Politicized Timber: The *German Forest* and the Nature of the Nation 1800-1945

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Abstract: Forests not only constitute natural landscapes to harvest timber or to go hiking in. Beyond that, they are also ideal landscapes constructed by intellectual and/or ideological orchestration. This paper delineates forest imaginations in German political thought between the period of Romanticism and the rule of National Socialism. Special focus is given to those mental images of the forest related to myth-conceptions like national identity, ethnic community, and racial purity. Here, the German Forest evolved from a poetical landscape of yearning into a Social Darwinian paradigm legitimizing the polity and politics of a dictatorship.

Introduction

“Even if we were not in need of timber any more, we still would need the forest. The German *Volk* needs the forest like humans need wine.”¹ This much-cited statement by the German novelist and anthropologist Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl substantiates a basic insight well-known to researchers, but probably not yet embedded in the perception of the public: landscapes are cultural phenomena just as much as—or even more than—they are natural phenomena. Using Benedict Anderson's theory of *imagined communities* and Simon Schama's concept of *nature as imagination*, these cultural landscapes might also be described as imagined landscapes.² They can function as projection screens for manifold cultural constructions, political agendas, and public perceptions, in each case reflecting particular historical contexts and intellectual developments.³

Regarding modern German history, the prototypical imagined landscape is arguably the German forest.⁴ Influential intellectuals and ideologists considered it to be a central symbol of Germanness from the early 19th century on—already decades before a German nation state came into being in 1870/71.⁵ When envisaging a unique relationship between people and forest allegedly existent since prehistoric times, the natural landscape was more often than not merely a metaphorical starting point for the cultural construction of a national landscape.⁶

The subsequent exercise in intellectual history delineates the imagined forests in German political thought that were built upon the myth-conceptions of national identity and ethnic community—supplemented by the ideal of racial purity from World War I onward.⁷ In doing so, the term *German Forest* does not signify the real forest to harvest timber in or the forest perceptions of the general population.⁸ It rather stands for an ideal forest created and orchestrated by painters, philologists, poets, politicians, and propagandists.

Intellectual Roots of the *German Forest*

From circa 1800 on, intellectuals in the German-speaking territories ascribed a multitude of meanings to the natural entity of the forest. These meanings clearly transcended the forest's proper botanical and silvicultural sphere and extended into the domains of culture, politics, and society. To portray the different layers of this imagination, one must start with the influential movement of German Romanticism.⁹ Here, novelists like Ludwig Tieck or painters like Caspar David Friedrich rhapsodically or solemnly evoked the forest as the genuine German landscape of spiritual profundity—and as a simple counter-image decrying the complexities of modern city life.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the claim of a distinct relationship between the forest and the people already laid the foundations for future intellectual developments. In the Prussian-led *Wars of Liberation* with the French Empire from 1813 to 1815, prominent literary men contrived the *German Forest* as a central symbol of national identity—inter alia, the poet Joseph von Eichendorff, the scholars Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, and the writer Ernst Moritz Arndt.¹¹ During the same years, the intellectual career of the *German Oak* commenced and this type of tree soon became proverbial as a patriotic icon of bravery, power, and strength.¹² Both figures of thought intended to facilitate the yearned-for national unity in the light of territorial fragmentation and political dissension. In addition, they included a strong anti-French and anti-revolutionary bias from the outset, especially in the case of Arndt.

Crucial for all these efforts were frequent allusions to the book *Germania*, written by the Roman historiographer Tacitus around the year 100 CE. He had described the forest as the origin of the Germanic tribes, as the place of their political gatherings, and as the spiritual sphere of their *hallow groves*. Because the German nationalists considered themselves to be lineal descendants of the ancient 'Teutons,' Tacitus' text seemed to substantiate their claims to belong to a venerable *forest people*.

Another stratum of imagination was added after the middle of the 19th century with the

ethnized forest,¹³ as propagated by the novelist and anthropologist Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl. His extremely popular writings—chiefly the four-volume *Natural History of the People*—were influenced by strong nationalist sentiment and reached an extensive educated audience mainly beyond the academic circles.¹⁴ Based on climate theories by the ancient Greek thinkers Hippocrates and Aristotle as well as the French Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu, Riehl correlated the national characters of peoples with their respective natural environments.¹⁵ He then characterized the English and the French negatively as *civilizations* already deprived of their culture by rationalization and urbanization: their prototypical landscapes were said to be the tamed parks and the cleared fields. In explicit contrast, Riehl perceived the German people—at that time still without a nation state of its own—as a pristine culture, deeply rooted in its wooded wilderness that served as a national fountain of youth. Furthermore, he contrasted the repudiated political freedom of the West with a genuinely German “forest freedom.”¹⁶ From this perspective, preserving the forest was more of a patriotic necessity than an economic or a silvicultural one: “We must preserve the forest not only to keep the furnace warm in winter, but also ... for Germany to remain German.”¹⁷

Radical and Racial Views of the *German Forest*

With World War I, the ideological instrumentalization of the forest took on a new intensity. For the evolving movement of *homeland protection and conservation* (*Heimatschutz*), the forest as the essence of German identity had to be defended versus both the *Western civilization* and the *Eastern menace*.¹⁸ After the defeat and ensuing disintegration of the German Empire in 1918, agitators like the forester and paramilitary leader Georg Escherich targeted the timber reparations demanded by France in the Treaty of Versailles. These were seen as a deliberate attack on the German forest, aiming at ultimately destroying the German people.¹⁹

Such a kind of forest nationalism was spearheaded and coordinated by the *German Forest Association—League for the Protection and Consecration of the Forest* (*Deutscher Wald e.V.—Bund zur Wehr und Weihe des Waldes*). Not much is known about this organization and its members aside from the fact that it was founded in 1923 and later enjoyed the patronage of Reich President Paul von Hindenburg. From the surviving sources, it can be established that the group organized public lectures and distributed its forest propaganda in multiple brochures, leaflets, magazines, and newspapers. Herein, caring about the natural forest threatened by industrialization was merely a

lesser aim, as the slogan “the German people and the German forest are at one” indicates.²⁰ First and foremost, the group intended to cure the collective self-esteem of a nation damaged by the loss of the war, the collapse of the Empire, and the following disruptions in politics and society. Such a revisionist mindset becomes clearly evident in a quote from the group's bulletin, aptly named *German Forest*: “Germans, come into the forest and let us all together be united.”²¹

In that regard, the propagandistic remembrance of the legendary *Battle of the Teutoburg Forest* with a strong focus on its hero *Herman the German* became particularly significant.²² The skirmish between Germanic tribes and Roman troops in the year 9 CE was portrayed as a liberation battle “of German man in the German forest”²³ fighting an alien empire without any roots in the forest—thereby providing a historical prototype for the more contemporary conflict with France fought out in the *Wars of Liberation* 1813–1815, the *War of Unification* 1870–1871, and World War I 1914–1918. In addition, the German Forest Association envisioned a forest “German in its plants and German in its animals,”²⁴ with zero tolerance for what nowadays is called *invasive species*. The enemies of the German forest—and thence of the German people alike—were explicitly specified to be the French as the “slaughtering mob”²⁵ and the Jews as the “offspring of the desert.”²⁶ With that, racist and anti-Semitic patterns of thought had entered the idealization of the forest years before the National Socialist regime came to power.

Imagined Forests of National Socialism

The rising National Socialist party stepped into the ideological field of the political forest in the 1920s, condemning the democratic system of the Weimar Republic as being *alienated from the forest*.²⁷ After the assumption of power in 1933, the *German Forest* quickly became part and parcel of the official ideology and propaganda.²⁸ Ideological and political players like Alfred Rosenberg, Heinrich Himmler, and Hermann Göring each pursued their specific forest-related projects. These party leaders deduced everything seen as positively German from the forest environment, declaring the forest to be a main factor in the creation of national identity.²⁹ Consequently, the Germans were awarded the honorary title of a *forest people*: allegedly they had descended from the forest, were still deeply rooted in the forest, and their culture and history was strongly shaped by the forest. To support that pseudo-historical claim, writers and researchers made multifarious references to a variety of fairy tales, sagas, and—again—Tacitus' *Germania*.³⁰

Inherent in this forest ideology and its omnipresent imagery of rootedness was a strong racist component: the capability to care for nature was exclusively attributed to Aryan racial ancestry.³¹ The Jews were perceived as a nomadic—and therefore rootless—*desert people*, threatening the German forest and the German people alike. In the same vein, the Slavs were denigrated as a *steppe people* to legitimize the occupation regime in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Moreover, stalwarts of Social Darwinism declared the forest to be the leading paradigm for the political and societal sphere, as articulated in the slogan *the forest as an educator*.³² Its assumed racial purity and hierarchic structure were taken as a role model for the policies of ethnic cleansing and a stratified *people's community* (*Volksgemeinschaft*) that was already taught to high school students.³³

Forest, People's Community, and History: The Film *Eternal Forest*

Alfred Rosenberg was the self-declared chief ideologist of National Socialism and the editor-in-charge of the party newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*. In 1934, he commissioned a feature-length propaganda film with the telling working title *German Forest—German Destiny* (*Deutscher Wald—Deutsches Schicksal*).³⁴ The film premiered two years later as *Eternal Forest* (*Ewiger Wald*) and was intended as a cinematic proof for the supposedly perfect symbiosis of an eternal forest and a likewise eternal people.³⁵

This leitmotif emerges at the beginning of the film with the first spoken words after the musical overture: “Eternal forest—eternal people. The tree, it lives like you and me, it strives for space like you and me. Its cycle of 'Perish and sprout' structures time. People and forest persist for eternity.”³⁶ In accordance with Rosenberg's anti-Christian beliefs, the ensuing section on prehistory displays various customs and rituals of an asserted pagan *forest religion* like a maypole dance or funerals in tree coffins. At the end of this ideological travel through time and space, the film seeks to legitimize the National Socialist assumption of power. The years of the Weimar Republic are made to appear disastrous for people and forest alike: “Rotten, degenerated, intermingled with alien races. Oh people, oh forest, how do you bear this burden so unthinkable?” Finally, the mutual rebirth is celebrated and the cycle of history concluded with an allusion to the film's first line: “Let's weed out the racially alien and the sick Join in to sing the new song of the time: 'People and forest persist for eternity'.”

By means of a highly selective and likewise dramatized outline, *Eternal Forest* repeated the same

message over and over: destruction of the forest in times of foreign rule means destruction of the autochthonous people; on the other hand, periods of self-rule lead to the joyous rebirth of both the forest and the nation. For that purpose, the entire course of Germanic/German history from Neolithic to National Socialist times had to be systematically re-arranged, re-staged, and thus naturalized. Yet in intertwining the human and the natural narrative, the film not only paralleled the social and the biological order as a whole through the habitual use of catchy metaphors. Beyond that, the purported laws of nature became a Social Darwinian paradigm for the polity and society of National Socialism because “those who abide by the laws of the forest will convalesce through the essence of the forest and live forever.”³⁷

Forest, Race, and Religion: The Search for a *Religion of the Forest*

Heinrich Himmler was the *Reichsführer SS* and Chief of German Police as well as the co-founder of the SS-*Abnenerbe*.³⁸ This so-called *research and education collective* set itself the task of studying Germanic prehistory and German folk customs to create a cultural continuity between the past and the present. In 1937, it launched a comprehensive scholarship program called *Forest and Tree in the Intellectual and Cultural History of the Aryan and Germanic Peoples* (*Wald und Baum in der arisch-germanischen Geistes-und Kulturgeschichte*).³⁹ The stated aim of this project was not so much to deal with practical questions of forestry or botany as to explore “how the Germanic and German man spiritually relates to forest and tree and of course to the forest's animals, ... how the sphere of the forest is reflected in his soul.”⁴⁰ Accordingly, the project's official announcement included a variety of ideology-related topics like *The Forest in the Religious Experience and Custom of the Germanic Man*, *The Forest in Germanic Poetry and Music*, or *Forest and Tree in the Aryan Tradition*.⁴¹

Throughout this endeavour, the origin of German culture in the Northern forest wilderness was not scientifically questioned or substantiated, but plainly stipulated as a fact. By striking contrast, the ideologists attributed the development of the Jewish and the Christian *anti-culture* to the hostile desert environment of the Middle East. To support the claim of a race-based *hatred towards trees*, recurring reference was made to the felling of *holy trees* by ancient Jewish prophets and medieval Christian missionaries. However, the apodictic premise “our Germanic ancestors did worship trees”⁴² hardly left any leeway for serious science. In selecting the project team, political reliability and membership in the NSDAP and/or the SS were yet more important criteria than simple scientific

skills. With all the mentioned ideological assumptions in mind, the selected fellows then meticulously combed through ancient mythology and contemporary custom for signs of a creed already taken for granted.

These inquiries into an archaeology of Germanic knowledge were not merely dispassionate exercises in the ivory tower of academia. On the contrary, they provided Himmler with arguments for replacing the Christian religion—reputedly tainted by its Jewish origins—with an undefiled pagan belief system. Such a *religion of forest and tree* was seen as more genuinely National Socialist since “being autochthonous and rooted to the soil is unsacred according to the doctrine of Christianity.”⁴³

Forest, People, and Landscape: The Project *Reforestation of the East*

Hermann Göring was the central figure in the field of German forestry, hunting, and nature protection⁴⁴ during the years of National Socialist rule, holding office as *Reichsforstmeister* and *Reichsjägermeister*. He himself stereotypically contrasted the German and the Jewish perceptions of nature: “When we walk around in the forest, we see God's magnificent creation That distinguishes us from yonder people which deems itself chosen, yet will only calculate the market prize for a cubic meter of timber.”⁴⁵ The ubiquitous assumption of a unique affinity between the German people and its forests was most markedly expressed in the project *Reforestation of the East* (*Wiederbewaldung des Ostens*) which was institutionalized in 1941.⁴⁶

This program aimed at reconstructing the imagined landscape of the *German Forest*, at first in the annexed areas of Poland—i.e. Danzig-Westpreussen and Wartheland—and later on in large parts of the occupied East.⁴⁷ Whereas the landscape planners equated the contemporary state of nature with a neglected Eastern steppe, their blueprint for the future envisioned the recreation of a forestal paradise on the ground. Accordingly, the territories were to be *re-Germanized* by reforesting up to 30% of their surface—roughly the percentage of land covered by forest in Germany proper. As a historical paradigm, the ideologues mentioned large-scale reforestations by the medieval Teutonic Order and by Frederick the Great after the first partition of Poland in 1772.⁴⁸

Such a peculiar landscape design was seen as an imperative precondition for the planned large scale resettlement of ethnic Germans from all over Europe. To this ideological end, substantial parts of the Jewish and Polish populations were forcefully expelled into the territories of the occupied *Generalgouvernement*. Many of them were immediately detained in the ghettos and concentration camps

there with poor chances of survival. These deportations were at the least facilitated—and certainly legitimized—by numerous references to the *racial inability* of Jews and Poles to take good care of the forest.

By attributing the perception and appreciation of nature to matters of blood and race, German foresters not only transgressed their own professional sphere. Beyond that, they willingly helped to turn the formerly innocent ideal landscape of the *German Forest* into—sometimes genocidal—practice. In this context, the actual arboreal reality was no more than an implement for the objectives of National Socialist racial ideology as “German blood will not be able to persist in barren steppe landscapes devoid of trees.”⁴⁹

Conclusion

The intellectual and ideological career of the *German Forest* began when writers and scholars declared it to be a decisive marker of national identity, presumably dating from Germanic times. In this blatant *invention of tradition*⁵⁰, the natural phenomenon of the forest provided—metaphorically speaking—only the rootage for the mighty stem of an ideal forest. As a result, the latter could increasingly serve as a token for an expansive set of anti-modernist, biologist, racist, and nationalist patterns of thought: as the opposite to progress and metropolis, as the role model for social order, as the origin of race, and as the ideal of native nature.

This imagined landscape of the *German Forest*—defined by stability, hierarchy, and inequality—was antipode as much as antidote against the French Revolution of 1789 and its values of human rights and democracy. From early on, the nationalist movement stigmatized France as the arch-enemy of the *forest people* and its idolized forest nature. Since World War I, stereotypical images of the Jews as a rootless *desert people* and the Slavs as a *steppe people* helped to legitimize their discrimination. Eventually, such images were used to justify the National Socialist policies of occupation and persecution.

These constructions and imaginations of the *German Forest* did not gain broad public impact until 1933. After assuming power, the party's ideologues eagerly appropriated paradigms developed and disseminated in nationalist circles since the beginning of the 19th century. In doing so, the respective historical and political contexts were mostly neglected—especially in regard to Romanticism. Rather, fitting fragments of lore were combined and further radicalized within a

seemingly coherent framework of *waldanschauung*.

After the regime change in 1945, certain less ideological aspects of the *German Forest* remained partly present in public discourses and in the professional fields of forestry and nature conservation for decades. Popular *Heimat* films and weighty coffee-table books were once more drawing upon the time-honoured notion of a distinctive German liaison with the forest. Hence, even the emotional debates about the *waldsterben* in the 1980s might be better understood when considering the cultural meanings of a natural phenomenon.

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Notes

¹ Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Socialpolitik. Vol. 1: Land und Leute*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart/ Augsburg: Cotta, 1856), 46; all translations from German in this article by the author.

² See Benedict Richard Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995).

³ For case studies of particular imagined landscapes, see e.g. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950); John Rennie Short, *Imagined Country. Society, Culture and Environment* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1991); Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th enlarged ed. (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 2001); Robert Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind. A History of a Fascination* (London: Granta, 2003).

⁴ For less encompassing imagined landscapes like the Rhine river or the Alps, see e.g. Horst-Johs Tümmers, *Rheinromantik. Romantik und Reisen am Rhein* (Köln: Greven, 1968); Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature. Landscape Preservation and German Identity 1885-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Edward Dickinson,

“Altitude and Whiteness. Germanizing the Alps and Alpinizing the Germans 1875-1935,” *German Studies Review* 33.3 (2010): 579-602.

⁵ For the cultural and political history of the *German Forest*, see *Waldungen. Die Deutschen und ihr Wald*, ed. Bernd Weyergraf (Berlin: Nicolai, 1987); *The Idea of the Forest. German and American Perspectives on the Culture and Politics of Trees*, eds. Kenneth S. Calhoun and Karla L. Schultz (New York et al.: Peter Lang, 1996); Albrecht Lehmann, *Von Menschen und Bäumen. Die Deutschen und ihr Wald* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999); *Der Wald—Ein deutscher Mythos? Perspektiven eines Kulturthemas*, eds. Albrecht Lehmann and Klaus Schriewer (Berlin/ Hamburg: Reimer, 2000); *Mythos Wald*, ed. Ann-Katrin Thomm (Münster: Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, 2009).

⁶ For the conjunction of landscape and nation in general, see *Geography and National Identity*, ed. David Hooson (Oxford/ Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994); *Mythical Landscapes Then and Now. The Mystification of Landscapes in Search for National Identities*, eds. Ruth Büttner and Judith Pelz (Erewhon: Antares, 2006); for specific countries, see Eric Kaufmann and Oliver Zimmer, “In Search of the Authentic Nation: Landscape and National Identity in Canada and Switzerland,” *Nations and Nationalism* 4.4 (1998): 483-510; Christopher Ely, *This Meager Nature. Landscape and National Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002); Joan Nogué and Joan Vicente, “Landscape and National Identity in Catalonia,” *Political Geography* 23.2 (2004): 113-132; *Landscape and Englishness*, eds. Robert Burden and Stephan Kohl (Amsterdam/ New York: Rodopi, 2006); Roberta Falcone, “Australian Landscape as the Language of a New Identity,” in *Imagined Australia. Reflections around the Reciprocal Construction of Identity between Australia and Europe*, ed. Renata Summo-O’Connell (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 2009), 123-136.

⁷ For the imagined forests of colonial and gender-body discourse respectively, see *Der deutsche Tropenwald. Bilder-Mythen-Politik*, ed. Michael Flitner (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000); Marcus Termeer, *Verkörperungen des Waldes. Eine Körper-, Geschlechter- und Herrschaftsgeschichte des Waldes* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2005).

⁸ For the history of woodland and forestry in Germany, see Heinrich Rubner, *Forstgeschichte im Zeitalter der industriellen Revolution* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1967); Joachim Radkau, “Wood and Forestry in German History: In Quest of an Environmental Approach,” *Environment and History* 2.1 (1996): 63-76.

⁹ For more details, see *Der Wald als romantischer Topos*, ed. Ute Jung-Kaiser (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 2008).

¹⁰ For more details, see Roger Paulin, *Ludwig Tieck. A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990).

¹¹ For more details, see Klaus Lindemann, “Deutsch Panier, das rauschend wallt!. Der Wald in Eichendorffs patriotischen Gedichten im Kontext der Lyrik der Befreiungskriege,” in *Eichendorff und die Spätromantik*, ed. Hans-Georg Pott (Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 1985), 91-130; Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm. From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988); Alfred George Pundt, *Arndt and the Nationalist Awakening in Germany* (New York: AMS Press, 1968).

¹² For more details, see Annemarie Hürlimann, “Die Eiche, heiliger Baum deutscher Nation,” in *Waldungen. Die Deutschen und ihr Wald*, ed. Bernd Weyergraf (Berlin: Nicolai, 1987), 62-68.

¹³ See Konrad Köstlin, “Der ethnisierte Wald,” in *Der Wald—Ein deutscher Mythos? Perspektiven eines Kulturthemas*, eds. Albrecht Lehmann and Klaus Schriewer (Berlin/ Hamburg: Reimer, 2000), 53-65.

¹⁴ See Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Socialpolitik*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart et al.: Cotta, 1854-1869); for an abridged English-language edition, see Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *The Natural History of the German People*, trans. by David J. Diephouse (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1990).

¹⁵ For more details on climate theories, see Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore. Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1967), 80-115 and 551-622.

¹⁶ Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Socialpolitik. Vol. 1: Land und Leute*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart/ Augsburg: Cotta, 1856), 50.

¹⁷ Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Socialpolitik. Vol. 1: Land und Leute*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart/ Augsburg: Cotta, 1856), 48.

¹⁸ For more details on the *Heimatschutz* movement in the Wilhelmine Empire, see Friedemann Schmoll, *Erinnerung an die Natur. Die Geschichte des Naturschutzes im deutschen Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2004), 385-457.

¹⁹ See Georg Escherich, *Der deutsche Wald und die feindlichen Mächte* (Hamburg: Deutscher Wald e.V., 1924), 4.

²⁰ Georg Escherich, *Der deutsche Wald und die feindlichen Mächte* (Hamburg: Deutscher Wald e.V., 1924), 3.

²¹ Anonymous, “Sinnspruch,” *Deutscher Wald. Mitteilungsblatt des Deutscher Wald e.V.* 2.20 (1926): 1.

²² For the myth and cult around *Herman the German*, see Andreas Dörner, *Politischer Mythos und symbolische Politik. Der Hermannmythos: Zur Entstehung des Nationalbewußtseins der Deutschen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1996).

- ²³ *Zur Hermannsfeier im Teutoburger Walde*, ed. Deutscher Wald e.V. (Hamburg: Deutscher Wald e.V., n. d.), 1.
- ²⁴ Alfred Willy Boback, "Und deutsch sei der Wald," *Deutscher Wald. Mitteilungsblatt des Deutschen Wald e.V.* 10.3 (1933): 2.
- ²⁵ August Meier-Böke, *Wald und Wehrwolf* (Hamburg: Deutscher Wald e.V., 1924), 6.
- ²⁶ August Meier-Böke, *Deutscher Wald und deutscher Friedhof* (Hamburg: Deutscher Wald e.V., 1924), 8.
- ²⁷ For the politically diverse and often conflicting Weimar discourses about the *German Forest*, see Ulrich Linse, "Der deutsche Wald als Kampfplatz politischer Ideen," *Revue d'Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande* 22.3 (1990): 339-350.
- ²⁸ For more details, see Heinrich Rubner, *Deutsche Forstgeschichte 1933-1945. Forstwirtschaft, Jagd und Umwelt im NS-Staat*, 2nd enlarged ed. (St. Katharinen: Scripta-Mercaturae, 1997); Michael Imort, "Eternal Forest–Eternal Volk'. The Rhetoric and Reality of National Socialist Forest Policy," in *How Green Were the Nazis? Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*, eds. Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, Mark Chioc, and Thomas Zeller (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005), 43-72; Johannes Zechner, *'Ewiger Wald und ewiges Volk'. Die Ideologisierung des deutschen Waldes im Nationalsozialismus* (Freising: Technische Universität München, 2006).
- ²⁹ See e.g. Hermann Göring, "Ewiger Wald–Ewiges Volk. Rede auf der Tagung des Deutschen Forstvereins am 17. August 1936," in *Hermann Göring. Reden und Aufsätze*, ed. Erich Gritzbach (München: Franz Eher Nachf., 1939), 245-255.
- ³⁰ See e.g. Karl Rebel, *Der Wald in der deutschen Kultur*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Der deutsche Forstwirt, 1934); Carl Wilhelm Neumann, *Das Buch vom deutschen Wald. Ein Führer zu Heimatliebe und Heimatschutz* (Leipzig: Dollheimer, 1935).
- ³¹ See e.g. Walther Schoenichen, "Das deutsche Volk muß gereinigt werden.–Und die deutsche Landschaft?," *Naturschutz. Monatsschrift für alle Freunde der deutschen Heimat* 14.11 (1933): 205-209.
- ³² See e.g. Franz von Mammen, *Der Wald als Erzieher. Eine volkswirtschaftlich-ethische Parallele zwischen Baum und Mensch und zwischen Wald und Volk* (Dresden/ Leipzig: Globus, 1934).
- ³³ See e.g. Hugo Keller, *So lebt die Waldgemeinschaft. Eine Bildreihe in drei Heften. Vol. 1: Biologische Gemeinschaftskunde*, 2nd enlarged ed. (Leipzig: Wunderlich, 1940).
- ³⁴ *Ewiger Wald*, Lex-Film Berlin 1936, b&w, 64 min, director: Hanns Springer/ Rolf von Sonjewski-Jamrowski, writer: Carl Maria Holzappel/ Albert Graf von Pestalozza, copy: Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv Berlin.
- ³⁵ For more details, see e.g. Sabine Wilke, "Verrottet, verkommen, von fremder Rasse durchsetzt'. The Colonial Trope as Subtext of the Nazi-'Kulturfilm' EWIGER WALD (1936)," *German Studies Review* 24.2 (2001): 353-376; Thomas Meder, "Die Deutschen als Wald-Volk. Der Kulturfilm EWIGER WALD (1936)," in *Il bosco nella cultura europea tra realtà e immaginario*, ed. Guili Liebman Parrinello (Rom: Bulzoni, 2002), 105-129.
- ³⁶ All film quotes taken and translated from the complete transcript in Zechner 2006, 89-91.
- ³⁷ Carl Maria Holzappel, "Wald und Volk. Leitgedanken der Filmdichtung EWIGER WALD," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* June 8, 1936, not paginated.
- ³⁸ For more details on the *Ahnenerbe*, see Michael H. Kater, *Das 'Ahnenerbe' der SS 1935-1945. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1974).
- ³⁹ For more details, see Bernd-A. Rusinek, "'Wald und Baum in der arisch-germanischen Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte'. Ein Forschungsprojekt des 'Ahnenerbe' der SS 1937-1945," in *Der Wald–Ein deutscher Mythos? Perspektiven eines Kulturthemas*, eds. Albrecht Lehmann and Klaus Schriewer, (Berlin/ Hamburg: Reimer, 2000), 267-363.
- ⁴⁰ Letter from the project's secretary Gilbert Trathnigg to Wilhelm Fabricius, January 17, 1939, Bundesarchiv Berlin NS 21/ 337.
- ⁴¹ See the official list of topics from April 1938, Bundesarchiv Berlin NS 21/566.
- ⁴² Hugo Neugebauer, "Tiroler Baumkult," *Germanien. Monatshefte für Vorgeschichte zur Erkenntnis deutschen Wesens* 11.9 (1939): 393-398.
- ⁴³ Otto Huth, *Die Fällung des Lebensbaumes. Die Bekehrung der Germanen aus völkischer Sicht* (Berlin: Widukind, 1936), 10.
- ⁴⁴ For the history of nature protection during National Socialism, see e.g. Frank Uekötter, *The Green and the Brown. A History of Conservation in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University, 2006).
- ⁴⁵ Quoted in Erich Gritzbach, *Hermann Göring. Werk und Mensch*, 17th ed. (München: Franz Eher Nachf., 1938), 111.
- ⁴⁶ See *Wiederbewaldung des Ostens*, ed. Reichsstiftung für deutsche Ostforschung (Berlin: Beamtenpresse, 1943).
- ⁴⁷ For more details, see Michael A. Hartenstein, *'Neue Dorflandschaften'. Nationalsozialistische Landschaftsplanung in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten' 1939-1944* (Berlin: Köster, 1998).
- ⁴⁸ See e.g. Herbert Hesmer, *Der Wald im Weichsel- und Wartheraum* (Hannover: Schaper, 1941).
- ⁴⁹ Heinrich Friedrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Deutsche Landschaft als deutsche Ostaufgabe," *Neues Bauerntum* 32.4/5 (1940): 132-135, 133.
- ⁵⁰ See the still inspiring *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

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