visibility of tourism’s effects. While Ash and Turner, Hall and Tucker, Urry and Carrigan provide ample guideposts for *Rewriting Alpine Orientalism*, to my knowledge, all of their works are oblivious to the notion that mountains are contested travel destinations. These critics focus chiefly on island and coastal tourism in South East Asia, the Caribbean, Africa, the UK and Southern Europe. Although Urry identifies the Mediterranean seashore as ‘the world’s most popular tourist destination’ in the 2002 edition of *The Tourist Gaze*, more recent travel statistics reveal that the European seaside shares its contested position with the Alps.⁶⁶ In 2018, the region of Tyrol hosted more than forty-nine million visitors, while Greece, including its islands, hosted thirty-three million.⁶⁷ In 2015, Ghazali Musa, James Higham and Anna Thompson-Carr responded to the high tourist exposure in alpine regions in the edited collection, *Mountaineering Tourism*; once again, however, the critical focus is on mountaineering, not on a more comprehensive, less athletic, tourist interest in alpine spaces.⁶⁸

That mountains are, indeed, an urgent site of analysis, not least because of the pressures placed on them through tourism, is well recognized in the interdisciplinary field of mountain studies. My book is indebted to many of the field’s central propositions. I agree with scholars in mountain history, geography and culture that imperial interests effectively led to a confrontation with mountains.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁶ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2002), 54.

⁶⁷ ‘Tourismus in Tirol, Innsbruck, Amt der Tiroler Landesregierung. <https://www.tirol.gv.at/statistik-budget/statistik/tourismus/>; ‘Greece Breaks All Tourism Records, Welcomes 33 Million Travellers in 2018’, *Gtp Headlines*, 31 January 2019. <https://news.gtp.gr/2019/01/31/greece-breaks-all-tourism-records-welcomes-33-million-travelers-2018/>.

⁶⁸ Ghazali Musa, James Higham and Anna Thompson-Carr, eds, *Mountaineering Tourism* (London: Routledge, 2015).

⁶⁹ See Peter H. Hansen, ‘Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain’, *Journal of British Studies* 34, no. 4 (1995): 300–24; Peter H. Hansen, ‘Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: British Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24, no. 1 (1996): 48–71; Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Slemmon, ‘Climbing Mount Everest’; Stephen Slemmon, ‘The Brotherhood of the Rope: Commodification and Contradiction in the “Mountaineering Community”’, in *Renegotiating Community: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Global Contexts*, ed. Diana Bryon and William D. Coleman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 237–71; Stephen Slemmon, ‘Tenzing Norgay’s Four Flags’, *Kunapipi – Journal of Postcolonial Writing & Culture* 34, no. 2 (2012): 32–41; Ann C. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Mathieu, *The*

I rely on the assumption that the politics and aesthetics of Romanticism – the cultivation of individualism, the reverence for nature, the devotion to beauty and the sublime, the increase in nationalism and the appreciation of irregularity – paved the way for mountain tourism.⁷⁰ And I support the claim that mountain travel is deeply entangled with literary production, mountaineering being ‘the most literary of all sports.’⁷¹ These attitudes pair well with postcolonial theory in general and Orientalism in particular: after all, Said defines Orientalism as a fundamentally literary discipline inspired by Romanticism.⁷² While these assumptions are perfectly compatible with postcolonial scholarship, others, such as my interest in a longer and more comprehensive cultural history on mountains which considers mountain culture before the onset of mass travel in the nineteenth century, set out independently from the discipline. So does a keen awareness for alpine environments and their changing ecologies. While principal assumptions from environmental studies inform my perception of mountains in this study, I do not resort to the methodologies of the biological sciences. Rather, I seek to investigate how literature imitates, portrays and interacts with the very physical state of mountains. I read mountains for the stories they tell about human interactions with the natural world, for what they reveal about human dependency on alpine ecosystems and for how they sustain material and cultural lives.⁷³ By making mountains a central concern in a postcolonial reading, I contribute to recent scholarly efforts that also combine ecocritical and postcolonial scholarly interests.⁷⁴

Distilling the principal methodologies, one can say that this study aims to conceptualize postcolonial theory for mountain tourism via a discourse analysis

Third Dimension; Jon Mathieu, Eva Bachmann, and Ursula Butz, *Majestätische Berge: Die Monarchie auf dem Weg in die Alpen* (Baden: Hier und Jetzt, 2018); Debarbieux and Rudaz, *The Mountain*.

⁷⁰ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 134–5; Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995); Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of The Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Robert Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003); Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains*.

⁷¹ Slemmon, ‘The Brotherhood of the Rope’, 239; Zac Robinson, ‘Early Alpine Club Culture and Mountaineering Literature’, in *Mountaineering Tourism*, eds. Ghazali Musa, James Higham, and Anna Thompson-Carr (London: Routledge, 2015), 105–117; Bruce Barcott, ‘Cliffhangers: The Fatal Descent of the Mountain-Climbing Memoir’, *Harper’s Magazine*, August 1996, 64; Amrita Dhar, ‘Travel and Mountains’, in *The Cambridge History of Travel Writing*, eds. Nandini Das and Tim Youngs (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 345–60.

⁷² Said, *Orientalism*, 197.

⁷³ William Cronon, ‘The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature’, *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7–28; William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995); Richard Grusin, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America’s National Parks* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁷⁴ Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*.

that accounts for a close link between literary representation, material reality and sociocultural contexts. To meet this aim, this study moves in two steps. The first important step, to be undertaken in Chapter 1, is devoted to investigating how mountain destinations are created through a discourse that unifies as much as it disunifies what one might call a rhetoric of mountain travel.⁷⁵ Chapter 1 seeks to demonstrate that this discourse operates similarly to the one that produced “the Orient”. This line of argument entails reading mountains not as places that exist as stable points of reference, as places with a universal meaning, or as places that are *there*. Instead, it calls for an understanding of mountains shaped by a range of signifying processes. Chapter 1 is an exploration of key concepts in travel writing to the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps within the discursive field of (imperial) mountain travel.

To identify the key concepts in the discourse on mountains, it is necessary to draw from a wide range of sources. This is why, in Chapter 1, I read more than eighty accounts of travel writing for the presence within them of such concepts that define Alpine Orientalist discourse. All of the accounts of travel writing I analyse were published during the long peak of imperial travel between 1828 (the years leading up to the foundation of the Royal Geographical Society) and 1950 (the immediate aftermath of the fall of the British Empire). This chronological choice serves the purpose of conceptually anchoring Alpine Orientalism in the histories of imperial expansion. The texts studied are also exclusively authored by people who did not call the mountains home, confirming that the Alpine Orient ‘was defined from without.’⁷⁶ I approach these texts via a wide-reading practice that involves reading literary and non-literary texts alongside each other. According to Wolfgang Hallet, wide reading is about exploring, recognizing and connecting literary texts and textualized discourses, which is why this approach allows for a recording of the wider historical and cultural context of literary representation on the Alpine Orient.⁷⁷ I base my wide-reading approach on the assumption that even the smallest units of a text – their patterns and details – can ultimately be grasped by looking at their implementation and signification in culture and in a variety of other texts.⁷⁸ Each chapter in this book begins with

⁷⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 12.

⁷⁶ Negar Azimi, ‘Revisiting Edward Said’s “Orientalism” 40 Years On’, *Frieze*, December 2018. <https://frieze.com/article/revisiting-edward-saids-orientalism-40-years>.

⁷⁷ Wolfgang Hallet, ‘Methoden kulturwissenschaftlicher Ansätze: Close Reading und Wide Reading’, in *Methoden der literatur- und kulturwissenschaftlichen Textanalyse: Ansätze – Grundlagen – Modellanalysen*, ed. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2010), 294.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

a reflection on an image (or images) that I encountered during my research in the archival and tourist landscapes of the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps, allowing me to make more explicit the ‘connections between a particular verbal text and a larger cultural text.’⁷⁹ When, at the end of Chapter 1, I arrive at six key concepts that constitute some of the driving forces within Alpine Orientalism, I have detailed the similarities between texts as diverse as the cover painting of a nineteenth-century young adult novel and the exploration report of alpinists. I follow Said when I say that even though this study includes a vast selection of texts,

there is a large number that I simply have to leave out. My argument, however, depends neither upon an exhaustive catalogue of texts dealing with the [Alpine] Orient nor upon a clearly delimited set of texts, authors, and ideas that together make up the [Alpine] Orientalist canon.⁸⁰

Put differently, it is not the richness of sources but the richness of the discourse itself that gives the discourse its power. Throughout this study, I describe parts of that rich pattern by suggesting ‘the existence of a larger whole, detailed, interesting, dotted with fascinating figures, texts, and events.’⁸¹

My close reading of four contemporary accounts of mountain fiction for their particular contribution to rewriting Alpine Orientalism does so within the wider counter-discourse so framed. I respond to a fascination with detail in the richness of representation. In the second major step of this study, I analyse two texts from the Canadian Rockies and two from the Austrian Alps not merely for the broader strokes in which they counter Alpine Orientalism but for the very specific aesthetic structures, literary techniques and linguistic elements that constitute alpine writing back.⁸² Based on the proposition that rewriting, on a very basic level, means ‘prising open the fixities of the colonial binaries,’ Chapters 2–5 engage with how contemporary mountain literature critical of mass tourism subverts the dualistic logic of Alpine Orientalist discourse. Chapter 2 disturbs the Alpine Orientalist codifications of time by activating the ghosts of oral storytelling. Chapter 3 returns the gaze of Alpine Orientalist visions in blurred dominant aesthetic frameworks. Chapter 4 upsets dualistic

⁷⁹ Robert Scholes, *Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 33.

⁸⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 4.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸² Hallet, ‘Methoden kulturwissenschaftlicher Ansätze’, 294.

inscriptions on the bodies of mountain travellers and ‘travellees.’⁸³ And Chapter 5 examines the double-speak of allegory in the linguistic interventions against Alpine Orientalism. Each of the four chapters begins with an exploration of how literature “writes back” in opposition to Alpine Orientalist discourse before discussing the unique strategies of rewriting Alpine Orientalism through which a distinctly alpine voice can be articulated. While the four defining categories of *time*, *gaze*, *body* and *language* constitute the stage upon which the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism acts, I do not suggest that a literary work only ever participates in one mode of rewriting. The various modes overlap, intersect and build upon one another, forming a counter-discursive chorus.

Chapters 2–5 each foreground one of the four distinct yet converging modes and are dedicated to the following literary works: Angie Abdou’s *The Canterbury Trail* (2011), Thomas Wharton’s *Icefields* (1995), Felix Mitterer’s *Die Piefke-Saga* (1991) and Elfriede Jelinek’s *In den Alpen* (2002). My choice of texts says as much about the phenomenon of tourism in the two mountain regions as it does about the literary landscape of fiction critical of mountain tourism in the two national canons. While in the Canadian Rockies mountain mass tourism is selective, and centralized around selected hotspots, the phenomenon in the Austrian Alps is more geographically dispersed, affecting a vast majority of regions. It is no coincidence, then, that the critical interventions on mountain tourism are thick on the ground of Austrian literature and sparse in the Canadian Rockies. The two Canadian novels analysed in this book are literary figureheads in the critical interventions of Canadian mountain mass tourism, in a landscape that is otherwise dominated by alpinist non-fiction and memoirs.⁸⁴ In contrast, the canon of *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, a corpus of Austrian literature whose central motif is a confrontation with the alpine idyll, provides a large pool of literary production that can be scrutinized for the rewriting of Alpine

⁸³ The term “travellee” is an increasingly accepted term in studies on travel writing. It was coined by Mary Louise Pratt in analogy with the term “addressee” and in correspondence with “colonizer” and “colonized” (*Imperial Eyes*, 258). In the same way that “addressee” denotes the person addressed by a speaker, “travellee” refers to the person travelled to by a traveller. For advantages and disadvantages of “travellee” as a critical term see Catharine Mee, *Interpersonal Encounters in Contemporary Travel Writing: French and Italian Perspectives* (London: Anthem Press, 2015).

⁸⁴ Even though one of the Anglophone world’s most well-known mountain book festivals is hosted annually in Banff, the majority of Canadian accounts of mountain literature are alpinist non-fiction, with a few exceptions on Indigenous mountain literature, such as Richard Wagamese’s *Medicine Walk* (2014), or historical fiction on the mountain railroad enterprise, such as Anne Tait’s *Li Jun and the Iron Road* (2015). Ernest Buckler’s *The Mountain and the Valley* (1952) and Yann Martel’s *The High Mountains of Portugal* (2016) are further Canadian examples of mountain literature, although neither are set in the Rockies nor do they address the topic of mass tourism.

Orientalism.⁸⁵ While the reasons for my choice of writers are their active engagement in rewriting Alpine Orientalism and the shared revisionist agenda directed against dualistic ascriptions to mountain place that renders invisible the complex heterogeneities of alpine ecologies and cultural environments, my choice of Austrian authors is motivated by the diversity of literary expression through which the texts intervene. Mitterer's and Jelinek's texts are examples from two extremes of literary articulation allowing an investigation between the poles of popularity and the literary avant-garde. It is important to mention here that while both Canadian texts are novels, the Austrian examples are a television series and a play. This focus on spatial, mass media and serialized narration in my selection of Austrian material can be read as yet another indicator for the comprehensive force with which mass tourism hits the Austrian Alps. At the same time, it supports an understanding of rewriting as a refigurative activity engaged across genres.

Beginning to chart the interventionist strategies in literatures that undermine mountain mass tourism, Chapter 2 anchors rewriting Alpine Orientalism in postcolonial "writing back" as formulated by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin along the rubrics of an antagonistic and revisionist counter-discourse. More precisely, it safely departs from traditional colonial literary terrain as it highlights a common set of linguistic features and literary strategies between postcolonial "writing back" and rewriting Alpine Orientalism in Angie Abdou's novel *The Canterbury Trail*. Chapter 2 also demonstrates that alpine writing back unfurls its own critical modes of intervention and begins the larger work of characterizing what might account for a distinctly alpine voice in rewriting Alpine Orientalism. As part of this process, the polysemy of the term "rewriting" gains an additional meaning, denoting not just a repetitive, antagonistic intervention but also a sense of retrospection, an interest in time. Chapter 2 highlights the significance of narration from a time prior to commercialized travel in a larger project that seeks to do justice to the representation of mountains. It is through this consideration of older, often oral, mountain stories, then, that the linearity of time dominating Alpine Orientalism can be subverted and alpine voices rise to speak in mythical tongues.

While Chapter 2 presents the strategies of alpine writing back parallel to an anti-colonial critique, Chapter 3 delves further into the specificities of alpine

⁸⁵ Examples from Raphaela Edelbauer, Marie Gamilschegg, Norbert Gstrein, Hans Haid, Ernst Jandl, Peter Turrini or Martin Plattner's work might align well with the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism discussed in this book.

rewriting. Challenging the colonial, tourist and romantic gaze,⁸⁶ exposing the disabling mountain gloom-and-glory dichotomy, and revisiting the wondrous creatures of an alpine past, Wharton's novel *Icefields* takes on the previously established themes of alpine writing back. Chapter 3 further discusses the distinct form and composition of *Icefields* as a celebration of the liveliness of alpine space and eventually moves towards a definition of a new literary topos that returns the gaze of Alpine Orientalist vision to exhibit the vitality of both mountains and postcolonial revision. The *locus vivus* is a key motif in rewriting Alpine Orientalism, developing from a glacial force that paces natural movement as it does narrative momentum and foregrounding the celebration of a mountain teeming with life.

After Chapters 2 and 3 have confirmed that rewriting Alpine Orientalism shares a common ground with postcolonial writing back, Chapters 4 and 5 seek to demonstrate that the dynamic force of postcolonial theory proves just as productive in analysing the critical interventions of mass tourism in the Austrian Alps. To this end, these two chapters write back from two critical sites of colonial and Alpine Orientalist appropriation: the body and language. Chapter 4 deals with Felix Mitterer's television mini-series *Die Piefke-Saga* and reveals how and where an Alpine Orientalist counter-discourse upsets the binaries of subject/object, host/guest, man/woman and life/death as it starts to rewrite and reinvent mountains from the body. That rewriting Alpine Orientalism holds as much political as it does cultural agency becomes clear once the chapter moves from the notion of 'writing as discourse to action as discourse',⁸⁷ situating the body front and centre in the anti-tourism agenda of an author who has earned the title of being the 'Salman Rushdie of Tyrolean tourism'.⁸⁸

In Chapter 5, all modes of rewriting meet and come full circle, returning, in a sense, to the crucial moment in which language becomes the arena where representational power is (re)negotiated. The analysis of Elfriede Jelinek's *In den Alpen* reveals that this is true also for a place and text heavily inscribed by Austrian national history. Curiously, the moment that makes *In den Alpen* almost untranslatable, Jelinek's virtually obsessive use of allegory, is key to a postcolonial

⁸⁶ Throughout this document I conventionally capitalize "Romantic" whenever I refer to the literary and aesthetic styles of Romanticism but not when writing about "the romantic gaze", which builds on John Urry's spelling of the term. While the term denotes a specific form of looking that is often ordered by Romantic aesthetic principles, it exceeds Romantic traditions when pertaining to a tourist experience, thus calling for a more open spelling.

⁸⁷ Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 31.

⁸⁸ 'Schimpfkanonade auf Piefke-Saga hält an', *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, 3 September 1993.

reading. Discussing Jelinek's play via the double-speak of postcolonial allegory shows with impressive clarity that postcolonial theory is capable of 'stretching out interconnectedly without limit', even when rewriting Alpine Orientalism includes rewriting Austrian historiography.⁸⁹

Finally, Chapters 2–5 suggest that rewriting Alpine Orientalism is a hopeful yet incomplete process. They are best considered as affording an opportunity to critically read the transformative representations of mountains, making *Rewriting Alpine Orientalism* a study about change: cultural, social and literary.

⁸⁹ Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 165.

Alpine Orientalism

Key concepts in nineteenth- and twentieth-century mountain travel writing

Leafing through the boxes at the Whyte Archives of the Canadian Rockies in Banff, I am struck by a book cover, between a Baedeker guide and Arthur Conan Doyle's *Memories and Adventures* (1924). Black and white, with little of the "buy-me" explicitness of some of the books on the Rocky Mountains sold on Banff Avenue, it would be inconspicuous to most, and yet I am captivated. Despite its overloaded and outdated design, the cover delights me. It shows endlessly still oceans, dangerous currents, sailing boats in rapid waves, shipwrecked sailors and coasts lined with palm trees. A crocodile, seagull, monkey, elephant, hippopotamus and lion frame the bold letters that spell *Over the Rocky Mountains*. The bold-faced conflict presented by the illustrations of Far Eastern and African fauna on the cover of a book that claims to be about the Rockies plainly reveals to me the necessity of analysing mountain travel through the conceptual framework of Orientalism and its wider field of critical colonial discourse.

Orientalist discourse likely seems to many out of place in the alpine world, but when lions and hippopotamuses roam the Rockies on book covers and ample reference to Orientalism is found in mountain travel writing (as this chapter will demonstrate), one has no other choice than to resort to postcolonial theory. Like tourism itself, Orientalist discourse neither stops at mountain ranges nor freezes at cold temperatures, and scholarly analysis of mountain travel must at last account for its Orientalist legacies and consider postcolonial theory an instrument in its analytical toolbox. Decorating a fictional travel account of a journey to the Rockies with the imagery generally employed for Oriental exploration is more than a shrewd marketing gag by the nineteenth-century London publishing house James Nisbet & Co. Although the publisher used the

imagery of Orientalism to advertise their entire Ballantyne's Miscellany series, in which this title appears, such imagery creates, and lends credence to, a certain system of meaning surrounding mountains. This chapter, as well as the study at large, is a long overdue attempt to dissect the structures of thought involved in the cultural production of mountains as Other tourist destinations, and it exposes the power relations involved in formulating alpine Otherness.

Mountain travel writing resorts to the familiar imagery of Orientalism owing to the lack of more accurate sets of images and to render landscape more intelligible and digestible to certain types of readers. This Alpine Orientalism is also used to frame representations of mountains as a whole (when, in reality, their complexity should prohibit that). Here I will take up Said and Foucault, situating Alpine Orientalism at the intersection of power, knowledge and truth, and treating it sometimes as 'the general domain' of various instances of Othering, sometimes as 'individualizable' and individual structures within discourse, and sometimes as 'regulated practice'.¹ To speak of Alpine Orientalism, therefore, is to speak about fractured, discontinuous, contradictory assumptions that participate in the Othering of mountains in different combinations and at different times.² Rather than using "a discourse" or "discourses" to refer to particular structures regulated by a common force within "discourse" as a whole, I propose using "discourse" to refer more simply to the wider dynamic of Alpine Orientalism and "concept" for the individual strains this Alpine Orientalism embraces.³

In other words, the study of Alpine Orientalism brings together critical colonial discourse and concept-based research. As a work of theory, Alpine Orientalism takes from Said's *Orientalism* (1978) its conviction that the systematic discipline of knowing the Other is best studied through discourse analysis; its reliance on the literary production of space for a privileged group; its rootedness in Romantic thought; its modes of Othering along preconceived binaries; its acceptance of contradictions within discourse; and, not least, its trust that texts can create the 'very reality they appear to describe'.⁴ As a work interested in the concepts – the 'miniature theories' – within Alpine Orientalist discourse, this study borrows from Mieke Bal's work on travelling concepts a

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 80.

² Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

³ Sara Mills, *Discourse: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 1997), 7.

⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 3, 28, 94.

liberated engagement with critical terminology that abandons any ‘obsession with “proper” usage of terms’, equipping them with a readiness to travel between disciplines, historical periods and geographical locations, and the ability to engage in confrontations with unexpected environments.⁵ Some of the colonial concepts Alpine Orientalism brings together date back to Said’s seminal work. Others are described later by scholars such as Peter Hulme, Mary Louise Pratt, David Spurr and Sara Mills. Some concepts travel unhindered to high altitudes and intra-European ranges; others demand reconceptualization. But, in keeping with Bal and Said, who argues elsewhere that the ‘point of theory is to travel’, I believe that we should not close our eyes to the insights Orientalist concepts provide into the power structures of mountain tourism, even if they are inevitably altered by travel.⁶

This chapter proposes six key concepts for Alpine Orientalism. While they are not the only tropes within the discourse, I maintain they are the most important ones. They are also all interdependent, never occur in isolation, and combine in different kinds of ways. These concepts are: the Orient, emptiness, (anti-)conquest, gender, savagery and superiority. I arrive at them through a wide reading of more than eighty sources of travel writing about the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps published between 1828 and 1950 – in the years leading up to the foundation of the Royal Geographical Society (in other words, “institutionalized colonial expansion”) to the fall of the British Empire and its immediate aftermath. This wide range of material includes novels, exploration reports, newspaper articles, promotional documents, governmental records, mountaineering reports, guidebooks, travel diaries, letters and poems, all contributing to the cultural construction of the most popular alpine destinations in Canada and Austria.

This chapter will identify the key concepts that contemporary mountain literature “writes back” to, locate them in Alpine Orientalism and map the discursive relocations from a hot, low-altitude and extra-European Orientalism to a cold, high-altitude and intra-European Orientalism. In each section, I turn first to literary constructions of the Canadian Rockies, mountains within the familiar realm of the British Empire, to prepare the ground for a postcolonial study of mountain literature. I then turn to the Austrian Alps to tease out how intra- and extra-European mountain travel are conceptualized in relation to one

⁵ Mieke Bal, ‘Interdisciplinarity: Working with Concepts’, *Filolog* 3 (2011): 11, 12.

⁶ Edward Said, ‘Traveling Theory Reconsidered’, in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2010), 252.

another at different times and in different places. Finally, I conclude by showing that Alpine Orientalism shares with its Saidean father a ‘contemporary fate.’⁷

1.1 The Alpine Orient

Rather than conceiving of the Alpine Orient merely as a theoretical construct, it is important to understand that the Orient” has a presence in the cultural imagination and literary representation of mountains. “The Orient” served as a model through which a general knowledge of the mountains and its inhabitants was constructed. Oriental manifestations of mountains are as diverse as they are dominant. At the same time that “the Orient”, understood as a place on a map, is reachable only once mountains are overcome, mountains are made accessible through Oriental ascriptions. This section will account for this diversity by showcasing literary representations in which “the Orient” signifies a geographical place that stands in relation to the commercialization of mountains, before moving on to instances in which it functions as a conceptual vessel through which knowledge of mountains is forged.

The story of the Alpine Orient cannot be disentangled from historical geographies. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argued, famously, that ‘European exploration to other parts of the globe’ began via ‘land routes to the “East”’.⁸ During a time in which the Canadian Rockies were an obstacle rather than a destination in their own right, the British Crown investigated the suitability of the Colony of Canada for settlement and the possibility of constructing a railway line that would connect Canada ‘to British possessions in the Orient.’⁹ The expedition was led by Captain John Palliser (1857–60), who found several passages through the Rockies, which ultimately cleared the way for the construction of a national railroad that connected East with West. The role of the Canadian railway lines (*Canadian Pacific Railway*, or CPR, and the *Canadian National Railway*, or CNR) in nation-building and (mountain) tourism is a research project unto itself, but a CPR map published decades later in A. P. Coleman’s *The Canadian Rockies* (1911) reveals with astonishing clarity how the world-famous tourist train placed the Rockies straight onto the tracks leading

⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

⁸ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2013), 111.

⁹ Robert W. Sandford, *The Canadian Alps: The History of Mountaineering in Canada*, vol. 1 (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1990), 60.

to “the Orient”.¹⁰ The route by which mountains became a commodity, similar to Oriental goods, was thus paved: the CPR saw Canadian land as a chain of opportunities for enrichment; from ‘the commercial centre’, via ‘the sportsman’s region and mineral belt’, to ‘the granary of the world’, the national railway line linked Great Britain and Europe ‘to the Orient’.¹¹ The Rockies, consecrated in the map as ‘America’s Switzerland’, were the last stop before this British treasure trove.

Apart from a geographic orientation (pun intended) fostered by trade, the Alpine Orient is an ‘aesthetic project’ and a colourful ‘European invention’ in the Saidean sense.¹² This means that the literatures creating systems of meaning about mountains in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries emphasized some of ‘the exotic sublimity of late-eighteenth-century paintings’, most often through reference to Oriental colours.¹³ In *The Rockies of Canada* (1909), for instance, Walter Wilcox draws a direct comparison to the colours of the Orient during his explorations in Consolation Valley: ‘Then as summer advances there appears the characteristic flower of the Rockies the painted cup. It is like a tuft of leaves dipped in the richest dyes of the Orient.’¹⁴ In this depiction, the legacy of the picturesque merges with that of the Orient when the plant also known as “Indian paintbrush” is dipped into the very colours that soothed the eye of Western travellers. Mabel B. Williams alludes to a painting of the Orient in the 1928 brochure of Jasper Park as she describes Pyramid Mountain: ‘The sombre oriental richness of its colouring gives it special distinction. Deep purples, gorgeous Persian reds and mulberry are splashed across the rocks like pigment daubed on by a Titan’s brush.’¹⁵ When Williams refers to ‘Oriental richness’, or the even more distinctive ‘Persian reds’, she treats the Rockies like a canvas painted by the Western imagination using an Oriental colour palette. Similar descriptions of Pyramid Lake are seen in a CNR brochure:

The unusual colouring of the strata, dark slag-like rock, splashed and banded with old red, maroon and tawny yellow, gives the peak something of the richness of an Oriental tapestry, and when, towards evening, the purple shadows gather

¹⁰ A. P. Coleman, *The Canadian Rockies: New and Old Trails* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1911).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Said, *Orientalism*, 168, 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁴ Walter Dwight Wilcox, *The Rockies of Canada* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1909), 207.

¹⁵ Mabel B. Williams, *Jasper National Park* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, King’s Printer, 1928), 52.

about its base and the whole is reflected in the peacock waters of Pyramid Lake at its feet, the scene is beautiful beyond description.¹⁶

In the Romantic visual tradition of framing landscapes, this representation of Pyramid Mountain and Lake turns their grandeur into an artefact. In such moments, Alpine Orientalism aesthetically exploits mountains as places full of imaginative possibility and renders mountain travel literature a 're-presentation of canonical material guided by an aesthetic and executive will capable of producing interest in the reader.'¹⁷ Furthermore, the above description shows how Alpine Orientalism can affect an understanding of alpine fauna. Instead of mentioning caribou or mountain goats, which one is more likely to encounter during a visit to the Canadian Rockies, the brochure alludes to the peacock, an animal indigenous to India that frequently appears when travellers' imaginations go wild. In a reference to Lake Louise, J. Monroe Thorington advises his readers 'to stop and look back at a peacock-blue corner of the lake' and remarks elsewhere that 'one sees the peacock-blue water of Hector Lake'.¹⁸ It seems as if these writers apply what they know about Othering the Orient to new places they encounter in the Rockies. Regardless of whether the traveller visits Lake Louise, Hector Lake or Pyramid Lake, surrounded by their respective glaciers, the landscape is characterized via peacock blues and Oriental reds and golds. Alpine spaces become stock images of Otherness, interchangeable like tapestry, and their geological, biological and cultural specificity is cast aside.

As understood through Orientalism, the Rockies are not just fragments of a text but, as Said had it, 'something to be encountered and dealt with to a certain extent *because* the texts made that Orient possible': 'Such an Orient was silent, available to Europe for the realization of projects that involved but were never directly responsible to the native inhabitants.'¹⁹ A prominent example of one of these projects is the Banff Zoo, which introduced a pair of ring-tailed monkeys and a pair of peacocks in 1913. A report by the Department of Interior also reveals that local moose were exchanged for a polar bear and the only native animal held was a black bear cub caught at Laggan, an earlier name for the town

¹⁶ Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park* (Toronto: Canadian National Railways, 1927), 27.

¹⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 177, 181.

¹⁸ J. Monroe Thorington, *Glittering Mountains of Canada: A Record of Exploration and Pioneer Ascents in the Canadian Rockies, 1914–1924*, ed. Robert W. Sandford (Calgary: Rocky Mountain Books, 2012), 5, 25.

¹⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 94.

of Banff.²⁰ One could almost say that the Rockies were turned into an attractive tourist destination by expelling the original alpine inhabitants and introducing the trendier cast of Oriental discourse.

How constructed this exoticism really is becomes apparent in an academic dispute between historians Chris Williams and Robert W. Sandford, with Williams convincingly arguing that the ‘claim that British climbers saw the Rockies as “exotic” is too simplistic.’²¹ While the Rockies indeed constituted a wilderness unparalleled anywhere in Western Europe, they were, nonetheless, a British dominion. As such, they were ‘a land where the English tongue, along with many British customs and manners, were shared and understood’, making the Canadian mountains appear familiar to British alpinists.²² This is not to say that writers did not, despite this familiarity, emphasize difference by making allusions to the Orient. One case in point is Thorington’s report, in which he gives his journey (and subsequently the Rockies) that strangely Oriental touch by conceptually opening up a circus ring on the Canadian glaciers: he states that the members of his party ‘balanced like acrobats, on the crests [. . .] between two crevasses.’²³ By visiting the Rockies, it seems, travellers could enter a circus with ring-tailed monkeys, peacocks and themselves as acrobats.

Additionally, like Said’s *Orientalism*, the kind of discourse I map out here is possessed by the architecture of Egypt and the East.²⁴ Equally disturbing and much more frequently drawn juxtapositions can be found in comparisons to the minarets, mosques and the all-pervading pyramid of Eastern architecture: in a 1927 travel brochure, the CNR describes the ‘glittering spires and towers’ of Mount Columbia, Mount Alberta and Mount Douglas as standing in the landscape ‘like the minarets of an eastern mosque’, while travel reports and novels relate mountains to pyramids.²⁵ Hezekiah Butterworth’s protagonist, for instance, recounts a walk in the Cascade Mountains ‘among pyramids older than the Pyramids’. Wilcox, meanwhile, contends that ‘compared with these columns, the pyramids of Egypt, the palaces of Yucatan, and the temples of

²⁰ *Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1913*, (Ottawa: C. H. Parmelee, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1914), 25.

²¹ Chris Williams, “‘That Boundless Ocean of Mountains’: British Alpinists and the Appeal of the Canadian Rockies, 1885–1920”, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 1 (January 2005): 75.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Thorington, *Glittering Mountains*, 40.

²⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 162.

²⁵ Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*, 5.

India are young, even in their antiquity.²⁶ It is particularly noteworthy that both of these references not only reveal the common practice of framing Canadian mountains through Eastern architecture but also demonstrate how these passages foreground the timelessness attributed to the Rockies of Canada. In a mode of Romantic Othering, the Canadian Rockies were temporally distanced from Europe; ascending them meant, in a way, also travelling back in time.²⁷

Turning now to Europe and bearing in mind that, according to Said, ‘in Europe itself at the end of the nineteenth century, scarcely a corner of life was untouched by the facts of empire,’ it is not surprising to also find Orientalist references in alpine travel literature.²⁸ Adolf von Schaden, a successful German travel writer, states that only the view revealing Tyrol as ‘spread out like a colourful carpet’ could compensate for the hard climb up the Venediger.²⁹ Heinrich Heine engages in the boldest and most insightful Alpine Orientalism in his *Reisebilder* from 1865, when he finds the alpine crowns of Tyrol in clouds, as if ‘wrapped with grey turbans.’³⁰ He evokes an image of mountains as figures donning headgear typical of those living in the Near, Middle and Far East. The parallel drawn between cloud and turban is a personification of mountains found nowhere else in Western travel literature on the Rockies. This is no coincidence: those travelling to the Alps were acutely aware that local people inhabited this area, and yet the presence of Indigenous peoples in the Rockies was never acknowledged or respected in that same manner. Oriental references used in the cultural production of the Austrian Alps noticeably reflected the human presence and did so even in the imperial act of naming. During the first ascent of the Großvenediger, for instance, a section of the prominent glacier in present-day Hohe Tauern Park was named ‘Türkische Zeltstadt’ – ‘Turkish Tent City.’³¹ With remarkable consistency (even the glove-selling Zillertal

²⁶ Hezekiah Butterworth, *Zigzag Journeys in the Great Northwest, or, A Trip to the American Switzerland* (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1890), 206; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 48.

²⁷ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1983), 16; Robert Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), 36.

²⁸ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 8.

²⁹ Adolf von Schaden, *Taschenbuch für Reisende durch Südbayern, Tyrol und das Salzburgerische*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Joseph Lindauer'sche Buchhandlung, 1836), 27. The German original reads: ‘Der einzige Lohn der ungeheueren Anstrengung war der Genuß der imposantesten Fernsicht. Ganz Tyrol lag vor den Blicken der überraschten Gesellschaft wie ein bunter Teppich ausgebreitet.’

³⁰ Heinrich Heine, *Reisebilder*, 5th ed. (Philadelphia: J. Kohler, 1865), 241. The German original reads: ‘Ich fand die Häupter jener Berge mit Wolken, wie mit grauen Turbanen, umwickelt.’

³¹ Ignaz von Kürsinger, and Franz Spitaler, *Der Groß-Venediger in der nordischen Central-Alpenkette, seine erste Ersteigung am 3. September 1841 und sein Gletscher in seiner gegenwärtigen und ehemaligen Ausdehnung* (Innsbruck: Wagner'sche Buchhandlung, 1843), 30.

peddlers were compared to ‘Arabian younglings’), Oriental vocabulary was hurled at the mountains within Europe and beyond, while a human presence was acknowledged only in the Alps.³² It is unsurprising, then, that the people brought to the Rockies to support the growing tourist industry after Indigenous and Métis locals had been expelled were quickly given Oriental touches, as if “the Orient” were a label guaranteeing promotional success: a guide is depicted wearing ‘his red bandanna [*sic*] turban and his patriarchal beard of but slightly inferior tinge’, ‘the packer plays the part of a dragoman in the East’, and CPR staff speak in ‘a soft Oriental voice.’³³ Alpine Orientalism, especially in the commercial enterprise of mountain tourism, hovers in the thin air of alpine heights like burning incense.

These moments of Othering in Canadian and Austrian mountain literature show that within the seeming interchangeability of Orientalist markers – ‘the still deep lakes of Tyrol’ that are, much like their Canadian counterparts, made ‘beautiful with reflections from peacocks’ wings’³⁴ – one occasionally finds nuance. It is this nuance that sheds light on the way in which the Alps and Rockies were regarded differently as inhabited or uninhabited spaces. It is astonishing that a discourse, otherwise characterized by arbitrariness and inconsistency, bothers to make this distinction and makes it so consistently. Describing mountain regions through the language of Orientalism and imperial conquest is not the same as colonial invasion and subjugation, in the same way that placing turbans on mountain peaks is not the same as describing mountain landscape through Persian reds but, as discursive elements, all these actions are related to the same dynamics of power and appropriation. As this chapter develops, the presence and constructed absence of Others in Austrian and Canadian mountains will emerge more fully as a concept that determines how other key concepts in mountain tourism can travel between classic postcolonial terrain and the high Alps of Europe.

³² August Lewald, *Tirol vom Glockner zum Orteles und vom Garda- zum Bodensee* (Munich: Verlag der literarisch-artistischen Anstalt, 1838), 75.

³³ B. W. Mitchell, *Trail Life in the Canadian Rockies* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 13; Arthur Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1924), 298; Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 5.

³⁴ Elizabeth Tuckett, *Pictures of Tyrol and Elsewhere: From a Family Sketch-Book*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1869), 78.

1.2 Mountains empty and vast

While looking for the Athabasca Pass, the alpinists Hugh E. M. Stutfield and J. Norman Collie set up camp at Bear Creek and gaze at the surrounding landscape. In their report in *Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies* (1903), they contemplate Canadian wilderness as void:

One wants to be alone to fully appreciate the mystery and the utter solitude of these great forests. It is less agreeable, doubtless, to be by oneself; but the impressions created are deeper and more enduring. It is then that is borne in upon you the silence and the immensity of an African desert, the utter loneliness of the Canadian backwoods, or the solemnity of the great mountain peaks. In the Rockies the scarcity of bird and animal life serves to intensify the sense of solitude; and the traveller may walk for hours without hearing a sound except the roar of some distant avalanche or torrent, the sighing of the wind in the tall pines, and the creaking of their gigantic limbs.³⁵

In this passage, rooted in the Romantic yearning for solitude, the Rockies, like the African desert in colonial discourse, are subjected to a rhetoric of triple emptiness: first, the construction of an absence of sound – one walks in ‘silence’ without hearing a thing; second, the construction of an absence of life suggested in the word ‘loneliness’ and evoked through the scarceness of animals, let alone humans; and third, a vastness mapped in the immensity of space as well as in the endless hours walking through it. Building on the previous section’s subtle distinctions regarding the ‘consciousness of absence’ in the production of the Canadian Rockies and the Austrian Alps,³⁶ this section engages in a more direct discussion of the rhetorical strategies surrounding negation, strategies that allow Alpine Orientalism to construct alpine spaces as empty, silent and vast. It proposes that negation serves to clear a space for alpinist and tourist imagination, where the value lies in the absence of Others or their exoticization as I will show later. Like all sections in this chapter, this one analyses a key concept (here “emptiness”) by underlining similarities and differences in extra- and intra-European alpine travel.³⁷

³⁵ Hugh E. M. Stutfield and J. Norman Collie, *Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies* (London: Longmans, Green, 1903), 137.

³⁶ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 92.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 92–3.

Western travel writing is replete with descriptions of the Canadian Rockies in which the human presence is ‘absolutely marginal’, and yet the Rockies are rarely declared simply as ‘empty land’.³⁸ They are constructed through a discourse of negation that empties by highlighting an absence of Others.³⁹ On one level, this is achieved by writing out any signs of Western civilization, such as in Stutfield and Collie’s report, in which alpinist ventures are a ‘good-bye to civilisation’.⁴⁰ On another level, it is achieved by writing out other travellers and Indigenous peoples. Stutfield and Collie state that ‘there was no mankind’, and they depict the Canadian mountains as ‘probably never before seen by human eye’.⁴¹ In references like these, the negation of the presence of the First Nations and travellers is subsumed under the larger absence of all human- and mankind. Notably, mountain literature of this era offers no explicit clues as to how it was simply able to ignore the presence of First Nations peoples. However, there is an instance from the visual arts that testifies to how radically cultural representations stripped the Canadian Rockies of Indigenous cultures. In the 1840s, Toronto-raised artist-traveller Paul Kane, renowned for his portraits of “natives”, travelled through the Western ranges and produced only one portrait of an Indigenous individual.⁴² When people disappear in the work of a painter so obsessed with depictions of indigeneity, the sheer force of the denial of Indigenous presence becomes palpable. The rich cultures populating the Rockies – the Ktunaxa, Nehiyawak, Niitsitapiksi, Pikuni, Kainai Tsuu T’ina and Iyāhé Nakoda people, known among European explorers as “Mountain Sioux” or “Stonies” – were rendered invisible in writing.⁴³

In 1909, Walter Wilcox still reports in *The Rockies of Canada* that ‘no visible living thing seemed to venture’ and ‘many speak of the absence of every kind of life in these mountains’.⁴⁴ Additionally, fellow travel writers continued to describe the Rockies with adjectives such as ‘unknown’, ‘unnamed’, ‘unmapped’, ‘untouched’, ‘unexplored’, ‘untrodden’, ‘untamed’, ‘unclimbed’, ‘uninhabited’,

³⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 50; Rupert Brooke, ‘The Rockies’, in *Letters from America* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916), 154.

³⁹ Brooke, ‘Rockies’, 154.

⁴⁰ Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 75, 107.

⁴² I. S. MacLaren, ‘Introduction’, in *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park: Studies in Two Centuries of Human History in the Upper Athabasca River Watershed*, ed. I. S. MacLaren (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007), xviii.

⁴³ Stephen Slemmon and Zac Robinson, ‘The Shining Mountains’, *Alpinist* 50 (Summer 2015): 116.

⁴⁴ Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 219, 198.

‘unspoiled’, ‘undammed and unfettered.’⁴⁵ The prefix “un-” functions first as a marker denoting an ‘absence of quality’, linguistically opening up the Rockies to a variety of colonial and alpinist claims in the way that ‘regenerating a fundamentally lifeless Asia is a piece of pure Romantic Orientalism.’⁴⁶ B. W. Mitchell’s travelogue reveals that the mountains in British North America are so appealing to travellers precisely because of the absence of presence: the Rockies are ‘a land unknown, and therefore a land of allurements.’⁴⁷ The luxury of roaming the mountains without ‘predecessors’ and ‘tread[ing] where no human foot had trod before’ brings us to the second meaning of “un-” as ‘expressing a reversal of some action or state.’⁴⁸ Once the Rockies had been mapped, named, touched, explored, trodden, climbed, dammed into national parks and finally acknowledged as inhabited by Indigenous peoples, absence had to be repeatedly asserted.

Creating emptiness, however false, held particular significance in the years surrounding the foundation of the Banff and Jasper National Parks, ‘when wilderness underwent redefinition as playground for the nation.’⁴⁹ In the first decade of the twentieth century, the federal government sought to remove Indigenous and Métis people living in the park and withdrew Stoney and Cree rights to their local hunting grounds in the mountains, deterritorializing Indigenous people and reasserting a pristine wilderness that could be populated

⁴⁵ ‘unknown’ (Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 370; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 107, 118, 321; Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 298; Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 78, 79; Mary T. S. Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies* [New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1911], 13, 14, 75, 80; Mary Schäffer occasionally adds to ‘unknown’ a ‘to us’, offering a rare instance of acknowledging Indigenous presence; Stanley Washburn, *Trails, Trappers, and Tenderfeet in the New Empire of Western Canada* [London: Andrew Melrose, 1913], xiii; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 5, 172; James Outram, *In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies* [London: Macmillan, 1906], 16, 20, 202; Butterworth, *Zigzag Journeys*, 23), ‘unnamed’ (Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 107; Washburn, *Trails, Trappers and Tenderfeet*, xiv; Coleman, *The Canadian Rockies*, 24, 31; Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*), ‘unmapped’ (Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*, 16, 3; Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 370; Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 54; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 126; Outram, *In the Heart*, 202), ‘untouched’ (Coleman, *The Canadian Rockies*, 370; Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 13), ‘unexplored’ (Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 4; Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*, 16, 3; Coleman, *The Canadian Rockies*, 365), ‘untrodden’ (Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 120; Outram, *In the Heart*, viii, 21), ‘untamed’ (Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 75), ‘unclimbed’ (Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 107; Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 12,13; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 67), ‘uninhabited’ (Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 12), ‘unspoiled’ (*Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1913*, n.p.; Mitchell, *Trail Life*, n.p.), ‘undammed and unfettered’ (Washburn, *Trails, Trappers, and Tenderfeet*, 67).

⁴⁶ ‘un-’, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/un->; Said, *Orientalism*, 154.

⁴⁷ Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 78.

⁴⁸ ‘un-’, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/un->.

⁴⁹ MacLaren, ‘Introduction’, xxix.

by new settlers (i.e. hotel employees, outfitters, packers and guides).⁵⁰ Once the Rockies had been widely promoted as a place to travel ‘without sight of another human being’, narratives had to persistently crop out travellers to maintain the image of having ‘never actually [been] visited by a white man.’⁵¹ Although the absoluteness with which presence was denied was moderated in some instances from ‘never actually’ to ‘apparently’ to ‘scarcely half a dozen’, the rhetoric of nothingness endured in travel writing about the Canadian Rockies even beyond 1945.⁵² In 1950, Tom Longstaff still spoke of the Rockies as ‘empty worlds [. . .] peopled only by our bare imagination’, clearly rooting absence in travellers’ imagination and desire.⁵³ Curiously, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that travel writing began to turn to snow, creating white blanks with every fresh fall to designate negation, a device frequently seen in contemporary mountain writing.

Mountain writing about the Austrian Alps also engages in conceptual emptying, although not as frequently as the literature of the Canadian Rockies. It occurs in moments when James Joyce, namesake of the prominent modernist, questions the reasonability of habitation – how can one ‘find such dismal out of the world place willingly inhabited?’ – and when writers depict signs of settlement as if it were no human achievement but either a whim or part of nature.⁵⁴ ‘Those solemn, spectral looking Houses’ are only ‘mysteriously attached’ in Joyce’s *Recollections of the Salzkammergut* (1851);⁵⁵ the human knowledge and labour involved in the construction are simply written out. In a different instance, Henry D. Inglis treats the houses as moss-like, describing the Inn Valley as ‘covered with varied and luxuriant vegetation, thickly studded with houses, and traversed by the broad, rapid, and brimful river.’⁵⁶ When Inglis describes houses as behaving like vegetation, he denies Tyrolean mountain cultures their civilizing achievements. Furthermore, Inglis’s account is a commentary on a relational absence of Others frequently found in the Austrian (*and* Canadian) mountains, once the Swiss Alps had become a popular alpine destination.

⁵⁰ Lewis Swift, a white homesteader, was the only person to successfully resist dispossession, maintaining his land on park territory. MacLaren, *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park*, xxix, 128, 155.

⁵¹ Williams, *Jasper National Park*, 4; Coleman, *The Canadian Rockies*, 239.

⁵² Coleman, *The Canadian Rockies*, 239; Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*, 16.

⁵³ Tom Longstaff, *This My Voyage* (London: John Murray, 1950), 218.

⁵⁴ James Joyce, *Recollections of the Salzkammergut, Ischgl, Salzburg, Bad Gastein, with a Sketch of Trieste, Frankfort on the Maine and the Baths of Homburg in Winter* (Frankfurt/Main: n.p., 1851), 48.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Henry D. Inglis, *The Tyrol: With a Glance at Bavaria*, 3rd ed. (London: Whittaker, 1837), 119.

'While Switzerland, which lies as one may say next door, is overrun by tourists,' he comments, 'scarcely any one deviates from the beaten track, to visit this land of romantic associations, and patriot recollection.'⁵⁷ It was impossible for travellers to extol the absence of all people in Tyrol, which is why emptiness is restricted here to the absence of other travellers and expressed in the depiction of the region as 'comparatively little opened up.'⁵⁸ The kind of relational scarcity expressed in the above quote, the demand, in other words, to be 'well away from other people', is a key element in the kind of tourist gaze that John Urry deploys, and it is therefore commonly utilized in promotional literature.⁵⁹ In fact, it is one of the most common promotional tactics that pit the Canadian mountains against the Alps. James Outram argues:

Two variations from the European prototype are certainly conspicuous. The one, that in this country of superlatives the ranges and peaks are multiplied tenfold. [. . .] The other obvious difference lies in the wildness of the Rocky Mountain region. Except where the railroad, with its intruding whirl of civilization, has caused the springing up of one or two small hamlets and an occasional section-house, even along the highway of trans-continental traffic there is but little sign of man. The graceful chalet, the climbing herd of cattle, the musical tinkle of whose bells chimes faintly through the distance, the sturdy tolling peasant, here are not. Nature alone holds sway, rugged and wild and beautiful.⁶⁰

This reference not only shows that the concept of absence persists despite evidence of a firmly established tourist industry with railroads and accommodation, but it also indicates that the relational absence of Others operated effectively through absolute negation. It is the complete lack of signs of civilization, the signs that 'here are not', which make the Rockies a prime destination for the mountaineer.⁶¹

The discourse of negation in 'uninhabited land' often also implies an absence of sound, as in August Lewald's advice to seek out 'the silent valleys of Tyrol'.⁶² The concept of silence served as an inroad into more explicitly uninhabited mountains, with literature describing the 'silence everywhere' and a 'high and voiceless air' in the Canadian Rockies, as well as the 'silent magnitude' and 'silent

⁵⁷ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁸ Rachel Harriette Busk, *The Valleys of Tirol: Their Traditions and Customs and How to Visit Them* (London: Longmans, Green, 1874), x.

⁵⁹ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage, 2011), 30.

⁶⁰ James Outram, *In the Heart* (London: Macmillan, 1906), 4–5.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Lewald, *Tirol vom Glockner zum Orteles und vom Garda- zum Bodensee*, 35. The German original reads: 'Im Sommer nach 1834 traf ich hier bereits eine englische Familie. Nach und nach fangen die Engländer schon an, die stillen Thäler Tirols aufzusuchen, da sie die Schweiz ganz und gar kennen.'

valleys' in the Austrian Alps decades before depicting the respective mountain ranges as unpeopled.⁶³ Understood through Said's *Orientalism*, a silent alpine landscape allowed Western travel writers to articulate mountains and form landscapes available for European consumption like 'genuine creator[s]' with little-to-no intervention from local cultures, filling the previously emptied space with imagination.⁶⁴

By 1900, the two concepts, the lack of habitation and the lack of sound, caught up with one another, with Stutfield and Collie's observing 'the scarcity of bird and animal life' while walking 'without hearing a sound' at Bear Creek.⁶⁵ A year later, Stanley Washburn describes the same place:

Bear Creek, undammed and unfettered by the hand of man, comes tumbling and surging down its narrow valley, pouring its blue waters into the ice-born froth of milky waters that is characteristic of the Saskatchewan, and all over the valley hangs the silence, the peaceful silence, that sings of nature, serene and undisturbed.⁶⁶

This passage, which frames silence and expansion in much the same way, leads us to the third and last concept in this section: vastness. The silent song of nature that Washburn seems to hear is 'all over', and he does not provide any specification as to what exactly "all over" might include.⁶⁷ In this moment, Washburn engages in a practice Stephen Greenblatt noted in the reports of Christopher Columbus. Washburn, like Columbus, uses the open formalism of "all over" as one of the 'empty place-holders for the unknown and imaginable.'⁶⁸ The unknown as an 'imaginatively malleable space' full of unbounded possibility becomes the Conradian blank space 'to dream gloriously over.'⁶⁹ Mary Humphry Ward achieves something similar in her novel *Lady Merton, Colonist* (1919):

⁶³ Butterworth, *Zigzag Journeys*, 209, 249; Erna Felicitas Amadea Römhildstift, *Tagebuch auf einer Reise durch einen Theil von Baiern, Tyrol und Oestereich. Neustadt A. D. Orla* (Neustadt a. d. O.: Johann Karl Gottfried Wagner, 1828), 88. (The German original reads: 'die Bergkette in das heitere Blau der Lüfte, die in mannigfaltigen Formen, Theils vom Gehölze geschwärzt, Theils kahl, in feierlicher Ruhe und stiller Größe da liegt'); Adolf von Schaden, *Taschenbuch für Reisende*, 117. (The German original reads: 'in die stillen Thäler')

⁶⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 58.

⁶⁵ Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 137.

⁶⁶ Washburn, *Trails, Trappers, and Tenderfeet*, 67–8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonders of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 53, 60.

⁶⁹ Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind*, 175, Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness & Other Stories* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1995), 36.

She stretched out her hand vaguely towards an enchanting distance – hill beyond hill, wood beyond wood; everywhere the glimmer of water in the hollows; everywhere the sparkle of fresh leaf, the shining of birch trunks among the firs, the greys and purples of limestone rock; everywhere, too, the disfiguring stain of fire, fire new or old, written, now on the mouldering stumps of trees felled thirty years ago when the railway was making, now on the young stems of yesterday. ‘I want to see it all in a moment of time,’ Elizabeth continued, still above herself.⁷⁰

The references to “everywhere” and “it all” are akin to Washburn’s “all over” and to Columbus’s “all this” in creating absence through depicting vastness. Not unlike the prefix “un-” that denotes an absence of quality, these indefinite markers of space create a ‘formal vacancy,’ a void to be filled, which ultimately can make possible imperial claims, however indeterminate.⁷¹

I know of only one reference in travel writing, and an early one indeed, in which the Austrian Alps are depicted as vast. John Forbes ‘cannot see the valley for the valley.’⁷² Later, the concept is among the most used in celebrating the Rockies over the Alps. ‘This is the feature which chiefly distinguishes them from the Alps with their narrow, deep-cut valleys,’ L. S. Amery argues.⁷³ The ranges in British North America are claimed ‘to be greater than any in Switzerland,’ to contain ‘more ice than is to be found on all the Alps,’ to expand in ‘their seemingly endless continuity,’ to be ‘Twenty Switzerlands in one,’ and to be ‘a mountain kingdom, large as some European countries, part of it still unmapped and unexplored.’⁷⁴ The last reference effectively turns vastness – a range larger than a country – into imperial proprietorship, confirming with crystalline clarity the imperial claim to possession that is enabled by representing the Canadian Rockies as empty. Taken from a promotional booklet, this quote might also imply that the imperial gesture of emptying space, while employed for a variety of ends, is most directly utilized for attracting visitors. In this manner, the brochure reveals the neocolonial practices of the tourist industry. The imperial violence involved in the (un)settling of mountain spaces will be discussed in the next section. This section closes by concluding that alpine travel literature

⁷⁰ Mary Humphry Ward, *Lady Merton, Colonist* (Toronto: Musson Book, 1919), 4–5.

⁷¹ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 60.

⁷² John Forbes, *Sight-Seeing in Germany and the Tyrol in the Autumn of 1855* (London: Smith, Elder, 1856), 193.

⁷³ L. S. Amery, *Days of Fresh Air: Being Reminiscences of Outdoor Life* (London: William Brendon & Sons, 1939), 259.

⁷⁴ Butterworth, *Zigzag Journeys*, 254, 54; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 142; Department of Mines and Resources, ed., *Jasper National Park Alberta* (Ottawa: National Parks Bureau, c. 1930s–1940s), n.p.; Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*, 3.

renders previously emptied mountains available for whatever travellers might desire – whether that is imperial, economic or recreational in nature.

In this section, only certain elements of the concept of emptiness travel unobstructed to cold, high-altitude and intra-European regions. Depictions of an absence of sound equally insinuate emptiness in the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps. The absence of people and vastness, however, is painted in different strokes: the Alps were acknowledged as an inhabited region, whereas the Rockies were not. While any signs of civilization were written out of most historical writing and promotional documents in the literature of the Canadian Rockies, writing on the Austrian Alps maintains emptiness as a marker only in the degree to which it questions the reasonableness of habitation, describes signs of civilization in the language of the natural and evokes a relational absence in the form of an absence of travellers, rather than negating all human presence. Vastness, then, is a conceptual element that is more confined to depictions of extra-European mountains towards the end of the nineteenth century.

1.3 Alpine conquest and anti-conquest

The erasure of all human presence allows for Alpine Orientalism to unfold as a drama consisting of violent acts. A passage from a guidebook to Western Canada is remarkable for its reflection of the imperial, visual and linguistic violence exercised in depictions of Lake Louise. It recounts how Tom Wilson, legendary Canadian outfitter and guide, put arguably the most frequently photographed site in the Canadian Rockies on the map for mountain travellers:

One evening, as they were camping at the junction of what are now the Pipestone and Bow Rivers, he [Tom Wilson] heard the noise of snow slides in the distance, and asked an old Indian guide where the noise was coming from. The Indian told him that it was the snow falling off the big mountains back of the “Lake of Little Fishes”. He tried to explain to him how beautiful this lake was, and told him how it was a painting made by the Great Spirit for the Indians, saying ‘not like white man’s painting – never fades’. Wilson arranged to go with the Indian the next morning to see this wonderful sight, and they followed what is now known as Lake Louise Creek up to the lake. That morning, Lake Louise must have been in one of her best moods, for it was such a beautiful shade of emerald in color that Wilson immediately named it “Emerald”. The lake is shown under that name on the first map of the district, made by Dr. Dawson in 1883. In 1884

the name was changed to “Lake Louise” in honor of Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria.⁷⁵

In arguing that Tom Wilson “discovered” something worthy of claiming as a possession, something that was not his to take, this passage does not sugarcoat the imperial violence involved. The Eurocentrism of his ostensible discovery is revealed once the place is unmasked as already known to local Indigenous peoples. The scene follows Mary Louise Pratt’s colonial playbook, in which discovery ‘involved making one’s way to the region and asking the local inhabitants if they knew any big lakes, etc. in the area, then hiring them to take you there, whereupon with their guidance and support, you proceed to discover what they already knew’.⁷⁶ Following Pratt, the scene then moves from imperial violence to visual violence, in which aesthetic appreciation forms the basis for mastery. After the lake is classified as beautiful, it is consecrated in the third and final act of violence, its renaming – first as “Emerald” and later as “Lake Louise”, making explicit the imperial agenda and power behind this new designation. This section sets out to analyse Alpine Orientalism’s imperial acts of triumph, its naming practices and its proprietary visions in the Canadian and Austrian mountains.

Since the 1990s, seminal works in interdisciplinary mountain studies have established the imperial underpinnings of mountaineering. Robert Macfarlane sees vertical exploration as a natural consequence of horizontal expansion.⁷⁷ Peter H. Hansen reads mountaineering as allowing Victorian men who neither had the time nor money to engage in the great games of colonial conquest to ‘act out the drama of the empire in the Alps’.⁷⁸ And Stephen Slemon foregrounds the ‘language of triumph’ involved in heralding ‘a New Elizabethan Age’ after the ascent of Mount Everest in 1953.⁷⁹ In part, the rhetoric of conquest has seen mountains as the ultimate Other in the battle of man against nature, which is evident in publications that frame the ascent of alpinists along conquering terms: a headline in *The Boston Globe*, for instance, reports on John De Laittre ‘Climbing

⁷⁵ Edith M. Sykes, Johnnie B. Walker and Florence J. Richardson, *Here’s Western Canada*, 8th ed. (Montreal: Traveller’s Digest, 1948), 144–5.

⁷⁶ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 198.

⁷⁷ Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind*, 179, 193.

⁷⁸ Peter H. Hansen, ‘Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain’, *Journal of British Studies* 34, no. 4 (1995): 315, 322.

⁷⁹ Stephen Slemon, ‘Climbing Mount Everest: Postcolonialism in the Culture of Ascent’, in *Postcolonizing the Commonwealth: Studies in Literature and Culture*, ed. Rowland Smith (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 55.

Dangerous Peaks in the Canadian Rockies Never Before Conquered.⁸⁰ Similar and numerous instances which pair the notion of an ‘unmapped’ mountainous terrain with the assumption of possession and control – ‘The peak is ours!’ – can be found in the reports of Coleman, Outram, Wilcox, Stutfield and Collie; not to mention the insistent recourse to terms surrounding conquest and ownership in reports published in the *Canadian Alpine Journal* in the first decades of the twentieth century.⁸¹ But mountaineering was more than a recreational test of strength: it was a ‘cultural re-creation of Britain as an imperial nation.’⁸² The extent to which the conquest of the Canadian Rockies was shaped by ideas of imperial expansion and supremacy can be seen in a variety of publications. The following passage from a piece of youth literature, for instance, clearly frames the CPR as an imperial venture in which man conquers mountains:

The construction of the road had not only conquered the Rockies and linked the two oceans, it had done more; it had bound the greater half of North America to England in bonds stronger than iron. That clang on the last spike had riveted the two continents of the possessions of the English crown, and made a greater England possible on this side of the Atlantic.⁸³

The conquest of the Rockies, the reference reveals, coincides with a number of moves maintaining the power of British imperialism. Even in the 1920s, a CNR brochure boasts of having conquered a ‘thin fringe’ of civilization along the railway, continuously deploying the rhetoric of empire to promote an exclusive travel experience in the Canadian Rockies, clearly demonstrating that a rhetoric of conquest neatly translated from alpinist and colonial endeavours to leisurely explorations.⁸⁴ Such a rhetoric of discovery and conquest appears far less often in literature on the Austrian Alps, not least because it acknowledges human presence in the region. It is not surprising, then, that while travellers to the Rockies could feel like ‘pioneers’, ‘discoverers’, ‘first-comers’, ‘explorers’ and ‘conquerors’, those scrambling in Austria saw themselves almost exclusively as

⁸⁰ Alfred J. Ostheimer III, *The Report of the 1927 Expedition to the Athabasca and Chaba Rivers, Jasper Park, Alberta, and the Clemenceau Icefield, British Columbia*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA, 1928), Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff.

⁸¹ Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 370; Outram, *In the Heart*, 115; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 105; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 4.

⁸² Peter H. Hansen, ‘Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: British Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24, no. 1 (1996): 48.

⁸³ Butterworth, *Zigzag Journeys*, 28–9.

⁸⁴ Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*, 16.

‘invaders.’⁸⁵ The notion of conquest is still somewhat present in the way that travellers brand themselves as intruders, but this branding foregrounds the force involved in taking control over a place that is owned by Others.

If not emptied, mountain regions had to be conceptually framed as unknown; as Tiffin and Lawson argue, only the unfamiliar can be successfully conquered.⁸⁶ This can be seen in literature about the Austrian Alps as much as in Canadian mountain writing, which depicts the Rockies as a ‘threshold of the unknown’, a ‘mystery’, ‘a new’ or ‘another world’, and a ‘real terra incognita’, largely ‘unknown.’⁸⁷ The Austrian Alps are rendered just as unfamiliar: Inglis exclaims: ‘I know almost as little about Tyrol as the celestial empire’ and, according to Robert Hoffmann, an 1863 alpine exploration of the Salzburg mountains rendered them ‘as if [they] were unknown terrain in Africa.’⁸⁸ What travel writing about the Austrian Alps lacked in imperialistic posturing when it acknowledged a human presence is gained here in comparing the Alps to Africa. Associations like these will resurface in the section on the gendered mountain as the *Salzburger Zeitung* follows Joseph Conrad ‘on a train to the interior.’⁸⁹

The ‘native guide’ who conveys the traveller to this interior stresses the fictionality of such concepts as conquest, discovery and the unknown.⁹⁰ As the opening quote to this section demonstrates, the native guide has to know and yet (in the discourse of negation) *unknow* in order to enable discovery. This is achieved mainly through textuality, as an act of discovery does not occur per se. ‘It only gets “made” for real’, Pratt claims, once ‘the traveller [. . .] returns home, and brings it into being through texts.’⁹¹ This “creation” is achieved, on the

⁸⁵ ‘pioneer’ (Washburn, *Trails, Trappers, and Tenderfeet*, 14, 19), ‘discoverer’ (Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 22; George Vaux quoted in PearlAnn Reichwein, *Climber’s Paradise: Making Canada’s Mountain Parks, 1906–1974* [Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2014], 6), ‘first comer’ (Brooke, ‘Rockies’, 156), ‘explorer’ (Wallace Atwood, *The Rocky Mountains* [New York: Vanguard Press, 1945], 267), ‘conquerors’ (Outram, *In the Heart*, 65; Walter White, *On Foot Through Tyrol in the Summer of 1855* [London: Chapman and Hall, 1855], 74; William Baillie-Grohman, *Tyrol and the Tyrolenses: The People and their Social, Sporting, and Mountaineering Aspects* [London: Longmans, Green, 1877], 25).

⁸⁶ Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, eds, *De-Scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality* (London: Routledge, 1994), 2.

⁸⁷ Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 118, 120, 269; Thorington, *Glittering Mountains*, 111; Brooke, ‘Rockies’, 151; Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 216; ‘unknown’ (Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 79; Amery, *Days of Fresh Air*, 264).

⁸⁸ Inglis, *The Tyrol*, 100; ‘Österreichische photographische Alpen- und Gletscherexpedition’, *Salzburger Zeitung*, 22 July 1863, quoted in Robert Hoffmann, ‘Die touristische Erschließung des Salzburger Gebirgslandes im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert’, in *Der Alpentourismus*, ed. Kurt Luger and Franz Rest (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2002), 70.

⁸⁹ ‘Das Führerwesen in Salzburg’, *Salzburger Zeitung* Nr. 97, 29 April 1863, quoted in Hoffmann, ‘Die touristische Erschließung des Salzburger Gebirgslandes im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert’, 70. The German original phrase is ‘einen Zug ins Innere’.

⁹⁰ Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 40.

⁹¹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 200.

one hand, by writing native guides out of documentation and, on the other, by overwriting local names in ‘a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control’.⁹² Such acts of linguistic violence not only write local pathfinders out of mountain chronicles but allow those who got to the pen first, rather than those who first reached a summit, to record a “first ascent”.⁹³

Through naming the mountains so conquered, they are reinscribed into new systems of knowledge, signifying linguistic possession, as the power to name presupposes the power to own.⁹⁴ Cartographers, geographers, climbers and naturalists gave prominent peaks in the Canadian Rockies a name and place in the project of empire. Occasionally consecrated with their descriptive qualities, such as T. W. Blakiston’s “Chopping Block” or Mary Schäffer’s “Endless Chain”, mountains in the Rockies were more frequently reinscribed to commemorate colonization.⁹⁵ Blakiston named “Gould’s Dome” north of Crowsnest Pass ‘after the distinguished British naturalist’, J. Norman Collie named “Cline Peak” after the fur trader, and Mary Schäffer designated ‘a fine glacier’ clinging to the Eastern slope of Mount Columbia “Edward VII”.⁹⁶ Schäffer’s toponymic practices are particularly interesting, as she also names mountains after friends and Indigenous peoples. Arthur O. Wheeler, ‘the nearest one could find for someone who might have regarded the [Canadian Rockies] his own’, was most scandalized about her naming of Mount Unwin and Mount Warren, as he thought such an honour should be restricted to highly distinguished – white – men.⁹⁷

One would expect evidence of a practice so deeply rooted in colonial dispossession to be scant in Austrian alpine history. However, naming ‘was a long-standing feature of colonialism and not restricted to distant unknown land’.⁹⁸ Local rumour has it that the former “Kessikopf” in the Vorarlberg Fundelkopf group was renamed “Schillerkopf”, after one of Germany’s most

⁹² Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 39.

⁹³ Peter Grupp, *Faszination Berg: Die Geschichte des Alpinismus* (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), 43, 44; Martin Krauß, *Der Träger war immer schon vorher da: Die Geschichte des Wanderns und Bergsteigens in den Alpen* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2013).

⁹⁴ Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 3; Bill Ashcroft, *Caliban’s Voice: The Transformation of English in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 2009), 164.

⁹⁵ T. W. Blakiston, *Report of the Exploration of Two Passes through the Rocky Mountains* (Woolwich: Royal Artillery Institution, 1858), 5; Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 60.

⁹⁶ Blakiston, *Report of the Exploration*, 6; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 142, 304; Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 84.

⁹⁷ MacLaren, *Culturing Wilderness*, xxx, 177. It is perhaps possible to trace Wheeler’s and Schäffer’s opposing naming practices back to what Ann McClintock calls male birthing rituals. In naming, she sees a male disavowal of the creative agency of others and an arrogation to one’s own power of origin. See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995), 29.

⁹⁸ Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 39.

praised Romantics, when travellers struggled with local pronunciation. A village in the Zillertal constitutes another instance in which a foreign tongue overwrote traditional spelling. The outside spelling “Tux” is, to this day, the official name for the local “Duchs”.⁹⁹ This is confirmed in a reflection by Rachel Harriette Busk, in which she explains how ‘the most important of these by-valleys is the Duxerthal, by non-Tiroleans generally written Tuxerthal’.¹⁰⁰ That it is, once again, a female travel writer who is sensitive to local traditions in toponymy is conspicuous, and the role of gender in this type of recognition would certainly be interesting to analyse more carefully in a separate study. In this example, I merely wish to stress the ‘privileging of written over oral history’ that leads any history prior to tourist invasion to be obliterated.¹⁰¹ Naming, here, operates as a form of cultural translation that ‘inserts the named object of location’ and ‘translates it’ into the cultural narrative of mastery, possession and control.¹⁰² While the integration of alpine emergency shelters into the order of traveller culture is a very complex historical phenomenon (and one that would have to be analysed on a case-by-case basis), the linguistic violence involved in the German Alpine Club’s practice to name huts after their respective club sections bears mentioning. The Berliner Hütte, to mention but one, is ‘a piece of Berlin in the Alps’ and recreated as a part of German mountaineering territory through an act of naming not unlike the naming of New South Wales, New York or Nova Scotia – as enclaves of the mother country.¹⁰³ It is through naming, then, that places distant to mountains were inscribed in the Alps, making them spaces belonging to distant peoples. These practices, accompanied as they were by gestures of symbolic mastery like the erection of flags and crosses on mountaintops, were textual performances of ownership.¹⁰⁴

Mary Louise Pratt sees explicit acts of conquest, visible rituals and rhetorics of subjugation and control, being preceded by what she terms ‘anti-conquest’, a set of ‘strategies of representation’ by which Western travellers ‘seek to secure their

⁹⁹ ‘Duchs’ (Lewald, *Tirol vom Glockner zum Orteles*, 78); ‘Dux’ (Baillie-Grohman, *Tyrol and the Tyrolese*, 25).

¹⁰⁰ Busk, *Valleys of Tirol*, 88.

¹⁰¹ Simon Ray quoted in Tiffin and Lawson, ‘Introduction: The Textuality of Empire’, in Tiffin and Lawson, *De-Scribing Empire*, 128.

¹⁰² Ashcroft, *Caliban’s Voice*, 164.

¹⁰³ ‘125 Jahre “Berliner Hütte” in den Zillertaler Alpen’, *Die Welt*, 24 July 2004. <https://www.welt.de/print-welt/article330035/125-Jahre-Berliner-Huette-in-den-Zillertaler-Alpen.html>.

¹⁰⁴ See Stephen Slemon, ‘Tenzing Norgay’s Four Flags’, *Kunapipi* 34, no. 2 (2012); and Helga Ramsey-Kurz, ‘Tokens or Totems? Eccentric Props in Postcolonial Re-Enactments of Colonial Consecration’, *Literature and Theology* 21, no. 3 (2007): 303.

innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony'.¹⁰⁵ With the term 'anti-conquest', Pratt understands the seeming innocence in colonial acts such as seeing and writing, which, indeed, simply conceal the act of conquest.¹⁰⁶ The common practice of mapmakers 'taking views' in colonial surveying is part of the visual violence inherent in seeing; and an example of 'anti-conquest'.¹⁰⁷ There are numerous instances in exploration literature on the Canadian Rockies in which seeing prepares the ground for imperial consecration: Wheeler 'gazed upon the summit of the pass which now bears his name';¹⁰⁸ Philipp Abbot 'turned to scan the massive mountain-side' and 'almost immediately the joyful exclamation came from [his] lips, "The peak is ours!";¹⁰⁹ and when a 'beautiful scene opened up before' Outram and Wilcox in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, the 'place was christened "Paradise Valley"'.¹¹⁰ Even long before the actual ascent, and with a dashing matter-of-factness, peaks had but to enter explorers' visual fields in order to be taken into possession through the act of naming.¹¹¹

To conceal the violence in the traveller's gaze, travel writing tends to shift the agency of the seer 'to the land's voluntary revealing of itself':¹¹² 'Mount Murchison came into view', 'the Hermit had dropped his cloak of humility and presented rather the appearance and dignity of a cardinal', Jasper 'valley [...] seems to open its arms wide in a sort of splendid generosity, as if it would welcome the whole world within', the 'curtain is about to be raised', and mountains 'spread like a map before [travellers'] eyes'.¹¹³ A landscape that comes with open arms, drops garments, raises curtains and generously presents itself can be owned without subjugation, were it not for the occasional reference to an eye that 'commands' views, exposing the mastery involved in an otherwise passive act.¹¹⁴

The interlocking of visual, textual and imperial violence is captured in Pratt's 'master-of-all-I-survey' who gains ownership first through aesthetic appreciation and second through a 'density of meaning' that represents landscape as 'rich in

¹⁰⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 9.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰⁷ Arthur O. Wheeler, *The Selkirk Range* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1905), 90.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁰⁹ Outram, *In the Heart*, 115.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹¹² Gordon Sayre, 'Le Page du Pratz's Fabulous Journey of Discovery Learning about Nature Writing from a Colonial Promotional Narrative', in *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment*, ed. Steven Rosendale (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002), 37.

¹¹³ Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 245; Wheeler, *Selkirk Range*, 56; Williams, *Jasper National Park*, 6; Outram, *In the Heart*, 125, 126.

¹¹⁴ Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 4; Karl Baedeker, *The Dominion of Canada with Newfoundland and an Excursion to Alaska* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1907), 240.

material and semantic substance.¹¹⁵ Arising in a vision from a promontory, the steps of the master-of-all-I-survey are also common in Austrian and Canadian mountain literature. Both ranges are equally praised as ‘strikingly picturesque’, delighting ‘an artist’s eye’ and rendered with a remarkable textual density that enables further appropriation.¹¹⁶ When explorers describe the individual features comprising alpine space, they do so also with a view to future prospects.¹¹⁷ Such prospects are what lead them to comment in detail on ‘forests, meadows, and streams’ and to depict a ‘square-topped black tower’, a ‘castellated rock ridge’ and ‘pineclad hillocks.’¹¹⁸ When adjectival modifiers derived from nouns are employed, as Pratt points out, they add additional objects to the discourse and at times also relate the landscape to the explorer’s home culture (as in “castellated”), allowing visual description to become a transformative project.¹¹⁹ In other words, once the alpine landscape is classified as beautiful and grasped in adjectival detail, the mastery held by the travellers – by their views and words – determines its future development, indicating ever so clearly the entanglement of visual, textual and imperial violence. These various forms of violence, gathered under the concept of (anti-)conquest, travel unhindered to cold, high-altitude and intra-European regions. The visual element of the concept, the trope surrounding the monarch-of-all-I-survey, is, according to Pratt, assertively gendered. The next section discusses in greater detail the gendered mountain already broached here.¹²⁰

1.4 The gendered mountain

The concept of gender, played out through the notion of a gendered mountain, is a tool with which to analyse the literatures of female mountain travellers who were not conventionally considered alpinist explorers, the historic achievements of female mountaineers in Canadian and Austrian alpinism and the role of mountains as testing grounds for masculinity. The ways in which to approach the gendered mountain are, inevitably, more numerous than this list and much more comprehensive than this study could possibly encompass. Yet, what all

¹¹⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 200–1; Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 19.

¹¹⁶ Joyce, *Recollections of the Salzkammergut*, 48; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 88.

¹¹⁷ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 59.

¹¹⁸ Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 255; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 49.

¹¹⁹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 200; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 255; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 49.

¹²⁰ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 209.

potential approaches hold in common is a commitment to comprehending mountains as sites of plural gendered practices. For the purpose of this study, I proceed selectively based on the thematic interests of the contemporary texts discussed in the following chapters and link my conceptualization of the gendered mountain in historical travel literature of the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps to notions of “the body” and “the gaze”. Rather than attempting to fully dissect the complexities and multiplicities of this concept at large, this section fleshes out the gendered mountain in Alpine Orientalist discourse by studying how mountains and the bodies of mountain people – both women and men – are constructed as objects of ‘the male gaze’;¹²¹ in ways of seeing mountain places and mountain people through a specific, masculine perspective.

I begin with a familiar manifestation of the male gaze, the practice, beginning in the seventeenth century, of feminizing mountains as ‘nature’s pudenda’ and apprehending the mountain as woman.¹²² Whenever mountain landscapes are figured in relation to the female body, Alpine Orientalism acts in line with the male gaze of feminist discourse as well as with traditional readings of Saidean Orientalism, which ascribe an ‘untiring sensuality’ to all that Orientalism touches.¹²³ In addressing descriptions of mountains that open up and drop garments, this chapter has already touched upon the allegorization of mountains in terms of the female body. A set of rhetorical devices consisting of such allegories, symbols, metaphors and sensual fantasies sits at the crossroads of colonialist and phallogocentric discourse and allows for mountains to be framed as a passive counterpart to the thrust of male mountaineering and imperial technology.¹²⁴ As much of a cliché as it is in colonial discourse, depicting erotically charged landscapes is a common practice in mountain travel writing, which frequently renders mountains as virginal and seductive, clothed and unclothed, or veiled and unveiled.

The cultural production of mountains using the vocabulary of virginity is particularly dominant in the Canadian Rockies throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Alpinists and poets alike attribute virginity to summits, peaks, forests, wilderness and uplands and declare almost all desirable markers of

¹²¹ Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’, in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Gerald Mast (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 803–16.

¹²² Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind*, 15.

¹²³ Said, *Orientalism*, 188.

¹²⁴ Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 170; Peter Hulme, ‘Polytropic Man: Tropes of Sexuality and Mobility in Early Colonial Discourse’, in *Europe and Its Others*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen, Diana Loxley, vol. 2 (Colchester: University of Essex Press, 1985), 21.

alpine topography ‘virgin.’¹²⁵ It is noteworthy that the attribute of virginity most frequently occurs alongside an ascribed obtainability and, thus, vulnerability to conquest. Coleman, for example, concludes in his report on Mount Robson, the most prominent mountain in the Canadian Rockies, that ‘the finest virgin peak in America awaited conquest.’¹²⁶ Likewise, it seems, drawing from the literature at hand, that this cultivated virginity, which suggests that mountains virtually await their conquerors, distinguishes the Canadian Rockies from the European Alps. The Rockies, like the “virgin”, putatively empty, lands of colonial exploration, are more desirable than the richly inhabited, numerous summited mountains of the Alps. To be virgin, Ann McClintock famously observes, is to be empty; and not just ‘empty of desire’ and sexual agency but also ‘passively awaiting the [. . .] male insemination of history, language, and reason.’¹²⁷ By feminizing mountains through the language of virginity, an attribute historically reserved for women, mountaineers could legitimate the imposition of imperialist and/or alpinist control while asserting their own virility. It may seem astonishing that the charging of the Canadian Rockies with ‘sexual promise’ does not only appear in the travelogues of male mountaineers:¹²⁸ indeed, A. P. Coleman claims that ‘a high mountain is always seductive’, and in this particular example amusingly does so with regard to Mount Hooker, which, of course, is named after the English botanist, but happens to add insult to injury in this specific feminization of mountains.¹²⁹ Mary Schäffer, although not quite as explicitly, also does not hold back from rendering the mountains surrounding Jasper as ‘decidedly alluring.’¹³⁰ In this manner mountain travel literature not only demonstrates afresh the constructedness of gender as well as Alpine Orientalism, it also highlights the unparalleled dominance of the Alpine Orientalist male gaze which imposes itself on the female mountaineer as it does on the male.

This tremendous discursive dominance of a distinctly male Alpine Orientalist gaze also holds true when examined through the symbol of the veil, through

¹²⁵ Brooke, ‘Rockies’, 156; Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 215; Outram, *In the Heart*, 21; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 14; Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 239, 370; Washburn, *Trails, Trappers, and Tenderfeet*, 237; Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Guards Came Through and Other Poems* (London: John Murray, 1919), 62; Frank S. Smythe, *Climbs in the Canadian Rockies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), 18.

¹²⁶ Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 239.

¹²⁷ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 30.

¹²⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 188.

¹²⁹ Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 79. Mount Hooker was named by David Douglas after his sponsor, the Scottish biologist, Sir William Jackson Hooker.

¹³⁰ Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 75.

which the land has become interchangeable with women in colonial discourse.¹³¹ The 'removal of the veil', Spurr contends, 'serves as a visual metaphor for ideas of opening and discovery' and allows travellers gazing at mountains to see the possibility of conquest opening up before them.¹³² While the attribution of seductive qualities to the Canadian mountain landscape has also occurred in travel writing authored by women, the conceptual concealment and unveiling in the next example provide greater detail on how mountains, even those named after men and represented with a masculine pronoun, are prone to feminizations. Stutfield and Collie write: 'Towards evening, the clouds began to lift; the snowy dome of Howse Peak, emerging from the mists, seemed, as it were, poised in mid-air; and Forbes slowly unveiled his noble outline and proportions to our view.'¹³³ In a stock gesture of exploration reporting, Mount Forbes seems to naturally open up before Stutfield and Collie. My interest here, however, is neither exclusively in how the mountain '*presents itself*' to the invisible European seer, nor in the uncontested presence of these very seers,¹³⁴ but in how these seers perceive Mount Forbes as unveiling like a woman despite the fact that they grammatically represent it as male. It is '*his* noble outline', not hers, that they see.¹³⁵ I have to admit, at this point, that I am as guilty as Stutfield and Collie because the first time I read their representation of Forbes, I overread the male pronoun and read Forbes as feminine. But if we see Alpine Orientalism not as a game of assigning blame but as a study of discourse, we learn about more than just its domination via the feminization of alpine landscapes. We are reminded of the Foucauldian idea that discourse always contains contradictions: subsumed within a discourse of the male gaze, the discourse of Alpine Orientalism often (insistently), but not always, feminizes mountains. The main point, however, is that the mountains of Alpine Orientalism, sometimes female and sometimes male, are never just mountains.

A further detachment from the mountain can be observed in the travel literature involving the Austrian Alps. While writing about the Canadian Rockies, on the whole, focuses on the feminization and sexualization of land, writing about the Austrian Alps is more concerned with the bodies of alpine women. Travel writing thus utilizes the body as 'a site for discursive control' and confirms once again the drastic difference in depicting one mountain region as

¹³¹ Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

¹³² Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 174–5.

¹³³ Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 261.

¹³⁴ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 59.

¹³⁵ Stutfield and Collie, *Climbs and Exploration*, 261 (my emphasis).

inhabited and another as empty.¹³⁶ While the male gaze in Alpine Orientalist writing renders the seemingly empty Canadian Rockies as female, it visually consumes the bodies of women in travel literature of the Austrian Alps. Most conspicuous in the general obsession with female bodies is the persistence with which German travel writers from the first half of the nineteenth century exoticize and sexualize alpine femininity in a way that is eerily similar to the tactics employed in the colonial scramble for Africa. It is important to mention that within mountain writing about the Austrian Alps, femininity acquires a certain trajectory that has its origin in a non-British colonial tradition. Whether male or female, German travel writers explicitly compare the women in Tyrol and Salzburg to stereotypes of those they would encounter on the African continent. For August Lewald, the women of the Zillertal 'are too colossal to be considered beautiful with their breasts sagging like those of the women from Mangersmannskraal in Africa,' while Erna von Römhildstift states that the women's 'complexion is as if they were descendants of blackamoors,' and Adolf Pichler depicts a girl balancing a milk bucket on her head as if walking from an African well.¹³⁷ A. A. Schmidl, an Austrian writer equally interested in portraying 'the most beautiful female figures' in the Alps, also comments on the 'big sagging breasts' of the Zillertal women.¹³⁸ Curiously, though, he restrains himself from making comparisons with women in Africa, where the Austrian Empire did not hold any claims. These depictions of female bodies in the Austrian Alps and predominantly feminized mountain landscapes in the Canadian Rockies demonstrate two things: they support my earlier contention that the distinctions Alpine Orientalism draws between different areas are ideological, and they reveal that while both alpine regions share the legacies of Othering that rely on certain ideas of the female, this concept enters the two mountain regions from different colonial centres: London and Berlin. The pattern of seeing mountains through

¹³⁶ Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 202.

¹³⁷ Römhildstift, *Tagebuch auf einer Reise*, 146 (The German original reads: 'ihre Farbe ist als wären sie Abkömmlinge eines Mohrengeschlechts'); Lewald, *Tirol vom Glockner zum Orteles*, 73 (The German original reads: 'Die Weiber im Zillerthal sind zu kolossal, um schön genannt zu werden, die Brüste hängen wie bei den Weibern von Mangersmannskraal in Afrika tief herab.'). Adolf Pichler, *Aus den Tiroler Bergen* (Munich: E. A. Fleischmann's Buchhandlung August Rohsold, 1861), 1 (The German original reads: 'ein hübsches Bauernmädchel, welches, den blanken Milcheimer zierlich auf dem Kopfe balanzierend eine Zeit lang vor uns hergeschritten ist').

¹³⁸ A. A. Schmidl, *Tirol und die Tiroler: Ein Handbuch für Freunde dieses Landes und ein Wegweiser für Reisende* (Stuttgart: J. Scheile's Buchhandlung, 1837), 26. The German original reads: 'Die schönsten weiblichen Gestalten findet man im Bregenzerwalde. Die Zillerthalerinnen stehen ihnen an regelmäßigen Zügen nicht nach, werden aber durch große herabhängende Brüste entstellt.'

the male gaze is – although part of the same male power fantasies – influenced by different colonial frameworks in the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps.

While the examples discussed so far have concentrated on how the gendered mountain is shaped differently in the colonial settings of the Rockies and the Alps, this section discusses how the attention of the male gaze is redirected in-between the Rockies and Alps. In the commercial empire of international mountain tourism, as opposed to the British or German Empire, the masculine becomes an interest of the male gaze. However, the male-on-male gaze of Alpine Orientalism is not necessarily one of same-sex desires. A straightforward reading of Said's *Orientalism*, which does not shy away from discussing homosexual interests (e.g. those at work in the writing of Flaubert), is thus not possible for these particular texts, in these particular mountains and at these particular times. What this section offers instead is a conceptualization of the male-on-male gaze within the nineteenth-century culture of international mass tourism.¹³⁹ A great majority of the literary accounts studied in this chapter highlight figurations of alpine males as if they were themselves commodities. The following passage, in which Stanley Washburn meticulously describes the physique of his guide, is a perfect illustration of how the male gaze overlaps with the tourist gaze and is, itself, consumed by it:

Fred Stevens stood six feet and one inch in his stockinged feet. Twenty-nine years old then, he was, with the shoulders and muscles of an athlete, and soft blue eyes that drifted back and forth from the gentleness of a woman's to the glint and fire of a savage's. Big hands, big feet, and a big soul. He was then, and is to-day, a big man, as big a one as I have met in travels in many far corners of this world.¹⁴⁰

Washburn surveys Fred Stevens's body as if it were a landscape in a monarch-of-all-I-survey scene. He takes note of his height, his features, individual body parts and his eyes. Washburn's surveillance of Stevens's body 'proceeds systematically from part to part, quantifying and spatializing, noting color and texture, and finally passing an aesthetic judgement which stressed the body's role as object to be viewed'.¹⁴¹ The ample use of adjectival modifiers in this scene shows that the descriptive strategies employed in scanning a landscape for prospects and

¹³⁹ In Chapter 4 of this book, I offer a thorough theoretical framework for the male-on-male gaze (figured and real) that I conceptualize at the intersection of German colonial discourse, masculine encoded sport culture and internal gender differentiation.

¹⁴⁰ Washburn, *Trails, Trappers, and Tenderfeet*, 6–8.

¹⁴¹ Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 23.

scanning a bodyscape – also for prospects – are all too similar.¹⁴² What Washburn evaluates when eyeing the guide's body is how Fred Stevens – his height, strength and general figure – can be of use to Washburn's own mountain ascent. Curiously, Washburn does so with a remarkable awareness of his description, following the tradition of the male gaze upon female subjects, when he assures the reader a few lines down that 'men are not described by outlining their features, but by telling of their deeds and doings.'¹⁴³ And yet, visually consuming alpine males played a significant role in the transatlantic commodification of mountain culture.

As travel to the Rockies gathered pace towards the late nineteenth century and more and more unskilled climbers roamed the Rockies, the CPR started hiring Swiss mountain guides in 1899 to safely accompany their guests.¹⁴⁴ It is ironic that local Indigenous knowledge on moving safely in the mountains was dismissed and European alpine know-how was introduced through men from the Alps – from Switzerland, Austria and Southern Germany. These guides, often established men in their native mountaineering communities, claimed many first ascents and played a key role in setting up the tourist infrastructure in the Canadian Rockies. It is all the more surprising how readily these men were reduced to physical prowess and their bodies a mere commodity displayed in staged rituals. This had already begun on the passage from the Alps to the Rockies, which was a carefully orchestrated promotional tour with stops in London and major Canadian cities. Swiss guide Edward Feuz Jr. recalls:

As soon as we got to Trafalgar-Square in London we had to show off around the C.P.R. office and walk through the high buildings with our gear, climbing style all the time. We had to walk around the city in knickers, posing for pictures right and left.¹⁴⁵

Completely detached from any alpine setting, this appropriation of mountaineering tradition through the bodies of alpine males was but an entertaining method of attracting more CPR travellers. The scene evokes images of colonial postcards displaying Indigenous people in "traditional" costumes for commodified consumption. Representations like these essentially show what (colonial) travellers want to see and are determined by the consumer, resulting, as

¹⁴² Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 63.

¹⁴³ Washburn, *Trails, Trappers, and Tenderfeet*, 6–8.

¹⁴⁴ Ilona Spaar, *Swiss Guides: Shaping Mountain Culture in Western Canada* (Vancouver: Initial Print & Copy Center, 2010), 1.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Edward Feuz, quoted in Nobs Beat, *Vom Eiger in die Rockies. Berner Oberländer Bergführer im Dienste der Canadian Pacific Railway* (Bern, 1987), 132.

David Spurr explains, in a representation of these bodies that ‘merely reflects the framework of values imposed by the colonizing eye.’¹⁴⁶ The physical appearance of the imported guides was, unsurprisingly, also a recurring theme in print culture. A 1928 brochure, for instance, advertises Jasper Park by proclaiming how visitors can mingle with the ‘picturesque mountain guides in Stetson hat and nail-studded or sheepskin “chaps”’ – positioning the alpine guide as a central object of the tourist gaze, a stock character of the ideal mountain tourism experience.¹⁴⁷ When Arthur O. Wheeler later wishes that guides would pay ‘more careful attention to the details of costume’, as they could ‘fill more nearly the prevailing idea of the hardy and picturesque Swiss mountaineer’, it becomes unmistakable that the male body is a staged commodity in the promotion of Canadian mountaineering.¹⁴⁸ Zac Robinson and Stephen Slemon note that the display of Swiss guides ‘coincided with the enforced going out of Indigenous guides, packers and providers from mountaineering in the Rockies, and from all meaningful participation in the [*sic*] Canada’s western mountain parks.’¹⁴⁹ Thus, the exhibition of alpine bodies in the business of Canadian mountain guides goes hand in hand with eradicating the presence of Indigenous bodies.

To sum up, the exploitation of alpine bodies, both in the literature of the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps, is justified based on their supposed femininity or masculinity. The concept of the gendered mountain, however, plays out strikingly differently in the Rockies and the Alps. As opposed to straightforwardly depicting landscapes as uninhabited, portrayals of extra-European travel tend to feminize landscapes deemed uninhabited, whereas literatures about intra-European travel fetishize local female bodies. In other words, while the gendered mountain serves the dictum of British imperialism in the Rockies, it recognizes human presence and echoes interests of the German Empire in literature about the Alps. The male body, in the end, is neither a child of British nor German imperial rhetoric but, as a commodity of international mountain tourism, the offspring of a new empire. Despite the concept of the gendered mountain originating in different cultural contexts and socio-economic frameworks, the body stands in the service of mountain tourism in both alpine regions, exposing Alpine Orientalism as a fractured and complex cultural phenomenon. The concept of savagery discussed in the next

¹⁴⁶ Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 176.

¹⁴⁷ Williams, *Jasper National Park*, 43.

¹⁴⁸ Wheeler quoted in Esther Fraser, *Wheeler* (Banff: Summerthought, 1978), 51.

¹⁴⁹ Robinson and Slemon, ‘Shining Mountains’, 124.

section, equally mapped onto the bodies of mountain locals, further reveals the conflicting assumptions of Alpine Orientalism.

1.5 The alpine Other as savage

The Other, whether idealized or debased, has been present in colonial discourse since its beginnings, and the critique of the Other is a key element within the discipline of postcolonial critical theory. Like the colonized subject, the alpine Other is characterized as Other through discourses of savagery and primitivism, establishing the binary separation between traveller and travellee and asserting the primacy of the travelling culture over any other.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, mountains played a central role in racial theory. Prominent European intellectuals like John Ruskin, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Albrecht von Haller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe contributed significantly to the discourse surrounding the Alps and the Other. They helped shape the prevailing notion that mountains were home to either the best or worst of human societies. Edward Dickinson underscores the unique significance of the Alps for Germany, serving as a crucial reference point in the evolution of racial theory that extended beyond the colonial era.¹⁵¹

Over a period of more than 200 years, Western projections of an alpine Other have generally fallen into racial dualisms. The classic distinction is between the “savage brute” and the “noble savage”: one echoing a medieval perception of the Other as a degenerate version of Europeanness awaiting a civilizing mission, the other a kind of Romantic idealization, framing the same people as belonging to a long-lost paradise. I will begin with the former: in depictions of savagery, mountain literature resorts to the familiar characteristics of a brutal, deprived, mentally aberrant and deteriorated Orient laid out by Orientalist discourse, and accordingly frames alpine people as dangerous, stupid, dirty and animal-like.¹⁵² Travel accounts set in the Canadian Rockies show that the portrayal of Indigenous peoples as ‘hostile’, ‘wicked’ and ‘stealthy’ is strongly tied to racial difference.¹⁵³ William Baillie-Grohman, for instance, is surprised to see ‘how

¹⁵⁰ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 186.

¹⁵¹ Edward Dickinson, ‘Altitude and Whiteness: Germanizing the Alps and Alpinizing the Germans, 1875–1935’, *German Studies Review* 33, no. 3 (October 2010): 579–602.

¹⁵² Said, *Orientalism*, 50, 40.

¹⁵³ Thorington, *Glittering Mountains*, 108; Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 124; William Baillie-Grohman, *Fifteen Years’ Sport and Life in the Hunting Grounds of Western America and British Columbia* (London: Horace Cox, 1900) 301.

close these stealthy moccasin-shod, almost naked stalkers, will manage to get to their quarry, the dusky hue of their skin assisting them in this.¹⁵⁴ Surprisingly, the link between race and savagery also appears in literature about Austrian mountain people; the same author refers to the Tyrolese as ‘poor and primitive,’ ‘ignorant natives’ and ‘a treacherously cruel people.’¹⁵⁵ As if racial difference bears the concept of the savage brute, travel writers depict Austrian mountain people as ‘Ureinwohner’ and ‘Eingeborene,’ as ‘natives’ with ‘brown, expressive faces.’¹⁵⁶

Adopted from Orientalist discourse, irrationality functions as an additional marker of savagery and mostly operates implicitly through the rhetorical strategy of negation, which denies the alpine Other the abilities that travellers value about themselves. Blakiston’s report contains references in which he tacitly refutes the knowledge of Indigenous people. Instead of accrediting achievements to genuine know-how, a hunter is just ‘lucky enough to procure [...] fresh meat,’ his success attributed to good fortune, and his precise local knowledge downplayed as an assumption in ‘the Indian’s *opinion*’ to cross the main river.¹⁵⁷ The denial of sophistication also translates into the Austrian context, where Baillie-Grohman finds ‘the Tyrolese in matters of daily life’ – not in science, not in politics, not in philosophy – ‘a highly intelligent, bold and excessively hardworking people, distinguished, even from the inhabitants of other mountainous countries.’¹⁵⁸ In this undeniably positive form of stereotyping in which Baillie-Grohman, in an Orientalist manner, reveals his inability to discuss individuals, he implies that he sees no sophistication, certainly not the kind of intellectual capability he accredits to himself, in alpine cultural practice.¹⁵⁹ It might be out of a certain defensiveness of the travel writers’ own cultures, out of the fear to recognize within an already acknowledged human presence also a knowledgeable culture, that many travel writers represent locals in the Alps as outright empty-headed: German nun Erna Felicitas Amadea identifies ‘the seed of imbecility’ in children’s eyes, Hermann von Barth is disgusted by the ‘stupidity and maliciousness’ of an ‘obtuse people’

¹⁵⁴ Baillie-Grohman, *Fifteen Years*, 301.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 42, 15, vii.

¹⁵⁶ Schmidl, *Tirol und die Tiroler*, 23, 24 (The German originals read: ‘Die Ureinwohner waren Rhäzier’ and ‘Die Eingeborene nennt diese seine Sprache nicht’); Ludwig Steub, *Aus Tirol* (Stuttgart: Adolf Bonz, 1880), 168 (the original reads: ‘Die Eingeborenen aber lächelten und fanden, daß sich der biedere Landmann einen ganz niedlichen Jux gemacht.’); Lewald, *Tirol vom Glockner zum Orteles*, 78, 74 (The German original reads: ‘Mit ihr waren einige riesige Männer aus Lahnersbach mitgekommen, mit braunen, ausdrucksvollen Gesichtern und starken Bärten, and ‘die Gesichtszüge der Zillerthaler sind schön, sie zeigen Offenheit und Gutmüthigkeit. Ihre Farbe ist gewöhnlich lichtbraun.’).

¹⁵⁷ Blakiston, *Report of the Exploration*, 2, 10 (my emphasis).

¹⁵⁸ Baillie-Grohman, *Tirol and the Tyrolese*, 5.

¹⁵⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 154.

and Heinrich Heine speaks of Tyroleans displaying an ‘unfathomable depth of stupidity’ and being ‘too dull to even fall ill’.¹⁶⁰

Similar dynamics of heightening oneself by debasing an Other can be observed in the representations of uncleanliness and animality that prevail in literature set in the Alps and in literature pertaining to the Rockies.¹⁶¹ Accounts of squalidness consistently emerge in literature of the Alps, and lamenting the typical ‘Tyrolean filth’ became a key element in alpine travel literature.¹⁶² There is mention of ‘great uncleanliness, poisoning the cabins’, of ‘frouzy’ smelling kitchens, of ‘neatness being severely neglected’ even in the presence of royalty, and recommendations to bring one’s own teakettle, as the water ‘heated in a greasy stewpan over a smoky wood-fire’ is undrinkable.¹⁶³ With ‘Victorian cleaning rituals’ being recognized ‘globally as the God-given sign of Britain’s evolutionary superiority’, the narrative of cleanliness and the lack thereof was deployed to debase cultures in the Alps.¹⁶⁴

Animality is another key trope used to elevate the traveller at the expense of the savage brute.¹⁶⁵ Examples from travel writing about the Rockies show Indigenous people depicted ‘like a fine wild animal’, with an Indigenous person

¹⁶⁰ Römhildstift, *Tagebuch auf einer Reise*, 147 (The German original reads: ‘Es hatte bereits einen ganz übernatürlich ausgedehnten Kopf, um die Lippen das Schlawe, Ohnmächtige der Kraftlosigkeit und in den Augen den sich mit Riesenschritten entwickelnden Keim des Blödsinns im stieren, gläsernen Blicke.’); Hermann von Barth, *Aus den Nördlichen Kalkalpen* (Munich: Heinrich Hugendubel, 1874), 613 (The German original reads: ‘stumpfsinnigem Volk’ and documents ‘Stupidität oder Bosheit der Bewohner’); Heine, *Reisebilder*, 245 (The German original reads: ‘Die Tiroler sind schön, heiter, ehrlich, brav, und von unergründlicher Geistesbeschränktheit. Sie sind eine gesunde Menschenrace, vielleicht weil sie zu dumm sind, um krank sein zu können.’).

¹⁶¹ I only know of one reference in which Indigenous peoples were depicted as filthy. In his journal, Daniel William Harmon renders native cooking habits as unhygienic: ‘The paunch of a male buffalo, when well cooked, is very delicious food. The Natives scarcely ever wash it; but boil it with much of its dung, adhering to it; and even then, the broth has an excellent taste, to those who can forget, or from habit pay no regard to the filth, which settles, to the thickness of two fingers, at the bottom of the kettle. Many consider a broth, made by means of the dung of the cariboo and the hare to be a dainty dish.’ William Kaye Lamb, ed., *Sixteen Years in the Indian Country: The Journal of Daniel Williams Harmon 1800–1816* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), 207.

¹⁶² von Barth, *Aus den Nördlichen Kalkalpen*, 292.

¹⁶³ Römhildstift, *Tagebuch auf einer Reise*, 174, 90, 169–70 (The German original reads: ‘die große Unreinlichkeit, die die Hütten vergiftet’, ‘die Rheinlichkeit sehr vernachlässigt’, ‘der Erzherzog Johann werde sich der Tischgesellschaft zugesellen, so blieb doch dasselbe Tischdudch liegen, das so vielfache Spuren früherer Genüsse an sich trug’); White, *On Foot Through Tyrol*, 221; John Murray, *A Handbook for Travellers in Southern Germany*, 7th ed. (Meran, 2014), 182.

¹⁶⁴ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 207.

¹⁶⁵ Anna Babka, ‘Den Balkan konstruieren. Postkolonialität lesen. Ein Versuch mit Karl Mays Kara Ben Nemsi Effendi aus *In den Schluchten des Balkan*’, in *Narrative im (post-)imperialen Kontext. Literarische Identitätsbildung als Potential im regionalen Spannungsfeld zwischen Habsburg und Hoher Pforte in Mittel- und Südosteuropa*, ed. Matthias Schmidt, Daniela Finzi, Milka Car, and Wolfgang Müller-Funk (Tübingen: Francke, 2005), 111.

of mixed heritage described as an ‘ideal centaur’: half-human/half-animal.¹⁶⁶ In Austrian mountain writing, animalistic comparisons, often collectively employed in literatures within the Canadian context, are confined to guides and “cretins”, those physically deformed individuals with congenital thyroid deficiency who became namesakes for those with mental illness. Felicitas Amadea’s travel diary, for example, points to cretinous ‘deteriorations of humankind’.¹⁶⁷ She wonders how such ‘degenerations of human form’ with ‘an ugliness and an animalistic coat’ can be found in so marvellous a place and considers taking cretinous children with her, for then ‘they would have become *humans*, instead of sinking to the state of the animal [. . .] as completed monstrosities’.¹⁶⁸ Describing cretinism in animal terms was a recurrent phenomenon that attributed ‘almost demonic climbing abilities’ to the deformed.¹⁶⁹ The ability to climb ‘with the certitude of a cat walking on a rooftop’ or like a chamois, the most dominant comparison prevailing to the present day, was often used to distinguish local guides.¹⁷⁰ This animalistic competence never fully credited guides for their substantial acquired skills.

Just as dominant as the Alpine Orientalist conceptualization of the “savage brute” is that of the “noble savage”, which is modelled against industrialism and urbanization and rooted in the enlightened desire for ‘natural innocence, freedom and equality’.¹⁷¹ Very much in line with Rousseau’s notion ‘that man in his natural state is innocent of the artifice required for deception’, ‘honesty’ is one of the qualities most praised in the alpine Others of Canada and Austria.¹⁷² Travel writing further employs attributes such as ‘well-disposed’, ‘harmless’, ‘fine, and manly-looking’ to characterize Canadian mountain people; their Austrian counterparts are similarly lauded as a ‘noble race’, ‘brave’, ‘sincere’, ‘handsome’

¹⁶⁶ William Spotswood Green, *Among the Selkirk Glaciers Being the Account of a Rough Survey in the Rocky Mountain Regions of British Columbia* (London: Macmillan, 1890), 35; Archibald Oswald MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta* (Calgary: Western Canadian History, 1912), 60; Robinson and Slemon, ‘Shining Mountains’, 124.

¹⁶⁷ Römhildstift, *Tagebuch auf einer Reise*, 157. The German original reads: ‘Aber wenn man dieß alles mit entzücktem Auge und gerührtem Herzen anerkennt, muß man schauern vor der Entartung der Menschheit, die hier einen so grellen Contrast mit den Reizen lebloser Gegenstände darstellt.’

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 175. The German original reads: ‘und es wären *Menschen* aus ihnen geworden, statt daß sie recht bald als vollendete Mißgeburten physisch und geistig in den Stand der Thierheit hinabsinken.’

¹⁶⁹ Martin Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht: Eine Bildergeschichte des Alpinismus* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 153.

¹⁷⁰ Anton von Ruther, ‘Aus dem österreichischen Hochgebirg. Ersteigung der hohen Wildspitze im Oetzthale’ (1861), *Mittheilung der K. K. Geographischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 6/1862 (Vienna, 1863), 226; Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht*, 153.

¹⁷¹ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 236.

¹⁷² Spurr, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 160; Blakiston, *Report of the Exploration*, 14; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 282; Marie Alker Von Günther, *Tales and Legends of the Tyrol* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1874), vii; Murray, *Handbook for Travellers*, 255; Heine, *Reisebilder*, 245.

and 'pretty'.¹⁷³ Additionally, a number of attributes are bounced around that indicate an incipient tourist trade in Salzburg and Tyrol, where a 'merry' and 'industrious race' wins over guests with cordiality and friendliness.¹⁷⁴

Travel writers, as with Rousseau's noble savage who lives in the 'absence of all rules', frequently associate so-called savagery with freedom.¹⁷⁵ The ideal alpine savage is one who defends his freedom and works against enslavement; in the Canadian context, this figure is only found in accounts by American travellers. US geographer Walter Wilcox's depiction of the Stoney Nakoda as 'independent and unconquerable' is unique, and the adjectives he invokes are untraceable in British travel writing, which, acting in the service of empire, managed to sidestep the freedoms of the American *Bill of Rights* entirely and avoid accrediting any rights to the people the empire sought to conquer.¹⁷⁶ In lieu of the *Bill of Rights*, the alpine freedom ascribed to the noble savage was confined, if not redirected, to the Alps. Multiple sources praise a certain Tyrolean 'freedom', 'unselfish love of country', 'warlike spirit' and the Tyroleans' 'chivalrous independent' character.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the manner in which travel writers frame Tyrolean alpine liberty is in line with the master/slave dialectic: Henry D. Inglis 'could perceive nothing in the external appearance of the Tyrolean and the Austrian that indicated the master and the slave' and Heinrich Heine likens Tyrol's fate in the Treaty of Schönbrunn (in which the Habsburg monarch broke his vow to protect the region) with that of slaves on a slave ship, who are promised freedom in moments of crisis and sold to the highest bidder in the next.¹⁷⁸ The Tyrolean

¹⁷³ John Barrow, *Tour in Austrian Lombardy, the Northern Tyrol, and Bavaria in 1840* (London: John Murray, 1841), 282; Murray, *Handbook for Travellers*, 358.

¹⁷⁴ Murray, *Handbook for Travellers*, 358; Aloys Schreiber, *Anleitung für Reisende durch Baden, Württemberg, Baiern in der Sämmtlichen Schweiz, Tyrol, Salzburg, in Rheinbaiern und dem Elsass* (Heidelberg: Joseph Engelmann, 1835), 47 ('The German original reads: 'Das Zillerthal, das sich hier mündet, ist durch den Fleiß und die Industrie seiner Bewohner, die bei aller Lust zum herumziehen in die Fremde doch mit seltener Liebe an ihren heimatlichen Bergen hängen, berühmt'); Heine, *Reisebilder*, 245 ('The German original reads: 'so putzig herzlich'); Busk, *Valleys of Tirol*, 89–90; Römhildstift, *Tagebuch auf einer Reise*, 88 ('The German original reads: 'Gutmüthige, zutrauliche Menschen, die nicht betteln, ob sie gleich oft ärmlich genug aussehen, begrüßen freundlich den Fremdling').

¹⁷⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, *Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 273.

¹⁷⁶ Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 293.

¹⁷⁷ 'freedom' (Murray, *Handbook for Travellers*, 274; Baillie-Grohman, *Tyrol and the Tyrolese*, vi; Inglis, *Tyrol*, 123); White, *On Foot through Tyrol*, 200; and Baillie-Grohman, *Tyrol and the Tyrolese*, 7, 13.

¹⁷⁸ Inglis, *Tyrol*, 123; Heine, *Reisebilder*, 244 ('The German original reads: 'Tröstet Euch, arme Schelme! Ihr seid nicht die Einzigen, denen etwas versprochen worden. Passiert es doch oft auf großen Sklavenschiffen, daß man bei großen Stürmen und wenn das Schiff in Gefahr geräth, zu den schwarzen Menschen seine Zuflucht nimmt, die unten im dunklen Schiffsraum zusammengestaut liegen. Man bricht dann ihre eisernen Ketten, und verspricht heilig und theuer, ihnen die Freiheit zu schenken, wenn durch ihre Thätigkeit das Schiff gerettet werde. Die blöden Schwarzen jubeln

Rebellion was of great interest to British writers, and travel tales set in the Alps contain entire chapters dedicated to its figurehead, Andreas Hofer. Seen as an 'embodiment of Tyrolean faith and bravery', he was celebrated in four sonnets by no other than William Wordsworth and, in an Orientalist twist, even compared to 'Muhammed', 'the Arab merchant'.¹⁷⁹

To historicize, however exemplary, the discourse surrounding the alpine Other also means addressing the role of time as a carrier of meaning, which travel writing employs to define the relationship between those travelling and those travelled to. We learn from Johannes Fabian that the concept of savagery 'is essentially a temporal concept'.¹⁸⁰ As an instrument of power, 'time may give form to relations of power and inequality under the conditions of capitalist industrial production', consigning mountain people to the past.¹⁸¹ The Austrian Alps become a favourable tourist destination through temporal distancing when travel writers admire 'the chivalrous manner of society some five or six hundred years ago', 'a curious medley of ancient and half-civilised customs', and the 'ancient mysteries and morris-dances' in Tyrol.¹⁸² Alpine cultures in the Rockies rarely become the object of travel based on their cultural past or even their present culture (again signalling the denial of human presence in Canada) but are produced as a tourist commodity that exists outside of time. The Alpine Club of Canada advertises its camp and the Rockies as 'a vast, towering wonderland created for timeless days of climbing', and the CNR promotes Jasper as 'a setting as changeless as time itself'.¹⁸³ The CNR's promise that the Canadian mountains 'do not commemorate' but 'only prophesy'¹⁸⁴ exemplifies the negation of history in promotional documents that renders the Rockies a land devoid of time and awaiting transformation.

nun hinauf ans Tageslicht, Hurrah! Sie eilen zu den Pumpen, stampfen aus Leibeskräften, helfen, wo nur zu helfen ist, klettern, springen, kappen die Masten, winden die Tuae, kurz arbeiten so lange bis die Gefahr vorüber ist. Alsdann werden sie, wie sich von selbst versteht, wieder nach dem Schiffsraum hinabgeführt, wieder ganz bequem angefesselt, und in ihrem dunkeln Elend machen sie demagogische Betrachtungen über Versprechungen von Seelenverkäufern, deren ganze Sorge, nach überstandener Gefahr, dahin geht, noch einige Seelen mehr einzutauschen.')

¹⁷⁹ White, *On Foot Through Tyrol*, 215; Lewald, *Tirol vom Glockner zum Orteles*, 317. (The German original reads: 'Gleich Muhammed wurde Hofer in seinem vierzigsten Jahr zum Haupte seines Volkes erkoren, gleich Muhammed ward er Krieger und nahm seinen Platz in der grossen Weltgeschichte ein; diess sind aber auch die einzigen Beziehungen zwischen beiden. Der arme Saumer vom Jaufenberge und der arabische Kaufmann böten keine ferneren Vergleichspunkte dar, selbst wenn Hofers Katastrophe nicht so traurig gewesen wäre.')

¹⁸⁰ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 18.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, ix, 16.

¹⁸² Baillie-Grohman, *Tyrol and the Tyrolese*, 14, 18; Barrow, *Tour in Austrian Lombardy*, 283.

¹⁸³ Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise*, 114; Department of Mines and Resources, *Jasper National Park, Alberta*, n.p.

¹⁸⁴ Canadian National Railways, *Jasper National Park*, 4.

In these positively and openly formulated atemporal ascriptions, it would be easy to neglect how value-laden literary manifestations really are surrounding the figure of the savage. Descriptions of savagery – be they signifying the noble or the brute – existed side by side: explorers, historians, pioneers, geographers, politicians and geologists alike make derogatory as well as celebratory comments. Blakiston praises the Stoney Nakoda as honest and quickly adds that it is a quality which he has ‘never yet met with in any Indians’ and Walter Wilcox’s portrayal is of a people ‘exceptionally faithful’, displaying ‘unusually good traits’; he thus praises the Stoney Nakoda as an exception among otherwise hostile peoples.¹⁸⁵ Contradictory traits are constantly assigned to the objects of Alpine Orientalism. Within Alpine Orientalist discourse, literature can easily frame the Stoney Nakoda as ‘wicked’ on one page and ‘good-hearted and honest’ on the next, and at one and the same time as ‘excellent riders and notorious horse thieves.’¹⁸⁶ The same holds true for travel literature set in Austria, in which writers refer to alpine locals as ‘brave’, ‘sincere’ and handsome, but rarely forget to emphasize their simple-mindedness, ugliness and uncleanliness.¹⁸⁷

Accordingly, Alpine Orientalist discourse surrounding the savage, in Johannes Fabian’s phrase, ‘is not about peoples in the real world’ but first and foremost about “savagery” as ‘an internal referent of a discourse’ – as a constructed object within a discipline.¹⁸⁸ It is irrelevant, therefore, whether the stereotypes invoked are positive or negative. Wilcox has two conceptual categories available to him – the brute and the noble savage – and he uses both. This does not mean that the alpine Other is either A or B. It means Wilcox knows them by their kind. In other words, it shows that the Alpine Orientalist apparatus of information gathering, of knowing the alpine Other, works.

¹⁸⁵ Blakiston, *Report of the Exploration*, 14; Wilcox, *Rockies of Canada*, 282.

¹⁸⁶ Coleman, *Canadian Rockies*, 124–5; MacRae, *History of the Province*, 76.

¹⁸⁷ Barrow, *Tour in Austrian Lombardy*, 282–3 (‘[T]he Tyrolese are certainly a noble race of men, well-made and well set-up, with a lofty and erect bearing; their moral character is that of a brave, sincere, and simple-minded people, not much given to boisterous mirth, but rather of a serious and sedate turn – blunt in their manners[.]’); von Schaden, *Taschenbuch für Reisende*, 28 (The German original reads: ‘Ihre Farbe ist gewöhnlich lichtbraun, und ihre besondere Zierde sind wohlgeordnete, sehr weiße Zähne, welche sonst in Tyrol gerade nicht häufig getroffen werden.’).

¹⁸⁸ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 77.

1.6 Superiority and the Robinsons of mountain travel

The previous sections have shown, in different and interrelated ways, that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, mountain travel to the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps often served the colonial fantasy of superiority – at times national, at other times racial, sexual, cultural or economic. Alpine Orientalism, shaped strongly by a superior-inferior polarity, is therefore as (if not more) revealing of the travellers and writers who formed the discourse – their cultural and economic backgrounds, their education and values, their preoccupations and their relationships to the alpine world – as it is about the places and people they wrote about in their visits. From the authors and texts discussed so far, a certain Alpine Orientalist type emerges that tended to travel and write from a position (or positions) of privilege, whether that is the position of being male (only four out of the more than eighty accounts in my corpus were authored by women), university-educated, a clergywoman or -man, wealthy and of upper or (upper) middle-class background, an industrialist or a scientist. Alpine Orientalism, as much as the mountains themselves, functioned as a playground for asserting one's own superiority against a discursively produced, empty, sensual, backward and animal-like alpine, so that by the mid-twentieth century Alpine Orientalism had become a discourse in which writers and mountaineers could remake and restore not only the mountains but themselves.¹⁸⁹ In this final section, I wish to spotlight a figure of that kind: Robinson Crusoe and his various manifestations in mountain literature leading up to the present day. The Robinsonade models two characteristic figures of mountain travel, the colonialist of capital accumulation and the castaway faced with savages on the fringes of civilization on the other.

By depicting mountain travellers fashioned like Robinson Crusoe, narratives of travel to the Canadian Rockies draw parallels between imperial conquest and leisurely alpine exploration. One case in point is James Carnegie's published diary, in which he compares himself to the man James Joyce called 'the prototype of the British colonist'.¹⁹⁰

Dashing on my clothes I started in pursuit, carrying a gun on each shoulder, Robinson Crusoe fashion – my rifle for a long shot, and the smoothbore with

¹⁸⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 166.

¹⁹⁰ James Joyce, 'Daniel Defoe', in *Buffalo Studies*, ed. Joseph Prescott (Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1964), 24–5.

the big bullet for close quarters – Lagrance and Antoine following with other weapons.¹⁹¹

Far from being stranded on a deserted island for twenty-eight years, James Carnegie nonetheless arms himself in “Robinson Crusoe fashion” and makes his travel through Hudson Bay Company territory a re-enactment of colonial conquest – a triumph in its own right. Mary Schäffer also renders the exploration of Maligne Lake in Robinsonian terms: the men ‘had a Robinson Crusoe sort of habit of falling over the right thing at the right time.’¹⁹² Schäffer’s rendering of her fellow explorers and Carnegie’s reflections of his personal attempts in the Rockies are examples of how the representations of a colonial traveller prefigure those of a mountain wilderness available for capitalist consumption.

B. W. Mitchell’s account of his trail life continues where Schäffer and Carnegie leave off and gear towards the commercial part of the Robinson Crusoe story. Mitchell describes the guide and not the traveller through the figure of Robinson. Mitchell’s ‘Robinson is a true being of the peaks’ and he earns the sobriquet of Defoe’s protagonist by being ‘one of the very Genii of the mountains.’¹⁹³ The mountain guide shares with his literary namesake the experience of ‘leaving home to find his fortune travelling the Atlantic colonial trade routes.’¹⁹⁴ Also like Defoe’s hero, the guide Robinson is – as most hired guides were at the time – ‘not bred to any Trade.’¹⁹⁵ The business of mountains, like ‘the colonial trade[,] found its workers among those who had not been “bred” to anything else.’¹⁹⁶

The last and perhaps most insightful version of Robinson appears in Henry D. Inglis’s Tyrolean travel account. The scene echoes yet another one of Defoe’s motifs, paving the way for neocolonial versions of Alpine Orientalism:

Every traveller entering the Tyrol, must be struck, as I was, with the dress of the peasantry: we see stockings without feet to them – the reverse we have all seen – but this appears a strange usage: hats, tapering to the crown, something like Robinson Crusoe’s; generally with green silk bands, and green tassels hanging from the crown at one side.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹¹ Carnegie, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains* (Toronto: James Campbell and Son, 1875), 197.

¹⁹² Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 244.

¹⁹³ Mitchell, *Trail Life*, 12.

¹⁹⁴ Lee Morrissey, ‘The Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660–1780’, in *English Literature in Context*, ed. Paul Poplawski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 286.

¹⁹⁵ Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner . . . Written by Himself*, 3rd ed. (London: W. Taylor, 1899), 2.

¹⁹⁶ Morrissey, ‘Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660–1780’, 286.

¹⁹⁷ Inglis, *Tyrol*, 118.

Curiously, the Robinson in Inglis's account is neither a traveller nor an imported professional; he is the alpine local. He is a Robinson who, like Defoe's protagonist, sees profit in travel. Concerned, as usual, with the economics of trade, Defoe's hero contends that 'all the good Things of this World are no farther good to us than they are for our Use' and enslaves nature for economic gain.¹⁹⁸ This reference to *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), seen by many as a colonial pamphlet of economic individualism, has us view alpine locals in Tyrol as strategic participants invested in the moneymaking industry of mountain tourism as early as 1837, when Inglis's account was published. In a second instance, the passage suggests that, in mountain travel, superiority does not necessarily equate to being a mountain outsider. The power and control asserted through Alpine Orientalism may, and often does, come from mountain communities themselves. In fact, in contemporary mountain tourism, it is often a local elite that reiterates Alpine Orientalist imagery, language and power.

If Alpine Orientalism remains as influential a discourse as it has been historically, one can expect its impact to continue. This consideration is deeply rooted in postcolonial theory, whose thinkers, despite considerable divergencies, agree that the 'past is not past'.¹⁹⁹ It also hinges on Said's assertion that Orientalism is not merely a 'historical phenomenon' and a 'way of thought' but also a 'contemporary problem and a material reality'.²⁰⁰ The materiality of Alpine Orientalism persists: although no longer on the landing page, the Canada Park's website continues to advertise its Cave and Basin National Historic Site with reiterations of William McCardell's nineteenth-century response to the cave in Sulphur Mountain as 'some fantastic dream from a tale of the Arabian Nights',²⁰¹ a forest warden describes the Austrian woods in terms of the 'Serengeti' where the density of the game population is maintained to entertain trophy hunters;²⁰² the marketing strategy of the Saalbach-Hinterglemm ski hills relies on promoting them as a 'Ski Circus', with clowns who occasionally walk the tightrope between ski lifts;²⁰³ and hundreds of magic carpets, installed on training hills around the

¹⁹⁸ Defoe, *Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, 152.

¹⁹⁹ Graham Huggan, *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 31.

²⁰⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 44.

²⁰¹ 'Culture', *Canada Parks, Cave and Basin Historic Site*, published 26 November 2022. <https://parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/ab/caveandbasin/culture#>.

²⁰² Matthias Schickhofer, *Schwarzbuch Alpen: Warum wir unsere Berge retten müssen* (Vienna: Brandstätter, 2017), 58.

²⁰³ Karl Stankiewicz, *Wie der Zirkus in die Berge kam: Die Alpen zwischen Idylle und Rummelplatz* (Munich: Oekom, 2012), 56.

globe, continue to transport young skiers up the mountains and instil into them the feeling of an Alpine Orient.

As the 'new forms of Empire have not necessarily erased the pull' of the old, Alpine Orientalism remains a discourse that should be resisted.²⁰⁴ Since Alpine Orientalist discourse is 'open as are all discursive practices', it is available to reinterpretation.²⁰⁵ The four examples of contemporary mountain literature discussed in the following chapters reinterpret and engage with the particular colonial codifications written into and onto mountains. These texts operate with and against the same tropes as those involved in Alpine Orientalist discourse. What the next chapters present, then, are forms of rewriting which interrogate how contemporary mountain literature, as much as the contemporary material reality of mountain mass tourism, links back to conceptualizations of mountains as Oriental, empty, available for conquest, sexualized, temporally distanced and inferior. While only Angie Abdou's *The Canterbury Trail* (2011) and Felix Mitterer's *Die Piefke-Saga* (1991) relate their mountain texts to the traditional – Oriental – places of colonial conquest, all contemporary texts dismantle the idea that mountains are empty and vast places; available for a consolidation of the self. In their texts, all four writers critique a tourism industry that mobilizes the colonial mountaineering imagery involved with being the first to set foot on unknown land in order to, paradoxically, attract a crowd. Just as much as the concept of an empty mountain is eroded, contemporary literature engages with the mountain as a gendered site and all four texts, some more explicitly than others, write back to the signification of mountains as a sexual playground. The following chapters will show that the observation that texts about the Canadian Rockies more frequently engage with feminizations of alpine landscape, while those on the Austrian Alps focus on the bodies of alpine locals, lives on in rewritings of Alpine Orientalism. These rewritings respond very clearly to the fact that alpine Others have been conceived of differently in the Rockies and Alps, where the concept of savagery is associated with sexual availability in Austrian mountain literature and Canadian texts respond to degradations of Indigenous peoples based on racial differences framed as inferior and animalistic. The four contemporary texts focused upon in the following chapters all write back to such practices of heightening oneself by devaluing the alpine Other and make clear

²⁰⁴ Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund, eds, *Postcolonial Travel Writing: Critical Explorations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 8.

²⁰⁵ Stephen Slemon, 'Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 23, no. 1 (1998): 164.

that mountain peoples and places cannot possibly be consigned to the past if we wish to find alternatives to mountain mass tourism.

To sum up, the contemporary texts dealt with in this study repeatedly return to Alpine Orientalist codifications. The ways in which the following chapters approach contemporary literatures will be strikingly different from the way I have approached the historical texts here. Instead of a concept-based wide reading of Alpine Orientalism and in pursuit of a literary analysis that allows me to simultaneously acknowledge a discursive framework and the liberations of a critical rewriting, the next chapters more effectively engage with the forms, rather than the formulas, of mountain writing. While this first chapter has demonstrated how Alpine Orientalist discourse can be conceptually framed and has served to structure the rewritings that come after, the following chapters present the unique and interrelating ways in which literature, not only as cultural but as literary practice, responds to these conceptualizations and transforms the stories surrounding them into new forms. The following chapters, then, seek not only to trace the various manifestations of Alpine Orientalism in four texts by contemporary writers but to articulate the specific literariness through which they write back.

Time

Alpine writing back in Angie Abdou's *The Canterbury Trail*

'If you don't have a story, you don't have anything,' says Paul Ragusa in the epigraph of *The Canterbury Trail*.¹ In a celebration of alpine storytelling, Angie Abdou writes back to Ragusa's assertion. Her novel about mountain pilgrims haunted by the spectres of their relationship to the alpine landscape in Coalton, a fictionalized version of Fernie, British Columbia, is a literary tribute to alpine storytelling across time that may be phrased optimistically: if you have stories, you have everything, including all you need to face mountain mass tourism. *The Canterbury Trail* (2011) revives numerous stories and forms of storytelling, all circling around "mountains" and "travel", from local Indigenous legends to Chaucer's tales – to which Abdou's novel pays tribute and with which it shares its dedication for storytelling as well as similarities in character composition, focalization and structure. The novel brings together fourteen distinct characters, loosely categorized as hermit, ski bum, local, trustafarian,² foreigner, redneck, mill worker, urbanite, rad chick, home-wrecker, lesbian, hippie, realtor and mother, who all travel along the Canterbury Trail to the backcountry hut called Camelot. Modelled on Chaucer's pilgrims, the characters in Abdou's novel symbolize a cross-section of ski-town society. In this manner, the novel becomes an ideal site to investigate the multiple voices with which contemporary mountain literature rewrites, and writes back to, Alpine Orientalism. In this chapter, I will argue that the kind of "writing back" that *The Canterbury Trail* performs is a response that goes far beyond an exclusively antagonistic counter-discourse, taking into

¹ Angie Abdou, *The Canterbury Trail* (Victoria, BC: Brindle & Glass, 2011), n.p.

² 'Trustafarian' is a colloquial, mildly derogatory, term for a rich, usually white, young person with a bohemian lifestyle, who lives off family wealth. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'Trustafarian', accessed 3 December 2019. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/247676?redirectedFrom=trustafarian#eid>.

account past, present and future. This argument builds strongly on the strategies of “writing back”, which entered postcolonial discourse with Salman Rushdie’s ‘first great stroke with the decolonizing pen’, and which postcolonial critics have since understood as a set of strategies and techniques that can be used to recover history.³ In the process of rewriting history, these strategies may also provide a path for guiding mountain culture towards a hopeful future.

Beginning with the past, this chapter begins with a tale older than human settlement in the Elk Valley, the Ghost rider myth:

According to Legend, William Fernie had promised to marry an Indian Princess to learn the source of her sacred black stone necklace. It is said that after learning the location of the Morrissey Coal Seam, Fernie stopped seeing the Princess and a curse was placed on the Elk Valley. Although the curse was later lifted, the ghost of the Indian Chief riding his horse with his jilted daughter at his side can still be seen on summer evenings among the shadows of Mount Hosmer’s face.⁴

This version of the curse narrative, simplified to fit the postcard format along with a photograph of the legendary shadow, is repeatedly offered to tourists as *the* story of Fernie. The tale might have its roots in the Ktunaxa tradition of avoiding the Elk Valley.⁵ However, since the tale contains the principal characters of colonial narratives – chief, princess, explorer, businessman and warrior – it also marks the beginning of the commodification of Kootenay mountain riches. The tale serves as a kind of origin story and, over the past decades, has been as exploited as the valley it cursed. Once it was recognized that the Ghost rider story travelled well and it was fused with the Mount Hosmer shadow in a brochure from the Chamber of Commerce, the legend became a ‘tantalizing product in the flourishing market of outdoor recreation.’⁶ In hiking guides, on t-shirts, mugs and jerseys of the town’s hockey team, the commodified image of the Ghost rider pulls one into the mythical unknown of mountain spaces. Ironically, the story that damned a greedy overreacher with flood and fire is now one of the most utilized narratives in Fernie’s tourism industry.

Although never explicitly referenced in *The Canterbury Trail*, the ski town’s most widely marketed tale shares several similarities with Abdou’s novel: it

³ Salman Rushdie, ‘The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance’, *Times*, 3 July 1982, 8.

⁴ H. Georgi, *The Legend of the Ghost rider Lives on in the Shadows of Mount Hosmer* (Fernie, BC, Canada, n.d.).

⁵ See Leslie Robertson, *Imagining Difference: Legend, Curse and Spectacle in a Canadian Mining Town* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005) for different versions of the curse and its effects on the Fernie community.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

responds to mountains traded as capital, exposes the commodification of alpine stories and anthropomorphizes the mountain to allow for a vengeful riding/writing back. Most importantly, however, it allows the reader to conceptualize alpine “writing back” through the figure of the ghost. According to Graham Huggan, who introduces the figure of the ghost to postcolonial theory via Derrida, spectres are characterized by an ‘untimeliness,’ by their ability to unsettle and transcend time.⁷ Their ‘temporal uncertainty’ becomes a shadow space – an in-between – in which past, present and future are indistinguishable from one another.⁸ In the same way that the figure of the ghost transcends time, it also ‘elides the distance between the actual and the imagined,’ which allows for a haunting presence to signify an unfinished history as well as the possibility of entering an imaginary place.⁹ If a Ghost rider haunting the exploiters of mountains can be seen as an itinerant figure of an occluded and unfinished history, Abdou’s *The Canterbury Trail* is an articulation of a desire to end that process or, in Huggan’s words, ‘to find a time – out of time – and a place – beyond place – where the haunting might cease.’¹⁰ This place, I propose, is the story. And it is riding/writing. The Ghost rider’s phonetic relative, “ghostwriter”, has a peculiar affinity to the postcolonial, ‘reclaiming the rare usage of “nègre” to mean “ghostwriter”’.¹¹ Kyle Wanberg, who theorized the ghostwriter for African literature, sees a “heterogeneous concatenation of voices” in the compound of “ghost” and “writer”.¹² Together, the two terms signify a transformation of ‘works from an oral archive into writing’ in a process that can ‘seek out traces of the past in the present.’¹³ *The Canterbury Trail* revives oral traditions and welcomes the ghosts of alpine past in the present, serving as a perfect point of departure for an exploration of alpine writing back, shaped by ghosts, time and stories.

The book that haunts this chapter in a most positive sense is *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), the canonical text that, at an early stage of postcolonial literary criticism, laid out tactics of writing back. This chapter’s first section (2.1) is dedicated to writing back as an interrogation of dominating views in mountain travel and engages with alpine pasts through a critical investigation

⁷ Graham Huggan, *Extreme Pursuits: Travel/Writing in an Age of Globalization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 137.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gillian Beer, ‘Ghosts’, *Essays in Criticism* 28, no. 3 (1978): 260; Huggan, *Extreme Pursuits*, 144.

¹⁰ Ibid., 147.

¹¹ Kyle Wanberg, ‘Ghostwriting History: Subverting the Reception of *Le Regard du Roi* and *Le Devoir de Violence*’, *Comparative Literature Studies* 50, no. 4 (2013): 613.

¹² Ibid., 590.

¹³ Ibid., 595.

of Alpine Orientalism. Section 2.2 explores the silencing powers of Alpine Orientalist discourse and acknowledges this muting as being responsible ‘for the unspoken, unrepresented, pasts that haunt the historical present.’¹⁴ Section 2.3, then, revolves around the different forms in which a haunted language can escape its shadows and write back in voices of its own. In Section 2.4, alpine writing back decidedly departs from its colonial forefathers and reaches back to a time when a personified mountain was a fundamental part of alpine imaginaries. Finally, Section 2.5 shows that it is through the regeneration of alpine myth that Western notions of time can be disrupted and new possibilities can be opened up.¹⁵ In this chapter, we follow these different features of alpine writing back in *The Canterbury Trail*’s three-part structure, which takes the reader from Alpine Orientalist inscriptions to failed communication and an opening up of a mythical past. This chapter also works to stake out the terrain on which contemporary mountain literature critically engages with mountain tourism, serving as a springboard for the chapters that follow.

2.1 Renegotiating Alpine Orientalism

When Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin take up Rushdie’s dictum of writing back to the centre, they do so predominantly to ‘portray the literary strategies used to oppose imperialist discourse.’¹⁶ Writing back in postcolonial theory has therefore most commonly been a “back” in the sense of “against” – a writing resisting the assumptions of the centre.¹⁷ In alpine writing back, the “against” is not merely directed at one imperial centre but often also contests a number of centres of discursive hegemony. It writes back to the British obsession with mountaineering in the Bernese Oberland, to imperial and alpinist institutions in London, to colonial discourse and to Romantic literature and imagery, renegotiating Alpine Orientalism at large. *The Canterbury Trail* confronts the centres of discursive hegemony in three major ways: first by countering Alpine Orientalism in imitation, via ‘a mimicry of the centre’;¹⁸ second by emphasizing

¹⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 18.

¹⁵ Bill Ashcroft, ‘Future Thinking: Postcolonial Utopianism’, in *The Future of Postcolonialism*, ed. Chantal Zabus (New York: Routledge, 2015), 244.

¹⁶ Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*, trans. Adam Blauhut (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 139.

¹⁷ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

the tropes that mountain travel shares with colonial expansion; and, finally, by deconstructing these very tropes in what Edward Said calls a ‘disruption of European narratives.’¹⁹

Abdou establishes her writing back as an imitation of Alpine Orientalist discourse in part I of her novel by employing concepts such as retreat, (anti-) conquest, gender, the sublime, solitude and wilderness. Regardless of how conflicting the fourteen mountain pilgrim’s expectations for their weekend getaways are, all of them see mountains as a hideout, an escape, a sanctuary from a world they seek to leave behind. ‘Backcountry touring,’ Shanny contends, ‘could easily be the missed solution to the world’s problems.’²⁰ Like Boccaccio’s escapees from plague-ridden Florence, they flee, and each character narrates a chapter in the first part of the novel. While the mountain becomes a place of retreat, each traveller becomes the Decameronian “king”.

As kings, the travellers participate in (anti-)conquest. They claim, name and take possession of a gendered mountain landscape. From the outset, when the hermit Heinz Wilhelm Wittiger escapes the loss of his wife by conquering the mountain, the narrative asserts the imperial relationship between traveller and mountain as one of ruler and ruled:

At first, he just wandered – finding the quickest way to mountaintop, then the most scenic, then the most likely to spot wildlife, then the path with a well-placed swimming spot or a nicely shaded nook for an afternoon nap. Eventually, he began marking his routes – more to leave evidence of his existence than to save himself from getting lost. By then he knew the way – *all* the ways – but naming a certain incline or a particular creek-crossing gave him an inexplicable satisfaction. He didn’t want to name the squirrels and birds. He didn’t need a ‘Chip’ and a ‘Chirp’, and he had no interest in being the crazy old hermit who deluded himself that the animals were his friends. Instead he named the land.²¹

Heinz retreats to the mountains and finds an incomprehensible gratification in the opportunities they offer for colonial play. Like a ruler of an imperial kingdom, he sets out on a hunt for superlatives, leaves evidence of his own existence, and names the places he “discovers” in the process. For Heinz, the mountain is now ‘his kingdom of forest trails.’²² When reading his chapter in part one, it seems almost impossible to imagine anyone outdoing his imperial acts.

¹⁹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 216.

²⁰ Abdou, *Canterbury Trail*, 68.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²² *Ibid.*, 4–5.

But the novel insistently reminds readers that Heinz is not the only emperor, with ‘each claiming the land as their own, insisting upon the right to name it, the power to decide how to use it.’²³ The other urban escapees literally follow Heinz’s footsteps. There is the foreigner Fredrik, who ‘had pulled out his pocket knife and sat carving deep, thick lines into the kitchen table. “I WAS HERE.”’²⁴ There are beds claimed with ‘packs and wet clothing strewn possessively across each’ and dogs ‘eager to mark their territory.’²⁵ That each action repeatedly contests a previous claim becomes most apparent when Shanny challenges Heinz’s rule by imagining herself ‘the Queen of the Jujubes,’ not in his but in ‘her Candied Kingdom.’²⁶ Competing claims repeated time and again through various perspectives reveal the arbitrariness with which humans have sought to control landscapes in mountain travel. Each assertion aims to outdo the previous one. And each ascent sets its own little record.

Apart from outright imitations of alpine conquest, *The Canterbury Trail* also reiterates strategies of anti-conquest via the conceptual emptying of land and the indication of its availability. Claudette, for instance, sees ‘in every direction [. . .] another peak to summit, another forest to explore, another river to ride,’ as if the only purpose of mountains, woods and streams was to be climbed, surveyed or used for transport.²⁷ Additionally, “in every direction” evokes the kind of open formalism discussed in Chapter 1, creating through vastness an empty placeholder to be filled with travellers’ imaginations. Replete with space-emptying gestures, the novel’s first part writes back to mountain literature that values mountains predominantly for offering spaces untainted by humanity. In offering a ‘valley so untouched that he could convince himself he was the only man on earth,’ a ‘virgin blanket of sparkling white fluff’ and a ‘completely untracked [. . .] landscape with not a single footmark in sight,’²⁸ *The Canterbury Trail* mimics the rhetoric of negation that enabled imperial claims on mountains in the first place. Moreover, by deploying words such as “virgin” and “blanket”, the author endows the now gendered mountains and bedworthy landscape with a kind of sex appeal.

In its parody of Alpine Orientalism, the novel also seeks to gender mountains in different ways. Allusions to the erotic, from environmental romanticization to

²³ Ibid., 240.

²⁴ Ibid., 191.

²⁵ Ibid., 13.

²⁶ Ibid., 68 (my emphasis).

²⁷ Ibid., 53–4.

²⁸ Ibid., 47, 67.

sexual penetration, which have circulated in mountain travel since the nineteenth century, echo from the Canterbury Trail, or, as the novel has it in short form, “Cunt”. The hippie Cosmos believes ‘Mother Nature always took care of Her children’ and sees in the mountain a female caregiver, while Loco and SOR refer to ‘tits deep’ powder as a ‘nasty whore’.²⁹ In the heteronormative world of Alpine Orientalism, it is only natural, then, that a rendering of mountains as female involves Coalton, the fictional stand-in for Fernie, becoming the masculine counterpart, the ‘Mansland’ and ‘Sausage Town’.³⁰ Suggesting that nature is calling for male penetration by enticing her conquerors with extensive snowfall, Kevin states, ‘she’s a-comin’ down now, boys’ and concludes that ‘someone [should] give that sky an atta-boy’.³¹ In this case, as in many other accounts of ‘macho big mountain skiing’ and a cabin reeking of testosterone, mountains are to be mounted chiefly to assert masculinity. The violence inherent in such acts is foregrounded when SOR caresses his skis and announces, ‘you don’t make love to these skis. You fuck them.’³² Furthermore, in keeping with much of early alpine travel literature, women are the Others in Abdou’s alpine writing back, and their exclusion is a central element in *The Canterbury Trail*. Two travelling parties originally plan their retreats as all-male and find that the presence of women spoils their trip. For Kevin and Fredrik, Claudette is an ‘intruder’, and Lanny asserts that mountains are ‘no place for a pregnant lady’.³³ This is not to say that female travellers are innocent bystanders in the aggressive eroticization in mountain travel. Shanny and Alison, who were ‘both here for the dick’, see in their mountain getaway the promise of sexual play.³⁴ Shanny uses the trip to explore same-sex fantasies, while Alison calls her journalistic exploration ‘under the covers research’ and wants to have sex with the native Cree, who goes by “F-Bomb”, a name I will unpack in a later section of this chapter.³⁵

Multiple displays of imperial behaviour, conceptual emptying and sexualization of alpine landscape make the first part of the novel a flamboyant imitation of early mountain travel literature. Over 160 pages, the text firmly roots itself in mountain tourism and the colonial legacy of travel. In the process, the narrative connects present-day mountain tourism to the past, emphasizing

²⁹ Ibid., 65, 259, 149.

³⁰ Ibid., 94, 68.

³¹ Ibid., 26.

³² Ibid., 68, 170, 67.

³³ Ibid., 82, 91.

³⁴ Ibid., 95.

³⁵ Ibid., 33–4.

the persistence of a discourse originating, at the latest, in the nineteenth century. With a remarkable dedication to detail, Abdou showcases Alpine Orientalism as sustaining mountain travel and, thus, clearly frames the discourse to which her novel writes back.

In addition to gendering mountains, the text writes back to Alpine Orientalism by highlighting the tropes that mountain travel shares with colonial expansion. Rather than depicting alpine culture and landscape factually, the novel makes numerous comparisons to traditional colonial terrain, by which even the most naïve reader finds their way into mountain travel's imperial past – mostly via references to the Orient and the rhetoric of emptiness. Abdou mediates the transfer from postcolonial theory's hot spaces to alpine spheres by evoking the 'Middle East'.³⁶ When the mountain cabin welcomes Lanny with Middle Eastern melodies, he argues it is 'music that belonged in a place where the air was so dense and steamy that you swam through it instead of walked, not on a snowy mountain just above Coalton'.³⁷ In this reference, as in many other examples too prominent to overlook, characters resort to Oriental motifs in order to comprehend an otherwise unfamiliar alpine experience. The conspicuous evidence of out-of-placeness underlines the complete ignorance regarding a space and the violent imposition inherent in Alpine Orientalism. *The Canterbury Trail* counters the discourse by holding up a mirror to travellers, adding a label to their disrespectful and destructive behaviour. For Abdou, they are the Columbuses of modern mountain travel: 'Then they'd act like they'd discovered Coalton, like the whole place sat empty before they arrived. Columbus had nothing over these arrogant pricks from the big shitty'.³⁸ The passage draws a direct line between Columbus and 'Californies', the Calgary elites with weekend homes in Fernie, in that it names its participants and criticizes the discourse of negation. Indeed, the novel has its origin in Central America, since the author's inspiration stems from her mother's trip to Costa Rica; that final site at which Columbus landed.³⁹ By bringing together sounds, sites and prominent figures of imperial expansion, the narrative shows that power relations and behavioural dynamics not unlike those prevailing in colonial travel are at work in mountain tourism. Columbus stands in the text for contemporary

³⁶ Ibid., 131.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 9.

³⁹ Mark Medley, 'Pilgrim's Progress: Angie Abdou Talks about *The Canterbury Trail*', *National Post*, 11 February 2011. <http://nationalpost.com/afterword/pilgrims-progress-angie-abdou-talks-about-the-canterbury-trail>.

travellers, simultaneously capturing past and present. The text thus writes back to the Alpine Orientalism still dominating twenty-first-century tourism as well as to the nineteenth-century exploitation perpetrated by the prospector William Fernie. Or, to use the metaphors surrounding the Ghostrider: it identifies 'the ghosts in the machine' of mountain tourism as spectres of colonialism.⁴⁰

The oppositional stance in *The Canterbury Trail*, far from merely recharting colonial concepts, unsparingly confronts them. The novel interrogates central tropes in Alpine Orientalism and puts their validity to the test. A major component in this specific process of writing back, Said argues, is disruption of the narratives and ideologies produced by the centre.⁴¹ The novel effectively challenges the ghosts of mountain tourism conjured by Western travel writing by dismantling, displacing and relativizing their claim(s) to truth. Against pseudo-royal imperialism, the text raises awareness of the presence of others. Heinz, for instance, 'knew, though, that he had not been the first' while snowmobilers shatter Shanny's 'illusion that this mountain was hers to consume in its frosting-covered entirety'.⁴² Against the idea of a pure, untouched landscape, it unleashes the stuffy air of cabin life and the odours of outdoor droppings. Against sexual fantasy, it places unfulfilled longing, with not one pilgrim managing to have sex, despite their considerable efforts. And against the obsession of controlling land through writing, it sets the inability to name some of nature's most vigorous forces, when an avalanche hits Alison 'before she had a name for what was happening'.⁴³ The answers *The Canterbury Trail* provides to its own interrogation of Alpine Orientalism are a shocking realization of mountains withstanding the false promises made in nineteenth-century travel writing.

As colonial motifs erode over the weekend, so do Romantic ones such as the notion of solitude, wilderness and the sublime. In her novel, Abdou does not grant her characters the solitude they seek so desperately. Characters are 'sharing too small a space with too many people' and are confronted with a place that looks like 'a hundred people had been here already'.⁴⁴ Wilderness, then, also defined through the absence of others, remains as highly priced as it is unattainable. Instead of finally reaching a place where they can give themselves fully to the

⁴⁰ Toni Morrison, 'Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature', in *Within the Circle: An Anthology of African American Literary Criticism from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Angelyn Mitchell (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 377.

⁴¹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 216.

⁴² Abdou, *Canterbury Trail*, 47, 69.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 176, 116.

forces of nature, the mountain pilgrims meet other wanderers, and the closest they get to encountering wildlife are their pet dogs in heat and the meat they carry in their packs: 'dead, fried animal'.⁴⁵ While the narrative directly expels the ghosts of solitude and wilderness, the idea of the Romantic sublime also disrupts travellers' alpine experience. In playbook Alpine Orientalist attitude, Shanny loves mountain skiing for the sublime feeling it evokes – it 'scared the shit out of her and made her long to do it again'.⁴⁶ But the invoked Romantic spirits answer to no one and an avalanche, sublime force embodied, overwhelms the humans beyond their wildest imagination. In *The Canterbury Trail*, the sublime is more than an imagined existential threat; it is their actual end. The avalanche functions as a plot device and ecological action that, in a sweeping disruption of the travellers' assumptions, effectively exorcizes Orientalist yearnings from the mountain. In the last breath of the sublime, it ends the lives of the mountain pilgrims, who fail to transform their perception of mountains in moments of crisis.⁴⁷

The way in which postcolonial writers negotiate Alpine Orientalism creates 'a distinct form of cultural and political hope' that does not allow an entirely tragic ending.⁴⁸ The only surviving pilgrim, Janet, symbolizes an optimistic future for the alpine world. In the course of the novel, Janet, in her role as a mother, offers a perspective on mountain futurity that is, as of yet, undetermined. In Section 2.5, I will explore how this future is imagined in alpine literature that writes back, but for now it is enough to know that Janet is the only character who never orientalizes mountains and has a realistic understanding of what an end-of-season-backcountry trip with thirteen other people might entail. Through this surviving character, Abdou's novel invites us to contemplate a mountain future beyond Alpine Orientalism. Writing back *to* Alpine Orientalism in the way Abdou does – through replication, interrogation and deconstruction – can therefore also mean writing mountain imaginaries *out of* Alpine Orientalism.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 235.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 148.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 276.

⁴⁸ Bill Ashcroft, 'Introduction: Spaces of Utopia', *An Electronic Journal* 2, no. 1 (2012): 4.

2.2 Articulating silence

‘Language’, Bill Ashcroft maintains, is ‘the arena of a dynamic power engagement.’⁴⁹ This is true in the sense that it ‘enables both “powerful” and “powerless” participants to act, to either perpetuate power or disrupt it.’⁵⁰ It is also true in the sense that even the words unsaid, ‘certain absences [. . .] so stressed, so ornate, so planned [. . .] call attention to themselves’ and ‘arrest us with intentionality and purpose.’⁵¹ Inherent in works by authors and scholars such as Toni Morrison and Homi Bhabha is the understanding that to speak in silence is vital to opposing imperial discourse. Speaking in silence, a seemingly contradictory term and, besides, a narratological device not explicitly associated with notions of time, is in fact a technique through which the ‘ghostly discourse’ of unspoken pasts can take form in the present.⁵² It is a literary strategy through which contemporary mountain literature breaks the ‘conspiracy of silence’ surrounding Alpine Orientalism – its centuries of external representation, its commodification of Indigenous stories and its silencing of local voices.⁵³ In this section, I will take a closer look at *The Canterbury Trail* as an example of writing back via the presence of the unsaid. How is the unspoken pronounced in the novel? What forms of narrative enunciation does it demonstrate at the level of character, language and structure? How can silence be a repository for a violent past? Who dictates what is said, and why does communication fall short?

‘People in Fernie spoke often about silence’, anthropologist Leslie Robertson noted during her field trip to the Kootenays, a silence that is omnipresent in Abdou’s novel.⁵⁴ As if to show that mass tourism and the vestiges of Alpine Orientalism have left an entire town speechless, the author depicts each of her fourteen characters in moments when they are at a loss for words. These include an urban contemporary travel writer forced into not speaking, an Anglo-Saxon/Italian local miner lost in silence and a young Indigenous man at home in a world that does not care for his voice. The journalist Alison Batz is ever eager ‘to jot her little notes, capture a slice of their life to package up and take home with her to sell.’⁵⁵ She represents travel journalism and, as such, stands for a literary market

⁴⁹ Bill Ashcroft, ‘Afterword: Travel and Power’, in *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility* (London: Routledge, 2008), 232.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 233.

⁵¹ Morrison, ‘Unspeakable Things Unspoken’, 136.

⁵² Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 22; Morrison, ‘Unspeakable Things Unspoken’.

⁵³ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 175.

⁵⁴ Robertson, *Imagining Difference*, xxxiii.

⁵⁵ Abdou, *Canterbury Trail*, 94.

capitalizing on mountains and a form of literary production that mountain people have accepted as a valid representation of their place and culture for more than two centuries. As the narrative progresses, it casts doubt on whether Alison is up to the task of fairly representing mountain life. Alison is depicted 'saying the wrong thing' so often that she finally 'vow[s] to shut the fuck up';⁵⁶ the narrative makes us question whether a person who is interested in 'her story count' and the value at which a tale might sell has a place in mountain future.⁵⁷ After the local ski crowd's constant reminders, as well as her own realization that her words are not the right ones, the former silencer falls silent and a space opens up for things unspoken.

In the process of muting Alison, however, the text does not gloss over the damage done to local individuals whose lives have been shaped by narratives from outsiders. This finds expression in Loco, the self-proclaimed local hero who, haunted too long by stories not his own, struggles with his sense of belonging: 'Loco did feel weird. Physically with these people but not like them. Not on the inside. He ran his index finger back and forth across his numb lips as if he were thrumming a guitar.'⁵⁸ This character's silence is highlighted by physical markers of his muteness. His lips are numb, 'his tongue couldn't reach the roof of his mouth', and there is a piercing that seems somewhat responsible for Loco's paralysed speech.⁵⁹

Too often these days, Loco *couldn't* remember what he was supposed to say. The things that came to his mind now – 'Your swearing embarrasses me' or 'Life's no joke' or 'There's more to living than fucking and skiing' – were all wrong. He knew that. Instead, he bit the inside of his mouth with his surviving back teeth. His piercing clicked against his eyetooth and suddenly he couldn't stand it. Couldn't stand being here but not being here. Couldn't stand being dressed one way but having forgotten the whole entire fucking script. He opened his jaw right there, stuck out his tongue and pulled the whole piercing out, threw it in the snow.⁶⁰

When the text describes Loco's speechlessness and frustration with alpine life being reduced to sex and mountaineering in line with a forgotten script and unremembered words, it exposes an intangible presence, a historiographical gap

⁵⁶ Ibid., 107, 150.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 101.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 101.

and a vacuum of local stories. Even though Loco seems to have forgotten the stories that may help him retrieve what is lost, he knows that expelling those of colonial and commercial travel is a first step towards breaking the silence.

Of all the characters, commercial travel in the Canadian Rockies has most defeated F-Bomb, a First Nation Cree. Like the conversational taboo connoted by his name, numerous excerpts document his inability to speak: 'F-Bomb talked about his grandmother, about his family's past in the valley [. . .] but never once saying that he was an Indian – everyone toeing around the word like it was a curse.'⁶¹ The novel only ever articulates Indigenous history (be it about Indigenous presence prior to or harm done during imperial expansion) in F-Bomb's thoughts, leaving Indigenous pasts unshared in the dialogue between characters yet still visible on the page. These crevices are most palpable when Loco silences F-Bomb, a perceived threat to his local status, arguing that F-Bomb's 'connections were to the Coalton of *yesterday*, not of *today*', consigning Indigenous knowledge to the past.⁶² Their one-sided conversations serve to render Indigenous knowledge to the past; a practice that has long served Alpine Orientalism's conceptualization of the alpine Other (see Section 1.5: 'The Alpine Other as Savage'). Eventually, F-Bomb concedes in the subliminal battle about local status, because to speak about his place would mean to speak up against inconvenient colonial truths:

Truthfully, he was the one who really had best claim to the status of 'local,' more than Loco, but when you're local in the sense of Cree, you don't brag about it the way you do when you're local in the sense of third-generation Italian immigrant miner. While Loco could go on and on about his grandfather who'd practically built the city hall, F-Bomb didn't want anyone to get wind of just how local his own grandpa was, didn't feel the need to go on and on about some priest diddling his young grandfather at the residential school down the road.⁶³

In this scene, language, even in the words unuttered, serves as a 'repository of histories of violence,' with settler Canadians speaking over Indigenous voices.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Ibid., 103.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 12. Abdou's second Coalton novel, *In Case I Go* (2017), takes on the subject of residential schools, which prevent F-Bomb from speaking. The novel, 'a ghost story without a ghost' according to the author, triggered a viral debate about cultural appropriation in the haunted house that is currently CanLit. Angie Abdou, 'Angie Abdou on Seeking Permission to Use a First Nations Character', *Quill & Quire*, October 2017. <https://quillandquiere.com/omni/angie-abdou-on-seeking-permission-to-use-first-nations-stories/>. See also Jonathan Kay, "'Canada Has Gone Mad': Indigenous Representation and the Hounding of Angie Abdou", *Quillette*, 10 January 2018.

⁶⁴ Ashcroft, 'Afterword: Travel and Power', 232; Wanberg, 'Ghostwriting History', 612.

Here, once again, *The Canterbury Trail* functions as ghostwriter/writer, as it 'is the idea of the phantom which can represent unspeakable crimes that were perpetrated against those who have passed away'.⁶⁵ The gaps thus formed within Abdou's ghostwriting are like the shadow on the face of Mount Hosmer: not always visible but ever present and 'unshakeable, inscribed in the landscape'.⁶⁶

Exposing various aspects of a mountain town enshrouded in silence, Abdou explores different forms of speech and speechlessness at the level of character. Once the reader learns that *The Canterbury Trail* is a book about the presence of the unsaid, the narrative becomes marked by linguistic gaps, with, for example, sentences left unfinished and full stops omitted ('Has to be — '), or the inclusion of em-dashes ('You used to be a ski bum and now you're a — ') to denote a break in the sentence as a means to also retain speechlessness at the syntactic level.⁶⁷ As one silence eerily repeats another, speechlessness does not merely refer to individual struggles for self-expression or lack of recorded history but sheds light on the power structures in a town muted by mass tourism. On the one hand, through conversations that are at best unidirectional, *The Canterbury Trail* shows a lack of connection among community members. On the other, it uncovers the regulatory forces in an industry that benefits from unsuccessful interaction among community members. To illustrate how communication in the mountain town fails, the text makes frequent use of phrases such as 'wasn't paying attention', 'non-responsive' and 'nobody answered'.⁶⁸ Throughout the novel's second part, moreover, Abdou alludes to images of 'words bounc[ing] back', and has her characters speak 'without waiting for an answer'.⁶⁹ There are characters who ignore each other from the moment they meet and instances in which the inability to communicate successfully penetrates even the smallest social unit.⁷⁰ Some characters choose a form of communication that does not call for a direct response, with Lanny deliberately 'talking to no one but his dog', well aware that 'she never talked back', and Alison writing a journal, a text intended only to be read by the author.⁷¹

Writing back in ways of the unsaid is, indeed, an articulate form of expression, because it casts into relief the most powerful players in the business

⁶⁵ Wanberg, 'Ghostwriting History', 596.

⁶⁶ Robertson, *Imagining Difference*, 108.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 144, 192.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 159, 138, 126.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 123, 92.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 245, 237, 209.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 170, 20, 221.

with mountains. In most incarnations of mountain travel, these are the local entrepreneurs symbolizing participation in the global industry and the travel writer reiterating Alpine Orientalism. *The Canterbury Trail* personifies these two powers in the realtor Michael LePlage and the Toronto-based journalist Alison. The two soon hijack a well-intentioned storytelling circle initiated by Cosmos. The story circle is originally intended to bring together a group of people with conflicting ideas on Coalton's past, present and future for peaceful exchange, but Michael quickly dismisses Cosmos's idea, renames the "circle" "contest" and installs Alison as its judge. 'No longer inclined to maintain the illusion of sharing his power with Cosmos,'⁷² he controls every move his 'inferiors' make and commands Shanny to begin.⁷³ But she is too drunk to 'manage to link the words of her story — *moose, windshield, bones, blood* — together into any sort of coherent narrative.'⁷⁴ Drugged by Coalton's promise of eternal vacation, Shanny's story, like her life, is empty of purpose and she is unable to express herself meaningfully. This is how *The Canterbury Trail* explains that an almost deadening silence enshrouds a ski town when development and tourists dictate the value of an alpine community and its stories.

A well-balanced novel like Abdou's does not advance its plot without depicting some attempt at resistance. Loco is well aware of the uneven power structures at work and confronts Michael's inability to listen: 'You know, just 'cause you open your mouth and noise comes out doesn't mean you're having a conversation. Are you listening to anything I'm saying?'⁷⁵ Loco's denunciation has no impact and, despite the fact that 'disapproving of Michael was the one thing they could all agree on', the community is unable to successfully fight his dictatorial plans for business expansion.⁷⁶

What an unsuccessful storytelling contest fails to do at the level of content (namely for storytelling to take precedence over individual interests), the novel achieves at the structural level. The chapters which in part I were labelled according to individual characters, in yet another nod to Chaucer, are named after places and narratological key events in part II ("In the Belly of Camelot", "The Contest", "Back Outdoors"), allowing the story to unfold beyond individual claims. In this way, the novel structurally mutes individual interests to give voice

⁷² Ibid., 178.

⁷³ Ibid., 176.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 183.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 216.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 193.

to stories embedded in place. How Abdou linguistically attempts to break the silence her novel shapes so articulately will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 Writing back with an alpine voice

Postcolonial criticism sees the struggle for truth as being conducted over the control of language that represents the tension between ‘cultural “silence” and ‘cultural “revelation”’.⁷⁷ After having analysed how *The Canterbury Trail* writes back with an articulate silence, this section examines what the language in the novel reveals about Canadian mountain culture and its struggle against mass tourism. Using *The Canterbury Trail*, I seek to demonstrate that in contemporary mountain literature, as in postcolonial forms of writing back, literary texts enable a cultural liberation from Alpine Orientalism by writing back in a language of their own. When Rushdie first conceptualizes writing back, he describes the ‘carving out [of] large territories within the language’ as a key feature in literary decolonization.⁷⁸ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin further develop this attribute and see linguistic and stylistic diversions as ‘an important sign of the coextensivity between language and a cultural space’.⁷⁹ The true ‘literary liberation’ in alpine writing back, therefore, lies in the capability of a narrative to forge mountain writing into shapes that comply with mountain realities.⁸⁰ Accordingly, Abdou’s novel seizes the language of those who travel and replaces it in a discourse fully adapted to mountains not as destinations but as home.⁸¹ It is no surprise, then, that belonging is the theme that most strongly emerges from the novel’s commitment to tell its story in a distinct alpine voice. The author achieves this by exploring appropriation, inscribed difference and stylistic alteration.

Writing back with an alpine voice often utilizes appropriation – that process of linguistic transformation that remoulds language for new uses and occurs in *The Canterbury Trail* through the implementation of terms specific to mountain life.⁸² Mountain jargon infuses the text with local colour and stands as an example of the creative linguistic energy that can emerge from marginalized regions that are (fairly) geographically secluded. Readers can marvel with Alison at the

⁷⁷ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Empire Writes Back*, 165, 58.

⁷⁸ Rushdie, ‘Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance’, 8.

⁷⁹ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Empire Writes Back*, 70–1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁸² *Ibid.*

multitudinous terms for snow, which, jotted down in her journal, are nearly incomprehensible to a person unaccustomed to the dangers and pleasures of mountain weather:

'Varieties of snow' alone filled three pages. 'Graupel' referred to those sharp little pellets of snow that hurt when they hit your face and accumulated on car windows like lost little pieces of Styrofoam. 'Wind sift' denoted the fine stuff, the consistency of icing sugar, that blew across the hill softening icy patches. 'Elephant snot' meant the sticky warm stuff – good for building snowmen, not so good for skiing. 'Cream cheese' fell somewhere between 'Elephant snot' and 'Sick powder.' Sick meant good, really good.⁸³

Alison is well aware of the inseparable link between mountain language and place and knows that 'to immerse [her]self in ski culture' she has 'to learn the language.'⁸⁴ She can write down meticulous lists of names for skis ('Skis could be rockets, boards, sticks, big guns') and skiing ('shred, ride, charge, rip'), but, as long as the 'subtle distinctions' between the words are 'still lost on her', she remains an outsider.⁸⁵ Her tenacious and, in the eyes of many, utterly annoying practice of writing down every word in her notebook, which she calls her *Great Book of Ideas*, needs to be understood in light of questions surrounding belonging. Alison desperately tries to fit in by copying the local language and remains an outsider precisely because of her inability to speak in the local jargon. At this point, it is important to mention that belonging is not a marker attached to one place but to the experience of travel itself. Abdou shows this when Loco remembers leaving Coalton for university and feeling deeply alienated by a mountain language out of place in the big city:

His classmates mocked the way he spoke, saying 'gunna' for 'going to' or 'supper' for 'dinner' or 'show' for 'movie.' As if using one word instead of another made him stupid. The endless list of things he said wrong filled his mind, pushing out the mathematics, taking precedence over physics.⁸⁶

Here, writing back with an alpine voice means inscribing difference. This time, Abdou writes alterity by including expressions from the local dialect. In so doing, she outlines a character who seems to stick to his regional dialect more

⁸³ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 96.

because of lack of skill than choice. Throughout the novel, there is a tension between the power of language to liberate and its power to control.

Other instances of linguistic alterity bow to the transnational character of mountain culture. At the same time that mountain communities are fairly self-contained, they are also astonishingly international, and were so long before the onset of mass tourism. That the term *Graupel*, referenced above, is German in origin is linguistic evidence of mountain culture's transnationality. To further account for this, Abdou expresses cross-cultural experience through the presence of foreign languages. French enters the novel via Claudette, le Canadienne: sometimes in entire sentences ('*Je m'en vais parce que je veux.*'), sometimes interspersed in the running text ('Get away. Out. *Maintenant.*'), at times in Metropolitan French, then again in Canadian French, maintaining, in the denial of *all* linguistic standards, the voice from the margin ('How could you do this to me? *Kaw-liss*, Kevin. *Tabernak.*').⁸⁷ Moreover, Swedish words find their way into the text through Fredrik. These French or Swedish phrases, set apart from the main text in italics, often occur in moments of misunderstanding and isolation. If language functions as a marker of belonging, words, even entire sentences, in a language Other than the dominant one and a font stylistically removed from the main text, visualize cultural difference on the page. These phrases emphasize the breaks in cross-cultural communication. Most characters with some history in Fernie obsess over language and mock those who express themselves in a language foreign to the area. To prevent further mockery, Fredrik 'decid[es] against sharing his grandmother's thoughts' with the rest of the group,⁸⁸ an incident that underscores the stubborn control Othering asserts even in the face of linguistic liberation.

Through wisely placing stylistic alterations in parts II and III of her novel, Abdou cautiously guides her readers to the teaching moment of her story: the demand to listen to utterances that go beyond any human language. She gradually sensitizes her readers to care for sound. Abdou has Shanny add sound effects in her story: 'pushing the air through her teeth on each *che* and huffing it out from the very back of her throat with each *ha*,' Shanny releases 'Che-che-che-ha-ha-ha.'⁸⁹ The author also evokes sound using orthographic infidelity, when she ties terms together 'like one long word,' as in 'whatcanyou do,' to playfully

⁸⁷ Ibid., 140, 53, 175.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 204.

challenge the rhythms of the written word.⁹⁰ Orthography loses its authority in the multifaceted, rhythmic prose of *The Canterbury Trail*.

By increasingly punctuating her narrative with sound, the author paves the way for the prominent role of oral narration towards the novel's close. Paralleled only by Chaucer's tale, *The Canterbury Trail* is a narrative that inhabits the borderlands between oral and written narration. It is a story that eventually teaches its readers to listen to mountains. By writing back with an alpine voice, the novel emphasizes that relief from mountain mass tourism does not lie in a world in which humans inscribe Otherness onto mountains. Rather, it shows that we need to understand how difference is imposed and how forms of Otherness have been suppressed. Snowmobilers, skiers, telemarkers, snowboarders, snowshoers, French Canadians, urbanites, Indigenous people, Swedes – the avalanche buries beneath 'thousands of tons of snow' all who subscribe to the idea of the mountain Other.⁹¹ What will matter in the future is how able we are as humans to listen to the sound of mountains. Listening for that sound means a way forward and away from binary thinking. The strength of rewriting Alpine Orientalism in an alpine voice, as will become more evident in the next section, lies in a most curious return to oral storytelling.

2.4 Personified mountains and premodern counter-discourse

As alpine writing activates an oral archive in the process of writing back, it reintroduces local mountain imaginaries, that is, mountain myths, which are often orally transmitted. This section discusses the literary strategy of utilizing such mountain mythologies in the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism and explores their utilization by addressing temporality, personification and agency. To begin with, it is important to remark that what we today call mountain myths are often imaginaries that originate from a time prior to mass mountain travel: a time that this study is calling "premodern" in a specific and limited sense – that is, a time before modern mountain tourism. While the term "modernity" is 'bewildering and disturbing' and to define it is an impossibly fraught task,⁹² scholars in the interdisciplinary field of mountain studies have relied on it to come to grips

⁹⁰ Ibid., 133.

⁹¹ Ibid., 276.

⁹² Malcom Bradbury and James McFarlane, 'The Name and Nature of Modernism', in *Modernism: 1890–1930*, ed. Malcom Bradbury and James McFarlane (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), 38.

with the motors of mountain tourism.⁹³ As far as my understanding of mountain myths in the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism is concerned, it is irrelevant whether “modernity” denotes a break at the end of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Humanism or around 1800, 1900 or 1970.⁹⁴ What is relevant is that modernity signifies ‘a break with the past’.⁹⁵ To acknowledge such a break means to acknowledge that there was a time prior to tourism. It is also to acknowledge that there have been alternative mountain imaginaries to Alpine Orientalist inscription. When contemporary writers, like Abdou, incorporate mountain myths in their literary interventions, they confront the impalpable ghosts of modernity by celebrating the long legacy of alpine storytelling in a reorientation towards a time in which the value of mountains lay not in how they could be exploited to produce private riches.

It is out of this awareness of a long history of alpine storytelling that Abdou’s *The Canterbury Trail* engages in a writing back, in which “back” not only signifies opposition but also denotes a narrative journey back in time. Other contemporary texts examined in this study also hark back to a time prior to mass tourism, but none do so quite like *The Canterbury Trail*, perhaps because of the author’s background in medieval literature. Abdou’s commitment to premodern storytelling, in contrast to prevailing Alpine Orientalist appropriations, is expressed most explicitly in the character of Heinz, who ‘chose a medieval motif in homage to his repulsion for the modern world’.⁹⁶ The author’s celebration of the vitality and richness of premodern (alpine) narration takes at least three significant forms: first, *The Canterbury Trail* exhibits several instances of intertextual reference to the tales draping the mountains surrounding Fernie. One of these tales is reflected in the novel through “the Ull”, a mythical figure named after the Norse snow god who coaxes the snow from the sky. This figure is grafted upon the mythical figure of the “Griz” which, according to local Fernie legend, is responsible for snowfall on the Lizard Range. The Ull, like Fernie’s Griz, becomes a mysterious presence in Abdou’s novel and penetrates local memory to such an

⁹³ Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 17. See also Marius Risi, ‘Einleitung’, in *Alpenland. Terrain der Moderne*, ed. Marius Risi (Münster: Waxmann, 2011), 7; Bernhard Tschöfen, *Berg – Kultur – Moderne: Volkskundliches aus den Alpen* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1999); Martin Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht: Eine Bildgeschichte des Alpinismus* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007).

⁹⁴ Cornelia Klinger, ‘Modern/Moderne – Ein irritierender Begriff’, in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe, Band 4: Medien – Populär*, ed. Karlheinz Barck, Martin Fontius, Dieter Schlensted, Burkhard Steinwachs, and Friedrich Wolfzettel (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2002), 121–67.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁹⁶ Abdou, *Canterbury Trail*, 4.

extent that the community bases a winter festival on it and frequently compares Heinz – ‘half man, half giant’ – to the mythical creature.⁹⁷ The second way in which Abdou pays tribute to storytelling outside Alpine Orientalist discourse is in her inclusion of motifs borrowed from Old English and Arthurian legends. These motifs manifest themselves in the narrative’s subversion of the modern world, particularly in Heinz’s naming practices, which decorate the trail to the backcountry hut with signs that highlight Grendel’s Mother, Pilgrim’s Progress, Camelot and Heorot. The last, and most outward, celebration of storytelling older than modern-day tourism is in a pastiche of Boccaccio’s and Chaucer’s literary journeys. As the novel’s title reflects, *The Canterbury Trail* shares several similarities with Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* (written c. 1388–1400) and thus implicitly with Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (written c. 1349–53). Both texts portray forms of travel that are premodern in the sense that they are representative of a past in which travel was neither outright colonial nor highly commodified. In a keen retooling of the two texts, Abdou’s book depicts the imperial behaviour of individuals, has conflicts emerge between the local commercial class and travellers, and prefers the vernacular over standard language. Set in April, built around a story contest and told with humour and irony to match Chaucer’s, Abdou’s tale is undoubtedly a contemporary version of Chaucer’s pilgrimage. The story does not fail to provide a moral lesson, depicting most travellers as Boccaccian kings and Chaucerian sinners who must pay with their lives. With this, I return once again to the well-worn narrative of the curse. The Ghost rider myth provides Abdou not only with a moral blueprint to punish sinful infractions but is also representative of a mythical ghostwriting that sees mountains as already saturated with other (older) stories frequently told ‘at the margins between speech and writing.’⁹⁸ It will become apparent in the course of this book that a return to a cultural system that nurtures mountain mythology is a common feature of alpine writing back. I must stress, however, that this is not limited to extra-European writing, as Martina Kopf argues in her comparative study of literature from the Alps and the Andes, but can also be found in ‘non-indigenous narration.’⁹⁹ In the later chapters of this book, in which I turn to Austrian mountain literature, I will show that texts from within Europe just as readily turn to a mythical worldview in their writing back. In doing so, I

⁹⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁹⁸ Wanberg, ‘Ghostwriting History’, 595.

⁹⁹ Martina Kopf, *Alpinismus – Andinismus: Gebirgslandschaften in europäischer und lateinamerikanischer Literatur* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2016), 240.

will not be suggesting that all alpine writing back employs premodern cultural systems, nor will I be suggesting that alpine writing back that does imagine and attempt to set in motion a kind of premodern counter-discourse necessarily has a fixed position on how that cultural system positions itself alongside temporally enduring Indigenous ways of knowing the mountains. In *The Canterbury Trail* this kind of counter-discourse is imagined as a premodern modality of thought and being that is also capable of effecting resistance to a modernity that will come. In this manner, a counter-discourse that engages with aesthetic and conceptual notions of the premodern is not the same as the discourse of Alpine Orientalism, which systematically disallows cultures from occupying a space in the present (see Section 1.5. 'The Alpine Other as Savage'). The aesthetic and conceptual way in which mountain myths engage with alpine pasts and possible futures makes them readable outside Alpine Orientalist inscription and proves the elasticity of stories rather than detecting a timelessness in mountains.

It is just as important to state that a counter-discourse that engages with conceptual and aesthetic notions of the premodern does not always have to involve a mythical return, to paraphrase Ashcroft, but when texts do rely on myths to compose literary mountainscapes, they often use personification.¹⁰⁰ The tradition of personifying mountains in narratives is probably as old as the relationship between humans and mountains, and is found in the literatures of antiquity as well as in Indigenous storytelling.¹⁰¹ It is hardly surprising, then, that Abdou declares the mountain the main character of her novel and endows the land with human attributes.¹⁰² The narrative progressively awakens the anthropomorphized mountain, first in analogy to the human body, then as a fully fleshed-out vengeful character. In the first instance, the mountain appears as a giant figure in front of the travelling eye:

Loco lifted his one eye up the column of space between the two skis, all the way up past the hut to the steep mountain ridge that loomed above. Locals called this ridge The Sleeping Giant. A steep peak at one end was said to be the giant's toes, pointing to the sky. A bump at the other end resembled a nose. A little dip

¹⁰⁰ Ashcroft refers to the engagement with the past in general and with memory in particular under the 'myth of return'. See Ashcroft, 'Future Thinking', 244.

¹⁰¹ Andrea Hungerbühler, *Könige der Alpen: Zur Kultur des Bergführerberufs* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), 140.

¹⁰² Angie Abdou, 'The Canterbury Trail', interview by Kim McCullough, accessed 24 May 2011. <http://kimmccullough.ca/the-canterbury-trail-interview-with-angie-abdou/> (site discontinued).

above the nose could pass for an eye socket, and a ridge somewhere between the two peaks looked just like a pair of hands folded across a sleeping man's chest.¹⁰³

The description of the mountain, analogous to the human body with its toes, eyes, hands, nose and chest, allows Loco to visually contain it in a way that is comparable to a monarch-of-all-I-survey scene. The mountain sleeps – like a person – and remains passive throughout the first part of the novel. This changes in part II, when the sleeping mountain turns into a powerful force in a transition anticipated in a quote from Earle Birney's 'Bushed'. In this epigraph, a man not unlike Heinz (in his wish to seek solitude) realizes the mountain is dangerously alive. It is a force Heinz, too, must experience. He

hears a booming explosion, as if the mountain has stomped its foot in approval. Then right before his eyes, a giant crack opens across the mountain's face, a grinning fracture from one side of the bowl to another. While he sits and contemplates that toothless gaping mouth – and it is, ever so faintly, pointing upwards – he swears he hears the mountain sigh, a swooshing breath of utter contentment.¹⁰⁴

This quote assigns a humanlike agency to the fatal avalanche. The mountain can stomp, sigh, 'split open', even breathe, and through motion it can also escape the traveller's gaze.¹⁰⁵ In contrast, the scene renders humans motionless. Humans only wait and listen. Heinz thinks: 'All the world's a stage, [. . .] but not in the way the Great Bard meant. More often than they think, humans are no more than a passive audience. The mountain, it appears, has called the final curtain on this performance.'¹⁰⁶ Humans are as passive as the woman turned to stone in E. J. Pratt's "Erosion", which Abdou uses as an epigraph to part III. Heinz's allusion to Shakespeare has the Sleeping Giant fully take to the stage to deliver his outstanding performance.

"Performance" is a highly significant term in my interpretation of Abdou's writing back because it grants agency to the mountain. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin define "agency" as 'the ability to act or *perform* an action' in their encyclopaedia of postcolonial key concepts.¹⁰⁷ While the concept remains important for comprehending the resistance of postcolonial subjects, alternative

¹⁰³ Abdou, *Canterbury Trail*, 100.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 274.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 271, 276.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 274.

¹⁰⁷ Bill Ashcroft, Garreth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 9 (my emphasis).

– non-human – agency has been the subject of much debate over the past decades.¹⁰⁸ The idea that agential force equates to intent has been at the root of major disagreements in scholarly discussion. Yet the mountain in *The Canterbury Trail* is of a *humanoid* nature – ‘Nature is a person’, says Janet – and like a person can react to the infractions of mountain travel.¹⁰⁹ This interpretation of a personified mountain obtaining an agential force is also in line with recent developments that grant mountains a legal personality, as seen with Mount Taranaki in New Zealand.¹¹⁰

Abdou most effectively constructs mountains as narratological agents by writing back a personified mountain. In this manner, the author represents alpine land as sentient, conscious and responsive.¹¹¹ Abdou does more than celebrate the richness of premodern narratives; she celebrates a mountain that becomes capable of ecological action through the vitality of alpine stories and the actuations of literary inscriptions.

2.5 Future memory

In keeping with the Ghost rider myth, the previous section has shown how *The Canterbury Trail* cultivates a catastrophe, which, as a disastrous turning of tables, arouses the imagination. In this upheaval, the novel depicts something that must be more productive than an apocalyptic avalanche. It evokes a vision of a future that, in the words of Jennifer Wenzel, is ‘something other than an ending’.¹¹² The figure of the ghost, connecting past, present and future, meets with postcolonial scholarship’s long tradition of understanding a recovered past ‘as something that can transform the present with a vision of the future’, and it also conceptualizes the futural orientation in alpine writing back, of which *The Canterbury Trail* is exemplary.¹¹³ This last section offers a brief discussion of the ways in which

¹⁰⁸ Richard Grusin, ed., *The Nonhuman Turn* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹¹⁰ Eleanor Aigne Roy, ‘New Zealand Gives Mount Taranaki Same Legal Rights as a Person’, *Guardian*, 22 December 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/22/new-zealand-gives-mount-taranaki-same-legal-rights-as-a-person>.

¹¹¹ Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 3.

¹¹² Jennifer Wenzel, *The Disposition of Nature: Environmental Crisis and World Literature* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 41.

¹¹³ Huggan, *Extreme Pursuits*, 137; Ashcroft, ‘Introduction: Spaces of Utopia’, 5.

contemporary mountain literature creates future possibility in pasts that resurge and take up ideas of temporality, memory and imagination.

Colonial critical discourse rejects the linearity of past, present and future that dominates Western philosophy. Therefore, the past in alpine writing back is never just something that occurred, but something alive in the present, and a window to the future. Bhabha speaks of 'past as projective', Ashcroft sees it 'geared to energize the present' and Dipesh Chakrabarty contends that the past helps us on our 'unavoidable journey into the future'.¹¹⁴ The future, postcolonial scholars agree, is 'always a possibility emerging from the past'.¹¹⁵ I gladly adopt this conviction with regard to alpine writing back, since it understands that the past remains irredeemable without a consideration of the future and accepts that historical narratives change and transform the future we live in. For literature like *The Canterbury Trail*, this conviction suggests that, by narrating its own past, possibly via alpine myths, mountain writing speaks to a future anterior.

There are many ways narratives can transcend the complexities of Western temporality, but myth and legend have frequently stood the test of time in cultural memory. Memory recreates the past in the present and reaches out to something that is not yet there. This "not yet" of the actual' opens a space for imagination.¹¹⁶ Ashcroft, who continues to cheer for postcolonial utopianism thirty years after the publication of *The Empire Writes Back*, asserts that 'the place where memory of the future might best be achieved is in literature'.¹¹⁷ Based on *The Canterbury Trail* and the texts discussed in the next chapters, literature has a particular capacity to imagine a different – better – alpine world.

In fact, I consider this unrelenting desire to imagine an alternative to the present to be the most urgent and productive tool in the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism. To imagine mountain reality as Other than a deadly avalanche, a constant fight over belonging or disoriented intoxication is how mountain literature can effectively write back to Alpine Orientalism. This might not seem like a major theoretical leap in the analysis of mountain texts originating in postcolonial terrain, but it certainly brings a radically new perspective to bear on how mountain literature, also of the European bent, is geared towards

¹¹⁴ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 364; Bill Ashcroft, 'Remembering the Future: Utopianism in African Literature', *Textual Practice* 23, no. 5 (2009): 718; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 250.

¹¹⁵ Ashcroft, 'Future Thinking', 243.

¹¹⁶ Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 250.

¹¹⁷ Ashcroft, 'Remembering the Future', 796.

a 'liberated future'.¹¹⁸ This analysis of *The Canterbury Trail* thus brings to the international and interdisciplinary field of mountain studies a number of forms of writing back that culminate in unbounded visions of the future. Writing back in opposition and silence, with a unique voice and premodern stories, and relying on the transformative power of literature, is an unsurpassable celebration of storytelling across national divides – and across time.

The Canterbury Trail offers us a glimpse of future memory in the final scene, with an uncanny apparition of Ashcroft's ideal figure for a future inspired by memory: the unborn child. Janet, who 'knows nothing' of the devastation wreaked by the avalanche, sits in front of the cabin stove and 'rub[s] her hands across her belly'.¹¹⁹ Before officials confirm the death of mountain life as it was, Janet can and must imagine an ending – a future – Otherwise.¹²⁰ The novel closes during a moment in which knowing mountains is no longer the ruling structural desire. Instead, *The Canterbury Trail* reminds us that the imperative to know mountains has to be replaced with telling mountains, with retrieving the many voices of alpine culture and history that were occluded in centuries of Alpine Orientalist appropriation. In this manner, the novel demonstrates just how much alpine writing back operates akin to postcolonial writing back: it dismantles the ghosts of travel; it addresses mountain past and future through the present; it shows that Alpine Orientalism is not just a relic but a primary contemporary, and literary, concern; it writes in a language unique to place; and it revives past stories for future possibility. Challenging colonial claims, head-on and like none of the other contemporary texts discussed in this book, Abdou's novel has been a perfect point of departure to conceptualize baselines of rewriting Alpine Orientalism. While I have focused here on how Abdou writes back to Orientalism as a discipline driven by imperialist motors, the next chapter discusses a text that challenges Alpine Orientalism as a discourse inspired by Romanticism.

¹¹⁸ Ashcroft, 'Introduction: Spaces of Utopia', 2.

¹¹⁹ Abdou, *Canterbury Trail*, 275.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 276.

Gaze

Narrating the living mountain in Thomas Wharton's *Icefields*

Long before nineteenth- and twentieth-century travellers visited the Rockies, and most likely saw the mountains for the first time through a train window, they had already painted themselves a mental picture of the Rockies in their minds. The Canadian railway companies solicited travellers to the Rockies through powerful visual artworks. These iconic images were mediated by a vastly successful 'economy of looking' that displayed the Canadian mountains according to Western aesthetic principles, and they continued, in many ways, the picturesque and sublime traditions of European landscape painting.¹ The graphics remain an indispensable part of Canadian mountain tourism, exerting their visual pull through postcards, fridge magnets, stationary, coffee table books and more. Even in the age of social media, the digital images produced by twenty-first-century travellers to the Canadian Rockies rarely deviate from those disseminated by the Canadian railway companies, mostly adhering to Romantic aesthetic principles. Not only is mountain tourism fundamentally visual in nature, it also continues to circulate similar sets of images in an ever-booming visual economy.

The dominance of an Alpine Orientalist gaze – a discourse that understands mountains as aesthetically pleasing and controllable through the travelling eye/I – is seen in its acceptance within mountain studies, whereby mountains are to the human mind either beautiful or abhorrent. Depending on whether one consults a literary, historical or geographical study, the alpine aesthetic

¹ Lynda Jessup, 'The Group of Seven and the Tourist Landscape in Western Canada, or The More Things Change . . .', *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études Canadiennes* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 147.

turn is situated between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.² Yet, while the discourse of mountain gloom and mountain glory (or *locus amoenus* and *locus horribilis*) has served well in showing that the dominant approach in mountain travel is visual, the assumption that mountains are either abominable or adorable is inconsistent, incorrect and dangerous. It is inconsistent because the aesthetic history of mountains does not unambiguously follow the glory-after-gloom formula: favourable and disapproving representations of mountains have existed alongside each other.³ It is incorrect because humans appreciated mountains long before the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, since the literary topos of the *locus amoenus*, the Latin term for “pleasant place”, denoted mountains as early as antiquity and the Middle Ages.⁴ And it is dangerous because while mountain travel may follow aesthetic principles, the fragile dynamics of alpine ecosystems and cultural networks do not. In order to imagine a mountain tourism that does not threaten the natures and cultures that constitute mountain life, one must consider what lies beyond visual representations of mountains. And one must invest in a new vocabulary that is capable of articulating the fullness of such ecosystems and networks. Thomas Wharton’s award-winning first novel, *Icefields* (1995), set within the boundaries of present-day Jasper Park, does just that: it shows how writing may develop as it calls for *new ways of thinking* and *new words* to articulate such mountain spaces.⁵

According to Wharton, the purpose of a revised mountain vocabulary is to ‘avoid clichés of writing about the mountains.’⁶ His novel experiments with the visible and invisible particularities of mountain life and offers hitherto unseen perspectives for the critical appreciation of alpine space. Since revision plays a key role in *Icefields*, it comes as no surprise that the author took the opportunity to modify parts of the story for the novel’s 2021 landmark edition, clearly demonstrating that the aliveness of mountains transfers into an aliveness of mountain writing.

² Jon Mathieu and Simona Boscani Leoni, *Die Alpen! Les Alpes! Zur Wahrnehmungsgeschichte seit der Renaissance* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 19.

³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴ Katharina Winckler, ‘Gemeine Plätze – Die Wahrnehmung der Alpen in (Spät-)Antike und (Früh-)Mittelalter’, in *Berg & Leute: Tirol als Landschaft und Identität*, ed. Ulrich Leitner (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2014), 309; Mathieu and Leoni, *Die Alpen! Les Alpes!*, 13; Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 198–9.

⁵ Thomas Wharton, *Icefields* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1995), 197.

⁶ Herb Wylie, ‘The Iceman Cometh Across: An Interview with Thomas Wharton’, *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en Littérature Canadienne* 27, no. 1 (2002): 168.

Icefields begins in 1898, when Doctor Edward Byrne falls into a crevasse during a Royal Geographical Society expedition, and closes in the summer of 1923, when the ice that trapped him finally reaches the terminus, the end point of the glacier. A vision from inside the mountain and a perspective from below frame the many gazes that scan the surface of mountains over a twenty-five-year period. Indigenous peoples, explorers, naturalists, settlers, latter-day investors, painters and tourists come and go, and all anticipate mountains until they finally realize, some more than others, that mountains defy any kind of framing. The topics of sight and insight, vision and revision, resound through the text, but the icefield refuses to be pinned down by a fixed aesthetic framework. The true hero of the story, therefore, is not one of the many gazers but the object of the gaze: Arcturus Glacier. Modelled after the Athabasca and Angel Glaciers of the Canadian Rockies, Arcturus acts as alpine protagonist and pushes the narrative forward by imitating glaciated landscape. The narrative unfolds between the accumulation and ablation zone and the glacier rewrites the story of mountain tourism, a story previously ‘organized around practices of looking and the faculty of sight.’⁷

Just as *Icefields* experiments with new ways to render mountains, this chapter tests a new term for the critical engagement with alpine spaces. It proposes thinking and writing about alpine space by honouring the mountain as a place that is alive: as a *locus vivus*. This proposal involves transcending the dualistic *locus amoenus/horribilis* and calls for abandoning “learned” ways of seeing.⁸ I base my exploration of frame-defying writings on three different forms of gazing and three different forms of relational looking: I consider the tourist gaze and its interest in the pleasures, desires and social dynamics that consecrate scenic attractions.⁹ I am invested in the postcolonial gaze and the power dynamics behind the seemingly innocent act of looking. And I question the romantic gaze, a habit of seeing alpine spaces in light of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape traditions that foreground qualities of the picturesque and sublime, of solitude, privacy and the spiritual. Accordingly, my investigation into the visual relations of mountain tourism rests on three major bodies of work: Mary Louise Pratt’s doctrine, which sees mastery behind aesthetic appreciation;¹⁰ John Urry, who effectively translates Pratt’s work to the tourist economy and demonstrates

⁷ Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 93.

⁸ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage, 2011), 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2, 14.

¹⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* (London: Routledge, 2008).

that ‘the organising sense in tourism is visual’;¹¹ and a departure from Marjorie Hope Nicolson’s aesthetic dichotomy of mountain gloom and mountain glory, which has provided generations of scholars with a ‘sense of landscape now called “Romantic”’ and a not unflawed standard story of alpine visual appreciation.¹² My argument for an appreciation of mountains as spaces that come to life honours the Romantic legacies of Orientalism and mountaineering.¹³ I do not, however, proceed from Nicolson’s terms of gloom and glory, borrowed from the writings of John Ruskin. Instead, I develop my case from the *locus amoenus* and *horribilis*, which, being a literary topos, better supports my argument that moving towards a sustainable mountain tourism requires abandoning dominant visual regimes to care for the imaginary.

This chapter is structured in four sections that follow the structural logic of alpine writing back laid out in the previous chapter: exposing dominant visions in order to subvert them through a critical rewriting. Sections 3.1 and 3.2, therefore, engage with the powerful frameworks of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horribilis* before Section 3.3 demonstrates how *Iciefelds* transcends these framings and returns the gaze through blurred visions. Finally, Section 3.4 offers a new topos through which to think and write about mountains as frame-defying living beings as it transcends the bifurcating perception of mountains and rethinks it into something different, into a *locus vivus* that might in itself constitute something akin to a decolonized new way of thinking.

3.1 Visual dominance

The *locus amoenus* has its origins in classical poetry, and it has traditionally been associated with the pastoral idyll. Contrary to the prevailing notion that it was in the sixteenth century at the earliest that mountains were deemed attractive, the grafting of the *locus amoenus* onto alpine spaces is almost as old as the topos itself. Examples from ancient Greek poetry render ‘the steep slopes of Ossa and

¹¹ Urry and Larsen, *Tourist Gaze* 3.0, 18.

¹² Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Janice Hewlett Koelb, “‘This Most Beautiful and Adorn’d World’: Nicolson’s *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* Reconsidered,” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 16, no. 3 (2009): 443.

¹³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 8, 137; Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 243.

Olympus' as pleasant as the shadowy plains.¹⁴ Based on Virgil's use of the word *amoenus*, Ernst Robert Curtius defines the topos as a place whose sole purpose is to 'give pleasure'.¹⁵ The agreeable framing of mountains as a "pleasant place" has played into the hands of tourism and exploration enterprises alike. Both global operations have capitalized on the pleasing aesthetic value of mountains. Ever since Pratt and Urry emphasized the 'power of the visual gaze', critical readers have been attentive to the power inherent in the position of the viewer.¹⁶ Pratt, for instance, argues that seeing a natural sight as painting highlights 'the relation of *mastery* predicated between the seer and the seen', and she explains that once a landscape is aestheticized, the land is translated into a cultural narrative of possession and control, making the seemingly innocent act of framing a gesture of conquest.¹⁷ Based on the dominance inherent in acts of looking, this section discusses the power that lies beneath the pleasure of framing mountains through a discussion of the aesthetic and horticultural denotations of the *locus amoenus* in *Icefields*, drawing out the inherent dominance in acts of looking and their material impact.

In the novel, Wharton highlights several instances in which a traveller's visual appreciation of mountains exhibits networks of power and makes apparent the perspectival layeredness of mountains. When Edward Byrne sees his lover Elspeth Fletcher standing in the shadow of Signal Mountain 'in the fleeing amber of sunset', Byrne thinks that 'The scene might be one for a sentimental painting', which he immediately names *Evening in Jasper*.¹⁸ By framing and naming the scene, Byrne objectifies the mountain as much as the woman he desires. Here, the novel mediates superiority via the gendered gaze. In another scene, Lord Sexsmith, modelled on the Scottish nobleman James Carnegie, Earl of Southesk, names places after their picturesque qualities, drawing attention to the power of the colonial gaze. Lord Sexsmith, who is as fond of Shakespeare's Caliban as he is of the Romantics, describes his camp in the Rockies as 'quite picturesque' right before naming it 'little Albion'.¹⁹ Consecrating a clearing in the Rockies in reference to the imperial motherland and seeing in it England, Southampton, the Solent and the Isle of Wight reveals ever so clearly the mastery involved in the

¹⁴ Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 199.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁶ Urry and Larsen, *Tourist Gaze 3.0*, 2; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 200.

¹⁷ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 200.

¹⁸ Wharton, *Icefields*, 163.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

aesthetics of colonial travel.²⁰ Furthermore, the novel shows how the powerful link between the acts of looking and taking continues even after the peak of colonial exploration. The aesthetic dominance of the *locus amoenus* translates neatly from British imperialism to Canadian railway tourism. Following Lord Sexsmith's conquest via aesthetics, Anton Sibelius builds his tourist enterprise on one compelling picture. In the following passage, Sibelius, based on CPR magnate William Cornelius van Horne, draws a red X on a map to indicate the site of his planned city. He has chosen this site because he first saw it rendered in paint, the description of which utilizes several stock symbols of the *locus amoenus* – grass, shade, water and humans embedded in a mountain setting:²¹

As a young clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company he had seen a painting at the Fort Garry headquarters: Gentle green hills around a placid lake. Peaceable Natives camped in the shade of giant trees. And far in the distance a mountain peak, weightless, serene, from which a fragile glacier wound a serpentine course. In the bright morning sunlight the avenues and spires of ice shone in the air like a celestial city. A city amid the ice.²²

Icefields leaves no doubt that Sibelius' project of railway tourism is inspired by a picturesque image of an alpine city displayed at Fort Garry. Like van Horne, who praised the display of the Canadian Rockies at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition as a means to ensure the railway's economic prosperity, Sibelius commissioned artists 'to reveal to guests the glories of the [. . .] empire'.²³ In this way, the novel reminds us that even the most leisurely trip, even a journey embarked upon in search of visual pleasure, is about the power of empire, thus indicating just how much artistic conventions for representations – specifically the picturesque and sublime – intersect with other modes of conceptualization and capture, like mapping and naming practices.

In addition to the underlying visual effects of *locus amoenus* upon the viewer, *Icefields* also reveals the overt discursive power of this topos. This discursive power is responsible for the fact that when travellers encounter the Canadian Rockies, they tend to see only that which has already been seen. In the words of John Urry: 'Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation.'²⁴ Thus, when the travellers in *Icefields* visit Jasper, they only see that which already has its

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Winckler, 'Gemeine Plätze', 309.

²² Wharton, *Icefields*, 105.

²³ Ibid., 230.

²⁴ Urry and Larsen, *Tourist Gaze* 3.0, 4.

place in the European knowledge apparatus; a few strong, pre- and reproduced images dominate over less picturesque representations. This is evident, first of all, in the discourse of the sublime that functions as a filter through which travellers' perceptions are sorted into categories and mountains are understood. In the presence of a fictionalized version of Pyramid Mountain, Lord Sexsmith takes his binoculars from around his neck, drops down on one knee and shows all the symptoms of 'a Victorian in the presence of the sublime.'²⁵ When Lord Sexsmith explains that this is 'the place I've been seeking',²⁶ it becomes clear that the sublime is not a quality he randomly encounters but a specific emotion he has learnt from the romantic gaze. The power of prefabricated sublimity, repeated in eighteenth-century mountain literature as frequently as images of the Orient in British and French writing of the same period, informs Sexsmith's perceptual cognitive bias so that he cannot feel anything but heightened emotions. A similar moment occurs later in the novel when watercolourist William Streit fails to render the mountains near Jasper in paint. Even though Streit realizes that the Rockies are quite different from his native Alps, he desperately falls back on 'European principles of the picturesque' after having stared for days at a blank canvas.²⁷ He 'paint[s], from nostalgic memory the Austrian Alps.'²⁸ This scene emphasizes that the Rockies are not so easily subsumed into European aesthetic categories and exposes the systematic errors of the perceptual bias surrounding mountains. But it also highlights the predicament that the visual repetition of the *locus amoenus* disables any representation of mountains outside a deeply homogenizing Alpine Orientalist framework that in turn gains force with each additional aesthetic product.

As *Icefields* displays the powers and systematic errors of the *locus amoenus*, it calls attention to the violence with which aesthetic frameworks affect nature. The degree to which an aesthetic framing interferes with the natural world becomes palpable in the second, far less common meaning of the *locus amoenus*, which Curtius sees in 'the poetical descriptions of gardens.'²⁹ The violence of framing, well disguised in the aesthetic connotation of the *locus amoenus*, comes to the fore through an analysis of the term's horticultural denotation. Etymologically, "garden" derives from the Greek word "enclosure" and reveals, ever so clearly, the power of the topos to fence in a natural space; to order it

²⁵ Wharton, *Icefields*, 28–9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 231.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 200.

for display, cultivation and enjoyment.³⁰ Through a critical reflection on three gardens involving colonial, Romantic and national cultivation, *Icefields* points to the violent ordering of mountain nature.

The first garden Wharton presents shows Jasper's nature in the service of empire when the hobby botanist Byrne, a stock frontier figure involved in colonial exploration, collects alpine specimens in a tin box for subsequent display at the Royal Gardens in London.³¹ While Collie searches for evidence of Mount Brown, Byrne 'create[s] a private botanical collection' that he hopes will one day blossom 'along the lofty aisles at Kew'.³² Byrne's employment displays the naturalist's ordering gaze and the powers involved in taking from the mountain with his aim to stock the 'great botanical exchange house for the empire'.³³ Although Byrne changes his attitude towards mountain nature in the course of the novel, his initial approach conveys the mastery of the naturalist's gaze: he names the flowers 'not caring if the scents matched the names he gave them',³⁴ exercising what Pratt refers to as 'a sense of ownership' over mountain territory.³⁵

The second garden is located in Jasper, yet it has nothing to do with alpine flora. It is 'a garden under glass' full of plants from various parts of the empire.³⁶ While the *locus amoenus* served the interests of the empire in the previous example, here it demonstrates a particular effect of empire upon its subjects, as the tropical glasshouse at the tourist chalet, run by Frank Trask, celebrates imperial, botanical richness by effectively excluding the nature of the Rockies. A space filled with 'humid air', where 'water drips from the broad, sagging leaves of hothouse plants' and 'the windows seem to be melting in the heat', is unsuitable for the growth of alpine flora.³⁷ The enclosed space, fenced off and protected from low temperatures and glacial winds, functions as a typical colonial garden in the sense that it is 'a means of keeping the "other" world at bay, of creating an oasis of Britishness in an alien if not potentially hostile land'.³⁸ As a tool of cultivation that helps to nurture the plants of British imperialism, the glasshouse

³⁰ *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. 'garden', accessed 5 November 2019. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/176724?result=1&rskey=cs4zt7&>.

³¹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 26.

³² Wharton, *Icefields*, 18.

³³ William Jackson Hooker, quoted in Jim Endersby, 'How Botanical Gardens Helped to Establish the British Empire', *Financial Times*, 25 July 2014. <https://www.ft.com/content/dcd33da0-0e69-11e4-a1ae-00144feabdc0>; Lucile H. Brockway, 'Science and Colonial Expansion: The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens', *American Ethnologist* 3, no. 6 (1979): 461.

³⁴ Wharton, *Icefields*, 26.

³⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 3.

³⁶ Wharton, *Icefields*, 62.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 68, 63.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

is also a symbolic hothouse for colonial offspring, conserving ‘unabashed blossoms from Europe, India, the Pacific islands.’³⁹ The glasshouse represents the ignorance towards alpine nature that prevailed in the early days of Canadian mountain tourism, when pictures of majestic mountains lured guests into the railway chalets but botanical interests were largely focused upon well-known exotics from India and the Pacific. Outside dominant aesthetic frameworks, mountain nature, ‘the jagged silhouettes of spruce trees rocking slightly in the wind’, was often only seen ‘through the fogged windows’ of the glasshouse.⁴⁰ In this passage, as in several others, the novel comments on the horticultural guise of imperial power which, here, grafts the subjugation of Eastern horticulture onto alpine landscapes, obstructing visions of mountain nature beyond widely circulated picturesque representations. At the same time, the greenhouse metaphor foreshadows the delimitation and consequent death of alpine life. When Byrne suggests that Freya Becker, the female alpinist he wishes to obtain, should ‘hibernate all winter in Elspeth’s garden’, Freya responds that she does not ‘thrive under glass.’⁴¹ The objectification of the woman, similar to Byrne’s imaginary picture *Evening in Jasper*, mirrors an objectification of mountains and suggests that enclosure, as much as visual control, is a hazard to viability.

The third garden *Icefields* takes up, and the first to fence mountains in rather than out, is of national significance: Jasper National Park, a garden for ‘the people of Canada.’⁴² How much this national garden develops along technologies of visual control rather than the parameters of biological and cultural diversity becomes apparent in the *Memorandum re. Dominion Parks* written by James B. Harkin, first commissioner of the Parks Branch. Harkin considers the preservation of Indigenous wildlife in the park worthy of protection not for the health of the ecosystem (and a cultural network) but for ‘aesthetic and sentimental reasons.’⁴³ It is not surprising, then, that this park, whose main purpose is to be, according to Harkin, aesthetically pleasing, is not only produced as a painting, to rephrase Richard Grusin, but also conditioned by certain tastes and aesthetic frameworks.⁴⁴ When Wharton, then, renders Jasper as a ‘bewitching garden

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 63.

⁴¹ Ibid., 155.

⁴² James B. Harkin, ‘Memorandum re. Dominion Parks, Their Value and Ideals’, 20 March 1914, MG30-E169, Vol. 2. James Bernard Harkin Fonds, Library and Archives Canada: 1.

⁴³ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁴ Richard Grusin, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America’s National Parks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10.

of signs;⁴⁵ he not only criticizes established viewpoints but also their selective point of view. It is worth mentioning here that it is almost always an outsider, a traveller, who decides what is worth seeing in Jasper. This tourist gaze is clearly bolted into the founding pillars of the park: to show the 'outstanding charm and attractiveness' of the Rockies, Harkin uses the writings of American, British and settler Canadian mountaineers, such as Outram, Wilcox, Collie, Stutfield, Coleman and Longstaff.⁴⁶ These mountaineers become the arbiters of taste when it comes to conserving mountains as aesthetic landscapes for economic development. It is with some irony, then, that Harkin states that 'national parks exist primarily to serve the needs of the Dominion's own people' when he is in fact building the park according to imperialist visions of a distinctive and highly exclusive landscape based on the exclusion of Indigenous peoples.⁴⁷ There is a landscape of picturesque and sublime beauty, of leisure and fantasy, and of urban-middle to upper-class men in which local Indigenous populations are undesirable elements to be removed.⁴⁸ Arguably, it is with this in mind that *Icefields* depicts Jasper as a space that 'can be enjoyed forever by travellers, mountain climbers and seekers after solitude' only because Indigenous peoples were 'driven off with guns.'⁴⁹ This passage speaks to the visual violence meted out by dominant frameworks not only upon mountains but also upon their human inhabitants. The apparent innocuousness of an aesthetic frame that selectively crops out particular ethnic groups to meet European aesthetic principles ultimately 'deterritorializes indigenous peoples.'⁵⁰

So far, this chapter has discussed the visual power involved in mountain travel and the violence with which it shapes mountain life. As an example of alpine writing back, *Icefields* does more than expose the various powers of the *locus amoenus*; it shows that mountain life tends to go (and grow) out of line. After all, none of the gardens referred to in *Icefields* completely manifest within the boundaries of the book's covers: the National Park only opens as the narrative closes; Elspeth 'unlocks the narrow wooden door' of the glasshouse and 'swings it open' for 'feathery snowflakes' to fall 'on the leaves of the tropical flowers';⁵¹ and Byrne loses his specimen box as he must lose his imperial baggage to survive

⁴⁵ Wharton, *Icefields*, 141.

⁴⁶ Harkin, 'Memorandum', 22–3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Wharton, *Icefields*, 62, 74.

⁵⁰ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 132.

⁵¹ Wharton, *Icefields*, 71.

in the mountains. In addition to offering a display of Alpine Orientalist visual dominance, Wharton's mountain novel, as the next section confirms, never fails to use the Alpine Orientalist gaze as a passageway into local perceptions of mountains.

3.2 Beyond visual regimes

—Warden Langford traces the [town's] name to an early fur trader named Jasper Hawes. But I think it was possibly derived from the French phrase *j'espère*: I hope.

—Why is that?

—An early surveyor spelled it *Jespare* in his published journal. What local meaning this phrase has I don't know. But on one old map the region is labeled *Despair*, which might be a further corruption of the original French phrase.⁵²

Byrne's description of the naming of Jasper is entirely fictional, yet his explanation of the town's name echoes the disabling gloom-and-glory dichotomy in which a discourse evaluates the same place as desperate before celebrating it as hopeful. This is in keeping with current academic discourse, which maintains the assumption that before mountains were sought after, they were deemed 'inconvenient, aesthetically repellent, and dangerous.'⁵³ Wharton's use of phrases such as "possibly", "might be", "I think" and "I don't know" already indicates that *Icefields* presents the dualism of mountain gloom and glory with a great deal of doubt. The scepticism towards discrediting ascriptions of mountains becomes even more obvious in the 2021 landmark edition, where Wharton has added a sentence to the paragraph in which Elspeth summarizes Byrne's story as a promising one: 'From despair to hope.'⁵⁴ While this section begins by outlining the dominant discourse of mountain gloom in early alpine exploration, it soon moves on to a more hopeful 'radical revision and rereading' of the *locus horribilis* that *Icefields* affords.⁵⁵

Following the prevailing historical trajectory of mountain gloom and glory, the narrative resorts to the notion of 'montes horribiles' in every traveller's first

⁵² Ibid., 86.

⁵³ William Cronon, 'Foreword to the 1997 Paperback Edition', in Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, viii.

⁵⁴ Thomas Wharton, *Icefields* (Edmonton: NeWest, 2021), 97.

⁵⁵ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 221.

approach to the Canadian Rockies.⁵⁶ With almost a century lying between them, the Sexsmith and Collie expeditions both comment disapprovingly on the Jasper mountains – sometimes as a response to aesthetic irregularities and sometimes because of the harsh climate and lack of agricultural fecundity. In the early nineteenth century, Sexsmith refers to the Canadian Rockies as ‘nothing’ but ‘a dreary waste of ice’, and he argues in Hamletian desperation that all he sees ‘is stale, flat, unprofitable’, and after exploring Arcturus Glacier writes in his journal ‘only the date and *Disappointment*’.⁵⁷ Several decades later, members of the Collie and Stutfield expedition emulate him. Collie considers the mountainscape ‘dangerous even for able-bodied travellers’.⁵⁸ For Trask, ‘the whole valley was inhospitable’, ‘cold and desolate’ with ‘less than nothing here’.⁵⁹ Stutfield supports the discourse of inhospitable mountains since he cannot believe that ‘people live here through the winter for the sake of a few marten skins’ and even Byrne explains that at times he ‘hate[s] this place’.⁶⁰ Characteristic of alpine writing back, *Icefields* exposes the dominance of Alpine Orientalist gazing before contesting its authority from within.

The novel achieves the subversion of the *locus horribilis* most conspicuously through symbolism, when the snake – the epitome of mountain gloom – opens a gateway into local alpine perception. In line with Christian traditions, the snake functions as an embodiment of evil and diabolic temptation, which was readily projected onto mountains, supporting the notion of the ascribed fearfulness they evoked.⁶¹ Several famous Romantics depict Mount Pilatus as serpentine evil, reaching from its peak and terminating ‘in the serrated jaw of a serpent’.⁶² Percy Bysshe Shelley, for instance, in a reference also quoted in *Icefields*, describes glaciers that ‘creep like snakes that watch their prey’.⁶³ It is out of this tradition that Sexsmith perceives the local Snake people. For him, *the serpent is the subtlest beast of the field*, which naturally makes the Indigenous group that carries its name deceitful as well.⁶⁴ He calls Athabasca’s smile *diabolical* and is convinced that *the girl is goddamned windigo* who, as a proper ice-hearted cannibal,

⁵⁶ Jon Mathieu, ‘Alpenwahrnehmung: Probleme der historischen Periodisierung’, in Mathieu and Leoni, *Die Alpen! Les Alpes!*, 53.

⁵⁷ Wharton, *Icefields*, 181, 180, 181.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 64, 65.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6, 176.

⁶¹ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 412–13.

⁶² Johannes Jacob Scheuchzer, quoted in Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 412.

⁶³ Wharton, *Icefields*, 72.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

will devour him at night.⁶⁵ In these moments, the discourse of devilishness is extended from the alpine environment to local Indigenous groups, perhaps resulting from the Alpine Orientalist framing of mountain people as close to nature (see Section 1.5: ‘The Alpine Other as Savage’).

Through a postcolonial double vision, the symbol of the snake, however, not only enforces the notion of diabolic contamination of mountain places and mountain people, but, more importantly, it opens up perspectives into local alpine belief. At first sight it may seem that local perception does not diverge significantly from those of travellers: Indigenous peoples, too, consider mountains to be populated by sublime creatures. But while Western travellers through several cultural shifts and technological advances have domesticated the serpent (in *Icefields*, they replace it with a ‘serpentine’ road that ‘will come down the moraine in switchbacks’ and ‘run about halfway across the ice’ for tourists to view, from a safe distance), Indigenous peoples respect glaciers as ‘spirit places’ that they only enter in the imagination.⁶⁶ This is true for local mountain imaginaries across the globe as Sara, a descendent of the Snake people and child of Sexsmith’s Indian domestic Viraj, explains:

—I’ve never seen the icefield, Sara said as she waited with Byrne on the cabin steps. The great ice prairie, the Stoneys called it. A good place to stay away from. My father and I never went up there to see it for ourselves.

—Never? Byrne said. Living so close by all these years?

Sara shook her head and glanced up across the valley at the ice.

—In my father’s country, he told me, the mountains are gods, or at least the palaces of gods. And, I think, for my mother’s people as well. Spirit places. It was enough for us that we could see them from the valley.⁶⁷

Following local belief, Sara – half Snake, half Indian – stresses that she has never seen the icefield. To her, mountains are a ‘good place to stay away from’, albeit for different reasons than those of early Rocky Mountain exploration.⁶⁸ Sara’s explanation echoes the understanding that one does not have to – or, even better, must not – see mountains up close to be close to them. The perspectives of local mountain communities, regardless of whether they live in the Rockies or Himalayas (or the Alps, as later chapters will reveal), assume a standpoint from

⁶⁵ Ibid., 42, 35.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 257, 50.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 50–1.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 59.

below; a perspective not from the position of those who climb but from those who imagine rather than explore.

Postcolonial scholarship has encouraged us to undertake 'sustained efforts to learn to learn from below'.⁶⁹ In a postcolonial revision, learning about mountains from below does not mean reversing a power, inverting polarities or reinstalling another dominant; rather, it means being open to Other perspectives.⁷⁰ It means giving up our trusted visions and imagining what Other appreciations of mountains might look like. *Icefields* points out the necessity of a shift in perspective in very explicit terms. From the very first sentence, the novel invites readers to leave the trodden trails of alpine aesthetics, to fall, like its protagonist, into a crevasse and to be perceptive to the wonders of alpine life: 'At a quarter past three in the afternoon, on August 17, 1898, Doctor Edward Byrne slipped on the ice of Arcturus glacier in the Canadian Rockies and slid into a crevasse'.⁷¹ Only after Byrne falls can he see a *hitherto unknown periscopic property of glacial ice*: a 'pale human figure, with wings'.⁷² This angelic apparition, which only becomes visible because the doctor is now 'hanging upside down', haunts the novel in a most wonderful way and afflicts traditional forms of looking.⁷³ In deploying the topos of the horrible mountain and taking it to wondrous places, *Icefields* upsets the binary aesthetic evaluation of an Alpine Orientalist gaze and teaches us to see in mountains not something to be composed into a picture perfect, nor a snake that needs to be tamed, but rather an extraordinary expression of mountain life. To fall, then, is not to fail; it is the first step beyond the dualism of gloom and glory.

3.3 Returning the gaze in a blurred vision

At the same time that *Icefields* points out a 'scopic regime' that directs travellers to perceive mountains only along the lines of a dominant aesthetic binary,⁷⁴ the novel shows the ability of mountains to escape the powers of such a gaze and to return it self-confidently. Mountains, Wharton implies, complicate colonial,

⁶⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Righting Wrongs', *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no. 2/3 (2004): 548.

⁷⁰ Stephen Slemon, 'Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World', *World Literature Written in English* 30, no. 2 (1990): 36.

⁷¹ Wharton, *Icefields*, 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁴ Urry and Larsen, *Tourist Gaze* 3.0, 2.

tourist and romantic gazes, which is evident, first of all, in the novel's tendency to let objects disappear under the watchful eyes of explorers and travellers: a rucksack tumbles down into the darkness of the glacier; a tin box holding rare seeds jangles to the bottom of a crevasse; a piano is pushed into a chasm; drops of tea dissolve in snow; a copy of Shakespeare's plays is lost during alpine exploration; and the image of a folded wing vanishes in an ice pinnacle. More stirring than the loss of things, however, is the disappearance of people. Some, like Sara's mother and Freya's father, exit the narrative space never to return. Others vanish temporarily: Byrne momentarily disappears into the crevasse at the beginning of the novel; Frank Trask is not seen again after his rescue; Elspeth too disappears, leaving only her boot prints in the snow; Sara repeatedly escapes Byrne's vision; and Hal Rawson only sees Freya in his dreams after a cornice collapses beneath her feet.

It is not just these descriptions of moments of loss on the mountain that imply the shortcomings of visual perception, however; Wharton also explicitly acknowledges that to know mountains one has to look for difference. This becomes apparent in a scene where Rawson examines a photograph retrieved from Freya's broken camera:

At the end of the summer, Rawson brings Byrne two photographs, the remnants of Freya's film cartridge. The rest of the exposures were spoiled when the camera cracked during the fall.

—I wanted to give you these, before I left. I may not be coming back to Jasper. The ice carapace of Mount Arcturus is the main subject of the first shot, the icfield below its summit a dark amoeboid blur to one side. The clerk in the camera shop explained to Hal that the glare of sunlight on the snow caused this effect.⁷⁵

What is so interesting here is that another fall, this time the fall of an optical instrument, reminds readers that the entirety of a mountain cannot be captured by eyes alone. When Freya's camera breaks, traditional, well-established forms of visual representation shatter and viewers are instead invited to see the mountain through the 'dark amoeboid blur'.⁷⁶ At the same time, Wharton cautions against framing this blur as yet another 'white expanse'⁷⁷ to 'dream gloriously over' by indicating that in all moments of visual ambiguity, in all instances of loss, alpine

⁷⁵ Wharton, *Icefields*, 212.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

forms and forces move centre stage.⁷⁸ After all, it is only *through* the crevasse that Byrne disappears, only *through* the snow that tea evaporates, only *through* a rock overhang that the piano can be pushed into a gorge, only *through* the fragility of the cornice that Freya falls to her death, and only *through* ‘the glare of sunlight on the snow’ that the blur can disturb the Alpine Orientalist gaze.⁷⁹ In this sense, the glacial blur does not function as a canvas for Alpine Orientalist yearnings but as a form that falls out of visual desires as it falls out of sustained orders of looking.

Gaze theorists will perhaps see in Wharton’s glacial blur a Lacanian stain that in another discussion would need to be unpacked. In the writing back of *Icefields*, however, it does not, because in the novel the blur is not that permanent *objet petit a* that holds together a symbolic order but is instead a disruptive structure that is starting to bring down an order.⁸⁰ The blur in *Icefields* does not order, it celebrates the diversity of mountain life. Put differently, the postcolonial revision that Wharton’s novel undertakes does not send readers down Lacan’s rabbit hole but invites them to see mountainscapes *through* the blur, through difference. Once the blur is neither a white blank nor an optical flaw but a primary concern, an alpine quality unassimilable into glorious and gloomy frames becomes visible.

Viewing the blur entirely outside aesthetic forms of appreciation, through glacial anatomy, creates another opportunity for revision. One might even see in the blur something as simple as a firm line, an equilibrium line: the perfectly balanced small area on a glacier in which the ablation and accumulation of ice amount to a mass balance of zero. The snow-covered surface of the accumulation zone appears brighter than the wet snow in the ablation zone that looks like Wharton’s ‘dark amoeboid blur’.⁸¹ Such a blur functions as a most fitting allegory for a sustainable environmental ethics in which humans honour the wild by preventing mountain life from being diminished and taking from the mountain only as much as the equilibrium allows.

My use of the term “equilibrium” deserves clarification, at least from a biological perspective. Although the concept of ‘the balance of nature’ is still part of the popular understanding of ecology, ecologists have long agreed that

⁷⁸ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness & Other Stories* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1995), 36.

⁷⁹ Wharton, *Icefields*, 212.

⁸⁰ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton), 1973.

⁸¹ Wharton, *Icefields*, 212.

nature should not be thought of in terms of scales and stability.⁸² Rather, nature is characterized by dynamic processes; always changing. While the concept of balance is outdated in the larger understanding of the natural world, it is still accepted and valid when addressing a glacier's mass balance. Here the suggestion is not that glaciers are static. Quite the contrary; balance is an indicator for a glacier's ever-changing long-term behaviour. To correspond with that behaviour, then, does not attempt to achieve 'some optimal state of balance'; instead, it incites a 'change of perception, brought upon by more robust modelling, lots of data, and a good reality check.'⁸³ It is this change of perception that the blur signifies in Wharton's *Icefields*. Acting in tune with the blur then means that 'deep reflection and respect must accompany each act of use, and means too that we must always consider the possibility of non-use.'⁸⁴ Therefore, the only image evolving from the postcolonial blur is a mirror image of our own interaction with mountain nature, turning the stain on Freya's photograph into a compass for a sustainable mountain ethics. That a lot of mountain tourism, past and present, has ignored such a signpost is evident throughout *Icefields*:

*The firn line, between the inviolate and the melting zones of a glacier, is often sharply defined. Once past this point the ice begins to die. Melting can be hastened by even a faint increase in heat at the lower extremity of the glacier, such as produced by the flash bulbs of hundreds of cameras.*⁸⁵

The novel's definition of the firn line implies that the tourist's visual obsession, as well as the industry's enabling of such an obsession through the tourist experience, disturbs the alpine equilibrium. It is no coincidence, then, that the most precious object disappearing in the light of mountain travel is the glacier itself. Throughout the novel, glaciers are in an 'unstable state' – receding, retreating, sublimating, melting and escaping.⁸⁶ But those participating in the tourist industry, which Wharton demonizes through his description of travellers' 'sightless eyes' and 'blinded tour guides,' cannot see the balefulness of their gaze and turn a blind eye to the state of mountain environments.⁸⁷ The chalet owner and local entrepreneur Trask, for instance, finds it ironic: 'another joke at his

⁸² Neil A. Campbell and Jane B. Reece, *Biologie* (Munich: Pearson Education, 2011), 1630.

⁸³ John Kircher, *The Balance of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 203.

⁸⁴ Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 25.

⁸⁵ Wharton, *Icefields*, 185.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 96, 74, 96, 171.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 210, 194.

expense in the country of illusion [. . .] that the ice should be disappearing at the same time that someone has finally found a use for it.⁸⁸

In the very moment in which the alpine picture-perfect melts away, Arcturus, at last, returns the gaze. When ‘all that was lost at the beginning of the novel reappears in the end’, Wharton records what ‘has always been there: the returning gaze of Others.’⁸⁹ This is evident, first of all, in the return of lost objects. The narrative ecology of *Icefields*, as any self-regulating environment would, forbids permanent loss so that lost things are now returned: *Whatever is embedded within it must, by the laws of nature, reappear.*⁹⁰ Most notably, the majority of items released by Arcturus Glacier at the end of the novel are objects of colonial cultural appropriation: Sexsmith’s ‘tattered volume of plays by Shakespeare’, a ‘shred of faded green cloth’ from the Collie expedition and the ‘dented, punctured remains of a tin specimen box.’⁹¹ ‘Tattered’, ‘faded’, ‘dented’ and ‘punctured’ – Arcturus gazes back in selective projection, presenting the instruments of Alpine Orientalism as altered, scattered and broken.⁹²

One item, however, withstands the mountain’s vengeful looking back and symbolizes the forever-hopeful moment that Angie Abdou’s *The Canterbury Trail* (2011) has already identified as an example of alpine writing back. When Byrne is waiting at the terminus for a final revision of the angelic figure he saw hanging upside down in the crevasse a quarter of a century earlier, he witnesses the result of a truly inexplicable transformation. At the spot that once enclosed him in angel’s wings, he identifies ‘a tiny purple-pink flower’:⁹³

Orchidaceae. The petals tremble in the icy wind. *An exceedingly delicate flower.* Quickly he takes note of sexual characteristics, number of petals, the single ovate basal leaf. There can be no doubt. *Calypso bulbosa.* The Calypso Orchid or Venus’ Slipper. He kneels in the cold muck. An orchid. His scientific understanding contracts. Orchids do not grow here. Nothing grows here.⁹⁴

In the obvious critique of the gaze under which ‘nothing can survive’, the glacier produces an orchid – ‘something rather extraordinary.’⁹⁵ It releases a flower

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁸⁹ Gautier Sans and Françoise Besson, ‘Mountains and Writing in Thomas Wharton’s *Icefields*’, in *Mountains Figured and Disfigured in the English-Speaking World*, ed. Françoise Besson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2000), 416; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 216.

⁹⁰ Wharton, *Icefields*, 182.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 178, 97, 273.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 274.

as delicate as an angel's wing and a beauty Other than the one contained in the *locus amoenus*. The flower that has sprung to life in an otherwise hostile environment of colonial and leisurely exploration is the ultimate symbol of a productive mountain future, because if something as unexpected as an orchid can grow at the terminus, a hopeful change to mountain future – a future Other than a terminus – becomes possible. This marvellous upsetting of the gaze that finds hope at the close is a prominent feature of alpine writing back. In the next and final section of this chapter, the hopeful upsetting of the gaze will connect with a resolution of the gloom-and-glory dichotomy in Romantic aesthetic appreciation.

3.4 In sight of the *locus vivus*

This study is not the first to argue that the perception of the paradigmatic *locus amoenus/horribilis* is flawed, but it is the first to start working towards an alternative discourse that is capable of fully comprehending perceptions of alpine spaces. This is necessary because mountain studies needs to move beyond purely visual evaluations if the plurality of mountain spaces is to be considered more thoroughly. Part of this work involves demonstrating the faulty historical separation of mountain narratives into a sequential logic of gloom followed by glory. This fault line is evidenced by Wallace Atwood's easy labelling of the region around Athabasca Glacier as 'an empty, desolate-looking place' in 1945 after Coleman had already admired 'beautiful Lake Louise' in 1911,⁹⁶ one of many examples in the literature on mountains around the world. As Jon Mathieu and Simona Boscani Leoni have argued regarding literature on the Alps, favourable and unfavourable mountain depictions have existed simultaneously, rather than only consecutively.⁹⁷ They, as well as Dawn L. Hollins, advance important critiques of a black-and-white history of alpine appreciation, with Hollins continuing Mathieu and Boscani Leoni's argument when she demonstrates that mountains were 'full of activity and written of in terms of the deepest admiration – long before the development of modern mountaineering.'⁹⁸ Hollins convincingly argues that the compelling need to reiterate the story of mountain gloom and

⁹⁶ A. P. Coleman, *The Canadian Rockies: New and Old Trails* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1922), 22; Wallace Atwood, *The Rocky Mountains* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1945), 187.

⁹⁷ Jon Mathieu and Simona Boscani Leoni, 'Einführung und Zusammenfassungen,' in Mathieu and Leoni, *Die Alpen! Les Alpes!*, 9–30.

⁹⁸ Dawn L. Hollins, 'Wired: Rethinking Mountain Gloom,' *Alpinist* 57 (Spring 2017): 105.

glory is sustained by modern mountaineering and the institutionalized belief in breaking new ground. ‘The narrative,’ Hollins explains, ‘provides one more way for modern mountaineers to be first.’⁹⁹ To show the inadequacy of this paradigm and to fathom its cultural roots is, undoubtedly, an important step in upsetting the dominant discourse; however, this kind of critique adheres to questions of aesthetics. It continues to promote aesthetic evaluation as the only way to appreciate mountains and as the only way to think and write critically about the cultural history of alpine spaces. The previous sections have established that there is more to mountains than meets the eye. This last section now turns to one of the trickier questions of this chapter: if visual evaluation is unfit to capture mountains in their plurality, how can we think and write about mountains in more holistic terms? How can we honour mountains above and beyond visual framing mechanisms? The answer is in Wharton’s novel and develops out of Byrne’s demand to look for *new words* and *new ways of thinking*¹⁰⁰ and Hal’s observation that *the ice is alive*.¹⁰¹

This study proposes that the most appropriate term for transcending binary ascriptions, as well as visual restrictions, is the *locus vivus*. Latin for a place that is “alive”, “living”, “lively” and “natural”, this term grasps the diversity of alpine life without capturing it. The term *locus vivus* emerges out of a natural science understanding of nature in which mountains are a *Lebensraum*, not in the territorial expansive tone in which the German compound of “life” and “space” has entered Anglophone scholarship on Nazi Germany but in the ecological sense as a synonym for the English “habitat”, a space in which multiple life forms as diverse as lichens, stoneflies, marmots and hunters live together and collectively create the space they inhabit.¹⁰² It is a place of natural and cultural interconnectivity. In certain ways, the *locus vivus* also echoes the tone of Nan Shepherd’s seminal mountain memoir, *The Living Mountain* (1977). Such a mountain can never only be either fear-inducing or awe-inspiring; in its own peculiar liveliness, it contains all the beauty and terror that life can offer. It is a place entirely outside aesthetic value, natural, continual, living and fresh, full of life and full of the possibility to recreate.

My choice to use a Latin term to build on established topoi is a tongue-in-cheek imitation of Linnaean binomenclature and a postcolonial return to the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁰ Wharton, *Icefields*, 197.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 226.

¹⁰² *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary*, s.v. ‘vivus’ (London: Cassell, 1982), 647.

naturalist's ordering gaze. Postcolonial theory argues that resistance is 'always necessarily complicit in the apparatus it seeks to transgress'.¹⁰³ This makes it possible that the *locus vivus* can simultaneously be (a) an *Other* to a *locus mortuus* that frames mountains as either glorious or gloomy and 'grinds away all life'¹⁰⁴ and (b) an-*Other* that 'disrupts the categorical closures implicit in the either/or logic' of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horribilis*, welcoming the vividness within mountains.¹⁰⁵ Building on Henri Lefebvre's trialectics of space, the concept of the *locus vivus* resists the two terms of alpine aesthetics and the oppositions and trenches built around them to form 'a third term that disrupts, disorders, and begins to reconstitute the conventional binary opposition into an-Other that comprehends but is more than just the sum of two parts'.¹⁰⁶ This type of third term or third space has frequently associated "space" with "life": Doris Bachmann-Medick, for instance, considers space 'existing beyond familiar boundaries, a "lived" and not fully chartable space of movement and community', while Edward Soja sees 'lived space as an-Other world' that transforms 'the categorical and closed logic of either/or' of the *locus amoenus/horribilis* dichotomy 'to the dialectically open logic of both/and also . . .' of the *locus vivus*.¹⁰⁷ As a concept referring to something diverse, fluid and ever-changing, the conceptual goal of the *locus vivus* is to move beyond the codifications of Alpine Orientalist aesthetics. It 'is not meant to stop at three, to construct a holy trinity, but to build further, to move on, to continuously expand'.¹⁰⁸ To understand mountains as alive is to realize that alpine environments and cultures are never closed, never finished and always in a process of being remade. Everything is teeming with life (and death) once mountains are viewed from a postcolonial perspective. This is true for ongoing conceptual reconstructions as well as for a temporal openness, because 'for the future to be open, space must be open too'.¹⁰⁹ It is no coincidence, then, that *Icefields* returns to a time in which Jasper was an open space not yet confined by the orders of the National Park. By reopening the space in narration, the novel affords an imaginative release.

¹⁰³ Slemon, 'Unsettling the Empire', 37.

¹⁰⁴ Wharton, *Icefields*, 273.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.; Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge: Blackwell: 1996), 7.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 34; Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: New Orientation in the Study of Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 222; Soja, *Thirdspace*, 60 (my emphasis).

¹⁰⁸ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 61.

¹⁰⁹ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007), 12.

It is important to explain, at this point, why the third I propose is not the sublime, which is also a third that goes beyond the beautiful and picturesque. There are at least four reasons to expel, or at the very least to closely question, the spell of the sublime in the discourse on mountains. The first is that, far from bringing mountain life into sharper focus, it limits their presence to how they affect humans. Philip Shaw demonstrates how much the sublime leans on the human, rather than the mountain, when he presents accepted definitions that describe the sublime as ‘a state of mind’, as ‘a feeling’ and as an ‘emotion.’¹¹⁰ The second reason to refrain from the sublime lies in the ‘gendered nature of the distinction between the sublime and the beautiful’ that juxtaposes a ‘virile masculine power’ of the sublime with an ascribed feminine passivity of the beautiful.¹¹¹ The third reason lies in the fact that in its history spanning two millennia, the sublime has ‘never permitted consensus about its meaning or implications.’¹¹² Conceptualizations and reconceptualizations by theorists as diverse as Longinus, Burnet, Addison, Dennis, Burke, Kant, Schopenhauer, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Lyotard, Derrida, Deleuze, Lacan and Žižek have occasionally highlighted structural similarities but generally stood in the way of a unity and produced a theoretical baggage unfit for a conceptual journey to the high alpine. One of the few similarities between Romantic, modernist and postmodernist understandings, namely their shared ‘sense of the unrepresentable’, provides the fourth and most important reason against my use of the sublime within a more holistic discourse on mountains:¹¹³ to use the sublime would mean to subscribe to the assertion that mountain life lies ‘beyond words.’¹¹⁴ It would imply that mountains are unrepresentable, and it would discard Wharton’s effort, which clearly demonstrates that mountains are representable once imagination and narration take precedence over visual appropriation.

Icelfields not only contains all the letters needed to spell out L-I-F-E, but it also shows further ways through which literature renders mountains as living entities. During the launch of the landmark edition in 2021, Wharton shared a poem composed of all the sections in the novel that are about the ice. It quickly turned into a glacial song, whose chorus sings to the aliveness of ice. To convey mountains’ sense of brio, the author renders mountains through verbal

¹¹⁰ Philip Shaw, *The Sublime*, 2nd ed., The New Critical Idiom (London: Routledge, 2017), 1, 125, 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹² Seth Perlow, ‘sublime’, *The University of Chicago Theories of Media Glossary*, accessed 31 October 2018, <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/sublime.htm>.

¹¹³ Shaw, *Sublime*, 168.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

depictions that imply their capacity to act. Not unlike the Sleeping Giant in Abdou's *The Canterbury Trail*, Wharton's Arcturus Glacier 'bobs, spills, dances, changes direction', 'groans, cracks, thunders, and rears up'; it 'crumbles' and 'sloughs off'.¹¹⁵ While Abdou's novel vivifies mountains through personification, Wharton's glacier, perhaps because of the author's training in natural sciences, comes to life mostly through movement, one of the main characteristics that helps distinguish non-living from living beings in biological science. Whereas the personification of mountains in Abdou's novel only constructs mountains as narratorial agents, Wharton registers them as already being agents, as being a medium in W. J. T. Mitchell's sense and therefore being alive before the actuations of literary inscription.¹¹⁶ The *locus vivus* allows for the recognition of *Icefields'* mountains as narratological agents in the material world; that is, without the literary topos and without the mediation of the literary artist. It is with this sense of a most *natural* movement in mind, then, that the novel activates another meaning of the Latin *vivus* and has the mountain behave 'like running water'.¹¹⁷ In *Icefields*, 'glaciers are like rivers', 'the ice flows' and 'it descends'.¹¹⁸

The narrative structure of *Icefields* insists on the mountain as a living being through the overlap between glacial movement and narrative development. Most impressively, and as recognized in most studies on *Icefields*, each of the novel's five sections is characterized as a specific phase of glaciation, underpinning the novel with a glacial anatomy.¹¹⁹ Mirroring Gustav Freytag's structural pyramid of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement, 'the glacier's writing' forms an alpine narrative ecology that traverses the névé, moraine, nunatak and ablation zone, to the terminus.¹²⁰ Each of the main chapters begins with a brief definition of the specific section in glacial anatomy and never fails to include the imaginary within the natural. This has also been noted by Joel Martineau, who compares dictionary definitions of each glacial area with the

¹¹⁵ Wharton, *Icefields*, 142, 161, 252.

¹¹⁶ W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2.

¹¹⁷ *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, s.v. 'vivus'.

¹¹⁸ Wharton, *Icefields*, 169, 170.

¹¹⁹ Joel Martineau, 'Landscapes and Inscapes in Thomas Wharton's *Icefields*', *Open Letter*, no. 2 (1998): 41–50; Pamela Banting, 'The Angel in the Glacier: Geography as Intertext in Thomas Wharton's *Icefields*', *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature & Environment* 7 (2000): 67–80; Claire Omhòvère, 'The Melting of Time in Thomas Wharton's *Icefields*', in *History, Literature, and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies*, ed. Robert A. Wardhaugh and Alison C. Calder (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005), 43–62; and, most recently, Cory Willard, 'Glaciers, Embodiment, and the Sublime: An Ecocritical Approach to Thomas Wharton's "Icefields"', in *Writing the Body in Motion*, ed. Angie Abdou and Jamie Dopp (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2018), 71–92.

¹²⁰ Banting, 'Angel in the Glacier', 72; Gustav Freytag, *Freytag's Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1900).

one provided in *Icefields*.¹²¹ Yet, when Wharton defines the névé as ‘a high plain of snow and ice from which the glaciers descend’ that ‘cannot be seen from the valley’ but ‘must be imagined’¹²² instead of ‘partially compacted granular snow that is the intermediate stage between snow and glacial ice’, he engages in more than the ‘playful fictionality’ Martineau describes, effectively showing that mountains are composed of imagination as much as ice.¹²³ Once the first chapter unpacks the Indigenous and exploratory histories that shape mountain reality, a second meaning of névé unfolds from the German *Firn*: this geological term that translates as ‘of last year’ becomes a compact mass of layers packed with (hi)story upon (hi)story.¹²⁴ It is only *natural*, then, that making sense of a moraine involves seeing in ‘a chaotic jumble of fragments’ not just a fragmented landscape but the need to reconstruct history.¹²⁵ When those histories resolve at the terminus, they enter the ‘transition zone between two worlds’ and the imaginary resumes a natural concern.¹²⁶ Trusting that alpine writing back involves a route into an alternative alpine appreciation that refigures in the material world points towards the power of storytelling. This is evidenced by the tool of narration that *Icefields* explicitly proposes as we move into the unknown future of mountain travel: we must be ‘moved through stories.’¹²⁷ It is in story that the *locus vivus* most effectively comes to life and the *loci amoeni* and *horribiles* are no longer the framing narratives. *Icefields* revitalizes our understanding of mountains as it vitalizes Arcturus Glacier on the page. It reminds us that alpine writing back, as conceptualized in the previous chapter, is an upsetting of imperial *and* Romantic visions through a foregrounding of vitality in alpine space – sometimes via movement, sometimes in premodern counter-discourse, sometimes via personification, and always through story.

The continual confrontation with the fact that everything mountainous is also alive must be the basis for the answers we give to questions such as: What do we see when we look at mountains, how do we relate to mountains, how do we behave with them, and where do we stand when glaciers recede under the metaphorical flashlights of the tourist gaze? Ultimately, the revealing truth of the *locus vivus* must be the basis for the morals that encompass our ecological

¹²¹ Martineau, ‘Landscapes and Inscapes in Thomas Wharton’s *Icefields*’, 44.

¹²² Wharton, *Icefields*, 1.

¹²³ Martineau, ‘Landscapes and Inscapes in Thomas Wharton’s *Icefields*’, 44.

¹²⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. ‘Firn’, accessed 8 November 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/science/firn>.

¹²⁵ Wharton, *Icefields*, 61.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

mindfulness towards mountains. In the twenty-first century, when Mount Edith Cavell, home to the Angel Glacier that inspires Wharton's *Arcturus*, is at times cut off from public visions by National Park authorities, the glacier on the mountain's flank, crammed to fit the frames of Alpine Orientalism in many promotional documents of the Canadian railway companies, no longer looks angelic. It has morphed into a blur with only a faint memory of its virtuous state. As the angel gradually blurs, we are constantly reminded that mountain reality as it lives now may one day cease to exist. Then, even the most stubborn gazers, entrepreneurs and scholars will realize that mountains are neither awful nor awesome, because they will have died. In a place in which Margaret Atwood states that 'earth, like trees, dies from the top down', implying that 'the things that are killing' mountains 'will kill, if left unchecked, everything else', we must continuously reconsider, reevaluate and readjust the tools we use to look at mountains.¹²⁸ To see them as *loci vivi* is to accept that whatever is pleasant and/or horrible about mountain life is good, as long as it is part of a mountain's essential nature. To know mountains outside the colonial, tourist and romantic gazes, then, is 'to know, that is, with the knowledge that is a process of living'.¹²⁹

It is striking that the interpretation of *Icefields*, like that of *The Canterbury Trail*, has us arrive at a place and time that demands to know mountains an Other way: Abdou challenges the visible powers of Alpine Orientalism and Wharton engages with the less apparent, seemingly innocent, act of looking at mountains. The 2021 edition offers a most curious point of connection between the two novels. In the landmark edition, the ambiguous stone offering that Elspeth hands to Byrne towards the end of the story becomes a symbol for their unborn child. Once Byrne slips the stone into his pocket, Elspeth says, 'we will be here'.¹³⁰ Moments later, Byrne understands that the "we" in Elspeth's statement was her way of telling him that she is expecting their child; their third. The "we" further gestures towards a sense of community and may thus signal the urgent need for togetherness that has become a staple in Anthropocene writing.

Whether Wharton's and Abdou's texts confront the colonial or Romantic legacies of Alpine Orientalism, both forms of rewriting expect life – a new beginning – and arrive at a celebration of a mountain's resilience, of the power to live. And both novels achieve this via narration: Abdou through the literary

¹²⁸ Margaret Atwood, *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (London, Virago Press: 2004), 140.

¹²⁹ Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2014), 1.

¹³⁰ Wharton, *Icefields*, 2021, 276.

construction of a mountain that is rendered as if it were alive and which then comes to life, becomes a person, becomes an agent, through literary actuation; Wharton sees the mountain already equipped with an agency that comes from a biological understanding of alpine space. He expresses, rather than constructs, alpine life forces through narration. This will to live, set against a devastating present of mountain mass tourism, knows no national boundaries and will also be a vital motif in Austrian forms of rewriting Alpine Orientalism.

Body

From ‘sexed subjects’ to an embodied counter-discourse in Felix Mitterer’s *Die Piefke-Saga*

Although critical theory often sidelined the body as the natural Other of the cultured mind, at least until Merleau-Ponty asserted the body’s primacy as a consciousness with which we comprehend the world, the body has always been at the core of colonialism, travel and mountaineering.¹ Postcolonial theory recognizes the body as ‘a crucial site of inscription’ and a site on which the economies of desire and power overlap.² It is through travel that bodies encounter other bodies, gaze at Others’ bodies, move their bodies through other people’s spaces and experience place through embodied practice.³ John Urry and Jonas Larsen argue that despite the visual dominance of the tourist gaze, ‘kinaesthetic pleasures are omnipresent in tourism’ when, during travel, individuals ski, climb, swim, hike, dance, get drunk, have sex and immerse themselves in foreign tastes and smells.⁴ Rarely has the corporality of tourism been more obvious than in mountain travel, where it is through *his* body (for Alpine Orientalism tends to privilege the male) that ‘modern man stands alone on the summit’, asserting his ability, his prowess and above all his masculinity.⁵ The concept of the body helps us to understand the physical dominance involved in the imperial game that cannot be entirely detached from the Romantic “I” who strives for solitude and self-expression. Thus, it is with “the body” – as symbolic and material reality – that I enter the intra-European terrain of

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2002).

² Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 202; Homi K. Bhabha, ‘The Other Question’, *Screen* 24, no. 6 (November 1983): 19.

³ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage, 2011), 21, 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁵ Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering After the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 2.

rewriting Alpine Orientalism. The body serves as an ideal vantage point from which to narrate the untold, silenced and inscribed sociocultural experiences of alpine travel that shape mountain lives in intra-European destinations today. In this chapter, I turn to Tyrol, the region that represented the Austrian Alps in nineteenth- and twentieth-century travel literature.⁶

My passage to the body is by way of the popular four-part mini-series *Die Piefke-Saga* (The Piefke-Saga) (1991), directed by Wilfried Dotzel (episodes 1–3) and Werner Masten (episode 4) in a co-production from the Austrian and German broadcasting companies ORF and NDR. The series is set in the fictional Tyrolean village Lahnenberg and filmed in Mayrhofen. It is based on a screenplay by Felix Mitterer that earned the writer the distinction of being referred to as the ‘Salman Rushdie of Tyrolean tourism.’⁷ In the series’ exploration of the ambivalent relationship between the Austrian tourist economy and the German consumers from whom it profits most greatly, the series shows three families pitting themselves against one another as embodiments of economic power, accomplices in the local tourist economy and desirable alpine Others. The series is thus an ideal site at which to investigate the corporeal cultures of mountain tourism. Previous interpretations of *Die Piefke-Saga* generally revolve around the opposition of two families: the Sattmanns, Berlin entrepreneurs whose patriarchs, Heinrich (Ferdinand Dux) and Karl Friedrich (Dietrich Mattausch), are the travellers; and the Wechselberger brothers, hotel owner and mayor Franz (Kurt Weinzierl) and teacher Hans (Hans Richter), who are the hosts and critics. Rarely has the Krimbacher family of mountain farmers at Rotterhof received critical attention, a rejection of those local bodies in the mini-series who do most of the work in mountain tourism and an absence that has hindered the ability of interpretations of the series to transcend the binaries of mountain travel.

This chapter pays increased attention to the Krimbachers and the ways in which their bodies dynamize the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism. It is concerned with the manner in which the body is constructed as a signifier within the discourse of Alpine Orientalism and its rewritings, and it illuminates how the bodies of mountain tourism – sexualized, exhibited, commodified, enslaved, exploited and mocked – speak back and utter their wounds in *Die Piefke-Saga*. My analysis of the corporeal in alpine “writing back” is informed by the following: the recognition by postcolonial tourism studies that the local body

⁶ Wolfgang Straub, *Willkommen. Literatur und Fremdenverkehr in Österreich* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 2001), 198.

⁷ ‘Schimpfkanonade auf Piefke-Saga hält an’, *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, 3 September 1993, n.p.

is a strategically constructed object of consumption utilized by the travelling body for pleasure and to fulfil its desires.⁸ It relies on feminist theory (the field that undoubtedly has devoted the most attention to the body) and its assertion that ‘both women *and men* are subject to disciplinary power and regimes of corporeal production, albeit to different degrees and in different ways’.⁹ And it strongly builds on recent impulses from the environmental humanities, in particular the work of Jeffrey M. McCarthy, which ascribes a pivotal role in knowledge production to the body.¹⁰

It is important to remark here that while the body most affected by Orientalist Othering is traditionally female, Alpine Orientalism – especially with regard to intra-European mountain destinations – does not share the distinctively ‘male power-fantasy’ of its Saidean predecessor, for the local creatures of mountain tourism are both female *and* male.¹¹ It will become clear that the Alpine Orientalism persistent in much of mountain tourism renders the Austrian Alps an erotic contact zone in which locality, perhaps more than gender, signifies sexual promise and unlimited sensuality.¹²

One might point here to a poster advertisement commissioned by the Tyrolean tourism agency, the image for which was shot in 1992 by US photographer Kurt Markus.¹³ True to his favourite object, the cowboy of the American West, Markus produced one of the most memorable campaigns in the history of Tyrolean marketing: a black-and-white shot of an alpine male body. Only the torso and top of the legs are visible. With a pair of goggles draped around his neck, the shirtless man wears loden trousers loosely tied around the waist and poses casually with one hand in his pockets. More than an ad, Markus’s poster is symbolic of the materiality with which male bodies have entered ‘the reproduction of capitalist culture’ – if not literally sold, bodies are used to sell destinations.¹⁴ How much of this selling was geared towards sexual desires is apparent in the placement of the iconic Tyrol logo south of the crotch along with

⁸ See Michael Hall and Hazel Tucker, eds, *Tourism and Postcolonialism: Contested Discourses, Identities and Representations* (London: Routledge, 2004); Anthony Carrigan, *Postcolonial Tourism: Literature, Culture, and the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2011).

⁹ Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 51.

¹⁰ Jeffrey M. McCarthy, ‘Why Climbing Matters’, *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 15, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 157–74.

¹¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 207.

¹² *Ibid.*, 188.

¹³ Kurt Markus, *Athlet*, 1992, *Tirol Werbung*. <https://page-online.de/kreation/arthur-zelger-und-das-grafikdesign-in-tirol/>.

¹⁴ Sheila Conboy, ‘Body’, in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literary Theory*, ed. Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace (London: Routledge, 2009), 54.

the campaign title ‘Heart of the Alps’. This aestheticized image of Tyrolean men is, in fact, a phenomenon dating back to the early days of mountain tourism in the Austrian Alps, when postcards portraying alpine men alongside women ‘as spectacles of commodity exhibition’ were a profitable source of income for local photo studios.¹⁵ Not unlike postcards depicting the ‘colonial nude’, which were regularly sent to Europe from Belgian and French colonies, postcards of Tyrol were popular souvenirs.¹⁶ Curiously, the images used to promote the Tyrolean mountains often overemphasize the masculinity of the strong alpine male, using, for instance, shadows on naked skin to accentuate bulging muscles and always exhibiting a faceless Other. So successful was the display of the male alpine body that the same subject was chosen for Bernhard Berger’s 2012 Tyrol marketing campaign, which played even more on the untiring sexual promise that the alpine male has come to signify.¹⁷ In Berger’s campaign, the male body is framed with a red heart blazing passionately from the margins of an otherwise black-and-white print.

As I go on to argue, sexualization of the alpine Other crucially informs Mitterer’s portrayal of the subjection of alpine locals through Alpine Orientalist discourse in *Die Piefke-Saga*. Section 4.2 then explores the travelling body as an embodiment of economic power, interpellated via the media in a war-ridden local economy, followed in Section 4.3 by a description of mountain mass tourism as an industry often built on the bodies of the dead. Stepping back slightly from the mini-series and considering the role of the critic in mountain studies, the last section (Section 4.4) adopts a broader perspective, proposing an embodied counter-discourse in which the climbing body, irrespective of whether it belongs to travellers or travelleses, holds potential for resistance.

4.1 Alpine bodies at work

From its outset, the series sensitizes viewers to an alpine contact zone and the bodies that move through it. Two traditional sites of colonial exploration

¹⁵ Michael Forcher, *Zu Gast im Herzen der Alpen* (Innsbruck: Haymon, 2015), 60; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995), 224.

¹⁶ Harry Wels, ‘About Romance and Reality: Popular European Imagery in Postcolonial Tourism in Southern Africa’, in Hall and Tucker, *Tourism and Postcolonialism*, 81. See also Raymond Corbey, ‘Alterity: The Colonial Nude’, *Critique of Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (1988): 75–92.

¹⁷ Bernhard Berger, *Lifestyle*, 2012, *Herz der Berge*, accessed 12 September 2023, <https://shop.gewi.at/collections/poster/products/poster-lifestyle-sepia>.

– the Middle East and the Caribbean – preface Mitterer’s rewriting and play a critical role in contextualizing the desires of the twentieth-century travellers we encounter in *Die Piefke-Saga*. In the introductory scenes, Karl Friedrich discusses the possibilities of an international business deal with an employee and Hans Wechselberger shares the travel plans he has with his wife Christl (Veronika Faber) at the regulars’ table. Both plans, the one to expand business ventures into “the Orient” and the other to swim in the Caribbean Sea, fail; instead, the families’ respective (neo)colonial fantasies are played out in the Alps. I argue in this section and the next that the subjection of alpine locals in contemporary mountain tourism operates akin to the subjection of Others in colonial expansion. Here I elaborate on how the production of the alpine Other occurs through discourse, whereas the following section touches on how state economy ‘calls people forth’ as subjects.¹⁸ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, following Foucault, argue that ‘just as the subject, in psychoanalytical terms, is produced by, and must operate within, the laws of language, so discourse produces a subject equally dependent upon the rules of the system of knowledge that produces it.’¹⁹ The construction of subjectivity in the bodies of Tyrolean mountain locals is thus mediated by Alpine Orientalism and its historical and cultural systems of knowledge, whereby the alpine Other is jolly yet stupid, close to nature yet dirty, racially different and therefore culturally inferior, and physically strong yet sexually available (see Section 1.5: ‘The Alpine Other as Savage’). Alpine Orientalism produces (and controls) female and male bodies in different ways, thus these bodies experience mountain tourism differently. In what follows, I will highlight the distinct production of alpine men and women as bodily capital, as ‘sexed subjects’ and as unseen labourers in Mitterer’s “writing back”.²⁰

Die Piefke-Saga portrays the Austrian Alps as a highly eroticized contact zone in Mary Louise Pratt’s sense.²¹ Living up to the title of the German erotic comedy film *Auf der Alm da gibt’s koa Sünd* (1974),²² which promotes mountains as a place free of sexual taboos, Karl Friedrich Sattmann excuses his engaging in extramarital relations on his hiking trip, in episode two; several amorous

¹⁸ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 251.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives’, *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (October 1985): 268.

²¹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 88.

²² The English translation of the title for this Bavarian sex comedy is *Bottom’s Up*.

advances are made by the Sattmann and the Rotterhof youth throughout the series; and mountains turn into one huge pleasure house in the fourth and final episode of the series. These moments in which sex and seduction become what Edward Said refers to as 'standard commodities' are particularly prominent echoes of Alpine Orientalism.²³ The Alps, Wolfgang Hackl reiterates, appear to be 'a playground for sexual adventures.'²⁴

While it has generally been male power that is exercised on female bodies in the history of travel, *Die Piefke-Saga* convincingly demonstrates that in intra-European mountain travel, local men are just as prominent in servicing, performing and displaying their bodies. The "typical Tyrolean" carved by discourse is an untiring sexual object of travellers' desires. Whereas in colonial discourse 'African women were usually considered to be forever sexually willing',²⁵ in *Die Piefke-Saga* it is Josef 'Joe' Krimbacher (Tobias Moretti), a young man from Rotterhof, whose body most explicitly reflects the erotic interests inherent in mountain travel. Mountain travel utilizes many of the same discursive strategies and practices of the male gaze seen in colonialism and tourism, except that the object of the gaze is often masculine. In *Die Piefke-Saga*, several scenes throughout all four episodes portray the bodies of female guests huddled up against Joe, who always has a salacious comment on his lips and a reputation for being a 'village bull' ready to mount anyone.²⁶ Many of the sexual traits ascribed to Joe are animalistic, another echo of the way Alpine Orientalism constructs inferiority. Sexual descriptions are very prominent indeed, for example, in scenes where Joe's body performs work in multiple capacities. It fulfils the role of musician (animating guests to dance), masseur (providing relief to travellers' physical tensions), holiday rep (inviting guests to move) and ski instructor (a profession so strongly tied to that of a womanizer that an Austrian escort service called 'Sexy Skiing Instructors' successfully sold the bodies of alpine men for decades).²⁷ The sexual undertones that resonate in all these roles are particularly evident in the milking scene that takes place as part of the hotel activity programme. In a scene saturated with ambiguous verbal and visual commentary, Joe teaches Sabine Sattmann (Sabine Cruso) how to milk

²³ Said, *Orientalism*, 190.

²⁴ Wolfgang Hackl, *Eingeborene im Paradies: Die literarische Wahrnehmung des alpinen Tourismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2004), 101.

²⁵ Wels, 'About Romance and Reality', 81.

²⁶ 'Die Animation', *Die Piefke-Saga*, directed by Wilfried Dotzel, aired 31 January 1990 (Vienna: Hoanzl, 2011), DVD. The full quote in the German original is: 'Das ist der Dorfbulle!'

²⁷ See Florian Spendlingwimmer, *Mythos: Schi- und Snowboardlehrer: Helden oder Sozialversager?* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2007), 9.

cows. The camera further supports the sexual framing of the scene that conflates the commodification of human and non-human alpine bodies. So prominent is sexual play in *Die Piefke-Saga* that a still of this scene is used as the book cover for the published version of the screenplay. But it is not the “buck-and-bull” epithets for alpine men that I wish to discuss in detail here.²⁸ What strikes me most are the double standards of Alpine Orientalism that are exposed through the juxtaposed sexual characterizations of Joe and Gunnar (Ralf Komorr).

Even though Gunnar Sattmann gets Anna Krimbacher (Brigitte Jaufenthaler), a resident of Rotterhof, pregnant, his reputation remains untouched while Joe continues to be the ultimate playboy. Gunnar’s sister Sabine, well aware that she is dating the most eligible bachelor in the village, protects her brother and scolds Joe, who feels mistreated and replies: ‘first everyone wants into bed with me and then I am called a male whore.’²⁹ This passage reveals the extent to which Joe’s body is a symbol of the inexhaustible sexual availability of the alpine Other. In the over-sexualization of the alpine male, little distinction is made between Joe engaging in emotionally meaningful sexual relations with Sabine or ‘looking after’ a female guest the night before her departure.³⁰ In this sense, *Die Piefke-Saga* reverses Orientalist gender stereotypes, making the Alpine Orientalist male, like the Oriental woman in Gustave Flaubert’s *Salammbô* (1862), a machine for sexual pleasure.³¹ Ultimately, Joe is as unsatisfied as Sabine because his body is trapped in its eternal signification of sexual Otherness within the tourist enterprise. Some critics of Austrian tourism argue that this kind of sexual subjection of alpine Others, blatantly mapped in *Die Piefke-Saga* on Joe’s body, is really a form of prostitution. In fact, Hans Wechselberger calls it just that – prostitution – in the first part of the series and opens up the term for metaphorical interpretation. By prostitution, the teacher means the ‘selling and betraying’ of *Heimat*, of which Joe’s body is the most striking embodiment.³² The Tyrolean body as a signifier for available sexual consumption dates back to the

²⁸ Martin Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht: Eine Bildergeschichte des Alpinismus* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 153.

²⁹ ‘Die Animation’, *Die Piefke-Saga*, directed by Wilfried Dotzel, aired 31 January 1990 (Vienna: Hoanzl, 2011), DVD. In the German original: ‘Zerst wollen sie alle mit mir ins Bett, dann wär’ ich auf einmal die männliche Nutte!’

³⁰ Ibid. The full quote in the German original is: ‘Jetzt muß i sie no a bißl betreuen!’

³¹ Gustave Flaubert quoted in David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 175; Said, *Orientalism*, 187.

³² ‘Der Skandal’, *Die Piefke-Saga*, directed by Wilfried Dotzel, aired 31 January 1990 (Vienna: Hoanzl, 2011), DVD. The full quote in the German original is: ‘Meine Landsleute verraten und verkaufen ihre Heimat’.

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when being Tyrolean was shorthand for being a prostitute.³³

In the heteronormative world of *Die Piefke-Saga*, the male alpine Other, when not a lover to German women, is a purchasable extension to the sporting bodies of guests on their quest to the summit. Here I rely on the work of Martin Scharfe, who observes that the bodies of alpine men, imagined as inconceivably strong in Alpine Orientalism (or ‘bursting with energy’ as stated in *Die Piefke-Saga*’s final episode), operate as ‘Hilfsleib[e]’, so-called auxiliary bodies that complement the untrained physiques of mountain travellers.³⁴ These predominately male bodies are on the market as mountain guides and porters. While women have occasionally taken over the roles of porters, relieving the bodies of mountaineers on their way to the top, the mountain guide generally was and is highly coded as masculine.³⁵ Andrea Hungerbühler contends that mountain guides ‘were not only exceptional people [within their communities] but also exceptionally masculine men.’³⁶ It is this kind of ostensibly overt masculinity that travellers seek when they purchase the strength of alpine men and feel their bodies roped together on a joint ascent.³⁷ This can also be seen in the series’ second episode, in which Karl Friedrich, desperately wanting to summit (‘I need a peak!’), uses Thomas’s body to reach his goal and is willing to pay anything for it.³⁸ This scene exemplifies the way in which the bodies of male alpine Others are used by travellers to achieve athletic goals otherwise out of their reach.

In this section, I propose that the subjectivity of the male alpine Other emerges in three distinct yet intertwined currents. First, and as postulated in Chapter 1, the alpine Other in the Germanophone literature of mountain travel is strongly shaped by German colonialism and its fixation on the African continent and African bodies. Few males in colonial discourse have been

³³ Compare Peter Turrini, ‘Die touristische Bananenrepublik’, *Spiegel*, 11 October 1986, Nr. 46/1986 edition, 216; Felix Mitterer, ‘Peter Prosch: Der erste Fremdenverkehrstiroler’, in *Das wunderbare Schicksal: Aus dem Leben des Hoftyrolers Peter Prosch: Ein Theaterstück und sein historischer Hintergrund* (Innsbruck: Haymon, 1992); Andreas Oberhofer, ‘Der “Tyrolismus” und seine Karikatur: Gegenentwürfe zur heilen Welt’, in *Gegenwelten*, ed. Christoph Bertsch and Viola Vahrson (Skarabæus: Studien Verlag, 2014), 413; Josef Rohrer, *Zimmer Frei: Das Buch zum Touriseum*, 2nd ed., ed. Südtiroler Landesmuseum für Tourismus Schloss Trauttmansdorff (Bozen: Athesia Druck, 2010), 42.

³⁴ ‘Das Geschäft’, *Die Piefke-Saga*, directed by Wilfried Dotzel, aired 31 January 1990 (Vienna: Hoanzl, 2011), DVD. In the German original: ‘Strotzend vor Kraft!’; Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht*, 154.

³⁵ Martin Krauß, *Der Träger war immer schon vorher da: Die Geschichte des Wanderns und Bergsteigens in den Alpen* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2013), 26, 46; Andrea Hungerbühler, *Könige der Alpen: Zur Kultur des Bergführerberufs* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), 35.

³⁶ Hungerbühler, *Könige der Alpen*, 13–14.

³⁷ Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht*, 154.

³⁸ ‘Animation’. In the German original: ‘Ich brauch’ einen Gipfel!’

exhibited as explicitly for their 'genital size and sexual prowess' as African men, who figured prominently as 'spectacles for commodity exhibition' in imperial iconography.³⁹ In a discourse in which knowledge of the alpine Other is shaped by the systems of knowledge about African men, the bodies of alpine men are thus also endowed with the racial signifier of dark skin, which, following Urry and Larsen, 'inscribes a kind of "savage" sexuality on the body';⁴⁰ this sexuality reflects a tradition that equates sexual potency with a Black (or bronzed) body. Examples of the discursive construction of darkness have already been showcased earlier in this study in travel accounts of the nineteenth century that highlight the 'brown expressive faces' of Tyroleans (see Section 1.5: 'The Alpine Other as Savage').⁴¹ Generally, material promoting the Austrian Alps relies on similar discursive tactics: dark complexions appear over and over in imagery that attempts to commodify the regions. In this light, it is no coincidence that the campaigns of Markus and Berger feature deeply bronzed Tyroleans strictly in black and white. These Tyroleans, who preserve their suntanned, sexy holiday looks, populate the mountains in the final episode of *Die Piefke-Saga*, even on the operating table. The subject of the bronzed, over-sexualized alpine Other has an even more potent function in a society in which women do not have the same right to sexual liberty as men. Women (I am again arguing within the heteronormative system Mitterer creates in his text) who use the anonymity that comes with being on vacation to partake in sexual adventure while avoiding the label of easy virtue are the primary market for sexually available alpine men. Furthermore, I trust that the male-to-male gaze (real not figured), although conceptually rooted within Europe, also travelled to extra-European terrain when, for instance, Swiss, Austrian and Southern German mountain guides took up their service in the Canadian Rockies (see Section 1.5: 'The Alpine Other as Savage'). The second current defining the male alpine Other is the attention that male bodies receive in sport culture, since sport is considered 'the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture'.⁴² While Florian Spendlingwimmer reflects that men experience themselves as being more attractive when they engage in any sport, Victoria Robinson argues that male bodies, consciously and

³⁹ Elleke Boehmer, *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 129; McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 224.

⁴⁰ Urry and Larsen, *Tourist Gaze* 3.0, 68.

⁴¹ August Lewald, *Tirol vom Glockner zum Orteles und vom Garda- zum Bodensee* (Munich: Verlag der literarisch-artistischen Anstalt, 1838), 78.

⁴² Victoria Robinson, *Everyday Masculinities and Extreme Sport: Male Identity and Rock Climbing* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 142, 33.

unconsciously, perform for an audience of climbers and non-climbers, male and female, homo- and heterosexual, all interested in seeing how well they manage a route: the audience repeatedly gazes at the climbing body, she summarizes, ‘and sometimes as an object of desire.’⁴³ Lastly, the particular corporality ascribed to alpine men emerges from a culture that delegates physicality to the Other – with the Other of bourgeois masculinity being not only femininity but also ‘raw’ working-class masculinity. This is in keeping with Michael Meuser’s remark that a discursive disembodiment of hegemonic masculinity ascribes physical strength and virility to working-class men. Seeking to set their learned bodies apart, middle- and upper-class men and women highlighted the physique of the male alpine Other.⁴⁴ These three currents – class differentiation, athleticism and German colonial discourse – will allow us to understand how the bodies of Tyrolean men in particular are subjected to the tourist gaze in *Die Piefke-Saga*.

Furthermore, the mini-series, penned by a writer who sees himself as committed to society’s Others,⁴⁵ invites consideration of how the bodies of “traditional” Others – women, children, foreigners and queer individuals – bear the burden of subjection in a system in which even the bodies of otherwise privileged men take a beating. In one of the opening scenes that introduce the Wechselberger families, Christl is painted as a woman buried under the weight of the tourist industry. She constantly wears her dirndl and drains one bottle of *Underberg* liqueur after another, numbing her body to the pressures of the emotional, aesthetic and performative labour of service culture. Her body quite literally suffers “under” the “mountain” and its commodification, as the name of the liquor brand suggests. It is not until episode two that it becomes clear just how much her drinking may result from the way in which the tourist industry co-opts female bodies. Christl explains how she could not have more than one child because her pregnancies could not be reconciled with the demands of the tourist economy. In a scene in which she discusses Anna’s maternity leave with Elsa Sattmann, Gunnar’s mother and future grandmother to Anna’s child, Christl confesses, in episode two, that she aborted three of her children because ‘they would have been born at peak season! And in peak season I do not have

⁴³ Spendingwimmer, *Mythos: Ski- und Snowboardlehrer*, 145; Robinson, *Everyday Masculinities and Extreme Sport*, 134–5.

⁴⁴ Michael Meuser, ‘Männerkörper: Diskursive Aneignungen und habitualisierte Praxis’, in *Dimensionen der Kategorie Geschlecht: Der Fall Männlichkeit*, 2nd ed., ed. Mechthild Bereswill, Michael Meuser and Sylka Scholz (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2009), 156.

⁴⁵ Felix Mitterer, ‘An Interview with Felix Mitterer’, by Nicholas J. Meyerhofer and Karl E. Webb, *Felix Mitterer: A Critical Introduction* (Riverside: Ariadne Press: 1995), 33.

time to lie down!⁴⁶ Gravely intoxicated, she also tells Elsa that she did, in fact, want more children. This passage highlights how a woman's right to her body is 'overruled by the need to ensure tourism's continued economic viability'.⁴⁷ The viability of the industry, however, comes at the cost of the bodies of woman and child when the unborn – that symbol of a hopeful future in many discourses, but also in alpine writing back – is killed, and hotel properties are given precedence over the *locus vivus* introduced in Chapter 3. What Christl points to when she talks about her abortions is the hotel empire she has built with her husband instead. Nonetheless, the series offers a prospect for an optimistic future, with Anna deciding to keep her child.

Anna's pregnant body draws attention to the invisibility and speechlessness of Others in the alpine tourist economy. Responding to the aesthetic demands of servicing bodies, she binds her swelling belly for as long as possible and then transfers to the kitchen following Christl's orders to serve 'as long as no one can see your belly'.⁴⁸ Her invisible body is also a speechless one, as she conceals her pregnancy and 'is afraid'.⁴⁹ This is a fate Anna shares with the foreigners and queer individuals in *Die Piefke-Saga*. Franz Wechselberger and many of his fellow hotel owners in Lahnenberg pay people from low-wage countries to perform back-of-house work for minimum wage. They employ, for example, a hotel porter from former Yugoslavia and a kitchen hand from Turkey – one of whom never talks and the other who is hushed at the slightest utterance. In even more extreme form, this also holds true for queer bodies, which are only visible as negations as the narrative produces and reifies a binary conception of gender. Throughout *Die Piefke-Saga*, local women and men dress according to gender norms, with women tending to wear dirndls and men lederhosen. Even in the final episode, which is otherwise a liberal sexual playground, people exclusively engage in heterosexual relations.

It becomes evident throughout the series that the tourists' strongest desire is a physical union with local bodies. Apart from outright sexual encounters, such embodied experiences with alpine Otherness occur in moments in which Heinrich Sattmann behaves like a Tyrolean and Karl Friedrich becomes a Tyrolean on the operating table. None of these unions are genuine, however:

⁴⁶ 'Animation'. In the German original: 'Weil sie in der Hochsaison zur Welt gekommen wären und in der Hochsaison da hab' ich keine Zeit mich ins Bett zu legen.'

⁴⁷ Carrigan, *Postcolonial Tourism*, 172.

⁴⁸ 'Animation'. The full quote in the German original is: 'So lang ma' deinen Bauch noch nicht richtig sieht, tust bedienen!'

⁴⁹ Ibid. In the German original: 'Angst hab' ich.'

Heinrich participates in the entertainment programme offered by the hotel and Karl Friedrich becomes a robot, who, like Joe, jokes about his untiring sexual prowess. While sex is indeed a charged site on which the power dynamics of mass tourism are played out, travelling to the Austrian Alps offers tourists the ‘opportunity to experience – in their bodies – their own privilege’.⁵⁰ What constitutes the subjectivity of travelling bodies and the positions they assume within the tourist economy will be discussed in the next section.

4.2 Travelling bodies

The work of Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser has been recognized by postcolonial scholars as highly productive in coming to terms with ‘the problem of constituting identities within the self-Other division imposed by imperialism’ and also proves useful here in unpacking the traveller–travellee dichotomy inflicted by mountain tourism.⁵¹ When Marguerite H. Helmers and Tilar J. Mazzeo claim in their ‘Introduction: Travel and the Body’ (2005) that the traveller’s identity is constructed in terms of the body and the mind, their argument follows ‘the idea of interpellation’ and they discuss ‘how travelers are hailed’ into being.⁵² The basis for such calling forth is rooted in the economy, as Althusser’s model, drawn from the capitalist state, teaches us. Terry Eagleton draws upon Althusser to explain how individuals acquire subjectivity through an ideology that essentially functions as the economic base of society.⁵³ Althusser’s ‘economistic model’ of ideology can help us to understand the subjectivity of mountain travellers, as the business of mountains relies on subjects who have internalized their roles.⁵⁴ For travelling bodies, this means performing their tasks as ‘exploiters’.⁵⁵ To call travellers by their name, not just in private but on national television, as is done in and through Mitterer’s *Die Piefke-Saga*, entails hailing them as profitable consumers within the tourist economy. While a single

⁵⁰ Nancy A. Wonders and Raymond J. Michalowski, ‘Bodies, Borders, and Sex Tourism in a Globalized World: A Tale of Two Cities – Amsterdam and Havana’, *Social Problems* 48, no. 4 (November 2011): 550.

⁵¹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 167.

⁵² Marguerite H. Helmers and Tilar J. Mazzeo, ‘Introduction: Travel and the Body’, *Journal of Narrative Theory* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 271.

⁵³ Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 148.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; Louis Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)’, in *‘Lenin and Philosophy’ and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 116.

⁵⁵ Eagleton, *Ideology*, 148; Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’, 89.

text or cultural artefact is only part of the landscape that gives rise to the subject, *Die Piefke-Saga* is illuminating insofar as it is a study of the social agency behind interpellation.

In *Die Piefke-Saga*, the Sattmann family is framed as a group of insatiable consumers whose demands must be met by the locals. The German *satt* in the family's surname denotes both physical satiety and more abstract satisfaction and thus carries an air of complacency and indifference.⁵⁶ In the very first episode of the saga, a game show moves the German travellers into their subject position. Their economic superiority is hailed via the ideological state apparatus that is the media. To this end, the series features two media scandals involving the disparagement of affluent German travellers, both of which are inspired by real-life events. The first scandal arises within a re-enactment of the German TV game show with Joachim Fuchsberger, popular in the late 1970s and 1980s, which provoked a controversy surrounding the meaning of the term *Piefke*, a disparaging term for Germans. When Fuchsberger asks his Austrian participants what they really understand by the term, it becomes clear that they see their German tourists as, above all, embodiments of economic power. When asked to explain, the Austrians being interviewed portray Germans as people who 'think they are something better and show off in foreign countries',⁵⁷ accuse their guests of 'throwing about their German Mark because the Austrian schilling is worth less'⁵⁸ and unanimously complain about their ostentatious displays of wealth. These widely broadcast accusations led to fierce indignation among German travellers, local tourist entrepreneurs and Austrian politicians. Soon after, in July 1983, the heading 'Who needs the Piefkes?' appeared in the *Wochenpresse*, in response to which the former Austrian minister of trade, Josef Staribacher, toured the country in a helicopter provided by the *Bild* newspaper to appease displeased tourists.⁵⁹ Accordingly, with his satirical reality TV fable, Mitterer – who frequently points out that one could not make these things up – portrays a minister of trade formally apologizing to German guests and promising 'to do everything in his power to prevent such disparagements from

⁵⁶ *Duden*, s.v. 'satt', accessed 22 February 2018, <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/satt>.

⁵⁷ 'Skandal'. The full quote in the German original is: 'Ich finde, das sind eingebildete Deutsche, die glauben halt, sie sind was Besseres, und die im Ausland viel angeben!'

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* The full quote in the German original is: 'Mit seiner Mark schmeißt er um, weil der Schilling weniger wert ist!'

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* In the German original: 'Wer braucht die Piefkes?'; Klaus Müller-Salget, 'Die Realität der Satire der Satire der Realität: Bemerkungen eines Zugereisten zu Felix Mitterers "Piefke Saga"', in *Literatur und Sprachkultur in Tirol*, ed. Johann Holzner, Oskar Putzer, Max Siller, and Hans Moser (Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik, 1997), 511.

happening again.⁶⁰ Well aware of their economically privileged position, the two patriarchs warn their hosts in the Alps that they ‘might as easily spend their German Mark elsewhere’, advise them to ‘keep the hand from which they feed in good spirits’⁶¹ and make it very clear that the Austrian tourist economy does in fact need the Piefkes: ‘This country, dear compatriots, this country lives on us!’⁶² In the last statement, there certainly lies an actual threat, as tourism has brought considerable wealth to otherwise impoverished mountain valleys in Tyrol since the beginning of the twentieth century. So important was the industry that its promotion was made a state affair in the 1930s, and Chancellor Dollfuss declared it a vital necessity for the country during his visit to the UK.⁶³ Tourism remains one of Austria’s largest industries, accounting for almost 16 per cent of its GDP.⁶⁴ In this sense, the interpellation of visitors as economic providers is very much in line with Althusser, a lived experience.⁶⁵ It also plays out in more than one way and affects more than one social group. Several opening scenes in the first episode of the series portray the Sattmann and Wechselberger families, as well as a media tycoon and two politicians, in front of their television sets all watching Fuchsberger suggest to his fellow countrymen that they be more generous upon their next trip to Austria. A split screen further highlights the role of television to interpellate various groups of society at the same time. Players in the tourist economy are steeped in ideology and called to ‘perform their tasks “conscientiously”’; ‘the task of the exploited’, ‘of the exploiters’, ‘of the exploiters’ auxiliaries’ or ‘of the highest priests of the ruling ideology’.⁶⁶

What is particularly noteworthy within a postcolonial study of *Die Piefke-Saga* is that the unequal economic (and social) relations between subjects are narrated through the dialectic language of imperialism. The series juxtaposes the bodies of imperialist travellers with those of alpine Others. Throughout the mini-series, Heinrich Sattmann is dressed in what Mitterer’s screenplay describes as *safari*

⁶⁰ ‘Skandal’. The full quote in the German original is: ‘Als Handelsminister der Republik Österreich entschuldige ich mich ganz formell bei Ihnen und darf die Versicherung abgeben, daß ich alles in meiner Macht Stehende tun werde, daß so eine Verunglimpfung nie mehr stattfinden wird!’

⁶¹ Ibid. The full quote in the German original is: ‘Die Kuh, die man stetig melkt, sollte man bei guter Laune halten!’

⁶² Ibid. In the German original: ‘Dieses Land, liebe Mitbürger, dies Land lebt von uns!’

⁶³ Straub, *Willkommen*, 38, 39.

⁶⁴ WKÖ Tourismus Freizeit, ‘Tourismus und Freizeitwirtschaft in Zahlen: Österreichische und internationale Tourismus- und Wirtschaftsdaten’, 55, June 2019, 9. <https://www.wko.at/branchen/tourismus-freizeitwirtschaft/tourismus-freizeitwirtschaft-in-zahlen-2019.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Eagleton, *Ideology*, 26; Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’, 152.

⁶⁶ Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’, 89.

gear (*Boer style*).⁶⁷ He introduces his alpine explorations with battle calls that echo imperial rhetoric and refers to mountain locals as ‘Indigenous people’ who must be tracked.⁶⁸ In the final episode of the mini-series, Franz Wechselberger describes Karl Friedrich’s behaviour as that of a ‘colonist’s among n—’, in a most explicit overlap of colonial perceptions of twentieth-century mountain travel.⁶⁹ Seeking to control the local population and their land, the Sattmanns are depicted as resembling Johann Gottfried Piefke, the composer whose iconic military marches were played after the German victory in the Austro-Prussian War and who has come to symbolize the manner in which Germans paraded their superiority in Austria after the invasion.⁷⁰

To buy into the popular interpretation of *Die Piefke-Saga* as a series that juxtaposes wealthy guests and greedy hosts, one would need to argue that the series only reinforces what it critiques. Given its popular success, one could argue that it plays its own part in Althusser’s interpellation, as it solidifies an unequal (and gravely disabling) economic and cross-cultural relationship.⁷¹ This is precisely what the majority of scholarly discussions of *Die Piefke-Saga* have done so far.⁷² But reading the series through the lens of the postcolonial corporeal provides compelling reasons to reject such an interpretation. As an account of alpine “writing back”, *Die Piefke-Saga* first challenges subjection through the kind of embodied mockery and self-mockery that Bhabha and, later, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin identified as a means of recovering a native voice.⁷³ This can be observed when the Viennese publishing assistant Mrkwicka poses as a Piefke for the cover shoot of a magazine featuring the scandalous

⁶⁷ Felix Mitterer, *Die Piefke-Saga: Komödie einer vergeblichen Zuneigung*. (Innsbruck: Haymon, 1991), 31. The German original reads: ‘Safarianzug (nach Buren-Art)’.

⁶⁸ ‘Skandal’. The full quote in the German original is: ‘Folgen Sie diesen Eingeborenen und finden Sie heraus, was sie vorhaben’.

⁶⁹ ‘Geschäft’. The full quote in the German original is: ‘Was kann ich dafür, wenn sich der Sattmann aufführt wie ein Kolonialist bei die N—?’.

⁷⁰ Numerous connections can be drawn between Austrian mountain tourism and war. In *Die Piefke-Saga*, Mitterer uses metaphor and rhetoric to address the martial underpinnings of mass tourism. In his play, *Kein schöner Land*, first performed in 1987, the author tries to come to terms with the connection between national socialism and Austrian mountain tourism, focusing on the fate of Jewish tourism pioneer Rudolf Gomperz in St Anton, Tyrol. The role of national socialism in Austrian tourism will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5 through a postcolonial reading of Elfriede Jelinek’s *In den Alpen*.

⁷¹ More than two million people watched the series upon its release in 1991. See Ingo Thonhauser-Jurnsack, *Tourismus-Diskurse: Locus amoenus und Abenteuer als Textmuster der Werbung, der Trivial- und Hochliteratur* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 101.

⁷² See Wolfgang Hackl, ‘Piefke und Fremde: Tourismus als Thema der Satire in der österreichischen Gegenwartsliteratur’, in *Von Qualtinger bis Bernhard: Satire und Satiriker in Österreich seit 1945*, ed. Sigurd Paul Scheichl (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 1998), 73–94; Thonhauser-Jurnsack, *Tourismus-Diskurse*.

⁷³ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Empire Writes Back*, 176.

article, 'Who needs the Piefkes?' Mrkwicka is asked to look just the right amount of dorky in mockery of German guests. Before the lens points at the Piefke in disguise, however, it is directed at the audience, gesturing towards the double-interpellation occurring on and off screen. Even more prominent are the series' over-accentuated depictions of embodied obsequiousness among Tyroleans, which consistently serve as examples of self-mockery and are employed with remarkable regularity: Mayor Franz Wechselberger runs after Karl Friedrich, demonstrating that Tyroleans 'love their German guests';⁷⁴ a farmer's girl falls onto her knees asking all German guests for forgiveness, fearing the region's economic stability might otherwise be at risk; and a bell boy kisses the two-mark coin Karl Friedrich hands over. In a postcolonial reading, the irony acted out in bodies that pose, run, kneel and kiss as though bowing to economic power suggests 'that the subaltern has, in fact, spoken and that properly symptomatic readings' of alpine writing back can and do 'recover a native voice.'⁷⁵ Just like literature that writes back to colonial subjection, mockery in mountain literature that "writes back" is a subversive manoeuvre directed not at an individual but at the whole process of mountain mass tourism.⁷⁶ The satirizing of subjects in mountain travel becomes manifest in a widely encompassing and 'potentially destabilizing' rewriting of Alpine Orientalism, as it locates a crack in the certainty of subjection,⁷⁷ a crack that ultimately provides opportunities for mountain people to speak back in ways similar to *Die Piefke-Saga*. In other words, while the series indeed verges on mockery, my contention is that it aims for something beyond subversive caricature and instead highlights a broader crisis in mountain mass tourism in which people feel, in their bodies, the wounds inflicted by the tourist economy.

By portraying a fictional world in which the great majority of the bodies travelling in the Alps do not come out of their experiences unharmed, *Die Piefke-Saga* sounds warnings that are in tune with postcolonial theory, which sees mockery accompanied by a certain menace.⁷⁸ Karl Friedrich, for instance, suffers from frostbite after a night stuck on a chairlift. Gunnar breaks his leg on a hay sledge. Sabine is equally scuffed up and wears a sling after slipping on a snowfield. Heinrich Sattmann, for his part, suffers from a heart attack when he eagerly tries to beat his own cross-country skiing record. This veritable

⁷⁴ 'Skandal'. In the German original: 'Wir lieben unsere deutschen Gäste'.

⁷⁵ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Empire Writes Back*, 176.

⁷⁶ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 156.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

mountain of injury does not necessarily show that travelling bodies are unfit for mountain environments, nor does it function solely to depict mountain spaces striking back, inflicting wounds on those who feed off them; this is also a way to demonstrate that the wounded body is a site of resistance. When Joe and Stefan, characters who slowly realize their wrongdoings in the course of the series, renounce their involvement in mountain mass tourism and shoot at tourists in the final episode, disrupting the alpine playground their fellow locals are orchestrating, they put into practice what Angie Abdou's travellers in *The Canterbury Trail* (2011) only consider: 'Why's it called tourist season, if we can't shoot them?'⁷⁹ They turn to the last resort against an economy of exploitation, believing that only once the bodies of tourists also express the wounds of mountain mass tourism can the Romantically informed imagery of an alpine idyll crack – and rethinking set in. How opposition can be embodied by mountain locals and visitors alike will be taken up in the final section of this chapter. One could argue that the possibility of this opposition hangs on the death of the binary codification of host and guest. The next section, therefore, engages with the dying bodies of alpine commodification.

4.3 Death zone

In mountain travel, the "body" often connotes "corpse" – a notion that both Robert Macfarlane and Wolfgang Hackl touch upon when they enumerate the 'many ways to die in the mountains' and argue that, in the supposedly refreshing and physically strengthening alpine landscape, death is a common fate.⁸⁰ For the literatures of mountaineering and mountain travel, Stephen Slemon likewise identifies 'a narrative need for death.'⁸¹ This feature, I believe, becomes even more apparent in Austrian alpine writing back, in which the national literary obsession with corpses meets narrative traditions of mountain writing. This section delves into the death zone of mountain mass tourism and the literatures that challenge it. The representation of the lethal effect that the highest alpine regions exert on

⁷⁹ Angie Abdou, *The Canterbury Trail* (Victoria, BC: Brindle & Glass, 2011), 97.

⁸⁰ Wolfgang Hackl, 'Die Alpen zwischen *locus amoenus* und literarischem Erinnerungsraum', in *Das Erschreiben der Berge: Die Alpen in der deutschsprachigen Literatur*, ed. Johann Georg Lughofer (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2014), 42; Robert Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), 97.

⁸¹ Stephen Slemon, 'Climbing Mount Everest: Postcolonialism in the Culture of Ascent', in *Postcolonizing the Commonwealth: Studies in Literature and Culture*, ed. Rowland Smith (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 57.

bodies, I argue, also sheds light on the fatal transformations of alpine bodies in mountain regions beset by tourists.

Ed Wyss-Dunant defines the death zone as a mortal area ‘which begins at about 25,000 feet’ (or 8,000 metres).⁸² In the same way that alpinists refer to great altitudes by means of addressing a deadly environment, I propose also thinking of mountain mass tourism as a lethal zone, equally defined by great heights; this time not by altitude but by the number of tourists that fall onto a host population. If tourists gravely outnumber local inhabitants, as is the case in the Zillertal, where most of *Die Piefke-Saga* was shot and which hosted thirty-three visitors per capita in 2016/17, the consequences are fatal indeed.⁸³ Wyss’s definition of the death zone applies as much to mountain mass travel as it does to high-altitude alpinism: ‘Life there is impossible.’⁸⁴ There is a correlation between death and commercialized mountain experiences: the statistics on Everest’s dead reveal that the numbers of bodies lining the way to the summit increased with the growing popularity of commercialized ascents in the 1990s.⁸⁵ It was at precisely this time that *Die Piefke-Saga* is released. The series addresses what can be read as a loss of vital functions in the bodies of mountain travellers, as well as a tendency among agents to make ‘poor decisions [. . .] in an already dangerous environment’.⁸⁶

Die Piefke-Saga addresses death in two prominent gestures: first, in its depiction of life in a death zone, the series reveals the way in which mass mountain tourism is built on the bodies of the dead. This finds expression in the third episode of *Die Piefke-Saga*, when Franz Wechselberger wants to use the moribund Andreas Krimbacher (Peter Kluibenschädel), the oldest person in Rotterhof, as a straw man to gift Karl Friedrich a piece of land. In the early 1990s, prior to Austria joining the European Union, the acquisition of land for secondary residences was restricted to locals after German vacationers bought up the majority of houses in remote alpine villages, which turned them into

⁸² Ed Wyss-Dunant, ‘Acclimatisation’, in *The Mountain World*, ed. Marcel Kurz (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1953), 133; Urry and Larsen, *Tourist Gaze 3.0*, 31, 61.

⁸³ Zillertal Tourismus GmbH, ‘Das Zillertal im Überblick’, February 2018. https://www.zillertal.at/fileadmin/daten/04_Service/Presse/Ganzjahres-Themen/Das_Zillertal_im_Ueberblick.pdf.

⁸⁴ Wyss, ‘Acclimatisation’, 113.

⁸⁵ Richard Salisbury and Elizabeth Hawley, *The Himalaya by the Numbers: A Statistical Analysis of Mountaineering in the Nepal Himalaya* (Kathmandu: Vajra, 2011), 127; ‘Familiar Tale of Tragedy as Record Numbers Tackle Everest’, *BBC News*, 24 May 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-40025553>.

⁸⁶ Wyss-Dunant, ‘Acclimatisation’, 113; Wilfrid Noyce, John Hunt, Barry C. Bishop, Norgay Tenzing and Stephen Venables, ‘Mount Everest’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 29 January 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Everest>.

ghost towns between seasons.⁸⁷ To circumvent the law, Franz Wechselberger deceives Andreas, who loses his will to live not least because of the increased commodification of alpine bodies, and makes Karl Friedrich his heir. The straw man, however, outwits the beneficiaries. The deal collapses, but what comes to the fore is the willingness of a local industry to sell out its dying bodies. Alpine journalism uses the term “summit fever” to explain the callousness with which mountaineers climb over dead bodies to reach their goals.⁸⁸ Sometimes these bodies are not even dead, as with the tragedies surrounding UK climber David Sharp in 2006 on Everest and Pakistani Sherpa Muhammad Hassan on K2 in 2023.⁸⁹ In the business with high-altitude mountaineering, the desire for a summit moment on the most remote peaks of this world quite literally kills people. The summit equivalent in mountain mass tourism is the unquestioned fulfilment of travellers’ desires, ideally leading to profit maximization. Titled ‘The Fulfillment’, the fourth and final episode demonstrates that to capitalize on bodies is indeed a feverish and physically threatening illness.

The second engagement with corpses, or rather, corpse-like bodies, occurs in the final episode, in which the majority of locals appear robotic, wholly fulfilling the Alpine Orientalist expectations of travellers. Dressed in extra-short dirndls and lederhosen, nicely tanned, good-humoured and generally available for sexual play, Tyroleans have acquired the bodies the industry demands on the operating table. Japanese surgeons mass-produce alpine Others, just as they produce the tin Tyroleans for sale in the village’s souvenir shop in episode three, as if to suggest that, in order to be able to endure what mountain mass tourism demands, local bodies must become the machines Alpine Orientalism has made of them. And if one body were to collapse in the continuous playback of commodified cultural and physical production, as it does in the series during a so-called Tyrolean Evening, the dance continues uninterrupted and the body is quickly exchanged for a sturdier model. So it happens that one body after another enters the production line and comes out fully “Tyroleanized”. For men, this means to become one of many “Sepp Unterwurzachern”, serving the industry as skiing instructor, folk dancer and mountain farmer in predetermined bodily

⁸⁷ Umgehung des Grundverkehrsgesetzes, *Bundeskanzleramt Österreich*, ‘Landesrecht konsolidiert Tirol: Gesamte Rechtsvorschrift für Grundverkehrsgesetz 1996, Tiroler Fassung vom 23.08.2017’, 9 December 2019.

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrT&Gesetzesnummer=20000005>.

⁸⁸ ‘The Open Graveyard of Mt. Everest’s “Death Zone”’, *Gizmodo*, 2 October 2011. gizmodo.com/the-open-graveyard-of-mt-everests-death-zone-5755875.

⁸⁹ Nestler Stefan, ‘Death on K2: Could Muhammad Hassan have been Saved?’, 8 November 2023. <https://www.dw.com/en/death-on-k2-could-muhammad-hassan-have-been-saved/a-66504683>.

configurations constituting the workforce of mountain travel. The surname “Unterwurzacher”, a common one in Tyrol, translates as “below the roots” and plays with the idea of pushing up daisies, indicating in this scene that even though the robotic Tyroleans live the many roles ascribed to them, they are as good as dead. What becomes evident through the industrialized production of Tyroleans is that the bodies through which identity could be (re)claimed only signify alpine Otherness and leave little space for recovery. Nowhere can this be observed better than when Andreas’s mechanized body becomes a manifestation of his loss of self. Having completely forgotten who he is (and once was), his answer to guests is always a variant of ‘I do not know anymore.’⁹⁰ The degree to which mass tourism changes local bodies and identities, lived and performed, receives extensive treatment in scholarly discussions of Austrian tourism in general and of *Die Piefke-Saga* in particular. Studies by Nikhil Sathe (2000), Bernhard Tschofen (2002), Wolfgang Hackl (2004) and Andreas Oberhofer (2014) argue that the way alpine Others present their bodies within a commodified cultural spectacle influences how they perceive their own bodies. Those who are constantly Othered, and perform the Other, become Other – also to themselves.

My argument up to this point has been that, if exposed too long to the great heights of mountain mass tourism, human bodies change. In other words, if bodies remain too long in the death zone of mass travel, they will slowly be devoured by the industry. There is a term in environmental studies, a euphemism for the death zone, one might say, which is used to describe areas in which bodies of nature are in peril. This area is called the “sacrifice zone”. According to Robert Bullard and Glenn Johnson, it denotes an area where people ‘bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal and commercial operations.’⁹¹ Several times in *Die Piefke-Saga*, environmental destruction follows commodification, ranging from polluted water to epileptic cows suddenly dropping dead. One scene in the series illustrates how the sacrifice zone is a kind of inversion of the death zone of alpinism. While the death zone is located at great heights and life happens beneath, the sacrifice zone spreads out below. In the first episode of the series, Gunnar locates the death zone down in the valley, where he finds things to be

⁹⁰ ‘Animation’. In the German original: ‘Woaß i nimmer.’

⁹¹ Robert D. Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson, ‘Environmental Justice: Grassroots Activism and Its Impact on Public Policy Decision Making,’ *Journal of Social Issues* 56, no. 3 (2000): 558.

'dead boring'.⁹² Throughout the series, the living mountain (or *locus vivus*), like a retreating glacier, moves further and further up the mountain. The most striking example of environmental destruction, however, is a scene in which the Sattmanns try to dig a hole in the ground to bury the robotic Tyrolean they kill in self-defence. Unable to penetrate the surface, they realize the ground is covered by grass mats that are peeling off in large strips that read 'Made in Japan' and that conceal piles of rotting garbage. Cans, car batteries and packaging waste populated by rodents constitute the mountain body that is continuously masked and relentlessly sold despite its polluted state. When the Sattmanns strip off mat after mat, they engage in an unveiling different to the one depicted by mountain travellers in early travel writing about the Alps. Instead, they lift the veil to reveal the body that mountains become once alpine villages are unable to manage the number of visitors and the waste they produce. Without any sign of possessive or penetrating desire, Karl Friedrich breaks down and becomes an embodiment of desperation, rather than economic strength, at the sight of destruction. Not only does Karl Friedrich realize that his recreational paradise is a fabrication – 'the whole country is made out of plastic' – but he also understands that his desire for the Alps may have contributed to its creation.⁹³

This dystopia – mountains of garbage populated by self-prostituting zombies – is equivalent to the terminus in Wharton's *Icelfields* (1995) and the avalanche in Abdou's *The Canterbury Trail*. The 'narrative need for death' that Slemon locates in mountaineering literature,⁹⁴ which supports myths of heroism and masculinity, is just as necessary in alpine writing back, where it functions as a kiss of death for an industry that cashes in on alpine bodies. It is a death that the industry desperately seeks to forestall by manipulating its subjects for the sake of its own viability. *Die Piefke-Saga* demonstrates that mountain mass tourism induces death while simultaneously denying bodies the full experience of dying. As shadows of themselves, the bodies of mountain travel roam the Alps and keep the wheels of the tourist economy turning. Ultimately, salvation does not lie in a mythical shadow like the Kootenay Ghost rider seeking vengeance, but in demands for alpine bodies to physically set themselves free. Just how this may be done in a highly embodied manner, and what position literary criticism may assume in this, is the topic of the next and final section.

⁹² 'Animation'. In the German original: 'Tote Hose!'

⁹³ 'Die Erfüllung', *Die Piefke-Saga*, directed by Werner Masten, aired 1 January 1993 (Vienna: Hoanzl, 2011), DVD. In the German original: 'Das ganze Land aus Kunststoff.'

⁹⁴ Slemon, 'Climbing Mount Everest', 57.

4.4 Climbing for resistance

We have learnt from the previous two chapters that ‘the body comes to life when coping with difficulty’ – sometimes in the figure of the unborn child, sometimes in the imaginative release of mythical creatures and sometimes as a mountain wondrously teeming with life.⁹⁵ I have shown earlier that narration is the site upon which mountain cultures seek to contest and subvert Alpine Orientalist appropriations, and that this is done through literary interventions, figurative opposition and textual counter-discourse. The interventions discussed thus far do not solely function as counter-discourse in the sense of an exclusive ‘symbolic resistance’.⁹⁶ Often, alpine writing back does more than undercut the grand narratives of Alpine Orientalism, revealing alternative forms of narrating, telling and knowing mountains. But in relation to *Die Piefke-Saga*, it is important to return to the specific counter-discursive interventions of resistance. Stephen Slemon’s argument that the means by which counter-discourse performs is always textually specific stands as firmly as ever.⁹⁷ The focus of this chapter, then, is the body, and if we think of the corporeal not just through the body that we have – a body interpellated, subjectified, mechanized and killed in mountain mass tourism – but through the body that we are, a key project for a criticism of alpine writing back becomes clear: we have to learn to read not just the explicit thematic textual declarations to the body positioned in the narratives opposing Alpine Orientalism, but also those physical counter-discursive manoeuvres that operate through the body.

I turn to three assertions to develop my argument for an embodied counter-discourse: the first is the Foucauldian claim that ‘liberty is a *practice*’ that must be exercised, the second is taken from tourism studies and holds that ‘freedom is most evidently actualized’ in the making of the body, and the third is grounded in feminist discourse, which contends that politics is not something “out there” but something happening “in here”, in the body.⁹⁸ The change called for in alpine writing back therefore can and must come about through a very physical engagement with the world in which our bodies dwell. It should come

⁹⁵ Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 310.

⁹⁶ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 67.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 24; Neil Lewis, ‘The Climbing Body, Nature and the Experience of Modernity’, in *Bodies of Nature*, ed. Phil Macnaghten and John Urry (London: Sage, 2001), 75; Adrienne Rich, ‘When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision’, *College English: Women, Writing and Teaching* 34, no. 1 (October 1972): 24.

as no surprise, then, that bodily resistance has been involved in social practice for centuries. During the final decades of the eighteenth century, for instance, 'the apparently mundane activity of walking took on a political hue.'⁹⁹ At the time, leisurely walking – walking for pleasure rather than necessity – recoded an arduous mode of transportation into an act of rebellion against established social hierarchies and a weapon in critical thinking. According to Martin Scharfe, the aim of this new cultural signification was new experiences and new insights for the emancipated subject, the enlightened human being who, following the motto of Enlightenment, must have the courage to use his own reason.¹⁰⁰ This reasoning, Scharfe continues, is not only located in the mind; it is also situated in the body and requires movement, not unlike legs that demand to walk.¹⁰¹ Macnaghten and Urry explain that when walkers engaged in embodied agency in the eighteenth century, they did so not just out of physical or political necessity but to set themselves free intellectually. The same holds true for climbing, with Neil Lewis asserting that 'the two are intimately linked.'¹⁰² Indeed, in the verb "transcend", perhaps one of the most commonly used terms in modern philosophy, one finds evidence of climbing's liberating and visionary associations. McCarthy observes that "transcend", a compound of *trans* (meaning "over") and *scandere* (meaning "to climb"), literally translates to "climb over".¹⁰³ Whenever we use the term to define structures of being, not as an ontology but as a condition of possibility, we unintentionally proclaim that a knowledge of being in critical thinking is etymologically rooted in the physical act of climbing.

Die Piefke-Saga is a perfect example of a counter-discourse, critically confronting established positions of the body in Alpine Orientalism. In its fourth and final episode, however, it also models a physical resistance, present in the act of climbing/walking, against mountain mass tourism and its bodily appropriations. The moving body as a symbol of transcendence awakens slowly in the series. It begins with a shake of the local priest's head, a physical reaction of disapproval at the sight of yet another zombie Tyrolean, the distribution of leaflets by Stefan and Joe; continues with Karl Friedrich's revelation that they 'have to cross the border on foot' if they want to escape;¹⁰⁴ and develops into a major resistance movement, with bodies climbing further and further into the high alpine, into

⁹⁹ Lewis, 'Climbing Body', 63.

¹⁰⁰ Scharfe, *Berg-Sucht*, 156.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Lewis, 'Climbing Body', 77.

¹⁰³ McCarthy, 'Why Climbing Matters', 158.

¹⁰⁴ 'Erfüllung'. The full quote in the German original is: 'Wir müssen zu Fuß über die Grenze.'

the *locus vivus* and out of the tourist industry's grasp. The Sattmanns set out together as a family. Together with Joe and Stefan, they retreat to a shelter in the high mountains, where they meet with the local priest, before they step beyond the death zone hoping to transcend the reinforced Alpine Orientalist subjection of traveller and travellee at the national border. Joe, Elsa, Sabine, Karl Friedrich and Gunnar climb the chimney together, guided by the mission to free their bodies from contemporary Alpine Orientalist exploitations. However (and here Mitterer's alpine writing back, like colonial theory, reserves a sense of possibility for the next generation), it is only the young who successfully climb beyond the death zone. Help comes too late for Karl Friedrich, already a robotic Tyrolean and as such programmed as a resource in the tourist industry. He is followed by Elsa and Gunnar, who try to save him, while Sabine and Joe continue on to the border. Hope for an escape from the tourist machinery is upheld by the younger generation; even more so in Mitterer's screenplay, in which Stefan and Gunnar join the couple, and together lead us to believe that mountain tourism can and must take alternative routes. This particular generational conflict is captured in Mitterer's recent reflection on the series' reception:

Of course, the older generation who had built up the industry, not without major sacrifice, renouncement, and decades of drudgery, disagreed with me. But their children were of a different opinion. And they were ready to tell their parents. Tell them that they never ever would work in the tourist industry. Some did anyway – but wiser, more organised, and under different circumstances.¹⁰⁵

In this sense, the embodied counter-discourse of *Die Piefke-Saga* can bring the bodies of alpine Others into a different, a more empowered, position. Climbing, whether real or narrated, sensitizes the mind through the body.

I must stress here the importance of this sensibility not becoming lost in the casual praising of *Die Piefke-Saga*'s visionary qualities. To gossip about how the outgrowths of tourism seem to be exceeding the series, as is often done in the Zillertal, is not enough if action does not follow. Within the field of critical mountain studies, I strongly believe a counter-discourse that does not manage to step from the world of narration into the bodies of those involved is meaningless. A critique of mountain mass tourism, especially one that weighs so heavily on alpine bodies, must do more than talk the talk. And it is here that the important task of the cultural critic comes in: to mediate between texts and bodies. It is

¹⁰⁵ Felix Mitterer, *Mein Lebenslauf* (Innsbruck: Haymon, 2018), 182.

true that an embodied counter-discourse (although suggested, informed by and triggered in writing) is physically situated outside a literary work, but this does not diminish the quality of the text or its contribution to social change. I believe that arguing for an embodied counter-discourse entails returning criticism 'to its role as the nexus where fiction meets the world', as Roland Greene invites us to do, and repositioning the critic as agent 'in a culture that often looks elsewhere for interpretation.'¹⁰⁶ I urge readers not to forget that the counter-discursive value of criticism also lies in the fact that it can say things about works of literature that these works cannot say about themselves.¹⁰⁷

For critics to embody the first part of Northrop Frye's legendary remark that 'criticism can talk', then, means to recover a critical voice with the agency to speak beyond the closed circle of academia. This is the first job of criticism. The second is to explore where and how literary discourse intersects with other forms of discourse. In some matters, narration may only play a minor role, but to accept the limits of narration is to take seriously the role of the critic and to expand critical responsibility to the political, the social and the physical. This is in line with Said's characterization of the intellectual as someone whose duty is to 'speak the truth to power.'¹⁰⁸ But in contrast to Said, who claims that 'the intellectual does not climb a mountain', I argue that a critical responsibility of alpine spaces is thinking about them through the physical act of climbing.¹⁰⁹ This goes beyond the preaching from above that Said might have challenged and moves towards paying attention to what emerges once hierarchies are put aside. In an attempt to take on this responsibility, and in an effort to reclaim the role of the critic as a public intellectual, I will step back from what is shown on screen in *Die Piefke-Saga* and conclude by providing a reading on climbing as a physical practice, which may guide us in the next steps we take as bodies transcending the physical burden of mountain tourism.

The future alternative to mountain tourism is modelled upon climbing, in that it prioritizes neither power nor time, accredits value to flexibility as well as different perspectives, and is built on a network of responsibility, connection and interconnection.¹¹⁰ An important idea to acknowledge is to accept, first

¹⁰⁶ Roland Greene, 'The Social Role of the Critic', *Arcade: Literature, the Humanities, and the World*, 18 March 2011. <https://arcade.stanford.edu/blogs/literary-criticism-really>.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 8.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 101.

¹¹⁰ My reflections here are inspired by Jeffrey M. McCarthy's article 'Why Climbing Matters' (2008) and Max V. Malotki's chapter 'Klettern ist Beides. Über Dualismus' (2017), in *Die Philosophie des*

and foremost, that climbing is about something Other than power. Rarely are great climbers defined by their physical strengths alone. The Others to bulging muscles are manifold: they are the skill and technique involved in engaging with the mountain and are fostered by experience and risk avoidance, by the very basic fact that climbing necessarily involves the avoidance of falling. In less antagonistic terms, these Others are found in flexibility and in the readiness to let go and find new solid ground. For mountain tourism, this means re-evaluating one's standpoint and the willingness to lose that which no longer serves the well-being of human and non-human alpine bodies. Like climbing, mountain tourism needs to involve careful decision-making at every step. It requires a conscious evaluation of whether the way forward can support not only the body of the self but also the bodies of those who follow on a rope that cannot be cut. Thinking in terms of the rope draws attention to the Others in climbing who are our partners. More often than not, it is our fellow climbers who can assess a situation best from below, proving once again the value of a postcolonial perspective. They can see a sure hold where we, up above, cannot. To trust these Others, to have faith in their vision, is key to any climbing party's success and to the future alternative of mountain tourism. Furthermore, climbing is very much about transcending the space that separates you from the Other, about becoming one. Once everything starts to flow with the movement of the body and its breath, the boundaries between the climbing body and the body of the mountain converge. 'Knowledge,' McCarthy explains in 'Why Climbing Matters' (2008), 'becomes movement and upwards,' and climbing a mode of knowledge production.¹¹¹ Climbing, therefore, is a way into knowing mountains an Other way, of understanding them, in the words of Aldo Leopold, not as a 'commodity belonging to us' but a 'community to which we belong.'¹¹² McCarthy also points out climbing's ability to open the body to the mountain's current and to animate it in an awareness of the natural world.¹¹³ 'Animation,' he continues, 'is when we welcome the world in, and come, thereby, to know it for more than the passive resource our culture of consumption and extraction tells us it must be.'¹¹⁴ This experience is precluded by the pre-packaged world of a hotel entertainment programme. Such interconnected perception, the experience that mountains and humans overlap rather than exist side by side, is

Kletters (Hamburg: Suhrkamp, 2017), 187–93.

¹¹¹ McCarthy, 'Why Climbing Matters', 166.

¹¹² Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), viii.

¹¹³ McCarthy, 'Why Climbing Matters', 171.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

at best perceived kinaesthetically or may be felt in the vicarious thrill of following a group of resistance climbers upwards on a page or screen.

Bodies and stories offer different yet equally entangled paths towards the recognition of community between humans and mountains. While narrative interventions have a strong foothold in the emerging field of interdisciplinary mountain studies, an embodied counter-discourse must still claim a space for itself. David Abram argues similarly for cultural ecology:

It may be that the new 'environmental ethic' toward which so many environmental philosophers aspire – an ethic that would lead us to respect and heed not only the lives of our fellow humans but also the life and well-being of the rest of nature – will come into existence not primarily through the logical elucidation of new philosophical principles and legislative structures, but [. . .] through a rejuvenation of our carnal, sensorial empathy with the living land that sustains us.¹¹⁵

To follow Abram is to join the critics who see a different kind of consciousness, developed through the bodies of humans as much as narratives, coming to characterize the relationship between humans and nature. The two work together; one does not take precedence over the other. Otherwise, the salvation for mountain future would lie in a climbing excursion for the masses. In order to embody the change towards an interconnected mountain future that transcends the divisions of traveller/travellee, nature/culture and body/mind, not everyone is obliged to climb a mountain, just as not every eighteenth- and nineteenth-century individual had to tour the Alps and compose odes to its peaks. 'The shift in outlook', McCarthy reminds us, 'was culture-wide.'¹¹⁶

The possibility of stepping beyond a subjectification of alpine bodies is always immediately with us – in the bodies that we are. To shape new attitudes in mountain tourism demands texts that consider, and bodies that live consciously with, the mountains that are home.¹¹⁷ To make this jump, to reclaim the body in the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism and its economies, is as necessary as it is (at least at this juncture) incomplete. In this process, we must rely on models, and we find these in the corporeal practice of climbing as much as in the (pre) mediation of narration. Both movements, of bodies on rock as well as eyes on

¹¹⁵ David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 69.

¹¹⁶ McCarthy, 'Why Climbing Matters', 173.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

a page or screen, help us to artfully realize the blueprint for an Other mountain tourism in life.

This chapter has shown, once again in this study, that liveliness and activity cannot be killed when narration challenges Alpine Orientalism. *The Canterbury Trail* celebrates the vitality of alpine stories, *Icefields* blends literature's liveliness with that of the biological world and *Die Piefke-Saga* highlights the vigorous living will of mountain people. Against the assumptions of Alpine Orientalist discourse, mountain people are not necessarily those who were born in the mountains but those who care for the mountain body as much as they do for their own. To read and practice resistance from our own bodies allows us to upset dualistic inscriptions on mountain bodies and set them free in a powerful moment of postcolonial action. The next and final chapter in this book will return to postcolonial speech. It will come full circle, in a way, and test the central paradigm of postcolonial writing back – language – on Austrian ground, analysing how language remains the arena where representational power is negotiated, even in literatures far removed from a traditional postcolonial setting yet heavily inscribed with national histories.

Language

Postcolonial allegory in Elfriede Jelinek's *In den Alpen*

Few things in academic work are as gratifying as the moment when the object of investigation responds to the study in a language clearer than ever imagined. One of these moments occurred when I spotted a billboard for National Parks Austria outside a car dealership in Innsbruck. The advertisement depicts a massive wall of marbled red rock. The rockface almost entirely fills the image, leaving only the top right corner to show some of Austria's highest peaks. Stretched across the centre of the image and blurring into the rock are the words, 'Nothing touches us like the untouched'. The 2016 campaign from Young & Rubicam Vienna stages this slogan on six different images each representing and promoting one of the country's national parks. To most passers-by, the ad would likely have been an inviting photograph for a getaway to Hohe Tauern National Park, Austria's first and largest national park and home to the largest ice fields in the Eastern Alps. The centred caption would be nothing but a memorable slogan, appealing to the emotions of a mountain traveller forever in search of the untouched. As someone familiar with the oeuvre of Elfriede Jelinek and the body of colonial critical discourse, this slogan made me look twice.

I looked first at the reverberation of absence within the phrase, which advertises mountains as a space unaffected by human experience. The billboard, deploying one of Alpine Orientalism's central concepts, conjures up the promise of being in touch with a nature forever waiting to fulfil human desire. Its font style, too, is tailored to the idea of conquering an untouched mountain, as it gradually vanishes into the rock, leaving the mountains eternally untouched and, thus, forever available for leisurely explorations. The billboard's revelation of the inscription of emptiness and conquest onto mountains simultaneously exposes the difficulty of development. This is because the second time I looked, I looked as a reader of Jelinek, identifying the slogan as almost identical to a key quote

in her play *In den Alpen* (In the Alps) (2002): ‘There is nothing that touches me like the untouched.’¹ With an almost imperceptible change of pronoun, National Parks Austria advertises its highest mountain playground in a manner that not only enunciates an all-engulfing alpine nothingness but also lets all voices, all writings, that claim otherwise, fade. If one considers, moreover, that the billboard, in addition to the literary origin of its slogan, conceals the national socialist past of the national park, one is already in the midst of the thematic field of Jelinek’s *In den Alpen* and in the midst of challenging Austrian tourism’s all-too common practice of inventing a landscape of political innocence for the construction of an alpine playground.²

Jelinek’s *In den Alpen*, set at the edge of Hohe Tauern National Park in the village of Kaprun, brings together Austria’s complicity in national socialism and its tourism-induced cultural amnesia. Like the introductory campaign, which is at one and the same time strategic concealer and active promoter, the play does two things. First, it depicts the ‘most tragic accident in post-war Austria’, in which 155 people burnt alive on the ski train to the Kitzsteinhorn Glacier on 11 November 2000, as a result of inappropriate, cost-efficient renovations. Within this depiction the play performs a second action: it creates a moment of resurrection for the ghosts of national socialism.³ The site of the 2000 tragedy was also the place in which the Nazis had a hydro-electric plant built by war prisoners and slave labourers during the Second World War. While the realization of the project began during national socialism ‘to fuel the Third Reich’s industries’, the idea for the Kaprun hydro-plant was first developed under the Austrofascist regime and completed with funds from the European Recovery Program.⁴

Now, one might ask, and rightfully so, what a work of literature about two historic events in Austria, as incomparable as they are, can possibly contribute to the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism in a postcolonial critique of mountain

¹ Elfriede Jelinek, *In den Alpen: Drei Dramen* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2002), 45.

² The Hohe Tauern Park was envisioned as a ‘nature for all’ during the Nazi regime: Ortrun Veichtlbauer, ‘Großdeutscher Nationalpark im NS (1938–1949)’, in *Geschichte: Wissenschaftliche Schriften*, ed. Patrick Kupper and Anna-Katharina Wöbse (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2013), 68. While there had been intentions to designate the Tauern mountains a conservation site prior to the Second World War, it was not until after ‘the Anschluss’ and Hermann Göring’s role as Reichsminister of Forestry that the area was developed as a site of protection and recreation following the American model; see Veichtlbauer, 2013 and Robert Kriechbaumer, ‘Die Großglockner Hochalpenstraße in der NS-Ära 1938–1945’, in *Die Großglockner Hochalpenstraße: Erbe und Auftrag*, ed. Johannes Hörl and Dietmar Schöndorfer (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015).

³ Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Nachbemerkung’, in *In den Alpen* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2002), 253.

⁴ Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, trans. Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 123; Valentin Weber-Wille, *Architektur von Wasserkraftwerken in Österreich* (Vienna: Eigenverlag, 2016).

tourism, especially since its author is so deeply entrenched in challenging a specific national history. Even after winning the Nobel Prize in 2004 and receiving global recognition, Jelinek remains as dedicated as ever to 'exhausting her dear home country'.⁵ Her work rarely attracts the attention of postcolonial scholars but continues to be perceived as a perfect example of the nation-specific genre of *Anti-Heimatliteratur*: a movement dedicated to challenging mainstream historical narratives of Austria.⁶ However, as billboard and play have already demonstrated, a second look at Jelinek proves most fruitful because reading *In den Alpen* through the 'binocular vision' of colonial criticism, which also always includes revision,⁷ shows how mountain literature – even an example heavily inscribed by national history – can offer invaluable insights into literature's role in challenging mountain tourism. Curiously, the key to reading *In den Alpen* to such an end lies precisely in recognizing how the play refuses translation. To this day, *In den Alpen* has not been rendered into English, and analysing the play for an anglophone readership reveals why: Jelinek's poetics of allegory, its specific density and richness, poses a considerable challenge for translation. The 'task of "translating the untranslatable"' is linguistically demanding.⁸ It is also critically instructive. 'The places where languages touch', as explained in the preface to Barbara Cassin's *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2014), are places that 'reveal the limits of discrete national languages and traditions'.⁹ More than opening a rift between one language and another, the untranslatable is a chance to approach difference another way, helping us 'to see what we are missing'.¹⁰ Postcolonial theory, which, according to Émilienne Baneth-Nouailhetas, is itself characterized by untranslatability, offers the perfect tool to study the

⁵ Elfriede Jelinek, 'Brandopfer der Freizeit', interview by Marietta Piekenbrock, *Münchener Merkur*, 3 October 2002.

⁶ One rare instance in which Jelinek meets postcolonial scholarship is in Heidi Schlipphacke's *Nostalgia after Nazism*, where Jelinek's prose is analysed with regard to topics of belonging and globalization. See Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger, 'Angloamerikanischer Raum', in *Jelinek Handbuch*, ed. Pia Janke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2013), 375–9; Heidi M. Schlipphacke, *Nostalgia after Nazism: History, Home, and Affect in German and Austrian Literature and Film* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2010).

⁷ Stephen Slemon, 'Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 23, no. 1 (1988): 165.

⁸ Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood, 'Preface', in *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, ed. Barbara Cassin, Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), xiv.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xiv.

untranslatable poetics of allegory in Jelinek's *In den Alpen*; and with it the forms taken by certain rewritings of Alpine Orientalism in an Austrian setting.¹¹

Making a virtue out of the difficulty of translation, this chapter studies the rewritings of Alpine Orientalism through allegory. That rewriting Alpine Orientalism and rewriting Austrian historiography are not mutually exclusive endeavours is owing to the fact that allegory is, in its simplest form, 'a method of double meanings'.¹² Throughout the long history of allegory, scholars have agreed on this literary technique being 'a means of figural double-speak' and 'a place in which two or more levels of meaning coexist'.¹³ Postcolonial theory – the work of Stephen Slemon in particular – adds to the prevailing meaning of allegory as occurring when 'one text is doubled by another', a form of 'other speaking'.¹⁴ In the context of rewriting Alpine Orientalism, this not only means that the appropriation of mountains in discourse contains many layers of textuality, addressing past and present in one word, but also that allegory becomes a site upon which contemporary mountain literature can contest and subvert Alpine Orientalist appropriation through figurative technology.¹⁵ *In den Alpen* is a prime example of such allegorical rewritings of Alpine Orientalism, and its author a master of "double speak".

Numerous scholars have commented on Jelinek's heavy reduplication of meanings. Lukas Wieselberg, for instance, acknowledges her continuous reference to 'something else', Ralf Schnell sees her aesthetic achievement in reinventing allegory for postmodern narration and Jessica Ortner has developed the trope of 'quasi-allegory' as specific to Jelinek.¹⁶ Taking up contemporary allegory's auto-referentiality, Ortner explains how the multiple meanings of Jelinek's allegories do not always refer to a specific extra-textual reference but

¹¹ Émilienne Baneth-Nouailhetas, 'Postcolonial, Postcolonialism', in Cassin et al., *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, 1058–9.

¹² Angus J. S. Fletcher, 'Allegory without Ideas', in *Thinking Allegory Otherwise*, ed. B. Machosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 10.

¹³ Maria Cichosz, *The Veil of Allegory: A Literary History Told in Visual Terms* (Qualifying paper, Stanford University, 2016), 2–3.

¹⁴ Craig Owens, 'The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism', *MIT Press* 12 (Spring 1980): 68; Stephen Slemon, 'Monuments of Empire: Allegory/Counter-Discourse/Post-Colonial Writing', *Kunapipi – Journal of Postcolonial Writing & Culture* 9, no. 3 (1987): 8.

¹⁵ Slemon, 'Monuments of Empire', 11.

¹⁶ Lukas Wieselberg, 'Zum 60. Geburtstag von Elfriede Jelinek: Eine Gebrauchsanweisung', *Science orf.at*, 19 October 2006. <http://sciencev1.orf.at/news/146018.html>; Ralf Schnell, "Ich möchte seicht sein" – Jelineks Allegorese der Welt: *Die Kinder der Toten*', in *Nora verläßt ihr Puppenheim: Autorinnen des 20. Jahrhunderts und ihr Beitrag zur ästhetischen Innovation*, ed. Waltraud Wende (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2000), 254; Jessica Ortner, *Poetologie 'Nach Auschwitz': Narratologie, Semantik und sekundäre Zeugenschaft in Elfriede Jelineks Roman 'Die Kinder der Toten'* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016), 271.

‘merge into one another’ – not telling individual stories but adding density to the (hi)story imbedded in a particular place.¹⁷ Allegory, as used by Jelinek, goes far beyond the purely textual. In an interview leading up to the premiere of *In den Alpen*, Jelinek argues that nature is inherently allegorical: what ‘we perceive and marvel at as nature has always already been overlaid with a second nature’.¹⁸ According to the author, we see in mountains not only a geological massif but a set of ideologically charged representations of ‘false innocence, kitsch, picturesque stills, and lofty gestures’.¹⁹ Reading Jelinek’s play, as this chapter will demonstrate, makes all these “second natures” visible at once.

Relying on a careful tectonic unfolding and the art of looking twice, this chapter seeks to uncover how an exemplary piece of contemporary Austrian mountain literature writes back to the hegemonies of mass tourism in a language that, despite its strangeness, is not too foreign. When *In den Alpen* revives the figures of alpine myths, reactivates a mountain’s life force in cathartic burnings and explores the possibilities of embodied speech, the play highlights the key features of alpine writing back and demonstrates, with utmost clarity, that when it comes to renegotiating Alpine Orientalism in the arena of language, what matters is not so much the choice of language, but the fact that language acts. My argument in this chapter owes an immense debt to Stephen Slemon’s concept of postcolonial allegory.²⁰ Section 5.1 addresses how allegory serves as a site for engaging with history, Section 5.2 discusses how allegory affords revisions of the past against forgetting and Section 5.3 examines how allegory empowers the Others of mountain travel. These three characteristics of allegorical writing are defined by Slemon. Section 5.4, then, adds the aspect of gender power to Slemon’s postcolonial allegory, as it explores Jelinek’s play as *Körpertexte*, ‘body texts’.²¹

¹⁷ Jessica Ortner, ‘Poetologie “Nach Auschwitz”’: Narratologie, Semantik und Sekundäre Zeugenschaft in Elfriede Jelineks Roman “Die Kinder der Toten” (PhD diss, University of Copenhagen, 2012), 188.

¹⁸ Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Ich glaube nicht an Gott und schreibe dauernd über ihn’, interview by Volker Corsten, *Welt am Sonntag*, 29 September 2002.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Slemon, ‘Monuments of Empire’; and Slemon, ‘Post-Colonial Allegory’.

²¹ Taking into account Anne McClintock’s conviction that ‘gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise’, including feminist theory in the analytical toolbox of this chapter is not only most meaningful in relation to Jelinek’s work but, in turn, enhances a reconceptualization of postcolonial allegory. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995), 7; Slemon, ‘Post-Colonial Allegory’; Monika Meister, ‘Theaterästhetik’, in *Jelinek Handbuch*, ed. P. Janke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2013), 72.

5.1 Historicizing the present

Since Paul de Man read allegory as a ‘rhetoric of temporality’, time has been considered a constitutive category in the semantic double-speak in which one sign precedes another.²² The temporal relationship is characterized by a sign taking anterior position and effectively leading the interpretive process into the past. An active engagement with the past is also a key feature in postcolonial allegory, which Stephen Slemon sees as ‘inherently involved with questions of history and tradition’.²³ For Slemon, however, the power of allegory for the postcolonial lies in its simultaneity. Instead of deducing meaning in a linear fashion – from anteriority to posteriority – postcolonial allegory allows for multiple meanings to be present at the same time. For Slemon, this involves a directional change in the interpretive process of allegory, allowing for past and present to be captured in one ‘binocular vision’.²⁴

In den Alpen utilizes allegory to simultaneously confront the tourist industry and Austria’s national socialist past, in which mountains were instrumentalized to conceal any complicity in the regime having once been a prime site of national socialist policy. The scenes in which allegories guide the interpretive gaze to a concurrent vision of past and present are numerous. My analysis, however, is selective as I focus on the allegorical polyvalence surrounding the terms *Plätzchen*, *Zug*, *Ofen* and *Nummer*. By employing *Plätzchen*, the play addresses topics of place, death and capitalist consumption in one word. A general understanding of *Plätzchen* as “biscuit” combines the dead of national socialism with those of mass tourism as if mixing together ingredients for a cookie dough. Accordingly, following the ski train disaster, in a scene in act I, the character designated as ‘the helper’ collects the remains of young athletes, addressing their dead bodies in a warning that, together with the Nazi victims, they will be baked to biscuits: ‘Tja, jetzt ist es zu spät, jetzt werdet ihr mit ihnen zu Plätzchen zusammengebacken.’²⁵ In a scene that suggests the deceased are a homogenous mass of cookie dough, the helper refuses to draw a distinction between the victims. A similar kind of irreversible fusion between the dead of national socialism and those of mass tourism is addressed in Jelinek’s postscript to the play, in which she leaves no

²² Paul de Man, ‘The Rhetoric of Temporality’, in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Adams Hazard and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986).

²³ Slemon, ‘Post-Colonial Allegory’, 158.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

²⁵ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 24. My English translation reads: ‘Well, now it’s too late, now you’ll be baked to biscuits with them.’

doubt that the two groups of dead are, in fact, one, ‘melted together to a sole lump.’²⁶ This notion is additionally expressed in a second meaning of *Plätzchen*, which, apart from “biscuit”, denotes a “small place” and refers to the town of Kaprun in the state of Salzburg.

The small town could not be a more perfect encapsulation of Austria’s history, given that the destructive culture of Austria’s tourist economy is as inscribed into the place as the tragedy of national socialism. Kaprun offers a microcosm of Austrian history, from Nazi rule to recreational periphery: soon after the Anschluss, Germany’s annexation of Austria in 1938, Hermann Göring broke ground for the Kaprun hydro-electric plant. Constructed by thousands of war prisoners and slave labourers, many of whom were forcefully removed from occupied nations and died from abuse and exhaustion, the power plant was completed in 1955, ironically the year in which Austria reinstated its independence and officially denied all complicity in the Nazi regime.²⁷ When Kaprun opened its ski train to Austria’s first glacier resort in 1966, the seamless transition from Nazi past to tourist landscape was complete, and summer skiing found its way into the Alps.²⁸ In 2000, this ski train caught fire and Elfriede Jelinek identifies the town as a crossroads where the past and present of Austrian mountains collide. Jelinek explains that she inevitably had to relate the Kitzsteinhorn catastrophe, as it is known, to the history of alpinism in Austria, in the sense that ‘the fire, which started a long time ago, took 155 more after taking millions.’²⁹ The dead of national socialism and the dead of mountain tourism are united in one place and consumed by the tourist industry. As depicted through the imagery of baked goods, the tourist industry has swallowed up the victims of national socialism, leaving no trace of their existence, while it continues to greedily feed from contemporary travellers.

Just as *Plätzchen* captures consumption, death and place in a single word, so do the multiple implementations of the term *Zug* – German for “train” – and its related word *Ofen*. In Jelinek’s play, trains are, above all else, bearers of

²⁶ Jelinek, ‘Nachbemerkung’, 225. The full quote in the German original reads: ‘In diesem Tunnel sind die Menschen, die sich nicht mehr retten konnten, zu einem einzigen Klumpen zusammenschmolzen.’

²⁷ Christian Klein, ‘Jelineks Konfrontation mit der politischen Vergangenheit’, in *Elfriede Jelinek et le Devenir du Drame*, ed. Gérard Thiériot (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2006), 60.

²⁸ See Clemens M. Hutter, *Kaprun: Eine Geschichte des Erfolgs* (Salzburg: Residenz-Verlag, 1994); Pia Janke, ‘Der Mythos Kaprun in *In den Alpen* und *Das Werk*’, in *Jelinek, Une Répétition? A propos des pièces ‘In den Alpen’ et ‘Das Werk’ / Jelinek, eine Wiederholung? Zu den Theaterstücken ‘In den Alpen’ und ‘Das Werk’*, ed. Françoise Lartillot and Dieter Hornig (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 127–41; Klein, ‘Jelineks Konfrontation’, 55–66.

²⁹ Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Das harte Gericht der Kunst’, interview by Nina Toepfer, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 6 October 2002.

death, functioning as catalysts of destruction in both the ski train tragedy and Austria's role in national socialism. In the 2000 disaster, the ski train caught fire because of improper use and unsafe, cost-cutting renovations, becoming a grave for passionate skiers.³⁰ Trains also played a key strategic role in the forceful deportation of Jews and other Holocaust victims. Modern historians even suggest that the pace of extermination would have undoubtedly been slower without the involvement of the railway.³¹ Several decades before either of these two specific train tragedies could unfold, trains played a prominent role in the onset of mass tourism, which essentially relied on a functioning and well-connected railway network. Several documents indicate that the Salzburg chamber of commerce was eagerly awaiting the construction of a railway network and that there were high hopes for a quick economic upswing once the Salzburg-Tirol Train and the Selzthal Train were connected to the international railway network in 1875.³² Against this backdrop, *In den Alpen* frames the train as a murderous vehicle that not only brings immediate death but is also responsible for the slow and steady destruction of mountain regions by bringing the masses to the mountains. Jelinek's poetics of allegory connects the trains that carried millions of Holocaust victims to their deaths or near deaths to those that have brought millions of travellers to the Salzburg mountains since the late nineteenth century and the one that finally killed its passengers in 2000. Simultaneously addressing the present and past, the train allegory thus represents tourism as a bearer of loss and destruction and as an industry that kills individuals and cultural communities.

In colloquial use, the train, like other vehicles, is occasionally referred to with the word *Ofen*, which in turn sets its own focus by merging two of the most murderous infernos in Austrian history. The standard meaning of *Ofen*, which in some parts of Austria also signifies mountain caves and rock formations, generally denotes "furnace". The term evokes association with the Holocaust, which etymologically derives from Greek and denotes the "burning offer" in which six million people lost their lives.³³ Jelinek consistently draws parallels between the burnings in Nazi Germany and the fires in the Kaprun tunnel,

³⁰ Jelinek, 'Nachbemerkung', 253.

³¹ Simone Gigliotti, *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 36.

³² See Robert Hoffmann, 'Die touristische Erschließung des Salzburger Gebirgslandes im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert', in *Der Alpentourismus*, ed. Kurt Luger and Franz Rest (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2002), 77.

³³ Michael Berenbaum, 'Holocaust', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14 November 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Holocaust>. In this chapter I use the term 'Holocaust' rather than 'Shoah',

describing humans as ‘flammable material’,³⁴ bodies being ‘fired up without having to enter a sauna’,³⁵ people burning while ‘the gates are – for a change – wide open’³⁶ and a Jewish apparition repeatedly shouting ‘burn me.’³⁷ Jelinek’s technique of alluding to one fire with another becomes obvious once more in a scene in act II where the child protagonist challenges the Jewish man to prove that his *Ofen* killed many more than hers: ‘Unser Ofen hat 155 Stück geschafft, aber daß Ihrer viel mehr geschafft hat, das müssen Sie mir erst beweisen.’³⁸ As the child challenges the Jewish man to a competition of casualties, she pits the 155 people of the 2000 accident against the 160 who died during the development of the Kaprun hydro-plant.³⁹ In so doing, the scene gestures towards the dark figures of national socialist killings.

Quantities also maintain a prominent role in Jelinek’s play in the polyvalence of meanings surrounding the term “number”, which challenges four distinct significations of the German *Nummer*. The first pertains to a historical assessment of the value of human life in Austrian history and economy and appears in a scene in the beginning of act II, in which the Nazi and tourist victims first face each other in the figures of the child corpse and the apparition of the Jewish poet Paul Celan:

*A man in a regular street suit enters. People cluster around him. He distributes numbers from a paper roll; they willingly accept. At the same time, number after number appears on a wall display. When the first number appears, the first person wants to walk through the door through which the man just entered.*⁴⁰

which specifically refers to the fate of Jewish people, to address the genocides during the Nazi regime that also affected other peoples.

³⁴ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 15. The original reads: ‘Da steht sie in der Talstation, die Bahn, noch zehn Sekunden, noch fünf, und hält die Hand aufs Herz, daß 170 Personen in ihr aufrecht mitsamt ihren Geräten, inmitten des bunten, leicht entflammbaren Materials, das sie selber sind, stehen können.’

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 37. The original reads: ‘So wie Italienerinnen auf das Meer und Isländerinnen auf die heißen Quellen in ihrem Ort stolz sein können, beneidenswert, so was könnten wir auch brauchen, die können den Menschen auch noch ein Bad anbieten, ohne die Sauna und die Körper erst mühsam anheizen zu müssen.’

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 58. The original reads: ‘Da rasen die Flammen mit der Zugluft davon, den Kamin hinauf, die Tore waren ja weit offen, wie originell, mal was anders: verbrennen, weil die Tore offen sind!’

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 49. The original reads: ‘Verbrennt mich mit seiner Packerlsuppe doch fast an der Schulter. Knapp daneben ist auch vorbei. Dafür verbrennt er mich mit seinem Heizstrahler am Oberschenkel. Verbrennt mich. Fragt nicht wenigstens vorher. Verbrennt mich.’

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 42. My English translation reads: ‘Our oven managed 155 pieces, but you first have to prove to me that yours managed much more.’

³⁹ Jelinek, ‘Nachbemerkung’, 258.

⁴⁰ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 41. The German original reads: ‘Ein Mann im ganz normalen Stadtanzug tritt ein. Die Leute scharen sich um ihn. Er verteilt von einer Papierrolle Nummern, die bereitwillig entgegengenommen werden. Zugleich beginnt an einer Wandanzeige Nummer für Nummer zu erscheinen. Als die erste Nummer erscheint, will die erste Person durch die Tür, durch die der Mann eingetreten ist.’

While the figure of a Holocaust survivor dealing out numbers implicitly gestures towards the identification system of concentration camps and widens the binocular vision towards the past, the allegorical use of the term *Nummer* in this scene is more concerned with demonizing contemporary alpine commodification as a process that reduces human lives to the value they might or might not have within the tourism industry. Humans seem to be important only with regard to how much money they bring to the tourist economy, and their lives are valued either as a commodity or labour power within the system. Their lives and identities are reduced to travel statistics and sales figures. This equalization of humans with numbers is expressed in the above scene where people only move when their ‘number appears on a wall display.’⁴¹ The fact that all motion can only lead to death if people resemble no more than numbered tickets given out in a self-service restaurant is underlined by the setting of the play, in which the ski train station functions as a purgatory.

The second signification of “number” addresses not the disdain for human life in general but the worthlessness enforced through racial Othering during national socialism, most prominently in relation to Jewish people. The Celan apparition, who deals out numbers but himself has none, is accused of having no value: ‘I have already drawn my number, but you sir, have not, sir, you will never be judged again,’ says the child protagonist to Celan, ‘because in some ways you have no value.’⁴² Kaprun, like other mountain regions, only welcomes those Others who pay for their mountain experience. Just a few sentences before the child protagonist reminds Celan of his worthlessness, the scene alludes to the third signification of *Nummer* as *Startnummer* and racing bib. The scene conjures up images of a skiing championship in which the men’s race promises to be particularly pulsating. Instead of race time, however, the competition measures a ‘reassessment of the soul.’⁴³ Here, the explorative dictum of “being first”, the dangerous obsession with numbers, is so dominant that it even projects into the afterlife. Last, the use of the German *Nummer* – die schnelle Nummer, “the quickie” – intersperses the plethora of digits with sexual connotations. One case in point is when *Micha assaults Karina not in the privacy of the bedroom but*

⁴¹ Ibid., 41.

⁴² Ibid., 57. The German original reads: ‘Ich habe meine Nummer schon gezogen, aber Sie, Herr, nicht, mein Herr, Sie werden nie wieder bewertet werden, und zwar weil Sie in gewisser Hinsicht keinen Wert besitzen.’

⁴³ Ibid., 56. The German original reads: ‘Erst einmal werden totale Neubewertungen der Seelen vorgenommen! Auch recht spannend, vor allem die Herrenbewerbe.’

*in broad daylight, in the kitchen.*⁴⁴ Although the trope of mountains as a sexual playground is not as prominent as in Felix Mitterer's *Die Piefke-Saga* (1991), *In den Alpen* does not fail to draw attention to the problematic sexual objectification in mountain tourist destinations. Evidently, then, in line with Slemmon's notion of allegory, in one word, the German *Nummer* captures some of the most central problems of mountain mass tourism, past and present, highlighting the commodification and sexualization of alpine Others as well as the unrelenting desire to be first.

In Jelinek's poetics of allegory, death is a common theme, especially in the play's references to Romanticism. In ways that are different to and, one could argue, more explicit than Thomas Wharton's *Icefields* (1995), *In den Alpen* exposes the fatality of Romantic principles in alpine appreciation: more than sowing the seeds of mountain travel, Romanticism is its end. In her rewriting of a Romantically induced Alpine Orientalism, Jelinek employs allegorical use of the terms *Ruhe* and *Einsamkeit* – tranquillity and solitude – and relates the nineteenth-century ideals of mountain travel to its contemporary fate. The notion of a certain tranquillity that one might be able to experience on a journey to the Alps is referenced on a single page in three different yet pertinent ways: first, as part of emergency measures, when the child protagonist recalls the safety instructions to stay calm ('*Ruhe bewahren*'); second, when questioning the alpine idyll by wondering why one would possibly want to seek tranquillity on the Kitzsteinhorn ('*Wer will schon Ruhe in Kitz*'); and finally, when the child is at peace in the face of her own death ('*Ruhe im Grab*').⁴⁵ Jelinek's use of allegory exposes the faint appeal of peace and quiet in the mountains within the contemporary state of emergency, the party arena of Kitz and even in the character's own demise. *In den Alpen* anchors *Ruhe* in mountain tourism's present and guides the interpretative gaze into the past, while also following this direction in the allegorical utilization of *Einsamkeit*. This allegory reveals the marginalization of Jews in the history of alpinism and, like *Ruhe*, embodies the omnipresence of death in *In den Alpen*. There is a stubborn child who tells the Jewish man, 'you do not deserve our solitude,' indicating that the Romantic ideal was restricted to a select few.⁴⁶ The same child cannot believe that together they have to pay with the solitude of death precisely at the moment in which

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41. The German original reads: '*Micha vergreift sich an Karina, und das nicht im dunklen Schlafzimmer, sondern am helllichten Tag, mitten in der Küche.*'

⁴⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 48. The German original reads: '*Sie verdienen unsre Einsamkeit nicht.*'

they are ‘washed over by the picturesque.’⁴⁷ Jelinek evokes the action of beauty washing over travellers, leaving open the suggestion that the obsession with aesthetics in mountain tourism is as destructive as the gas that poured out of the showers in the concentration camps. The allegorical effect is the same: ‘Result: You are dead. I am dead. We both paid with solitude.’⁴⁸ Solitude and tranquillity, those high-held values of Romantic wilderness and alpine exploration, bring destruction along with the tourist droves, just like the train that functions as a promoter of alpine travel. The character described as ‘the young woman’ can only dream of being alone – ‘am liebsten wär ich allein’⁴⁹ – because mountains are overpopulated; the Kitzsteinhorn region, for instance, hosted more than 700 guests per capita in 2015/16.⁵⁰ With her tale of gothic horror, Jelinek makes it clear from the start that Romantic ideals are as dead as local communities in popular tourist regions, the force of mountain mass tourism as annihilating as that of national socialism. After all, the main characters, cramped together as they are in the station for the ski train, are all corpses of alpine past and present.

Through allegory, *In den Alpen* opens up an interpretative process that considers what has informed tourism historically and discursively together with more contemporary concerns. It historicizes the present in an example of postcolonial allegory and manages, as Slemmon explains, to ‘reinstat[e] the sphere of the political’ in the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism.⁵¹

5.2 Against forgetting

So far, this chapter has highlighted Jelinek’s allegorical engagement as geared towards amending the past through the present, and it has demonstrated that the utilization of allegory in *In den Alpen* ‘is helping to change our received ideas of history.’⁵² In the play, the author writes against the assumption,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 54. The German original reads: ‘Den Augenblick, in dem uns Schönheit überrinnt, den müssen wir mit Einsamkeit bezahlen.’

⁴⁸ Ibid. The German original reads: ‘Fazit: Sie sind tot, ich bin tot, wir zahlen beide mit Einsamkeit und aus, so das wäre gegessen.’

⁴⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁰ Between December 2015 and November 2016, 998,663 people visited the *Zell am See-Kaprun* region. Together, Zell am See and Kaprun have a population of 1,280 local residents. See ‘Zell am See’, *Salzburg Wiki*, last modified 15 August 2023. http://www.salzburg.com/wiki/index.php/Zell_am_See; *Geschäftsbericht 2015/2016: Kitzsteinhorn-Zell am See-Kaprun* (Kaprun: Gletscherbahnen Kaprun AG, 2016); *Gemeindebericht 2015: Gemeinde Kaprun*, ed. Martin Gaßner (Kaprun: Gemeinde Kaprun, 2015).

⁵¹ Slemmon, ‘Monuments of Empire’, 13.

⁵² Slemmon, ‘Post-Colonial Allegory’, 158.

prevalent in Austria until the mid-1980s, that the country was Nazi Germany's first victim rather than its abettor, and tourism a blessing for impoverished post-war communities. All too quickly, Austria exalted alpine topography and technology to distract from the guilt question. For most of Jelinek's readers, her commitment to facing the past head-on is doubtless not unusual. After all, she handed out protest leaflets during the Waldheim presidency (1986–92) and has been committed to historical reinvestigations since the beginning of her literary career. But exposing the inconvenient national history inscribed into Austrian mountains does not offer a magical relief from engaging with the problematic utilization of alpine spaces. Engaging with national socialist history is, like the postcolonial, 'an urgent, unfinished project',⁵³ which is hinted at in the repeated inclusion in Jelinek's play of a sense of emptiness that evokes Austria's negation of its national socialist history. This difference between creative appropriation and critical investigation can 'already be felt on the surface of the text' as one of style and handling of concepts: where in Derrida a *glissement* of concepts takes place, where words seem to 'lose themselves in endless horizons of reference and yet repeatedly revolve around an unnameable centre', de Man's language possesses a severity, technicity and rigour whose dogmatic scientificity can also be perceived as doctrinaire coldness, as Ingo Berensmeyer remarks in a different context.⁵⁴ Although Berensmeyer studies style and gesture in de Man and J. Hillis Miller, and in this particular instance refers to Derrida's *glissement*, the idea of creating a sense of vacancy with writing is equally attributable to Jelinek's play. The author is acclaimed for her 'artistry in marking immense voids', by which she engages in 'dismantling a faulty collective memory', and in 'lifting the veil of amnesia'.⁵⁵ In the play, Jelinek achieves this by deploying allegory as a tool that has the 'capacity to rescue from historical oblivion that which threatens to disappear'.⁵⁶ This section will show how this sense of emptiness in Jelinek's writing is not too different from that of colonial discourse, with its fundamental ideas of conceptual emptying, de-peopling and constituting absence (see Section

⁵³ Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, 'What Was Postcolonialism?' *New Literary History* 36, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 399

⁵⁴ Ingo Berensmeyer, 'Gestus und Geltung: Zur Rhetorik der Theorie (de Man/Miller)', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 75, no. 3 (September 2001): 491–539.

⁵⁵ Nancy Erickson, 'Echoes of Celan and Heidegger in Jelinek's *In den Alpen* [*In the Alps*]', in *Elfriede Jelinek: Writing Woman, Nation, and Identity*, ed. Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger and Matthias Piccolruaz Konzett (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 186; Peter Kümmer, 'Die Welt im Kamin: Vom Zwang in jedem Unglücksfall Auschwitz zu entdecken', *Die Zeit*, 10 October 2002.

⁵⁶ Owens, 'The Allegorical Impulse', 68.

1.2: 'Mountains Empty and Vast'). Jelinek's allegorical rewriting of Alpine Orientalism 'seeks to interrogate those notions of history' that deem mountains empty and innocent.⁵⁷

The play signals emptiness in the way it renders mountain spaces as holes in the landscape. This is evident, first of all, in the allegorical use of *Lohe*, which is the name given to a field, referring to a hole and an antiquated term denoting roaring flames. With the mention of a 'sengende Lohe',⁵⁸ a scorching hole, which eats the child and her brothers, the play not only bears witness to people disappearing in flames but also melting into the depths of mountain landscape; a constant reminder against forgetting. In allegorical perfection, the torrid hole signifies historical material and material absence in one burning image. This sense of absence becomes even more apparent in the introduction of the term *Loch*, which signifies "tunnel", an unavailable memory, and, in salty language, a vagina. While all of these allegorical meanings echo throughout the play, in this section I will focus primarily on the term's chief signification as a "hole": a 'hollow place'.⁵⁹ At this point, it is worth taking another look at the quotation referenced in the discussion surrounding *Plätzchen*, in which the victims of both burning tragedies are subsumed into a single mass. The reference indicates that the dead are 'baked to biscuits' precisely because they 'have not made space in time, where history has already left a hole to evade'.⁶⁰ In placing blame on the victims' eagerness to occupy mountains, the passage points to an absence in both history and place: the blank is framed as pertaining to spatiality as well as temporality. In its first instance, the "hole" is a location one must circumvent. It is also a lapse in memory, a time avoided and an absence from standard historical narratives.

Through the creation of spatial and historical voids, *In den Alpen* challenges the dominant discourses of received history and what it omits. Notably, strategies of concealment are not unique to the Austrian mountains; they have also been frequently deployed in Canadian mountain history. In her study on Canadian mountain parks, PearlAnn Reichwein observes that the history of prisoner-of-war camps and military testing grounds in the Rockies was carefully concealed

⁵⁷ Slemmon, 'Monuments of Empire', 11.

⁵⁸ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 16.

⁵⁹ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. 'hole,' accessed 27 November 2019. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/87707?rskey=82jmKH&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

⁶⁰ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 24–5. The German original reads: 'Tja, jetzt ist es zu spät, jetzt werdet ihr mit ihnen zu Plätzchen zusammengebacken, weil ihr nicht rechtzeitig Platz gemacht habt, wo die Geschichte eh schon ein Loch zum Ausweichen übriggelassen hat.'

in post-war publicity material, which politicized the parks ‘as innocent daytime venues for the middle-class.’⁶¹ Thomas Wharton likewise articulates the glossing over of war crimes in his novel *Icefields* when he debunks the role of prisoners of war in building park roads.⁶² Mountain regions, in Canada and Austria alike, have been historical sites of violence, and the onset of mass tourism has turned them into timeless and thus innocent places for tourist consumption. Jelinek writes against such commercially induced forgetting and, in her use of allegory, engages in a ‘process of “revisioning” history’ – with allegory becoming ‘not only technique, but also thematic content.’⁶³ It is easy to see how *In den Alpen* constitutes postcolonial allegory in the play’s utilization of strategies of occlusion and erasure that specifically invoke the potential of mountains to conceal history. Within *In den Alpen*, cultural amnesia that benefits the promotion of tourism is enabled through a number of distinctively alpine forces. The first is ice, which is introduced by the child protagonist who believes ‘that what we know is only the tip of the iceberg.’⁶⁴ This iceberg, evidently, symbolizes the way in which a large part of alpine truth is concealed. ‘Most of it was kept a secret’, the child maintains.⁶⁵

A second alpine form that facilitates cultural amnesia is water. The play renders water useful in washing away inconvenient historical truths in a scene where the child muses: the ‘Kitz lures so wonderfully’ and it seems as if ‘God himself had cleaned it for us.’⁶⁶ With all traces of genocide gone, the Kitzsteinhorn, now scrubbed and polished with newfound innocence, can finally attract visitors and water is, indeed, the perfect element for covering or eradicating an inextinguishable guilt for the sake of travel promotion. In the case of Kaprun, however, the role of water in enabling a specific form of alpine economy goes beyond a purely metaphorical whitewashing. After all, human settlement was washed away during the construction of the Kaprun power plant and its accompanying dam. Numerous people had to be resettled, agricultural alpine pastures were lost in the process of flooding *Mooserboden* and the *Erzherzog*

⁶¹ PearlAnn Reichwein, *Climber’s Paradise: Making Canada’s Mountain Parks, 1906–1974* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2014), 195, 206.

⁶² Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 247.

⁶³ Slemmon, ‘Post-Colonial Allegory’, 163.

⁶⁴ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 10. The German original reads: ‘Ich glaube jedoch, das, was wir wissen ist nur die Spitze des Eisbergs.’

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* The German original reads: ‘Das meiste wurde verschwiegen.’

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 55. The German original reads: ‘Das Kitz lockt so schön, der liebe Gott hat es für uns geputzt.’

Rainer Hütte, the first refuge hut of its kind and an emblem of Austrian alpinist history, disappeared in the mass of water.⁶⁷ This is reflected in the play:

Schon seit dem Staudambau. Tot. Diese Häuser schreien, wenn man an ihnen vorbeigeht, aber irgendwann hören sie, wie wir, damit wieder auf. Es hilft ihnen keiner und nimmt ihnen ihr Türmchen mit der Glocke wieder ab. Viele von ihnen sind damals im Wasser versunken. Ich werde das nun nie mehr erleben. Daß ich vorbeigehen kann. Ich bin immer nur: vorbeigegangen.⁶⁸

Instantly, water is framed as a destructive force that removes any evidence of human settlement. Dead houses scream until they are silenced by ignorance and nobody is concerned when ‘yet another one sinks into the ground, as if in water.’⁶⁹ To supply the growing demand for electricity during the expansion of the Third Reich, human presence was denied and people forcefully removed. Water has effectively wiped humans off the landscape. This fact has been insistently overlooked so that travellers who visit the high mountain reservoir and gaze down at Mooserboden see only an empty surface of water ‘unhistoricized and uninhabited.’⁷⁰ There is a moment in the play that reflects upon the transition of Mooserboden from an inhabited space to one that is gazed at:

Wir wollen mal sehen, wie sich das anfühlt, eine Aussicht zu sein, auf den See, auf die Mooserbodensperre, auf das Gebirg im Gesamtzusammenhang, nein, hängen tut es nicht, es ist unten am Boden verschraubt.⁷¹

In this reference, the dead consider their own disappearance beneath an aestheticized alpine landscape. Humans have ‘to be a view, of the lake, of Mooserboden, of the mountains,’ in order for the region to become the

⁶⁷ Michael Guggenberger, *Hoch hinaus! Wege und Hütten in den Alpen*, ed. Deutscher Alpenverein, Österreichischer Alpenverein, and Alpenverein Südtirol (Köln: Böhlau: 2016), 2:167. Just like in the Austrian Alps, the hydropower projects were forerunners of recreation in the Canadian Rockies. Not unlike in the Kaprun region, in the Rockies, local land was also flooded for hydropower development. PearlAnn Reichwein discusses the infringement on Stoney land in the Kananaskis Falls dam project in 1913 and mostly unsuccessful petitions for similar projects in Waterton Park, Spray Lakes and Lake Minnewanka in *Climber's Paradise*, 136.

⁶⁸ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 17. My English translation reads: ‘Since the construction of the dam. Dead. The houses scream when one walks past them, but some day they will stop, just like us. Nobody helps them and nobody takes the bell off their turret. Many drowned in the water.’

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 40. The original reads: ‘Und da versenkt sich schon wieder eine vor mir im Boden wie im Wasser, weinend, weil es ja doch immer zu früh ist, egal wann.’

⁷⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge: 2008), 50.

⁷¹ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 22. My English translation reads: ‘Let’s see what it feels like to be a view of the lake, of the Mooserboden dam, of the entirety of the mountain range, no it does not hang, it is screwed to the bottom of the ground.’

picturesque image that travellers have been taught to expect.⁷² A place designed to please the travelling eye is not solely reduced to an iconic image on a wall, the scene emphasizes, but manifests in the loss of a local environment. The emptiness is, so to speak, ‘screwed to the bottom of the ground.’⁷³ Jelinek’s *In den Alpen* adds to Wharton’s critique of the Alpine Orientalist practice that aestheticizes emptiness; a critique that also unpacks the violence inherent in the act.

The third natural force that assumes a prime position in Jelinek’s strategic forgetting is snow. It is, arguably, also the form of concealment that most readily creates a space for tourist consumption, as snow constitutes a negative to an otherwise richly inhabited space: ‘The white fluttering will soon devour the cabin, the houses, the church, and suck it all into a milky nothingness.’⁷⁴ Symbols of human presence lose themselves in the growing layers of snow until all buildings are covered and the Kaprun mountains finally become a white blank for visitors to conquer. Just as snow serves the promotion of mountains as leisurely sites of exploration in the Austrian National Parks billboard, ‘there is nothing that touches me like the untouched,’ says the child protagonist who is eager to risk everything to dive into ‘completely untouched powder snow.’⁷⁵ The quote implies that the value of the untouched is lost at the precise moment of first contact; a prominent colonial motif in the writings and rewritings of Alpine Orientalism. The uniqueness of snow is that it recreates a blank with every snowfall, producing emptiness afresh. Following this trajectory, the presence of Others is eradicated with every new covering of snow, and what was once inscribed onto the mountains repeatedly vanishes, like the slogan in the national parks campaign that gradually blurs into the rock. It is worth mentioning that all three natural forces in Jelinek’s strategic forgetting – ice, water and snow – are forms of H₂O, a device through which the play highlights the various shapes of political whitewashing that have utilized mountain space.

The 2016 Hohe Tauern campaign from Young & Rubicam Vienna is representative not merely of an absence of history but also of an absence of voice: despite the fact that the slogan is almost identical to the child’s utterance in Jelinek’s play, the author remains unreferenced. This is a perfect example of a loss of voice

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 47. The German original reads: ‘Schauen Sie, es schneit, das weiße Rieseln frißt bald die Hütte auf, die Häuser, die Kirche, saugt es ein in ein milchiges Nichts.’

⁷⁵ Ibid., 45. The German original reads: ‘Das müssen Sie doch zugeben, wenn Sie versucht haben vom Becher des Todes zu nippen, so wie ich, wenn ich die Pistenabspernung mißachte und drunter durchtauche und mich in den vollkommen unberührten Tiefschnee stürze. Es gibt nichts, das mich sonst so berühren könnte, wie das Unberührte.’

that enshrouds the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism. When Jelinek hints at the deafening effect of snow – ‘the white comes from far above, comes from the glacier, one could, but should not say, this is the language that matters’ – she writes back in articulate silence, not unlike Angie Abdou in *The Canterbury Trail* (2011).⁷⁶ The tactic of creating tension between revelation and silence that is employed in the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism aims to retake ‘control over language.’⁷⁷

5.3 Recovering voices

Already, then, one can assume that Jelinek’s rewriting is not merely about exposing and confronting silence. In ‘the process of recovering the past’, *In den Alpen* also recovers the voices of the Others of mountain tourism and national socialist history.⁷⁸ To understand how this recovery of voices operates within this chapter’s scope of allegorical writing, as well as within the argument made in this book for a postcolonial reading, the etymology of “allegory” must be examined. Slemmon demonstrates that there is an etymological trace of postcoloniality in the literary technique of “allegory” when he argues that the term derives from the Greek *allos*, meaning ‘other’, and *agoreuein*, to ‘speak openly’.⁷⁹ In this sense, ‘allegory literally means “other speaking”’.⁸⁰ In the logics of writing and rewriting Alpine Orientalism, “allegory” denotes Alpine Orientalist speaking for the alpine Other, as well as the literary sites through which those Others can contest and subvert Alpine Orientalist ascriptions.⁸¹ According to Slemmon, the ‘other speaking’ inherent to allegory establishes ‘an oppositional, disidentificatory voice within the sovereign of the discourse of colonialism’ and can thereby ‘help to open a space upon which the false clarities of received tradition can be transformed.’⁸² In this manner, postcolonial allegory allows writers to expose, oppose and rearticulate Alpine Orientalist representation. Reading allegory through postcolonialism, therefore, does not only invite a study of allegorical

⁷⁶ Ibid., 55. The German original reads: ‘Es hat sich die Erde gefaltet hier oben, hat sich gefaltet einmal und zweimal und dreimal, und hat sich aufgetan in der Mitte, und in der Mitte steht ein Wasser, und das Wasser ist grün, und das Grüne ist weiß, und das Weiße kommt von noch weiter oben, kommt von den Gletschern, man könnte, aber man soll’s nicht, sagen, das ist die Sprache, die hier gilt.’

⁷⁷ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 118.

⁷⁹ Slemmon, ‘Monuments of Empire’, 8.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 8, 11.

⁸² Ibid., 8, 13.

figuration within the play, but also invites us to see the play itself as a form of 'Other speaking'.⁸³

It is important to clarify, at this point, that *In den Alpen* being an act of 'Other speaking' does not require Jelinek to represent the Others of mountain tourism or national socialism.⁸⁴ Rather, it is her language that gives space to the voices of these Others. This focus on language in rewriting is as strong in the reception of Jelinek as it is in postcolonial criticism: critics agree that language is a 'leverage of power' in Jelinek's oeuvre, and the author herself identifies her literature as a 'fight of the oppressed', a 'political battle' and a commitment 'to speak for those for whom no other speaks'.⁸⁵ Although Jelinek commits her silencing and *In den Alpen* can never fully escape representation, the text makes the whisper of that which cannot be said heard and in the same way that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak unsettles expression as she unsettles postcolonial scholarship, Jelinek, too, gets things moving in Austrian historiography by speaking as Other.⁸⁶ That she speaks *as*, rather than *for*, those who carry the burden of mountain tourism, and national socialism becomes obvious through Jelinek's acceptance of the 2017 Faust lifetime achievement prize via Nikolaus Habjan's hand puppet in which she spoke from the margins in her Nobel Prize lecture.⁸⁷ Rarely accepting awards in person, Jelinek states:

Ich spreche hier, ja, ich bin's und doch nicht ich, aber ich sage mal: Das bin ich. Und schon haben wir das Theater erforscht und für gültig befunden – eine andere, die ich ist, bin ich nicht, bin ich doch.⁸⁸

'I speak here. Yes, it is me and it is not', says Jelinek as hand puppet, declaring how the nature of theatre allows her to be 'an Other that is me'.⁸⁹ With the accounts that rewrite Alpine Orientalism already discussed in this book, especially Angie

⁸³ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Elfriede Jelinek, 'Ich bin im Grunde ständig tobsüchtig über die Verharmlosung', interview by Stefanie Carp, *Theater der Zeit*, May/June 1996. <https://www.elfriedejelinek.com/fstab.htm>. See also Rita Svandrlik, 'Patriarchale Strukturen', in *Jelinek Handbuch*, ed. Pia Janke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2013), 270; Tobe Levin, 'Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek', *mamas pfirsiche – frauen und literatur* 9, no. 10 (1978): 175.

⁸⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988).

⁸⁷ Elfriede Jelinek, 'Im Abseits', Nobel lecture, Stockholm, 7 December 2004. https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2004/jelinek-lecture-g.html.

⁸⁸ M. Laages, 'Faust-Preisverleihung in Leipzig: Elfriede Jelinek für Lebenswerk geehrt', *Deutschlandfunk*, 11 May 2017. http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/faust-preisverleihung-in-leipzig-elfriede-jelinek-fuers.691.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=399879.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Abdou's *The Canterbury Trail*, Jelinek's 'Other speaking' shares a 'responsibility for the unspoken, unrepresented, pasts that haunt the historical present'.⁹⁰

Before proceeding to the more concrete, before delving into the specific speech acts of the Others in the play and before explaining who these Others are for Jelinek, it is worth briefly examining the linguistic sites from which their voices emerge. At the most basic level, *In den Alpen* articulates the tension between the spoken and unspoken, the represented and unrepresented, by producing, as Margit Oberhammer notes, simultaneous 'blabber and silence'.⁹¹ Jelinek creates an omnipresence of speech that, not least due to its evocation of multiple meanings, creates meaninglessness. Instead of traditional dialogue, *In den Alpen* consists of long passages of speech that the author refers to as 'language planes'.⁹² But the language that constitutes these planes neither adheres to the landscape nor to one particular meaning. Gaps are plentiful in the play and they are ornate. There is a remarkable linguistic density in *In den Alpen* that always seems to circle around an emptiness. Nancy Erikson locates 'within the spaces between the evoked texts' the 'possibility of giving voice to silenced memories'.⁹³ Thus the gaps in the play, like the gaps conjured by the untranslatable, are not vacant rifts, but opportunities, and linguistic voids are there to be filled by those who have been previously excluded from the discursive field.

Indeed, the mountaineering community is discursively characterized as 'something inherently difficult for "others" – non-whites, women'.⁹⁴ Slemon describes the sport as a phenomenon that 'comprises itself within cultural, gendered, and class-specific limits' when he sees the emergence of mountaineering as a codified practice to emerge out of 'the formation of a consolidated, organised, metropolitan, male-only, and middle-class community'.⁹⁵ *In den Alpen* attests to this by giving voice to women and Jews, making the play a shared site of linguistic resistance. Jelinek's writing frequently suggests that the female and Jewish Others in the Third Reich share at least a part of their experience, and Jessica Ortner

⁹⁰ Slemon, 'Monuments of Empire', 8; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 18.

⁹¹ Margit Oberhammer, 'Orte des Verdrängten in den "Alpenstücken" von Elfriede Jelinek und Klaus Händl', in *Das Erschreiben der Berge*, ed. Johann Lughofer (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2014), 237.

⁹² Gita Honegger, 'Staging Memory: The Drama inside the Language of Elfriede Jelinek', *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature* 31, no. 1 (2007): 287.

⁹³ Erickson, 'Echoes of Celan', 186; Honegger, 'Staging Memory', 294.

⁹⁴ Stephen Slemon, 'The Brotherhood of the Rope: Commodification and Contradiction in the "Mountaineering Community"', in *Renegotiating Community: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Global Contexts*, ed. Diana Bryon and William D. Coleman (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2008), 237.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 236–7.

and Annette Runte, together with a number of German first-wave feminists, argue that ‘the position of the woman in post-war society is really an indication of the continuation of fascism in the present day.’⁹⁶ Therefore, in acknowledging allegory’s ‘other speaking’, I dedicate the remainder of this section to the scenes in which the play addresses the exclusion of Jews and women in mountain and mountaineering discourse.⁹⁷

Jelinek makes an exceptional effort to highlight the anti-Semitic history of alpinism, alluding not only to the millions of Jewish people murdered during the Holocaust but also to their expulsion from the mountaineering community as it became more institutionalized. In her commentary to *In den Alpen*, Jelinek notes that the mountains only seem to belong to some while Others are excluded, and she makes it unmistakably clear that these Others ‘are the Jews’ when she states that the ‘history of alpinism’ is ‘since its beginning a history of antisemitism.’⁹⁸ It is instantly obvious from this statement that Jelinek recognizes national socialist politics within mountaineering culture. And yet the author invites us even further into considering specific examples:

Jews were excluded from all sections of the Alpine Association and the ‘Wandervogel’ movement and had to found their own section (‘Donauland’). The ‘clean’ mountains must never be touched – that is to say soiled by those ever present ‘inhabitants of the plains’, who were in no way fit for purity or for the challenge of the sublime.⁹⁹

In her play, Jelinek explores this negative attitude towards Jewish mountaineers – which was not only on the agenda of alpine clubs in Austria but also in the Canadian Rockies – in four significant ways.¹⁰⁰ First, through the introduction of a speechless Jewish character; second, through intertextual references to one of Paul Celan’s most famous texts; third, through a distinct example from Austrian

⁹⁶ Annette Runte, “‘Kinder der Un/Toten’: Zu Elfriede Jelineks, “Versprechen” zwischen Satire und Allegorie”, in *Elfriede Jelinek: Sprache, Geschlecht und Herrschaft*, ed. Françoise Rétif and Johann Sonnleitner (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 136; Jessica Ortner, *Poetologie ‘Nach Auschwitz’*, 237; and Beatrice Hanssen, ‘Elfriede Jelinek’s Language of Violence’, *New German Critique* 68 (1996): 79.

⁹⁷ Slemmon, ‘Monuments of Empire’, 8.

⁹⁸ Jelinek, ‘Nachbemerkung’, 254; The German original reads: ‘Den einen gehört das Gebirge, die anderen sind und bleiben ausgeschlossen, vor allem sind diese anderen: die Juden. Die Geschichte des Alpinismus seit dessen Beginn ist eine Geschichte auch des Antisemitismus.’

⁹⁹ Jelinek, ‘Nachbemerkung’, 254–5, translated in Honegger, ‘Staging Memory’, 291.

¹⁰⁰ Anti-Semitic tendencies leading to institutional exclusion were also prevalent in Canada, where ‘Canadian leaders in the ACC executive actively worked to exclude Jews from the club’. Reichwein, *Climber’s Paradise*, 47.

alpinist history; and fourth, through the insertion of economic anti-Semitic utterances.

Act II in the play references Paul Celan's *Gespräch im Gebirg* (Conversation in the Mountains) (1959) and comments on the exclusion of Jews in mountaineering through an apparition of Celan. As a ghostly figure, he grieves his own lack of linguistic presence and laments that 'there is no space for my poor voice.'¹⁰¹ Jelinek's Celan keeps being burnt on his way to the summit, not in a Nazi concentration camp, but by instant soups and hazardous heaters installed in trains. And yet Celan does not speak up: 'But I keep quiet. Why don't I complain?'¹⁰² Continuously haunted by the consequences of the Holocaust, Celan keeps still and only observes that 'the stones, too, were silent, and I almost turn to stone myself.'¹⁰³ Stone is a frequent metaphor in Celan's writing and, according to Tobias Rochelle, expresses a firmness of standing as well as the possibility of being sculpted and made 'into the mouthpiece for a voice that is not his own.'¹⁰⁴ In the same way that *In den Alpen* lets the Jew be silent and stand as Other, the play incorporates material written elsewhere; lets it also stand 'as Other', casting the prevailing power structures into sharp relief.¹⁰⁵ Along with excerpts from *Gespräch im Gebirg*, *In den Alpen* strings together news headlines from the 2000 Kaprun tragedy and passages from Leo Maduschka's *Junger Mensch im Gebirg* (1960), creating a narrative mosaic of discourse and counter-discourse. While the various quotes mainly address technology and tragedy in the mountains, they often, and often insistently, comment on the dominant silence that enshrouds mountains: 'The stones, too, were silent. And it was quiet in the mountains, where they walked, one and the other. So it was quiet, quiet up there in the mountains.'¹⁰⁶ This direct quote from *Gespräch im Gebirg*, one of Celan's rare pieces of prose reflecting on an aborted meeting with Theodor Adorno, reiterates a historical as well as poetic speechlessness. It also reveals that Jelinek is a writer who has truly taken to heart the question of whether poetry is possible after Auschwitz. Almost a decade before publishing *In den*

¹⁰¹ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 55. The German original reads: 'Hab keinen Platz für meine arme Stimme.'

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 49. 'Doch ich schweige, warum klage ich nicht.'

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* The German original reads: 'Und es schweigt auch der Stein, und ich werde fast selbst zu Stein.'

¹⁰⁴ Tobias Rochelle, *The Discourse of Nature in the Poetry of Paul Celan: The Unnatural World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 29.

¹⁰⁵ Corona Schmiele, 'Ein früher Alpinist in Jelineks "Alpen"', in *Jelinek, Une Répétition? A propos des pièces 'In den Alpen' et 'Das Werk' / Jelinek, eine Wiederholung? Zu den Theaterstücken 'In den Alpen' und 'Das Werk'*, ed. Françoise Lartillot and Dieter Hornig (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 184; Evelyn Polt-Heinzl, 'Ökonomie', in *Jelinek Handbuch*, ed. Pia Janke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2013), 262.

¹⁰⁶ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 44. The German original reads: 'So schwieg auch der Stein, und es war still im Gebirg, wo sie gingen, der und jener. Still war's also, still dort oben im Gebirg.'

Alpen, the author states, 'of course poems are possible after Auschwitz, but no poem is possible without Auschwitz'.¹⁰⁷ Jelinek's literary technique and 'Other speaking' in and with *In den Alpen* has repeatedly underscored her commitment to speak against Austrian historiography's deafening silence of the Holocaust.¹⁰⁸ The diversity with which the author writes back to the anti-Semitism inherent in mountaineering cultures also becomes visible in the anti-Semitic utterance of the child who openly tells Celan:

We do not want you. You do not deserve our solitude. And even if you would stand in front of our cabin one-legged, we would not let you in. Be glad! Solitude is a painfully proud feature of strong personalities. That is why we remain among ourselves.¹⁰⁹

This statement is based on a real-life occurrence, when a distinguished one-legged Jewish mountaineer was denied access to a refuge hut during severe weather.¹¹⁰ The scene also symbolizes the 1905 provision of the Austrian Alpine Club rules officially excluding Jews.¹¹¹ In addition, the play juxtaposes the greed of contemporary mountain tourism to economic anti-Semitism. Act II is replete with interactions and grumbling that expose such practices. In one particular scene, the character introduced as 'the child' complains that she gave away 'our good, soft, and round landscape for free' and cannot believe that 'now they want money on top of it'.¹¹² She accuses Celan of 'immediately asking for the price'¹¹³ and claims that the 'money in their pockets gets more and always more, but never too heavy for them to carry'.¹¹⁴ One is forced to also read here, in allegorical

¹⁰⁷ Sigrid Berka, 'Ein Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek', *Modern Austrian Literature* 26, no. 2 (1993): 134. The German original reads: 'dieser Adorno Ausspruch – natürlich sind Gedichte nach Auschwitz möglich, aber es ist kein Gedicht ohne Auschwitz möglich.' Translation by Matthias Piccolruaz Konzett, 'Preface: The Many Faces of Elfriede Jelinek', in *Elfriede Jelinek: Writing Woman, Nation, and Identity*, ed. Matthias Piccolruaz Konzett and Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 16.

¹⁰⁸ Slemmon, 'Monuments of Empire', 8.

¹⁰⁹ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 48. The German original reads: 'Wir wollen ja Sie nicht! Sie verdienen unsre Einsamkeit nicht. Und wenn Sie noch als Einbeiniger vor unsrer Hütte stünden, wir ließen Sie nicht hinein. Seien Sie froh! Die Einsamkeit ist das schmerzlich-stolze Merkmal der starken Persönlichkeiten. Deshalb bleiben wir auch unter uns.'

¹¹⁰ Alexandra Kedves, 'Facts und Fiction in der Box – Elfriede Jelinek forscht *In den Alpen*,' *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 24 October 2002, <https://www.nz.ch/article8H6LT-1.433860>.

¹¹¹ Münchner Kammerspiele, 'Früher Antisemitismus bei Alpenvereinen', in *Elfriede Jelinek: 'In den Alpen'* (Munich: Münchner Kammerspiele, 2002), 37.

¹¹² Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 42–3. In the original: 'Unsere gute weiche runde Landschaft haben Sie total gratis gekriegt. Jetzt wollen Sie ein Geld auch noch dazu.'

¹¹³ *Ibid.* In the original: 'Wo Sie doch nichts an der Landschaft zu tragen haben, und nur ihr Geld in der Brieftasche, mehr und immer mehr, doch es wird für Sie nie zu schwer.'

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 47. In the original: 'Sie aber, Sie aber, Sie fragen bei allem sofort nach dem Preis, obwohl statt dessen Sie es anständig preisen sollten.'

double vision, a critique of those whose desire for consumption is never satisfied in contemporary mountain tourism.

When *In den Alpen* rewrites Jewish Others into the Austrian mountains, Jelinek does so most explicitly through the figure of Celan. While Jelinek explicitly rewrites Jewish Others onto the Austrian mountains through the singular voice of Celan, her articulation of the female Other necessarily plays out through speechlessness, indicating that her own writing, her ‘Other speaking,’ is a feminist voice.¹¹⁵ Women who speak do not take a prominent role in *In den Alpen*. The child protagonist, while female, is still a child, and as such can speak freely. Instead of challenging the silencing of women in mountain travel through a single character, the play points at female speechlessness in broader, more pluralistic strokes. In the scene with the already minor character of ‘the young woman,’ Jelinek not only states that this character *might even better be a man* but the stage directions also specify that the young woman should change gender in the moment of speech: *Dann Geschlecht des Sprechens ändern!*¹¹⁶ In precisely the moment in which the young woman becomes a male, this character begins to feminize the landscape through the veil of snow:

I am the snowboard world champion, but I never really looked at those trees, probably because I was racing too fast. And when we finally see the trees, then we can't be seen anymore. Because we are already all the way down and only our race, dragged by ghosts like fluttering veils, still curtains the landscape.¹¹⁷

This study has demonstrated throughout that covering up human presence is a standard trope in Alpine Orientalist writing and rewriting. It has also discussed the role of the ghost in alpine writing back in Chapter 2. But this scene deserves closer inspection because it adds a gender dimension to Slemon's postcolonial allegory in portraying the alpine landscape through the rhetoric of the veil. The veil is not only a symbol for the Western desire to reveal, penetrate and possess a feminized non-Western world; allegory also functions as “a veiled word”. In Latin, *allegoria* signifies ‘figurative language’ and a ‘description of one thing

¹¹⁵ Slemon, ‘Monuments of Empire’, 8.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25. The full quote in the German original reads: ‘Die junge Frau (*kann auch ein junger Mann sein, wäre vielleicht sogar besser. Dann Geschlecht des Sprechens ändern! Geschlecht egal, Körper: der Zweck*).’

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 26. In the German original (translated in Honegger, ‘Staging Memory’, 255): ‘Und wenn wir sie dann sehen, die Bäume, dann sieht man dafür uns nicht mehr. Weil wir schon unten sind und nur noch unsere Fahrt, wie wehende Schleiergardinen, geschleift von Gespenstern, vor der Landschaft hängt. Wer will uns erkunden? Es hätte keinen Sinn.’

under the image of another¹¹⁸ – in other words, it hints at a meaning behind a veil. The veil of allegory thus constitutes a surface for an otherwise hidden meaning that can only be decoded if raised to the surface or if this surface is permeated. The veil conceals what is to be discovered and also collects with each flutter an Other meaning. Which meaning a snow-covered slope might have for a female speaker, or what becomes visible if the snow veil is uncovered, is not something Jelinek cares to explore. Nevertheless, she does not tire in ‘lifting the veil of amnesia’ and in so doing speaks for ‘the speechless or those whose language we do not understand.’¹¹⁹

Jelinek’s engagement with ‘women as marginalized and excluded Other’ began with her personal engagement in the feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s.¹²⁰ Her writing permanently resists the discourse of male domination in which, as the author observes, ‘one simply does not want women to speak.’¹²¹ In an interview the year of the Kaprun disaster, Jelinek notes that counter-discursive writing was not generally intended for women and that her ‘arrogation to write’ remains ‘a permanent transgression.’¹²² Together with Ingeborg Bachmann, Jelinek claims that there is ‘a destructive verification’ in the act of developing a female identity while fighting for one’s voice: ‘For a woman writing is already a violent act because the female subject is not one that speaks.’¹²³ In the same way that the female body was deemed unfit to climb in the masculine landscape of mountaineering leading up to the second half of the twentieth century, so, too, was writing ‘reserved for the great – that is, for great men.’¹²⁴

At last, the play banishes exclusion and elitism from the mountain when the rope on which the ski train runs breaks: ‘and then the rope did not hold.’¹²⁵ With it, the so-called brotherhood of the rope breaks and gives way to more inclusive forms, to a true mountain comradeship that includes those who have been rejected – the Others of race, gender and even nature. It opens a space,

¹¹⁸ ‘Allegory’, Etymonline, accessed 17 November 2017. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/allegory>.

¹¹⁹ Erickson, ‘Echoes of Celan’, 186; Carp, ‘Ich bin im Grunde ständig tobsüchtig über die Verharmlosung’.

¹²⁰ Christa Gürtler and Moira Mertens, ‘Frauenbilder’, in *Jelinek Handbuch*, ed. Pia Janke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2013), 272; Pia Janke and Stefanie Kaplan, ‘Politisches und Feministisches Engagement’, in *Jelinek Handbuch*, ed. Pia Janke (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2013), 13.

¹²¹ Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Schreiben als ständige Überschreitung’, interview by Christine Dobretsberger, *Wiener Zeitung*, 1 August 2000, quoted in Helen Ackel, *Sprechen ohne Sein: Elfriede Jelineks Heidegger-Kritik in ‘Über Tiere’* (PhD diss, Mannheim University, 2010), 2.

¹²² Dobretsberger, ‘Schreiben als ständige Überschreitung’.

¹²³ Svandrlík, ‘Patriarchale Strukturen’, 267.

¹²⁴ Hélène Cixous, ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’, trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 876.

¹²⁵ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 51. The German original reads: ‘Und dann hat das Seil selbst nicht gehalten.’

a 'language plane', one might argue, upon which Other speaking voices can recreate the significance of mountains.¹²⁶

5.4 The physicality of language

When confronted with Jelinek's writing, it is difficult to resist associating her work with feminist theory. Towards the second half of the previous section, I have already begun to show that Jelinek's feminist rewriting of Austrian mountain history and Alpine Orientalist concepts plays out through the concept of superiority and specifically attempts to rewrite the Alpine Orientalist notion of emptiness. This section continues in this vein by reading Jelinek's play for 'the inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text'.¹²⁷ By exploring *In den Alpen* as one of Jelinek's body texts, this section explores the relationship of bodies, text and mountains in critical rewriting.¹²⁸ This is a line of investigation that fully acknowledges Jelinek's aesthetic as being characterized by a 'physicality of speech' and by a language that needs and receives a body in the act of speaking.¹²⁹ In this section, it will become clear that Jelinek's approval of Hélène Cixous's philosophy of a writing through which 'woman will return to the body' transcends from the body of the female Other to that of the natural Other.¹³⁰ Because, in the end, the body that *In den Alpen* most effectively rewrites is that of the mountain.

But before I explore how the play writes the corporality of mountains, I want to comment briefly on the scenes that sharpen readers' attention on the body; that is, the bodies of humans. Throughout the play, the human body is portrayed as a mechanical motor stripped of social agency with the sole function of powering a larger moneymaking apparatus: 'Gender irrelevant, body: purpose.'¹³¹ The concept of a body utilized in the tourist economy becomes significant in *In den Alpen* on multiple occasions: in a commentary on the fitness mania of late capitalism and in an echo of the national socialist cult of athleticism, the body appears as though made of steel, and finds its purpose as a

¹²⁶ Honegger, 'Staging Memory', 287.

¹²⁷ Elaine Showalter, 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness', *Writing and Sexual Difference* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 185.

¹²⁸ Meister, 'Theaterästhetik', 72.

¹²⁹ Erickson, 'Echoes of Celan', 174.

¹³⁰ Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', 880; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 117.

¹³¹ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 120. German original: 'Geschlecht egal, Körper: der Zweck.'

vehicle through which humans can enjoy the pleasure of mountain sport. From this perspective, the human bodies are served by the body of the mountain, as though the landscape is no more than a piece of sports equipment. There is mention of bodily consumption, when people are oven-baked like bread and biscuits, cooked together to form a slick surface like fried eggs, with clothes melting away like soft cheese.¹³² Skiers are eaten uncooked¹³³ and the landscape is a 'hot plate'¹³⁴ for humans to be boiled together to form 'das jüngste Gericht',¹³⁵ a religious and culinary term denoting both a fresh dish as well as Judgement Day. These scenes allude to the role of the human body in a tourist industry that hungrily devours its resources. They also speak to a key concern in Jelinek's Marxist feminist intervention, the practice of uncovering the 'submission of everyone, regardless of sex, to the accumulation of capital and their resultant alimentation.'¹³⁶ Another purpose of the body in tourist consumption is its function as sexual commodity. Cheese melts in *In den Alpen* and bodies, too, melt together in the sexual act: 'Sie stellen sich das Verschmelzen mit einem oder mehreren anderen Menschen schöner vor, als es ist, glauben Sie mir.'¹³⁷ This is seen again in a scene where chambermaids are chased by kisses and 'unleashed hands',¹³⁸ and in the moment when 'the older woman' expresses her sexual preference for ski instructors.¹³⁹ In these examples, the commodification of human bodies in Jelinek's play closely aligns with the sexualization of the alpine Other in Mitterer's *Die Piefke-Saga* (see Chapter 4, *Body*). Unlike *Die Piefke-Saga*, however, *In den Alpen* moves beyond an understanding of the body in predominantly human terms, rendering instead the mountain as body.

To convey a bodily sense of the mountain, the author introduces a number of expressions pertaining to the physicality of this landmass. First, mountains

¹³² Ibid., 21, 24, 34, 16.

¹³³ Ibid., 37. German original: 'Wir müssen die Menschen ungekocht zu uns nehmen, so roh, wie sie sind.'

¹³⁴ Ibid., 36–7. German original: 'Aber vorher werden Sie heiß gewesen und auch so heiß gegessen wie gekocht worden sein auf der Herdplatte unserer Landschaft, wo wir alle auch schon ganz scharf sind.'

¹³⁵ Ibid., 35. German original: 'Jaja, schon gut, werfen Sie ruhig Blasen und verschmelzen Sie bis zum Jüngsten Gericht oder gleich zum Jüngsten Gericht, allerdings haben wir keine Ananas mehr für Sie, macht nichts, es geht auch mit eingelegten Birnen.'

¹³⁶ Brenda Bethman, 'Obscene Fantasies': *Elfriede Jelinek's Generic Perversions* (Peter Lang: New York, 2011), 125.

¹³⁷ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 35. My English translation reads: 'Helper: You imagine the merging with one or more other people more beautiful than it is, believe me.'

¹³⁸ Ibid., 25. German original: 'Die Zimmerfrauen arbeiten auch, allerdings an ihrer eigenen Lebenslüge, daß sie echte Menschen sind, in den Pensionen, wo sie oft von Küssen und von der Leine gelassenen Händen verfolgt werden.'

¹³⁹ Ibid., 39. German original: 'Dann schauen Sie bitte auch mich in Zukunft an! Ich stehe auf Schilehrer.'

are capable of hunger and satiety. The mountains in the play have reached the peak of capital consumption and have had enough: 'The mountains are full' and spit back their former consumers like validated ski passes.¹⁴⁰ Second, mountains are depicted as injured bodies, with wounded ridges covered in gauze bandage.¹⁴¹ Third, Jelinek's Alps are explicitly presented as alive. In act I, 'the young woman' exclaims 'O Gott, der Berg lebt! Wahnsinn. Der bewegt sich ja, und nicht mal schlecht', acknowledging a mountain that 'is alive'; one that even moves.¹⁴² And finally, mountains are bodies capable of seeing. They can return the tourist gaze with an eye 'the man' is afraid to meet: 'Nicht bewegen, damit der Berg mich nicht im letzten Moment noch sieht!'¹⁴³ Their returning gaze, however, is not exercised as an oppositional face-to-face but is a marker of the mountains' own interiority. This is most conspicuous in the play's title. The "in" in *In den Alpen* is to be understood literally as "inside the Alps" and "inside the mountain".¹⁴⁴ It is from the inside, most noticeably, that *In den Alpen* revives the mountain body. Renewal is possible, first and foremost, because the mountain interior harbours a dragon, signalled by the original name of the ski train: the 'Gletscherdrachen'.¹⁴⁵ In this manner, the author inserts a mythical creature into the fires of destruction and reconstructs mountains as places ruled by mythical beings. Just like the Ghost Rider and the personified mountain ride/write back in Angie Abdou's rewriting of Alpine Orientalism, Jelinek's dragon holds the possibility to imagine mountains an Other way; and it does so from within. It is worth highlighting just how much Jelinek's mountain body text unites the strategies of rewriting Alpine Orientalism in the contemporary texts under discussion in this book. Because once the mountain is body in *In den Alpen*, it addresses *Die Piefke-Saga*'s embodied resistance with references to satiety and injury, *Icefields*' alpine vitality with its returning gaze and *The Canterbury Trail*'s rewriting with its mythical return.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 23. German original: 'Wir haben euch den Bergen vorgelegt, wir haben auch eine gute Zeit vorgelegt, aber die Berge waren schon satt und haben euch, allerdings unkenntlich gemacht und entwertet wie einen Schipaß vom vorherigen Jahr, wieder zurückgespuckt.'

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 48. German original: 'Es packen mich heiß, lautlos und mit klopfendem Herzen schaue ich hinüber, bis sich die weißen, nassen Mullbinden wieder um die verletzten Grate wickeln, der Nebel wieder aufwallt und eine Stimme neben mir sagt: du, es wird kalt.'

¹⁴² Ibid., 27. My English translation reads: 'Oh, God, the mountain is alive! Awesome. It's moving, and not even badly.'

¹⁴³ Ibid., 49. My English translation reads: 'Don't move so the mountain does not see me at the last moment.'

¹⁴⁴ Reinhard Wengiereck, 'Essay aus der Geisterstation', *Die Welt*, 7 October 2002; Oberhammer, 'Orte des Verdrängten in den "Alpenstücken" von Elfriede Jelinek und Klaus Händl', 234.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 38.

In spite of its emphasis on the body, *In den Alpen* considers language the prime site for recovery. This is contrary to *Die Piefke-Saga*, which calls for an embodied counter-discourse, and to both *The Canterbury Trail* and *Icefields*, which celebrate the power of storytelling in rewriting Alpine Orientalism. *In den Alpen* situates recovery in the body that is language and, once again, achieves this via allegory. Figural speech merges mythical traditions with the body. This is possible because allegory is an ‘ancient literary phenomenon’ used since antiquity to narrate values through personification.¹⁴⁶ Jelinek’s allegory embodies, in Fletcher’s words, a ‘primordial agency’, with the demons, this time from alpine rather than Greek mythology, having ‘a unique power to act without impediment, obeying a system of absolute, single-minded, purified intention.’¹⁴⁷ In this sense, allegory once more creates possibility and plants seeds for renewal. When Jelinek sets her dragon free and unleashes alpine mythology, she unleashes the reviving genius of allegory that situates in each moment of destruction a new beginning. And yet, every allegorical new beginning gestures to the past. Regardless of whether it is informed by antiquity, as in Fletcher, by ‘pre-Enlightenment’, as in Schnell, or by the medieval, as in Weirauch’s morality plays, Jelinek’s commitment to the tradition of allegory is profoundly attentive to the value of alpine pasts.¹⁴⁸ Gérard Thiériot concludes that Jelinek ‘rolls the history of theatre back to its early beginnings’ and Pia Janke discovers in the play a return to ancient dramatic methodology that visualizes fear and horror as much as it acts as their solvent.¹⁴⁹

In this field of double visions, alpine bodies, pasts and presents, myths and renewals and ‘Other speaking’, it is almost impossible to read *In den Alpen* as an alpine dystopia.¹⁵⁰ The figural speech of allegory, which Walter Benjamin claims is entwined with the history of salvation, can never remain devastating after taking an allegorical “second look”.¹⁵¹ And yet scholars and critics rarely accredit

¹⁴⁶ Fletcher, ‘Allegory without Ideas’, 12.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴⁸ Fletcher, ‘Allegory without Ideas’, 12; Schnell, ‘Ich möchte seicht sein’, 261; Sebastian Weirauch, ‘Das entfernte Ich: Elfriede Jelineks Erzählperspektive und der Wandel der politischen Literatur’ (paper, Bydgoszcz, 5 February 2016).

¹⁴⁹ Gérard Thiériot, ‘Jelineks schöpferische Zerstörungswut: Die Alpendramen (*In den Alpen, Das Werk*)’, in *Elfriede Jelinek – Stücke für oder gegen das Theater?*, ed. Inge Arteel and Heidy Margrit Müller (Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2008), 51; Pia Janke, *Der Mythos Kaprun in In den Alpen und Das Werk* (Landestheater Linz, 2011), 22.

¹⁵⁰ Slemmon, ‘Monuments of Empire’, 8.

¹⁵¹ Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, 6th ed. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1993).

a redemptive capacity to Jelinek's writing.¹⁵² Even Ralf Schnell, in an otherwise inspiring essay on Jelinek's allegoresis, denies her storytelling the moment of salvation.¹⁵³ After having analysed *In den Alpen* within the powerhouse of language, I propose that allegory in general, and postcolonial allegory in particular, acknowledges what is hardly acknowledged: Jelinek's *In den Alpen* does not depict an alpine dystopia; instead, like Thomas Wharton's *Icefields*, it stands as literary testimony to mountain life. In Jelinek's play rebirth occurs through fire, not ice, and it unlocks yet another meaning of the *locus vivus*: *vivus* also denotes 'burning', turning the glacier into 'a burning place' out of which new life may rise from the ashes.¹⁵⁴ This is in keeping with the vitality inherent in the critical rewritings of Alpine Orientalism discussed in the previous chapters. It is also in keeping with Stephen Slemon's conceptualization of postcolonial allegory as a literary tool with a 'transformative power of imaginative vision' and with Angus Fletcher's definition of allegory as 'a mix of making and reading in one mode'.¹⁵⁵ Regardless of how engaged allegorical writing is with historical events, it is always associated with the hope of transformation. History, as Slemon explains, is then no longer 'a set of immovable past' events but a 'discourse, open, as are all discursive practices, to reinterpretation'.¹⁵⁶ The kind of allegorical writing he describes is 'fiction that determines the way we read history' and a 'history that is contingent upon fiction, and not the other way round'.¹⁵⁷ This is exactly what Jelinek achieves in *In den Alpen*, as in many of her other plays. It is no accident that historian Heidemarie Uhl credits authors like Jelinek – and not historians – with spurring a coming to terms with Austria's participation in national socialism.¹⁵⁸ Like *The Canterbury Trail*, *Icefields* and *Die Piefke-Saga* in the previous chapters, *In den Alpen* offers an opportunity for writing mountains Otherwise.

This chapter has shown that rewriting Austrian historiography does not stand in competition with the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism. And it has shown that postcolonial concerns also take centre stage in mountains not situated in traditional postcolonial terrain. Through Jelinek's aesthetic of allegory,

¹⁵² A rare exception is Brigid Haines who sees Jelinek's texts containing 'in their continued faith in language, a utopian element'. Brigid Haines, 'Beyond Patriarchy: Marxism, Feminism, and Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Liebhaberinnen*', *The Modern Language Review* 92, no. 3 (July 1997): 646.

¹⁵³ Schnell, 'Ich möchte seicht sein'.

¹⁵⁴ D. P. Simpson, s.v. 'vivus', *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (Cassell Publishers Limited, London: 2007).

¹⁵⁵ Slemon, 'Post-Colonial Allegory', 164; Fletcher, 'Allegory without Ideas', 10.

¹⁵⁶ Slemon, 'Post-Colonial Allegory', 164.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 164–5.

¹⁵⁸ Janke and Kaplan, 'Politisches und feministisches Engagement', 13.

mountains cannot be regarded as a single place, story or event. With the art of looking twice, mountain tourism has been exposed as a practice that is never only about selling hotel beds and promoting powder snow, or eating cheese and cuddling up with mountain locals, but also always about history, politics, dispossession, disempowerment, exclusion, cultural amnesia and silencing. With allegory, mountain history can be understood as full of meanings, as complex and conflicting remnants of thousand-year-old existences. Allegory offers a powerful reminder that mountains are always more than meets the eye. As 'the young woman' reflects in *In den Alpen*:

The Alps have become our habit, just because they are there. Perhaps this is a mistake. It is good to at least question it. Where would this get us, if we walk along the ridge and omit sensation? We do not get anywhere, if we just gaze.¹⁵⁹

A quick glance does not bring the viewer any closer to a sense of what mountains really are and leaves them in the dark. Instead, *In den Alpen* invites us to reconnect to our senses as well as to the essence of mountains, whose marvellous complexity can never be understood at a glance. A second, more comprehensive look, one can argue, is to be found in feeling, reading and writing mountains beyond essentializing Alpine Orientalist discourse. The second look granted by *In den Alpen* suggests that mountain lovers should be touched by the liveliness of alpine (hi)stories rather than a promotional, untouched rock face.

¹⁵⁹ Jelinek, *In den Alpen*, 25–6. In the German original: 'Die Alpen sind zu unsrer Gewohnheit geworden, nur weil sie da sind. Vielleicht ein Fehler. Es ist gut, das wenigstens jetzt zu hinterfragen. Wo kommen wir denn da hin? Wo kommen wir denn hin, wenn wir dort den Kamm entlanggehen und das Empfinden weglassen? Wir kommen nirgendwohin, wenn wir nur schauen.'

Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to develop an analytical framework capable of analysing the particular colonial codifications written into and onto mountains as well as the interventions that write back to the business of mountain tourism. This analytical approach, which has merged existing frameworks, allows for a critical reading that can, in turn, respond to such literary interventions. This study has shown that a postcolonial way of reading, beginning with Said's foundational work, is fundamentally productive in understanding the power relations between cultural representation, tourism and mountain spaces. I have approached this relationship through the literary record and have done so based on the premise that representation is foundational to the construction of mountain tourism as a business and practice, and key to coming to terms with mountain tourism's past, present and possible future. I have demonstrated that the postcolonial investment in representational power is essential to decoding the cultural signifiers that promote mountain mass tourism and the literary strategies that project alternative routes from this form of tourism. This has been achieved by testifying to the power of Orientalist fantasies in nineteenth- and twentieth-century mountain travel literature and by discussing the literary strategies of critical rewritings that challenge Alpine Orientalist discourse.

The methodology of this study has demanded the utilization of a variety of analytical tools from postcolonial, tourism and interdisciplinary mountain studies. It is important to mention that none of these three fields of study made it into this book in a totalizing capacity. Instead, they have all, and some more than others, contributed specific concepts, frameworks and theorems. Putting to use smaller critical units that are more receptive to re-evaluation has enabled the theoretical transfer that this study has ultimately achieved. This study has attempted to reconceptualize a critical framework whose work in the past has been to attend, almost exclusively, to hot, low-altitude and extra-European regions for cold, high-altitude and sometimes even intra-European regions. To do this work, this study has compared and contrasted Alpine Orientalist writings and rewritings of two mountain regions. By focusing on literatures

of the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps, this study has demonstrated 'the geographical dispersion of which the theoretical motor is capable'.¹ Throughout this study, I have facilitated this movement by exemplifying the theoretical travel of concepts from traditional to non-traditional terrain.

By means of this transfer, this study has shown that markers such as the Orient, emptiness, conquest, temporal and gendered Otherness, as well as Romantic ideas of solitude and aesthetic pleasure, are not only power players in colonial rhetoric but are also bolted into the literary construction of mountains as peripheries of pleasure. Rewriting Orientalizing discourse on mountains has equally never been too far removed from questions of representation and self-representation linked to the inadequacy of universal claims.

My analyses of more than eighty accounts of mountain travel writing published between 1828 and 1950, a period spanning the final peak of European colonial expansion, have enabled a conceptualization of Alpine Orientalism based on travellers' heavy reliance on the colonial appropriation of mountain spaces. By proposing six key concepts for Alpine Orientalism, this study has begun to chart the largely unexplored territory of discursive mastery as it pertains to mountain tourist destinations. The concepts discussed in Chapter 1 are the Orient, emptiness, (anti-)conquest, gender, time and the Other, as well as superiority. In the primary material employed in this study, I was able to trace an interdependence between these six key concepts and their combination in different forms and patterns. One way in which the interrelated nature of these concepts has become particularly apparent is in the portrayal of mountain landscapes as an empty and untouched wilderness available for tourist consumption.

The discursive strategy of negation, like other dominant signifiers, does not operate within a narrow thematic context; rather, it influences other key concepts within Alpine Orientalist discourse. Negation determines, for instance, the degree to which mountain places or people are gendered, depending on whether a mountain region has been acknowledged as settled or human presence consistently denied. In addition to observing the interrelations between Alpine Orientalist critical concepts, this study has been attentive to the differences within the common conceptual framework. While Alpine Orientalist writing about the Rockies reaffirms the value of travel by promoting

¹ Edward Said, 'Traveling Theory Reconsidered', in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2010), 252.

an all-engulfing emptiness rather than a significant space for Indigenous culture, mountain travel literature on the Austrian Alps insistently reiterates not the absence of all people but the absence of other travellers. In this particular example, as well as in this study as a whole, I have highlighted the conceptual commonalities, and subtle differentiations, between colonial and mountain travel. While there is a presumption that the key concepts formulated in this study could occur in mountain regions other than the Rockies and Alps, albeit in different configurations, I do not claim that these are the only concepts shaping Alpine Orientalist discourse. At this point, it is worth acknowledging that the complexities of Alpine Orientalist writing can only ever be eclectic in a single study. Seeking to understand how mountain travel literature contributes to an Orientalist appreciation of alpine space unavoidably requires pointing out some areas of further critical investigation. To begin, it is worth conceding that to understand the dominant cultural discourse in mountain travel literature, it would be important to flesh out the discourse with additional concepts from Orientalist discourse, such as, for instance, references to a tropical wilderness or ascriptions of fountains of knowledge to mountains – in short, to explore Alpine Orientalist moves other than the six this book works with. It would be equally important, however, to shift critical attention to further alpine destinations, to ask if (and how) alpine terrain other than the Canadian Rockies and Austrian Alps might be subject to different modalities or specific applications of Alpine Orientalist manoeuvres.

Postcolonial theory has taught us that generalized concepts are as productive as they are troublesome; that their abstraction ultimately does not simply construct a dominant discourse but also functions as an object of resistance.² ‘The question for any theory,’ Robert Young argued, ‘is whether it can maintain, and do justice to, both levels.’³ To test whether the discourse of Alpine Orientalism participates in the unmaking of mountain tourist destinations as much as in their making, I have analysed the ways in which four selected works of contemporary mountain fiction rewrite Alpine Orientalism. I have studied the ways in which Angie Abdou’s *The Canterbury Trail* (2011), Thomas Wharton’s *Icelfields* (1995), Felix Mitterer’s *Die Piefke-Saga* (1991) and Elfriede Jelinek’s *In den Alpen* (2002) prise open Alpine Orientalism’s binary codifications via the themes of time, gaze,

² Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 211.

³ Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 165.

body and language. My choice of these four defining themes was determined by their dominant role in the vast arena of colonial mastery, where they have served before in comprehending the rhetoric and realities of a dominating discourse in (post)colonial contexts; and served well. “Time” and, above all, “language” are critical categories in *The Empire Writes Back*, and ever since Pratt’s and McClintock’s foundational works, postcolonial scholarship is unthinkable without a consideration of the “gaze” and the “body”.⁴ While this foundational scholarship explains my focus, it in no way implies that these are the only themes with which to study the critical interventions in Alpine Orientalism.

In analysing how the literary strategies of Abdou, Wharton, Mitterer and Jelinek interrogate the hierarchical structure of the dominant discourse and the universalizing assumptions on which that structure is based, this study has presented four significant ways in which literature rewrites Alpine Orientalism. First, these works tend to revisit the universalizing attitudes that frame mountains as places of desire in order to challenge the validity of such attitudes. The texts frequently expose the problematic nature in Alpine Orientalist cultural appropriation and perform an oppositional stance towards the dominating discourse, acting in line with postcolonial writing back. Second, authors frequently play with the tension of cultural representation and cultural silence as they mark the gaps constructed between the language of power and that of lived experience.⁵ Abdou does so, in no uncertain terms, when she leaves sentences unfinished, punctures them with disruption and signals visible breaks. Mitterer’s speechless Others of mountain tourism, Wharton’s blur of visual acuity and Jelinek’s reinserted holes into alpine landscape are variations of the same theme. Third, rewriting Alpine Orientalism is characterized by a confident development of a uniquely alpine voice. Displaying a language distinctly different from Alpine Orientalist representation, the four texts resort to local alpine dialects, include international mountain jargon, foreground the role of sound and construct mountains themselves as narratorial agents. As the specificities of alpine voice take shape, the linearity of time is disrupted, a gaze is returned, bodies are moved beyond national boundaries, and power is lost and regained on the slippery slopes of language. Moving from an oppositional understanding of writing back towards an analysis of a specific “mountainness” in literary articulation, Chapters

⁴ See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back; Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest* (London Routledge, 1995).

⁵ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, 54.

2–5 reveal that even though postcolonial scholarship figures prominently in this study, postcolonial theory ‘remains the servant of literary production rather than its master.’⁶ Last, and perhaps most importantly, the texts refuse to pander to the notions that humans are a threat to mountain nature and that tourism is always a terrible danger to mountain spaces. If anything, the works in this study present us with a certitude of interconnectedness that relies on human’s ability to recover their flawed relationship with mountains through imagination. In the imaginative investments studied here, mountains are in no way an empty and timeless wilderness whose purpose is to satiate travellers’ desires. Mountains are layered with stories of human journeys, and their contemporary rewritings are testimonies for a liveable future. If readers can but take one thing away from this research, it is the awareness that mountain ethics must include human imagination and must do so responsibly.

Throughout this study, I have shown that a postcolonial reading is capable of actuating a responsible revision of mountain tourism. Readers who approach the four analysed texts through a mode that acknowledges neither ‘the transformative power of imagination’ nor ‘the transformative conceptions of utopian hope’⁷ – qualities central to postcolonial analysis – would be unable to see in the narratives anything but death and destruction: Abdou ends her novel with a devastating avalanche; Wharton titles his final chapter ‘Terminus’; Mitterer closes with robot Tyroleans dancing on piles of plastic; and Jelinek, known for her gloomy mountain manifestoes, allows corpses to act on the theatre of alpine dystopia. With these grim images, the writers respond to the equally dark ecological realities of mountain mass tourism. Extensive tourism has caused mountain ecosystems that are susceptible to alterations of critical landscapes and bionetworks to suffer from a change in water flow as they do from pollution.⁸ Alpine Orientalism is not only a threat to alpine culture; it is a danger to mountain ecologies. That the crisis, indeed, is existential, and the claims made by the four literary works extremely relevant, is something this study has shown with great clarity. But not without also seeing the moment for recovery in the power of representation. Postcolonial criticism has reminded us time and again how ‘death is creative, not destructive’ and has directed our

⁶ Ibid., 211.

⁷ Stephen Slemon, ‘Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History’, *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 23, no. 1 (1998), 159; and Bill Ashcroft, ‘Remembering the Future’, *Textual Practice* 23, no. 5 (2009): 708.

⁸ Werner Bätzing, *Die Alpen: Geschichte und Zukunft einer europäischen Kulturlandschaft*. 4th ed. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2015), 194.

attention to the hopefulness that runs through the literary record like quartz veins.⁹ I understand that to be one of the major contributions this book makes to the discipline of mountain studies; even more so for scholarship on Austrian mountain literature. The tendency to see only a deterioration of alpine space in contemporary Austrian mountain literature – something Jelinek and Mitterer have often been unjustly accused of – has previously obstructed views on the works' revisionist capacities. In proposing a postcolonial reading over a national one, which frequently led to the impasse of *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, this study has unearthed precious gems illuminating not only alternative routes of investigation into the future of mountain tourism but also into the analysis of contemporary Austrian mountain literature. Most importantly, however, a postcolonial reading has demonstrated that the problems faced by mountain regions are global and cannot be solved as long as national interests prevail.

The force that cheats death in all four rewritings is never the act, or the product, of representation alone; it is its literariness. The art of writing ultimately transforms the mountain from a place approaching death to a place that is alive and well. Because I found this commitment to vitality to be the central motif in rewriting Alpine Orientalism, I have been careful not to blindly rely on the presupposition that literary representation matters, but instead to be attentive to how literature writes mountains back to life. *The Canterbury Trail*, in its mythical return to alpine oratures, focuses on the revival of storytelling traditions that, in contrast to Alpine Orientalist representation, care for the sounds that emerge from mountain spaces. The sound that speaks most powerfully through Abdou's novel is the voice of a mountain that takes human form and, fully personified, 'calls the final curtain on th[e] performance' of Alpine Orientalism.¹⁰ Through this personification, Abdou brings about the arrival of traditional alpine storytelling in contemporary mountain literature. *Icefields*, on the other hand, mediates mountain vitality not via personification but via the literary expression of a glacier's natural force. Wharton grants Arcturus Glacier agency by allowing glacial morphology to dictate the flow of narration. The author achieves this by dedicating each chapter to an element of glaciated landscape, unfolding a story between the névé and the glacier's terminus. In his nod to natural science, where movement is a central characteristic of all things living, Wharton

⁹ Helen Tiffin, 'Towards Place and Placelessness: Two Journey Patterns in Commonwealth Literature', in *Awakened Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature*, ed. C. D. Narsimhaiah (New Delhi: Sterling, 1978), 148.

¹⁰ Angie Abdou, *The Canterbury Trail* (Victoria, BC: Brindle & Glass, 2011), 274.

communicates an exhaustless mountain life. Mountains, *Icefields* demonstrates, are always on the move, formed and informed by infinite vitality. *Die Piefke-Saga*, on the other hand, resorts to mockery and parody and pushes linguistic differences to such an extreme that difference can only be overcome through physical movement. The ability to *transcend* national boundaries is prefigured in the verb's etymology, which, as a compound of *trans* (meaning 'over') and *scandere* (meaning 'to climb'), literally anticipates the physical act of climbing. Finally, and perhaps most ambitiously, *In den Alpen* ignites endless possibilities for mountain life via the literary function of allegory. With a language that does not fully adhere to the landscape, nor to one particular meaning, Jelinek's play oscillates between past and recent burnings in Austrian mountain history. In an incomparable allegorical firework, Jelinek sets a dragon free at the play's close and unleashes alpine mythology – planting seeds of renewal in the site of ruin. The reviving genius of Jelinek's allegory is that every site of death, every moment of destruction, implicates a new beginning, which does not merely describe a process of rebirth, but also a disruption of temporal linearity that allows the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism to come full circle – to return, in a sense, to the fires and stories that created mountains in the first place.

Foregrounding the literariness of the counter-discourse to mountain mass tourism, this study has identified two paradigms that frequently occur in the rewriting of Alpine Orientalism: the first is the premodern counter-discourse of a personified mountain, the second is the topos of the *locus vivus*. Both ways of knowing mountains – either through the myths of alpine storytelling or the recognition of mountains' vital forces – erode the rocks of Alpine Orientalism and allow mountain writing to develop new, stark, sculpted and liberated forms. In a return to local alpine storytelling, contemporary mountain literature honours the narrative traditions and mythical worldviews that predate Alpine Orientalism and thus makes visible the richness of mountain narratives that have defied colonial codifications. The recourse to a cultural system that nurtures mountain myths instead of a rhetoric of exploitation indicates just how ornately mountains were narrated prior to (and alongside) Alpine Orientalist inscription. Often the premodern counter-discourse in critical rewriting is attended by a personification of mountains whereby literature accredits mountains with a corresponding humanlike agency. Mountains, then, often assume the role of a character and an agent that is as sentient as it is responsive. The topos of the *locus vivus* ties in with these lively reactivations of mythical mountains and provides a model through which scholarly discourse can account for the alpine vitality

that contemporary mountain literature celebrates, including instances where narration does not prioritize, or perhaps does not even resort to, mountain myths. The *locus vivus* denotes a place that is 'alive', 'living' and 'natural'.¹¹ It draws attention to the liveliness of mountain spaces and reminds us of their cultural and ecological vitality. I coined the term to signal the pitfalls of the dichotomy of mountain gloom and glory and to disrupt the binary aesthetic principle that has dominated the discourse on mountains. In the style of a trialectics of space, the *locus vivus* forms a third element in this traditional binary set-up and transcends limiting ascriptions. It is an Other that rejects containment by being alive and living, by being rich in the possibilities to recreate and by continuously becoming – by unceasingly outgrowing the picture postcards sold by mountain tourism.

Although all of the four contemporary texts celebrate the inexhaustible life force that mountains summon even in the presumed hour of death, none of them offers a solution to the problem of mountain mass tourism; at least not a solution in the sense that a commodified consumer society would demand. But literature, Salman Rushdie recently explained, does not have to be good at solutions: it has to be good at imagination.¹² All four narratives undoubtedly suggest that the human ability to imagine an alternative world is the only valuable counterweight to the insanities of mountain mass tourism. The texts that rewrite Alpine Orientalism invite consideration of the numerous stories and versions of mountains that are not represented in the dominant discourse, and they remind us that the process of rewriting Alpine Orientalism has at its disposal an endless fountain of imaginary possibilities. As they write back to mountain mass tourism, these texts, more than anything, incite the imagination. And all that can be imagined can be created. This is the logic through which Alpine Orientalism has gained force, and this is the logic by which literature can shape mountains after and beyond Alpine Orientalism.

Convention dictates that a study engaged with the problems of Alpine Orientalism should provide clear solutions. This study does not act in contradiction to the literature it analyses, and it does not bow to the obsession with products which permeates academia as much as the (travel) economy. This study, like the narratives it has engaged with, prefers a story over a solution. The critical story I have attempted to tell here has an analogue in my own relationship

¹¹ D. P. Simpson, s.v. 'vivus', in *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (London: Cassell, 1982), 647.

¹² Salman Rushdie, 'Salman Rushdie: The Author's New Novel *Quichotte* Explores Struggles of the Present Day and How the Novel Can Remind Readers of "the Good"', interview by Tom Power, *CBC Radio*, 3 September 2019. <http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/q/segment/15734175>.

with the Athabasca Glacier: a relationship that began, first, in the reading. The Athabasca Glacier is one of the six principal toes of the Columbia Icefield in the Canadian Rockies, and ever since reading Thomas Wharton's novel, I longed to see and feel the Columbia Icefields, to listen to what the Athabasca Glacier might have to tell me after it spoke so strongly through the novel. My first attempt at a visit was in February 2013, when I drove the Icefields Parkway shortly after Valentine's Day. As soon as I passed Saskatchewan River Crossing, clouds gathered and it started to snow. Once I reached the icefield, I could not distinguish the glacier from its surroundings. My second attempt at a visit was in September 2014. I had planned a climb between archival stays at the Jasper Yellowhead and the Whyte Museum of the Rockies in Banff. But, again, winter got in the way and the road was blocked. 'Third time's a charm,' I thought, and planned another trip in September 2018. And I was right: this time, I made it. I saw the glacier, walked on it and heard its cracks and sounds. I was filled with gratitude. When I took out my phone to take a picture, I realized that the cold had eaten up my battery. I realized, too, that the Athabasca Glacier had refused to be captured and framed. At last, I began to understand that the mountain was forcing me to acknowledge it outside aesthetic frameworks and preconceived recreational packages. It was demanding respect as a moving, living, storytelling creature. I understood then that mountains do not tend to "behave well" when they are the objects of research. And, perhaps more importantly, I understood, in the words of the Scottish novelist and poet Nan Shepherd, how 'knowing another is endless,' and that 'the thing to be known grows with the knowing.'¹³ In an effort to consider the visual texts of mountain travel, all chapters in this book (and some more explicit than others) have begun with a reflection on one or more images, including book covers, postcards, posters, billboards and other promotional documents. This final section ends with the idea of an image. I give you, dear reader, my unsuccessful photographic attempt to capture Athabasca Glacier. And with it, I give you a story to continue responsibly.

¹³ Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain* (Edinburgh: Canongate 2014), 108.

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