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A New South Tyrol: The Multilingual, Multicultural Society

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A New South Tyrol: The Multilingual, Multicultural Society

by

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Acknowledgements

Since taking an Italian language course at the University of Göttingen my passion became studying both Germanic and Italian culture. Spending a year teaching English with the USTA Fulbright Program in Innsbruck granted me the opportunity to discover South Tyrol, a mere thirty-minute train ride. This trilingual region (German, Italian, and Ladin) fascinated me, with bilingual signs on every corner. Speaking German in rural villages, some inhabitants informed me of their disgust of Italians, others expressed the advantages to living at the crossroads of Northern and Southern Europe. Sitting with my father outside a grindy pizzeria along Genoa's Via San Benedetto last summer, a couple motorcycling approached, speaking an alpine German dialect. Curious, my father asked me to question where they were from, the response: "Wir sind Südtiroler" (We are South Tyroleans). Distinctly un-Italian, but South Tyrolean was their response. This conversation confirmed my interest to investigate South Tyrolean contemporary literature, in both German and Italian, and how characters grapple with their own identity in the multicultural region.

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Abstract

Identity formation is a reoccurring theme in an increasingly global world. Monolingualism and monoculturalism is no longer a possible in a global world. Like greater society, should contemporary literature not also argue for a multilingual, multicultural society? South Tyrol, a province that experienced Nazism and Fascism, control by both Mussolini and Hitler, pitted ethnic German and ethnic Italian speakers against one another. Today, since the founding of Schengen Europe eradicated border controls between Austria and Italy in 1997. South Tyrol is officially trilingual, with German, Italian, and Ladin¹ being the official languages, and in recent years, has taken in a substantial number of immigrants from outside Europe, further problematizing the conundrum of what it means to be South Tyrolean.

This project is the beginning of an attempt to fulfill a gap in our understanding of how South Tyrolean literature grapples with conundrums of contemporary identity. Do German-language authors express remorse for a lost Heimat? Do Italian-language authors cast all German speakers as Nazi sympathizers? I argue that none of this is the case, but instead, South Tyrolean literature in both German and Italian collectively argue for a multilingual, multicultural paradigm, criticizing xenophobia. *Eva dorme (Eva sleeps)*

¹ Ladin is the language spoken first by 4.5% of the population in the upper Dolomite valleys. It is also spoken in parts of Trentino and Veneto. Linguistically, it is very similar to Romansh spoken in Switzerland. Although Ladin literature is not present in this thesis, Ladin literature should be included in broad study of South Tyrolean literature.

(2010) by Francesca Melandri, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht (Roman Elegy)* (2011) by Sabine Gruber, and *Die Walsche (The Italian)* (1982) by Joseph Zoderer are the three novels I examine. Finally, if given more attention, this minor South Tyrolean literature can reach the world literary market, educating the world reader to embrace multilingualism and multiculturalism. By appealing to conventions of the popular novel, and admittedly, with greater promotion and translation, contemporary South Tyrolean literature can act as a model for embracing multilingualism and multiculturalism.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Why South Tyrol?

South Tyrol is the northernmost Italian province with a German-speaking majority, a territory of the Austrian Empire until the end of World War I. South Tyrol underwent a rapid territorial and political transition from the time following World War I to the formation of Schengen Europe, and the 1997 abolishment of border control between Italy and Austria. Both Italian Fascist and German Nazi regimes controlled the territory until the conclusion of World War II, the victim of both Fascism and Nazism. Additionally, an influx of migrants from Southern Italy and the Veneto relocated to South Tyrol for work, due to Mussolini's decree to Italianize the province. Mussolini's Italianization mandate included Italianizing the names of localities from their German or Ladin original. The region's capital, renamed from Meran to Merano, is an example. This creates the potential for ethnic tensions to exist even absent a hostile regime such as Fascism or Nazism. Today, 80% of ethnic German-speaking South Tyroleans identify first as Südtiroler (South Tyrolean), contrasting to only 25% of ethnic Italian speakers identifying as Sudtirolese (South Tyrolean) first.² While officially bilingual, in reality, German and Italian speakers often live separately in different neighborhoods within communities. The province's ethnic-linguistic division and the

² See Riehl and Hajek.

successive control of the region by Fascism and Nazism invites a specific case study on ethnic, regional identity.

Norbert Kaser's "Brixner Rede" (Brixen Speech) demanded a pivot to South Tyrol's literature trajectory, away from a nature-oriented 'Heimat' style that was predominant in South Tyrolean Literature pre-1969. Kaser claimed that South Tyrolean literature did not yet exist in 1969. Without proposing what exactly this literature should consist of, it is evident that he supported a shift away from the Heimat-style literature, with its über-focus on identity and landscape, toward a literature with a cosmopolitan approach, that nevertheless retains a focus on South Tyrolean identity. Kaser aggressively advocated for a reformed, multilingual South Tyrolean literature, in German and Italian:

Langsam brechen die Vorurteile uns gegenüber ein. Wir haben als Literaten die Pflicht, sie weiter einzureißen...Und die Italiener sind dann auch mit von der Partie. Auch sie haben die heiligen Kühe herdenweis. Die Schlächter stehen alle so in meinem Alter. Wir sind unser zwanzig und mehr. Manche können kein Blut sehen, aber das macht nichts. Südtirol wird eine Literatur haben, wie gut daß es niemand weiß. Amen. (117-18)

Gradually the prejudices against us are crumbling. As literati, it's our responsibility to tear them down. The Italians will join in. They too have many herds of sacred cows. The slaughterers are all my age. We are 20 and more. Some can't stand blood, but that doesn't matter. South Tyrol will have a literature. It's good that nobody knows it. Amen. (Translated by Siegrun Wildner, 86)

Kaser's declaration for a re-birth of South Tyrolean literature explicitly calls for multilingualism and multiculturalism.³ Recognizing the importance of Italians to join the German-speaking literati of South Tyrol, Kaser argues for multicultural, multilingual literature. Naturally, literature should reflect that area's people, and in the South Tyrolean context, there should be German, Italian, and even Ladin literature to accurately reflect South Tyrol's demographics. Moreover, multilingual, multicultural literature attracts the cosmopolitan reader. Its content triggers attention. Not only are Kaser's requests pertinent to reform South Tyrolean literature, accepting Kaser's plea will bolster South Tyrolean literature's reception in the entire world. Kaser's demand echoes 18th century Swiss authors, Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger, who advocated for a "new" German literature in their *Kritische Dichtkunst (Critique of the Art of Poetry)*. Bodmer and Breitinger demand a new German literature, not centered off a nature-oriented 'Heimat' genre. Only a novel, exciting German national literature, concentrating on cosmopolitan, worldly debates, could grant German language literature a position to compete with popular French national literature. Multicultural literature appeals to the cosmopolitan world reader. By expanding the reach of South Tyrolean literature to the global sphere, more people will learn about the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual territory and its complex history. Francesca Melandri's *Eva dorme (Eva sleeps)*, Sabine Gruber's *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht (Roman Elegy)*, and Joseph Zoderer's *Die Walsche (The*

³ Despite Kaser's pleas coming in 1969, South Tyrolean literature did not noticeably pivot its theme until the 1980s, with Joseph Zoderer leading the charge. Contemporary authors like Sabine Gruber, Lilli Gruber, and Ada Zapperi Zucker carried on Kaser's demand for a literary reform more recently. Notably, *Una casa sull'argine* by Gianni Bianco (1965) is an epitome for the new, South Tyrolean literature Kaser envisions.

Italian)⁴ are three contemporary South Tyrolean works that would achieve Norbert Kaser's aspirations. *Eva dorme* and *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* were published in 2010 and 2011 respectively, while *Die Walsche* was published in 1982. Evolving narrative techniques and South Tyrol's ever-changing demographics are reflected in the differences between the two more recently published novels and *Die Walsche*'s setting and plot.

1.1: Towards A Minor, Cosmopolitan Literature

Francesca Melandri's *Eva dorme*, Sabine Gruber's *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and Joseph Zoderer's *Die Walsche* make the political and linguistic history of South Tyrol globally visible because the plots of the novels appeal to readers, while highlighting South Tyrol's ethnic identity debates. Additionally, the novels argue against the subcategorization of cultures, envisioning a multilingual, multicultural paradigm. A multilingual South Tyrolean paradigm undermines xenophobia and the infliction of hate by ethnic Germans or Italians upon one another. A multilingual paradigm intrinsically denounces hate speech and acts because monolingualism and monoculturalism become the natural, accepted, symbolic order.

Eva dorme and *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*'s plots are dynamic and mobile; the settings are not restricted to South Tyrol, but encompass the entire Italian peninsula and Rome respectively. Although the characters' thoughts and feelings repeatedly return to South Tyrol's linguistic and political turmoil, ethnic identity is a predominant theme in both novels. Both are set primarily in the present era; however, they rely heavily on

⁴ *Die Walsche* is a derogatory term to describe Italians in German, predominantly in South Tyrol or German-speaking Switzerland. So the English translation, *The Italian*, is not exact.

narrative flashbacks. *Eva dorme* flashes back to the post-World War II era in South Tyrol, and *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* returns to the Fascist Italian and Nazi occupation of South Tyrol in the 1940s, as well as the stories of poor South Tyrolean women working at tourist hotels in Italian cities.⁵ Thus, the novels accomplish telling a story in the present, about current events, without dismissing identity issues of South Tyrol's past. They connect past historical events in South Tyrol and greater Italy with the present; demonstrating how these events directly affect modern-day ethnic South Tyrolean identity. For this reason, issues of greater 'Italian' identity, specifically Calabrian in *Eva dorme*, unites more significant Italian identity issues with those of South Tyrol's German, Italian, and Ladin speakers. The novels can achieve literary fame worldwide by vividly engaging a global audience.

Contemporary cosmopolitanism demands embracing all human life and culture on our undeniably global planet.⁶ *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *Die Walsche*

⁵ See Lüfter.

⁶ The meaning and uses of the term "cosmopolitanism" has shifted throughout history and, in any given era, the notion has had thinkers who embraced it and those who rejected it. For example, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels tied cosmopolitanism to world economic capitalism and human suffering, thus denouncing "cosmopolitanism"; in Russia, at the onset of the 20th century, musicians were attacked as "cosmopolitan" for embracing too many things foreign, including having Jewish ethnicity, or training abroad in Germany or Italy (Gooley, Dana, "Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Nationalism, 1848–1914," 525); whereas in the 1930s, Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth and Lion Feuchtwanger postulated Jews and Jewish culture as the prototype of a deterritorialized cosmopolitan" (Cathy S. Gelbin, "Nomadic Cosmopolitanism: Jewish Prototypes of the Cosmopolitan in the Writings of Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth and Lion Feuchtwanger, 1918–1933," *Jewish Culture and History*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2015, pp. 157-77).

For an overview of the history of the concept and its current reemergence, see Paulo Lemos Horta and Bruce Robbins, "Introduction," *Cosmopolitanisms*, New York UP, 2017, pp. 1-17; and Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, W.W. Norton, 2006.

support cosmopolitanism. Their protagonists are world citizens who denounce nationalism. Speaking multiple languages, enjoying many cuisines, and concern for fellow world citizens are motifs in each of the novels. Cosmopolitanism as a theme does not erase South Tyrolean national memory, rather cosmopolitanism and national memory work with one another. Daniel Levy and Nathan Sznajder argue, “National and ethnic memories are transformed in the age of globalization rather than erased” (89). *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *die Walsche* recount the historical national memory of ethnic Germans and ethnic Italians battling German Nazism, Italian Fascism, and the tumultuous post-war years in Italy, but add contemporary global stories of non-European residents, minority sexualities, and the aspiring conclusion to embrace cosmopolitanism and all humankind, regardless of linguistic identity, race, or sexuality. Rural and urban South Tyrolean memories of German Nazism, Italian Fascism, and “gli Anni di piombo” (Years of Lead) in the 1960s and 70s, marked by ethnic divide between German and Italian speakers, and political separatist attacks carried out predominantly by the “Südtiroler Volkspartei” (South Tyrolean People’s Party). Characters remember and recount the tragedies of South Tyrol’s history, but at the same time recognize the vitality of global issues, and the benefits of globalization, and contend that class unites individuals more than ethnicity does. Additionally, *Eva dorme* and *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* include stories of recent migration to South Tyrol and Europe by non-Europeans and the minority Ladin community, debunking the narrative that South Tyrolean ethnic divide solely involves ethnic German and ethnic Italian speakers. The novels simultaneously embrace globalization and the local. Characters admire the landscape of their region, or even if gay, facing scrutiny in their rural home, refuse to

leave their beautiful mountains. Admiring cuisine is another motif signifying the combining of national and ethnic memories, while supporting globalization. Characters, ethnic German or ethnic Italian, love their regional cuisine, but also enjoy sampling the cuisine of their neighbors. Finally, South Tyrol's demographics, particularly in urban settings where half of the population speaks Italian and half speaks German, exemplify a multilingual, cosmopolitan paradigm if citizens act with care and passion towards their neighbors. Where else can one enter a local store and buy fresh Knödel (dumplings) and fresh tortellini simultaneously?

South Tyrolean literature is inherently minor, but its authors increasingly seek worldwide recognition. *Eva dorme* and *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* transcend access to the world literary market by representing the 'modern novel' through the process of 'differentiation' and translation. Both novels retain these attributes, but can gain access to a broader world audience with translation, and promotion of this literature in academia or the entertainment industries. New South Tyrolean literature is not only minor since it comes from a small territory, with a population of slightly above half a million, but also because it attempts deterritorialization. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari argue in their essay "Toward a Minor Literature" that,

A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization...The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation. (6-18)

Deterritorialization is a key concept. It involves the writings of a minority subgroup within a major language group. South Tyrolean literati is minor within a larger German and Italian context. Authors pursuing deterritorialization strive to give voice to a minor subgroup within a larger societal framework. Ethnic German, Italian, Ladin, and other linguistic groups that live in South Tyrol experience South Tyrol's complicated history daily. It is impossible not to notice a road sign reading Bolzano/Bozen and wonder why or be unaware of requirements mandating employees to speak German, Italian, or both. Deterritorialization in South Tyrolean literature therefore means giving voice to the shared experiences of South Tyroleans, regardless of native language, to the greater German and Italian speaking societies. The second characteristic of minor literature is connecting the individual to a political immediacy. In literature, this involves the character being directly involved with politics. *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *Die Walsche*'s protagonists and minor characters alike experience similar events to the actual South Tyrolean. By writing about concrete historical events and experiences in South Tyrol, Melandari and Gruber not only connect the characters in their novels to political immediacy, but the entire South Tyrolean population. In addition, dialect and traditional customs are integrated into the plots as embellished on holidays and through cuisine. Upon reading *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, or *Die Walsche*, South Tyroleans identify with the characters' experiences. When non-South Tyroleans read the texts, they may not relate to individual perspectives, but at least will better understand the actual South Tyrolean experience. Does the question then become how to write novels that capture cosmopolitan attention while adhering to the laws of minor literature? This is

the formula to attract both global readership to South Tyrol's complex history and the local South Tyrolean reader to identify with the characters' experiences.

Eva dorme follows the protagonist's Eva long train journey across the Italian peninsula from her rural home village in Pustertal (Val Pusteria) to Reggio Calabria. After receiving a phone call from her childhood father-like figure, Vito, informing Eva of his deadly illness, Eva embarks on the journey to see Vito a final time. The novel shifts between the present day, Eva's recollections of her mother Gerda's childhood during the inter-war years, and Eva's memories of her youth and early years during the 1960s and 70s in South Tyrol.⁷ The post-war 1960s and 70s South Tyrol was a time of ethnic tension between German and Italian speakers. Italian migrants from the South often refused to learn German, and rural German speakers not forced to converse in Italian daily chose not to learn Italian. Political turmoil was prevalent, with separatist leaders like Sivlius Magnago, leader of the "Südtiroler Volkspartei" demanding annexation from Italy. Family, sexuality, linguistic belonging, and xenophobia are themes of the novel.

Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht is narrated from the first-person point of view, but shifts between various protagonists', Clara, Ines, Emma, and Paul's, perspectives.

Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht begins when Clara Burger, an author and mother from a South Tyrolean village, Stillbach, but living in Vienna, receives an unexpected message from Rome that her best-friend Ines, also a writer from her village, has died of cancer. Clara is grateful to escape Vienna, if even briefly, since her marriage with Claus is in a dismal state. Clara travels to Rome to pack up Ines's belongings and stops in her native

⁷ Of course, Eva was not alive when her mother grew up. She heard her mother's and family's stories throughout her life.

village, Stillbach, South Tyrol. Upon arriving in Rome, Clara meets Paul Vogel, a fun-loving, whimsical Austrian historian specializing in World War II. Paul met Ines only once for coffee. Ines was seeking a historian's counsel for her upcoming novel. Clara and Paul grow romantically fond of one another, but at the novel's end, Clara decides to return to Vienna and her family. While searching through Ines's belongings, Clara discovers Ines's forthcoming novel detailing the lives of two South Tyrolean women: Emma Manente, a hotel owner Ines worked for in Rome, originally from Stillbach, and an autobiographical account of Ines's own experiences in Rome upon moving to the Eternal City. Ines's novel shifts between Ines's and Emma's perspectives, with Emma's stream-of-consciousness drifting between the present (1978 in Ines's novel) and the 1930s. Themes include grappling with German Nazism and Italian Fascism, "gli Anni di piombo" (The Years of Lead) in post-fascist Italy, women's rights, and regionalism versus cosmopolitanism.

Joseph Zoderer's *Die Walsche (the Italian)* is a literary classic of South Tyrolean Literature, with a protagonist embracing the multi-ethnic persona. Olga, the protagonist, narrates the story from a first-person perspective. Since early childhood, Olga has been nicknamed "die Walsche" (die Italienerin, the Italian) by fellow villagers since she is the only village child who can speak Italian and delights in learning the compulsory language at school (10). Olga lives in Bolzano with her boyfriend, Silvano, a migrant from Southern Italy, studying at a Polytechnic University. The novel shifts between the present, in Bolzano, flashbacks to village life, and at the end, returns to the village for her father's funeral. Olga's identity crisis illustrates South Tyrol's demographic and cultural state during the post-World War II years. Her rural village devalues her for choosing to

live with an Italian, and among Silvano's circle of friends, she is never equal, a foreign tongue to their ears. The drama details the struggle of Olga's relationship with Silvano and her family, particularly her father, a Nazi World War II veteran, and a fervent German nationalist. Themes of the novel include ethnic linguistic identity, regionalism vs. cosmopolitanism, and class vs. ethnicity.

Pascale Casanova exposes how power dynamics affect the world literary market in *The World Republic of Letters*. Casanova argues that all authors seek recognition in Paris and identified that literature from minor regions risks subversion and that major literatures will prevail on the world market. Examples given by Casanova of minor authors rejected by the dominant literati include Charles Ferdinand Ramuz and Robert Walser (177). Both are Swiss authors, Ramuz Swiss-French, and Walser Swiss-German. This means their status is like that of South Tyrolean authors. Ramuz attempted to join the literary elite of Paris, but was rejected due to his accent. He was too different to be considered French, but not foreign enough to be exotic and embraced by the Parisian literati. After ten years in Paris, Ramuz returned to Switzerland, content to be a local minor writer. Walser attempted to establish himself in Germany, first in Munich, then Berlin, but did not succeed. Like Ramuz, Walser returned to Switzerland, establishing himself as a major Swiss-German writer, but without approval from the dominant German literati.⁸ Like Ramuz and Walser, Joseph Zoderer is satisfied to be a minor, local

⁸Walser is widely read by Swiss-Germans, there is even a foundation museum recognizing him in Bern, the Robert Walser-Zentrum. Unlike Paris for Francophone literature, there is no single German-speaking city home to an established German literati, instead it is Munich, Berlin, and Vienna, with Munich as the historical base for the greatest number of authors. Florence was the historical base of the Italian literati during the Renaissance, but now, Rome, and to a lesser extent Milan, are the literati's hubs.

South Tyrolean author, although his novels also became popular in the greater Italian peninsula after Umberto Gandini and Giovanna Agabio translated them into Italian.⁹ *Die Walsche* is also translated into Russian, but only increased translation can grant linguistically diverse readers access to the novel. Zoderer still lives in the small village Terenten in Pustertal, choosing to live among the local population, like Ramuz and Walser. Just because he is content with being a local minor writer does not mean that Zoderer's novels cannot be read on the cosmopolitan world stage; they can be with translation and heightened promotion. The multilingual paradigm is not only relatable to South Tyrol, but places like Alsace, Hong Kong, New Brunswick, or Texas, to name a few. Zoderer's multilingual paradigm, criticizing xenophobia, appeals to compositionist values. Sabine Gruber lives in Vienna and writes novels alongside plays, but is still more well-known in South Tyrol and Austria than by Germany's dominant German language literati. Francesca Melandri's three novels, *Eva dorme* and *Più alto di mare (Above the Sea)*, and *Sangue giusto (The Right Blood)* receive more praise from the dominant Italian language literati compared to Gruber and Zoderer's works by the dominant German language literati in Germany. Melandri is also a screenwriter and documentary filmmaker. Lastly, she is from and lives in Rome, the center of contemporary Italian literati. Like Zoderer's novels, increased promotion, and translation of Melandri and Gruber's novels would give them a superior platform on the world literary market.

Writing solely at the local level does not allow for global recognition. Asserting how writers from outlying geographic regions can achieve literary recognition,

⁹ Eight out of Zoderer's twenty works have been translated into Italian, so still a minority.

Cassanova states: “In order simply to achieve literary existence, to struggle against the invisibility that threatens them from the very beginning of their careers, writers have to create the conditions under which they can be seen” (177). Admitting that peripheral writers will struggle to achieve literary recognition, one path to achievement is through differentiation (179). Differentiation means advocating for separation from the dominant literati, challenging the dominant literary space. Focus on identity is a reoccurring theme for writers who choose the path of differentiation. Local stories representing a specific space, i.e., South Tyrol, is an example of applying differentiation.

Francesca Melandri is Roman, but lived in Brunico (Bruneck), South Tyrol, for many years. A substantial number of ethnic Italians migrated to and continue to migrate to South Tyrol. Therefore, I treat Melandri as a South Tyrolean author since her status echoes that of many ethnic Italian South Tyroleans. Sabine Gruber grew up in Lana, a village between Merano (Meran) and Bolzano (Bozen), and is an ethnic German speaker, so her status as a South Tyrolean author is clear. Joseph Zoderer was born in Merano in 1935, but his family moved to Graz in 1940, choosing the Nazi’s “Option.”¹⁰ Zoderer’s family returned to South Tyrol in 1949, and he currently divides his time between Terento (Terenten) in Pustertal and Brunico (Bruneck). *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *Die Walsche* apply the process of differentiation, as well as conventions of the popular modern novel, and can achieve literary existence on the world stage with

¹⁰Die Option was Hitler’s invitation for South Tyrolean ethnic German speakers to move to Germany or Austria prior to World War II. Hitler offered them farms and land, if they chose die Option. See: Steininger.

promotion and translation. Like Ramuz and Walser, they do not concede to dominant *lingua literati*, but gain by representing the modern novel, differentiation, and translation.

Eva dorme and *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* exemplify the modern novel, as defined by Franco Moretti in “Conjectures on World Literature.” Moretti hypothesizes: “The modern novel first arises not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between formal western influence (usually French or English) and local materials” (58). Moretti compares the modern novel with the image of a triangle: A foreign plot, local characters, and local narrative voice (65). The plot of *Eva dorme* emerges through her journey from New York to Calabria, via Munich, South Tyrol, Rome, and the entire Italian peninsula. *Stillbach und die Sehnsucht* is set mainly in Rome, a far-away city for the rural South Tyrolean.¹¹ Characters and narrative voice in both novels are distinctly South Tyrolean. *Die Walsche*, on the other hand, is set exclusively in South Tyrol, aside from a brief excursion to Trentino’s nearby Val di Non. Within South Tyrol, the plot pivots between Olga’s unnamed rural German-speaking village and the unnamed Italian-majority city, evidently Bolzano.¹²

David Damrosch shows how novels and authors gain from translation in *What is World Literature*. Damrosch cites how authors like Goethe embraced the translations of their writings. Goethe was aware that translation made his works more accessible to non-German readers. Of course, translating is complex, and translators face the excruciating

¹¹ There is a small portion in Venice, and flashbacks to the protagonists fictitious home village of Stillbach, South Tyrol. I will get to this in greater detail when summarizing the novels.

¹² The city is unnamed, but definitely Bolzano, since monuments such as Mussolini’s Victory Monument are in the city’s neighborhoods.

task of finding colloquial language in the language they translate to, that fits the colloquial meaning in the original. Additionally, this is more difficult when non-standard forms of a language are in the original editions: In *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *Die Walsche* this includes South Tyrolean German and Calabrian Italian. Future work translating South Tyrolean literature is imperative for its literature to be widely accessible on the world literary market. Melandri's works have been translated into English, French, German, Dutch, Ukrainian, Croatian, Greek, and Hebrew. Gruber's works to English, Russian, Slovakian, Swedish, Italian, Finnish, Turkish, and Arabic. Zoderer's novels are translated into Italian, Russian, Slovenian, and Japanese. *Die Walsche* was adapted into a 1986 film directed by Werner Masten.¹³

¹³ Francesca Melandri's *Eva dorme* is translated into all the languages listed for her, *Sangue giusto* is not translated, and *Più alto di mare* does not deal with South Tyrol. Sabine Gruber's *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* is translated only into English, Italian, and Turkish. Joseph Zoderer's *Die Walsche* is translated into Italian and Russian.

Chapter 2: *Eva dorme*

2.1: The Popular Epic Drama

Eva dorme illuminates South Tyrol's devastating past and complex contemporary identity debate on the world stage by representing the modern novel and implementing the process of differentiation. Readers are intrigued by the epic-journey plot, but the novel also includes local material, such as South Tyrolean and Calabrian cuisine, South Tyrolean and Calabrian dialect, and historical political uprisings, to educate an audience on ethnic identity issues in South Tyrol. *Eva dorme* begins at Chilometro (Kilometer) 0, the Munich Airport. By noting the kilometer mark, which is done throughout the story, *Eva dorme* becomes an epic journey. The protagonist Eva is an attractive, assertive woman, arriving in Munich from a New York art preview.¹⁴

Io, anche dopo nove ore di volo ero vestita e truccata come per I vernissage di New York da cui provenivo: abito in jersey verde pistacchio di Donna Karan, orecchini a goccia, ballerine. (13)

As for me, even after a nine-hour flight, I'm dressed and made up as if for the New York Art previews, which is indeed where I'm coming from. Pistachio green Donna Karan Jersey ensemble, pendant earrings, pumps. (Gregor, 2016, 21)

¹⁴ Eva works as an event organizer in New York; however, this is not revealed until the novels end, upon meeting Vito. Until then, Eva's mannerisms mimic that of a wealthier, or more educated individual.

Eva is intriguing. Living in New York, a cosmopolitan, she becomes a captivating protagonist. Eva is returning home from the Easter Holiday. Carlo, an old friend, drives Eva from the Munich Airport to an unspecified village in South Tyrol's Puster Valley, presumably near Bruneck. After hearing that her long-lost quasi father figure, Vito, is terminally ill, Eva embarks on a train journey to Reggio Calabria to finally reunite with Vito.

Clearly, *Eva dorme*'s plot conforms to the laws of popular fiction. The story is an epic journey and drama, as Eva seeks to reunite with her long-lost father figure, a reflective journey across Italy. The frantic phone call and urge to rekindle a relationship with the adult she had the closest bond to during childhood, Vito, and the long-awaited reunion of Eva and Vito is the epitome of a drama with a blissful gratifying ending, leaving the reader on the verge of tears. Exhausted after the endless train journey, Eva falls asleep on Vito's belly.

Il sonno arriva a tradimento: mi era accanto, ma non l'ho visto finché non mi ha ghermito. Sento ancora Gabriele che entra nella stanza con il caffè, e Vito che dice: "Eva lo prende dopo. Adesso dorme." (310)

"But it's late now," I say. "It's not late. It's just later." Sleep creeps up on me like a thief: it was next to me but I didn't see it until I was in its Clutches. I can still hear Gabriele coming into the room with the coffee, and Vito saying, "Eva will drink it afterwards. Now, she's asleep." (363-4)

Adesso dorme, sleep now. The novel's title is elucidated in Eva and Vito's long overdue reunion. Shedding tears is inevitable as Eva reminisced of her childhood with Vito throughout her train journey. Vito is not a stranger the audience encounters only at the

novel's end, but a loving, warm character with a complex past as a Calabrian struggling to live a life in South Tyrol. Although Vito tries earnestly to establish himself within ethnic German-speaking South Tyrolean culture, he ultimately fails. Additionally, his Calabrian family questions his motives for remaining in South Tyrol, instead of marrying a local girl, which eventually he does. Vito's wife is cheerful upon meeting Eva, but unnamed. Nameless because this is not the story of Vito and his wife, but Vito's life in South Tyrol and his relationship with Eva and Gerda. The climactic, bittersweet ending is the final characteristic of *Eva dorme* conforming to the demands of the conventional drama, and importantly, it grants *Eva dorme* a space on the world literary market. *Eva dorme* is not just a fairytale. By applying the process of differentiation and integrating local, specifically South Tyrolean materials in the narrative, *Eva dorme* is a popular novel.

2.2: The Process of Differentiation and Ethnic Identity

As Casanova noted, identity is a central theme for writers who choose to elicit fame through the process of differentiation. I do not suggest *Eva dorme* is non-conforming to established literati,¹⁵ since it matches the narrative devices of a popular epic drama. However, within the story, Melandri applies the process of differentiation, highlighting ethnic identity as a central theme of the text. 'Local materials,' essential to the modern novel per Moretti, arise throughout the text. Examples include the history of Bolzano's Shanghai neighborhood, the Feuernacht (night of fire), and Vito's reoccurring, impossible attempt to establish himself within South Tyrol's German-speaking

¹⁵ In *Eva dorme*'s case, the contemporary dominant literary establishments in Rome and Milan.

community as a Southern Italian.¹⁶ Confronting ethnic identity directly in popular fiction gives a voice to South Tyrolean history.

History does not have to be narrated using the traditional historical model, but can also explain itself in literature. Dominick LaCapra details the complicated relationship between truth claims (writing history) within the context of literature.¹⁷ LaCapra argues that truth claims' relationship to art does not follow a single path, but is complicated by performative dimensions in art. Nonetheless, LaCapra stresses that truth claims do emerge in art. Summarizing his argument, LaCapra notes: "In brief, the interaction or mutually interrogative relation between historiography and art is more complicated than is suggested by either an identity or a binary opposition between the two, a point that is becoming increasingly forceful in recent attempts to reconceptualize the study of art and culture" (15). Mutual interaction between history and art is complicated by the fact that art's goals are many, including: To be rhetorical, emotive, performative, and in the case of *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *Die Walsche*, provide historical accounts for the readership.

"Die Option" (the Option) in South Tyrol was the option allowed by the Nazis for South Tyrolean German speakers to move to Germany beginning in 1939. The National Socialist Regime promised to grant homes and farms to South Tyrolean farmers who opted to immigrate to Germany. "Die Option" created a rift among ethnic German South Tyroleans. Those that left were labeled "Optanten" and those who remained "Dableiber".

¹⁶ The Feuernacht was when South Tyrolean separatists, led by Silvius Magnago, blew up 37 electricity pylons in 1961. This triggered the Italian government to send more soldiers to the region.

¹⁷ To be explicitly clear, LaCapra states that art includes literary fiction.

A majority of South Tyroleans chose “die Option”, however, at the wars’ end, “die Dableiber” made up most of the population. “Die Dableiber” were tied to nature and their homeland, even if staying in Fascist Italy victimized German-speakers as second-class citizens. After the war, “Rücksiedler” was the term applied to families who opted for Germany during the war, but returned to South Tyrol at the wars’ end. “Die Dableiber” labeled “die Rücksiedler” as traitors, claiming they left their homeland in Tyrol for a Nazi Germany destined to fail. Suddenly, as if nothing had transpired, they wanted to be welcomed back to South Tyrol. It is important to sympathize with both groups, understandingly “die Optanten” wanted to return to South Tyrol, familiar with the dialect and customs, unlike Germany, but “die Dableiber,” frustrated, rightfully critiqued their “Optanten” neighbors as traitors, choosing only what is best for their individual life’s, not the South Tyrolean community. “Die Dableiber” versus “die Rücksiedler” is a motif in *Eva dorme*, two working-class ethnic German groups pitted against each other, victims of German National Socialism and its laws.

Eva’s first flashbacks on her train journey are to the years between 1925 and 1961. She remembers and tells her mother Gerda’s story. Gerda’s family were “Rücksiedler,” she grew up in the slum neighborhood of Shanghai, two miles from the nearest store, well known as a problem neighborhood, monitored by Italian Carabinieri (National Italian Police). The Italian government placed all “Rücksiedler” in “Shanghai.”¹⁸ Denis Cosgrove notes in his essay “Carto-city” that: “Maps of social and

¹⁸ Shanghai (spelt Schanghai in *die Walsche*) is a district on the outskirts of Bolzano. Mussolini initially designed the district to place “Rücksiedler” to strengthen the social divide between “Dableiber” and “Rücksiedler.” In later years, it became the home to poorer immigrant groups, first from Southern Italy and in recent years, from outside

ethnic status have shaped the political life of urban democracies, nowhere more dramatically than in the case of the twentieth-century American zoning maps, used by housing and loan companies for ‘red-lining’ inner-city ghettos and later by government agencies to assert and monitor civil rights” (170). While the United States applied zoning to shape urban space most profoundly, many urban democracies used zoning to shape urban space. Placing a segment of the population (“Rücksiedler”) despised by another demographic (“Dableiber”) into a designated urban space, the majority “Dableiber” could easily target “Rücksiedler.” Michel de Certeau would classify these urban planning politicians as voyeur-gods, casting evil upon Bolzano’s citizens. Controlling urban demographic space is a method to position ethnic German speakers against one another, sabotaging their common goal, to preserve their South Tyrolean-Germanic cultural customs.

Since Eva narrates all the flashbacks in the novel, presumably she is reliving family stories heard during her childhood. In the opening reflection, Eva details her mother Gerda’s difficult upbringing in the Bolzano slum and the unavoidable separation between political and domestic life. Gerda’s family, “Rücksiedler”, were victims of the intentional, political division of “Rücksiedler” contra “Dableiber.” Since Mussolini relocated all “Rücksiedler” families to the same “Shanghai” slum neighborhood it was easy to identify who the “Rücksiedler” and who the “Dableiber” were. She remembers a story from her friend Ulli’s¹⁹ father, Peter, who grew up in “Shanghai” after his family

Europe. The name Shanghai echoes orientalist attitudes, viewing the inhabitants of Shanghai as the lesser, exotic, other.

¹⁹ One of Eva’s best friends, a gay man who is now deceased.

returned from Bavaria. Peter was a victim of bullying at school. Ruthless bullying exemplifies how politics affects daily life, leading to identity trauma. “Nessun madre avrebbe permesso a un suo coetaneo di andare a giocare a casa sua, a Shanghai. I compagni lo tormentavano, poi gli dicevano: ‘Non ti piace qui? Nessuno ti ha chiesto di tornare’” (31). “No mother would allow a child his age to go and play in Shanghai. His schoolmates bullied him then said: ‘Don’t like it here? Well, nobody asked you to come back’” (43). Bullying is traumatizing, most readers can identify with the effects of bullying. Children should not be forced to deal with political turmoil. Sadly, children hear the angry arguments between their parents and neighbors about leaving or staying. Politics turned ethnic identity not only into a German versus Italian conflict, but a conflict between ethnic German speakers. “Dableiber” contra “Rücksiedler” is only one example of the impact of politics on everyday life. Politics positions families against one another.

Eva reflects upon specific historical partisan attacks as she recalls her mother’s childhood stories. Gerda remembers the sleepless night her brother Johann did not return home until dawn after committing a terrorist attack with the independence movement on the Monumento alla Vittoria (Siegesdenkmal, Victory Monument). Mussolini built the monument in 1926 to celebrate Italy’s War victory over Austria and the annexation of Tirol. Peter, Gerda’s brother, aligned with South Tyrolean separatists, sprayed Mussolini’s victory monument with the Tyrolean flag’s colors.

Qualche anno dopo, una notte Peter tornò a casa che quasi albeggiava. Sua madre, che Non riusciva mai a dormire fino a quando il suo primogenito non era di nuovo a casacapri subito: non era dalla caccia che Peter tornava. I suoi vestiti non

odoravano di bosco e polvere da sparo, ed erano sporchi di vernice bianca e rossa. (36)

One night, a couple of years later, Peter came back home at dawn. His mother, who could never get to sleep until her first-born was back, knew immediately: Peter hadn't been hunting. His clothes didn't smell of forest or gunpowder, but were soiled with red and white paint. (49)

Identity trauma leads to committing insurgent attacks. Political and domestic life are inseparable. Johanna (Gerda's mother) is innately aware that Peter committed the attack with the Tyrolean separatists, but does not scold Peter as she supports South Tyrolean independence from Italy. The entire family is conscious of Peter's involvement, and the story is deliberately passed on orally to Eva's generation, with the hope to never be forgotten. Melandri, in turn, places the oral story in writing, passing on the history of German-speakers' struggles in post-war Italy. The outside reader, unfamiliar with historical controversies in post-war South Tyrol, or the commoner's daily collision with politics, learns vis-à-vis Gerda's narrative.

South Tyroleans hail from disparate valleys, but unite to separate. Regional linguistic variations exist throughout Italy and the German-speaking world; however, use of dialect is more predominant in prose than narrative.²⁰ The largest protest in South Tyrolean history took place at Castel Firmiano/Schloss Sigmundskron (Sigmundskron Castle) in 1957. Protestors gathered to listen to Silvius Magnago, the South Tyrolean Independence Party leader, calling for independence from Italy. Again, Eva retells her

²⁰ See Haller.

mother's story of the protest, invoking dialect to expose the diversity of South Tyrol's population.

Come Gerda e Peter, erano partiti a notte fonda su camion, autobus, auto, motociclette, trattori. Provenivano dai dintorni di Bolzano, dall'Oltreadige, ma anche dalle valli più lontane: Ahrntal, Schlanders, Passeier, Martell, Gsies, Vinschgau. Dai posti dove in dialetto sio conta *oasn, zwoa...*, e da quelli dove invece si dice *aans, zwa*. (44-45)

Like Gerda and Peter, they had left in the middle of the night on trucks, buses, cars motorcycles, tractors. They came from the outskirts of Bolzano, Oltreadige, but also from valleys farther away: Ahrntal, Schlanders, Passier, Martell, Gsies, Vinschgau. From places where, in dialect, you count *oans, zwoa...* and also those where you say *aans, zwa*. (59)

Dialect diversifies South Tyrol's image. Inserting dialect exemplifies executing the process of differentiation. Local materials, like local language, are fundamental to the narrative. Alexander Beecroft argues that narrators create national-identity.²¹ While a great deal of literature is written for elites, dialect creates a voice for the lower-class and national identities. Beecroft notes: "In other words, narrators are in some sense also nation-builders...Founders of nations and narrators of novels alike build imaginary worlds linking disparate individuals to their actions, creating out of these materials stories that are compelling and meaningful" (417). The Castel Firmiano protest does not only

²¹ See Beecroft.

highlight the collectiveness of a dialectically diverse population, but the uniting of a working-class uprising.

As a narrator, Eva unifies the protestors to one another, constructing a uniform ethnic-German South Tyrolean identity. (I use the term ethnic-German South Tyrolean identity instead of “South Tyrolean identity” since the protestors share a commonality speaking a German dialect. South Tyrol’s minority Italian and Ladin speakers are not part of this population. Protestors from separate valleys, speaking various dialects, consolidate an ethnic-German South Tyrolean nation-state. The narrator is responsible for connecting individuals and creating a national identity. Although less prevalent than the German, Italian dialect is part of ethnic-Italian South Tyrolean identity and daily life, especially in urban centers. Southern Italian dialect assists recent migrants to cope with homesickness. Nostalgically, Vito refers to Eva as his *sisiduzza* in Calabrian, especially when he misses the sunny Italian south. Like the ethnic German “Dableiber” vs “Rücksiedler” Italians from the north and south of the Italian peninsula are derogatory against each other. For example, northern Italian’s call southerners *Terrone*.²² Eva continues to recount Silvius Magnango’s speech at Castel Firmiano and the crowd chanting “Los von Trient, los von Rom” (Away from Trento, away from Rome). Many wanted to separate with Trento, the southern and majority/historically ethnic Italian province. Originally, Alto-Adige encompassed both South Tyrol and Trentino.²³

²² For example, see page 94, when a co-worker mocks Gerda’s German accent, another co-worker tells her not to worry, she is just a *Terrona*.

²³ Eventually, after the founding of the European Union, South Tyrol, and Trentino became two separate provinces.

Mixed ethnic German-Italian individuals is another demographic group that arose during South Tyrol's Italianization era. How do couples of mixed ethnicities navigate life in the region? Do they favor one culture over the other? Do they choose to study in Italian or German? Are they equally sensitive and empathetic to discrimination faced by both ethnic groups? Silvius Magnago, South Tyrol's governor between 1960 and 1980, and the leader of the Südtiroler Volkspartei (South Tyrolean People's Party), offers a case study for a mixed German and Italian individual. He chose the Nazi's "Option" to live in Germany, but studied at the University of Bologna. Despite this, Magnago was one of the foremost supporters of South Tyrolean independence and advocated for German speakers. Magnago repeatedly appears in *Eva dorme*, although the narrator Eva does not admire him as a leader, as historical texts often do, but, rather, she portrays him as a bigot. A 1981 law promoted by Magnago required citizens to identify as either German, Italian, or Ladin on the census in order to work and earn state benefits. Claiming to be multi-ethnic was not an option. Eva and Ulli protested with several youth, and in Eva's stream-of-consciousness, she criticizes Magnago's hypocrisy: "Propio lui, figlio di una tedesca e un italiano, aveva preso a dire: 'Nicht Knödel mit Spaghetti mischen,' canederli e spaghetti non vanno mescolati" (239). "He, of all people, the son of a German mother and an Italian father, had started saying, 'Nicht Knödel mit Spaghetti mischen,' you shouldn't mix dumplings with spaghetti" (281).²⁴

²⁴ Knödel means dumpling, and is an extremely popular cuisine in South Tyrol, with many varieties, including: Cheese, Spinach, Bread, Potato, Bacon, and more. Another example of applying local materials to the novel.

The discrimination and fear of the ‘other’ is also applicable to the Italian population. Vito’s mother, Mariangela Annania nè Mollica, does not understand how her son is in love with Gerda Huber. Critical of him marrying a woman with such a despicably sounding name, she urges him to return to Calabria and marry a family friend’s daughter, Sabrina. During trips home, Vito scribbled German surnames in an attempt to educate his mother, but she became distraught by their harsh sounds.

Schwingshackl. Niederwolfsgruber. Tschurtschenthaler. Altro che ridere, la facevano scantare, manco una vocale, tutte consonanti, e no consonanti normali ma cappa e acca e doppia vu. Ma che nomi sono? (264)

Schwingshackl. Niederwolfsgruber. Tschurtschenthaler. She didn’t find them funny, but on the contrary, they annoyed her, there wasn’t even one vowel, all consonants, and not even normal consonants, but Ks, and Hs, and Ws. What kind of names were they, anyway? (309)

Criticizing anti-German sentiment is equally vital to *Eva dorme* as is critiquing anti-Italian sentiment. Making fools of figures such as Silvius Magnago and Vito’s mother is a critique against xenophobia. Notably, the novel also elevates characters who embrace multiculturalism, such as Herr Neumann, the head chef at the restaurant where Gerda worked. Food is his reason for this. Neumann appreciates that he can buy typical German meats at the butcher, but in addition Italian cuts as well, admiring their taste and exotic names like “*filetto, sottofiletto, fesa, and spalla*” (177). Neumann credits the Venetian, Calabrian, and Sicilian migrants for this. To embody multiculturalism, recognizing the benefits of a multilingual, multiethnic state should be the novel method for South

Tyrolean state to embrace both German and Italian culture. *Eva dorme* calls for a new, integrated South Tyrolean state.

2.3: Identity and the Modern: More than just a German dilemma

The past dominates her thoughts during Eva's journey as she traverses the Italian peninsula. She ponders what the Italian migrants thought of the mountains and narrow valley at Fortezza as she passes by on the train. "Cos'avranno pensato I ferrovieri fatti venire da Mussolini quando sono arrivati qui da Rovigo, Caserta, Bisceglie, Sulmona?" (51) "What could the railroad men Mussolini brought here from Rovigo, Caserta, Bisceglie, Sulmona thought upon arrival?" (my translation). Like Eva, the reader connects the landscape with history and identity. Ethnic Germans fall victim to political turmoil in South Tyrol, as do the Italian migrants. There are no victors among common people from the Italianization decrees. Italian migrants left their homeland for financial incentives to a region with a foreign language, foreign customs, and a foreign colder geography. Typically, the Italians are not considered victims in the South Tyrolean question. Eva's thoughts authenticate how identity affects the entire South Tyrolean population, including us as readers, encountering ethnic identity traumas.

Recent migration to South Tyrol accentuates the linguistic demographic as more complex than simply Italian, German, or Ladin. Since the founding of the European Union, harmony has focused on unity between ethnic German, Italian, and Ladin speakers. Recent migrants to the area face a state of conundrum: Do they consider themselves nationals of their home country, Italian, purely South Tyrolean? After Eva arrives in her mother's village at the beginning of the novel, she meets her Chinese

neighbors, who share their humorous endeavor filling out the South Tyrolean census forms.

Qui (Alto-Adige) il signor Song risiedeva quando, al censimento del 2001, gli fu chiesto di mettere una croce su una di tre caselle: italiano, tedesco o ladino.

Nessun'altra possibilità era ammessa, solo queste tre sono le etnie riconosciute in Alto Adige. Per partecipare dei benefici dalla Regione a statuto speciale era necessario compilare e firmare la dichiarazione d'appartenenza al gruppo linguistico. L'intestazione del formulario, in tedesco, diceva:

Sprachgruppenzugehörigkeitsklärung. Il signor Song, così mi ha raccontato lui stesso, fissò a lungo quella parola. Trentasei lettere. Undici sillabe. Benché sia poliglotta (italiano, inglese, mandarino e ormai anche un po' di tedesco), la sua lingua madre è il dialetto di Shandong: una lingua tonale e, soprattutto, monosillabica. (19)

That's (South Tyrol) where Signor Song was living when, during the 2001 census, they asked him to tick one of the following boxes: Italian, German, or Ladin.

There was no room for any other option, since these are the only three ethnic groups recognized in South Tyrol. To receive the benefits of the region with special status you had to fill in and sign a declaration of belonging to the language group. The heading on the form said, in German,

Sprachgruppenzugehörigkeitsklärung. Signor Song told me he stared at that word for a long time. Thirty-six letters. Eleven syllables. Although he is a polyglot (Italian, English, Mandarin, and now also some German), his mother-tongue is Shandong dialect: a tonal and especially monosyllabic language. (28-29)

Song eventually checks Italian, since he could not relate to a language with thirty-six letter words. Naturally, a preponderance of literature concentrates on Italian-German (and sometimes Ladin) relations. For instance, past great novels, such as Gianni Bianco's *Una casa sull'argine* (1965) and Joseph Zoderer's *Die Walsche* (1982) are romance novels in which an ethnic Italian man falls in love with an ethnic German-speaking South Tyrolean. The theme of *Una casa sull'argine* is how and if the Italian protagonist Michele can navigate village life with ethnic German speakers who constantly diminish him. Comparatively, *Die Walsche*'s protagonist Olga does not mold perfectly into her rural ethnic German village or ethnic-Italian urban life. Olga's village rejects Silvano, Olga's Italian boyfriend. Upon returning to the heavily Italian concentrated neighborhoods of Bolzano, the Italian male protagonists in both novels notice the cruel treatment of Italian patrons to German clients, refusing to let them shop in their markets. Everyone, Italian and German, faces discrimination, and sadly, resentments turn into discriminating against others. Melandri modernizes South Tyrol's identity debacle by telling the Song family's story. It is critical to tell and include stories of all persons, not just German, Italian, or Ladin speakers. Questions such as: To which nation/language do I belong? are eternal and unanswerable. Perhaps the best answer is part of each culture, Chinese, Italian, South Tyrolean, and German in Song's case. Embracing multiculturalism is utopian, but understandingly challenging. *Eva dorme* embraces multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism.

Previous South Tyrolean literature does not approach transcultural issues, but hyper-focuses on the Italian versus German identity debate.²⁵ Obviously, checking a box on a census form is absurd and results in irrelevant questioning from multi-ethnic individuals. Transcultural literature promotes a global identity, not national. By including the stories of the Song family and embracing German-Italian friendship, *Eva dorme* is no longer just a South Tyrolean novel, but a global novel, relevant to a broader audience than just South Tyrol itself. Wolfgang Welsch defines transculturality, contextualizing it to align with today's modern world. Welsch writes: "Transculturality is, in the first place, a consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures. These encompass a number of ways of life and culture, which also interpenetrate or emerge from one another" (4). The term transcultural offers a novel theoretical approach to analyzing contemporary global literature. Eva embodies the transcultural protagonist: Living in New York, she is a fluent South Tyrolean German Speaker, and empathetic with respect to Italian Culture. Most importantly, she values migrants' contribution to South Tyrol. By including a trilingual protagonist and transcultural themes, *Eva dorme* argues against the subcategorization of cultures and promotes a multilingual world paradigm, and multicultural South Tyrolean province.

Eva's best friend Ulli is a gay man. Eva had known Ulli since youth when Eva and Ulli's families first became close. Remembering the happy and sad life experiences she went through with her best friend Ulli is a reoccurring theme in the novel, just as is recalling traumatic political experiences and tragic experiences her mother Gerda

²⁵ By previous literature, I mean from the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, when transcultural issues were not as prominent a theme in World Literature.

endured. Richard McNally may classify these memories as intrusive, distressing recollections: “involuntary thoughts about the trauma” (106). Ulli and Eva embark on many journeys together, including ski trips and the beach at Formia. They share endless stories of their families’ past and struggles to reintegrate into South Tyrolean life. Both Eva and Ulli’s families are “Rücksiedler.” Tragically, Ulli commits suicide, unable to reconcile with being a gay man and his desire to remain in South Tyrol. In the first place, he struggles to come out and, upon doing so, meets men that pressure him to escape South Tyrol for the metropolis, like Berlin, to be around more gays. However, Ulli does not want to leave his family and the magnificent mountains. Relating stories like Ulli’s is another example of bringing contemporary discourse into South Tyrolean literature. How can gays live in South Tyrol? In a village environment? Whether due to family, or a passion for fresh mountain air, gay individuals should not feel that they must migrate to cities. Upon eventually finding a soulmate, Costa, Ulli feels torn and divided. Should he stay in South Tyrol or leave with Costa? When Ulli introduces Costa to his family, Ulli’s homophobic brother Sigi grabs Costa and shoves his head down their outdoor toilet. Eva captures Ulli’s thoughts as he grapples with remaining in his homeland, choosing Costa, or death: “Costa avrebbe volute trasferirsi a Berlino, che a Ulli piaceva, c’era già Statoò però non riusciva a immaginarsi di vivere così lontano dalle sue montagne” (252). “Costa wanted to move to Berlin, which Ulli liked, he’d been there; but he couldn’t imagine living so far away from his mountains” (296). After Ulli’s death, Eva reflects on the numerous unresolved issues that plagued Ulli, ultimately leading to his suicide:

Ulli non voleva andare a vivere a Berlino, a Londra, a Vienna come tutti gli dicevano di Fare. Non voleva essere il figlio *schwul* dell’eroe che aveva donato la

vita per lui...Voleva solo essere se stesso lì dov'era nato, e poter amare chi amava. (261-2)

Ulli didn't want to go live in Berlin, London, or Vienna, like everyone was telling him to do. He didn't want to be the *schwul* son of the hero who'd given his life for him. He only wanted to be himself where he was born and to love the person he loved. (305-6)

Combining local materials, unique traumas South Tyrolean citizens experience with conventions of the popular drama novel, such as the epic journey through Italy and sad suicide story, *Eva dorme* epitomizes the modern novel. The romance between Gerda and Vito is poignant throughout with lines such as: "I tuoi occhi sono belli e tristi" (248). "Your eyes are beautiful and sad" (291). Applying conventions of the modern novel is the first step to bringing it to the world market. Furthermore, telling stories of minorities who are not ethnically Italian or German and marginalized groups is vital to adequately address contemporary identity traumas in South Tyrol. Promoting transcultural identity includes embracing different genders and sexualities. Finally, the novel and the argument for a multilingual, multicultural paradigm boosts *Eva dorme*'s appeal on the world literary market by relying on local material and hyper focusing on identity (the process of differentiation) and utilizing conventions of the modern novel, fast-paced and individual stories.

Chapter 3: *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*?

3.1: The “Foreign” Novel

Sabine Gruber’s *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht (Roman Elegy)* construes the political and linguistic history of South Tyrol, with the potential of accessing the world literary market by relying on local materials and conforming to traditional narrative tropes. Unlike *Eva dorme*, most of the novels’ plot takes place in Rome, a foreign capital for ethnic-German South Tyroleans, especially rural ones. A cosmopolitan center, with a Mediterranean, not Alpine climate, Italianate, not Germanic architecture, and a foreign language, Italian, is the city’s lingua franca. The three central protagonists: Clara, Ines, and Emma, are ethnic-German South Tyrolean’s trying to navigate life in their nation’s capital, which is “foreign” to them. They share similar emotions to Vito in *Eva dorme*, feeling like foreigners in their home nation of Italy. Vito is a foreigner in South Tyrol; Clara, Ines, and Emma are foreigners in Rome, all in their country of citizenship, Italy. Positioning Rome as the novel’s main setting exemplifies how it conforms to the foreign plot advocated by Franco Moretti. Admirable protagonists, particularly Ines, embrace speaking multiple languages and embodying multiple cultures. *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* endorses a multilingual, multicultural paradigm.

Clara and Paul’s story is set in the present; Ines’s novel within a novel is set in both 1930 and 1978. Emma moved to Rome during the 1930s amidst fascism. Ines moved to Rome in 1978, when many Italians associated the region with terrorism and the

pro-German independence leader, Silvius Magnago. Ines's and Emma's story is essentially a novel within the novel. Clara reads Ines's book within the context of the greater novel, resulting in half the novel set in 2009 and half in 1978. How can ethnic South Tyrolean Germans navigate life in other parts of Italy? Is living in Austria preferred? Are their experiences unique from a feminine perspective? *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* wrestles with these questions, observing the protagonists befriending Italians along their journeys.

The South Tyrolean reader sympathizes with Emma's experiences. Those who have been to Rome share the feeling of being a foreigner in their nation's capital. In the 1930s, when South Tyrol was in economic despair, it was common to seek employment in Italian cities, which required no visa, unlike other nearby German-speaking nations. South Tyrolean women often sought employment at hotels in Italian cities during the 1930s. Consequently, Emma moves to Rome after searching through many ads in her local newspaper.

Emma war nichts anderes übriggeblieben, als sich die Arbeit anderswo zu suchen, im Eigenen, fremden Land, für das man im Gegensatz zur Schweiz und Deutschland keine Aufenthaltsgenehmigung brauchte. Das *Katholische Sonntagsblatt* war voll von Anzeigen gewesen. Italienische Familien suchten nach einer *ragazza tedesca*, einem *Deutschen Mädchen*, das als gesund, tüchtig, ehrlich sauber und anständig galt, gleichzeitig warnte man darin vor Mädchenhändlern, die oft jüdischer Abstammung seien. (92-3)

Emma had had no choice but to look for work elsewhere, in her own foreign country, where, unlike Switzerland or Germany, you didn't need a residence

permit. The *Catholic Sunday News* was full of small ads. Plenty of Italian families were looking for *ragazze tedesce* — ‘German girls’ — who had a good reputation for being fit, efficient, honest, clean and well brought-up. At the very same time, the paper warned its readers to beware of girl-traffickers, who it claimed were often of Jewish extraction. (Lewis69-70)

Three identity and xenophobic traits are tangled in the previous quotation: First, Emma’s resistance against Italianization, citing Italy as her own foreign country. Secondly, the advertisement stereotypes Germans. These are false-positive stereotypes, creating the imagery for Italians to view the ethnic-German workers as conforming to their rules. Unlike Italian workers, ethnic-German South Tyroleans are expected to work diligently with fervor. Required to conform to higher standards than their compatriots’ results in German workers facing stricter treatment in the workplace. Finally, antisemitism is forever present in a land that recently collaborated with Nazism.²⁶

Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht is plagued with characters revealing internal biases. The above section exposes mass-Italian biases against ethnic-Germans. Emma’s thoughts show that she conforms to these beliefs, viewing Italians as lazy and lethargic. Above all, Emma remembers the 1930s as an employee, now, as a boss, Emma eyes her ethnic-Italian employees as lazy. She portrays her employee Alessandra as sluggish, spending too much time on details and trivial tasks. Although Emma’s husband is Italian and she has lived in Rome for almost fifty years, she retains anti-Italian biases.

²⁶ Between 1943 and the World War II’s end, Nazi Germany occupied South Tyrol. The Nazis annexed the region after Mussolini’s surrender. Respecting Mussolini and Fascist Italy’s past, they did not harm ethnic Italians living in South Tyrol and protected them from attacks by ethnic-German speakers.

Emma stand im Türrahmen zum Speisesaal und beobachtete Antonella; die war nicht ungeschickt, aber zu langsam, und sie verwendete zu viel Zeit auf Äußerlichkeiten, ordnete lieber die Schnittblumen in den kleinen Vasen, anstatt das Wasser zu wechseln, faltete kunstvoll Servietten und vergaß die Dessertlöffelchen. (94)

Emma was standing in the dining-room doorway watching Antonella. The girl wasn't clumsy, but she was slow, and she wasted too much time on unimportant things, rearranging the cut flowers in their vase instead of changing the water, or folding serviettes into pretty shapes but forgetting to put out dessert spoons. (71)

Since Emma defines and paints Italians as slow, she prefers to employ South Tyrolean chambermaids to local Roman girls. For this reason, Emma perpetuates the practices that brought her to South Tyrol and recruited South Tyrolean chambermaids. This is how Ines comes to work at Emma Manente's hotel.

Ines's experience navigating life in Rome is the most intense of the three protagonists²⁷ due to turmoil in the 1970s. During the 1930s, Mussolini's fascist laws and the impending war were of greater concern to most Italians than the anti-German, pro-Italianization reforms initiated by Mussolini in the 1930s. Also, overall, in the year 2009, less tension exists since South Tyrol has autonomous rights compared to other Italian provinces and due to the existence of the European Union. The 1970s was different, however, with conflicts such as the Castle Firmiano riots and leaders, such as Silvius Magnago, demanding separation from Italy. In turn, Italians saw South Tyroleans as

²⁷ Compared with Clara and Emma.

terrorists and ethnic-German South Tyroleans were as fervent as ever to separate. After deciding to leave Stillbach for Rome and work at Emma Manente's hotel, Ines faces criticism from her aunt: „Tante Hilda hatte erzählt, daß die Manente den Krieg in Rom verbracht hatte, weil sie schwanger geworden war. Nicht von irgendeinem Soldaten, sondern vom Sohn des Hotelbesitzers. Von einem unstandesgemäßen Italiener“ (99). “Aunt Hilda had told me that Ms. Manente had spent the war in Rome because she got pregnant. Not by a soldier, but the hotel proprietor's son. By some lowly Italian, in some other words” (74). Aunt Hilda's comments demonstrate her contempt for all things Italian. She questions why her niece desires to live in Rome, she would never choose to live amongst ethnic-Italians.

Rome does not offer a reprieve from discrimination for Ines; instead, she becomes a specimen for inspection. After arriving in Rome, she meets her roommate, Antonella, who cannot understand what Ines is: „«Aber wenn du keine Deutsche bist», sagte Antonella, «was dann?»“(124). ““So, if you're not a German,' demanded Antonella, 'then what are you?’” (101). To Antonella, South Tyrolean's and Germans are the same, nationalistic, and cling to their Nazi-past. Antonella's probing provokes Ines. She is reticent and unsure, having been drawn to the rhythm of the Italian language during childhood, now, after moving to Rome, is viewed as foreign by Italians.

The political turmoil in South Tyrol does not capture the headlines of the Roman newspapers during Clara's travels in 2009. However, while visiting her home country's capital, Italians still question her identity. Ideally, in a globalized world and cosmopolitan city, home to a mixture of Northern, Southern Italians, and immigrants, a cultural mosaic is valued. Afraid to tell a taxi driver she is from South Tyrol because of the region's

association with right-wing extremism, Clara acquiesces. Her fear diminishes as the taxi driver praised the wealthy Italian province and criticized the Southern Terrone.

Gleich werde ich mir einen Vortrag über den Südtiroler Rechtsextremismus anhören müssen, dachte sie. Doch der Fahrer stimmte eine Lobeshymne auf ihr Herkunftsland an, auf die stabile Konjunktur und die Beinahe-Vollbeschäftigung. Das Bruttoinlandsprodukt pro Kopf liege ums Doppelte über den Vergleichsziffern Siziliens. Er mache seit Jahren in den Dolomiten Urlaub, es gäbe keine sauberere Region. «Der Mezzogiorno ist das Problem», sagte der Mann, «ohne die Cousins der Afrikaner» — er sagte *i cugini degli africani nel sud* — «stünden wir ganz anders da.» (58)

Here we go, she thought, I'm about to be treated to a lecture on rightwing extremism in South Tyrol. But instead, the driver launched into a paean of praise to her homeland, its stable economy and its almost full employment. Did she know the per-capita GDP for Bolzano was twice that of Sicily. He'd been holidaying in the Dolomites for years and there was nowhere to match its cleanliness. "The South's the problem," the man continued, "without those cousins of Africans" — the precise phrase he used: *I cugini degli africani nel sud* — "we'd be far better off" (40).

North contra South tensions are the overwhelming political, economic, and social battle in today's Italy. The North is far wealthier, with modernized infrastructure compared to the South. Matteo Salvini's Lega Nord Party advocates for the North's separation from the South. Despite the cab driver's praising of her region, Clara is agitated and interjects that all humans were created equally by God. Distraught, she exits the cab early. *Stillbach*

oder die Sehnsucht echoes *Eva dorme* here, revealing racist individuals as fools. In addition, the themes of globalization and migration are popular and relevant to modern Europe's recent and current mass migration movements. Levy argues, "Perceptions of globalizations are frequently the main trigger for nationalist rhetoric" (11). This taxi driver exemplifies this, fearing the other, rather Africans, Asians, or Southern Italians. *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *die Walsche* denounce xenophobic, nationalist characters who do not embrace cosmopolitanism and compassion for humanity. Including contemporary themes, such as promoting multiculturalism, popularizes the novel, enhancing its appeal on the world literary market. Like *Eva*, *Clara* promotes a transcultural world. Uniting cultures is superior to categorizing cultures and labeling individuals with specific identities.

3.2: Embracing the Intersectional Persona and Political Resistance

Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht villainizes racism and devalues the idea of monolithic culture, but more importantly, the novel gives voice to intersectional personalities. Instead of checking a census box and choosing one identity over another, a culturally fluid individual supports not just their own culture, but many. *Ines* offers the best example of a character who embraces multiple identities. She yearns for Italian culture, and feels more comfortable in a Mediterranean lifestyle. The following passage reveals *Ines*'s delight upon crossing the South Tyrolean border into Trentino:

Kurze Zeit später passierte der Zug die Klause, und ich verließ das umschlossene, umhagte Land, brachte jene Schleuse hinter mich, die den bairischen vom italienischen Sprachraum trennte. Die Berge wurden heller, vor mir breitete sich die Piana Rotaliana aus, an dessen Scheitelpunkt das Valle di Non ihren Anfang

nimmt, jenes Tal, aus dem der Urgroßvater durch die Gola di Rocchetta ins Unterland eingewandert war, ein Tagelöhner mit Lumpen am Leib. (108-9)

Soon after, the train swept through the gorge and I was released from that claustrophobic, enclosed landscape; I'd passed through the airlock separating the places where Austro-Bavarian and Italian are spoken. The mountains grew brighter and before me unfolded the Piana Rotaliana, at whose apex the Valle di Non begins — the valley from which my great-grandfather, a day-laborer dressed in rags, emigrated into the lowlands through the Gola di Rocchetta. (85)

Relieved to be in the open Italian landscape is an exception to the stereotypical South Tyrolean attitude. Unlike figures such as Ines's Aunt Hilda or Eva's mother Gerda during her later years, who reject all things Italian, Ines epitomizes the contemporary intersectional persona, an attribute Clara greatly admired. The endless travertine-tiled Italian train stations remind Clara of Ines. During Clara's train journey in Italy, she recalls how Ines treasures all things Italian and how the nation's splendid architecture is even apparent in its railway stations. (11-12)

Like *Eva dorme, Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, with excruciating effort, tells the history of South Tyrol, and how decrees such as Mussolini's Italianization initiative affected the region. The effect of the region's history on its people is dispersed throughout the plot. Characters teach one another about the region's history by sharing stories, and in turn, the audience learns about South Tyrolean history and how politics impact lives. One example occurs when Ines tells Antonella that all the factory jobs going to Italians during the Fascist era caused ethnic Germans to be unemployed. The girls argue about their boss's (Emma Manente's) morals, Antonella accuses her of being

crooked, while Ines defends her. Ines suggests Emma was sexually harassed, causing Antonella to erupt:

«Die hat sich ins gemachte Nest gesetzt und hat auch noch ihre Familie durchgefüttert. Sie hat mit den Lire der Manentes diese Italienerhasser dort im Norden finanziert.»...«In den Fabriken wurden nur Italiener beschäftigt», sagte ich. Antonella biß an ihren Nägeln herum. «Du meinst, wir sind schuld?» (126)²⁸

“No, she got her feet nicely under the table here and even managed to provide for her family too. She used old Manente’s money to support those Italian-haters up North.” ... “But they’d only employ Italians in the factories back then,” Antonella chewed at a hangnail. “We’re to blame, then, are we?” (102)

Although Antonella does not value Emma’s anecdote, viewing all German-speakers as Nazis, the reader is educated due to Ines’s recollections. Mussolini’s politics negatively impacted the lives of all people, ethnic-German speakers, left to deal with complex financial situations, and Southern Italians, reluctantly leaving their homes to populate a vastly distant region. Building individual dialogue and local material is part of applying the process of differentiation, a parcel of the formula to craft the modern novel.

Not only does *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* critique the Italianization initiative, but also National Socialism. In the modern section of the novel, with Clara as the protagonist, she and the historian Paul leaf through historical manuscripts, journals, and newspapers collected by Ines. At this point, Clara decided to stay indefinitely in Rome to

²⁸ In between the first and second half of the dialogue is a long-thought process by Ines, when she remembers her family told her they had to work odd-seasonal jobs, since Mussolini reserved industrial jobs for migrating Italians from the South.

complete Ines's project. She ultimately interviews Emma Manente, but gains little information due to Manente's impaired memory. Johann was a soldier during the war, and Emma was in love with him. Throughout Ines's novel, Emma expresses her passion for Johann and wish to be with him. Clara asks Paul if Johann was likely a perpetrator since, interestingly, he became a policeman in the SS Polizeiregiment Südtirol (SS Police Regiment South Tyrol). This was an ethnic-German South Tyrolean Police Regiment created by the Nazis upon annexing South Tyrol in 1943. Paul responds with a history lesson explaining how Nazi German soldiers treated their ethnic German South Tyrolean counterparts as subpar.

Männer wie dieser Johann hätten es maximal bis zum Grad des Rottwachtmeisters schaffen können; alle wichtigen Positionen im Polizeiregiment Bozen waren ausnahmslos von Reichsdeutschen besetzt, sicher nicht von Südtirolern, die waren den Reichsdeutschen suspekt. Einige hatten ja zuvor auf der Seite Italiens gekämpft. (358)

People like Johann could only have risen as high as company sergeant; all the important positions in the Bolzano police battalion were filled by Germans from the Reich, definitely not South Tyroleans — The Reich Germans didn't trust them. Some of them had fought in the Italian Army beforehand. (318)

Most historical writing focuses on atrocities committed by Italians post-World War II; it is more recent than the Nazi occupation. Focusing solely on the Italian and Fascist impact on South Tyrol risks dismissing atrocities committed by Germany and the National Socialists. By including the story of the Nazis annexing South Tyrol and the treatment of its citizens as second-class, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* affirms the region's history

wholeheartedly. Paul and Clara further discover that Johann's battalion fought in the Via Rasella Italian resistance campaign in 1943 and was responsible for the Ardeatine Massacre outside Rome when the SS Bozen Police mercilessly killed 335 civilians. Exposing the history of the region vis-à-vis retelling stories of characters' lives, the reader becomes cognizant of the region's history. It is more interesting and engaging for many to discover history through fiction than a history book.

3.3: The Popular

Finally, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* conforms to conventions of the popular novel. Romantic relationships, sexuality, and Paul's persona add to this. Paul finds himself in Rome after his girlfriend Marianne left him in Vienna. Heartbroken, he rents out his Vienna flat and packs up for Rome to research "gli Anni di piombo" (Years of Lead), a period of political instability in Italy between the 1960s and 80s, marked by uprisings by both right and left-wing extremists. He earns a living in Rome by lecturing at institutions such as museums and schools. *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* contains provocative language detailing Paul's daily life, which works to keep the audience engaged.

Nachdem er den Wein ausgetrunken hatte, ließ er sich aufs Bett fallen. Er zog den Reißverschluß seiner Hose auf und faßte sich an den Schwanz, massierte ihn kurz. Die üblichen Vorstellungen halfen nicht, daher setzte er sich wieder an seinen Laptop und schaute sich ein paar YouPorn-Filme an. Das Taschentuch warf er in den Papierkorb. (27)

After finishing his glass of wine, he flopped down onto the bed, unzipped his fly, pulled out his cock, and rubbed it briefly. The usual fantasies didn't seem to do

the trick, so he sat back at this laptop and watched a few YouPorn clips. When he was done, he tossed the used tissue into the wastepaper bin. (14)

Painted as a stereotypical, highly intelligent disorganized academic, Paul comes across as genuine and likable. After Clara comes to Rome, romantic feelings ignite between the two. Just hours after meeting one another, bonded by their mutual interest in history, they wander the streets of Rome until very late, meandering across the Tiber for a slice of pizza. The sharing of the pizza symbolizes their mutual attraction for one another.

Als er sie dann fragte, ob sie von der Zucchini-Pizza kosten wolle, biß sie mehrmals in das noch heiße Brot, als würden sie sich schon Jahre kennen. Weil er ihr mit Schokolade überzogene Kekse gekauft hatte, drückte sie ihm aus Freude über die nette Geste spontan einen Kuß auf die Wange, blieb aber weiterhin beim Sie. (63-4)

When he emerged and asked her whether she'd like a taste of his courgette pizza, she took several bites of the hot bread, like they'd known one another for years. And when she revealed that he'd brought her a bag of chocolate-coated biscuits too, she was so delighted she planted a spontaneous kiss on his cheek for his 'kind gesture', though she still kept using the polite form of address to him. (44)

This scene and the setting are romantic, late at night above the Tiber consuming pizza al taglio, (pizza by the slice), a Roman specialty, is an example of embracing Italian culture. A potential romance between two appealing characters near the story's beginning entices readers to continue the lengthy novel. Paul's masturbating signals his romantic attraction to Clara; and his hope to finally begin a long-term relationship with someone who shares his passion of history and embrace of cosmopolitan life. Additionally, the story of Emma

Manente's unrequited romance with Johann during the 1930s and 40s, Ines's bisexuality, and Arabella's rebellious character are popular stylistic choices, enhancing the novel's entertainment value. In turn, the reader learns about South Tyrol's history regarding Nazism, Fascism, and political turmoil after World War II, along with the financial crises' impacting families, causing South Tyrolean women to seek employment as chambermaids in Italian tourist hubs.

Chapter 4: *Die Walsche*

Joseph Zoderer's *Die Walsche* is not just a romance between an Italian and German, but a critique of the monolingual, monocultural paradigm, and supporter of a multilingual, multicultural paradigm. Economic class, not ethnicity, marks the true boundary between individuals. Like *Eva dorme* and *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, concrete pieces of history manifest themselves in the novel. Mussolini's "Monumento alla Vittoria" (Victory Monument) in Bolzano is an example. South Tyrol's keen multiculturalism displays itself in South Tyrolean cuisine, with increasing Italian influence. Importantly for a German-language novel, Zoderer reminds the audience that Italians and South Tyroleans co-inhabited the region for centuries, with an excursion to the Val di Non. *Die Walsche* is both a popular novel, informing the reader about South Tyrol's battle with ethnic-identity clashes, campaigning for a multilingual, multicultural South Tyrolean paradigm. *Die Walsche* is based in the 1970s or 80s; consequently, there is no mention of non-ethnic German or Italian individuals. However, this is in line with the regions' demographics during the time (Riehl and Hajek, 212). Immigration to the area by non-Italian or German speakers dramatically rose beginning in the mid 1990s.

4.1: The Popular Local

Olga and Silvano's romance typifies conventions of the popular novel. Executing the process of differentiation by relying on local materials and stories makes the love

story between the pair, albeit seemingly impossible, appealing to a literary audience. How can a society so polarized, divided by ethnicity, possibly bring two people together, creating a bi-ethnic romance? Olga and Silvano's relationship forces Zoderer to apply the process of differentiation. The couples' relationship, explicitly connected to South Tyrol's environment, is divided between Italian and German, urban and rural. South Tyrol's tumultuous, dynamic political environment weaves into Olga and Silvano's relationship. The relationship endures miraculously despite its destiny for failure.

Silvano and Olga's relationship alternates between the public sphere, mostly Silvano's Italian friends, and the private, their apartment. Silvano visits Olga's village just once. Her father's malcontent for the Italian and the greater village's anti-Italian sentiment made visiting Olga's village difficult for Silvano. It is important to note the exact village and city remain unnamed, since the division between Italian urban and pro-German rural could represent any South Tyrolean village.²⁹ For this reason, the household is a sanctuary, quiet and peaceful, a sacred location for Silvano and Olga's relationship, protected from the outside, divided world. In scenes such as this they find solace:

Sie erzählten einander das mögliche Unmögliche, zum Beispiel, daß ihr Schlafzimmer ohne Fenster wäre und sie in diesem fensterlosen Zimmer, ohne Hunger und Durst, leben könnten, lediglich zu einem einzigen Zweck, mit einer einzigen Aufgabe: aneinander und an nichts anderes zu denken und dieses ununterbrochene Denken auch ununterbrochen zu fühlen. (46)

²⁹ I only know the city is Bolzano, not Merano, Brunico, or Bressanone, since Mussolini's Italian Victory Monument appears in the novel.

They shared with each other the possible impossible, for example, that their bedroom had no windows and that they could live in this windowless room, without food or water, for one specific purpose, with one specific task: To think about each other and nothing else and for these uninterrupted thoughts to remain uninterrupted. (my translation)

Taking time to be with one another authentically, uninterrupted by the outside world, Olga and Silviano require a tranquil space to escape the chaotic social-political tension outside. Zoderer's rhythmic prose enhances the dramatic element of the romance. Olga and Silviano take time to find the good in one another, yet at times, they fall victim to prescribing stereotypes from their dominant ethnic cultures. For example, when Olga wants to provoke Silviano, she calls him a Walscher.

Und doch hatte sie ihn schon mehr als einmal in rasender Wut beleidigt und genau gewußt, wie sie ihn am empfindlichsten treffen konnte: Du Walscher. Und nur da hatte er sie geohrfeigt, sonst nie. Als sie ihm das ins Gesicht geschrien hatte: Du Walscher. Sonst nie. (41-2)

And, of course, she has insulted him more than once with raging rage, and knew exactly how to irk him most: By calling him "Du Walscher." And only then had he slapped her, otherwise never. When she yelled that in his face: "Du Walscher." Otherwise never.³⁰

³⁰ Walsche is a derogatory term to describe ethnic Italians. It is commonly heard in South Tyrol and by Swiss-Germans degrading Swiss-Italians. Der Walscher is masculine, die Walscherin is feminine.

Silviano and Olga's love for one another risks evaluation by South Tyrolean cultural influences. The racial slur, "Walscher," is Olga's answer to offend Silviano.

Not only is Silviano the victim in the relationship, but also Olga, who by moving to the Italian residential district of Bolzano, trades her old German rural life for an urban Italian one. By moving to the city, Olga is immersed in Italian culture, the shops' signs written in Italian, Italian products everywhere, etc. The least Silviano could do is attempt to learn German, but he does not, upsetting Olga. Silviano's refusal to learn German mimics how many Italian migrants to South Tyrol refuse to learn German. Italians consider German a difficult language compared to English, French, or Spanish, and if they learn Standard High German, they cannot understand South Tyrolean's anyway (Riehl and Hajek, 219). Olga's stream-of-consciousness prior to her calling Silviano a "Walscher" reveals her discontent and feeling like a foreigner amongst ethnic Italians. While Olga positively celebrates the multi-ethnic identity and loves Italian culture, she can never completely synchronize into Italian society.

Sie wünschte sich, daß Silviano das, was er war, blieb, daß er aber zugleich deutsch denken und sprechen könnte wie sie. Sie wußte, wie verdreht dies war, und wollte es ausspucken wie etwas Bitteres. Aber umgekehrt war sie, wenn nicht für ihn, so doch für seine Freunde, auch etwas anderes. Obwohl sie eine Dunkelhaarige war, fühlte sie sich von ihnen zur Blondin gemacht, zu dem, was sie als Klischee haben wollten, zur Blondin, die für die Italiener immer etwas Erotisches hatte. (40)

She wished for Silviano to remain as he was, but at the same time, that he

could think and speak German. She knew how twisted these thoughts were and wanted to throw out her bitter sentiments. On the other hand, she was something foreign, if not for Silvano, then for his friends. Although she was dark-haired, she felt that she had been transfigured by them into a blonde, which was considered erotic by the Italians.

Olga is the ‘other’ for Silvano’s friends. On weekend hiking excursions, she sings with them at the tavern and is one among them, but her voice is always foreign. Her German tongue never quite matches the rhythmic Italian. While being labeled “the other” is relatable to many immigrants regardless of what nation they come from and what nation they immigrate to, Olga is seen as “the other” in her homeland, where she was born. Zoderer’s novel is specific to South Tyrol during the post-war era. The fictional Olga’s experiences are easy for South Tyroleans to relate to; they have lived during the Italianization of Bolzano. Therefore, Olga’s thoughts resonate with local South Tyrolean readers and educate the non-South Tyrolean reader about South Tyrol’s post-war culture.³¹

Food is a reoccurring theme of significance in the novel. Cuisine, both South Tyrolean, Italian, and Calabrian, holds a celebrated place in the novel. Experiencing and accepting diverse cuisine is a way to overcome identity dysphoria. Food unites cultures. Olga’s passion for Italian and South Tyrolean cuisine is an endorsement of the multi-ethnic identity. Viranda Varma argues in “Constructing Women Identities through Food

³¹ Of course, increased translation of *Die Walsche* is imperative to grant the world, cosmopolitan reader greater knowledge of South Tyrol’s post-war culture as seen in the novel.

Memoirs” that women’s interactions with food, either eating, consuming, or observing, give women a language in a patriarchal dominated world in which women have no language of their own. I do not believe Olga has no language of her own, she is tenacious, and her appreciation and interaction with food creates unity, a motif in *Die Walsche*. Additionally, by including characters’ interactions with cuisine, something most of the world relates to, adds to elements of the popular novel. Cuisine is enjoyable to read about and educates the reader about the region. During her first days in Bolzano, wandering the street, Olga admires the bustle of an Italian butcher shop:

In einem Fleischerladen, in dem sie fünfzig oder hundert Gramm Mortadella kaufte, ließen sich zwei Italienerinnen von fast allem, was da an den Haken hing, herunterschneiden, der junge Metzgergehilfe glitt in der Eile beim Auslösen eines Schinkenknochens mit dem breiten Messer ab und kappte das Hautstück seines Daumens. Ohne es zu bemerken, legte er das Papier, in das er ihre Wurfscheiben dann wickelte, auf den Blutklecks und verwischte ihn beim Verpacken. (26)

In a butcher shop, where she bought fifty or one-hundred grams of mortadella, two Italian women requested for almost everything hanging from the hook to be cut. In a hurry to cut the ham bone with his broad knife, the young butcher let the knife slip, carving off a piece of skin from his thumb. Without realizing, he lay the bag with their sausage on the blood from his bleeding thumb, smudging it together while packing.

The butcher shop experience is different from the traditional German one. Chaotic, wild, and fast characterize of the Italian way of life, which Olga experiences firsthand upon wandering the city, trying a new meat, mortadella, brought to the region by Italian

migrants. When returning to her home village, Olga juxtaposes the more robust Italian coffee compared to her village station's "wäßrigen Cappuccino" (watery cappuccino) (53), an example of reverse culture shock. Later, food became a critical component in Olga and Silvano's relationship. She describes their nightly dinners and contrasting personalities, Olga chewing her food quickly, while Silvano enjoys dinner like a ritual, biting meticulously slow (37). Sundays became a romantic time for the couple to luxuriate, during which they agreed not to cook, to dine in bed, enjoying both the cuisine of Silvano's and Olga's homelands.

Irgendeinmal in der Nacht, vielleicht war es schon gegen Morgen, breitete er Packpapier auf dem Bett aus und servierte in raschelnder Silberfolie kalte Hühnerflügel und Hühnerburst, und sie kauten dazu schwarze Oliven aus Kalabrien und spuckten einander die Kerne ins Gesicht...Es wurde nichts gekocht am Sonntag, kalt aßen sie aus dem Kühlschrank die Schnitzel, die Silvano mit süßsauren Essiggurken und weißen Toastschnitten ans Bett brachte, und stehend oder im Bett kniend schluckten sie die Fleischstücke. (12-13, 38-39)

One time during the night, perhaps around early morning, he brought a pack of paper to the bed and served cold chicken breast and chicken wings wrapped in rustling silver foil, and they chewed black olives from Calabria along with it, spitting their pits in each other's faces....Nothing was cooked Sundays, they ate cold schnitzel from the fridge, which Silvano brought to bed accompanied with sweet-sour pickles and white pieces of toast, and standing or kneeling in bed they ate the pieces of meat.

Feasting develops into a ritual in their relationship. Sundays are purposely set aside, a day of leisure, they do not leave the house and instead spend time together. They share each other's Calabrian and South Tyrolean culture via food. In the way Olga experiences Italian culture by choosing mortadella over a traditional German cut, Silvano experiences South Tyrolean culture eating schnitzel. Together, the couple models a positive multi-identity relationship, embracing one another's cultures. Unity between Italians and Germans, endorsed by Zoderer, is splendidly exemplified in the couple's relationship.

4.2: The Political

Unlike in the recent novels by Gruber and Melandri, the intersectional persona is not embraced, but berated. This reflects the sentiment of the 1970s and 80s in South Tyrol, in a different political and economic situation than today. There is no European Union, and the Italian government has more control over the region than today. Moreover, there are no new non-Italian or non-German ethnic speakers, like the Song family. In her village, Olga is continually viewed with contempt by fellow citizens. In the city, while she admires the Italian language, daily-life experiences prove to her that she is in fact the victim.³² Her people are the losers and the Italians the victors. Recalling her first weeks in Bolzano, Olga reflects on the profound difference between the Italian and German pronunciations over the train station's loudspeaker:

³² Olga is continually eyed with contempt by local villagers, gossiping that she is a traitor by choosing the Italian. This happens at the local bar, the Lillenwirt, or outside in the town's squares. For one example, see page 24.

In den ersten Tagen stellte sie sich häufig auf dem Bahnhof zu den Zügen hin oder auch in die Schlange der Wartenden an den Schaltern, sie hörte die Ankunftszeiten und Abfahrtszeiten und die Verspätungen über die Lautsprecheranlage: das Italienisch immer perfekt, das Deutsche lächerlich verstümmelt. (28)

During her first days she often found at the train station's platform or also standing in line at the ticket counter, she listened to the arrival calls, departure calls, and delay announcements over the loudspeaker: The Italian always perfect, the German, laughingly garbled.

While Olga enjoys seeing the Italian shops, with new delicacies from the south, and speaking in the musical language, it is impossible not to be conscious that the German language is inferior. The Italians put in a trivial effort to communicate with German patrons; probably a law requires them. At the largest train station in the region, villagers who only speak German inevitably pass-through Bolzano, even if only in transfer. They must communicate accurately in Italian, German speakers must learn some Italian or seek guidance from a fellow German speaker who does. While Italian is a compulsory course for the younger population, the older population is unmotivated to learn the language. Nonetheless, they will undoubtedly encounter bureaucratic loops that require some knowledge of Italian.

Political tensions and concrete landmarks creep into the narrative as well. Like *Eva dorme*, Bolzano's Monumento alla Vittoria (Siegesdankmal, Victory Monument), constructed at Mussolini's command, appears in the novel. Olga admires the monument, but eventually realizes that the monument was built to oppose her people. They are

disenfranchised. After Olga points Italian tourists in the direction of the monument, Olga contemplates its meaning, coming to the realization that her people (ethnic Germans) are the losers and that the ethnic Italians are the victors. With every victory, comes a loser.

Nicht einziges Mal hatte sie dran gedacht, daß es einen Sieg bedeuten sollte und also eine Niederlage für die anderen, und daß sie, Olga, zu den anderen, also den Besiegten gehörte, daß überhaupt hier jemand geseigt haben mußte und jemand anderer besiegt worden war und daß dem Sieger jenseits des Flusses ein Denkmal, ein Siegestempel mit weißen Säulen und verziert mit Rutenbünden, aus denen ein Beil hervorragte, erbaut hatte werden müssen noch vor dem letzten Krieg. (29)

Not once had she thought that for there to be a victory there must be a loser and that she, Olga, belonged to the losers, to the defeated, that exactly here someone must have won and someone else lost and that the victory monument on the other side of the river, a victory temple with white columns, decorated with faces, from which an ax protruded must have been built before the last war.

In the previous scene, we observe Olga walking Bolzano's streets, having admired the shop windows, delighting in the Italian goods. Still, the victory monument reminds her that she is not one of them, the Italians. Olga longs to establish herself as multi-ethnic, living in Bolzano's Italian sector and forging friendships with her neighbors. Yet, the monument reminds her of the impossibility of her aspiration. The faces on the monument symbolize fascism. Mussolini modeled the victory monument off Ancient Rome, with his goal being for Fascist Italy to become an empire like Rome. Interestingly, Olga views the strangers as "Fremde." "Fremde" can mean either stranger or foreigner in German. I translated "Fremder" as stranger to enhance readability. However, Olga could easily have

thought of this couple as foreigners. Presumably tourists, perhaps newly arrived in South Tyrol, they are foreigners to the land. The mountains, landscape, climate, and language of the land's natives is new to them. Oddly enough, these 'Fremden' Olga encounters are in their own country, Italy.

Other remnants of Mussolini's Italianization in the novel include the "Shanghai" neighborhood. By the 1970s, and still, at present, the "Shanghai" neighborhood became the slum district of Bolzano, predominantly populated by Italians from the poorer South, like Calabria and Sicily. This contrasts with the immediate post-war years when Rück siedler were placed in Shanghai (Schanghai in German). The opening lines of the novel reads: „Sie hatte zuletzt anschreien müssen: Bleib daheim, bis er endlich verstand und daheim blieb im italienischen Stadtteil, der von den Deutschen Schanghai genannt wurde“ (2). “She finally had to yell at Silvano: Stay at home, until he finally understands, and stay at home in the Italian quartier, that the Germans call Schanghai.” The aftermath of Italianization remains in the city's infrastructure. Contradicting to the portrayal of Schanghai in *Eva dorme*, a neighborhood built for the traitors who chose Germany, in juxtaposition, now Schanghai is the slum neighborhood for incoming workers from the South. Evidently, political decisions influence South Tyroleans, German, and Italian speakers alike. Calabrian and Sicilian workers made up the overwhelming percentage of “Shanghai's” population in the 1980s. Today, Southern Italians and migrants from outside Europe make up the majority of the “Shanghai” neighborhood, formally called “Don Bosco.”

Walking by the Victory Monument monument is part of Olga's everyday life, leaving no time to contemplate its symbolization. Olga realizes that she belongs to the

defeated only after encountering Italians, eager to see the monument, which symbolizes their victory. Her stream-of-consciousness transforms her from a cheerful state to one of uncomfortable realization. It is futile to escape her ancestry and upbringing. Caught in the middle, Olga finds herself unable to blend into Italian society, simultaneously castigated as “die Walsche”, the lowly Italian, by her family and village neighbors, in her native language and dialect. Olga has no friend like Clara to Ines in *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, who admires Ines’s intersectional persona. Rather than align with the times of the 70s, 80s, and 90s in South Tyrol, Olga’s intersectional persona faces repudiation. Concrete political landmarks, like Mussolini’s Victory Monument, demonstrates politics presence in daily South Tyrolean life. There is no escape. Zoderer’s inclusion of significant landmarks in the novel enlightens the reader to the history of South Tyrol and how the landmarks tie in with the populace’s conflicted identity crisis.

The political is not always detrimental; it can also be a positive. One trait Olga admires in Silvano is his outcry for positive change in the region. Olga observes him as he addresses and persuades the citizenry for solidarity between Italians and Germans on Bolzano’s Manzonei Square. Silvano preaches through a loudspeaker. „Aber seine Argumente hatten Hand und Fuß und endeten meist mit dem Aufruf *Solidarietà fra operai tedeschi ed italiani!* Sie war froh, daß er es ohne Pathos sagte“(54). “His enthusiastic preaching’s with hands and feet usually ended with the call ‘Solidarity between German and Italian workers’ She was happy that he said it without pathos.” A commonality of Gruber’s, Melandri’s, and Zoderer’s narratives is the inclusion of literary figures promoting change. While the ethnic-identity divide between Italians and Germans is tense, Silvano’s speech advocates for change. Workers, the lower class, share more in

common with one another, regardless of native tongue, than the elites. Silvano embodies cosmopolitanism, recognizing that class, not ethnicity, is the greatest societal divider.

Silvano's stance makes him a foil to Olga's father.

4.3: The Dangers of Division

For a German-speaking South Tyrolean, Joseph Zoderer takes excruciating effort to problematize the dangers of Germans distancing themselves from Italians.

Isolationism, remaining in their rural villages, is not a healthy response to South Tyrol's shifting demographics. To illustrate, Olga's father, an alcoholic, rejects Silvano; his relationship with his daughter, already strained, deteriorates further as he continues to isolate himself socially. Other villagers lead minimal social lives, dining at one local café, the Lillenwirt. Finally, Zoderer reminds the audience that the alpine region has always been a cross-point between the Germanic and Romantic.

Olga's unnamed father represents the sad state of being of someone who chooses the path of xenophobia. Her father's pan-Germanist ideology and hate against Italians causes his relationship with his daughter to suffer. After meeting Silvano, he gives Olga an ultimatum: Leave Silvano or break off her relationship with her father. Olga chooses Silvano, renouncing her father's callous demand. Her father's story is melancholic. He chose "die Option" and fought on the Eastern front for the Nazis. Sadly, upon losing the war, her father returns to South Tyrol, disheartened to find Italians inhabiting his homeland. To make his tale more miserable, he begins drinking excessive amounts of alcohol and treats his wife (Olga's mother) maliciously. She eventually leaves him.

Zoderer loathes bigotry, and paints Olga's father as a fool. Remembering her childhood, Olga recalls one of her father's routine rants:

Nicht wie die anderen, das mußte sie ihm lassen, hatte der Vater auf die Walschen geschimpft. Wir Deutschen! Hatte sie ihn oft sagen hören, wir Deutschen! Das war wenig und schon viel, aber zwischendurch fluchte er auch auf die Hornoschen hier oben, die von nichts eine Ahnung hätten. Toleranz! hatte er geschrien, von denen im Süden könne man schließlich auch etwas lernen. Aber trotz seines Toleranzgeschreis zeterte er, besonders wenn er angetrunken war, wie ein Feldwebel und hielt Ansprachen, in denen nicht nur Wir Deutschen und die Deutsche Heimat vorkamen, sondern auch Pünktlichkeit und Disziplin, die die anderen bei den Deutschen, bei den Unseren, in der Kaserne hättenlernen müssen, ausgerechnet er, der höchstens zufällig einmal pünktlich in eine Klasse kam und schließlich nicht in Ausübung seiner Pflicht, sondern besoffen in einer Bachweise den Schuldienst quittierte, hatte von der Schank und daheim lauthals einen Schiff für die in den Tag hineinlebenden Italiener gefordert. (14)

“Not like the others!” that was his coin term, her father often cursed against the Italians. We Germans! She had so often heard him say, we Germans! That was repeated, but time-to-time, he also cursed the bastards up here, who have no idea of anything. Tolerance! He often screamed, from those that in the South we can finally learn something. But despite his cries for tolerance, which he usually spat while drunk, like a sergeant he gave speeches, in which he not only mentioned “we Germans” and “the German homeland”, but also punctuality and discipline, and that the others staying with the Germans should have learned these qualities in the barracks. Coincidentally, her father at most made it to class on time once and not because of attending to a responsibility. Instead, drunk in the meadows,

he quit school, sat at the bar, and at home loudly demanded the departure of the Italian living in their German land.

Olga's father, a xenophobic hypocrite, criticized Italians for attributes he is guilty of possessing. Punctuality and discipline are not facets of his personality. Similarly to the taxi driver in *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, his nationalist rhetoric occurs due to his fear of globalization. Even though Italians never interact with him in his secluded German-speaking village, the mere thought of seeing an Italian frightens him. Unlike Olga, he does not possess the experience of living in harmony with Italians, or any non-ethnic German group for that matter. Lack of interaction with other ethnic groups causes him to reject cosmopolitanism.

There is no evidence to back up his assertion that Italians are lazy. His rants occur while drunk, assuming the role of a sergeant general. It would be an oversimplification to criticize Olga's father; his past influenced his opinions, deceived, he followed the National socialists and fought on the Eastern front, receiving no compensation in return. He grew up without a family, without a home, raised at the local 'Leitnerhof.'³³ His upbringing reminds audiences familiar with the German literary canon of Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's *das Gemeindegeld* (*The Parish Child*), whose father was a criminal and hanged. His imprisoned mother left the protagonist Pavel an orphan, later raised by the entire village parish. Like Pavel, Olga's father is destined to fail in life. Patriotism aroused by the Nazi-party gave him "einen Zweck" (a purpose) in life, but the

³³Presumably, a large farm-style community house in his village.

Nazis' defeat reverts him into despair. Now, he finds himself in a sorrowful state in his native village, his pan-Germanist aspirations upended.

Olga's fathers' most blissful moments occur when German tourists visit South Tyrol. Tourism increased after Germany's economy stabilized with the skiing and hiking industry boom in South Tyrol. The beer-drinking and dancing German tourists allow him to recall fondly his time in the Barracks along the Eastern Front. Olga iterates his enthusiasm among partying German tourists:

Und ebenso sang er auch mit den deutschen Urlauben nach dem zweiten oder dritten Liter: *Und kommt der Feind ins Land herein ... und solls der Teufel selber sein ...!* Aber da kein Feind in Sicht war, konnte es kein anderer sein als der Walsche, und die aus Hamburg, Bochum und den Württembergischen ließen ihre Bildzeitungen und Sämtliche bunten Illustrierten in den Häusern ihrer Gastgeber zurück, auch in dengastfreundlichen Almhütten, nach Schmarrn und frischer Milch. (14-15)

And he also sang with the vacationing Germans after the second or third liter: *And the enemy comes into the country ... and is the devil himself...!* But since there was no enemy in sight, the enemy could be none other than the Italians, and those from Hamburg, Bochum, and Württemberg left their Bildzeitungen and all their brightly colored illustrations behind in their guest keeper's houses and in the guest-friendly alpine huts, after consuming schmarrn and fresh milk.³⁴

³⁴ The Bildzeitung is a German tabloid newspaper. Schmarrn is a fluffy, eggy pancake dish.

Olga's father chooses to identify with wealthy German tourists over the 'devil', or Italians, even though he belongs to the same class as the migrating Italians. Rather than adhering to Silvano's call for the working-class German and Italian-speaking population to unite, he identifies and is rejuvenated by the upper-class tourists briefly stopping in South Tyrol. They view the ethnic South Tyrolean-German speakers as inferior. After partying, they return to their comfortable tourist hotels. Their indulgence with local music and food is fleeting, soon they return to Germany. Unlike the Germans, Olga's father does not return to comfortable tourist quarters, he retreats home lonely, without Olga or his wife. Pining for the German past at the local bar offers a respite from his dreary existence. Do the Italian migrant workers, poor and displaced from their families in the South, not share more in common with Olga's father than the wealthy German tourists? Ethnic alliance is more important to him than socio-economic unity. Socio-economic class, not ethnicity, is the real barrier between individuals. Only in fantastical minds like Olga's father's or the cab driver in *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht* is the reverse true. South Tyrol's new multilingual, multicultural paradigm frightens and, more importantly, threatens him. Rather than dividing individuals by linguistic demographic, economic class is the true divider of a population.

Rural folklore permeates Olga's memory. The tipsy Germans sing the famous Tyrolean song, „Es lebt der Schütze froh und frei“ (The Shooter Lives Happy and Free). Today, this song is beloved in South Tyrol, popular at folk festivals and après ski clubs. The enemy is the Italians. The song references the Italian as little dark people, the enemy, invading their country. The end of the melody calls for a return to Austria. Like Gruber and Melandri, Zoderer's inclusion of real-life, beloved, although xenophobic music

informs the reader of South Tyrolean culture and political unrest within his novel. Also, including regional materials such as local dialect, villagers playing the popular alpine-Germanic card game Watten, and provincial foods are part of the process in constructing the modern novel. The novel ends with Olga's return to her village to attend her father's funeral. Three days after his death, the post-funeral reception occurs at the Lillenwirt, a frequent haunt for her father. In the final lines of the novel, Olga calls Silvano from the reception, proclaiming how much she misses him, and will return that evening. Silvano expresses remorse over the loss of her father and declares that he, too, misses Olga. Olga is joyful she can finally say "Ciao" again, after spending three long days in her village speaking German. The final lines portray Olga starting her car engine, exuberantly kissing her hands.

Olga and Silvano's excursion to a friend's cabin in the Val di Non prompts the local reader and enlightens the cosmopolitan reader that Italian and German speakers have always lived in close proximity. The Alps are a natural boundary and place of contact for the Germanic, Romantic, and Slavic languages. Silvano's friend is not a migrant from a distant region, but from the Non-Valley, a high Alpine valley a mere twenty-five kilometers from Bolzano. While the inhabitants are ethnic Italian speakers, the culture and cuisine are more akin to South Tyrol's than the rest of the Italian peninsula.³⁵ The excursion to the Val di Non calls for harmony between German and Italian speakers. Native inhabitants of the mountains and newly arrived workers from the

³⁵ Of course, throughout the entire Italian peninsula, regional cuisine is highly diverse, varying even village to village. The classic cooking example is that Northerners use butter, Southerners olive oil.

South all reside in the unique geographic space of South Tyrol. Their commonality, living in the rural mountains should unify people, not alienate them.

Guido, a friend of Silvano's, invites the couple and other friends to his grandfather's cabin in the Val di Non. The cabin is vacant, but stocked with food. Olga tries to fit in at the cabin, yet feels out of place amongst Silvano's friends. They are friendly, laughing, sharing mountains of spaghetti and bottles of wine. Still, Olga is uncomfortable that she cannot speak the same language or enact facial gestures as swiftly and delicately as they. An eerie, disquieting fear stirs in Olga's mind, a panic attack triggered by feeling out of place.

Sie versuchte, ihren Gesten zu folgen, den blitzartigen Heben einer Hand, den Verwinkelungen der Arme, dem Springen der Finger, vielleicht verzerrte sie Sogar unwillkürlich ihre Lippen, gleichzeitig mit dem Verzerrungen der redenden Gesichter. Oft hätte sie sich zurücklehnen mögen vor Erleichterung, daß alles nur ein Jux war, aber die Bewegungen erschreckten sie, häufig sah sie nur mehr diese Bewegungen und Verrenkungen und war nicht fähig, die dazugehörigen Worte aufzunehmen. Alle waren stärker als sie, flinker in ihren Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten. Ohne daß sie es wollten, drängten sie Olga an eine Wand, die zurückwich, und sie fiel erschrocken ein Stück nach hinten, wurde aber aufgefangen von einer neuen Wand, die beweglich war, es wurde immer schwerer, einen Halt zu finden, alles war ungefähr und blieb im Vagen. (66-7)

She tried to follow their gestures, the lightning-fast movements of their hands, the winding arms, the springing fingers, maybe she even accidentally curled her lips, when taking in the contortions of their speaking faces. She often wanted to lean

back in relief, knowing everything was a joke, but the movements frightened her, she often only saw their movements and contortions, unable to comprehend their words. All of them were stronger than her, agiler in their expressions. Without her approval, they dragged Olga against a wall, which receded, and she fell a shot back, but was grasped by a new, moving wall; it become increasing difficult to find a stop, all of this was not certain and remained vague.

Identity dysphoria causes Olga's hallucination. Olga's uneasy state of mind runs wild due to being the only German speaker, the odd one out at the party. Zoderer's prose and Olga's thoughts spin. Olga feels displaced, confused, anxious, and distressed that she cannot convey her feelings adequately. Overwhelmed by the Italians' quick, expressive facial gestures, Olga barely recognizes their rapid hand gestures and facial maneuvers, unable to comprehend the words' actual meaning. The combination of fast speech, loud, boisterous voices, and quick gestures cause Olga to fall into a subverted state of vertigo. Olga does not physically fall into the walls, nor do Silvano's friends actually touch her; she is in a state of mental disorientation. Albeit dazed, Olga believes that the others are fond of her, empathetic to her struggle, aware that she is trying so hard to communicate in a foreign tongue. Olga's confrontation with her identity is the reason she experiences the agitation. While she admires Italian culture when completely immersed with Silvano's friends, she feels inadequate in her Italian language skills, overwhelmed and traumatized. World Wars I, II, Italianization initiatives, and reacting pan-Germanism creates an adverse atmosphere. Ethnic categorization situates citizens against one another. South Tyroleans today are indirect victims of past politicization of the region; it is inevitable, no matter which linguistic or ethnic group you belong to, to feel displaced, being the sole

speaker of the “other” language in a room. As in Olga’s case, even if the others are encouraging and sympathetic, being the one minority amongst a majority can be deeply unsettling.

While speaking different languages and living in a multicultural life comes with difficulties, there are benefits. Positive aspects of Olga and Silviano’s relationship outweigh occasional linguistic misunderstandings. Perhaps they would have more conflict if they understood the exact lingua and nuances of their communication:

Wahrscheinlich machten die Mißverständnisse sie auf eine gute Art fremder, sie achteten aufeinander mit Ängstlichkeit, und ihre Fremdheit machte sie zerbrechlicher. Sie erlebten schon eine Weile das gleiche, ohne große Hoffnung auf wirklich Neues, sie Teilten ihr Unglücklichsein mit einem Schuldgefühl, als ob ihre Sprache schuld wäre. In der gleichen Sprache hätte vielleicht dieses Schuldgefühl gefehlt, aber dann hätten sie sich wohl weniger geschont, sie wären beide stumpfsinnig stark gegen andere und gegeneinander gewesen. (81)

Their misunderstandings were probably in a strange way a good thing, they looked out for one another with trepidation, and their differences made them fragile. They have already experienced this feeling for a while, without much hope for something really new, they shared their unhappiness with a sense of guilt, as if each other’s language was to blame. If they shared the same native language, they may have lost this guilty feeling, but then they would have spared each other less, they would be strongly jaded against others and against each other.

A relationship between speakers of different languages from different cultures and ethnicities can be challenging, but the devotion for another dampens the risk of miscommunication. Olga and Silvano become the fairy-tale model for South Tyrolean society, unity between Germans and Italians. Both respect their own and the other's culture, with no malice. *Die Walsche* judges the xenophobic, monolingual South Tyrolean paradigm and advocates for a cultural mosaic, with South Tyrolean ethnic Germans and South Tyrolean ethnic Italians living in harmony, while simultaneously retaining their ancestors' culture. The popular love narrative between Olga and Silvano elevates the novel's marketability on the world literary market, but again, phenomenal promotion and precise translation is imperative for success. Thanks to Umberto Gandini's translation, *l'Italiana* (1985), *Die Walsche* gained access to the dominant Italian Literati and was widely accepted and expansively read throughout Italy.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Towards a Multilingual, Multicultural Paradigm

Ideally, a growing and prosperous multiethnic society embraces multiple aspects of a culture: language, cuisine, and interpersonal relationships are all elements that make a culture distinct. A multiethnic society is not limited to physical infrastructures such as translated road or train station signs. The real change must come from greater involvement from society as a whole; the education sector alone, but not just that, could make a significant impact. Education and exposure to the ‘others’ while maintaining a commitment to tell history authentically, acknowledging and admonishing xenophobic actions by both ethnic Germans and ethnic Italians is necessary and optimal. Perhaps this is too utopian, but at least *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *Die Walsche* all promote a proud multiethnic South Tyrolean community. Moreover, the literary style in which the authors write their novels, appealing to popular conventions and drawing inspiration from local materials, including South Tyrol’s history, political climate, and evolving culture, follows the formula to construct the modern novel. An amalgamation of rural and urban environments, ethnic German and ethnic Italian familial narratives (including struggles experienced during the war and post-war years), and the diverse South Tyrolean demographic coming from outside the European continent, bring to light all the minor individual narratives within the novels. Due to the region’s complex past, politics intersect and infiltrates the lives of all individuals in the novels. Whether it be events of the protest, filling out census forms,

or the miniscule elements of daily life, such as riding the train, all affect every individual in some way or another. Fiction that genuinely reflects the experiences of South Tyroleans expressed in the form of popular novels, filled with romance, details of political instability, and bilingual, cosmopolitan protagonists appeal to the world literary market. Broader translation of these novels and other South Tyrolean novels will make South Tyrol's complex history and culture more accessible to the world reader.

Eva dorme, Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht, and *Die Walsche* are not simply popular novels which educate the reader, but critique the monolingual and monocultural world, and advance a multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural society. They do not counter the obvious that individuals inevitably identify with their native tongue, but present their argument for a multicultural society within a multi-lingual paradigm. Yasemin Yildiz's *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* investigates the authors Franz Kafka, Theodor Adorno, Yoko Tawada, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, and Feridun Zaimoğlu writing in a multi-lingual, rather than monolingual paradigm. Yildiz explains in her conclusion the effect of these authors writing in a multi-lingual paradigm:

They reveal that what is called the “mother tongue” combines within it a number of ways of relating to and through language, be it familial inheritance, social embeddedness, emotional attachment, personal identification, or linguistic competence. Contrary to the monolingual paradigm, it is possible for all these different dimensions to be distributed across multiple languages, a possibility that becomes visible only in multilingual formations or when the monolingual paradigm is held in abeyance. (205)

Gruber, Melandri, and Zoderer model this multilingual paradigm in their texts, without forgetting or negating what the mother tongue means. Eva, Vito, Clara, Ines, Olga, and Silvano's identities are all connected to their mother tongue; they cannot and do not want to escape this reality. Olga's experience of disorientation being the only ethnic German speaker in a room full of Italians perhaps epitomizes this best. These characters are unique in that they do not remain within the constraints of their familial, ethnic societies, but reach out to the 'other' culture; embracing a multilingual, and with it, multicultural society. Gruber, Melandri, and Zoderer argue for a multilingual, multicultural South Tyrol, with unity and compassion by writing in the multilingual paradigm. A passage from Bernd Schuchter's *Föhntage (Föhndays)* highlights the realization and sentiment individuals of one linguistic community should feel for their linguistic other, their neighbor.³⁶ Giuseppe, an Italian Carabinieri stationed and now living in Bolzano, witnesses outright discrimination against an ethnic-German boy, merely asking for a cigarette. Observing the indignant response, Giuseppe realizes harmony amongst ethnic German and Italian speakers is best:

Jetzt erst bemerkte Giuseppe, dass er in einem italienischen Lokal saß, wenn man so wollte. Alle jungen Menschen sprachen Italienisch, kein einziger Gesprächsfetzen, der an sein Ohr drang, klang deutsch. Mit einem Mal ratterte es in ihm, sickerte eine Erkenntnis in Giuseppe, die er sich eigentlich nicht eingestehen wollte. Der junge Mann an der Bar war nicht bedient worden, weil er kein Italiener war. (116-17)

³⁶ Der Föhn is a dry, warm wind in the alps, emerging from the South. Austrian's often complain about the wind, stating it causes headaches.

Only now, did Giuseppe realize, that he sat in an exclusively Italian pub. All the young people spoke Italian, he could hear no scrap of German conversation in his ear. Suddenly this rattled him, a realization, that Giuseppe did not want to admit to himself. The young man was not served at the bar, because he was not Italian.
(my translation)

Giuseppe, an Italian Carabinieri forced to relocate from his home in the South, still calls South Tyrol his home today. Remembering the bigotry and xenophobic actions by both ethnic German and Italian speakers during his early days in South Tyrol, Giuseppe longs for a multilingual, multicultural society, free of segregation. There is no segregation by law, but natural segregation in bars, clubs, and even schools remains. Certain spaces exist for Germans and certain for Italians. Giuseppe's act of compassion is a model for creating this desirable, multicultural South Tyrolean community, an environment favorable and empathetic to all. While Giuseppe is too late and cannot find the boy, his attempt at empathy can be a model for younger generations. To recognize segregation and discrimination and demand a pivot from a monolingual to multilingual, multicultural paradigm. It is important to note that while Giuseppe views the scene through the lens of the Italian, critical of the bartender for not speaking German, the boy, also at fault, did not attempt to speak Italian, equally complicit in the hypocrisy. Unity among all, a multilingual, multiethnic, and multilingual paradigm is the positive resolution to upend the impacts of Nazism, Fascism, and two World Wars on the region's cultural life. Past traumatic history instead creates the possibility for an open, embracing, multilingual paradigm. *Eva dorme*, *Stillbach oder die Sehnsucht*, and *Die Walsche* promote a multilingual South Tyrolean paradigm. South Tyrolean fiction can act as a case study to

promote a multilingual, multicultural paradigm in other regions dealing with xenophobia. Switzerland and Belgium's linguistic divide are Western European examples, experiencing tumultuous political tensions due to linguistic divide, as is the Ukraine and Russia, or Israel and Palestine. Authors from these regions could learn from Melandri, Gruber, and Zoderer and promote inclusive, rich, and uplifting multilingual, multicultural paradigms in their region. Their literature can be an agent of discourse to lessen political turbulence.

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