Cakewalking into representation: Gabriele Münter’s America travels (1898-1900) and art of dailiness

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the fashioning of Gabriele Münter as a German modernist with a focus on the eclipse of her struggles in coming to representation, the rich complexity of her processes, and the importance of dailiness for her work. Drawing on feminist readings of autobiography and on the relationships elaborated by Henri Lefebvre and Georg Simmel between modernity and the everyday, the daily is described here as an expansive site encompassing subjugating repetition and familiarity as well as discourses of worldliness and possibilities for subversion.

The discussion centers on Münter's travels in the United States as an emblem of the stretch of her dailiness and its instructive vantage on issues of authenticity and documentation governing her output. Münter's pocket calendars, sketchbooks, photographs, photograph album, and retrospective writings about America are considered as a project of forging Heimat and visuality.

With its associations of effortlessness, the use of "cakewalking" in the title evokes the erasure of Münter's daily processes in their messiness. The cakewalk was a form for African Americans to parody their masters in the antebellum period and was taken up by whites at the time of Münter's visit; she herself designed a postcard of a young relative performing the dance. Though the daily enabled Münter to come into representation, by its slightness and imbrication in mass culture, it would go underground in service of authenticity.

The argument is grounded in the American context through readings of period guidebook literature, discourses of shopping and flânerie, and Kodak advertising; theatrical productions and tourist sites Münter visited; and relationships between her work and contemporary Arkansas photographers such as Harry Miller. The 19th-century German popular literary figuration of America as adventure elaborated by Charles Sealsfield, Karl May, and others shapes the interpretation, as do Wilhelmine discourses of empire lodged in Die Gartenlaube, the Völkerschauen, and the shifting meanings of Kultur.

The conclusion develops the relevance of the lens of dailiness for Münter by turning to four of her paintings – Man in an Armchair, Interior, Return from Shopping, and Boating – with an interwoven treatment of her writings, photographs, sketchbooks, and ephemera.

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Introduction

In 1950, at the request of Hans Konrad Röthel, then head curator of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Gabriele Münther described in a letter how her 1913 painting, *Man in an Armchair* (fig. 1), had come about:

When Kandinsky and I had our apartment at 36 Ainmillerstraße – in Munich – Paul Klee lived with his wife and his little boy [Bübchen] Felix only a few houses away. He liked to come over once in a while. We usually sat in my work room then, the largest room in the apartment. Once – it was 1913 –, as the first warm days came, Klee appeared in white pants, which we cheerfully welcomed as a sign of summer. As he sat in my big rumination armchair [Nachdenksessel] and talked with Kandinsky, I suddenly saw him in the room and the room with him quite pictorially. I got my small sketchbook, which I always keep handy, and quickly made notes without being observed. The white pants stood in the center of the image, and the man was made up entirely of rectangles, merged with the armchair and the pictures on the wall. A large curve arched from his forehead on the right of the picture to the door handle on the left, and all the forms resounded wondrously together down to the last detail.

I probably painted the picture the next day. I don’t remember doing the actual painting anymore. But it must have occurred in one fell swoop like the majority (and the best) of my works. The painting emerged freely and according to laws of its own, based on my pencil sketch, and created out of the palette. I didn’t look to nature anymore. The ‘model’ was gone from the armchair, and the studio wallpaper, which I had before me, was actually gray, as was the armchair. Instead in the painting, as if by itself, the wall took on the mysterious green and the armchair the heavy ultramarine blue.

I never intended to paint a portrait of Klee. That’s why I just called the picture ‘Man in an Armchair.’ Yet when the painting was exhibited in the Munich show ‘The Blaue Reiter’ in 1949, after more than a generation Klee was recognized at first glance by his acquaintances. Kandinsky loved the painting, and when he was mounting the ‘First German Autumn Salon,’ organized by ‘Der Sturm’ (Herwarth Walden) in 1913 in Berlin, he gave it a place of honor.


This remarkable statement would be published in the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen’s 1951 catalogue of recent acquisitions and in Die Kunst und das Schöne Heim (1953). In concrete, chatty details, we are given the address, hear that Miinter’s work room is the biggest in the house, that Klee is in her “Nachdenksessel.” Miinter crafts a wry familiarity via mention of furnishings, the “Bübchen,” and dress. She will bring this out further in a shortened version published in her 1959 tribute to Paul Klee:

When the hot days came in 1913 and Klee sat in my studio for the first time wearing his white summer pants, which were duly admired, I saw him pictorially against the wall with the old reverse-glass paintings [Hinterglasbildern] next to the little table [Tischchen] heaped with carved wooden folk art figurines. I let the men have their talk while I captured the sight with a few strokes of the pencil. Out of this the large painting emerged, which Kandinsky gave a place of honor in the ‘First German Autumn Salon,’ organized by Herwarth Walden in 1913 in Berlin with great fanfare. It is not meant to be a portrait, as is clear from the title ‘Man in an Armchair,’ but rather it is a picture, a fully formed visual experience of a totality in which the white pants gleam almost ironically against the darkness and mysterious variety. And yet perhaps the essential expression of Klee as man and artist is located inadvertently in this paradoxical statement: corporeal existence in the world is wondrous, and the spirit leads its own life, immersed in the sounds of things and in itself.  

Farbbilder und 16 Schwarzweissbilder auf Tafeln. 7 Abbildungen im Text, with an introduction by Hans Konrad Röthel [Munich: Verlag F. Bruckmann, 1957], 24-26). Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this study were undertaken by me and my translator, Dietlinde Hamburger, who did the majority of the work. Anne Mochon publishes a helpful translation of a portion of the above passage (Gabriele Miinter: Between Munich and Murnau [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Published for the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, 1980], 42).

2 Johannes Eichner, Kandinsky und Gabriele Miinter: von Ursprüngen moderner Kunst (Munich: Verlag F. Bruckmann, 1957), 155. The statement his own text includes (155-156) differs only slightly (i.e. in terms of punctuation) from the version Röthel publishes. There are minute variations between both and the earlier Die Kunst und das Schöne Heim version. For further publication information on the text and painting, see Gabriele Miinter 1877-1962 Retrospektive (Munich: Prestel, 1992), 276.

In both statements, time is Münter’s point of entry – the “when” of context, once, 1913, the opportune visual moment. Heralding the warm weather, the white pants highlight the role of seasonality for the humor of the encounter, contrast, and visual experience. Within the fortuity of circumstance, the man is amalgamated into the configuration of objects, is the localized, imminent totality of the environment; the objects are listed as an inventory – the *Hinterglashbilder*, the little table, the crowded wooden figures. The animated flash spars with the mysterious depth.

It is a value contrast that matters, one that emblematizes the richness of interplay of the commonplace and the singular in Münter’s output. Yet the painting and her narrations also illustrate salient features of the problematics of Münter’s artistic creativity. We began here with her self-inscription in a letter, or rather with Röthel’s apology for her telling: “At the request of the author Gabriele Münter wrote in 1950…” For the second statement, it is the tribute that serves as refuge, so that Münter’s ode to Klee is a telling of herself. She notes that she adopts his cataloguing system for her works and is a frequent presence at his house for concerts; she records his praise of her work, a child’s portrait “like Munch at his best.” If her paradoxical statement perhaps sums up Klee, it also may describe her philosophy. Similarly, the painting figures Münter in absentia in the quotidian specificity of her work room through the small chair with her clothing on it (an established motif surrounding questions of presence in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, for example); the objects she and Wassily Kandinsky collected and made; the prominently featured door handle as a metonym for the painting as interior (work room and interiority); and Klee’s marginal position in the overloaded organization of objects.  

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5 Reinhold Heller foregrounds the spatial compression of the figures of Klee and Frau Simonowitsch. Noting the importance in Münter’s writings of the purchase of her house and its role as a setting for some of her important paintings, he reads environments she stages within as a symbolic expression of self ("Innenräume: Erlebnis, Erinnerung und Synthese in der Kunst Gabriele Münters," in *Gabriele Münter 1877-1962 Retrospektive* [Munich: Prestel, 1992], 57-59). Shulamith Behr understands the compression of the image as stifling male control of the space ("Beyond the Muse: Gabriele Münter as Expressionistin," in *Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression 1906-1917* [London: Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery in Association with Paul Holberton Publishing, 2005], 65). In her dissertation on Lasker-Schüler and Münter’s 1910-1914 work, Francesca Stafford thematizes what she calls the “absent presence” (‘*My Pictures are all moments of my life*: Representations of time and space in the work of Gabriele Münter and..."

13
self-understanding in Klee may also be inferred from an interview with Edouard Roditi undertaken toward the end of her life. She observed that Klee was not very communicative. That is why I depicted him all hunched up and tense, as if he were constraining some mainspring within himself. In my eyes, it was almost a portrait of silence rather than of Klee, and for many years it no longer occurred to me that he had been my model. But Klee was always a close friend of ours, and Kandinsky and I both had great confidence in his talent and his future, though he was not yet very active as a leader or a theorist in our group.6

The qualities caught here – unspeakability, capability, theoretical reticence – are a resonant composite for Münter herself.

While Münter develops creative strategies to challenge that unspeakability, she and others would contribute to it, including artists with whom she associated such as Kandinsky and Klee and scholars building her reception, her second companion Johannes Eichner and Röthel among them. There is, of course, the danger of self-inscription via another; however, I do not simply mean to imply a focus on the problematics of her creativity in terms of the threat of self-effacement in collaborative partnership.7 What I am after here instead is to try to understand what is submerged in the fashioning of Münter as a German modernist. Returning to her statements, Münter maintains that the scene is caught in a moment in her sketchbook. Though she notes that the sketch undergirds the painting, she has forgotten the process of painting the next day, which came of its own accord. The gaps surrounding seeing Klee pictorially, letting the men talk, capturing (festhalten) appearance in a few pencil marks, the big painting, and Kandinsky’s ratification are telling. In a far cry from, even a mockery of, triumphant authorship, Münter sums up her artistic process as a visual experience with indexical overtones. I shall argue

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Else Lasker-Schüler, unpublished Ph.D. Diss., Institute for Women’s Studies, Lancaster University, October 2001). This is a resonant point for my own discussion as I shall describe in the conclusion of this thesis, although my emphasis on dailiness, relationality, and mass-cultural forms differs from Stafford’s study.

6 “Gabriele Münter,” in Dialogues on Art (Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1980), 150.

7 For a thoughtful brief treatment of the issue, see Behr, “Kandinsky, Münter and Creative Partnership,” in Kandinsky: The Path to Abstraction, eds. Hartwig Fischer and Sean Rainbird (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), 76-100.
in the pages that follow that what is lost in that self-figuration are her struggles in coming to representation and their imbrication in dailiness.

From June 8 to around July 9, 1899, Münter visited Marshall, Texas, as part of two years of traveling she was undertaking with her older sister, Emmy, to visit their maternal relatives. Her pocket calendars suggest that she spent the month swimming at Sue Belle Lake, picnicking, and visiting Hynson Springs. An advertisement plugged the latter as “Nature’s Sanitarium, Six Miles West of Marshall. Delightful place to spend the day or night. Drink the heath-giving water. Breathe pure air. Survey the surrounding country for miles. Transportation reasonable. One hour drive from Marshall. Cuisine unsurpassed. Always cool and comfortable. No mosquitoes.” Photographs Münter took with a Kodak Bull’s Eye # 2/No. 2 Special upon either that stay or her return visit to Marshall from May 18 to July 11, 1900 reveal a myriad of themes building upon the sisters’ enjoyment of the hot Texas outdoors. Münter recorded escapades at Sue Belle, family members consuming watermelon, young women enacting a courtship ritual in the yard, encounters with African Americans in town and country, a 4th-of-July parade, horse-and-buggy excursions, outdoor observation of passing trains.

As I shall argue in the following study, the daily is an expansive site for Münter that crucially affected what she produced. Even its most routine and colorless manifestations, such as the line items concerning visits with family members in her American pocket calendars, demonstrate a surprising reach. The daily as I understand it also has far-reaching implications for

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8 Behr suggests that widespread views “of her work as aligned with nature” have resulted in a loss of consideration of Münter’s imaginative reworking of the “lesser genres,” and she advocates a rehabilitation in this context of her creative processes “involving draughtsmanship, photography, graphic production and painting” (“Beyond the Muse,” in Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression, 50). Heller offers an interesting case study of Münter’s struggles for representation surrounding the Nach dem Tee and Abstraktion 25.4.1912 images (“Innenräume,” in Gabriele Münter 1877-1962 Retrospektive, 47-50).
10 Daniel Oggenfuss proposes both cameras as possibilities for that Münter used. As he points out, the Bull’s Eye No. 2 came onto the market in 1895, and the No. 2 Special in 1898 (“Kamera und Verfahrenstechnik der Amerika-Photographien Gabriele Münters,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 [Munich: Gabriele Münter- and Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 190).
the artistic practice Münter elaborates upon her return to Germany. Her first statement about the Klee painting instances a suggestive fluidity surrounding time – once, 1913, suddenly, the next day – which complicates an understanding of her practice as momentary. To be sure, she would insist in the Roditi interview:

My pictures are all moments of my life, I mean instantaneous visual experiences, generally noted very rapidly, and spontaneously. When I begin to paint, it’s like leaping suddenly into deep waters, and I never know beforehand whether I will be able to swim. Well, it was Kandinsky who taught me the technique of swimming. I mean that he taught me to work fast enough, and with enough self-assurance, to be able to achieve this kind of rapid and spontaneous recording of moments of life. In 1908, for instance, when I painted my Blue Mountain, I had learned the trick. It came to me as easily and as naturally as song to a bird.11

In this telling it is the momentary that enables the life of a picture for Münter.12 And in a reference to her drawings from the 1920s in “Bekenntnisse und Erinnerungen” (1952), she associates a successful portrait with summary capture of the moment: “...these were just sketches, works of the moment, outlines in a few strokes.”13 As Münter tells it, they did not require further working up; if they were successful, they were complete and needed nothing more to be pictures.

At the same time, however, Münter communicates a greater breadth of time in her warning about the dangers of instantaneous visual experience, for as she writes in “Bekenntnisse,” “Photographs make you realize how superficial, sometimes even false, appearance can be. The right [treffende] symbol must be discovered out of changing views and fleeting chance expression.”14

Taking a cue from Münter here but also problematizing her statements, I take her dailiness not simply to be a self-transmitting “extended present tense,”15 but rather as a process of distillation lodged in the moment and in immanence but combining multiple temporalities.

11 “Gabriele Münter,” 151-152.
12 As a token of thanks for care packages her relatives sent in the context of deprivations after World War Two, Münter gave them sketches, and she maintains that they were delighted by the works’ true-to-life qualities (“Bekenntnisse und Erinnerungen,” in Gabriele Münter: Menschenbilder in Zeichnungen, with an introduction by G.F. Hartlaub and memories by the artist [Berlin: Konrad Lemmer Verlag, 1952], n.p.).
13 “…da entstanden nur Skizzen, Werke das Augenblicks, Abrisse in ein paar Strichen” (ibid., n.p.).
14 “An den Photographien erkennt man, wie oberflächlich, ja manchmal auch falsch der Augenschein sein kann. Das treffende Symbol muß aus den wechselnden Ansichten, dem flüchtig zufälligen Ausdruck erst entdeckt werden” (ibid., n.p.).
15 Suzanne Juhasz, “Towards a Theory of Form in Feminist Autobiography: Kate Millet’s Fear of Flying and Sita; Maxine Hong Kingston’s The Woman Warrior,” in International Journal of Women’s Studies 2.1 (January/February 1979): 64.
Undergirded by a tension between recording and representing, the daily for Münter foregrounds questions of authenticity, as caught in her above remarks. Within such an apparently modest site, Münter suggests there are big challenges; and my discussion frames dailiness in terms of a fundamental interplay between contingency and opportunism. In addition, while I assert the familiarity of the daily in the pages below, I also describe it as a locus of permeability between the familiar and the exotic. In focusing my argument around dailiness, I wish to signpost the importance in Münter’s output of issues of embodiment and especially of process, with its attendant qualities of on-going routine, capaciousness, and invisibility.16

At a basic level, my framework is indebted to connections of the daily with women’s spaces of activity. Suzanne Juhasz’s description of dailiness – which she understands as “a structuring principle in women’s lives” developed for example in the autobiographical writings of Kate Millet – is evocative for Man in an Armchair and many of Münter’s other works:

When you ask a woman, ‘what happened?’ you often get an answer in the style that [is]...circumstantial, complex, and contextual. You hear a series of ‘he saids’ and ‘she saids’; you are told what they were wearing, where they were sitting, what they were eating; and slowly the story unrolls. The woman is omitting no detail that she can remember, because all details have to do with her sense of the nature of ‘what happened.’17

While Juhasz’s linkage of the diary as a “source and model” for dailiness has important ramifications for this discussion, my approach differs from her perception of dailiness as revealing of female experience, as a privileged locus for truthfulness, and as private articulation.18

Juhasz also maintains that “[i]n their form, women’s lives tend to be like the stories that they tell: they show less a pattern of linear development towards some clear goal than one of repetitive, cumulative, cyclical structure. One thinks of housework or childcare: of domestic life in

16 I am indebted to Sonia Hofkosh for helping me to refine my understanding of dailiness here and especially for first suggesting it as an avenue for reading Münter’s sketchbooks in a Fall 1998 seminar on feminist methods at the Graduate Consortium for Women’s Studies at Radcliffe.
17 “Towards a Theory of Form in Feminist Autobiography,” 64; also cited in Bettina Aptheker, Tapestries of Life: Women’s Work, Women’s Consciousness, and the Meaning of Daily Experience (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 44. Juhasz is drawing on psychologist David McClelland’s contention that “[w]omen are concerned with context,” while “men are forever trying to ignore it for the sake of something they can abstract from it” (cited in Juhasz 63).
18 Ibid, 62-64, 74.
general.” For all the multiplicity of “context,” Juhasz’s is but one version of dailiness, as Laurie Langbauer reminds us in her look at the everyday and nineteenth-century serial novels. She also notes that the association of dailiness with women’s routines is so prevalent as to be stereotypical. Approaching the daily as a female modus vivendi clearly elides differences among practitioners (including men), and risks assumptions of oppression and/or fails to account for oppression in its historical specificity. Thus for example in her discussion of the “dailiness of women’s lives,” Bettina Aptheker posits an “analogous” relation between “women’s stories” and “those of tribal people’s” because, as she argues, “in male-dominated society women’s ways of seeing, women’s culture both in an artistic sense and in the sense of beliefs and values, are systematically erased, denied, invalidated, trivialized.” For Henri Lefebvre, whose work has informed this study in significant respects, “everyday man” is defined by his proximity to nature (against philosophical man); and Lefebvre goes on to make this connection especially for women, to whom he ascribes much of the burden of the tedium of the everyday. The marginalization of daily practices has indeed been a significant motivation for my engagement with Münter’s output; but as I shall argue here, while aspects of her dailiness have been devalued, much of it also propagates and is facilitated by dominant perceptions.

In the following discussion I shall posit Münter’s dailiness as both particularizing and generalizing, a point Ben Highmore raises by noting the possibility of locating everyday life in “singular, individual acts” and “an accumulation of particularity” as well as perceiving it as an “overarching structure common to a large group of people.” My analysis approaches dailiness in terms of the conjunction of the “[t]wo widely shared but diametrically opposed views” Naomi

19 Ibid., 64.
21 Tapestries of Life, 43.
Schor perceives the everyday to entail: an everyday as lodged in domestic repetition (the “feminine or feminist” view), and a “masculine or masculinist” version unfolding in street encounters.\(^\text{24}\) Thus, while I want to assert the idea of dailiness as interpretation, I employ the term “dailiness” in this study rather than “everyday” because of its accentuation of the “feminine” perspective. This is necessary to retain for Münter, I believe, because of her location within a gendered framework of culture and also for the interrogative potential of such a position to the currency of a single and shared everyday. She will negotiate this feminine vantage in a complex fashion and use it to tack to other positions, including the masculine, and demonstrate the unraveling of the boundary between these conceptions of the everyday and of commonalities ascribed to the everyday.

Eichner asserts that Münter saw the world as a still life,\(^\text{25}\) a statement that situates her practice within dailiness as low, if ordered, perishability; and Reinhold Heller suggests evocatively that Münter figures a “visionary poetry of the prosaic.”\(^\text{26}\) The Klee painting and her discussions of it attest to a preoccupation with domestic motifs, still life, elements of dress and fashion, and a breezy, familiar mode of discourse different from high “theory” and pronouncement. Written in a letter and subsequently as a tribute, her statements exemplify her preference for relational, serial (daily) forms. She also frequently jots down her recollections on loose sheets of paper and scrap paper, many for Eichner’s text, *Kandinsky und Gabriele Münter. Von Ursprüngen moderner Kunst* (1957).\(^\text{27}\) Drawing on what she calls the “loose, drifting


\(^{25}\) *Kandinsky und Gabriele Münter* 32; translated and cited in Heller, *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 1903-1920* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997), 39. Münter wrote to Kandinsky in a letter of October 30, 1910, “– first I’m going to work on a couple of sketches (paint pencil jottings) & then there are still lifes asking to be done wherever you look – It’s so beautiful here with the flowers! And the table with the 17 madonnas!” [Annegret Hoberg, *Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences 1902-1914* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2001), 76].

\(^{26}\) *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism*, 110.

material of life,” Virginia Woolf’s oft-cited description of what a diary should be is resonant for Münter’s output:

Something loose knit, & yet not slovenly, so elastic that it will embrace any thing, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk, or capacious hold-all, in which one flings a mass of odds & ends without looking them through.28 Münter’s sketchbooks include drawings in different materials and at different levels of finish, some of which were later worked up into paintings, with corrections noted and pages torn out. She worked on multiple sketchbooks simultaneously and some of them include different hands. They also feature clothing and jewelry designs, shopping lists and brand names of certain items such as Gitanes and Glycerin-and-cucumber soap, quotations from literature and philosophy, and popular songs, recipes, furniture measurements with thumbnail sketches, records of expenditures, and contact names and telephone numbers.

Münter’s output overlaps with Deena Metzger’s figuration of the difficult, potentially liberating heterogeneity of the daily: “Each day is a tapestry, threads of broccoli, promotion, couches, children, politics, shopping, building, planting, thinking interweave in intimate connection with insistent cycles of birth, existence, and death.”29 To address the myriad interpretive challenges raised by Münter’s capacious practice – an issue I shall take up repeatedly in this study – I have drawn on feminist readings of autobiography and the everyday, such as those offered by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Elizabeth Hampsten, Cynthia Huff, Sidonie Smith, Julia Watson, and Luce Giard. In arguing for the plurality, constructedness, and opacity of the everyday and foregrounding issues of gender, Langbauer’s work has shaped my approach to the daily in important respects. Highmore’s framing of the problematics of everyday life has been helpful in this regard as well, as has his discussion of the relationship of the everyday to theory and the challenges attending its rendition as a form. In addition, I have found Schor’s multi-

29 Cited in Aptheker, Tapestries of Life, 39.
faceted mapping of the everyday as sited in a tension between totalizing containment and pleasure to be particularly useful for this study. My own construction of the stretch of dailiness for Münter is animated by readings of imperial modernity by Georg Simmel, Rita Felski, Walter Benjamin, and Anne Friedberg, among others. And in thinking about Münter’s daily in the specific context of German-American relations around 1900, I have drawn especially upon the writings of Kirsten Belgum, Nancy Reagin, Sierra Bruckner, and Eric Ames.

In their discussion of daily writing, Suzanne Bunkers and Cynthia Huff assert: “Women’s daily, lived experience...has been denigrated by mainstream Western epistemology in favor of universality and the separation of the mind from the drudgery of daily, bodily tasks. The gendered construct of this mind-body separation places women squarely within the daily.”30 As we shall see, while to an important extent this is true historiographically for Münter, it was not necessarily the case during her association with Kandinsky. Quite the contrary in fact. Yet if her work were not viewed with denigration, its support often depended upon a paradigm of denial and/or appropriation, one that continues to plague her reception.31

In “Painting as Pure Art” (1913), Kandinsky charts a teleology moving from “primitive man’s” noises to accompany dance, resulting from a “sexual drive,” to “modern man’s” need for

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31 While Sabine Windecker accords pre-eminence to the Eichner source (and Münter’s statements for it) in Münter’s (self-)inscription within Blaue Reiter ideology, such an emphasis obscures the meaning of statements by these artists and by Münter herself from the period and before, as well as the role of turn-of-the-century perceptions of female creativity [Gabriele Münter: Eine Künstlerin aus dem Kreis des ‘Blauen Reiter’ (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1991), 13-14 and 24]. Windecker does note the overlap between aspects of Kandinsky’s and Eichner’s conceptualization of Münter (30-31), and Eichner’s is indeed a seminal text for Münter’s subsequent reception; yet Windecker’s lens furthers a teleological (if aborted) sweep of history that logically is unable to accommodate much of the contradiction of Münter’s self-constructions some fifty years earlier. Thus she notes that Münter “saw herself first and foremost as a ‘true primitive’” (sah sich in erster Linie als ‘echte Primitive,’ 39), which subsumes the problematics of Münter’s on-going project of self-fashioning into Münter’s (and Eichner’s) writing of legacy. Windecker’s flagging of Münter’s problematic presence within the Blaue Reiter, as communicated for example in the Macke-Marc correspondence, in its nitty-gritty details offers a thoughtful alternative to characterizations of her simplicity, if not just by Eichner and followers (33).

a concert, resulting from an “aesthetic” and thus “spiritual” impetus instead of a “bodily” need: “In the course of this process of refinement (or spiritualization) of the simplest practical (or bodily) needs, one consistently notices two consequences: the separation of the spiritual from the bodily element, and its further independent development, by means of which the various arts come into being.”32 While for Kandinsky any form in principle is a potential avenue to authentic, spiritual transcendence, what of a practice lodged (at least initially) in the here and now with traces of embodiment and mass culture? To be sure, Münter’s Man at a Table (Kandinsky), with its prominent display of still-life objects, is included in The Blaue Reiter Almanac in the context of Kandinsky’s essay, “On Stage Composition.” In an oft-cited excerpt from her 1911 chronicle, Münter writes of the 1908 summer spent in Murnau: “After a short period of agony I took a great leap forward, from copying nature – in a more or less Impressionist style – to feeling the content of things – abstracting – conveying an extract.”33 Yet the fact remains that the triumphant abstraction and transcendence touted by the Munich avant-garde is fundamentally ill-suited to a painting practice forged for example around caricature and fashion, still life and shopping, and the consumption of meals, for all the mystical overtones and strategies of defamiliarization in her output. Thus in a letter of December 12, 1910 to Münter, for example, Kandinsky succinctly describes aspects of his theory of form (“Form can be impeccable, brilliant, and yet worth exactly a half-sou, because it is empty. So long live form, and down with form!”), which he then relates to his companion:

You personally needn’t be worried: you must say something because it is given to you. Just put your ear to your heart and listen! Maybe you should read more. Good things only. And listen inwardly to the sound they make. Then you will be inspired by even the simplest, most banal sentence. Just listen! “it was a warm summer’s day & the clouds drifted slowly over the tops of

32 Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art, eds. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 351. Barbara D. Wright suggests that in the category of reason, Expressionist literature tends only to value Vernunft and not Verstand, a split which serves to divorce the ethical from the empirical. She argues that that literature defines Geist in opposition to the specificity of everyday existence (“‘New Man,’ Eternal Woman: Expressionist Responses to German Feminism,” in German Quarterly 60.4 [Fall 1987]: 586-587).
the trees"... Banal, like an M.N.N. [Münchener Neueste Nachrichten – the local Munich newspaper] serial & yet has a resonance.\textsuperscript{34}

Though Kandinsky will go on to assert in the same letter that there "is no one beauty & no one truth,"\textsuperscript{35} his evocation of the banal, similarly to his exhortation that Münter read "good things only," would appear to leave little room for capacious everydayness, the somatic self, or triviality outside of orotund appropriation.

In his \textit{Formprobleme der Gotik} (1911), which would exert such influence on Expressionism, Wilhelm Worringer asserts that, in contradistinction to Greek architecture, all expression in Gothic architecture was enabled "\textit{in spite of the stone}": "weight does not appear to exist; we see only free and uncontrolled energies striving heavenward with an enormous \textit{elan}."\textsuperscript{36}

In her discussion of writings by Kandinsky and by Marianne von Werefkin, Shulamith Behr explains:

They both embraced philosophical idealism, proclaiming the superiority of art over the phenomenological, and employed in their writings the rhythms and cycles of nature as metaphors for the organic and yet autonomous laws of art. In seeking abstraction, the notion of boundlessness, the desire to transcend physical and spatial containment had its correlative in their different emphases on denying the body.\textsuperscript{37}

In the gendering of Expressionist theory, as Behr goes on to note, "the victory of 'spirit' over female 'matter' was viewed in utopian terms."\textsuperscript{38} Münter would not, indeed, have an easy time working through the daily. In even a recent treatment of her work, for example, \textit{Man at a Table} was understood as a "visual analogue" to Kandinsky's ideas on stage composition.\textsuperscript{39}

Within \textit{Blaue Reiter} discourses, to spin the \textit{Augenblick} into the \textit{Augen-blick}, Münter's daily processes and influences would be obfuscated. Particularly thorny features of dailiness for

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 93-94.  
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 94.  
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Form in Gothic} (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 106.  
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 134.  

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Münter as an Expressionist, I shall argue, include embodiment, trivial forms, and contingency of circumstance. Dailiness is problematic within a Blaue Reiter construct and historiographically for two primary interconnected reasons: its modesty of position and its problematization of authenticity.

A caricature by August Macke registers Münter’s physical modesty in her artistic and family circles (fig. 2).40 A slightness (of subject matter, of temporality, of self) is at odds with Expressionism’s teleological thrust, universalist reach, and rhetoric of anticipatory religiosity, as in the apocalyptic language in Kandinsky’s “Reminiscences”:

Painting is like a thundering collision of different worlds that are destined in and through conflict to create that new world called the work. Technically, every work of art comes into being in the same way as the cosmos – by means of catastrophes, which ultimately create out of the cacophony of the various instruments that symphony we call the music of the spheres. The creation of the work of art is the creation of the world.41

In a related vein, in his reading of Gotik, Charles Haxthausen refers to Worringer’s “historical ‘divination,’” and he argues that prewar Hausenstein “donned the mantle of prophet” too.42 Arthur Jerome Eddy, who was a unique supporter of Münter’s work,43 would convey some of her difficulty here in noting sensitively, “Gabriele Münter has a vision of things quite her own, a sense of humor and of life that penetrates beneath the surface, and that manifests itself in a technique that is one might say, almost nonchalant.”44 It is precisely this ease of working that for

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40 Hoberg writes, “...the quiet and modest Gabriele Münter is sitting on the sofa next to her brother Carl, whose noisy and incessant pontificating causes her obvious embarrassment” (Gabriele Münter, with a contribution by Helmut Friedel [Munich: Prestel, 2003], 25).
41 Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art, 373; part of passage also cited in Heller, Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, who notes evocatively: “Münter’s worlds, however, do not thunder. The confrontation between art and reality is more playful” (168).
43 Heller notes that Eddy’s acquisition of six of her paintings at the beginning of World War One constituted “the most significant private collection of her work then in existence,” and that outside of works given to relatives, these were the first works collected in America ("Gabriele Münter," in New Worlds: German and Austrian Art 1890-1940, exhibition catalogue, Neue Galerie New York, November 16, 2001 – February 18, 2002, 221).
44 Cubists and Post-Impressionism (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1919), 114. Here is Worringer again in comparison: “And thus the dualism [between man and the phenomenal world], which no longer suffices for
Liselotte Erlanger, writing back in 1974, consigns Münter to having a “lesser life.” The apocalyptic is more forceful than dailiness in that it is louder. As scholars have noted, Münter’s reception suffers by not making the revolutionary (and, for writers such as Paul Vogt and Sigrid Schade, male) “breakthrough” to abstraction along with Kandinsky. In contradistinction to paradigms of “achievement and quest” attending Kandinsky’s teleological, heroic autonomy, Münter worried about the process-oriented quality of her output in its multifacetedness. As she writes in a 1910 letter to Kandinsky: “…but how am I supposed to find ‘form’ —, what is ‘form’ after all. Which is right? Which is wrong? Is one allowed to paint diversely, as I do? Yet these are all attempts [Versuche].”

the negation of life, which is already enfeebled by knowledge which nevertheless denies to it complete emancipation, resolves into a confused mania of ecstasy, a convulsive yearning to be merged into a super-sensuous rapture, into a pathos, the specific essence of which is a lack of all measure” (Form in Gothic, 68 and 79.)


46 See n. 41 of this introduction.

47 Vogt as cited in Windecker, Gabriele Münter: Eine Künstlerin aus dem Kreis des ’Blauen Reiter.’ 81. In a conclusion resonant for this study, Schade suggests that by focusing on constructions of sexual difference as in the writing of abstraction, one may be able to rewrite a history of autonomous genius and the reproductively imitating woman and thus recognize the contributions of female avant-garde artists (“Künstlerinnen und ‘Abstraktion’: Anmerkungen zu einer ‘unermöglichen’ Beziehung in den Konstruktionen der Kunstgeschichte,” in Garten der Frauen: Wegbereiterinnen der Moderne in Deutschland. 1900-1914, eds. Ulrich Kempel and Susanne Meyer-Büser [Berlin: Ars Nicolai, 1996], 45). While Behr offers suggestive revision here for Werefkin in an illustration of the latter’s interrogation of sexual identity and of the right to abstraction (“Veiling Venus,” in Manifestations of Venus, 135-141), she concludes that overall, Münter’s output “does not conform easily to modernist paradigms of autonomy and painterly abstraction” (“Creative Partnership,” in Kandinsky: The path to abstraction, 86).

48 Jeanne Braham suggests that the “male, white, upper-class model of ‘achievement and quest’ [has been] dominating the field of biography and autobiography until the last twenty years” but is starting to be interrogated (“A Lens of Empathy,” in Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women’s Diaries, eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996], 56).

49 “…aber wie soll ich ‘Form’ finden –, was ist überhaupt ‘Form.’ Welche ist richtig? Welche falsch? Darf einer so wie ich verschieden malen? Das sind doch alles Versuche” (letter of November 3, 1910 cited in Heller, “Innenräume,” in Gabriele Münter 1877-1962 Retrospektive, 56). Elsewhere in the same essay Heller provides a useful discussion of the term “Versuche” in Münter’s output (53). Münter repeatedly expresses doubts about her artistic validity, as Heller points out (56); thus she notes for example: “When we founded the [Neue Künstler-] Vereinigung, out of modesty I resisted signing as a co-founder & yet Erbslöh and Kanoldt were not older in art than I — but they seemed much more mature to me & were more self-confident. K. forced me to sign. I also considered myself much too insignificant [wenig] to found an artists’ association with eminent painters – This attitude seems typical of me. I often see myself as ‘slight’ [wenig] – and the others always seem to be more substantial” (Als wir die [Neue Künstler-] Vereinigung
Münter’s statement is problematic for an aesthetic theory elaborated around inner necessity. Plagued by daily doubts (and opportunity), foregrounding multiplicity and concerns about process, such a position quietly threatens to unravel authenticity. In other letters to Kandinsky: “As regards my inner depths, I’ve already told you you overestimate me”; “Simplicity is hard to take.” Probing what counts as truth and knowledge, these articulations raise questions about authority and authorship and about the validity of artistic endeavor. Such doubts are buried under the assertion of authentic selfhood. Beginning to question what (and who) are underneath this framework, Münter’s letters suggest a potentially costly position. Mark Jarzombek offers clarification of what is at stake here:

In essence, the nineteenth-century idea of subject-objectification...demands that aesthetic intentionality be equivalent to ontological intentionality and nothing else. The old Platonic suspicions toward artifice are still there, except that now artifice defined as art made under the negative influence of capitalism could be separated from a type of art made under the influence of an ‘inner spirit’ guided by the true forces of history. In essence, if Plato saw the best artists as the most cunning ones, modernism would see the best artists as the least cunning ones.... It is thus no accident that turn-of-the-century psychologically oriented artists and art critics, beginning with the expressionist and Cubist movements, recognized the theoretical advantages inherent in African and children’s art, for it was precisely in the overlapping discourse of the primitive and the innocent that psychology could identify a space of production that was both aesthetically and historically legitimate.

Authenticity might then stand in for accountability; for in a letter from January 1, 1915, Kandinsky would assert to Münter: “How dearly I should like to help you. Still I believe – that is, I am sure – that the way I suggested [living apart] is the best one. You will not be alone, and a
constant spiritual warmth will always guard you against loneliness. Each of us will have his full freedom." At the same time, as I shall show presently, Münter’s status as a woman is not incidental to her assertion of (and doubts surrounding) authenticity. In a 1926 diary entry for example she writes: “People forget that a woman can have original, genuine talent – that she can be a creative human being.”

In a 1913 tribute to Münter, then, Kandinsky asserts that her “pictures are painted with modesty, that is to say, not for their outer appearance but out of an inner necessity.” Though Kandinsky sought to nurture her talent here as throughout their association, a project both enabled and compromised by their personal relationship, an oft-cited quote is suggestive for the terms of the arrangement: “You are hopeless as a pupil,” Kandinsky told her. “[I]t’s impossible to teach you anything. You can only do what has grown within you. You have everything [instinctively] by nature. What I can do for you is to protect and cultivate your talent so that nothing false creeps in.” As Irí Rogoff puts it: “Thus begins a new phase in the constitution of Münter, one in which she...somehow becomes positioned as a pure, natural, unspoiled, and undirected talent positioned in contrast to Kandinsky’s acculturated and highly theorized practice.” In keeping

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57 Trans. in Behr, “Beyond the Muse,” in Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression, 50; from Eichner, Kandinsky und Gabriele Münter, 38.
with this (and a broader period) call to authenticity, Münter fashions herself as a primitive. As she would later pithily note to Eichner: “I was unaware, and not self-confident” (selbstbewusst). 59

The problems for Münter with such an approach are clear. Though she mentions relying on her pencil sketch for the Klee painting, her rational process and societal influences are submerged under passivity and nature. 60 Münter, we have heard, has learned her to paint her mountain as the bird sings; disconnecting the self from (rational) process, she asserts the power of her intuitive ability as against artifice: “My early inclination towards drawing came completely from within me and found as little support in my family as in school. When I was 14 years old the accuracy [Treffsicherheit] with which I rendered simple outlines of faces from my surroundings became apparent.” 61 Modernity’s other is activated here in the guise of woman as object of nostalgic desire, a position Felski describes in her discussion of Simmel, 62 so that she “expresses her subjective states more directly and spontaneously than the man.” 63 In varying cadences, writers such as Simmel, Karl Scheffler, and Otto Weininger emphasize woman’s suitability for reproduction over creative production. 64 And as Rosemary Betterton points out,


60 For a detailed treatment of the problematic in keeping with the Blaue Reiter investment in primitivism, see Windecker, Gabriele Münter: Eine Künstlerin aus dem Kreis des ‘Blauen Reiter.’

61 “Meine frühe Neigung zum Zeichnen kam ganz aus mir selbst und fand in meiner Familie so wenig Förderung wie in der Schule. Als ich 14 Jahre alt war, fiel die Treffsicherheit auf, mit der ich Köpfe meiner Umgebung in bloßem Umriß wiedergab” (“Gabriele Münter über sich selbst,” in Das Kunstwerk: eine Monatsheft über alle Gebiete der bildenden Kunst 7.2 (1948), p. 25). Münter also casts her participation in German modernism as authentic happenstance: “Without my involvement I found myself among the founders of the ‘Neue Künstler-Vereinigung München’.... When the ‘Blaue Reiter’ circle was formed in 1912, once again I was there from the beginning. Along with the works of all sorts of masters my pieces were represented by art dealers and were made known far across Germany and beyond – from Moscow to Chicago. I didn’t need to do anything” (Ohne mein Zutun kam ich 1909 unter die Gründer der ‘Neuen Künstler-Vereinigung München’.... Als 1912 sich der Kreis des ‘Blauen Reiters’ bildete, war ich von Anfang an ebenso dabei. Mit den Werken der allbekannten Meister wurden meine Arbeiten von Kunsthändlern vertreten und weit durch Deutschland und darüber hinaus bekannt gemacht – von Moskau bis Chicago. Ich brauchte nichts dazu zu tun [‘Gabriele Münter über sich selbst,” 25]).


64 See for example Simmel’s “The Problem of the Sexes” in On Women, Sexuality, and Love, 102-132; Karl Scheffler, Die Frau und die Kunst (Berlin: Verlag Julius Bard, 1908); and Otto Weininger, Sex and Character (New York: Howard Fertig, 2003). The latter two are discussed in Renate Berger, Malerinnen
Ellen Key connects women’s abilities to “receptive” (acting and singing) instead of “creative” art, as does Lily Braun in her 1901 *Die Frauenfrage*. Beyond their figuration of challenges surrounding women’s accession to German modernism, such tropes present particular difficulties for a practice inscribed in dailiness with a rhythm of repetition and foregrounded qualities of embodiment, immanence, and process. For Lou Andreas-Salomé, the very quality of dailiness seems to preclude women’s artistic status, for as Carol Diethe notes citing her work, “The artist has something of woman’s sensitivity; ultimately, though, he is ruled by his intellect, whereas a woman excels in ‘her practical way of being, – her way of living.’” Diethe concludes that Andreas-Salomé reserves creative art for “goal-oriented men.”

The artists and historians building the architecture of Münter’s reception variously position, and thereby flatten, Münter’s practice within this polarizing framework, as Sabine Windecker and other scholars have noted. For all his attempt at valorization Eichner couches his assessment in terms overlapping with a reductivizing dailiness, as for example: “She does not have a goal toward which she is striving. She is completely present.” And for Röthel: “Through the ‘aimlessness’ of her painting she was the opposite of a Franz Marc whose *Will-to-Art* was determined by ethical concepts.” To further illustrate from among the many examples: citing a woman’s comment from a ball for Fasching that Münter and Kandinsky attended – “Miss

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67 “Sie hat kein Ziel, wonach sie auf dem Weg ist. Sie ist vollkommen da” (Kandinsky und Gabriele Münter, 143).
68 “In Memoriam: Gabriele Muentner,” in Gabriele Muentner 1877 to 1962: Fifty Years of Her Art. Paintings: 1906-1956, trans. Alfred Werner, Leonard Hutton Galleries, March-April 1966, n.p. While Röthel goes on to note that her “naivete was not primitive: it was basically different from that of the Sunday Painters: Gabriele Münter knew what she did,” there are many equivocations in his writings. In this text, for instance, he foregrounds the authentic naturalness of her practice: “She let her talent flow carelessly, with the unreflecting self-assuredness of an unthinking creature.” Windecker conveys this ambivalence in her comparison of Eichner’s and Röthel’s statements: for while she discerns a great deal of overlap between their treatments, she notes that Röthel makes mention of Münter’s engagement with artistic currents, though he ultimately reinscribes her practice within tropes of authenticity (Gabriele Münter: Eine Künstlerin aus dem Kreis des ‘Blauen Reiter,’ 26).
Miinter is like freshly fallen snow” – Peter Lahnstein concludes, “Childlikeness, chastity, innocence, naïveté, from the heavens – a better metaphor for it all cannot be found.” And for Erich Pfeiffer-Belli, whose stance like Lahnstein’s is indebted to Eichner’s and Röthel’s characterizations, Miinter is “the born graphic artist, entirely self-reliant, independent of any model.”

As Behr summarizes it in her reframing of Miinter’s practice as “Expressionistin,” “Since Expressionist theory emphasises the values of the ‘untutored,’ the ‘intuitive’ and the ‘spontaneous,’ it is difficult to extricate women’s artistic agency from the metaphoric associations of their gender in cultural practice.” Kandinsky’s writing of his intuitionist process in the following passage from “Reminiscences” evokes aspects of this gendered framework. Against Miinter’s assertion, “I still always follow my nose when I paint,” Kandinsky explains:

I have never been able to persuade myself to use a form that arose within me by way of logic, rather than feeling…. Every form I ever used arrived ‘of its own accord,’ presenting itself fully fledged before my eyes, so that I had only to copy it, or else constituting itself actually in the course of work, often to my surprise. Over the years I have now learned to control this formative power to a certain extent. I have trained myself not simply to let myself go, but to bridle the force operating within me, to guide it. Over the years, I have realized it is not enough to work with hammering heart, hands clasped to your breast (which only makes your ribs ache), your whole body tense…. The horse carries the rider quickly and sturdily. The rider, however, guides the horse. The artist’s talent carries him to great heights quickly and sturdily. The artist, however, guides his talent. This is the ‘conscious,’ the ‘calculated’ element in one’s work, or whatever one wishes to call it. The artist must know his gifts through and through, like an astute businessman leaving no jot unused or forgotten; he must exploit and develop every morsel, to the very limit of his capability.

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69 “Fräulein Mün ter ist wie frischgefallener Schnee”; “Kindlichkeit, Unberührtheit, Unschuld, Naivität, vom Himmel gefallen – eine bessere Metaphor für all das läßt sich nicht finden” (Miinter [Oberammergau: Buch-Kunstverlag Ettal, 1985], 8-9).
70 “…die geborene Graphikerin, ganz selbständig, von keinem Vorbild abhängig” (Gabriele Mün ter: Zeichnungen und Aquarelle, with a catalogue by Sabine Helms [Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1979], 14).
71 “Beyond the Muse,” in Gabriele Mün ter: The Search for Expression, 49. See also Heller, Gabriele Mün ter: The Years of Expressionism, 58-59.
72 “Ich male immer noch so, wie mir die Pinsel gewachsen ist” (Gabriele Mün ter über sich selbst,” 25).
Münter’s statement, “Not an experience, not a painting,” which Gisela Kleine sees as “lapidary,”
“whenever someone recommended a motif as worthy of painting, which she could not bracket
with her own vision,”74 indeed is a succinct capture of her authenticity in a simplified selfhood,
undergirded by a fictionalization of woman.

As a primitive (“she was the one, who more than any other member of the circle of
friends embodied a quality through her pure presence and unreflected actions toward which they
were all striving” – “a genuine ‘primitive’”),75 Münter foregrounds a (lesser) autobiographical
self over the untidy noncompliance of writing a daily life. The term “life writing,” as Timothy
Dow Adams notes, implies a plurality of forms of autobiography,76 and lacks what Sabine
Vanacker calls “scripted coherence.”77 Conversely, as Smith and Watson explain:

Although the genres of life writing in the West emerge in Antiquity, the term autobiography is a
post-Enlightenment coinage…traditional ‘autobiography’ has been implicated in a specific notion
of ‘selfhood.’ This Enlightenment ‘self,’ ontologically identical to other ‘I’s, sees its destiny in a
teleological narrative enshrining the ‘individual’ and ‘his’ uniqueness.78

For all Kandinsky’s attempts at elevation of the objective above the subjective in his formulation
of inner necessity,79 he is ultimately unconvincing either theoretically or empirically. In his
discussion of Expressionist theory by many of its artists, Haxthausen argues:

If there was a common thread running through all of this stylistic and iconographic diversity –
and one could broaden the sample considerably with other works from Germany and abroad – it
was subjectivity. As Ludwig Hilberseimer, writing one of the many postmortems for the

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74 “Kein Erlebnis, also nicht malbar”; “wenn jemand ihr ein Motiv als bildwürdig empfahl, das sie nicht
ihrer eigenen Vision verklammern konnte” (cited and discussed in Kleine, Biographie eines Paars, 14).
75 “…sie war es, die mehr als jedes andere Mitglied des Freundeskreises durch ihr reines Dasein und durch
ihr unreflektiertes Tun etwas verkörperte, was sie alle erstrebt” – “eine wirkliche ‘Primitive’” (Röthel,
Gabriele Münter: 14 Farbbilder, 7-8).
76 “Life Writing and Light Writing: Autobiography and Photography,” in Autobiography, Photography,
Narrative, ed. Timothy Dow Adams, special issue of Modern Fiction Studies 40.3 (Fall 1994): 460.
University of New York Press, 1997), 182.
78 De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women’s Autobiography, eds. Sidonie Smith and
Julia Watson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), xvii; cited also in Marsha Meskimmon,
The Art of Reflection: Women Artists’ Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1996), 70. For further discussion of the history of autobiography, see Linda Anderson,
79 On the Spiritual in Art, in Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art, 173-175.
‘movement,’ observed: ‘Expressionism did not overcome subjectivity but actually brought it to its fullest development.... It is just as individualistic and anarchistic as impressionism.’

Divorced from process, Münter disavows aspects of her modernity in a convergence with Simmel’s gendered framework of culture. As Felski puts it, “in contrast to male becoming, woman represents being; whereas he is dynamic, she is beyond historical time.” As I have illustrated in the discussion of Man in an Armchair, that is not to say that her life-writing disappears completely – for indeed, Münter will find effective strategies for refuting her pact with modernism – but it is submerged under the rhetoric of the Munich avant-garde. Thus in a letter to Kandinsky in Moscow from November 3, 1910 Münter mentions work on several still life drawings and observes of one: “- unmistakable Picasso influence.” But in his response from November 7, Kandinsky writes:

I am quite delighted at your persistent efforts to find drawing. I like the sketches. Now as you know I am quite opposed to hard, overly precise form, which ‘today’ is impossible & anyway leads to a dead end.... If you really feel what I mean (don’t philosophize, just simply understand, feel!) you will also find form. One must let the form work on one and forget all the Picassos and Picassore.”

And in Klee’s own writing of Münter: “Gabriele Münter’s work sometimes directly recalls children’s art. In this approach she also has found the appropriate expression of her personality.” In foregrounding her experience as the “origin of knowledge,” as Joan Scott argues in her critical reading of experience, “the evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world.” By highlighting the contradictions of Münter’s daily processes, this inquiry seeks to problematize her “experience” as an artistic practitioner and its historiography.

80 “A Critical Illusion,” 188 n. 79.
81 The Gender of Modernity, 46.
82 Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences, 80 and 82-83.
To explore some of the specifics of what is expunged by modest authenticity, and how Münter and German modernism are served (or not) in the process, this study centers on Münter’s travels in America as a textualization of dailiness. From 1898 to 1900, Münter and Emmy visited relatives in Saint Louis, in Moorefield, Arkansas, and in various locations in Texas, with stops in New York and Niagara Falls. Münter’s American output in the Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung encompasses seven sketchbooks, some of which also contain works predating her travels; a corpus of approximately fifty individual sketches; roughly 400 photographs, many of which were made with a Kodak Bull’s Eye; a photograph album she compiled with about 90 images; pocket calendars for each of the years of her travels; a couple of postcards she designed; and reminiscences from her travels and upbringing. In addition, her library in the same archives includes two bound volumes of Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine spanning July 1860 through May 1861 belonging to her mother and an 1888 edition of Charles Siringo’s A Texas Cowboy or, Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony Taken from Real Life. While Röthel suggests that Münter’s “natural immediacy and straightforwardness” received confirmation in America, that “[t]he naive as an ‘unexpected form of the childlike’ stood the test of the wide world,” I shall show that, to the contrary, in America Münter encountered a variety of modern influences out of which to forge a visuality that was neither naive nor unmediated. In conclusion to this study, I shall illustrate some of the forms of her art of dailiness by centering my

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85 These are Kon. 36/2; Kon. 36/3; Kon. 37/2; Kon. 37/3; Kon. 38/4; Kon. 46/1; and Kon. 46/2.
86 Oggenschuss notes that the Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung has approximately 250 negatives and 330 prints. For some of the negatives there are multiple prints of differing quality and appearance (Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 194). Not all of these images were made by Münter, and she appears to have acquired them from numerous sources. A few such as those depicting Münter are presumed to have been taken by her sister: some were probably given to the sisters by relatives and friends; and others, such as Official building on fire (fig. 108), were published in local newspapers.
87 One is housed in the Gabriele Münter Stiftung.
89 “Unmittelbare und Unkomplizierte im Naturell”; “Das Naive als ‘unerwartete Form des Kindlichen’ hatte sich in der großen Welt bewährt” (Gabriele Münter: 14 Farbbilder, 12).
discussion on four of her paintings from circa 1908 to 1913, with consideration of her writings, photographs, sketchbooks, recipe book, and ephemera.

There are three primary reasons for my focus on Münter’s America travels to evoke what I take to be her art of dailiness. First, her American output is an apt illustration of dailiness both for its exemplification of lifewriting in the process-oriented, generic capaciousness I have begun to describe as well as for her direct evocation of the daily in this material. For example, she captions many of her sketches with dates, sometimes to the exclusion of other identifying information, and includes identification for her photographs in her pocket calendar for 1900. Furthermore, Münter equates her American sketchbooks with diaristic practice. As Juhasz asserts, the diary is the “classic verbal articulation of dailiness,”\textsuperscript{90} and stems from the Latin term “diàrium,” or “daily allowance.”\textsuperscript{91} Affirming her cultivation— in and against nonchalant modesty— Münter told Roditi, “When I came to the United States, I filled my sketchbooks with drawings, very much as any educated girl of my generation might have kept a diary. But nobody attached any more importance to my drawings than they might have done to a diary.”\textsuperscript{92} Various scholars point to the low valuation of diaristic genres; as Philippe Lejeune puts it for example, “One has to overcome the general contempt and condescension that surround the phenomenon of nineteenth-century girls’ diaries. Many other scholars have never read any of these diaries, yet they are always convinced that these diaries are a recreational activity, like stitching or playing the piano, meek, sickly sentimental, and boring.”\textsuperscript{93} In the body of this text I shall extend Münter’s equation of the sketchbooks with diaristic practice to argue for an intersection between her overall American output and genres of life writing.

\textsuperscript{90} “Towards a Theory of Form in Feminist Autobiography,” 64; cited also in Hogan, “Engendered Autobiographies,” in Autobiography and Questions of Gender, 95.
\textsuperscript{91} Bunkers and Huff, “Issues in Studying Women’s Diaries,” in Inscribing the Daily, 5.
\textsuperscript{92} “Gabriele Münter.” 139.
In America, Münter registers her surroundings with the tools and practices of daily life—pocket calendars, jottings and sketches, postcards, a Kodak Bull’s Eye—as a group hardly the locus of Art, even though that was fluid: Jugendstil artists were designing postcards, for example, and the category of American amateur photography was highly porous and the subject of contestation. Focusing on these “low” genres with which Münter engages in the United States is useful for teasing out her resourcefulness in articulating a quotidian creativity and for understanding her relationship to modernity. As Ann Ardis asks, “If modernism was in fact one aspect—but only one aspect—of women’s modernity, then what other aesthetic modes and venues of literary and/or cultural production...did women explore and exploit?” An examination of an array of daily materials is also instructive for probing the extent of her modesty in visual capture. In addition (and related) to genre, modesty is underscored functionally through use (documentation, organization, relationality), subject matter—her American relatives and (German-)American landscapes, and a foregrounded thematics of amusement and cultivation. A key question I explore is how Münter maintains, harnesses, and circumvents genre for lifewriting purposes. Münter will continue to use many of the same low genres beside “high” forms after 1900; we shall have occasion to track aspects of her dailiness across these genres and also to speculate on their connections to her paintings at the conclusion of this study to understand the shifting problematics surrounding self-inscription she faced.

My second motivation for approaching Münter’s dailiness via America is for what that material so resonantly illustrates concerning the breadth of dailiness—its imbrication in constructions of region and nation; its connections to modern, mass cultural amusement and to high art. It figures what Highmore refers to as “micro” and “macro” perspectives in covering

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95 In using the terminology “mass culture,” I follow Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes. They retain the term for the period due to its role of “reconstructing the United States” in distinction to “popular culture,” of which Susan Davis notes that it “does not mean the industrially produced, standardized cultural forms produced for cheap sale to ‘mass’ audiences. Mass culture, on the other hand, means exactly that—and more.”

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protocol and possibility, taking on Foucauldian and deCerteau-esque resonances, for example, and Schor’s “masculine” and “feminine” perspectives. This scope of dailiness is important for Münter because of the tension swirling around her in the literature between her agency and victimization. My approach to dailiness seeks to catch the two viewpoints. Thus for example, while this study retains the meaning of the everyday in terms of its subjugating repetition and conformity, it also looks to discourses of worldliness in which dailiness is imbedded and its opportunities for subversion.

I have chosen to center this inquiry on America for the third reason that Münter’s retrospective statements about this material, as well as those made by some scholars, reveal almost an obsessiveness with truth claims even as they destabilize these, which is a crucial issue for the autobiographic project and for German modernist currents with which Münter engaged, as we have seen. Thus, in “Bekenntnisse,” she maintains:

Later, when I had had a glimpse of the academy’s dealings (in Düsseldorf, with little interest and success), I still filled my sketchbooks as a modest dilettante without artistic intentions with depictions of people who appealed to me. Thus during my two-year trip to visit the cousins [Vettersreise] in the USA I drew my mother’s relatives. She had come over there as a child and had returned to Germany as a woman, whereas all her siblings had become Americans. Back then I did not know anything about art. I only wanted to capture people as they were.

Such a position is adopted by writers such as Lahnstein, who maintains that in America, Münter’s drawing is “accurate, dedicated to the object, completely unpretentious.” Münter oscillates between a belief in transparent capture and an opening of the gap in that process: “I copied [konterfeite] all of my relatives, from the old to infants. They are very objective works, far from

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98 Her drawing is “genau, um den Gegenstand bemüht, ganz unprätentiös” (Gabriele Münter, 6).
artistic compositions, but they have the advantage that they provide lifelike images of the sitters."99 Such a catalogue of moments of opticality, as Münter seems to formulate it here, invites questions surrounding authenticity. Her introduction to photography in the United States, with its pre-eminently claim to referentiality, reinforces a focus on questions of indexical documentation. In seeking to unbind Münter from a lack of rationality, a divorce from process, and a construction of the self as imprinting mimetically, the America material, then, offers a useful locus to explore her idea of capture and to problematize issues of representation and representability.

As is clear, I do not mean to take the American material for what it reveals of Münter’s *Blaue Reiter* work in terms of pressing my understanding of her dailiness into service of progression and affirmation of the canon. Fortunately from this vantage, at least, while important visual strategies that characterize Münter’s subsequent output indeed may be discerned in her American material, if one looks to it for aesthetic “clues” leading up to the *Blaue Reiter* Period or for the lynchpin of disavowal of aspects of Kandinsky’s later influence, one will not find them. For in keeping with expectations of Bildung (educational formation) constructing women’s engagements with artistic practice via recording, shoring up familial duty, imitation, decoration, and accomplishment,100 Münter did not devote her time to avidly searching for motifs that she would then mobilize throughout her career. Her interest in artistic representation was sufficiently manifest that she had engaged in private drawing and painting lessons in Düsseldorf with the portrait and genre painter Ernst Bosch, and subsequently participated in the portrait and history painter Willy Spatz’s drawing class at the Ladies’ School of the Düsseldorf Academy. As Behr

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100 For a historized discussion of Bildung, see Georg Bollenbeck, *Bildung und Kultur: Glanz und Elend eines deutschen Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1996).
suggests, Düsseldorf also afforded Münter the possibility for contact with Jugendstil ideas. Yet with a heavy dose of copying her teachers’ works, as Münter tells it, her instruction provided only some stimulation. Thus her Llano Estacado was not the lifelong “itch” that New Mexico was for Georgia O’Keeffe. Nor was it parallel to Kandinsky’s “shattering experience” of traveling in the Vologda as in Peg Weiss’s scholarly examination in terms of motifs inflecting his overall practice (a “unifying iconographic rationale”). While Münter’s travels intersect with Kandinsky’s ethnography and both journeys have personal resonance, as I shall discuss, the academic motivations of his project differ from hers in cultivation. There are interesting intersections between the spectacularity in Münter’s American output and portrayal of its more developed forms in Simone de Beauvoir’s retrospective (and self-styled “scrupulously accurate”) America Day by Day covering four months of travel in 1947, though there are more differences than similarities between the accounts.

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101 “Beyond the Muse,” in Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression, 51. See also Heller, Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 42-44.  
102 Münter as cited in Hoberg, “Gabriele Münter in Amerika,” Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 15-16. To Roditi she is more unenthusiastic about her Düsseldorf experience (“Gabriele Münter,” 139).  
104 Kandinsky’s emphasis on salvage also differs from Münter’s travels. He explains that on his journey, “My task was two-fold: in the case of the Russian population to study peasant criminal law (to discover the principles of primitive law), and in the case of the fishing and hunting communities of the slowly disappearing Syryenians, to salvage the remnants of their pagan religion” (“Reminiscences,” in Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art, 365).  
105 Among other cities, Beauvoir visited New York, Niagara Falls, Chicago, Hollywood, Houston, and Boston. She records that in New York, “I’m strolling alone, looking at the window displays. Yet those inspired by Dalí are worth a look: those gloves flying in trees like birds, those shoes stranded among seaweed – only one or two stores in Paris could offer something similar. If one had to pay to enter, there would be a crowd to admire this fashion theater. But the show is free, and even the women pass by without looking; everyone in the streets is striding purposefully ahead” [America Day by Day, trans. Carol Cosman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 19]. She registers her wish to see Niagara Falls because of a Sunday viewing of them at the Châtelet Theater “all green and foamy” (86). She takes the elevator underground and dons “an enormous oilskin cape”: “I’m going to walk under the falls; I imagine I’ll pass behind the curtain of weeping waters, as I sometimes did in the Bois de Boulogne (or was it at the Buttes-Chaumont?) in my childhood. But no. I’m in a subway corridor” (88). In Houston: “In the absence of cockfights, a professor takes me to a wrestling match after my lecture,” and: “We arrive toward the end of the match in a huge sports arena filled with a delirious crowd. The women shout: ‘Kill him! Kill him!’ in raucous voices. In the ring the wrestlers confront each other with looks of bestial hatred, studiously imitating the stance and snarl of King Kong. It’s clear that this is a performance and not a real fight” (215). And, at the end of her first week: “But one thing that I’m already sure of – aside from the beauty of New York – is that there is a human warmth in the American people” (25). At the same time: “The constipated
Nevertheless, as an interesting, underexamined manifestation of dailiness, Münter’s American material serves a restitutive function surrounding her artistic process and thereby helps to spotlight hierarchies of value and to interrogate the construction of creative selfhood in the context of her practice and historiography. As Bunkers and Huff suggest, women’s diaries’ “narrative structure of repetition within the cycle of dailiness invites us to discover patterns that do not follow a progressive timeline and that do not necessarily culminate in the creation of

girl smiles a loving smile at the lemon juice that relieves her intestines. In the subway, in the streets, on magazine pages, these smiles pursue me like obsessions.... Optimism is necessary for the country’s social peace and economic prosperity” (23).

A recent exhibition at the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus of Münter’s American photographs is long overdue. My own study departs from the exhibition and accompanying catalogue, which are wonderfully recuperative for a gap in the literature, in terms of the focus on dailiness. If the American material is finally seeing its due in being valued, which is helpful to better understand Münter’s practice, while none of the scholars involved seek to claim her material for high art and note specifically that Münter did not perceive her American material as art, there are tendencies in that direction in focusing on the artistic quality and uniqueness of her amateur practice. To some extent, the mere fact of exhibition of the blown up 3½-x-3½ photographs makes this unavoidable. The exhibition and catalogue have facilitated my own research not only through publication of many of Münter’s photographs and of her informal retrospective statements on America (some unfortunately in excerpted form), but by establishing a basic chronology of Münter’s circulation. Intriguing new questions are also proposed, including Münter’s possible involvement with the development of her American photographs. This issue is taken up for her post-America photographs in a subsequent exhibition also at the Lenbachhaus (Isabelle Jansen, “Die Photographien der Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung und des Aufbau einer deutsch-französischen Bilddatenbank,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Jahre mit Kandinsky. Photographien 1902-1914 [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirner/Mosel, 2007], 57). The first exhibition also speculates about convergences between her work and early cinema, an issue I develop somewhat here.

Münter’s material from America has generated much interest, though there have been no sustained studies of the overall practice. Mochon published some of the images and focused her consideration on Münter’s early output, and Comini noted the gap surrounding the America material in her 1982 “Gender or Genius? The Women Artists of German Expressionism,” an expanded discussion of her 1980 Arts Magazine article (283). Heller’s Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism included publication of a small grouping of her images, and his entry on Münter for a 2001-2002 exhibition of German and Austrian art at the Neue Galerie in New York foregrounds the unique importance of her connections with America. The essay also includes a fascinating discussion of her reception in America during her lifetime and her contacts with the United States following her travels. In addition, in the “Beyond the Muse” essay in Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression, Behr flags the need for examination of the America material. My own treatment overlaps with her summary framing of the problem in the following assertion: “...whereas [Münter’s]...role as an explorer hints at imperialism, her quest to map the coordinates of her parents’ recollected pasts and memories serves as an exercise in self-ethnology. Such discoveries empowered her, providing an understanding of her attachment to notions of Kulturnation, given that the political nostalgia for 1848 was enshrined in German-Texan folklore (53). The most detailed discussion of the America material appears in a chapter in Kleine’s biography of Münter and Kandinsky. Diana Gilpin is working on an M.A. dissertation on the America material as well.
selfhood through accruing tests of individual acts." As Highmore puts it, the everyday "becomes shorthand for voices from ‘below’" as well as "the name for aspects of life that lie hidden," which is suggestive of its recuperative possibilities. At the same time, Highmore cautions us about an "unproblematic acceptance of everyday life as a transparent realm" and aims for his compilation to foster "a less everyday use of the term everyday life. It explicitly and implicitly addresses the ‘everyday’ as a problematic, a contested and opaque terrain, where meanings are not to be found ready-made." Here as we have begun to see, Miinter’s experience is not taken as an “originary point of explanation,” and she is not perceived to have the final word in her written texts or visual material; instead, I flag the contradictions in them, posturings and fictionalizations, what she does not say.

To be sure, my approach to Miinter is different from a poststructuralist dispensation with authorship. If the removal of the construct problematizes the singularity and contours of (authorial) selfhood, and thereby offers critical assistance to the feminist project, the disconnection of it from consideration sidesteps historicization of struggles surrounding representation and accountability. Through a discussion of Miinter’s strategies for and challenges in coming to representation as instanced in her America practice, as well as the

107 “Issues in Studying Women’s Diaries,” in Inscribing the Daily, 19. “History,” Elizabeth Hampsten points out, “has traditionally recorded those discrete events that manifest change and progress: battles, the rise and fall of kingdoms and governments, the conquests of warriors of railroad moguls.” Such a valuation leaves much of women’s lives and everyday artistic practices aside – “food cooked, clothes sewn, letters written. These are consumed, worn out, thrown away, and they go out of style or out of date if kept too long” (Read This Only to Yourself: The Private Writings of Midwestern Women, 1880-1910 [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982], 2).
108 “Introduction: Questioning everyday life,” 1. See also Aptheker, Tapestries of Life, 43.
111 Miinter’s signature “is not a full presence that somehow stands outside the text as a mark of the author’s propriety, ownership over, or singular connection with the text”; it is not a stamp of authenticity (Elizabeth Grosz on Derrida in Space, Time, and Perversion [New York and London: Routledge, 1995], 13). Smith and Watson succinctly formulate the problem: “The myth of autobiography is that the story is singularly formative, that the gesture is coherent and monologic, that the subject is articulate and the story articulable, and that the narrativizer lies there waiting to be spoken” (“Introduction,” Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography, eds. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996], 9).
responses to modernity it suggests, I hope to probe the category of modern authorship and to
begin to offer a contribution to the projects of Felski’s The Gender of Modernity and Ardis and
Leslie Lewis’s Women’s Experience of Modernity 1875-1945. Marsha Meskimmon inquires:

To what extent is it possible to enunciate a truly different position when you are always already
within the structures which mark your difference? For feminists considering their own position
as ‘speakers,’ this has revealed a double-bind: to be rendered silent by taking up the traditional
and ‘appropriate’ place of the feminine woman in patriarchy or to adopt a position of power
which colludes with patriarchal discourse.\footnote{Reflection, 7-8.}

For Münter, coming to representation was crucial for what and how she produced, and it is for
this reason that this study centers on her difficulties as an autobiographical subject.

As a modest, “authentic” self, Münter’s launching of “Bekenntnisse” with an apologia for
coming to writing is understandable: “What concerns me is seeing, painting, and drawing, not
talking.” She then notes that she is responding to requests that she discuss her work and the
“early times” (aka those with Kandinsky).\footnote{“Meine Sache ist das Sehen, das Malen und Zeichnen, nicht das Reden” (“Bekenntnisse und Erinnerungen,” in Gabriele Münter: Menschenbilder in Zeichnungen, n.p.).} Throughout her life, she tends to avoid – out of
disinterest, discomfort, or probably some combination – grand theoretical pronouncements,
programs, and self-declaration.\footnote{Münter tells Roditi outright, “I have never been particularly interested in theory” (“Gabriele Münter,” 146); and indeed, the engagement with theory is a leitmotif of the interview. She maintains that Klee (as discussed above) and Jawlensky are not really theorist-thinkers, as are Kubin and Kandinsky. Theory/its lack and issues of articulation are seen as defining an artist. When Roditi asks her, “Would you say that Jawlensky was one of the optimists or one of the pessimists in your group? Was he interested in the art of the future, like Kandinsky, or in that of the past, like Kubin?,” she answers, “I suppose he was a middle-of-the-road man. In some respects he was very conservative, not at all interested in ideas or theories” (147-148). Roditi notes, “In the last couple of years, she had experienced, as she admitted to me, great difficulty in moving around. An infirmity of the semicircular canals made her lose her sense of equilibrium very easily, but her eyesight was still excellent and her hand firm enough to allow her to draw and paint” (141). Röthel observes that Münter was “lacking the ability to speak uninhibitedly” and so revealed much “only in notes and...diaries and correspondence” (in Gabriele Münter 1877 to 1962: Fifty Years of Her Art, trans. Werner, n.p.). And following Eichner’s discussion of Münter’s lack of interest in “weighty sessions” (Sitzungen) leads Bernd Fäthke to perceive her as “quite obviously” projecting her own circumstances onto Jawlensky in Listening (“Marianne von Werefkin: Von Farben, Formen und Linien,” in Marianne von
‘Theory’... need mean no more than systematic and public reflection on ways of doing things and the assumptions that underlie them. Such reflection can be more or less formalised. However, ‘theory and theorising’ may also refer to full-blown Theory, the abstractions of academia of the very kind that some feminists have been opposed to. In any of these guises, theory is an attempt to draw together the perspectives of individuals into a better understanding.\(^{116}\)

And while Lefebvre calls for a philosophical examination of the tensions of everyday life ("its baseness and exuberance, its poverty and fruitfulness") to unleash the latter’s “creative energies,” his quotidian is lodged within philosophy.\(^{117}\)

To illustrate some of the problems for Münter with theoretical articulation, it is instructive to turn briefly to Werefkin. With its “colorful” collection of characters, her salon consolidated her radiance and passionate engagement with variegated intellectual currents.\(^{118}\)

Werefkin’s 1910 self-portrait displays a subject with a “fiery” temperament and lack of allure, scorched by demonic vermillion irises in pools of blue. Kinesthetic eyebrows and a cheekbone in a cyclone of mustard frame her facial features, echoed by the vortex of color as backdrop (fig. 3).

Münter’s discussion of Werefkin in the context of her own portrait of her intimates her perception of Werefkin as a monstrous subject:\(^{119}\) “I painted the Werefkina in 1909 before the yellow base of my house. She was a pompous appearance, self-confident, domineering [herrisch], richly dressed, with a hat like a wagon wheel, which offered space for quite a number of things.”\(^{120}\)

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\(^{120}\) Cited in Hoberg, Gabriele Münter, 2003, 19. Though she argues for Werefkin’s “appropriation of the masculine creative force” in the self-portrait (“Veiling Venus,” in Manifestations of Venus, 135). Behr’s translation of this passage, included in a different text, misses some of the more fraught qualities of the German: “I painted the Werefkina in 1909 before the yellow base of my house. It was a bombastic appearance, self-confidently, authoritatively, richly dressed, with a hat like a carriage wheel, on which all
Mara Folini argues for Werefkin’s “theoretical” discovery of the language of artistic form as ultimately an enabling mechanism for the renewal of artistic practice after a lengthy hiatus.\textsuperscript{121} And particularly suggestive for its departure from Münter’s daily self is Werefkin’s mode of registering her self-doubt and longing, to which \textit{Lettres à un Inconnu} (three notebooks completed between 1901 and 1905) attest. Writing primarily in French, but also in German, English, and her native Russian, and addressing an Unknown, Werefkin writes at a distance to register a (learned) critique of positivism and to figure the composition of the (autobiographical) self through language: “Vous, au fond, ce n’est que moi, mais un moi bien autrement noble et grand, un moi génial, un moi éloigné du moi réel de toute la distance du rêve à la réalité.”\textsuperscript{122} Her text moves between the pronomial subject positions “I” and “You,” which she sometimes conflates, as well as into a third position, “the artist,” and between genders. Werefkin thus resists phallogocentrism and, in her championing of “mensonge” foregrounds the fiction of the autobiographical self; yet her lyrically tortured writing relies upon essentializing frameworks and a quest for individualism as it figures her struggles to subjectivize herself within the epistolary form.\textsuperscript{123} Nicole Brögmann therefore goes so far as to see her as a “complete captive” of patriarchal conceptions of genius.\textsuperscript{124}


\textsuperscript{123} Werefkin’s writing is animated by a related spirit to that of Hélène Cixous: "In my tongue the 'foreign' languages are my sources, my agitations. 'Foreign'; the music in me from elsewhere; precious warning: don’t forget that all is not here, rejoice in being only a particle, a seed of chance, there is no center of the world, arise, behold the innumerable, listen to the untranslatable. Languages pass into my tongue, understand one another, call to one another, touch and alter one another, tenderly, timidly, sensually; blend their personal pronouns together, in the effervescence of differences. Prevent 'my language' from taking itself for my own; worry it and enchant it” (“Coming to Writing” and Other Essays, ed. Deborah Jenson, with an introductory essay by Susan Rubin Suleiman, trans. Sarah Cornell et al [Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1991], 21).

Werefkin’s well-known “J’aime les choses qui ne sont pas,” in its utopianism seems very much at odds with dailiness as immanence; as Folini notes, she rarely describes immediate events and activities in her *Lettres.* Instead, Werefkin poetically figures the quotidian as a limitation to fantasy, creativity, transformation, and the ideal throughout these writings. However, while Werefkin opposes “banal reality” to alternative worlds of artistic fantasy, as Jelena Hahl-Koch perceptively observes, Werefkin’s variation of her ideal of things that are not in terms of things that yet are not admits their siting at least initially in daily reality with an emphasis on becoming.

Yet even though Münter avoids Werefkin’s entanglements (and possibilities), this does not mean that she lacks self-pronouncement or theoretical position in the sense of trying to arrive at better understanding or that she is simply documenting a private self. As I shall show in this study, Münter’s forms of articulation are often more contextual, mass cultural, and daily than the term “theory” would seem to imply. In contrast to the magnetic power of visionary abstraction for Werefkin, Münter’s vision is lodged in the concrete, through which she will tack to imaginative positions with “spiritual,” confessional resonances. As I shall illustrate here, Münter’s practice is often informed by a quest for order within daily occurrence and “personal experience” that differs from Werefkin’s assertion in her “Lettres”: “I do not love life, I love dreaming. A trip is like a living dream. People, things, events pass by like visions, nothing holds

125 Brößmann evocatively suggests that the relationship of this motto to Werefkin’s figurative strategies forces a redefinition of terms of abstraction and figuration. Differences between Werefkin’s and Münter’s vantages are clear, however, in Brößmann’s subsequent point that instead of mere illustration, Werefkin’s painting emanates from a visionary, “philosophical-religious” approach and is expressed through a unifying language of signs and symbols (*ibid.*, 48). Folini relates this credo to a critique of positivism, bourgeois values, and the banality of existence (“‘Lettres à un Inconnu’ [1901-1905]: Considerations esthétiques de Werefkin,” in Nicole Brößmann, *Marianne von Werefkin: Œuvres peintes 1907-1936*, exhibition catalogue, Fondation Neumann, Gingins, 1996, 82-83).

126 “‘Lettres à un Inconnu’ (1901-1905),” in Brößmann, 81.


128 *Marianne Werefkin und der russische Symbolismus*, 57.
Münter’s statements frequently include a foregrounded relational component, and she is acutely aware of her audience: “All is confession, every utterance is a confidence. But not all people are father confessors.” Unlike Werefkin’s philosophy of reality as a lie in her quest for transcendent truth, as an Expressionist Münter, for all her use of parody, her “spiritualizing” revision of reality, and her articulation of doubt, will ultimately seek authenticity through her daily experience. Long before her diaristic “Beichte und Anklage” (Confession and Accusation) of 1925-1928, Münter’s practice relates to what Hampsten in her study of female Midwestern diaristic writing refers to as a desire for “an accounting of herself.”

In her discussion of confessional writing, Felski describes its assumption of intimate audience and truth claims and notes:

Protestantism’s emphasis on the importance of the individual struggle for salvation prepared the way for the self-consciousness necessary for autobiography proper; the flourishing of Pietism in Germany and Puritanism in England in the seventeenth-century encouraged an active interest in self-scrutiny and spiritual introspection, often in the form of diaries in which every detail of daily thoughts and actions was recorded and examined for its moral and spiritual meaning.

In a resonant formulation for Münter’s practice, Georges Gusdorf argues for autobiography as a “work of personal justification” and an “apologetics.” Indeed, Felski’s essay flags the

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131 Read This Only to Yourself, 25.
embedding of new freedoms of self-exploration devolving from the confession in a network of
social restraint.134

Windecker acknowledges Münter’s voluminous correspondence, diaristic writings, and
“Bekenntnisse”; yet at the beginning of her study she laments Münter’s lack of theoretical
articulation, a stance exacerbated by Windecker’s reluctance to interrogate theory itself.135
Highmore notes that

theorists often promote the values of ‘rigorous’ thought, ‘systematic’ elaboration and ‘structured’
argument: but what if rigour, system and structure were antithetical and deadening to aspects of
everyday life? What if ‘theory’ was to be found elsewhere, in the pages of a novel, in a
suggestive passage of description in an autobiography, or in the street games of children?136

In keeping with my focus on dailiness for this discussion, such a lens is useful for exploring
specific aspects of Münter’s cognitive process and enunciation. Describing the costs for black
feminist critics of making themselves heard, Barbara Christian laments their return to abstraction,
jargon, and “high” theory: “So we learned their language only to find that its character had a
profound effect on the questions that we thought, the images we evoked, and that such thinking
recalled a tradition beyond which we had to move if we were to be included in any authentic
dialogue.”137 While I am wary of the search for spaces of authenticity, I shall follow Christian’s
call to “also look low...as we look high” by turning to Münter’s Bildung.138

Münter’s family retains a number of the books she had as a young girl
(“Mädchenbücher”), some of which were gifts from her brother, Carl (Charly).139 Annegret
Hoberg points out that, among other motifs, Münter’s school notebooks include renditions of

134 “For the ‘authentic self’ is itself very much a social product, and the attempt to assert its privileged autonomy can merely underline its profound dependence upon the cultural and ideological systems through which it is constituted” (“On Confession,” in Women, Autobiography, Theory, 87-88).
135 Gabriele Münter: Eine Künstlerin aus dem Kreis des ‘Blauen Reiter,’ 9 and 34-39. As a corrective to the writing of her lack of process and awareness, however, Windecker demonstrates Münter’s investment in Blaue Reiter currents.
138 Ibid, 56.
139 Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 38-40 and 675 nn. 2-3.
female types from Gründerzeit periodicals and books.\textsuperscript{140} Let us briefly consider Münter’s 1892 sketch that Hoberg reproduces (fig. 4) against one of the texts Münter owned, Eugenie Marlitt’s well-known The Old Mam’selle’s Secret (Das Geheimnis der alten Mamsell; 1867).\textsuperscript{141} The novel emphasizes the display of gentle female virtue and female form and probes, even as it reinscribes, a separation of spheres. Marlitt notes that the main character, Felicitas, was on the way back to the kitchen, still entirely unobserved, when at the entreaty of little Anna, who was playing in the shady walk by the summerhouse, she stopped a moment, and with her head thrown back and arms uplifted caught the drooping branch of the acacia and tried to break off a small branch for the child. It is difficult for a faultless female to assume an attitude better fitted to display its charms than the one which the young girl retained for several minutes. The lawyer hastily seized his eyeglasses—he was rather near-sighted—and the dark eyes fixed in evident amazement on the youthful figure under the acacias were in turn sharply watched by the councillor’s widow, though she was apparently engrossed in her embroidery.\textsuperscript{142}

The figure at the left of Münter’s sketch certainly looks angelic, her eyes turned heavenward; and the sense of sculptural solidity, in keeping with the bust format, further idealizes. The apparent freshness of the trail of hair that twists off the page due to the figure’s torsion indeed works to marmorean effect—not unlike Felicity’s reach to the acacia. The female figure at the right reads as a collection of accoutrements, awaiting the receipt of Love’s arrow.

If we turn now to two specific passages in the novel, Marlitt’s articulation of challenges for women surrounding the development of their creativity and asserting their talent is resonant for Münter. In the first:

Felicitas went up to the mistress of the house and laid an exquisitely embroidered cambric handkerchief on her work-table. The councilor’s widow hurriedly seized it.

“Is this to be sold for the aid of the mission, aunt?” she asked, unfolding it and examining the embroidery.

“Why of course,” replied Frau Hellwig. “Caroline worked it for that object—she has dawdled over it long enough. I think it ought to bring three thalers.”

“Perhaps so,” said the councillor’s widow, shrugging her shoulders, “where did you get the design for the corners, dear child?”

A faint flush mounted to Felicitas’s face. “I drew it myself,” she replied, in a low tone.

The young widow looked up quickly. For a moment her blue eyes seemed to sparkle with a green light. “Drew it yourself?” she repeated slowly. “Don’t be vexed with me, child, but with my best efforts I can’t understand such boldness. How could you attempt anything of the

\textsuperscript{140} Gabriele Münter, 2003, 7.
\textsuperscript{141} Kon. 38/4, p. 19; Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
\textsuperscript{142} New York: Home Book Company, 127-128.
sort without the requisite knowledge? This is real cambric, and must have cost aunt at least a thaler, and now it is spoiled by the awkward pattern."

Frau Hellwig looked up angrily.

“Oh, don’t be vexed with Caroline, dear aunt; she undoubtedly meant well,” pleaded the young widow’s sweet voice. “Perhaps the difficulty may be remedied. See, dear child, I have never studied drawing thoroughly – a pencil in a woman’s hand does not please me – but I have a very, very keen eye for any defect of outline. Good Heavens! What a monstrous leaf that is!” She pointed to a long leaf, whose tip was gracefully curved, standing forth in strong relief from the transparent foundation. Felicitas made no reply but, compressing her delicate lips, gazed fixedly into the face of her censor. The councillor’s widow hastily turned away and covered her eyes with her hand.

“Oh, my dear child, that piercing glance again!” she said, complainingly. “It really is not proper for a young girl in your situation to stare at other people so defiantly. Remember what your true friend, our good Secretary Wellner, always says: ‘Sweet humility, dear Caroline.’”

And here is the second passage, again concerning Felicitas:

Brave as she could be in defense of her own convictions, in telling her few the undisguised truth, she was exceedingly timid and reserved in regard to her own talents and attainments. The bare thought that her voice might reach the ears of a stranger would instantly silence her, the idea of annoying any one was unendurable. And now, it had actually happened; she was thought bold, she had exposed herself to the suspicion of trying to attract attention, and so she had been pitilessly reproved and humbled.\textsuperscript{144}

It appears misguided and a co-optive maneuver, however, to attempt to recuperate such literature as “theory” due to the different goals and publics of these two categories. In his influential discussion of modernist hierarchies of value, Andreas Huyssen points to a gendering of mass cultural forms as feminine, and he perceives trivial literature as a paradigmatic example. French feminists’ focus on the feminine as unscribable in common language is problematic, he insists, for its disavowal of women’s connections to mass cultural forms such as trivial literature. Based on her \textit{Bildung}, the inclusion of Münter as a German modernist is problematic because, as Huyssen argues, “the nightmare of being devoured by mass culture through co-option, commodification, and the ‘wrong’ kind of success is the constant fear of the modernist artist, who tries to stake out his territory by fortifying the boundaries between genuine art and inauthentic mass culture.” From this vantage, Huyssen concludes that “the modernist aesthetic...begins to look more and more like a reaction formation, rather than like the heroic feat steeled in the fires

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid}, 85-86.
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Ibid}, 172-173.
of the modern experience."\textsuperscript{145} In its impure foundation, as we shall see, Münter’s project poses a challenge to the structure underpinning the modernist project.

In discussing trivial literature such as women’s pocket books and almanacs of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, Birgit Hörzer points out that it sought to further the everyday knowledge of its female readership.\textsuperscript{146} Hörzer also links almanacs etymologically to calendars, and her description of items included in the former suggests close overlaps with forms of Münter’s dailiness such as her pocket calendars.\textsuperscript{147} The basic \textit{Bildung} this literature sought to further, Hörzer argues, emphasized manners and morality, with emotional appeal over theory; the targeted audience was women instructed in how to be good wives, housekeepers, and mothers.\textsuperscript{148} Developing Walter Nutz’s understanding of this genre as a literature of female conformity, Hans-Herbert Wintgens foregrounds its pandering to a specific market at the level of reader desire and publisher protocol.\textsuperscript{149} Marlitt claimed to wish to fight conservative forces – the “return of old, rotten, misanthropic institutions” –\textsuperscript{150} and indeed in her courting of readerly desire figured difficulties surrounding female autonomy with “references to female strength, independence, and even sexual desire,” as Belgum maintains. “The genius of Marlitt within the context of the popular magazine was her ability to create these desiring women, figures who are both morally strong and the source of focalization, but who eventually (willingly) participate in the domestication of desire.”\textsuperscript{151}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[147] See ibid., 10-11, 63.
\item[148] Ibid, 3-4 and 8-9.
\item[149] \textit{Trivialliteratur für die Frau. Analyse, Didaktik und Methodik zur Konformliteratur} (Stuttgart: Burgbücherei Wilhelm Schneider, 1979), 5-9.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Enmeshed in the structures of mass consumption and convention, spaces of criticality are questionable; and such documents are troublesome for the framework of education they preclude. However, approaching them in terms of "total human manipulability" is, of course, too dark. These texts neither presuppose pseudo-happiness nor rule out enabling reassurance, interactive resistance, or the power of female pleasure; for scholar Pamela Regis, women’s freedom and quest are in fact central to the romance novel, rather than its conclusion in heterosexual marriage. While the emphasis on freedom here is perhaps overly optimistic, it is too simple to suggest that this and related genres are not conducive to self-understanding, reflection, constructive self-affirmation, and creativity. For example, the direct address in trivial literature to its audience, as in the fore- and afterwords that prescribed conduct, and its frequent usage of the epistolary form designed to build intimacy with the reader, are evocative for Münter’s modes of self-figuration and confessionalism in her extensive correspondence. To personify moral principles with clarity, the literature also is marked by a tendency toward typology and pronounced figural contrast, with the readability of good and bad often constructed through an impressive deployment of adjectives and an important link between inner and outer beauty.

153 See for example Jochen Schulte-Sasse, who discusses popular literature as a compensatory mechanism for modern fragmentation through its figuration of an “imaginary realm in which ‘outmoded’ norms and values are once again revitalized” (“Toward a ‘Culture’ for the Masses: The Socio-Psychological Function of Popular Literature in Germany and the U.S., 1880-1920,” in New German Critique 29 [Spring/Summer 1983]: 85).
155 As we shall see, Münter’s practice unravels some of the distinctions between Literature and popular fiction usefully charted by Ken Gelder, whose own analysis draws on the work of Pierre Bordieu. At the same time, Münter retains an uneasy relationship to Literature’s models of autonomy and originality (Gelder, Popular Fiction: The logics and practices of a literary field [London and New York: Routledge, 2004], 11-39).
156 Hörzer, 13.
157 Ibid, 5, 13, 15, 59, and 61. Hörzer maintains, “This direct connection between the essence and the appearance of a figure is expressed through signals in the form of gestures, the play of facial features, vocal expressions, or landscapes. This frequency of signals spares the reader mental effort since the accumulation of signals reinforces the essence of the characters and does not dim the plot” (Dieser direkte Zusammenhang zwischen Wesen und Erscheinungsbild einer Figur wird durch Signale in Form von Gesten, Mienenspiel, Lautäußerungen oder Landschaften ausgedrückt. Diese Signalhäufigkeit erspart dem
we shall see, typology and physiognomy are important modes of (self-)figuration for Münter. Instead of arguing for a causal connection here, however, the resonance of trivial literature for Münter’s practice illustrates the need to cast a wide net to pick up her modes of critical understanding of the world, many of them sited in mass culture. Even without formal artistic training, this does not mean that she was lacking in influences upon which to build an artistic creativity; instead, many of these were modest, apparently untheoretical, outside of the domain of high art.

Trying to revision theory, however fundamentally, may simply end in disappointment. Giard’s idea of “doing-cooking” as a quotidian knowledge is perhaps more evocative for Münter:

I learned the tranquil joy of anticipated hospitality, when one prepares a meal to share with friends in the same way in which one composes a party tune or draws: with moving hands, careful fingers, the whole body inhabited with the rhythm of working, and the mind awakening, freed from its own ponderousness, flitting from idea to memory, finally seizing on a certain chain of thought, and then modulating this tattered writing once again.\(^{158}\)

As Giard goes on to explain, “Doing-cooking” is lodged in a will to learn to consider the fleeting and unpretentious ways of operating that are often the only place of inventiveness available to the subject: they represent precarious inventions without anything to consolidate them, without a language to articulate them, without the acknowledgment to raise them up; they are bricolages subject to the weight of economic constraints, inscribed in the network of concrete determinations.\(^{159}\)

Subsequent aspects of my discussion will test the resonance of such a mode for Münter. Giard suggests that “[d]oing-cooking” requires “a very ordinary intelligence…, a subtle intelligence full of nuances and strokes of genius, a light and lively intelligence that can be perceived without exhibiting itself.”\(^{160}\) As we shall see, for all the overlaps here to Münter, even in her early practice she sought to challenge the erasures of the “gestural” mode Giard describes; later, she would directly communicate her frustration at these. I do not believe, therefore, that Münter

\(^{158}\) Leser einen großen Teil der geistigen Tätigkeit, denn die Anhäufung der Signale ruft das Wesen der handelnden Charaktere in Erinnerung und läßt die Handlung nicht verblassen, 59).


\(^{159}\) Ibid., 155-156.

\(^{160}\) Ibid., 158.
sought the ambitious and misunderstood “programmatic minorness” Yve-Alain Bois claims for Sophie Taeuber-Arp. While I shall argue in the conclusion to this inquiry that in an Expressionist context Münter becomes more self-aware of her use of ordinary knowledge, with which she pokes at the bastion of high art, much earlier she quietly displays her talent. In the Klee painting and Münter’s discussion of it, dailiness constitutes both a prosthesis for her aesthetic vision and the site to which she tries to bring art; as she brings her practice up she unravels the seams of Art. And of course, many of Münter’s activities were highly audacious, from approaching art dealers and museum contacts to champion her own work and that of others in her circle to including still lifes regularly in public exhibitions, not to mention practicing her art at all within such a masculinist framework. The ambition surrounding her modesty (and her difference from Bois’s Taeuber-Arp) registers in a 1928 statement to Eichner: “I have...depicted experiences. But whatever for? And such effort and work. And now those ‘experiences’ are sitting in the cellar and molding.”

In his Kandinsky und Gabriele Münter, a text foundational for Münter’s reception, Eichner introduces an interestingly fraught position surrounding her dailiness in his emphasis on the cyclothymic constitution of her practice. For all the difficulties with this interpretation, his

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161 Bois argues that “‘glory’ and ‘major’ are words that do not quite fit when dealing with Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s achievement, and this may be what is lying at the core of most writers’ embarrassment about it. What if she had found glory and ‘majorness’ repulsive? What if she had seen heroism, in its phallocratic bravado, as that which her art should try to undercut?... Kandinsky, though himself more prone to unleash vociferous canvases, gently compared the general tone of Taeuber-Arp’s work to a whisper, adding (perhaps thinking of his own production) that a murmuring voice is often more persuasive than a loud one. What if she had tried to make effectively ‘minor’ art?” (“Sophie Taeuber-Arp against Greatness,” in Inside the visible: an elliptical traverse of 20th century art in, of and from the feminine, ed. M. Catherine de Zegher [Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 1996], 414). While this argument is intriguing, it bears pointing out that Taeuber-Arp took on ambitious design commissions, such as the interior of the Café Aubette. 

162 As Heller drily notes, “‘To create...symbols for their own time...[for] the altars of a future spiritual religion,’ was the goal Marc set for the new art. Münter predicted a future in decoration and fashion” (Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 168). 

163 Ibid., 102.

discussion offers useful cautionary guidance regarding constructions of Münter’s dailiness. First identified by Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum in 1882, the features of cyclothymia were elaborated and disseminated by his junior colleague Ewald Hecker – a clinician with “remarkably modern views” – in an 1898 paper.\(^{165}\) Described in today’s parlance as a “relatively benign form of manic-depressive illness,”\(^{166}\) cyclothymia was defined by Hecker as a mood disorder with a “young age-at-onset” marked by the recurrence of episodes of dysthymia and hyperthymia (depression and exaltation) in which reason is unimpaired.\(^{167}\) Symptoms resonant for Münter include: in the depressive period, a lack of energy and reduced work; foregrounded somatic features such as headaches, an overwhelming sense of feeling unwell, and inexpressive facial characteristics; and finally, reduced social interaction, “an inner numbness and petrification, as if a closed curtain or a wall were put between the [patient]…and the world,” and despondency. In the hyperthymic mode, Hecker discerns an elevated cheerfulness and “a boisterous tendency to play tricks”; and heightened wittiness and greater creativity (“the thought process is accelerated, and the grasp of external perceptions becomes quicker and easier”), as well as overall skill enhancement. In both modes of the cycle, Hecker notes a propensity to be cantankerous and hypercritical.\(^{168}\) Drawing specifically on Ernst Kretschmer’s later consideration of cyclothymia in the context of his study of linkages between physique and temperament, Eichner suggests that it is Münter’s globular head and small build that warrant the cyclothymic label.\(^{169}\) And in a

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\(^{165}\) For example, Hecker sought to reduce the use of physical restraints, advocated work therapy, included social entertainment such as concerts at his Görlitz sanitarium, and hired his patients to work in his home. To be sure, he also perceived elements of genetic determinism in cyclothymia (Christopher Baethge, Paola Salvatore, and Ross J. Baldessarini, “Classic Text No. 55: Cyclothymia, a Circular Mood Disorder; Introduction,” History of Psychiatry 14.3.55 [September 2003]: 382-383 and 387).

\(^{166}\) Ibid, 377.


\(^{168}\) “In contrast to patients with true melancholy, they often experience many petty matters as unpleasant and disturbing. They complain about imperfections in the room, about the food and the service. Although these complaints may sometimes not be totally unfounded, they are in remarkable contrast to their reported indifference towards the world” (Hecker 393-395; and “Introduction,” 385-386).

\(^{169}\) Eichner, Kandinsky und Gabriele Münter, 29.
discussion of geniuses in his inquiry, Kretschmer suggests that Realists and Humorists “stand out quite unmistakeably” amongst cyclothymes.\textsuperscript{170}

While I am not interested in attempting a medical diagnosis of Münter, Eichner is correct that such a system of correspondences between physical constitution and character plays an important role in her artistic practice, as I shall argue (even as I differently position that information). More significantly, though, the suggestiveness of the above description of cyclothymia for Münter points to the need to be mindful of assumptions concerning dailiness and social categories we might connect with it. For example, it points the way to problematizing aspects of the Münter-Kandinsky correspondence as “virtually a textbook example...of the traditional male-female dualism”:

In a flush of almost giddy enthusiasm, Kandinsky reports on his impressions and exploits in Moscow – innumerable encounters with friends, relatives, artists, intellectuals, collectors; manuscripts he is writing; lecture and discussion evenings; visits to exhibitions and theaters. Münter, on the other hand...appears in many passages of her letters as a predominantly passive, lackluster individual, given to frequent mood swings of a mainly negative kind, as a captive of her domestic environment, who was latter dogged by poor health as a result of dental problems.\textsuperscript{171}

Interconnected textualizations of gender, class, race, and ethnicity are indeed of crucial importance for Münter’s dailiness; as Volker Berghahn suggests, “Migraine [which she had frequently] became one of the symptoms and symbols of a neglected female psyche. And in many cases it was also a weapon of refusal used by many ‘well-situated’ women.”\textsuperscript{172} Yet the role of Münter’s individual body should not be discounted. Nor should one presuppose that the fluctuations in Münter’s work rhythms depended entirely upon her relationships to a partner.\textsuperscript{173}

To be sure, Münter herself couples her sense of well-being with Kandinsky repeatedly; for


\textsuperscript{171} Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences, 18.

\textsuperscript{172} Imperial Germany, 1871-1914: Economy, Society, Culture, and Politics (Providence and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1994), 77.

\textsuperscript{173} Hoberg, Gabriele Münter, 2003, 7. Behr also maintains, “If Münter was merely spectator to a new and evolving male artistic partnership [between Kandinsky and Marc], then this could partially explain her slackened production from 1912 onwards. Her personal and artistic crisis is also attributable to a worsening relationship with Kandinsky, in which mutual tensions and disappointments arose over this lack of commitment to marriage” (“Creative Partnership,” in Kandinsky: The path to abstraction, 95).
example: “When I am alone, dreariness seems to take over and then I am less capable of being happy than ever.” Yet a statement from 1922 moves beyond distress at a lack of partner support to an articulation of captivity within a cycle of dailiness: “It is a vegetative emptiness without interests and happiness – one day like the other – dragging oneself along for 7 years…. How would artistic development be possible in the face of such psychological upheaval & such restlessness & the constant fear of loneliness! Every day – every hour for 7 years!” Thus, even as such statements ostensibly buttress the sensationalism of Kandinsky’s “abandonment” of Münter, her deep-seated imbrication in dailiness moves her beyond his determination. Periodicity, with an unpredictable duration of its phases, including daily fluctuations to those protracted over years, is an important component of Münter’s mode of working informing mood, thought processes, and energy. Thus I think it makes sense to be wary of pigeonholing the diaristic forms with which Münter engages as feminine, even as it is clear that the diaristic quality of her American (and later) output was animated by intersections of gender, class, ethnicity, and race.

Münter remains a troubling subject for some scholars, and I think an imputation of flattened dailiness as victimization and lack is partly responsible for inflections of disappointment.
Discussing Münter’s *Still Life with St. George*, Shearer West maintains:

However, this powerful feminization of art was oddly contradicted by her own life and behaviour. Although immensely important for the Blaue Reiter circle, she was also timid, chronically depressed and jealously possessive of Kandinsky. Her one written reference to feminism, in a letter of 12/13 December 1910 suggests a combination of interest and resignation: ‘Wanted to read in the afternoon – the philosophy of the feminist Lessing – a new book ‘Weib, Frau, Dame’ but the phonograph was going across the street with the window open – so I did some sewing and ironing.’

As another example, despite the thoughtful creativity surrounding Rogoff’s project of calling for ways of learning to listen differently to Münter’s output and to re-examine the modernist edifice, she ultimately does not move beyond her embarrassment at Münter’s “nagging.” In addition, Anne Mochon also notes that after 1908, Münter’s motivations for painting...were not geared toward specific professional goals, but emerged from the continuum of her life among artists. Münter’s disinclination to develop a consistent style has already been mentioned, and it is known that she worked only periodically, rather than in a continual routine. Society did not impose professional expectations on a woman in her position with an independent income, and it was therefore understood that she would have the option to consider her art a personal activity. Her own attitudes toward work reinforced this viewpoint to a degree, as she allowed the rhythm of her life to determined her productivity as an artist.

If this statement recalls elements of the cyclothymic profile, there is a whiff of dismissiveness here at odds with the sensitivity of Mochon’s catalogue essay. And restitution alone remains unsatisfying; negating the myth of Kandinsky as “isolated genius,” Hoberg writes:

On the contrary, his collaboration with Münter – and with other contemporaries – was an essential factor in the evolution of his thinking. Gabriele Münter, in turn, was an artistic personality in her own right, with clear and definite contours; as a painter, she was fully capable of standing her ground in the face of his more widely recognized brilliance, and in a certain way she complemented his talents by constituting an antipode to his character and the cast of his intellect.

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178 In a related vein, Juhasz points out that reviewers dislike Millet’s *Sita* because of its agonizing dailiness: “The world of *Sita* is painful, humiliating, anxious, obsessive, also tedious, repetitive, cumulative; it is genuinely depressing, a total downer” (“Towards a Theory of Form in Feminist Autobiography,” 66-67).

179 The Visual Arts in Germany 1890-1937: Utopia and Despair (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 73. For a very different reading of the Münter passage, see Behr, “Beyond the Muse,” in *Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression*, 63-64.

180 “Tiny Anguishes,” in *differences*.

181 *Gabriele Münter: Between Munich and Murnau*, 34.

Despite his reliance upon an essentializing, tautological argumentation surrounding woman’s profound difficulties in producing objective culture, Simmel’s definition of her cultural achievement as within the sphere of the household frames the problematic of women’s creativity in terms resonant for this study. Though he does not mention the daily directly, Simmel’s reasoning depends upon a version of it. Whereas male culture is lodged in “an unceasing process of becoming and expansive activity,” and within “the continuous, the substantial,” woman “is concentric with itself,” and her culture is “devoted to the fleeting experience.” He writes:

The fact that the cultural formation of the home as described here often remains unclear is a consequence of the fluid and variable particulars of the phenomenon, which are there to serve the interests of persons and everyday matters. As a result, the objective cultural significance of the form in which the home consummates the synthesis of these fluid and fleeting performances is overlooked. In any case, consider what the home possesses beyond the sum of its ephemeral achievements and as their real configuration of stable values, composed of influences, memories, and the organization of life. All this is linked with the variable and personal life of the hour and the year in a more radical fashion than holds true for the objective cultural achievements of a male provenance.\(^{183}\)

In such a statement, Simmel foregrounds the importance of rhythm and immanence for women, and even seems to evoke their connection to lifewriting. More importantly, he appears to valorize and understand aspects of the problematic of dailiness as I have been describing it; and the tension he evokes between an evanescent daily as particularity and the generality of a lasting dailiness is one that will characterize much of Münter’s American output. For all his ghettoization of the home as a culture of a “secondary originality” and woman’s inability for (modern) objective culture, Simmel effectively diagnoses the problem of dailiness as domesticity and communicates aspects of its potential:

Typical purposes and general forms of realization are delineated in the home. In every case, however, both are dependent on individual variability, spontaneous decisions, and a responsibility that applies only to unrepeatable situations. Thus the occupation of the housewife – in all its diverse qualities, it is still governed by a thoroughly unified meaning – is an intermediate entity, lying between production out of the supremely creative self and the mere repetition of prescribed forms of activity. This determines its position in the social scale of values.\(^{184}\)


\(^{184}\) Ibid, 97.
Women in a Simmelian framework are not only domestic drudges, but he seems to particularize a modest authentic female cultural achievement all the more remarkable for its daily challenges. However, for all his progressiveness here and in his question as to whether we are not imposing a masculine criteria of performance upon women in asking if they can create objective culture, he resolves the dualities he establishes in a fundamentally unsatisfying way in situating women in a distinct and unequal sphere outside modernity.

As this introduction has suggested, a leading theme of my study is the multitemporality of the everyday moment and its expansive spatiality. While Simmel positions women outside of culture and modernity, the duality he elaborates speaks ultimately to an expansive understanding of the modern moment. I have noted that Münter frames her practice in terms of a search for the “treffende Symbol.” Dailiness for Münter is not a slice of life, but is harnessed as a symbol of “accuracy” (idealizing and physiognomic) of Americans and America; it is a protracted arrest and an ordering of encounter. Ulrich Pohlmann relates her American photographs to Momentphotographie – the snapshot of the perfect instant – and there are indeed examples of this in her output: Pohlmann illustrates with images of her relatives captured just in the middle of the Sue Belle water slide. If one looks at Münter’s photograph captioned “Jim Wade feeing the

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185 “Die Fragilität des Augenblicks: Gabriele Münters Photographien der USA-Reise im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen (Moment)Photographie,” in Gabriele Münter. Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 (Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006), 203-215. Some examples include cat. 42-43, 55, 91, and 119-220, although this only amounts to a small percentage of the 130 published photographs in the exhibition catalogue. An 1895 source Pohlmann cites notes: “By the term ‘Momentaufnahme’ we understand a photograph...whose exposure time lasts less than one second, which is so short that it precludes providing the lighting by hand and with the lens cover” (“Unter einer Momentaufnahme verstehen wir eine Aufnahme....bei der die Expositionszeit weniger als eine Secunde beträgt, und die so kurz ist, dass man mit der Hand und dem Objectivdeckel allein die Belichtung nicht mehr bewirken kann,” 205). Yet while Monika Faber translates “Momentphotographie” as “instantaneous photography” (“Instantaneous Photography Conquers the City 1840-1980: On Photography as the Art of the Split Second,” in The Eye and the Camera: The Albertina collection of photographs, eds. Monika Faber and Klaus Albrecht Schröder in collaboration with Gilles Mora, trans. Edith Vanghelof and Karin Tippelt [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2003]), Pohlmann’s usage of the term for Münter seems to imply a more specific meaning involving the technical feat of captured movement – a train in the middle of the bridge, pedestrians in the city, or, as in Hugo Müller’s Anleitung zur Momentphotographie (a source Pohlmann cites), a long jump (fig. 5). There is a closer link between Münter’s practice and that of
hogs. Schreiber hill bei [near] Moorefield" (fig. 6), however, while it indeed seems to relate to Pohlmann’s understanding of Momentphotographie, Münter’s photographs and overall America practice are better served, I think, by a more elastic understanding of the moment. Here I find Kirk Varnedoe’s discussion of the work of Degas helpful: “Not simply the individual, but the dialogue between the individual and the archetypal; not simply the spontaneous moment, but the dialogue between the spontaneous moment and the determining history – these are the subtexts of Degas’ realist vision of motion and time.” Münter’s temporality in America is one of immanence and opportunity of the moment, to be sure, but, as Varnedoe argues for Degas, it is one of *durée* as well, in her case, stretching both into the past and future.

This brings me to my next point: the fiction of the moment, a quality caught in the duality of the everyday as repetition (generality) and as continual flow of unique time (particularity). Drawing on Mae-Wan Ho’s formulation that “‘form is dynamic through and through,’” Doreen Massey suggests that it “neatly undermines any idea of the temporal as process and the spatial as form-which-is-therefore-lacking-in-process. It is only in our experience, Ho goes on to argue, that things are held fast, if only for a second. ‘There is no holding nature still’…. It is consciousness which introduces a notion of ‘now.’” Massey makes a plea for conceiving of space and time integrally to avoid “lame” constructs of space – “the realm of the dead or the

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186 All titles of Münter’s photographs provided in quotes are her own; where she includes both English and German, I have shown the combination in some form in my translation. Photographic titles in italics are translations from published sources, such as *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900*.


188 *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 4.
chaos of simultaneity and multiplicity,” “as static, as the dimension precisely where nothing ‘happened,’” “as a flat, immobilized surface.” In her succinct formulation:

There is a whole set of dualisms whose terms are commonly aligned with time and space. With time are aligned History, Progress, Civilization, Science, Politics and Reason, portentous things with gravitas and capital letters. With space on the other hand are aligned the other poles of these concepts: stasis, (‘simple’) reproduction, nostalgia, emotion, aesthetics, the body. 90

To listen differently to Münter, then, will require joining these two categories, “to think always in terms of space-time,” which is a central point of Francesca Stafford’s dissertation on Münter and Lasker-Schüler. 92 Thus for example instead of perceiving Münter’s America as equivalent to “that boundless country, the wide horizon, and the practical, easygoing way in which people interact,” I shall foreground Germany’s construction of “America” and the relationship between nations in the fin-de-siècle.

The lens of Alltagsgeschichte (the history of everyday life) is suggestive for this expansiveness of dailiness. As Wolfgang Kaschuba explains, Alltagsgeschichte concentrates on the “cultural praxis of historical subjects as a complex historical reality.” In a related vein, Alf Lüdtke asserts the need to establish a network of interrelationships in the microhistories foundational to Alltagsgeschichte to avoid the flattening of the picturesque. 95 For Alltagshistoriker the intertwining of public and private is of crucial importance, as Dorothee Wierling suggests in an elaboration of connections between Alltagsgeschichte and gender studies:

189 Ibid, 1, 3-4, 6, and 252.
190 Ibid, 257.
191 Massey, 121.
192 Stafford’s study argues compellingly for a need to conceptualize space and time together, drawing primarily on the work of Bakhtin’s chronotope, which she extends to gender and race relations. Our discussions overlap in terms of their autobiographical components, if with different foci, in that Stafford examines Münter’s paintings from 1910 to 1914 rather than the diverse “daily” forms and American output that constitute my analysis (‘My Pictures are all moments of my life,’ unpublished Ph.D. Diss.).
193 “Das grenzenlose Land, den weiten Horizont und die praktische, unbekümmerte Art, wie Menschen miteinander umgehen” (Lahnstein, Münter, 6).
Alltag is not restricted to the so-called basic facts of human existence such as birth and death; it is more than the routine of daily labor; it is not just private or shaped by ‘small’ events. Everyday experiences cannot be limited thematically; the ‘high’ politics brought into the living room by the media, the fact that even ‘simple, everyday’ people take part in public events, the possible breadth and diversity of experiences on the job, and the different historical conditions, for example, under which women give birth to children – all militate against any such thematic circumscription.

Beyond the lens of recuperation of this “‘bricks and mortar’ of our everyday experience,” Alltagsgeschichte’s decentered approach and emphasis on the complexity of questions of agency and victimization are resonant for Münter. Of particular relevance is Lüdtke’s call for reading practices surrounding the unsaid. Because often for the inquiries constituting Alltagsgeschichte “the joys and sufferings, longings and worries of earlier generations have often left little more than a smudged imprint on the material sources that remain, or are encoded there in a cryptic form,” Lüdtke argues that “what is important are the mediations – as well as the ruptures, discontinuities – between the thought-images, modes of interpretation, and rules for action which can be considered valid in a given context.”

In keeping with my focus here on the daily, I shall also turn to the registration of temporality as articulated in sites of mass culture. One model for this study is the broad spatiality and multi-temporality in Die Gartenlaube. Begun in 1853, this immensely popular illustrated family magazine helped at least implicitly to contribute to Münter’s Bildung: “So we want to entertain you, and in entertaining, instruct you.” That is not to imply that Münter bought into its messages; as Gay rather dismissively notes:

200 While Christiane Hertel agrees with the substance of Gay’s assessment, she points out that there is a “reductive” quality here that “belies the diversity of this publication” (“The Nineteenth-Century Schiller Cult: Centennials, Monuments, and Tableaux Vivants,” in Yearbook of German-American Studies 38 [2003]: 166).
The nonacademic tenor of its articles coupled with the unquestioning academicism of its art, the undemanding level of its fiction, and the bluff heartiness of its communications imply readers neither avant-garde in their taste in art nor sophisticated in their way of life. Its persistent didacticism points in the same direction; it implies subscribers intent on discovering the world without too much strain after a day's hard work. Its examination of sensible budgets would appeal, not so much to comfortably situated bourgeois, who scarcely needed such lessons, as to those who could not aspire to conspicuous consumption, though he underscores its broad readership. 301 As we shall see, Belgum's summary suggests closer overlaps for Münter and her output:

The magazine regularly published poetry, short biographies of notable individuals, historical sketches, and essays about distant as well as familiar cultures and the arts. It featured a variety of topics that distinguished it from the cultural periodicals of its day, such as firsthand battle reportage from important wars and travel reports of life in foreign cities or the situation of German emigrants abroad. The Gartenlaube popularized scientific information with advice columns on human hygiene and essays on plant and animal life. It explained technological innovations and described modern industrial factories that might be of general interest. Although each issue ended with a brief section that contained announcements of newsworthy occurrences, the magazine did not focus on describing daily events as much as general contemporary concerns. Most of all, it always claimed to be above partisan politics, despite its inception in the context of the 1848 revolution. 302 Belgum does underscore the accessibility of the periodical in terms of the length of the articles and the lack of jargon. Of particular relevance here is Belgum's point that Die Gartenlaube was "above all, a German family magazine, a magazine for the German Volk" that crafted the "definition of the nation in terms of the family." 303

In her consideration of German housekeeping practices and their making of nation, Reagin argues for the prevalence of comparativity between German and foreign housekeeping in various household advice literature and women's magazines as well as Die Gartenlaube. These sites may be slight, such as those of the "snow white" linen closet, the meticulous record of expenditures, and the Sunday roast; yet in fact: "Symbols rooted in private life were powerful building blocks of national identity and were at least as effective as public ceremonies or rituals, because the practices of private life were usually seen as 'unpolitical' and thus more 'naturally'

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302 Popularizing the Nation, xii, 12-15.
303 Ibid. xii-xiii, xv.
and essentially German”; and: “Domestic notions of Germanness were worked into fabric of daily life, popular culture, and social policy: in the programs of bourgeois housewives’ groups; in scholarly and popular discourse regarding national character; in how ordinary people thought of their nation and their place in it.”204 In keeping with the (self) assessment Reagin highlights, Belgum argues for a juxtaposition in issues of Die Gartenlaube from 1895 to 1900 of discourses of modernization, such as industrialism, militarism, and competition, as against a parade of reassuring tropes of the “simple life” of rural peasants and of the mythic past, often decontextualized from text.205 As I shall demonstrate, processes of modernization jockey with a discourse of nostalgia in Münter’s American output. She also displays an important taxonomic strain that I shall relate to the issue of fascination with foreign others and of differentiation of the German self from these that helps to forge an “imagined community.” Both Belgum and Reagin’s studies draw on Benedict Anderson’s pivotal work, and I find Belgum’s tracking of a discourse in Die Gartenlaube of a unified German geography of diverse regionalisms forging a “compensatory visual space for the ideal nation that existed in the imagination and beyond political realities” evocative for Münter.206 In the figuration in different media of her American relatives and their customs (to be sure, outside of the sphere of print-capitalism Anderson emphasizes), elements of German-American linguistic hybridity, and American and German-American landscapes, Münter imagines her own community of nation. Built of elements of German superiority, creolization, and plenitude, it is forged in the sphere of Bildung in concert with forces of modernization. In daily ways, Münter establishes her national identity through discovery grounded in fusion and opposition.

204 Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany,1870-1945 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 14. She asks: “What could be more private, apparently, than a woman’s decisions about how often to wash, what to sew for her children, or what to cook for her family? And what could be more a matter of personal choice? And yet, these decisions were also part of the process of class formation and moved to the heart of discussions of national character by the Imperial period, at the latest” (9).

205 Popularizing the Nation, 142-182.

206 Popularizing the Nation, 28-54.
A perusal of issues of *Die Gartenlaube* from 1896, of *Jugend* from 1898, and an 1898-1899 supplement for *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon* bears out this sense of expansiveness of the daily-in-modernity. Thus in *Die Gartenlaube*, Christmas celebrations in Germany are contrasted to those in its colonies; an article on women in New York is followed by a full-page image of a smiling Dutch “fish girl,” whose cap rhymes with the background church tower; nationalistic sayings are sprinkled into the issues, as in “German home and German land, may God protect it with a strong hand!”207 and as a last example, figures in local dress (*Tracht*) are inset into articles on myriad subjects and serialized fiction. In its lyrical, inebriated embrace of the modern, *Jugend* yearns for the past in an arrest of the confusion of time, as its figurations of women illustrate. An image of women playing tennis is juxtaposed to Alfredo Testoni’s “Arkadien” with an image of a child. And *Jugend* ran a spoofy image from *Life* of a giant bike captioned “The Trojan Bike” (fig. 7), which attests to the fraught importance surrounding female cyclists, which *Jugend* repeatedly joked about in stories, images, and ads.208 Some of its poems deny dailiness and the passage of time in their idealization, but the fraught historical moment is of course implicit. Thus the periodical features Hermann Moest’s drawing of a nude statuesque woman found by a (dressed) police officer; in a Romanticizing vein, the sun and clouds stream out behind her head

207 “Deutsches Haus und deutsches Land, Schirm es Gott mit starker Hand!”
208 One example is “The World as Pedal and Handlebars: a Cyclosophy. Dedicated to the Members of the Ladies’ Bicycle Club ‘Kallipygos’” (Die Welt als Pedal und Lenkstange: Eine radtionalistische Philosophie. Gewidmet den Mitgliedern des Damen-Radfahrvereins ‘Kallipygos’) by L.B., which satirizes women’s boundless faith in the bicycle. Why not see it as a microcosm of the world, uniting within it contrasting forces to refute philosophical divisions of matter and Geist? “Here now one could take it in one’s hands and grasp, yes, even possess it: the blind but powerful will of the pedals creating movement, the steering, striving, but alas not always comprehensible, reason of the handlebars! And both finally unified in one entity in equal parts!.... That which philosophy has so far sought in vain has been discovered at last: the unity of what we are and what we should be; the forces of reality and the values of our will have finally found a convergence in the bicycle” (Hier konnte man es nun mit Händer greifen und begreifen, ja, man konnte es sogar besitzen: der blinde, aber kraftvolle, alle Bewegung erzeugende Wille in den Pedalen, die Vernunft, die lenkende, zielstrebende, aber, ach, nicht immer durchgreifende, in der Lenkstange! Und beides endlich in einem Wesen zu gleichen Rechten verein...). Was die Philosophie bisher vergebens gesucht hat: Die Einheit des Seins und des Sollens – ist nun entdeckt; die Kräfte der Wirklichkeit und die Werthe unsres Willens haben endlich im Rade ihren Treffpunkt gefunden (III.13 [March 23, 1898], 210-211). In a more positive valence, in an image of progress from 1896, Bruno Paul depicts “Woman before, behind, and upon the Wheel” (included in David Ehrenpreis, “Cyclists and Amazons: Representing the New Woman in Wilhelmine Germany,” in *Woman’s Art Journal* 20.1 [Spring/Summer 1999]: 26).
like a nimbus. Julius Diez’s “Woman [das Weib] and the Devil” shows an active naked woman as Eve battling the devil and, in its pendant, their body parts are commingled androgynously (fig. 8). An index of cultural degeneration, the illustration accompanies a Genesis story that concludes, “And that’s why ever since women have such wicked heads.”\textsuperscript{209} In P.M. Eichler’s “The Frozen Mermaid” the misogyny gets turned up as woman’s body parts are showcased in icy captivity.\textsuperscript{210}

In Meyers, which billed itself as an “encyclopedia of common knowledge,”\textsuperscript{211} there are entries for example on new statistical research establishing connections between alpine and polar flora; department stores; an overview of German art exhibitions in 1898; and instructions for making household aquaria (as out of preserve containers, cheese covers, and beer glasses) and upkeep. The relationship of square footage to population is provided by continent, and boundary changes in nations are provided in colored maps, including of Germany’s colonial possessions; the imperialist aims (i.e. against Deutschum) of the Alliance Française also are communicated, and the count of Indian populations in North America is charted. The volume describes advances in artillery (inscribed into a discourse of public reassurance), train lines (a chart of track lengths by region in Germany and its colonies), electricity (development of the Sonya-Dauerbrandlampe; legal discussion concerning electrical theft and public safety), printing (efficiency, precision, color, and safety); and the telephone (how to use; a map of connections by town). And proverbs (Haussprüche), especially beloved in Münter’s Westphalia, are included, as for example: “Should this house stand only until envy and hate have departed, then truly it would remain until the world has halted.”\textsuperscript{212} This is of course but a brief selection of what is on offer here; but as we shall see, in many ways these texts dovetail with what and how Münter will produce in America. They also

\textsuperscript{209} “Und darum haben die Frauen seitdem einen so bösen Kopf” [III.2 (January 8, 1898): 33].
\textsuperscript{210} III.16 (April 16, 1898): 265.
\textsuperscript{211} “Nachschlagwerk des allgemeinen Wissens.”
\textsuperscript{212} “Wenn dieses Haus so lang nur steht, bis aller Neid und Haß vergeht, dann bleibt’s für wahr so lange stehn, bis die Welt wird untergehen.”
begin to suggest the particular charged quality of her lifewriting project, a quality informing the
autobiographical impulse. As Gusdorf argues in his classic discussion from 1956:

The man who takes the trouble to tell of himself knows that the present differs from the past and
that it will not be repeated in the future; he has become more aware of differences than of
similarities; given the constant change, given the uncertainty of events and of men, he believes it
a useful thing to fix his own image so that he can be certain it will not disappear like all things in
this world.215

Unlike Gusdorf’s emphasis on the individual unity of the autobiographical subject and
the “aerial view” afforded by his enterprise,214 it is the opportunism of Münter’s dailiness in
America (Giard’s unpretentious inventiveness) that I find especially revealing for how she
approaches art making and self-representation. Within interlocking spaces of her daily
consumption – theaters and department stores, tourism and ethnography – and in concert with her
albeit scattered artistic training and cultivation, Münter elaborates a visuality. Her lifewriting
instances interesting tensions between individual and type, document and art, and self and other at
the forefront of her quest for self-representation. While in conclusion I shall contend that after
1900 Münter retains a positionality connected to dailiness as I have been defining it here, she will
rethink and continually refashion it in different contexts. There will, however, be certain ongoing
themes, such as recording, typology, commodification, mobility, and Heimat.215 Throughout this
discussion is governed by examples concerning Münter’s challenges to and creative strategies for
the representability of self.

Woolf writes that she decides to continue her diary, “[Partly] I think, from my old sense
of the race of time. ‘Time’s winged chariot hurrying near’ – Does it stay it?”216 And Margo
Culley asserts that “periodic life-writing springs from the same source as the art created for a

214 Ibid, 38.
215 Some of the meanings of this term include homeland, home, and home region; I discuss it in more detail
in this study in “Travels in America: Introduction.”
216 Cited in Harriet Blodgett, “Preserving the Moment in the Diary of Margaret Fountaine,” in Inscribing
the Daily: Critical Essays on Women’s Diaries, eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst:
public audience: the urge to give shape and meaning to life with words and to endow this meaning-making with a permanence that transcends time.”

Echoing what I see as a nostalgic strain in Münter’s American output, my study begins with her retrospective writings on her America travels (mid-to-late 1950s) to introduce the body of the text. Chapter one then describes three case studies of dailiness for Münter: a reading of the volumes of Godey’s mentioned above; Münter’s pocket calendars from America and before; and her drawing “Carrots for dinner.” Here I develop the issue of creativity against mechanical capture and introduce aspects of the 19th-century German popular literary discursive fabric on America informing her work, which I shall draw on for much of the remainder of my inquiry. Chapter two involves Münter’s engagement with spectacular forms, including the St. Louis theaters she visited, her flânerie in New York and beyond, and her spectacularization of nature. The discussion brings together such heterogeneous discourses as Clyde Fitch’s “The Moth and the Flame,” period discussions of shop windows and shopping, guidebook literature, treatments of physiognomy, and theories of the touristic gaze. Münter’s individual sketches are a primary focus here, with consideration of her photographs as well. Chapter three is framed around photography as a site conducive to problematizing issues of representation and authenticity. My three primary subjects of inquiry here include Kodak advertising and the mobilized gaze, with a sub-section on visual adventure; Münter’s photograph album; and a comparison between her photographs and period figurations of an Arkansas vernacular. Issues of German ethnography and Kultur are the focus of chapter four in terms of an examination of the relationships between Münter’s output and Völkerschauen (exoticizing “people shows”), colonialism, and worldly provincialism.

Throughout, I seek to ground Münter’s output within specific discourses in the American context as well as broader German intellectual currents. Thus for example I draw on source material from and about her family in varied public repositories and amongst her relatives, and embed her work in discourses of tourism and flânerie in the particular spaces she navigates. My

217 Cited in ibid, 167.
discussion also considers American icons such as the Kodak Girl, Gibson Girl, and the popular amusements Münter views, and I draw comparisons to period photographic practitioners and writers. This cultural nexus is fashioned in relationship to German perceptions of America in traditions of popular literature in the nineteenth century, its Völkerschauen, and broader German discourses of ethnography and nation.

My postscript for the America material centers on a postcard Münter designed and sent to her brother, Carl, of a young relative doing the cakewalk. With its associations of effortlessness, already established in the period, my inclusion of the word “cakewalking” in the title of this study is intended to evoke the erasure of Münter’s daily processes in their messiness, a problem to which she herself contributes as I have argued. This dailiness as I see it is imaginatively fashioned with Bildung undergirded by ordinary intelligence. Though the daily enabled Münter to come into representation, by its slightness and imbrication in mass culture, it would go underground in service of authenticity. In the overall conclusion to this thesis, as noted, I shall suggest some of the forms dailiness takes in Münter’s practice after 1900. The conclusion, then, treats the intersection of art and Art, and examines how dailiness informs Münter’s mode of seeing as a German modernist, with consideration of its position within the Münter-Kandinsky partnership. As one important example of her modes of representation – and this is another reason for my use of “cakewalking” in the title – Münter engages with parody as a way of speaking in an appropriative stance that may have difficult overtones or simply may be lost altogether; the cakewalk dance was a form for African Americans to parody their masters in the antebellum period and was taken up by whites at the time of Münter’s visit. In this study, by throwing Münter’s cakewalk into relief, I hope to return to her some of the complexity of her processes.
**Travels in America**

It was during the 1898-1900 years, when I went with my older sister on a cousin trip [Vetterlesreise] to visit my mother’s relatives, who had all become Americans. My father had found my mother in Savannah in the state of Tennessee and brought her back to Germany during the slave wars. Her sisters and brothers had married and settled over there, as bankers, tradesmen, small farmers. We spent most of the time in the country in Arkansas and Texas, in primitive circumstances [Urzuständen], in houses without any plumbing, far from any conveniences. You rode across the prairie for hours to get a sack of flour. Once I did that and lost the sack off the horse. How I managed to heave it back up, since it was too heavy for me to lift, was quite a sight. But the freedom in endless nature was beautiful. And the good people were fun [lustig].

Gabriele Münter, manuscript, “Eichner Entwurf zu Mü Autobiogr.”

**Shifting Scenes.** Travelers to Texas, Mexico and the West can witness a variety and character of scenery, among the Ozark Mountains, not excelled and seldom equalled on the stage. Those who have once experienced the delights of this trip always insist on tickets via the Frisco Line.

Advertiment for the Frisco Line in a 1900 programme for the Olympic Theatre

**Introduction**

Shortly before her departure for America, in a small paperback sketchbook, Münter dashed off an image of a woman with her hands outstretched toward a steamship on the left of the page. Though her body is turned toward the ship, she looks to her bicycle on the right. With a few strokes of the pencil, Münter catches the pull of the figure, articulated in the combination of her torsion and the attenuated arm-rectangles.

It is less a riven image than a rather delightful incidence of symbol; if anything, Münter gently mocks the wrenching tug between going and staying. With the freshness of a cartoon, she

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2 Kon. 46/2, p. 39; Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.

3 The image may have been lodged in difficulties she was having in taking her bicycle on board; in a retrospective writing, Münter explains, “I had left my bicycle in St. Louis and bequeathed it to Lulu when we traveled home” (Mein Fahrrad hatte ich in St. Louis gelassen und vermachte es an Lulu, als wir heimreisten: “Erinnerungen an Amerika,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 219). This statement differs, however, from Gisela Kleine’s mention that Münter had reassured her brother that she was not going to bring her bicycle along (Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky:
creates a visual equivalence between the vehicles and articulates her position between her old life and that to begin. On the title page for her 1896 pocket calendar, Münter had written in, “The year of the bicycles!” with “!!!” on an August page. Her letters from Düsseldorf to her mother are filled with her adventures on her bicycle. As a cycling guide noted, “A woman riding alone must gird herself with strong self-confidence and a certain defiance.” For all the image’s symbolic reductivism and thematized tension, there is a tenor of forward-looking hopefulness inscribed into both of the vehicles, which for Münter, then twenty-one years old, are the means to the discovery of new worlds.

After Wilhelmine Münter (her one surviving parent) had died in November 1897, Emmy decided to go forth with arrangements for the trip to America her mother had promised her. Münter had not planned to go at first but, at the urging of a cousin—“I would not let my only sister travel to America by herself. You definitely should come along”—she decided to accompany her. Regardless of whether the decision were undertaken passively, or if her uncertainty were related to misgivings about traveling with her sister or unknown reasons, Münter would be full of thoughts about the past and the future. Due to her family’s personal connections with America, as well as the broader nexus of relationships between Germany and

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*Biographie eines Paares* [Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1990], 17). As we shall see, though, the minimalness of means and motifs—the devoted focus—in many of Münter’s drawings suggests a distillation that foregrounds symbolic readings.

4 “Das Jahr der Räder!”

5 Kleine, *Biographie eines Paares*, 54.


7 Ehrenpreis points out that in German visual culture of the period, images of women cycling were often associated with pleasure surrounding the modern and youth (“Cyclists and Amazons,” 25 and 28).


10 In a discussion of Münter’s early childhood, Kleine foregrounds the lack of closeness between the sisters (*Biographie eines Paares*, 34). This quality permeates Münter’s accounts of the America travels from the late 1950s (“Erinnerungen an Amerika,” in *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika*, 219-220).
the United States, her travels would be a kind of pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{11} And leaving behind her uninspiring art studies in Düsseldorf, her journey overlapped with an important motivation for emigration lodged in adventure and the possibilities of self-fashioning.\textsuperscript{12}

“For several centuries,” Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson write, “America has been a desirable destination for certain groups of people, a promising place where people have come to get a new life, to re/form and to remake themselves as social subjects ‘free’ of a variety of constraints they experienced in the cultures and locations they left behind.”\textsuperscript{13} They go on to call for the “intimate relationship of America with the remaking of lives, with a proliferation of heterogeneous autobiographical narratives, with, that is, the romance of democratic individualism”: “Writing autobiography testified to arrival in ‘America’ and the achievement of an ‘American’ identity.”\textsuperscript{14} To begin to understand the life Münter writes through America, I propose to examine two of her retrospective statements involving her travels that apparently were written in preparation for Eichner’s text.

Münter launches a handwritten manuscript from 1956 with her objective (and legitimacy) for writing:\textsuperscript{15} Charly has written down what their father told him, and she’ll flesh out the family record with information – “to serve as a supplement” – her mother told her “here and there.”\textsuperscript{16} Münter goes on to note that her mother was the oldest of Johann Gottlieb Scheuber’s nine children, and that he emigrated as a cabinet maker with his family to America in 1846 when

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\textsuperscript{12} Theresa Mayer Hammond notes for example that America was “the repository of many unrealistic expectations regarding the real world,” but not “merely the haven for those [emigrants] with the highest ideals. It was the land which attracted all the discontented, whether they fled prosecution or persecution, justice, poverty, or even boredom” (American Paradise: German Travel Literature from Duden to Kisch [Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980], 51 and 53).
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. 5 and 7-8.
\textsuperscript{15} “Erinnerungen an Amerika,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 217-218.
\textsuperscript{16} “…was Ergänzung geben kann”; “hier und da” (ibid, 217).
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Wilhelmine was nine. "Minna" was charged with taking care of her younger siblings but, when Carl Münter asked for her hand, her parents were concerned because "Al"[bertine], the next oldest daughter, was to undertake domestic service: "Aunt Al told me that herself in St. Louis." Münter’s mode of telling, as my discussion of this brief passage (seven sentences) begins to show, is grounded in familiarity, modesty of authorship, and orality as truth, as Münter claims herself and Charly as the family’s historians in a consolidation of their relationality.

Here is another segment of this same text:

My mother told me during walks in the park along the Rhine in Coblenz that she saw my father for the first time when she was sitting in the classroom on the day of her graduation celebration. A young man with big light blue eyes looked into the classroom window and made an impression. It probably was a bit later then when the same man invited her on a buggy excursion and proposed to her. She only later learned that he had already asked her father for her hand in marriage, which she did not like much. They settled there and had a house and a business with negro slaves and it went along well. The war and the fact that my father had to help the southerners, while his sympathies were more aligned with the north, caused him to return to Germany (which is already described). For all their thrown-down quality – what Rita Felski in her discussion of confessional writing describes as an “informal and nonliterary style” that “deemphasize[s] the aesthetic and fictive dimension of the text in order to give the appearance of authentic self-expression,” these six sentences contain a plethora of information, much caught elliptically and inviting additional

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18 “...um sie angehalten hatte”; “Das hat mir Tante Al selbst in St. Louis erzählt” (“Erinnerungen an Amerika,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 217).


First, there are precise details about how, where, and that female desire is discussed, and its importance is accented. Was it usual, one wonders, on graduation day to meet one’s spouse in the context of thinking about the next phase of life, and was that why Carl Münter was hanging around? Wilhelmine’s autonomy and directness is foregrounded, however, as Münter not only suggests that she looks at him and is taken by his physical appearance, but also that she does not like the primacy of her function as object of the discussion. There is an exoticizing familiarity in the comment about the buggy ride talk and the slaves, which are figured as a personal and cultural ethnography via nonchalance (“it went along well”), as Münter articulates a difficult tension between opportunism and idealism.21

Münter’s concise choppiness and apparently unadorned mode of telling, which, however, retains a humorous undertone, comes across in the next brief passage: “So they sailed across the ocean. There was a storm on the crossing. ‘All men to the pumps’ – it was a dangerous situation – the ship could have sunk. My father divided their money in case they were separated. But things worked out and they both came over. Then came the successful life in Berlin.”22 Sketching the drama of the story, Münter almost seems to undercut it in her voice of detached staccato. Returned to Germany, Wilhelmine fades from the picture as the narrative foregrounds the life of her father. Inscribing the family’s (self-styled) creolization, she notes that he “war einer der [was one of the] 3 American dentists,” but – as if compensating for his American Dream – Münter explains in the next sentence that he fought honorably in the Franco-Prussian War.23 In

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21 Dorothea Stuecher points out that critiques of the Forty-Eighters for backseating their political ideals to economic gain were widespread (Twice Removed: The Experience of German-American Woman Writers in The Nineteenth Century [New York: Peter Lang, 1990], 6).


23 Based on Münter’s telling in a fragmentary hand-written manuscript also from 1956, as well as from information provide by Kleine, the formulaic drama runs roughly: Carl Münter leaves Germany in the context of 1848 and arrives on American soil with five thalers. Helping a German peddler in New York, he becomes financially independent. After moving to Cincinnati, a professor at the Dental College admires the “dexterity” (Geschicklichkeit) of his hands and counsels him to become a dentist and his assistant. Carl Münter later receives employment trading in Tennessee and runs a drugstore in Savannah. His successes
her plainspoken telling, America is figured as an exotic adventure of youth, even youth itself, and as mobility as against the rootedness of Germany. Münter concludes: "in [18]63, 66, 69, 77, 2 sons and 2 daughters were born and in 78 they moved to Herford, the old Heimat, and into an imposing house with a big garden on Bielefelder Straße along the [River] Aa."

If Herford were the old Heimat – Münter’s as figured through reference to her father’s – America was yet another Heimat in its otherness in space and time to Germany. Shearer West explains that Heimat was a murky idea with “infinite connotations for Germans at the turn of the nineteenth century. In its strictest sense, it means ‘home’ or ‘homeland’, but it also refers to ‘native country’ and ‘natural habitat.’” West points out that for all the confidence projected in period writings about the term, they also imply the “elusive ideal” of their quest. Governed by tensions between nostalgia and modernity, Peter Blickle suggests that Heimat is a shifting signifier that, for all its permutations, retains qualities of originary unity and an emphasis on belonging that “tends to be invoked when German-speaking cultures are expressing their difficulties in adjusting to modern life.”

enable him to purchase a house and piano for his parents and to bring his brother Gustav over. Upon his return to Germany in 1864, he sets up shop as an “American Dentist” on Unter den Linden (“Erinnerungen an Amerika,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 218; and Kleine Biographie eines Paares, 20-24).


25 Although Münter only spent six years in Herford, she would later write to Eichner that she preserved “a certain emotional tie to her Westphalian Heimat” (doch gewissermaßen ein westfälisches Heimatgefühl; letter of February 4, 1933 cited in Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 673 n. 30). In a discussion of the resonance of Münter’s Herford surroundings that is of significance for her confessionalist mode of writing, Kleine describes a deep-seated commitment to loyalty and truth: “Was it because of the Protestant estimation of the word, and the sermon’s constitution of the focus of the service, that promises were taken so seriously here? Even little Ella learned that behind every word is a truth. The reliability of the world was based on this” (Lag es an der protestantischen Hochschätzung des Wortes, das ja als Predigt stets den Mittelpunkt des Gottesdienstes bildete, daß man hier ein Versprechen so ernst nahm? Schon die kleine Ella lernte: Hinter jedem Wort steht eine Wahrheit. Darauf beruhte die Verlässlichkeit der Welt; Biographie eines Paares, 30). In addition, in keeping with Münter’s own statement, Kleine emphasizes Münter’s enjoyment of the garden her mother planted, which, as Eichner notes, included fruits such as tomatoes brought back from America (see Biographie eines Paares, 32).

26 The Visual Arts in Germany 1890-1937: Utopia and Despair (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 42.

context of lived experience at a place of origin, nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality.”28 Mack Walker implies just such a nostalgic impetus to German emigration to America even as it is also forward-looking in the specific context of the 1840s and thus at the time of both of Münte’s parents’ departure: “The German emigrant to America characteristically was somebody who did not want to go to the German city and its way of life.”29

If we turn to the group of Münte’s writings on her American upbringing and travels, under the plainspoken and quotidian quality of her report, there is a thematics of a self and family split between but also bridging nations and instancing the nineteenth-century “transatlantic community.”30 Markers of timing, conjunctions, and punctuation are particularly telling for what Münte says, if with great efficiency. Thus in a text from 1959 for example about her siblings, Münte’s relationship to them, and the death of her parents and her brother August: “meanwhile” (= while her mother is on a return trip to the United States to take care of August in the mid-1880s); “afterward” (= after their father’s death, August returns to Germany); “amongst” (August was beloved amongst the American relatives).31 Beginning with the age difference between August and herself, the text concludes with the truce with Emmy in the United States over differences of opinion on flirting, and problematizes who “we” is throughout. Between moves and deaths, there is an image both of dislocation and of one event flowing into another. Such qualities are accentuated by Münte’s frequent uses of dashes, which is characteristic of much of her writing: “He [August] had pneumonia – I recall that Mama nursed him at home with eggs and

30 For a thoughtful illustration of the two-way “borrowings” between America and Europe that I have found useful for this study, see Thomas Adam. “Cultural Baggage: The Building of the Urban Community in a Transatlantic World,” in Traveling between Worlds: German-American Encounters, eds. Thomas Adam and Ruth Gross (Arlington, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 79-99; and, in the same volume, Christiane Harzig, “Gender, Transatlantic Space, and the Presence of German-Speaking People in North America,” 146-182.
cognac.”32 Here an assertion of the daily as domestic process is how Münter copes; thus, for example, after their father dies and with August deathly ill and Wilhelmine having a breakdown in the hospital, Münter notes that she, Charly, and Emmy have to move their household in the midst of it all: “Once we spent the night in a hotel and our supper with tea was brought from the basement up to the room. Emmy and Charly played a game that I was their child. (Charly had a separate bedroom.)”33 Via tea from below, Münter figures her tender age and concomitant self-awareness and the threat of loss.

“I have been awake for a long time telling myself from [erzählte mir aus] the past,” Münter begins another recollection on America from 1956.34 To go further: the Atlantic for Münter is what Thomas Adam calls a “connective lifeline”;35 her formation up through 1900 (and after) attests to late-nineteenth-century mechanisms of cultural transfer between Germany and the United States and mutated forms.36 America was not only part of Münter’s personal history, but of a broader German (and European) past and future as well. As numerous writers have pointed out, the mythology of America is deep-seated in Germany’s construction of selfhood and otherness. “In the beginning, all the world was America,” John Locke had written in 1690.37 In a resonant discussion of this statement, Dan Diner argues that, one hand, it contains the “diagnostic” notion that America should become Europe through the redemption of Christianity and culture. On the other, though, is the understanding of America as a “paradise lost” due to unbridled capitalist expansion, which Wilhelm von Polenz in Das Land der Zukunft (1903) would see as dangerous for Germany: “For the Old World and especially for Germany [to

33 “Wir übernachteten einmal im Hotel und bekamen das Abendessen mit Tee serviert vom Keller im Zimmer oben. Da spielten Emmy und Charly so als wäre ich ihr Kind. (Charly hatte ein anderes Schlafzimmer)” (ibid, 218-219).
34 “Ich bin schon lange wach und erzählte mir aus der Vergangenheit” (ibid, 219).
35 “Cultural Baggage,” in Traveling between Worlds, 80.
36 See also Harzig, who adopts the term “transcultural space” to refer to “a space filled with the manifold relationships that weave the fabric of the transatlantic world beginning in the seventeenth century” (“Gender,” in Traveling between Worlds, 147).
follow America] that would mean sinking from a higher level of culture to a lower one. Americanization of culture means trivialization, mechanization, stupefaction." Sander Gilman captures the problem succinctly:

It can be a positive Other – America as the space where the non-European world permits the freedom of the German from the social, moral, and intellectual constraints of ‘Germany,’ before and after its actual political creation in 1871; it can be the negative Other – America as the topography of corruption and decay, where only the unfit live.

In both poles, America is the “counterworld” to Europe. Jerry Schuchalter argues that on a “symbolic and ideational level,” America is used to forge Germany’s identity as a nation: “The America-paradigm created a whole set of values and definitions for such categories as the Staat, Gesellschaft, Kultur, Volk, Nation, Gemeinschaft, Politik, and even Kunst,” and involved such binaries as Geld and Geist; Prosa and Poesie; and Zivilization and Kultur.

Scholars repeatedly emphasize the imbedding of the works of Karl May and the Wild West within German (male in particular) childhood memory; as we shall see in chapter three, there is a resonance of this tradition for Münter as well. Karl Markus Kreis writes that “from the start of May’s success in the 1890s, there is scarcely a single autobiography written by male authors from this period that does not discuss reading Karl May’s books before and during puberty or playing Indians.” For Münter, seeing her American relatives will be a ratification of

38 Ibid, 3-5 and 49.
40 Diner, America in the Eyes of the Germans, 5. As Christof Mauch puts it, “Many nineteenth-century Germans traveled to the United States in order to encounter ‘the other’: everything that their country was not” (“Oceans Apart? Paradigms in German-American History and Historiography,” in Traveling between Worlds: German-American Encounters, eds. Thomas Adam and Ruth Gross [Arlington, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2006], 8).
41 “Geld and Geist in the Writings of Gottfried Duden, Nikolaus Lenau, and Charles Sealsfield: A Study of Competing America-Paradigms,” in Yearbook of German-American Studies 27 (1992): 50, 64, and 68.
42 “German Wild West: Karl May’s Invention of the Definitive Indian,” in I Like America: Fictions of the Wild West, eds. Pamela Kort and Max Hollein, exhibition catalogue, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, September 28, 2006-January 7, 2007 (Munich: Prestel, 2006), 262. In the same volume, Max Hollein maintains, “A readiness to embrace the Indian as a kind of blood-brother remains unique to Germany” (“Foreword," I Like America, 9); and as Pamela Kort explains, for Wilhelminians, “the Indian was appreciated as a majestic individualist, untainted by capitalist value systems” (“The Unmastered Past of the Indians’ Murder,” I Like America 45).
a life dream of authenticity related to the “vivification” Eric Ames describes amongst viewers of Wild West shows. This quality was based on the particular ‘aliveness’ of performance, even as it openly bypasses reality in favor of fantasy. The very idea of vivification in this context at once surprised and delighted viewers, almost as if the practice of spectatorship had become a form of magical thinking. ‘That these our childhood dreams could one day assume tangible form – who would have ever guessed?’

Coming to the United States for Münter was a theatrical journey to a Heimat she had never seen; it is a version, if an albeit very different manifestation, of May’s pretense to being Old Shatterhand and to his assertion that he had been in America before he ever had.

As Münter stood poised between her bicycle and the steamship, she looked to America as the future embedded in the past. “America,” Kreis maintains, was a place of yearnings..., not as a utopian fantasyland beyond the real world but as a real possibility, albeit one attainable only via a difficult journey by ship. Most of those willing to emigrate did not associate America with notions of colonial areas to be conquered, as they did with Africa in the late nineteenth century. Those seeking a ‘place in the sun’ did so not in German Southwest Africa or in other German colonies but rather, as they had before, in America.

But no; here is Gilman:

The image of America, especially in the world of Karl Bodmer,..., or Charles Sealsfield..., or even later in the works of Karl May,..., provided a model for understanding the role of the German in the German claim for colonies in Africa. How does the German exist as a German in strange climes, with strange people; does the German collapse into identification with the ‘New World,’ or does the German keep his own sense of his difference (and superiority)?... By the time Karl May wrote his ‘Africa’ novels to accompany his Old Shatterhand novels of the American West, these parallels were simply assumed. America was Africa and Africa, America.

As I shall show, Münter’s capture of a “momentary” circumstance would be a response to these dislocations in a quest to locate the self.


44 “German Wild West,” in I Like America, 250.

45 “Introduction,” in Diner, America in the Eyes of the Germans, xv.
We have seen that Münter connected her America sketchbooks with diaristic practice in her interview with Edourard Roditi to separate them from Art and bold self-declaration. When Roditi had responded, “Still, many a future writer’s career has begun with the keeping of such a diary,” and had turned to a sketch from Plainview, Münter framed her output as an index of cultivation:

In those days educated men and women nearly all kept diaries or sketched what they saw when they traveled. It was not like today, when every traveler has a camera, even if he has no ambition of ever achieving the skill and the status of a professional photographer. My American sketches were private notations of visual experiences which I wanted to fix on paper as a personal memento.

Here Münter accents four components that to varied extents will shape my study of her America:

1. the personal;
2. souveniring;
3. visual experience; and
4. a separation from mass-cultural practices.

The first component involves the issue of audience, which I flag for its crucial importance for self-inscription and related issues of genre. Lynn Z. Bloom cautions that it “is a mistake to think of diaries as a genre composed primarily of ‘private writings,’ even if they are – as in many women’s diaries – a personal record of private thoughts and activities, rather than public events.” Bloom argues that it is the audience hovering at the edge of the page that for the sophisticated diarist facilitates the work’s ultimate focus, providing the impetus either for the initial writing or for transforming what

46 Philippe Lejeune discusses the overlap between diaristic practice and female education (“The ‘Journal de Jeune Fille’ in Nineteenth-Century France,” trans. Martine Breillac, in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women’s Diaries*, eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996], 114). Münter also repeatedly contrasts her cultivation and application to Emmy’s interest in diversion; thus in Marshall, she writes, “Back then, when Emmy went out to entertain herself, I sat at the piano in the Scheubers’ parlor alone. The gals were all in school – Cousin Jenny had things to do in the kitchen. In St. Louis I also was alone in the parlor at the piano – everyone was busy. Emmy was ‘out.’ I didn’t talk about the music – I was alone with it, it was nobody’s business” (damals als Emmy sich amfisieren ging saß ich allein bei Scheubers am Klavier in der Stube. Die Mädels waren in der Schule – Cousine Jenny hatte in der Küche zu tun. In St. Louis war ich auch allein in der Stube am Klavier – alle waren beschäftigt. Emmy war ‘aus.’ Ich sprach nicht von der Musik – ich war allein damit, es ging niemand an; cited in Hoberg. “Gabriele Münter in Amerika.” in *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika*, 20.

47 “Gabriele Münter,” in *Dialogues on Art* (Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1980), 139.

might have been casual, fragmented jottings into a more carefully crafted, contextually coherent work. Diaries, notebooks, and journals that may originate as ‘emotionally naked’ writings ‘predicated on privacy,’ metamorphose, says William H. Gass, into public documents when the writer already has an 'eye on history.'

Bloom’s statement is both useful and overly prescriptive. I take issue with the public/private split she sets up here and which she furthers in a category she establishes of “truly private diaries,” or “bare-bones works written primarily to keep records of receipts and expenditures, the weather, ‘visits to and from neighbors’… Written with neither art nor artifice, they are so terse they seem coded, no reader outside the author’s immediate society or household could understand them without extra-textual information.” While it may well be that an interpretive apparatus is necessary for understanding such activities, receipts and visits indeed involve a public self and, as I shall argue, are expansive sites of Münter’s dailiness. Enclosing them in a label of privacy is ultimately an act of value. Moreover, as Marilyn Ferris Motz illustrates, the private can serve as an alibi for incursion into other spaces, including politics. Bloom’s hovering audience is, however, resonant for Münter: at a basic level, Charly and his wife, the American singer, Mary Quint, are the recipients of much of Münter’s American material. For example, Gisela Kleine mentions that Münter writes him a card daily; and the reverse of an individual sketch mentions the couple’s names and English words in a variant of pig latin, which illustrates their viewership of the output. We also know that Münter sent some of her sketches to her American relatives in the 1940s; and she undoubtedly showed many of the works to them, and Daniel Oggenfuss observes that she may have exchanged photographs with friends and family members.

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49 Ibid, 23.
50 Ibid, 25.
52 Biographie eines Paares, 60.
54 "Kamera und Verfahrenstechnik der Amerika-Photographien Gabriele Münters," in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 (Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006), 194.
We have seen, too, that in the 1950s Münter is seeking to establish herself as one of the family's historians, and this brings me to the second issue I am zeroing in on in the statement to Roditi, that of souveniring. As my introduction and brief remarks on *Heimat* have begun to suggest, I shall argue that a focus of Münter's travels is to collect souvenirs that will stand in for a form of "imagined community." Münter, it may be recalled, refers to her journey as a "Vettlersreise"; and a key function of her drawings and photographs is to record her American cousins, their customs, and the land in which they live for Charly, herself and Emmy, and ultimately the American relatives too. Patricia Holland reminds us that the custodial role of the family archive and memory generally devolves to women.\(^5^5\) This function in many respects indeed serves as an alibi for Münter's visual experience, our third area of focus here and one Münter herself highlights in some of the statements I have discussed. In imagining her community, Münter figures her role as an artistic chronicler and, as we shall see, sometimes specifically undercuts a sense of documentation to foreground her visuality.

While Münter's visual experiences are souvenirs of her stay in America and often overtly figure their imperial context and her tourism, she disavows her connection to mass culture, our forth component. Highlighting her souveniring in the "memento" reference, she attempts to unbind herself from it through a distinction between her work and traveling with a camera, perhaps the quintessential touristic practice. Caren Kaplan enumerates the "leisure pursuits of the Grand Tour, which were pursued by Euro-Americans of means" as "sketching, keeping a diary, collecting souvenirs, observing customs and manners."\(^5^6\) Münter does all of these and photographs with her Kodak. John Urry maintains polemically:

Photography is a promiscuous way of seeing which cannot be limited to an elite, as art. Sontag talks of photography's "zeal for debunking the high culture of the past...its conscientious courting


of vulgarity...its skill in reconciling avant-garde ambitions with the rewards of commercialism...its transformation of art into cultural document.\textsuperscript{57}

To be sure, this is but one avenue photography has taken. Regardless of whether the Grand Tour or mass tourism is considered, both presuppose global inequities. As Joan Roca I Albert points out, "Travel choices cannot be divorced from societally determined cultural norms, in accordance with mechanisms determining personal taste and prestige in different social strata, as noted by Pierre Bordieu in \textit{Distinction}. The tourist gaze is inextricably linked with education – in the widest sense of the word – and with prior social experiences."\textsuperscript{58} Tourism indeed seems to presuppose leisure time and an asymmetry of representation and possession between subject and object. Münter’s framing of her practice in terms of visual experience highlights her role as a tourist; at the beginning of his introduction, Dean MacCannell characterizes tourists as “sightseers, mainly middle-class, who are at this moment deployed throughout the entire world in search of experience."\textsuperscript{59} Yet as MacCannell suggests, an anxiety about their superficiality of engagement undergirds touristic practices: “Tourists dislike tourists. God is dead, but man’s need to appear holier than his fellows lives.”\textsuperscript{60}

David Blackbourn offers a useful contextualization for understanding the tension in Münter’s remarks, and it is worth citing him at length:

The Wilhelmine years saw widespread concern among the highly educated that standards of individual cultivation were being eroded. Max Weber called for a renewed, ascetic individualism, the building up of internal ‘mastery’, to counteract this; Thomas Mann saw the work of the true ‘artist’ as the best antidote. The sense of cultural malaise was common ground, as it was to numerous intellectuals and educated bourgeois. Within higher education the problem was blamed on ‘mass culture.’ The targets were numerous. They included the pulp fiction turned out by series...together with newer forms of mass entertainment like the vaudeville, variety show and dancehall. Werner Sombart argued that mechanical music had driven out the authentic folk song, part of his passionate lament about the ‘desert of modern technical culture.’ There was similar dismay over the hurdy-gurdy machines and mechanical rides at fairgrounds, as the former parish fairs became more secularized and commercialized in a new urban setting. As the earlier bioscopes and dioramas gave way to the cinema...a parallel concern arose, as it did over the

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{The Tourist Gaze}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 128.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}, 10.
growth of spectator sport, especially soccer and professional cycling. In each case fear was expressed about the creation of passive, regimented consumers.  

Blackbourn concludes that there were

many overlaps and points of intersection between avant-garde, official, middlebrow and mass culture more generally. In the first place, technology and market forces operated across the categories.... Secondly, the formal distinctions between different kinds of culture became more blurred in this period... Thirdly, the fierce cultural debates of these years led to complex affinities and shifting alliances.

In essence, "It was no longer clear what culture was, a disturbing situation to those, especially the educated middle classes, who thought they knew."  

Münter's statement which, it should be recalled, Roditi publishes in 1960, reflects many of the contradictions of Wilhelmine Germany as Blackbourn sketches them out. Although the Brownie will not be released until 1900, Münter not only acquired her Bull’s Eye in the context of a proliferation of amateur photographic practices and the explosion of Kodak's mass-marketing campaign; but, as I have begun to suggest, her sketches also overlap with a touristic mode of perception, and are enabled by the processes of modernization mass tourism presupposes. Sierra Bruckner argues that as Völkerschauen "[a]round the turn of the century...came to be more pointedly associated with a wide range of social groups," including the middle class, neuer Mittlestand, and workers, critics

exposed deep...middle-class fears regarding their loss of cultural capital, a specifically bourgeois gaze that constituted public comportment and thus embodied social and cultural identity. In their eyes, the 'objective' way of seeing of the cultivated German seemed to be giving way to Schaulust, the untutored ‘lust to look’ and undisciplined behavior of gawking spectators,” and she notes that such criticisms “underscored middle-class anxieties about the role of mass culture in the transformation of the respectable sphere of popular science.

Münter's output not only thematizes this tension, as I shall show below, but her visuality itself is enabled by this broadening of lookers and ways of looking, even as it inscribes markers of

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62 Ibid, 297-299.  
gender, class, race, and ethnicity, for example. And her statements themselves manifest an ambivalence; she would recall erroneously in 1956 that in Plainview and Guion, "I drew portraits [abzeichnen] of almost all the relatives. Then in Guion Emmy gave me a Codac 'Bulleye Nr. 2' [sic] 9x9 cm & I took photographs instead of drawing," which suggests a perception of an interchangeability of media. Again I have to disagree here. While there are indeed overlaps, I shall suggest some of the differences between Münter's individual sketches, sketchbooks, and photographs. And I shall contend that Münter's comments to Roditi index her struggles in coming to representation against the backdrop I have sketched out here.

In a resonant discussion of a new space-time continuum linked to railway travel, Wolfgang Schivelbusch articulates a crisis in perception. For those wedded to old transport technology, railway traveling might be supremely monotonous or, following Pitirim Sorokin, even risk the loss of self: "If we try to replace sociocultural time by a purely quantitative time, time becomes devitalized. It loses its reality, and we find ourselves in an exceedingly difficult position in our efforts to orient ourselves in the time process, to find out 'where we are'...." Yet Schivelbusch's assertion that the "railroad has created a new landscape" also points the way toward new spaces of perception in modernity, which I shall consider in this study. Schivelbusch notes that through the railroad, "remote regions were made available to the masses," and in this context of tourism draws a connection to mechanical reproduction: "this was merely a prelude, a preparation for making any unique thing available by means of reproduction. When spatial distance is no longer experienced, the differences between original and reproduction

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64 As Hoberg points out, this is a flawed statement given that there are photographs she took in Plainview ("Gabriele Münter in Amerika," in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 25).
65 "...habe ich fast alle Verwandten abgezeichnet. Dann in Guion schenkte mir Emmy einen Codac 'Bulleye Nr. 2' 9x9 cm u. ich photographierte anstatt zu zeichnen" (cited in Hoberg, "Gabriele Münter in Amerika," in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 24).
67 Ibid, 60.
diminish." In keeping with the contradictions in her statement and those to which Blackbourn alludes, Münter, I shall suggest, seems to experiment with modes of modern visual perception in a quest for selfhood. While she foregrounds her cultivation to Roditi, her America travels are an uneasy fit with the category of the Bildungsreise; as Gordon Craig asserts, "The railway destroyed the coherence of the Bildungsreise by widening horizons and making change, variety, and amusement the traveler’s goals rather than edification and self-improvement." Yet while Münter’s artistic practice in America unfolds within a context of tourism and consumption, these also enable her cultivation.

For Urry, the “basic binary division” surrounding the ordinary and the extraordinary is fundamental to the touristic gaze. If tourism offers up the escape of consumption or variety, as per Kaplan – “I have been a tourist myself often enough, looking for some relief from the rooted realities of dailiness” – what of criticality of the ordinary? In the disconnectedness of its expansive time, tourism would seem ill-suited for engaged awareness:

When tourists travel across space, or even sit in their cars and gaze at the view, they take part in the type of time-travel which is commonplace in reading and writing. Then time slows or quickens as stories are compressed or expanded, apparently moving at speeds unrelated to ‘real’ time. In the acts of writing and reading, as in touring, time becomes elastic; or at least it is changed from its fixed measure in the working world.

Joan Roca I Albert is more optimistic. Thus he argues that travel time is an extraordinary time – with sacred undertones…. Our senses are heightened, we find ourselves reading street signs aloud, locking in on the most unusual details, and our impressions, assessments and doubts are that much livelier. Research and training in the grammars of itinerizing can surely contribute to consciously bringing closer the traveller gaze and the everyday gaze. Learning to walk through and observe unknown environs in a more everyday fashion unlocks the door to the possibility of making even daily journeys with the eyes of an outsider, defamiliarizing the most common situations and thereby enabling us to examine them critically.

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68 Ibid, 42.
70 Questions of Travel, ix.
72 "Itinerary as Art-Form, Cities and Citizenship," in Tour-isms, 105.
Within an emotionally overdetermined “America” laden with both authenticity and modern soullessness; in the context of the scramble of what Hans Gatzke refers to in the period as the “new imperialism”;73 and with heightened antagonism between the United States and Germany right at the beginning of Münter’s travels: criticality will be hard to locate in her output. But in the problematic opportunism of tourism as well as the most mundane aspects of chronicling, Münter will hone her perception and begin to interrogate in various forms what it means to capture everyday life.

73 From 1895 to 1905, as Gatzke notes, the colonial powers scrambled for the last remaining “available” portions of the earth. In the process there were numerous spats between the United States and Germany. During Münter’s stay in the United States, relations had heated up in the context of Weltpolitik with heightened tension surrounding the Manila Bay Incident. Additional friction between the two nations resulted from their partition of the Samoan Islands and American concerns about Germany’s harsh treatment of the Chinese in the Boxer Rebellion. Gatzke suggests that until the middle of the 1880s, German immigrants were generally regarded positively due to the culture, money, and skills they furnished, but relations grew strained between the two nations in the context of protectionist tariff legislation and colonialist rivalry (Germany and the United States: A ‘Special Relationship’ [Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1980], 38-40 and 43).

Attempting to record knowledge and events of the current moment, the 1898-1899 Meyers Konversations-Lexikon begins its entry for “Amerika” noting the “crucial change” (hochwichtige Änderung) that the United States “has taken over the Spanish islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico with armed forces” (sich mit Waffengewalt der Spanien gehörigen Inseln Cuba und Puerto Rico bemächtigt hat). This precedes a discussion charting the borders of the North American Continent (34-35).
Chapter one: three orchestrations of dailiness

To launch an examination of this issue of capture for Münter, this chapter centers on three textualizations of dailiness in and surrounding her practice. As an example of the prescription of daily forms of creativity for mid-to-upper-class American women, I first shall turn to the two volumes to which I have referred of Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine covering the mid-1860-to-1861 year. Although the fin-de-siècle America Münter visited would be dramatically different from that evoked across the issues, the latter contributed to building the edifice of expectations for female creativity and selfhood of her upbringing and conceptualization of America inflecting her practice after 1900. Of relevance to this discussion is the periodical’s framing of a social problem surrounding artistic originality for women, even as creativity is admitted. Extending the issue of mechanical capture raised by a reading of Godey’s, Münter’s pocket calendars constitute the second form of dailiness I shall consider here in all their mundane detail. In keeping with my emphasis on the sweep of Münter’s dailiness, this section also highlights the interconnected fashioning of gender, class, nation, and religion in these documents, as well as Münter’s strategies of generic expansion. Finally, the third instance of dailiness I shall delineate concerns her sketch, “Carrots for dinner Annie Maud 15.IX.1899.” As I shall show, Münter’s record of momentary circumstance is enfolded within a German mythologization of America long in the making.

Mechanical creativity: Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine

“A woman is decidedly imitative,” a Godey’s article contending that woman’s character is established by her dress notes, “and, when you put her into the wide-awake, the short skirt, the jacket, into the pockets of which she is very apt to thrust her hands, you will generally find her sayings curt, and her laugh loud.”¹ The periodical variously casts female artistic practice within a discourse of copying in the elaboration of taste. Thus for example, instructions for Grecian oil

painting, a genre *Godey's* recommends to its readers entailing varnishing and painting a print such as an engraving, include the following: "Paint the sky first, commencing at the left side of the picture, and working onward to the right"; "Ripples should be put in distinctly, yet blended carefully and softly"; and "Distant hills are tinged with a mild gray or blue, as they approach nearer gradually resolved into green."2 Similarly to a recipe, tasteful execution is emphasized in the tension surrounding formulaic artistry. For the genre of moss painting, ready-made materials (moss, bark, sand, and rope for example) are to be fit into a pre-established design in a paint-by-number paradigm. Another facet of this artistry manifests in the display of recitation, as in the enactment of charades and *tableaux vivants*, musical performance, and cultivated conversation drawing on previously read snippets and dialogues committed to memory. And a discussion of "Persian painting" inscribes "mechanical" embellishment into a discourse of decoration, gender, and otherness:

Persian painting is so purely mechanical that even those altogether unacquainted with drawing and coloring will find no difficulty in it. It differs from painting generally in this important particular, that no attempt is made to copy from nature; it is rather a mosaic work of colors, consisting of quaint scrolls and arabesques, flowers of extraordinary hues and forms, birds of marvelous plumage, and devices which have only their oddity to recommend them... its outlines are all abrupt, its colors contrast and not blend with one another, and brilliancy rather than delicacy is the effect aimed at.... Screens, card-cases and boxes, netting boxes, the covers of blotting-books, cigar-cases, baskets, etc., are the articles most ordinarily painted.3

Within a rhetoric of domestic ornamentation, Wilhelmine Münter's issues of *Godey's* construct cultivation as the basis of middle-class women's spaces of activity. Connected to a bourgeois separation of spheres, such gendered creativity is inscribed in a context of aesthetic uplift as against commercial gain. As an articulation of the cult of domesticity, this model is based on ornamentation of the household, person, and bourgeois life, and admits craft over art. Thus against the black ink and white pages of the rest of the volumes, the vivid colors of the fashion-plate frontispieces serve as a metonym of woman's bodily adornment of her environment.

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The discourses surrounding female creativity in *Godey's* repeatedly interpellate women as the custodians of aesthetics within the home, a position in keeping with Kathleen McCarthy’s complication to the myth of “female cultural custodianship” *tout court:* “While middle-class men fashioned arts associations around closely intertwined webs of male friendships, avocations, and business pursuits, women were cautioned to confine their aesthetic ministrations to the home.”

McCarthy explains that during the antebellum period,

Contemporary observers were quick to underscore the relationship between gender and genius, drawing a sharp distinction between male creativity and female talent. ‘Genius is power; talent is applicability,’ noted the New England sage Ralph Waldo Emerson. While men were viewed as rational beings ruled by intellect, influential Enlightenment writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau held that women were closer to nature, more governed by their emotions and biological imperatives, and therefore more given to imitation than originality. Because creativity was deemed an intellectual endeavor rather than an intimate gift, women seemed destined to be excluded from true achievement.

In this context of “imitation,” a discourse of relationality structures women’s activities as “accomplishments” as a backdrop to marriageability.

If such discourses of domesticity and imitation would be echoed in adapted form in the writings of Georg Simmel and others in keeping with an emphasis on women’s essential roles of reproduction over production, sites of recitation and recording might nevertheless foster the development of observation, interpretation, and critical interaction. McCarthy refers to prescribed artifacts in *Godey’s* such as the staple knitted fruit as a “small universe of horrors,” and the regularly featured fancy letters, like historiated initials, obscure literacy on multiple levels; indeed, McCarthy maintains that *Godey’s* Sarah Josepha Hale sought to inscribe advancements in

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4 *Women’s Culture: America Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), xi and 4. McCarthy asserts: “While men’s cultural opportunities were continually widened through their friendships, institutions, and clubs, women’s roles were correspondingly whittled to fit the context of the domestic sphere. ‘From Painting,’ reported Hale, housewives could claim ‘drawing, Penmanship, [and] Letter-writing’ as their own, ‘from Poetry, the art of reading and taste of selection in literature; from Music, besides household song, we have dancing, gracefulness, and propriety of manner and attire, and many of those innocent home amusements which are beneficial to the heart and soul, mind and body.’ Drawing, needlework, and the acquisition of suitable household decorations were also deemed particularly appropriate accoutrements to the feminine sphere” (5).


women’s education within domesticity. Yet women’s struggles for creativity, education and work, and how they should spend their time are figured throughout the periodical, which thus offers the possibility for greater awareness and interrogation as well.

Thus for example the volumes that Münter retained bear numerous discussions of autobiographical articulation for women that describe the need of writing in secret – women hide their pens or steal upstairs to write – and of stifling voice, and they also variously convey a tension between writing and marriage. While the latter two are often shown as antithetical propositions and marriage is the ultimate outcome, a story in an issue a few months before those retained by Münter depicts this conflict in such an over-the-top manner as to invite questioning. Framed as a diaristic account of a “blue” and “spinsters” (24-year-old) writer of periodical literature who spends the summer at the seaside to rest, she meets her future spouse: “He says we must be married soon...; that my pen and papers must be locked up.” And elsewhere: “Come down, ‘Cassy! At that pen again, I’ll warrant! I’ll levy an ‘attachment,’ and place it under arrest for safe keeping! Hurry, please! Here’s Aunt Sarah waiting to consult you about certain loaves of cake for a certain occasion!” Later returned to her room, the joking fiancé “shook his finger at me and bade me not to exceed his warrant of ‘just ten minutes.” In addition, an article from February 1861 catches some of the tensions surrounding women’s written expression.

Recommending the art of conversation, it suggests that this may be developed “by the habit of arranging thoughts (our own or others) in writing”:

We do not mean authorship, writing books or articles for magazines, although such efforts, when time and duties permit, are improving as intellectual exercises, even when only intended for private perusal. We mean letter writing, making records of pleasant conversation, copying out the best specimens of poetry and prose from the writings of eminent authors.9

And an article entitled “The Fine Arts at Home” establishes painting, poetry, and music as “the three Queen Arts,” each with their subsidiary “acquirements”:

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7 Ibid. 6.
9 “Conversation and Reading,” in Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine (February 1861): 173.
For instance, from Painting, we have Drawing, Penmanship, Letter-writing; from Poetry, the art of reading and the taste of selection in literature; from Music, besides household song, which is its natural expression, we have dancing, gracefulness, and propriety of manner and attire, and many of those innocent home amusements which are beneficial to heart and soul, to mind and body.  

I do not mean to discount the conservative impetus of the periodical, but ultimately, McCarthy’s contention that “[s]elf-sacrifice, rather than self-assertion, was the rationale that undergirded...[women’s] public roles” in the volumes seems overly confining, as illustrated by the interconnections of these modes in the philanthropic activities described in these issues. Missionary work is one example here, for all the problematics of its assumptions of civilization, and in addition the genres advocated for women in the periodical such as letter and diary writing query the boundary between containment and self-expression. One article notes for example:

We have often urged the habit of ‘keeping a diary’ upon our young people, and particularly upon those whose domestic cares would be aided and lightened by it. It assists in forming a habit of regularity and method; it revives pleasant reminiscences, and what wife can resist the grand climax of bringing positive evidence to bear upon a disputatious husband? 

The article goes on to mention a “richness about the life of a person who keeps a diary, [a richness] unknown to other men,” and foregrounds its role as an instrument of family and community cohesiveness.

The themes outlined here will inflect Münter’s overall practice, and there are also points of connection to the Imperial German context. For example, in a discussion of middle-class girls and women in the period, Ute Frevert provides the following description of a manufacturer’s wife:

Far removed from the world of toil and the compulsion to make a profit, she was there to exude a lifestyle of luxury and display the refinements of the social graces; free of the necessity to pursue

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10 In *Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine* (December 1860): 556.
11 *Women’s Culture*, 4. *Godey’s* suggests a more complex position, as in the following statement: “…we believe the rarest thing in the world is a woman aiming at renown that has not some real or imaginary basis of doing good” (January 1861: 77).
12 “Keeping a Diary,” in *Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine* (July 1861: 93). This issue appeared just after those retained at the Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
13 Here the article is quoting from “The Recreations of a Country Parson” (“Keeping a Diary,” in *Godey’s*, 93).
any particular end, she was to devote herself to the fine arts, and to develop hospitality in such a way that guests felt they were with cultivated and educated beings.14

In an 1895 poem entitled “Via Passionis,” artist and writer Hermione von Preuschen describes a mandate for woman to paint and write “conventions” and lavish attention on her man and the adornment of her household.15 Discussing the artistic pursuits among Münter’s female relatives and acquaintances during her upbringing, Johannes Eichner mentions for example that they painted porcelain cups with floral motifs and tin signs following patterns. Like her subsequent exercises in rendering ornament and copying after plaster casts in Düsseldorf, he notes that she found these activities rather tedious.16 At the same time, though, the opportunities in such training should not be overlooked, nor should the implicit meanings of the Godey’s volumes even if she simply held on to these out of deference for her mother. Difficulties surrounding and imaginative modes of self-declaration will be a hallmark of her artistic practice. As Münter’s discussions of the Klee painting illustrate, she will expand secrecy into an avenue of approach for visual experience, and she also refers to her need to hide her sketches against adult judgment. As I shall suggest in the conclusion to this study, while discourses of adornment and craft will be fraught for Münter, her identification with the household and engagement with its aesthetics,17 as in the very different context of her Murnau practice, will enable her questioning of public articulation and circulation as well as of domesticity itself. If I stress Münter’s agency here, though, the gendered framework of culture in Imperial Germany that I have outlined in the introduction will make problematic her relationship to imitation. The (gendered) connotation of mechanical transmission surrounding imitation would seem to compromise creative selfhood, and partially accounts for Münter’s de-emphasis on such influences. Yet despite the apparent

17 See Introduction, n. 5 of this study.
prescriptiveness of imitation as documentation for her American output, it will further her visuality.

Beyond what they have to say regarding female creativity, the Godey’s volumes signify as nostalgic souvenirs of her upbringing, a function suggestive for her approach to America. The fact that Münter retains these documents throughout her life attests to their significance. A point of connection with her mother, who had acquired the periodical a few years after her marriage, they were a trace of America as heritage; on the inside cover of the first volume, Wilhelmine had neatly inscribed, “Mrs. C.F. Münter, Jackson, Tennessee.” Indeed, a central goal of the periodical lies in the construction of women’s roles in establishing family tradition, as noted in an issue a few months before than those retained by Wilhelmine Münter:

We do not publish, nor need our subscribers expect to receive, a mere story-book. We have a nobler aim; we seek to enlighten, to instruct womankind; to teach them their various duties; and that our labors are appreciated we appeal to this fact. Mothers take it for their daughters, whose mothers took it for them. The Lady’s Book is an heirloom in families.\(^{18}\)

R. Hewison suggests that heritage “represents some kind of security, a point of reference, a refuge perhaps, something visible and tangible which…seems stable and unchanged.”\(^{19}\) In his “Unpacking My Library,” Walter Benjamin foregrounds the role of inheritance for the activation of the collection, and these volumes, like the output Münter produces, will be part of Münter’s project of forging familial and cultural inheritance. Discussing Benjamin’s essay, Naomi Schor suggests that two of his mother’s photograph albums are the “matrix of his entire collection”; these, and his room, are the “originary” space he finds in unpacking: “Collecting, when it is not unpacking, is for Benjamin a form of psychotherapy, a healing anamnesis, a means of remembering his fragmented past, of re-collecting a lost maternal presence, the plenitude of childhood – his mother’s, his own.”\(^{20}\) As I shall show, Münter’s travels in the United States were

\(^{18}\) Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine (February 1860): 186.


themselves a collection of, and problematization of, originary experience. In her understanding of nostalgia as a “self-constitution of the modern” rather than a peripheral anachronism, Rita Felski suggests that “the redemptive maternal body constitutes the ahistorical other and the other of history against which modern identity is defined.” Yet as Münter leafed through the piecework designs and the fashion plates in Godey’s, as she read about how to make a compote and followed debates surrounding female physicians, she would elaborate an American Heimat both grounded in, and resisting, the modern.

_Toward a reading of Münter’s pocket calendars_

[22] A place on the map is also a place in history. Adrienne Rich, “Notes toward a Politics of Location”

Developing my argument for dailiness as a mechanism to better understand Münter’s practice, the following is a transcription of her itinerary in the United States based on the entries under the daily allotment of space in her pocket calendars. I provide marginal notes in red to facilitate legibility and to fill in basic blanks. 24

**1898**

- Sept. 27: Rotterdam
- Sept. 28: ~
- Sept. 29: Schiff ab

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21 Such a dynamic governs the notion of the souvenir as Susan Stewart understands it: “But whether the souvenir is a material sample or not, it will still exist as a sample of the now-distanced experience, an experience which the object can only evoke and resonate to, and can never entirely recoup” (On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993], 136). As such, the volumes problematize authenticity: “The possession of the metonymic object is a kind of dispossession in that the presence of the object all the more radically speaks to its status as a mere substitution and to its subsequent distance from the self” (Stewart 135).


24 There are some entries I have been unable to make out, and I am grateful to Ilse Holzinger for helping me to figure out as much as we could. I also have taken advantage of Annegret Hoberg’s establishment of the basic chronology, including the names of relatives in each of the locations in which Münter stayed (“Gabriele Münter in Amerika.” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 17-22), and have supplemented it in some cases. My chronology is, however, by no means complete.
Oct. 9: New York an
Oct. 20: ab nach St. Louis
Oct. 21: St. L. an
Oct. 21, 1898-Feb. 5, 1899: St. Louis (with an excursion to Niagara Falls); with aunt Albertine (“Al”) Happel, daughters Lulu, Kate (married to Joe Buchheimer, with daughter Mildred), and Bertie, and son Konrad; with a visit from cousin Leila Hamilton-Davidson and daughter Annie Maud
Oct. 23: bei Buchheimers
Oct. 27: St. Louis Exposition
Oct. 28: Imperial Theatre “Saratoga”
Oct. 31: bei Linie Dietz gef.
Nov. 2: Imperial Theatre Frou-Frou
Nov. 3: Moth & Flame (Olympic Theatre.)
Nov. 4: Columbia
Nov. 6: Kirche
Nov. 10: ~
Nov. 22: Columbia
Nov. 23: Reign of Error Olympic Theatre
Nov. 26: Grand Opera House Northern Light
Nov. 30: Cirano de Bergerac Imperial Theatre
Dec. 2: Skate
Dec. 2-3: Century Middler [?]
Dec. 16: ~
Dec. 18: ab St. Louis
Dec. 19: an Niagara
Dec. 20: Niagara Falls. Buffalo
Dec. 20: Star Theatre “Evil Eye”
Dec. 21: Lyceum Theatre: “Going to the races”
Dec. 22: St. Louis
Dec. 26: Columbia
Dec. 31: “Unkel Toms Cabin” Imperial Theatre

1899
Jan. 2: Photogr.
Jan. 3: Grand Opera House “Blue Jeans”
Jan. 4: [Havlins?] “2 Little Vagabonds”
Jan. 6: Conrad
Between Jan. 7 and 8: Columbia
Jan. 8: Grand. Opera House
Jan. 10: Imperial Theatre “Plunger” [?]
Jan. 15: Columbia ff. 16ten
Jan. 18: Grand. Opera. House the Jilt
Jan. 19: Beauprés
Jan. 20: Century Robinhood
Jan. 24: ~
Jan. 25: Grand. Opera House Comtess Gucki [?]
Feb. 5: Aristocracy Grand. Opera House
Feb. 6-June 8: Moorefield; with aunt Caroline Schreiber, husband Michael, sons John M. and Jake, and daughters Annie (Schreiber) Wade and her husband Jim, Minnie, and Ida
Feb. 6: nach Moorefield
Feb. 26: bei Cora Bryant singing
Feb. 27: up to Schreibers
Mar. 1: ~
Mar. 3: Jammer [?]
Mar. 5: Cave ritt
Mar. 6: Winter
Mar. 8: Bertie
Mar. 23-29: Moorefield
Mar. 25: Palmsonntag: Preaching. Singing at Cora Bryant
Mar. 29: Kate
Apr. 1: Jammer [?] church
Apr. 2: Winter
Apr. 8: ~
Sommer
Apr. 12: Explosion
May 4: Ed. [?] Linden
May 12: ~
May 19: mill running again
May 21: children day
May 26: Jesse
June 3: blowing-cave
   cave in bell cave
   Bayr. wochen [?]

Jun. 8-c. July 6: Marshall; with cousin Willie Scheuber, wife Jenny, and daughters Minnie Elizabeth (Bessie), Virgie May, and Jennie Lee; Willie's mother Mrs. J. Gaddis Allen; cousin (Willie's sister) Annie Smith and daughter Allie May; Bessie Allen, Bruce Allen, and 2 additional Allen children
   Jun. 8: to Marshall
   Jun. 11: ~
   Jun. 18: Sue Belle Lake
   Jun. 19: picnic
   Jun. 21: " " " swimming
   Jun. 22: Hynsonspings
   Jun. 25: Lake
   Jun. 28: swimming

C. Jul. 9, 1899-c. Feb. 3, 1900: Plainview; with aunt Louise Donohoo and husband Joe N.; their children (1) Lena Ware, husband Richard Cameron Ware, and daughters Alice (Allie) Louise and Helen Cameron; (2) daughter Allie Slaughter, husband George Morgan Slaughter, and children Eloise and George Jr.; (3) son Carl Donohoo and bride Octavia ("Tavie") Winn (wedding 8/9/1899); (4) daughter Minnie Donohoo; and (5) son Will Donohoo. Also: with aunt Annie (Scheuber) Hamilton, husband William Zewinkle Hamilton ("Uncle Bud"), son Harold Herman ("H.H."), daughter Lela Hamilton Davidson, and her daughter Annie Maud Davidson; and Arthur Hamilton [?]
   Jul. 22: ~
   † Uncle Mike
   Jul. 28: Helen Cameron
   Aug. 9: Carl Tavie wedding
   Aug. 15-19: Cowboy Reunion
   Aug. 30: camping
   Hals ranch
Sep. 1-3: camping
Sep. 5: zu Hamiltons

Stuck in here is a little typed sheet: “Fleiß ist der Vater des Glücks.”
  Oct. 2: ~
  Oct. 8-c. Nov. 4: Wares’ 18
  Oct. 25: Aunt Al
  Nov. 6: ~
  Nov. 7: Hamiltons
  Nov. 10: Lulu
  Nov. 11: Donohoos
  Nov. 14: Wares [?] zu Wills
  Dec. 14: ~

1900

Newspaper clipping at the beginning: “Je härter Kampf, um desto größerer Sieg”
  Jan. [?]: Plainview
  Jan. 13: Eastern Star
  Feb. 3: Fortworth [sic]
  Feb. 4: Abilene [sic]
  Feb. 5-May 16 (with an excursion to Abilene): Guion, with cousin Jane Lee Graham, her
  sons Willie, Johnie, Dallas, and Fred, and daughter Benlah 25
  Feb. 5: Guion [Guion]
    Feb. 14: Rights partie Toscola
    Feb. 20: ~
    Feb. 24: Guion
    Feb. 25: Church. Singing
  Feb. 27: to Abilene
  Feb. 28: home
  Back in Guion:
    Mar. 1: fall out
    Mar. 4: Bradshaws
    Mar. 7: Buffalo Gap
    Mar. 9: Morgans
    Mar. 10: Fishers
    Mar. 11: Neals
    Mar. 28: ~
    Apr. 1: walking
    Apr. 8: riding
    Apr. 13: Willie 18
    Apr. 15: Walking
    Apr. 22: Moro mountain
    Apr. 27: ~
    Apr. 29: Red lake
    May 5: Clara
    May 16: leave Guion
    May 17: leave Abilene
    May 18-Jul. 11: Marshall

25 Gisela Kleine mentions six children (Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares
[Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1990], 82).
May 18: ar. Marshall
May 20: Sue Belle
May 26: Jette Sue Belle swim
May 31: Sue Belle swimming

~

Jul. 11: ab Marshall
Jul. 12-c. Jul. 28: Moorefield

Jul. 4: ~
Jul. 11: ab Marshall
Jul. 12: Moorefield
Jul. 20: zii. Wades
Jul. 25: Cave picnic
Jul. 26: to Moorefield
Jul 28: leave Moorefield

Jul. 29-Oct. 1: St. Louis
Jul. 29: arr. St. Louis
Forest Park
Aug. 1: Suburban
Aug. 5: Leila arr.
Aug. 6: ~
c. Aug. 8: river exc.
Montesano Springs
Aug. 11: Delmar garden Amusement Park
Aug. 12: Bentoup [?]
Aug. 23: river exc.
Seton
Aug. 25-27: Columbia
Aug. 30: river exc.
Sept. 2: Kate’s
Sept. 12: ~
Oct. 1: ab St. Louis

Oct. 2-6: New York
Oct. 2: am Hoboken
Oct. 6: ab New York
Oct. 16: ~
Oct. 6-19: on S.S. Pennsylvania of Hapag-Lloyd Line bound for Hamburg

This ant’s eye view highlights visits with family and friends, leisure activities, and basic travel coordinates. The emphasis on leisure dovetails with Münter’s social space and the privilege attending travel and its recording; but within this schematic framework, much in fact is conveyed. Family milestones are registered, including a wedding, a death, a birth, the explosion of the family mill. And edification and amusement read as intertwined, as in programs at clubs, theatrical performances, and the St. Louis Exposition. There are many references to physical activity, including skating, swimming, riding, walking, picnicking excursions, and camping, and
Münter elliptically figures her embodied processes (via a wave, which I take to refer to her menstrual cycle, and which is submerged by its proximity to the dates instead of being included in the blank space for entries). There are allusions to tourism not only in the trip to Niagara Falls and excursions on the Mississippi, but also in entries for day trips such as to Hynson Springs and Buffalo Gap. Traces of ethnography resonate here too, as in “Preaching: Singing at Cora Bryant” and the cowboy reunion, as well as of personal adventure (“fall out” – of the carriage). Seasonality and recurrence are referenced, and extratextual cut-outs are slipped in: but there are no mentions of visual art. The entry for January 2, 1899 presumably refers to a family visit to a photographer.

The itinerary of Münter’s travels as given here demonstrates some of the problems in working from a position of dailiness, both for Münter and for me. Some of the information here seems uninteresting and private; why bother? In her catalogue essay for Münter’s America photographs, Annegret Hoberg reproduces only the entries involving Münter’s main travel coordinates and a few select activities. In some respects it appears absurd or even fetishizing to devote pages to an examination of Münter’s pocket calendars. As Woody Allen puts it in a response to the “long-awaited” issue of volume one of The Collected Laundry Lists of Hans Metterling:

LIST No. 5
6 undershirts
6 shorts
6 handkerchiefs

has always puzzled scholars, principally because of the total absence of socks…. Why did this literary giant suddenly strike socks from his weekly list? Not, as some scholars say, as a sign of his oncoming madness, although Metterling had by now adopted certain odd behavior traits. For one thing, he believed that he was either being followed or was following somebody…. Eisenbud assures us that Metterling continued to wear socks. He merely stopped sending them to the laundry!

26 “Gabriele Münter in Amerika,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 16-17.
Yet Allen’s parody of the scholarly enterprise through a critique of its obsession with trivial
details of a writer’s life is predicated on an assumption of its (albeit absurdly) tortured genius
practitioners.

As a historian, a crisp cartography is fundamentally impossible to establish from this
material. Münter did not include items for each day, so that with additional materials, we may
only sketch the contours of an itinerary of her trip; and its interpretation – i.e. a narrative
surrounding what she did in each place and what her destinations brought her – is harder to
establish. From this vantage, her travels remain quite inaccessible; Guion, in which she spent
an important amount of time, is no longer there; and who, for example, was Cora Bryant? A
1900 Independence County, Arkansas census reveals that she was born in 1881, and thus was
about four years younger than Münter. Why does Münter include two entries about singing at her
house? In her study of midwife Martha Ballard’s diary, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich describes the
gaps in reading produced by accounts written though dailiness:

The problem is not that the diary is trivial but that it introduces more stories than can easily be
recovered and absorbed. It is one thing to describe Martha’s journey across the Kennebec,
another to assess the historical significance of Nancy Norcross’s lingering labor, Obed Hussey’s
sojourn in jail, or Zilpha and Ebenezer Hewins’s hasty marriage. Taken alone, such stories tell us
too much and not enough, teasing us with glimpses of intimate life, repelling us with a reticence
we cannot decode. Yet, read in the broader context of the diary and in relation to larger themes in
eighteenth-century history, they can be extraordinarily revealing.

If it appears that Münter included too much of the wrong stuff and yet too little – the private
elasticity of a life – leaving out the duller items closes out important avenues of interpretation.

And if there is a limitation to a proper-names approach to Münter’s output, through which more
disappointment and misunderstanding may result, such a cartography of the mundane foregrounds
what counts as knowledge.

28 For a related discussion of the problem, see Elizabeth Hampsten, who frames the issue in terms of the
challenge of extracting “presence,” or what an event felt like to its writer, from the “appearance of
information” (Read This Only to Yourself: The Private Writings of Midwestern Women, 1880-1910
29 A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary (New York: Vintage Books, 1990),
25.
To attempt to read Ballard’s diary, Ulrich argues for a myriad of sources:

The diary does not stand alone. A serious reading requires research in a wide range of sources, from Sewall’s diary to Ephraim Ballard’s maps. Wills, tax lists, deeds, court records, and town-meeting minutes provide additional documentation, as do medical treatises, novels, religious tracts, and the fragmentary papers of Maine physicians. But the diary itself is central.\(^{30}\)

While such a laudable project unfortunately is beyond the scope of this study for each item Münter lists, I agree with Ulrich’s call for a heterogeneity of materials to begin to contextualize Münter’s entries. Thus for example this discussion draws upon guidebook literature and city directories; census and probate records; period popular literature, songbooks, and theatrical literature; municipal newspapers and tourist flyers; and first-person accounts in memoirs, commonplaces, how-to manuals, and postcard collections. I have only been able to scratch the surface; but I hope that what I have located illuminates the usefulness of reading such daily forms as Münter’s pocket calendars for understanding her social space, aspects of her visuality, difficulties of coming to and critique of authorship, and problematic selfhood for scholars. For example, while an apparatus of materials is required to understand such a cartography-list, this does not, however, mean that such jottings are “truly private.” If Münter did not expect for others to know when she had her period (which may be a faulty assumption), her codedness references the hovering audience. Considering the pocket calendars from the perspective of genre will help to discern Münter’s negotiation of expectations for her lifewriting. The Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung houses pocket calendars beginning in 1893, and I shall consider the pre-America calendars as a group to build a context for those from 1898 to 1900 and her overall American output.

A uniquely daily genre, the pocket calendars suggest the straightjacketing of the self within spatial-temporal constraints.\(^{31}\) Not much larger than matchbooks – they are almost 1½ by

\(^{30}\textit{Ibid.}, 34.\)

\(^{31}\) I have found Cynthia Huff’s examination of the spatial conditioning, possibilities for textual expansion, and modes of writing the self in the diaries of Lady Marianne Brougham and Marianne Estcourt useful for this section of my discussion (“Textual Boundaries: Space in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Manuscript
2 inches, with that from 1900 somewhat larger – their grid of days admits but a barebones record of daily events like a string of fragments, yet with cycle as primary. Conducive neither to rumination nor imagination, they also are not intended for the writing of a jam-packed life of “events.” In a resonant discussion of the miniature, which she sees as the “notation of the moment and the moment’s consequences,” Susan Stewart notes of miniature books, “It is the hand that has produced these volumes and the hand that has consumed them – they are an affront to reason and its principal sense: the eye.” In Stewart’s formulation, such daily genres as these foreground the body. And her discussion develops this idea through her understanding of miniature texts as objects of person – “a talisman or amulet. The fact that the miniature book could be easily held and worn attaches a specific function to it. Its gemlike properties were often reflected in its adornment by real gems” – as against authorship:

The writing of miniaturization does not want to call attention to itself or to its author; rather, it continually refers to the physical world. It resists the interiority of reflexive language in order to interiorize an outside; it is the closest thing we have to a three-dimensional language, for it continually points outside itself, creating a shell-like, or enclosed, exteriority.

It is difficult to tease out a narrative from such artifacts because, as Stewart suggests, they are “caught in an infinity of descriptive gestures.” Perhaps their very structure suggestively curtails activity as well; as Stewart observes in the different context of Elizabethan manuscript writing, “Minute writing is emblematic of craft and discipline.” The practicality at the level of portability is undercut by the cramping of documentary space, which, in a related vein to the Godey’s fancy letters, compromises legibility. Thus while the genre appears to call for mechanical record-keeping, their miniature scale actually forces selectivity by the writer to foreground her distance from documentary exactitude. As Stewart notes, “There are no miniatures in nature; the miniature is a cultural product, the product of an eye performing certain

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32 On Longing, 40 and 46.
33 Ibid, 41 and 45.
34 Ibid, 38 and 47. Stewart indeed points out that calendars are favored types of miniature books: “The microcosmic aspects of the almanac make it particularly suited for miniaturization” (39).
operations, manipulating, and attending in certain ways to, the physical world." Indeed, the
cover of the 1893 calendar emphasizes the whimsy of this microcosm through the motif of
dancing pigs on a brown background. Like a postcard image, the pre-printed grid seems to retain
primacy for Münter over the text inside due to her frequent choice to leave the notes sections
beside the dates blank.

Münter’s inscription of her name on this calendar, “Ella Münter – Coblenz” suggests the
important function of these repositories in interpellating the female self through a grid of
dailiness. She includes entries such as her mother’s birthday and her own, and, on May 13, a
notable event, “Julie away” (fort). The calendar includes pre-printed references to seasonality,
such as notations concerning the start of summer and moon phases. Religion and nation are
underscored as a marker of daily identity by the calendar’s printed inclusion of saints’ days, the
printing of Sundays in red, and Münter’s inclusion under Apr. 28 of “Chapels”; the back includes
given entries such as “Catholic Holidays” and “Jewish Holidays,” which suggests an ecumenical
fluidity of use (Münter was a Protestant), as well as “Fairs and Markets” by city, “Birthdays of
German Princes,” including that of Wilhelm II, and the Protestant “Days of Penitence and Prayer”
by state.

If we turn to the specifics of the entries from Münter’s 1894-1898 calendars up until her
departure for America, there are overlaps to America. Münter references the arrival and
departure of family members and friends; theatrical productions (“Bureukrat,” “Die wilde Toni”)
and operas such as “La Traviata” and “Tristan and Isolde”; attendance at the Messiah and visits to
chapel. For 1895, she includes a saying on the inside cover below her full name with a flourish,
as if summing up the year and herself in a confessional vein: “Don’t say all you know, but always
know what you say. (Claudius.)”; and at the back after an entry for “Eclipses of the Sun and

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36 “Sage nicht alles, was du weisst aber wisse immer, was du sagst. (Claudius.)”
Moon in 1895,” she writes in, “If you want to be good, believe me first that you are bad,” and she then erases a few items. As expected, after 1896, there are entries involving biking including a “Bicycle Festival,” and there are also mentions of walks. The 1897 calendar is particularly full due to her move to Düsseldorf, and indexes Münter’s presence at a “Malkastenfest,” a Zoological Garden, the Ananasberg Café, a Christ exhibition, and the Circus Mehl and E. Schumann. Son of Gotthold, Ernst Schumann performed with the Circus Schumann; his more famous brother Albert, a horse trainer, was known for his liberty act, and his circus also featured pantomime. Münter uses the pocket calendar to map her basic circulation (Coblenz, Herford, Bonn, Cologne, Düsseldorf), and American relatives are occasionally mentioned.

Drawing on the work of Lauren Berlant, Geoff Eley explains that the idea of ‘the nation’ works by…figuring history and geography into a landscape of familiarity and promise, inciting memories and hopes of citizenship, and bringing its claims and demands into the intimate and ordinary places of daily life. ‘National fantasy’ captures the process by which ‘national culture becomes local – through the images, narratives, monuments, and sites that circulate through personal/collective consciousness.

In a vein resonant for my discussion, Michael Billig offers the term “banal nationalism”: “Daily, the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition.” Gisela Kleine emphasizes the military culture of Coblenz, and notes that while the heroic quality of its sculpture was not to Münter’s liking, the Niederwald Monument of Germania Triumphant was a favored site of excursion for her family and she enjoyed walks at the Schloß Stolzenfels. Nancy Reagin, whose study is informed by Billig, emphasizes that “nationalism can…be expressed in the more everyday forms that help to create and sustain national identity: the shared rituals, values,

37 “Wenn du gut werden willst glaube mir zuerst dass du böse bist.”
41 Biographie eines Paares, 46.
symbols, and assumptions that bind people together as a nation,” though the nationalism here is
often so quotidian that it is overlooked.42 Without ruling out possibilities for interaction, from
such a perspective, the expansive dailiness of Münter’s pocket calendar seems to imply a strong
network of control.

Yet the pocket calendars’ very scope complicates this deterministic reading of the
everyday. I have cited examples of Münter’s addition of extratextual citations here. James
Retallack perceives the “philosophical aphorism” as a “distinctive feature…of Wilhelmine
culture,” and he alludes specifically to Nietzsche as an example.43 While Münter’s engagement
with the aphorism borders on the bromidic, it reveals what Stewart calls the “representative
quality of the miniature,” which will be important for the overall America output:

The miniature offers a world clearly limited in space but frozen and thereby both particularized
and generalized in time – particularized in that the miniature concentrates upon the single
instance and not upon the abstract rule, but generalized in that that instance comes to transcend, to
stand for, a spectrum of other instances.44

If Stewart aptly characterizes the emphasis on craftsmanship and discipline in the genre of the
medieval miniature book, scholars such as Michael Camille also point to the disruption,
experimentation, and (self-) inscription possible in such a genre from the margins, even as they
may buttress the center. Both tendencies are present in Münter’s pocket calendars. In terms of
disruption, I am interested in the way Münter channels the quality of portability of the pocket
calendars into a mode of expansion of the self, as we see with the extratextual material. Thus she
uses the blank pages in the back of the 1900 calendar to make notes regarding the subjects she
photographs, many with dates, in a form of documentation as captioning, and thereby harnesses
the pocket calendar’s portability in a gesture of expansion of its space. Her micrographia runs as
follows:

1. Lifeoak  28.II

42 Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany,1870-1945 (New York:
44 On Longing 48 and 54.
2. wagon wreck 2.III
3. blank
4. blank
5. blank (the following numbers repeat: Minter corrected the initial pencil numbering)
3. Donkey w. 3 boys 2.III
4. Willie & I on the trough 5.III
5. group with calf [?]
6. group in tree
7. road 7.III
8. Guion church
9. Ceder [sic] hill
10. dead hog
11. hog with boys
12. Dugout
13. Well group
14. house 8.III
15. organpeddler [sic]
16. Donah & Bridget
17. Willie 9.III
18. mountain
19. Guion
20. store
21. horse b.ground
22. gobbler 10.III
23. peachtree 11.III
24. C.P. place 13.III
25. Steamboat east
26. " south
27. " west
28. rock (ruin of)
29. Willie fine
30. house snow 15.III
31. mountain
32. house
33. hog with John 16.III
34. brown jug 25.III?
35. corn pulling 27.III
36. Toscola order gap "
37. place [?] mountains "
38. plantin' taters 2.IV
39. rocker group 9.IV
40. redbuds 10.IV
41. bluff 10.IV
42. spring
43. elm trees 19.IV
44. Moro mount. 22.IV
45. " cave
46. blank
47. Red lake. Ground ↓ 29.IV
48. wagon
49. Fishers "

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The pocket calendars become an unlikely tool for the furthering of Münter's aesthetic vision and reflection, if within a site of documentation. As such, these documents complicate characterization as an "enumeration of mere facts."\(^{45}\) Returning to the aphorism, for example, the form registers Münter's play for cultural capital and concomitant truth claims,\(^{46}\) and thus her renegotiation of dailiness as a space of containment. As we shall see, artistic skills and documentation will continue to have an uneasy relationship in her practice. If Münter seems to be expanding her discourse up and out, she is, importantly, also drawing public discourses and articulation inward to problematize that very boundary, in keeping with some of the tensions David Blackbourn summarizes. Some of the dates for her photographic captions reveal that outings were undertaken on the weekend, a reminder of the structuring of what she saw as distinct from and thus dependent on working time. She is challenging the status of the truly private writing, even as qualities such as authorial voice and narrative devices are not evident in accordance with Lynn Bloom's categorization.\(^{47}\) In her pocket calendars, Münter may be said,

\(^{45}\) "Aufzählung bloßer Fakten" (Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 41; for additional discussion of entries in the pocket calendars, see 42-44).

\(^{46}\) Laurie Langbauer describes these qualities in a helpful discussion of the proverb in Anthony Trollope's "ordinary language" (Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930 [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999], 97-99). She also asserts that the proverb "provides an important site where distinctions between the elite and the popular are impossible to maintain," a resonant point for the Wilhelmine context as we have seen (99).

then, to harness the category of the mundane to fashion aspects of her philosophical and artistic approach at the same time that discourses of gender, religion, and nation govern it.

An odd echo of this generic critique within lifewriting may be found in a booklet preserved by the descendents of Münter’s cousin, Jane Lee Graham, and housed at Southwest Collections at Texas Tech University. Billed as a “Regulator Diary,” such artifacts were given away as advertisements for the Simmons Liver Regulator. A page ruled up to 6 inches bearing the heading “Erasable Memorandum” and urging its user (Jane?) to “erase with a clean dry rubber” bears the note, “Pictures. Feb. 3. 99.” Three names are listed, jammed above and around parts of the printed material. While it might be that the writer intended to compile a long list and thus was using the allotted space frugally, the booklet is noticeable in places for the selection of cramped intertextual spaces of writing. Thus for example on one page the user chose to write on top of the pre-printed text, “The names of the cousins of the cozy corner,” and left the page below blank; on another page entitled “An Instructive Journey” (fig. 9), six names are crammed in, including around a diagram of internal organs (!). The booklet includes pages such as “Course of the Food,” which tells the digestive journey, as well as “The Churning Process” and “The Important Organ”; names are sandwiched humorously around these while some of the adjacent “Memoranda” remain blank, suggesting that the writer appeared to relish the absurdity of the cramming and space of writing. The connection between daily writing and regulation of the body is so overdone as to defamiliarize it.

Münter would show up in Guion a year after the booklet was compiled according to its two dated entries, and while there she would begin using her pocket calendar to document her photographic practice. On one page of the Simmons booklet, the user penciled in, “Feb. 3.1899 issues,” and listed 29 different names, and it is unclear whether the “issues” involved were those of accounting or otherwise. Yet the booklet’s inclusion of a page-length pre-printed write-up on amateur photography suggests a resonant interplay in this carnivalesque universe between embodiment, recording, and photography within a marketing plug – for a Simmons Liver
Regulator Camera. Unlike the readings of Münter’s practice discussed above inferring the body as a limiting factor to her output, here it is the means to lifewriting and visuality.

“Carrots for dinner Annie Maud 15.IX.1899”

One of the few oft-reproduced images from Münter’s America trip is a sketch made during her Plainview stay of young Annie Maud overrun with carrots (fig. 10). A photograph of the girl with her mother, Münter’s cousin Leila Hamilton-Davidson, taken at Murillo Studio in St. Louis around 1900 and now in the Llano Estacado Museum (fig. 11), suggests that Münter has captured the likeness beautifully. Münter, it may be recalled, maintained that in the United States, “Back then I did not know anything about art. I only wanted to capture people as they were.” We also have discussed the paradigms of spontaneous capture surrounding Münter’s reception. Yet there are more complex factors at work in her presentation.

Describing this image, Anne Mochon notes that Münter “depicted a young girl who had just uprooted an armful” of carrots, and that it “introduced a way of seeing that is repeated in Münter’s drawings through her life. Her interest in the momentary effect of the child appearing from the garden gate is a precocious indication of the artist’s ongoing concern for immediate context.” Similarly to Man in an Armchair, the drawing’s breezy humor and intimate relationship of figure to environment suggest its inscription within daily immanence. Through telling details such as the bare feet, mass of carrots, and tilting gate, we can almost trace the girl’s movements as she pads out to the garden, harvests too much to be able to close the gate, and

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48 LEM P-76-03-15.
49 Münter was clearly taken with the project of recording Annie Maud’s likeness, as the number of sketches she made of her attest. In the Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, see for example Kon. 38/4, p. 31, and Kon. 37/2, pp. 61, 63, and 67. In all four drawings, Annie Maud is shown lying down or resting without pretense, often in plunked or somewhat sprawling body positions on a rocking chair. Münter also represented her in Kon 26/21, which I discuss below.
50 Gabriele Münter: Between Munich and Murnau (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Published for the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, 1980), 13.
returns, the latter moment almost suggested by the feet at the top of the page. And this quality is underscored by Münter’s caption, which implies an immediate experience in time.

Yet Münter did not of course record the moment passively or “as it happened.” An examination of how the image operates suggests that its freshness turns on the figure’s relationship to nature, which is signified by her body. Münter is attentive to the way Annie Maud’s hands somewhat awkwardly hold the carrots, which foregrounds the size of the bunch; in the background sketch, the girl uses half of her body to carry them all. Her other focus is on the somewhat stocky bare legs and feet, a quality mirrored in the reinforced, yet rough-hewn gate. Through these motifs, I shall argue that Münter figures “America” and Annie Maud as “an American.”

To do so, she drew on a cultural inheritance of mythologies of America developed especially over the nineteenth century in different forms. Referreing to Gottfried Duden’s 1829 Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nord Amerikas und einen mehrjährigen Aufenthalt am Missouri, Hans-Jürgen Grabbe asserts that this “account of his immigration to Missouri was probably the most widely disseminated German publication on the United States in the nineteenth century if one disregards works of fiction such as Gerstäcker’s.” 51 In terms of fiction, Kleine notes that Münter owned a copy of Charles Sealsfield’s The Cabin Book; or, National Characteristics (1841), and that she read Wild-West tales modeled on James Fenimore Cooper’s Leatherstocking Tales, 52 which were published in Germany in the 1830s. H. Glenn Penny ascribes to Cooper the role of literary “source” of German interest in Indians and the

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52 Biographie eines Paares, 73 and 678 nn. 19-20.
American West, even as subsequent authors moved away from the America he fashioned. In addition, Karl May’s *Winnetou* trilogy had come out in 1893, and its immense popularity suggests at the very least that Münter had implicit familiarity with it as a public discourse, especially due to her upbringing. His imaginative distillation and refiguring of the America paradigm in “period” context, given that he had not actually visited the United States at the time, therefore would have inflected her perceptions. The “thrilling and realistic frontier novels” of Friedrich Gerstäcker, such as *Die Regulatoren in Arkansas* of 1846, are another likely possibility; in 1838 he had traveled to the Batesville, Arkansas area that Münter would visit. It is probable that Münter was familiar with others who helped to shape the picture of America in Germany, especially because aspects of that literature, as well as images by artists such as Balduin Möllhausen, dubbed the “German Fenimore Cooper,” Rudolf Cronau, and Rudolf Friedrich Kurz appeared in weekly periodicals including *Die Gartenlaube* and in Meyers Konversations-Lexikon. *Die Indianer Nordamerikas*, a translated amalgamation of George Catlin’s *Letters and Notes* and *Portfolio*, had been issued by Berghaus in 1848, and a group of ten of his paintings purchased by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1855 and exhibited at Berlin’s Königliche Museen the following year; moreover, Currier and Ives had released prints in large edition sizes of his paintings during the second half of the century that were known in Germany. Exhibitions of Indians and Wild West shows in Germany also sparked the public imagination, including Doc Carver (1880 and 1889); a show of Chippewas at the Berlin Panoptikum (1883); Carl

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56 See H. Glenn Penny, “Illustrating America,” in *I Like America*, 140-157.
Hagenbeck’s Bella Coolas (1885-1886); and Buffalo Bill (1890-1891). Penny points out that after the 1890 Wounded Knee bloodbath, “images of Indians faded from their dominant position in the iconography of the Wild West. The West remained wild,” but the emphasis was now on cowboys, ranching, and the barbaries of lynching.59

What today’s marketing efforts might call the supersized bundle of Annie Maud’s carrots connects to German tropes of the bounty of America. It is instructive to begin with a comparison between the drawing and Alexander von Humboldt’s 1814 *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent*:

In the Old World, nations and the distinctions of their civilization form the principal points in the picture; in the New World, man and his productions almost disappear amidst the stupendous display of wild and gigantic nature. The human race in the New World presents only a few remnants of indigenous hordes, slightly advanced in civilization; or it exhibits merely the uniformity of manners and institutions transplanted by European colonists to foreign shores.60

In “Carrots,” nature certainly overwhelms culture; but Münter’s humor suggests some distance from Humboldt’s observation. Is the image Münter’s insertion into the *querelle d’Amérique*, “the long and arrogant dispute among European intellectuals over the relative size, value, and variety of American flora and fauna, in comparison with those of Europe and the other continents?”61

I doubt of course that she was intending to take on Humboldt overtly. Yet the pervasiveness of versions of this discourse suggests that Münter engaged it implicitly. In what Reinhold Wolff calls a “classic emigrant letter” that for many Germans would define Texas,62 Friedrich Ernst from Oldenburg, one of the earliest German emigrants to Texas (1831), constructs

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59 “Illustrating America,” in *I Like America*, 155. Wolfgang Helbich concurs, noting that in this period, “Surprisingly enough in view of the important role of Indians in the earlier period, the earliest Americans are no longer an object of particular interest, and the indictment of white Americans for having destroyed the aboriginal nations has either become subdued, or changed into a justification or at least a declaration of inevitability” (“Different, But Not Out of This World: German Images of the United States Between Two Wars, 1871-1914,” in *Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany and America Since 1776*, eds. David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt [Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute; and Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 118-119).


61 Pratt, 120.

the over-the-top offerings of the land. It is an edenic vision that, at the same time, enables endless prosperity:

The weather only prevents field work for a few days all month; the air is always lovely and there is sunshine, you see bees and butterflies throughout the year, birds sing in the bushes, some of which remain green, and the cattle finds its own feed in winter and summer. The cows calve without help and come home in the evening to nurse their calves.63

The abundance of the animals is scarcely to be believed: “Pigs multiply so astonishingly, that with 6 of them you have 100 the following year,” and there is a large quantity of pheasants, which, he notes, are as big as barnyard chickens.64 Ernst’s is a vision of humans in a peaceable kingdom, immersed in fresh air with little need for cash; even the mosquitoes, while present, are less annoying than in Germany.65

Münther’s overburdened Annie Maud also overlaps with the Guiness’s-Book-of-World-Records quality of May’s depiction of American nature, as in Old Shatterhand’s speech to Bao and the Kiowas: “...may their [your] ears of maize grow to the size of pumpkin squash, and the squash grow twenty times as large.”66 Hyperbolic nature is a German trope to figure the American landscape, as in Gerstäcker’s Wild Sports in the Far West:

The south bank of the White [River] is one of the most fertile in America, on which account it rejoices in the name of ‘Oiltrove Bottom.’ Some say the soil is better than that of the American bottom opposite St. Louis; and this is my opinion, having seen from sixty to seventy bushes of maize to the acre, and pumpkins larger than a man can lift. Trees grow to an enormous size, some of the trunks of sassafras trees measuring from five to six feet in diameter; pawpaw trees are also very numerous. This last is a small tree bearing a fruit of about four or five inches long and two and a half inches thick, having a sweetish pulp with a number of oily seeds.”67

64 “Schweine vermehren sich so erstaunlich, daß man von 6 Stück im folgenden Jahre 100 hat”; the pheasants are “so groß wie Haushühner in Menge” (ibid, 31-32; see also Lich, The German Texans, 41).
65 Cited in Wolff, “‘Charley goes to America!’ in Karl May im Llano Estacado, 32-33.
In addition to these points of connection, however, it makes sense to position “Carrots for dinner” within less brobdingnagian modes of presentation. Describing late-nineteenth century letters by German emigrants sent home, Linda Schelbitzki Pickle explains, “Health, weather, crops, work, and social life are common topics.” Münter’s drawing catches all of these, if elliptically. The yield of American land of course continues to be important for German families working on it, and in a letter of March 1900 that Pickle examines, “references to harvest and weather conditions are dryly informational and straightforward. These conditions were crucial for the family farming enterprise and it was natural that Wilhelmine [the author Pickle discusses— not Münter’s mother] should report on them.” In an 1884 letter from Wilhelmine Münter to seven-year old Gabriele from a visit back to Tennessee, she had enthused about American fruits such as pineapple, watermelon, and honeydew, livestock running about freely (“werden sie nicht eingespert wie bei uns”), and barefoot children.

As Glen Lich suggests, German emigrants to Texas such as Ida Kapp (writing in 1850) “trusted that in their new world ‘everything would take root’ and grow bigger and better than before. They were seekers pursuing a dream.” While Münter’s Annie Maud does not overtly champion the success of German industry, in keeping with the motivations of writing that Pickle tracks it is figured latently. Arkansas sketches such as her House with a fence and tree in...

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69 Ibid, 97.
70 Letter of June 1884 cited in Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 37.
71 Cited in The German Texans, 73.
72 Though Kleine references the “narrow range of motifs” (engen Themenkreis) of Wilhelmine Münter’s own writings to Gabriele from 1897, her mother’s dailiness might be positioned in this context of emigrant reporting, if now in the transplanted context of home. Wilhelmine Münter writes for example, “I am doing well. Yesterday we had veal stew with mushrooms and an onion flavor. Today a filet, larded with a mushroom sauce, which was delicious. For dessert, Charly sprang for a cake with sour cherries and whipped cream” (Mir geht es gut. Zu Mittag gab es gestern Kalbsfricassee mit Champignons und Zwiebelgeschmack. Heute Fillet, gespickt mit Pilzsoße, hat sehr gut geschmeckt. Als Dessert hat Charly einen Saureren Kirschkuchen mit Schlagsahne gestiftet; cited in Biographie eines Paares, 50-51). Kleine’s difficulty with Wilhelmine’s dailiness is thrown into relief by a recent New Yorker article by Adam Gopnik, who flags the fundamental impossibility of a scene in Ian McEwan’s “Saturday.” Though the main character ostensibly cooks a version of a bouillabaisse while meditating on the events leading up to the Iraq war and the current climate as the t.v. plays in the background, Gopnik points out that the dish...
Moorefield and Rollemills in Moorefield, both of 1899 (figs. 12-13), convey the enormity of American natural resources and also of the work of civilization. Civilization in North America, Friedrich Ratzel had noted in an account of the United States from his 1873-1874 travels underwritten by the Kölnische Zeitung, “grows in fresh, unspoiled, virgin soil as luxuriantly as corn or wheat in the black soil of the prairies.” While nature dwarfs human activity in size in the two drawings, it is ultimately domesticated, lumbered into logs and into a window onto the Schreiber dwelling. An individual sketch captioned “Schreiber-house” and dated III.99 still more clearly figures her relatives’ project of domestication. In contrast to the schematically rendered foreground, with a stump and component of unreadable disorder, a carefully delineated fence impresses in its repeating vertical posts, as does the sturdiness of the house, with its substantial roof (it occupies some two-thirds of the house from our view). Münter elaborates on the theme of her relatives’ rooted solidity in the juxtaposition of these motifs to a natural environment which she renders more hastily and energetically, as in the squiggly leaves of the huge tree and the scribbled verticality of its trunk. As such, the sketch relates to an anonymous 1853 image published in Die Gartenlaube entitled A German farm with a log cabin (fig. 14), which Penny inscribes within a broader discourse of German resilience and economic success. The sturdiness of the Schreiber house evokes what Thomas Lekan calls “German’s longing for permanency,...a Heimat abroad,” which he distinguishes from a desire for quick cash. Lekan simply requires too much concentration. “[H]ere...lies the difficulty with using cooking as the stock for the stream-of-consciousness stew. It is that the act of cooking is an escape from consciousness – the nearest thing that the non-spiritual modern man and woman have to Zen meditation; its effect is to reduce us to a state of absolute awareness, where we are here now of necessity. You can’t cook with the news on and still listen to it.... You can cook with music, or talk radio, on, and drift in and out. What you can’t do is think and cook, because cooking takes the place of thought. (You can daydream and cook, but you can’t advance a chain of sustained reflections)” (“Cooked Books: Real food from fictional recipes,” in The New Yorker, April 9, 2007: 84).

74 Kon. 26/42; Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
75 “Illustrating America,” in I Like America, 145.
76 “German Landscape: Local Promotion of the Heimat Abroad,” in The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness, eds. Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 146. In a similar vein, Münter’s “Lifeoaktree” from Guion (fig. 15) helps to
explains, “Writings on German Americans claimed that they maintained (or could be stimulated to embrace) emotional ties to the natural features of their homeland; that these attachments resulted in a superior stewardship over the land; and that the distinctive cultural landscapes that had emerged in their home country through centuries of occupation would be recapitulated in a foreign setting.” Münter would seem indeed to construct the image as a German-American landscape.

If America is equivalent to abundant nature in much of the German America paradigm, Lekan’s notion of “superior stewardship” and “distinctive cultural landscapes” relates to a prevalent imputation of its lack of culture (Unkultur), a topic I shall consider later. Discussing 19th-century German travelers to the United States, Theresa Mayer Hammond notes, “[W]hile many came to America to praise its majestic land, few praised it for its people.” And Grabbe asserts: “Romantics cherished the United States as long as they could convince themselves that they should believe in the country’s oneness with nature. Thus, they could figuratively contrast American nature with European unnaturalness.” Even in Ernst’s edenic report, there is “wine in great quantity but not of a particular taste.” While Münter does not judge Annie Maud harshly here, she evokes a “natural” body in its awkward handling, inelegant circulation and proportion, and “soiled” clothing. Thus, while the impressive yield of carrots implies her relatives’ hard work in cultivating the Texas landscape, and Annie Maud is a child of the American land, the setting Münter establishes here is a Kulturlandschaft in the sense of being a cultivated landscape but not as a cultural landscape due to the primacy of status she accords to the girl as Naturrolk.

Jeffrey Sammons discerns a return in May’s representations of America to Cooper’s influence, forge an American Heimat; Lekan writes, “In 1869 a German factory worker described his experience at a picnic on Chicago’s North Side. ‘Nothing thrills a German more than a festival in the woods under the green leaves of oak trees!’ he exclaimed. ‘This [feeling] has clung to our people since the forest life of our ancestors. I forgot that I was so far, so distant from my homeland...’” (141).

77 Ibid., 142.
78 American Paradise: German Travel Literature from Duden to Kisch (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980), 57.
80 Cited in Lich, The German Texans, 41.
81 For a related discussion, see chap. 3, n. 143, of this study.
from which writers such as Sealsfield had distanced themselves, and he concludes in his discussion of Germans on Native Americans, “There seems to be a longing to act out an exotic, utopian identity, relieved of modern alienation and unburdened by the complicities of culture and civilization.”82

Though “Carrots” is mitigated by the observation of a daily event and delicate humor, which admit at least some distance from the picture of America forming in Germany in the nineteenth century, Münter’s Romanticizing figuration of childlike naturalness in connection with nature’s bounty suggests a nostalgia for such unmediated connections with the land, and of course for the land itself. Münter’s Romanticism retains a point of connection to her training in Düsseldorf, if without the painstaking monumentality. Her Annie Maud recalls qualities of Philipp Otto Runge’s The Artist’s Parents (fig. 16), in which Robert Rosenblum discerns a “peculiar quality of the children – a kind of tough, bursting energy – [that] is above all related to the expansive growth of the lily plant which they hold and point to,” so that the plant almost becomes “the source for the vitality of these two infants. The irrepressible growth of the plant’s tough stalks and blossoms partakes of the same young sap that seems to swell through the pneumatic flesh of the children.” 85

Something of the contradiction between Karl Markus Kreis’s and Sander Gilman’s perceptions on the equation of America as Africa for Germans registers here as a time that looks back (in a primitivizing vein, to childhood and bountiful nature) and into the future (vitality, organic civilization). Carefully observing a quotidian event here, Münter thus fashions it into a fresh articulation of symbol.

87 As Lich notes, Duden had foregrounded overpopulation as the primary reason for German emigration in 1829 (The German Texans, 18).
84 See Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 47-48 and 55.
It seems difficult to imagine, then, that Münter just represented naively, which is not, of course, the same thing as wanting to represent naïvety, even as an autodidact, in this context of widespread nostalgia for a preindustrial past and hope for the future. Münter does not capture a slice of life in an envelope called the “moment,” but rather harnesses daily opportunity in service of the tropes of nationhood with which she was familiar. Such discourses were prevalent in the period in Die Gartenlaube, for example, in terms of what Kirsten Belgum describes as a “presentation of colonial (and potential colonial) territory as a re-found paradise” to counter the alienation of modernity:

The press characterized these colonial territories as spaces for the nation that were ideally and innocently premodern. Its essays suggested that in joining the race for colonies, Germany could not only hope to acquire a substantial and lucrative economic empire but also a portion of the remaining paradise on earth. Essay after essay referred to the beautiful wildlife, exotic birds, and marvelous greenery of these tropical and subtropical areas.... The colonies were promoted as having the potential for bountiful agricultural production. Even the images of native fetishes and tools that the magazine reproduced can be seen as more than a sign of archaeological curiosity; they constituted an emblem of the simple and pure lifestyle of these “nature children.”

Erik Grimmer-Solem describes concerns in Germany at this moment that the ceiling for German agricultural productivity had been reached, and Jörg Nagler goes so far as to assert, “From 1897 to 1900 friction between the two countries [Germany and the United States] reached an intensity greater than any other point in the previous four decades,” and he suggests that the competition between German and American expansionists “spread to the cultural realm, and for Americans the German Empire subsequently lost its reputation as a cultural leader.” From this vantage,
Miinter’s sunny figuration of Annie Maud obscures more difficult historical circumstances. To what degree Miinter was consciously aware of and engaged this complex of issues is unclear; nor should the local situation be obscured by the generality of these narratives. In a memoir entitled “My Pioneer Heritage,” Carrie Barton Rosser notes that in early Hale County (of which Plainview is the county seat), while people did not take vacations, they had fun while on trips with a purpose:

Always Papa knew if there were plums in the Sand Hills.... We would take all the washtubs and boxes in the wagon, which Papa had prepared with the bows and wagonsheets to keep the sun off the family and the plums, and we would hunt until we found plums then gather them up until all the containers were full and return home tired and blistered.”

Yet a letter to Miinter of October 30, 1900 from C.F. Liebetreu, the editor of the New Yorker Staatszeitung und Herold who had been friends with her father, is suggestive here. “If I say that Germans in particular are called upon to teach manners above all to Americans, because there can be talk neither of morals nor manners here in this land of corruption, hypocrisy, and fraud..., then opinion stands against opinion.” From this viewpoint, the representation of Annie

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90 “Wenn ich meine: gerade die Deutschen sind berufen, den Amerikaneren zuvor der Sitten beizubringen, dem von Sitte und Sitten kann hier noch keine Rede sein im Lande der Bestechung, der Heuchelei und Spitzbüberei..., so steht Ansicht gegen Ansicht” (cited in Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 63). To be sure, Liebetreu’s viewpoint relates to problems devolving from German assimilation for organs such as the New Yorker Staatszeitung und Herold; for further discussion of this problem as articulated for example in concerns surrounding the future of German poetry in the United States, see Dorothea Stuecher, Twice Removed: The Experience of German-American Woman Writers in The Nineteenth Century (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 16. Moreover, emigration by the time of Miinter’s visit was largely an affair of the past: “By the mid-1890s, the mammoth wave of emigration that characterised the 1880s had effectively dried up,” even as Germany experienced a population growth between 1888 and 1914 from roughly 50 to 68 million and large numbers migrated during this period to Germany’s industrial centers (James Retallack, Germany in the Age of Kaiser Wilhelm II [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996], 16).

The New Yorker Staatszeitung had been founded in 1834 as a platform for German-Americans to voice their opposition to the Whig Party. Using the occasion of the 65th anniversary of its founding as an excuse, a pamphlet charting its “phenomenal growth” was released in 1899 to solicit advertising and as a general platform for self-promotion (An Epitome of the New Yorker Staats-Zeitung’s Seventy-Five Years of
Maud reads as Münter’s visual experience in time of an authentic “American.” The brief descriptions Münter offers of her American relatives in an account from 1956 intimate this as well: “In St. Louis at the time Cousin Leila Hamilton-Davidson was there. A young widow with a child Annie Maud Davidson 5 years old from Plainview. Who we then experienced at home in Plainview.”

As such, the girl is a familiar performance of authentic otherness overlapping with that offered by Buffalo Bill. Seeing one of his shows, a Dortmund reporter explained:

What would we have given in our childhood days, when we pored over [Gabriel] Ferry’s ‘Coureur de Bois’ with glowing cheeks, to witness the romantic Indian figures in reality. Now that we have settled with our childhood dreams, comes this Colonel Cody, called Buffalo Bill, and floods us with all that we once so desired… This show is truly an experience.

Annie Maud indeed seems to have been a personal memento for Münter, a testament to essence informed by her mother’s and the broader 19th-century German fashioning of America. As Münter would write much later, “Other children ‘painted stories.’ I didn’t try to represent events

Progress. A success unprecedented in the history of American publications printed in foreign languages [New York: 1899]). Articles from the newspaper during Fall 1898 bemoan German sanctions against foreign meat in the context of a German shortfall, report on the yield of American commodities such as wheat, sugar, rice, and oats by state, and showcase American prize animals such as the Guernsey cow. And as Helbich notes, the phrase “Land der unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten” had first appeared in the June 3, 1902 issue of the newspaper and was then taken up by Ludwig Max Goldberger in 1903 (“Different. But Not Out of This World,” in Transatlantic Images and Perceptions, 118). Nagler notes that as relations between Germany and America deteriorated at the turn of the century, there was more nationalism amongst German-Americans and “extreme differences in attitudes [that] polarized the German immigrants themselves; there were those who advocated complete assimilation, and others who maintained an ‘ardent identification with the German empire which precluded any adoption of worthwhile American ways and culture.’ This type of nationalism could sometimes be extreme, and was increasingly accompanied by the rhetoric of cultural superiority – a typical defense mechanism against the often alienating forces of assimilation.” He also notes that “[t]he banner of cultural superiority was carried mainly by the German-American mandarins of high culture” (“From Culture to Kultur,” in Transatlantic Images and Perceptions, 149).

King’s 1893 guidebook to New York City describes the New Yorker Staatszeitung und Herold, then edited by Oswald Otendorfer, as “severely classic in tone, filled with notes of the Fatherland, besides all the American news” and “an influential journal in Berlin by reflection of its German-American authority” (King’s Handbook of New York City: an outline history and description of the American metropolis, 2nd ed. [Boston: Moses King, 1893], 613). I am grateful to Jaimey Hamilton for bringing my attention to this source.


and actions. With human beings, only lasting appearance captivated me – the manifest form that expresses essence."  

Chapter two: spectacular travels

The less settled, less certain and less free from contradiction modern existence is the more passionately we desire the heights that stand beyond the good and evil whose presence we are unable to look over and beyond. I do not know anything in visible nature that bears the character of the materially transcendent as a snowscape that expresses 'the summits' in its colour and form. Whoever has once enjoyed this will yearn for the release in something that is simply other than the 'I' – the 'I' with its melancholy disquiet, full of the life of the plains, choking the exercise of the will.

Georg Simmel, “The Alpine Journey”

One of the striking features of Münter’s pocket calendars from America – and to a lesser extent those from before – is their number of theatrical listings. To be sure, these appear only in the first St. Louis leg of the journey; yet the sheer amount of them intimates an insistence or an investment in recording this kind of information. In 1908 Thomas Mann would write:

We Germans have an inborn reverence for theater unknown to any other nation. What the rest of Europe considers a form of convivial amusement, we regard at the very least as an educational experience. Recently the Kaiser told a French actress: Just as the university is a continuation of the Gymnasium, so too the theater is a continuation of the university.¹

We know that Münter disavows her connections to mass-cultural forms in the statement to Roditi; yet as I shall explain, spectacularity governed many of these performances. But beyond the actual theatrical shows that Münter took in, her American photographs and, in a different mode, the individual sketches she made suggest a far-reaching immersion in spectacular forms, which are the subject of this chapter. Beginning with a discussion of theatrical selections Münter saw in St. Louis and a consideration of the resonance of vaudeville for her practice, this analysis turns to New York as the spectacular city. Focused around the imperial context, my inquiry here takes up the issue of female flânerie as a lens onto the portrait Münter fashions of America as sited in a tension between play and a quest for truth and accuracy. A last section on Münter’s dioramic representation of nature describes the confusion of space and time devolving from her technologized vision as well as her attempts at self-orientation.

Theaters

St. Louis’s Olympic Theatre was one venue for Münter of lavish American display. It had opened in its second incarnation in 1882 and was an important venue for star-gazing; the summer before Münter arrived, the dressing rooms were enlarged to accommodate large casts. In his history of the Olympic, John Callahan explains that it featured bookings called “spectacles”:

It is difficult to define this term for many differing types of plays used it in their advertisements, but from a sampling of some of the shows which used the adjective ‘spectacular,’ it would seem that spectacles were those productions which featured live horses on the stage, the more the better and preferably galloping; onstage explosions; earthquakes; water tanks; three or more major stars; singing and dancing midgets; the noise and flash of gunpowder; casts of hundreds; costs of thousands; five or more boxcars of scenery – even better, five boxcars of animals; fifty or more stagehands; aerial ballets; a blizzard; a buzz saw; a chariot race; huge grand ballets with girls, girls, girls; sumptuous costumes (sumptuous little on dancing girls); or any possible combinations or variations of these features.  

Blue Jeans, for example, which the theater began presenting in 1891 and which Münter would later see, was a melodrama which gave the world one of its most hoary melodramatic clichés, namely the hero tied to a log about to be sawed in half by a large buzz saw. The production was a ‘jumble of varied dramatic materials which superficial cleverness devises and constructs into the successful novelty of the stage… The plot is frequently strained to the point of absurdity, and is an offense to sound judgment and good taste.’ However, the play was amusing and ‘the sawmill scene in which the hero is saved from a horrible death by his wife is exceedingly realistic and presents an episode of intense interest.’

Describing the Olympic’s 1898 and 1899 presentations of a group of German-speaking “midgets” called the Liliputians, Callahan notes that they “contained elaborate scenic effects, large and gorgeous ‘grand ballets’ with full-size dancing girls wearing small-size costumes.” Yet for a

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3 Ibid., 11.
4 Ibid., 12. This emphasis on effect and illusion at the Olympic seems to have reached its apogee during Münter’s stay in St. Louis in the context of the spectacular melodrama, Way Down East, though Münter does not mention attending it in her pocket calendar. Its “spectacular feature” was “an intensely realistic twenty-four minute long snow storm”: “The electric battery is turned on, the cylinders revolve at the rate of 1200 revolutions a minute, and the ‘snow,’ falling from the box above, is whirled in eddies across the window, in imitation of the drifting process of the storm. Salt is thrown from the cylinders, and, whirling through the air, gives a sleet-like effect to the storm. A four-inch lens of 110 volts pressure, 18 amperes power and 4 ohms resistance, flashes a white light upon the storm and on the left a light shining through a dull blue glass adds to the coldness of the scene” (ibid., 15).
period source, the "‘freak show’ impression...has died away. They are artists.”\(^5\) This instance of attempted legitimization of spectacular otherness was of course part of a broader discourse surrounding respectability and viability, at the Olympic and elsewhere. Thus, while manager Pat Short “considered many attractions too expensive” and kept prices constant from 1889 to 1905, and though the theater increasingly featured musical entertainments, the Olympic billed itself as a venue for “high-class legitimate drama.”\(^6\) Revealing its own version of this porosity, the Imperial styled its offerings as “a high class of amusements in the realms of both drama and vaudeville.”\(^7\) There Münter saw “Saratoga,” cast as “Bronson Howard’s Greatest Comedy Success.”\(^8\) At the Columbia, “fashionable vaudeville” was on offer.\(^9\)

Münter would seem to have little connection to this sensational discourse of buzz saws, titillating girls, and extravagant costs. Yet at a basic level, if spectacle as it is laid out here is taken to mean a display of clever technological illusionism, there are indeed instances of this in Münter’s output that might suggest an interest. Returning to the *Momentphotographie* Ulrich Pohlmann describes, Münter catches a steam engine right in the middle of the bridge (fig. 17) and fixes her relatives barreling down the waterslide into Sue Belle (fig. 18). Yet such images are the exception in her overall photographic output, and it is hard not to feel that it is a violation to frame a practice in terms of wizardry that seeks to represent, if with levity, the meaningfulness of a people’s organic connections to nature and the freedom of its endless land. If the mode of capture she claims for her drawn subjects – “I only wanted to capture people as they were” – highlights its conjuring element, the act is performed within the multivalence of symbol.

For all its subtleties and contradictions – and I will distinguish some of them in this study – Münter’s is a technologized vision. The new landscape Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes incorporates the railway technology itself, he argues, in a mode of panoramic vision that

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\(^5\) Cited in *ibid*, 17.
\(^7\) *The Imperial Evening News*, May 7, 1898, vol. 1, no. 238: 4.
\(^8\) *The St. Louis Republic*, October 23, 1898: 10.
\(^9\) *The St. Louis Republic*, October 21, 1898.
emphasizes the ability to “perceive the discrete, as it rolls past the window, indiscriminately.”

While this landscape offers particular features of velocity and linearity, the cost is the loss of the foreground and thus the viewer’s relationship to the landscape:

As the traveler stepped out of that space, it became a stage setting, or a series of such pictures or scenes created by the continuously changing perspective. Panoramic perception, in contrast to traditional perception, no longer believed in the same space as the perceived objects: the traveler saw the objects, landscapes, etc. through the apparatus which moved him through the world. That machine and the motion it created became integrated into his visual perception: thus he could only see things in motion. 10

This discussion of a visuality lodged in the apparatus of motion is evocative for Münter; indeed, in his foreword to the catalogue of her American photographs, Helmut Friedel writes that Münter “takes much in with excitement, sometimes in sequences of several exposures when there is singing and dancing, as if she wanted to transcend the limitations of the medium and incorporate movement and sound.” 11 Not only is succession intimated in the sketch of Annie Maud, as I have suggested, but Münter shot a number of her photographs from the buggy and ship, which are the subjects of the images. I shall discuss these in a later section, but as I introduce Münter’s spectacular perception here, it is worth mentioning her retention of Schivelbusch’s foreground in many of these images, a difference only partly accounted for by differences in these transport technologies.

In St. Louis, Münter also attended its 15th annual Exposition, which may have helped to introduce her to the technology of moving pictures. 12 Recurring advertisements in The St. Louis Republic highlight opportunities to take in the “Auguste Lumiere Cinematographe of Moving Pictures,” as well as “realistic naval scenes” and John Philip Sousa and his band in concert. And

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12 In Germany, the Skladanowsky Brothers presented their Bioskop at the Berlin Wintergarten in 1895. However, Martin Loiperdinger contends that “the film medium’s true hour of birth in Germany” was in 1896 with Lumière showings across the country (Robin Lenman, John Osborne, and Eda Sagara. “Imperial Germany: Towards the Commercialization of Culture.” in German Cultural Studies: An Introduction [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 45-49).
the Grand Opera House presented Biograph selections as part of “tremendous laughing week.” An advertisement ran: “New Views this Week – Comical, Historical and Miscellaneous. Pillow Fight and Panoramic View of Conway, England, Retained by Special Desire.” Referring specifically to the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition, but true also of other Expositions, if to a lesser extent, Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes note that it “fired dreams for creating whole new culture industries…and accelerated the development of others.” Much of Münter’s output is a response to those nascent industries and spectacles at the level of genre, subject matter, and perception. And a version of the Olympic’s spectacular otherness was of course foundational to the framework of the world exposition, which “drew upon and reshaped such sources of entertainment as the zoological garden, the minstrel show, the circus, the museum of curiosities, the dime novel, and the Wild West show. World’s Fairs existed as part of a broader universe of white supremacist entertainments.” Inscribing the atmosphere of international competition within spectacularity, an advertisement for the St. Louis Exposition asserted, “Let us be thankful for peace and hope for the fruits of the victory. The 12th U.S. infantry and Capron’s Battery E will visit the Exposition on Monday.” To be sure, it is difficult to establish a causal connection between such presentations and Münter’s own spectacular otherness, but I shall consider the latter’s valences within this nationalistic framework at varied points in the remainder of this study.

13 The Saint Louis Republic, October 23, 1898, 10.
16 The Saint Louis Republic, October 23, 1898. Rydell explains that the contemporaneous Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha featured “a representation of the BATTLE OF MANILA” on the wall of the Great Tunnel of the Scenic Railway, a “miniature bombardment of Cuban forts,” impresario Henry Roltair’s show with stereopticon slides, music, and fireworks showing the sinking of the Maine followed by a representation of naval might and McKinley’s portrait, as well as a Philippine village (All the World’s a Fair, 120).
One way that the surfeit of visual effect in St. Louis might have served Münter relates to its potential for interrogation of femininity. Münter’s sketches from Saint Louis reveal points of connection with the theatrical selections she saw; to elaborate these, let us take as an example one of the plays she attended at the Olympic, Clyde Fitch’s 1898 “The Moth and the Flame.” Thematizing women’s attraction to bad, or “fast,” men (the moth to the flame), the play examines the institution of (upper-class) marriage and male and female roles within it. Though Fitch pokes at them in irreverent one-liners (i.e. an expression of cynicism at philanthropy for social mobility, a discussion of the rich’s practice of regifting) and shows women as pawns of men (the issue of purchase of the heroine, Marion Wolton, to save her father’s reputation), his narrative ultimately reinscribes these roles. Men are treacherous; women are bucking the system: but goodness and the system prevail. In this display of what Kim Marra perceives as a nuanced “iconic femininity” elaborated from the presentations of figures such as Charles Dana Gibson and Howard Chandler, Marra contends that Fitch “used the theatre both to express and contain his transgressive desires, especially through fetishistic stagings of femininity, baroque stylistic excess, ironic wit, and novel scenic effects.”

“The Moth and the Flame” dovetails with Münter’s space of activity in St. Louis and elsewhere. The play opens with a party scene in which women take turns singing and performing for the rest of the guests. These men and women are arrayed in children’s costumes for which Fitch gives detailed instructions and are in a set including “gilt furniture” and “bric-a-brac.” Münter frequently treats the subject of women making music in her sketchbooks, in keeping with the role of music (including composing) in her Bildung. Woman Playing a Guitar of 1898 (fig. 19) is one example from St. Louis, though against Fitch’s elaborate and declarative performance, Münter images her figure’s quiet engagement in her music in what is apparently a nicely appointed interior. Her own artistic process illustrates this focus on seriousness: as

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18 Kon. 38/4, p. 27; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
pentimenti reveal, Münter adjusted the woman’s body position and fall of her dress to support her guitar through her crossed knee and to play the instrument with her attenuated elbow and carefully positioned left hand. While Münter’s sense of proportion is off in the elbow and left arm and her right hand is underdeveloped, her registration of the left hand reveals a sensitivity to the plucking of the strings, even as there are anatomical distortions. However, this can hardly be called an image of baroque stylistic effect.

Yet there are in fact elements of this in Münter’s America practice. In the same sketchbook, a full-page, bust-length depiction in charcoal and pencil of Annie Maud’s mother captioned “22.XI. Leila” showcases her as an object of theatrical display.\(^{19}\) Elegantly attired in an off-the-shoulders dress with a large bow, Leila is staged in an ornamental settee, with horizontal shading around her head that creates a theatrical effect. The figure’s status as object is heightened by the delicate shading of her bare shoulders and neckline, which evoke a sensuous, powdery tactility. Though foregrounded by its central placement, the neckline curiously also reads as an evacuated space through its figuration as an expansive surface relative to the busier other areas of the composition – the delicate detail and shading of the face; energetic linearity of the background; schematic poufiness of the dress; and the chiseling of the curlicued furniture. The image signifies as a disjunctive collection of effects, a quality created especially by a pronounced contrast between the symmetrical, forward-facing position of Leila’s body and the torsion of her face away and up to the right. It is an unflattering position with the scrutiny it affords of the fullness of cheek, chin, and neck. Leila’s head and shoulders do not really seem to fit the dress due to the difference in handling and torsion, which makes her seem to be plunked into her outfit; even her head and neck seem mismatched. Münter conveys a tough countenance and Leila looks bored; sitting is an ordeal. While it is of course possible that the image’s heterogeneity relates at some level to the status of Münter’s developing craft, she also deliberately sought out qualities of theatricality and disparity.

\(^{19}\) Kon. 38/4, p. 35; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
Fitch conveys a clear interest in the theatrical performance of (female) selfhood, as in a dialogue between Marion’s mother and the divorcée Mrs. Lorrimer. Discussing others’ perceptions of her, Mrs. Lorrimer suggests that she is undoubtedly viewed as “frivolous,” which she claims she is. While Mrs. Wolton concurs that that is the talk, she insists: “No, you’re not – These qualities are all only on the surface…. They are the rouge and powder of your character – underneath, I believe, you are plain and sincere.”20 If Fitch seems to reinscribes the self’s boundaries in Mrs. Wolton’s response, the overall exchange, coupled with the campiness of his tone in much of the play, highlights the question of where the “self” is located and challenges the line between surface and depth. This oppositionality was a resonant issue for Fitch himself in the context of accusations that he represented fashion and femininity as against art and substance.21 As I shall show in the following section, theatricality is an important component for Münter in America in terms of a figure’s orchestration through gesture and body position, and dress and furniture, though as we shall see in her individual sketches, she manifests the issue quite differently than Fitch. However, as I shall argue in chapter three, Münter harnesses the camera’s particular opportunities for self-enactment in an often freer vein.

Keith’s Theater in New York is one of two destinations a fellow Statendam passenger jotted down along with the address in one of Münter’s small sketchbooks;22 it had opened in 1893 and begun to offer vaudeville exclusively as of 1894.23 Blackbourn includes vaudeville in his discussion of the contradictions surrounding Wilhelmine culture, and Peter Jelavich explains that by the 1880s, “broad sectors of the middle class, which had initially looked down upon it, were being won over to its popular theatricality.” In the process, some efforts were made at its refinement, and vaudeville also helped to dissolve the seams of, and thus to refashion, high

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21 Marra, “Clyde Fitch’s Too Wilde Love,” 23 and 25.
22 Kon. 46/1: 1898; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. The other destination was the Museum of Natural History.
culture. In the United States, Alison Kibler explains, “The leading vaudeville magnate, B.F. Keith, voiced a philosophy of cultural uplift...that depended largely on attracting respectable female patrons and highbrow performers, from Shakespearean actors to learned lecturers,” though as she points out, this did not mean vaudeville entrepreneurs such as Keith “eliminated coarseness” or “instilled feminine, ‘passive politeness’ in their audiences,” but rather, that “vaudeville was actually a site of debate over cultural hierarchy and ‘refinement’... it drew high and low together onstage and in the audience, uniting the fractured cultures (male and female audiences, art and amusements) in its theaters.” Overlapping with entertainments from the world exposition, vaudeville theaters offered a kaleidoscope of offerings; as Kibler notes, they included material from the minstrel show, dime museum, and concert saloon, as well as high-cultural forms such as opera and the legitimate stage.

Not surprisingly, such spaces of reshuffled publics and genres often traded in type and stereotype. Though as I have suggested Münster’s pocket calendars do not represent the sum of her experiences, one of her cartographies of St. Louis might be understood as a variegated spectacle encompassing “tremendous laughing week” at the Grand Opera House, minstrelsy by George Primrose and Lew Dockstader at the Olympic, and displays of naval prowess at the Exposition. *The Imperial Evening News* quipped: “One never realizes the superiority of woman so much as when one sees a bachelor sewing on a button without a thimble, pushing the needle against the wall to get it through, and then pulling at it by hanging on to it with his teeth.” In the context of such instruction in surface capture, Münster would have had the opportunity to hone her own version of what Benjamin Gastineau, thinking about the traveler looking out of the train compartment, called “the synthetic philosophy of the glance.” And if depth were rendered problematic, the spectacular presentations Münster took in would enable a new breadth of...

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25 *Rank Ladies*, 7-8.
27 May 7, 1898, vol. 1, no. 238: 2.
visibility. As Kibler writes: "With women cheering on boxing matches, 'hoi polloi' paying attention to literature, and the box patrons occasionally immersed in 'riots,' vaudeville theaters were sites in which patrons could test new freedoms and cross social boundaries."

Imperial flânerie

In his study of Berlin cabaret, Jelavich discusses period views of vaudeville as an expression of modernity and its distracted mode of perception. For Otto Julius Bierbaum, for example, "The contemporary city-dweller has vaudeville nerves" that preclude sustained reflection; and in "Classicism and the Infiltration of Vaudeville," Oskar Panizza perceives it as indexing the destruction of culture, "the total lack of character in the arts." In the American context, Annie Russell Marble similarly laments the "melodramatic" extravagance of modern life which she equates with the "spectacular," with its domination of the "eye" and "surface-impression" over depth of feeling and truth. In this emphasis on glitter and artifice, there is a "craze for pictures and pageants."

Yet not all accounts of course were this unenthusiastic about the porosity of culture registered in these discussions. In an essay on the 1896 Berlin Trade Exhibition, Simmel maintains a characteristic dialectic engagement: "Every fine and sensitive feeling...is violated and seems deranged by the mass effect of the merchandise offered, while on the other hand it cannot be denied that the richness and variety of fleeting impressions is well suited to the need for excitement for overstimulated and tired nerves." While Simmel displays a critic’s detachment from the assaulting displays, he concedes their power as a modern tonic. And in a noteworthy

29 Rank Ladies, 54.
30 Cited and discussed in Berlin Cabaret, 23-25.
31 “The Reign of the Spectacular,” The Dial (November 1, 1903): 297-299. I am indebted to Michael Leja for bringing this article to my attention in the context of the New York circa 1900: Art and Urban Spectacle seminar held in Spring 1999 at MIT. The ideas I put forth in the “Imperial flânerie” section of the present study owe much to the rich discussions and readings from that class.
portrayal of the experience of navigating Wertheim Department Store, Fedor von Zobeltitz writes:

First I tried to get my bearings. I don’t easily get lost, but here my topographical talents abandoned me altogether. The streaming mass of humanity pushed me this way and that; I wanted to get to the perfumes and ended up in hardware, then suddenly I was standing in front of a woman showing me handkerchiefs, and a half-minute later I had stumbled onto enameled utensils.... One of the official guides, a man who looked like a diplomatic undersecretary, told me I should use the elevator or the escalator.... This I proceeded to do;...but I found myself in a painting exhibit.... A man who looked like a privy councillor from the Ministry of Culture could see my embarrassment and asked me what I was looking for. ‘Up,’ he said, smiling, and pointed to the elevator. But I hadn’t paid attention: the elevator was going down, not up – and when I looked around I was in a magnificent hall with lapis-lazuli columns and a roaring fountain. This was getting a bit tiresome. I pressed on with weary steps, came to a palm garden and a buffet where a cute little girl presented me with a glass of lemonade, next I was into a muddle of child’s garments...then to the phonographs and finally to the perfumes I was looking for. Thank God – at last!33

In this confusion of culture, Von Zobeltitz’s verb choices alone – “abandoned,” “pushed,” “wanted,” “stumbled,” “found myself,” “looked,” “presented” – convey the erotic thrill of spectacular disorientation.

How might Münter’s approach to the spectacular city be positioned vis-à-vis these accounts? Gisela Kleine’s telling foregrounds her engagement with New York as spectacle in the terms I described in the section on St. Louis theaters. “For Ella New York stood for the superlative as against everything experienced and...devised at home!”34 From her examination of postcards that Münter sent daily to Charly, Kleine conveys a discourse of extravagance – monumental building costs, unthinkable heights, palatiality. Kleine also suggests that Münter saw department stores such as Bloomingdale’s and Wanamaker’s, “where you could buy anything from a white cockatoo to a casket with silk padding.”35 Kibler locates vaudeville within a network of mass culture industries springing up at the turn of the century and notes that

34 “New York bedeute für Ella die höchstmöglichste Steigerung alles zu Hause Erfahrenen und...Erdenkaren!” (Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares [Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1990], 60).
35 “...wo man vom weißen Kakadu bis zum seidengepolsterten Sarg alles kaufen konnte” (ibid, 62).
vaudeville entrepreneurs advertised in department stores and staged productions there.\textsuperscript{36} In addition, Münter collected picture postcards for an album, with a particular focus on billboards.\textsuperscript{37} Kleine rightly emphasizes the resonant expressivity of the latter’s stripped down qualities for Münter’s spare linearity, though here I would like to position such artifacts and their broader discourse of shopping within the picture of spectacularity I am establishing for Münter to see what they suggest about aspects of her visual perception in New York and in her America.

Guidebooks and commentaries on New York from around the period of her visit variously emphasize women’s relationship to the city in terms of shopping and consumption. For example, in a six-day tour of Manhattan written somewhat before Münter’s arrival (1892), Carolyn Faville Ober and Cynthia M. Westover include a vivid description of Macy’s noteworthy for its experiential quality that contrasts with the construction of factuality of much of the rest of the text:

It is a curious sight to watch the purchasers who often stand three and four deep around the counters. Women of wealth and simply-dressed country dames jostle each other in their efforts to secure the attention of the ever busy clerks. Children clap their hands at sight of a beneficent Santa Claus dispensing beautiful toys, or wail from the nervous fatigue of so much excitement, while cash girls in bright red aprons run hither and thither with their package baskets.\textsuperscript{38}

John van Dyke’s 1909 impressionistic New York is undergirded by a particular separation of spheres in which women are slotted into sites of consumption as against (for) the virility of downtown bankers and the City overall:

The men go down town in the morning and the women are left at home to their own devices. They manage to worry through the early hours in domestic or social duties, but by the afternoon they must get out, must have air. Many of them seek it on the avenue en route to the Central Park, perhaps stopping to shop or call on the way.

\textsuperscript{36} Rank Ladies, 10.
\textsuperscript{37} Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 59-62. A fascination with New York advertisements, which displayed an American competitive edge for Germans, crops up in an issue of Jugend from the period in the humor section as an excerpt from the Albany Messenger: “A large soap producer had the following billboard posted all over New York: Buy Smith’s soap! How amazed he was when a few days later right under his billboard a new one appeared proclaiming, If you cannot get Brown’s soap!” [Ein großer Seifenfabrikant ließ als Reklame folgendes Plakat in ganz New-York aufkleben: Kauft Smith’s Seife! Wie erstaunt war er, als nach einigen Tagen genau unter dem seinigen ein neues Plakat prangte mit der Inschrift Wenn Ihr Brown’s Seife nicht kriegen könnt! (III. Jahrgang, Nr. 9, February 26, 1898)].
\textsuperscript{38} Manhattan Historic and Artistic: A Six Day Tour of New York City (New York: Lovell, Coryell & Company, 1892), 70.
Van Dyke’s rather glib observation that “[t]he wonderment at the enormous sums of money made down town in New York is paralleled by a still greater wonderment over the ease with which those sums are disbursed up town” is suggestive for a general elision of class in his treatment, even as it occasionally registers selectivity. Thus the Wall Street brokers are all men. They women do some trading in stocks, too, but usually it is over the ‘phone from up town. Petticoats in the lower city during business hours are, of course, seen, but infrequently as compared with coats and trousers. And usually they belong to stenographers and typewriters who are employed in the various offices. The majority of women living in New York never go down town from year end to year end. The whole lower part of the city is given up to men and their business.

In this vein van Dyke harnesses an image of femininity to describe (the old) City Hall’s out-of-place quality vis-à-vis the skyscrapers: “It is like some fair lady clad in a ball dress of pale silk, standing in the dust and dirt of the noisy street. It is too delicate, too lovely, too feminine, for contact with those great structures of steel and granite.”39 And the connection of women and shopping is also underscored by Ernest Ingersoll (1891), who notes in a description of Macy’s,

The great feature of shopping in New York is the prevalence of huge bazaars like Macy’s where every sort of thing is sold that a woman would want to buy for herself, for her family, or for her house…. Here the visitor will find telegraph and telephone offices, a place to leave parcels on payment of ten cents, retiring rooms, an immense luncheon-room with moderate prices, and a detective system which guards the customer from pick-pockets, while it protects the firm from thieving.40

Ellen Gruber Garvey’s linkage of periodical literature, trade cards, and department stores as rich spaces of visual consumption that “would not excite comment” for women of the middle class but allow them to “wander seemingly at will” is suggestive for Münter’s training and approach to the city.41 She explains:

New cultural practices grew up around shopping: it became possible to spend an entire day in a department store. These cathedral-like ‘palaces of consumption’ offered customers not just floors

39 The New New York: A Commentary on the Place and the People (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1909), 73-74, 140, 180, and 189. This source was introduced by Michael Leja to the New York seminar (see n. 31 of this chapter).
40 A Week in New York (New York and Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1891), 101; cited by Emily Gephart in a presentation of this guidebook (New York seminar as in n. 31 of this chapter).
of elaborately and theatrically displayed goods, but spaces that were ostensibly entirely social: ladies’ lunchrooms, ladies’ parlors for writing letters and meeting friends, concert halls, and art galleries.\textsuperscript{42}

At the time of Münter’s visit, New York shops themselves were visual spectacles. Not only was art frequently displayed in commercial settings, but shops were also sites of popular entertainment, as I have begun to suggest. Frank L. Baum’s manual on shop window decoration (1900) suggests some of the elaborate possibilities. Overlapping with dime-museum and sideshow presentations, one category of enticement involved “beautiful young ladies” in tricks of illusion – vanishing through a trap door and reappearing in different get-ups, without the lower half of her body, wedged in a box that appears impossibly small, and other variations. Another type involved “mechanical displays” enabling such enactments as the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius and the passage of ships on a moonlit night. One example is what he calls “A Panoramic Display”:

The mechanical feature attached to this dress goods display consists of a frame in the center of which appears a panorama of bright pictures, portraits of prominent men, etc. The frame is made of ordinary boards and puffed in two colors. In the picture shown there was an electric light in each corner of the frame. Within the frame the panorama moved constantly from top to bottom, and: “The panorama consists of pictures fastened together endwise upon a belt of ticking and forming an endless band about two 7-inch rollers, which are placed at the top and bottom of the background. As the rolls revolve by means of an electric motor, the pictures pass across the frame.”\textsuperscript{43} Baum devotes much of his discussion to methods of folding cloth, the benefits of cheesecloth for window dressing, and the how-to’s of framing elements, but overall, his emphasis is on how to produce novelty and striking effect.

As Garvey points out, “The department stores were also called bazaars; they were part of the same stream of nineteenth-century celebration of the exotic as expositions and worlds [sic]

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{43} Baum, \textit{The Art of Decorating Dry Goods Windows and Interiors. A Complete Manual of Window Trimming, designed as an Educator in all the Details of the Art, according to the best accepted methods, and treating fully every important subject} (Chicago: The Show Window Publishing Company, 1900), 82, 113, and 149-150. For a concise description of Baum, see Anne Friedberg, \textit{Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 66.
fairs, in which the world was miniaturized and turned shopping plaza." Ober and Westover’s
discussion of Tiffany’s is suggestive of this overlap to world’s fairs and the cultural porosity we
have been tracking:

Upon the first floor there is a bewildering assortment of diamonds and other jewels, silverware,
fans, etc.... Among the marble and bronze statuary placed in a little room near the elevator [on
the second floor], is Edward Thaxter’s “First Dream of Love,” – a life-size marble figure which
challenges criticism as to the conception, -- for a maiden asleep in an upright position, her limbs
bound with a net, her feet unsupported by the ground, and the infant ‘Love,’ who whispers in the
maiden’s ear, is skillfully modeled.... Specimens of agatized wood from Arizona and Dakota, in
which startlingly beautiful mineral colors have been produced by the wash of waters containing
quartz in large quantities, are next shown. Near these curiosities are antiques in wrought brass,
arbor, etc.; while everywhere are clocks that make the air musical with the chimes of Grace,
Trinity, or Old World cathedrals.... On the floor above ceramics from all the great factories of
the world are displayed. Moses King’s 1893 guidebook inscribes the visual opulence of New York shop windows within a
rhetoric of international competition: “What cannot be found here, is not to be found in any
shopping district anywhere.... What are the Parisian boulevards, or even Regent Street, to this
magnificent panorama of mercantile display, reaching from Washington Arch to Bryant Park?”

In a guide to the 1900 Paris exposition, Wanamaker’s reminds readers of its pre-eminent branch
business across Philadelphia, New York, and Paris (we “nationalize the fashions”), and advertises
25-cent reproductions of Dewey’s Manila victory and the Battleship Iowa. In a mixture of
insecurity and bluster, the guide declares, “France likes our furniture. So much is it appreciated
abroad that we have taken orders for its delivery in Paris.” In a related vein, the 1902 Round-
About New York, put out by Bloomingdales, is bookended by “The Story of Bloomingdales” as
frontispiece and a list at the end of U.S. presidents culminating in a picture of Teddy Roosevelt
and a summary of the Spanish-American War. Featuring a “Diary of the Visit of H.R.H. Prince
Henry of Prussia To the United States” in February 1902, the guide succinctly captures the

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44 The Adman in the Parlor, 196.
45 Manhattan Historic and Artistic, 73-74.
46 King’s Handbook of New York City: an outline history and description of the American metropolis, 2nd
ed. (Boston: Moses King, 1893), 843; partially cited by Jaimey Hamilton, New York seminar; see n. 31 of
this chapter).
competitive edge between the two nations: “Purported reasons for the visit – the drawing tighter of the friendly ties between Germany and the United States. The occasion of his visit – the launching of the Meteor, Emperor Wilhelm’s American-built yacht.” When Münter arrived in October 1898 in the United States, the nation was in the midst of negotiating the peace with Spain; the Treaty of Paris would be signed in December.

Garvey and the period sources I have sampled adumbrate constraints and opportunities for female circulation and creativity in keeping with the broader picture I have been sketching of dailiness as protocol and opportunity. The literature on female flânerie offers a useful lens onto this issue in its problematization of women’s fraught relationship to the position of the flâneur and its consideration of extensions, as in shopping. Pursuing the issue of mechanical creativity addressed in the discussion of Godey’s, Anne Friedberg likens the department store to the flâneuse’s first coup; yet in Anke Gleber’s discussion, such spaces of consumption furnish only “secondhand distraction.” In Walter Benjamin’s account, the flâneur steeps himself in the jostling smells of the crowd and the contingent phenomena of the city in his empathy with the commodity, but he retains the possibility for criticality in a dialectic of immersion in and observation of the metropolis. At best a conscious contradiction for him instead of a reflection of...
a fundamentally sluggish spectatorial status, the dynamic of critical ivresse vis-à-vis modernity is closed off, Benjamin suggests, as the arcades give way to the department store.\textsuperscript{52}

Writers debate the historicity of the flâneur,\textsuperscript{53} and Susan Buck-Morss proposes a capacious reading of flânerie evocative for Münter:

Benjamin examined the early connection between the perceptive style of flanerie and that of journalism. If mass newspapers demanded an urban readership (and still do), more current forms of mass media loosen the flâneur’s essential connection to the city. It was Adorno who pointed to the station-switching behavior of the radio listener as a kind of aural flanerie. In our time, television provides it in an optical, non-ambulatory form. In the United States particularly the format of television news-programs approaches the distracted, impressionistic, physiognomic viewing of the flâneur, as the sights purveyed take one around the world. And in connection with world travel, the mass tourist industry now sells flanerie in two and four week packets.\textsuperscript{54}

Buck-Morss’s emphasis relates to Charles Baudelaire’s figuration of Constantin Guys, who is the ultimate tourist: he is not “an artist, but rather a man of the world,” in that he wants to “know, understand and appreciate everything that happens on the surface of our globe.”\textsuperscript{55} Modernizing forces enable that very reach, so that for Susan Sontag, photography first comes into its own as an extension of the eye of the middle-class flâneur, whose sensibility was so accurately charted by Baudelaire. The photographer is an armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitering, stalking, cruising the urban inferno, the voyeuristic stroller who discovers the city as a landscape of voluptuous extremes. Adept of the joys of watching, connoisseur of empathy, the flâneur finds the world ‘picturesque.’\textsuperscript{56}

A small number of Münter’s photographs of New York are extant: the publication of her America photographs includes thirteen made in the area, with the majority taken from the steamship Pennsylvania upon her departure from America and some featuring her as a subject;

\textsuperscript{53} For a sample of different positions and registration of ambiguity surrounding the issue, see The Flâneur, ed. Keith Tester, especially contributions by Tester, Rob Shields, and Patricia Parkhurst Ferguson. For a useful brief characterization of the difference in temporal-spatial location between Benjamin and Baudelaire, see Wolff, “The Invisible Flâneuse,” 39.
\textsuperscript{54} “The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore,” 103-104.
five are of scenes on New York streets. In two of the latter, for example, photographing the Dewey Arch and colonnade (figs. 20-21) in October 1900, Münter took up the imperial city as a subject. Constructed in wood and plaster as a temporary structure for Dewey’s New York procession in September 1899 to commemorate the triumph over the Spanish at Manila Bay in May 1898, the structure had fallen into disrepair at the time of Münter’s capture and would be carted away by the end of the year. Due to the tensions between Germany and the United States over Manila, it is clear that Münter was engaging the political situation, though her images retain primacy to understanding the American people and modernity within that context. Baudelaire attributes to each age “its own gait, glance and gesture,” and that is particularly true of the second image, with the woman striding purposefully forward wearing a Gibson Girl shirtwaist. Her left arm is in abeyance, and the street cars and carriages are stopped: like the other photograph, it is an example of Momentphotographie. But here Münter relates to the flâneur in Baudelaire’s terms: “he is the painter of the passing moment and of all the suggestions of eternity that it contains.” In its thematization of inexorable modernity, the photograph almost anticipates Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s Street, Dresden, if without the screaming tenor. If the blurred movement in the other photograph is an amateur glitch, it also highlights the technologics of vision to which Sontag alludes – its modernity and its artifice. Thus for example, the framing on the diagonal, delectating architectural display, and combination of pedestrian and carriage traffic recall the Lumière Brothers’ street scenes, such as those in their 1895 La Place des Cordeliers à Lyon. Münter’s vision is mediated by the apparatus, as Schivelbusch suggests; yet the foreground, or if we continue to follow him, Münter’s presence, is an important subject of the image. In a potent manifestation of female flânerie, she is both within and outside the image, a

57 Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 (Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006), 163-177, cat. 118-130.
58 Peter Simmons, Gotham Comes of Age: New York Through the Lens of the Byron Company, 1892-1942 (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 1999), 186.
60 Ibid, 5.
presence and an absence: as such, the photograph relates to Donna Haraway’s “leaky distinction” between “animal-human” and machine, as well as between physical and non-physical.\(^{61}\) Thus, Münter’s project of elaborating a synecdochal response to America overlaps with the Baudelairean *flâneur*:

His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite....[T]o see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world.\(^{62}\)

In connection with this *flâneristic* fantasy of invisibility, it may be recalled that Münter mentions capturing Klee’s white pants without being noticed, though her repeated claim for such a mode of registration relates to discourses of secrecy of authorship discussed in the context of *Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine*. Naomi Schor’s feminine and masculine versions of dailiness converge here.

In his own treatment of the *flâneur*, Benjamin describes a mode of circulation devolving from the 1830s *physiologies*, which sought a typology of the city in the repressive context of the French 1836 September Laws. Such panorama literature was a way for a writer to orient himself, and functioned to “assure...people that everyone was, unencumbered by any factual knowledge, able to make out the profession, the character, the background, and the life-style of the passers-by” with “perfect bonhomie.”\(^{63}\) Yet as Anne McClintock notes, “The project of the physiologies was ‘basically a petty-bourgeois genre.’ But it was also an *imperial* genre, for the notation of types and specimens was characteristic of the travel ethnographies being written by men who were taking a good look at the marketplace of empire.”\(^{64}\)


\(^{64}\) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 81.
If aspects of this are present in the two photographs considered, it is noteworthy that beyond the works Münter made in New York, her individual sketches often are informed by a heightened physiologic cast. For instance, let us consider her sketch of a girl captioned “listen to the graphophon!” dated 14.VIII (fig. 22). All ear, the girl has eyes that she appears not to use, as her ear has hijacked her to a faraway place of fascination in the thrill of (albeit crude) auditory recording. Slouching forward, her head is heavy in her hands and her elbows are propped up inelegantly on her spread-out knees. Planted ponderously, she is reduced to a gesture for optical consumption; Münter’s handling and composition demonstrate particular attention to chiseling elements of the girl’s silhouette. Through this single-minded focus, this figure-as-ear is ultimately all spectacle. Citing Simmel in developing his discussion of the flâneur, Benjamin notes the modern preference for the eye over the ear: “Someone who sees without hearing is much more uneasy than someone who hears without seeing. In this there is something characteristic of the sociology of the big city. Interpersonal relationships in big cities are distinguished by a marked preponderance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear.”

The loss of culture and self-awareness represented in this blunting of senses for Münter is tantamount to a loss of gender:

In this girl...I tried to convey the unconscious boyishness of one of my young cousins, who spent so much of her time with her brothers and with other boys that she was almost unaware of being a girl. You can see that in her pose and expression, I hope. There is nothing defiant or hoydenish in her boyishness, and her attitude and pose are not at all immodest, just naturally boyish.

65 Kon. 26/39; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. Advertisements from the New Yorker Staatszeitung und Heraldo for the “Eagle Graphophone” bear out Münter’s name for the device. Describing it as “interesting, amusing, and educational” (interessant, amusant und lehrreich), they note that the machine captures vocalization, instrumentation, and speech, and they bill it as a sign of the age (“bemerkenswerteste Erfindung des Zeitalters”; October 8, 1898: 10; and October 29, 1898: 10).

66 Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 79.


69 Interview with Edouard Roditi, “Gabriele Münter,” in Dialogues on Art (Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1980), 140.
I shall develop the issue of Münter’s inscription of new possibilities surrounding the American female body in chapter four.

If the photographs of the Dewey Arch convey a fluidity between Münter and her subjects, even as it is propped up by typology, her figuration of the gramophone girl overlaps with the judgments of Bierbaum, Panizza, and Marble. Discussing the “fiercely negative establishment response” in Germany to early cinema, Robin Lenman, John Osborne, and Eda Sagarra allude to the problematic of its “wordlessness” for “a society in which a literary high culture was widely regarded as the foundation of both individual Bildung and national identity.”

That consumption, rather than contemplation, is the subject of the drawing is clear from a comparison to another image of Annie Maud. Seated on a chair, she is utterly immersed in writing on her slate. Yet Annie Maud does so with presence rather than passivity. Münter displays a keen engagement in body position in this sketch as well. Annie Maud crosses her legs, with one up on the chair rung, and holds her chalk somewhat awkwardly, with raised index and pinky fingers.

In Kleine’s discussion of the billboards with which Münter engaged in New York, she makes an insightful connection between their caricatural components and Münter’s proclivity toward exaggerated gesture, which she would use in portraiture. Münter’s training in theatricality with its overlap to typology in forms such as vaudeville probably partly underlies this interest in exaggeration and body language; but at the same time, in explaining her motivation of just capturing her subjects “as they were,” Münter invests her sketches with the power of truth telling. An important strain of her output in America, and in her individual sketches in particular, is informed by a discourse of physiognomic order, as I shall continue to show. At some level, the

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70 “Imperial Germany,” in *German Cultural Studies*, 47. They also mention a 1910 article asserting that film’s “prime means of expression was ‘romantic’ gesticulation, whereas Geist could be mediated only by words” (47).

71 22.1.99 *Annie Maud Davidson*, Kon. 26/21; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.

72 Kleine, *Biographie eines Paares*, 60.
fixity of these might be read as an antidote to what Simmel calls the “daily civil war of sense impressions.”

Münter's study of patterns and ornamentation as a young girl in Coblenz, as in the *Zeichenheft für Ella Münter. Classe Ib 1891*, expresses aspects of systematizing order in her training. Featuring patterns in pencil such as concentric circles, a pinwheel, an 8-pointed star, four hearts within a circle, and a 5-lobed flower in a hexagon, all within square shapes, the focus is on gridded exactitude. Lines at the margins assist in the impeccable duplication of form. To be sure, Münter clearly resisted the exercises, which she nevertheless does capably: bucking the disciplinary impetus, many of her circles have little impish faces in the middle of them, and in the margins she also drew female figures relating to the trivial literature she read. Dreamy idealizing heads, bride figures in long dresses, a “Mater Dolorosa” with the word in curlicued letters: the figures’ flowing hair and corseted bodies overlap the assigned form.

The schooling in a physiognomic mode of seeing may be inferred by the retention in her estate of O.S. and L.N. Fowlers’ 1857 edition of the *Illustrated Self-Instructor in Phrenology and Physiology with one hundred Engravings and the Chart of Character*. It had belonged to her father, who had submitted himself for phrenological testing, as Shulamith Behr notes in suggesting a connection between Münter’s practice and the physiognomic discourses of Johann Caspar Lavater. Drawing on the work of Franz Josef Gall, phrenology, the Fowlers claimed, mapped the “conditions of BRAIN and corresponding manifestations of MIND” [capitals in original], in a system predicated on a correspondence between inside and outside, synecdoche,

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73 Cited in Retallack, *Germany in the Age of Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 33.
74 Kon. 38/2: 1891/2; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
75 Describing Münter’s drawing lessons at school in Coblenz, Reinhold Heller explains that they were marked by the theories of Heinrich Pestalozzi, with a focus on “imitation and accuracy by using simple outlines to define forms” and “grid-facilitated, systematic accuracy” (*Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 1903-1920* [Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997], 38-39).
and the sovereignty of the brain over the body.\textsuperscript{77} In contrast to Clyde Fitch’s discourse, such a
cartography is of course ideal for physiologic capture; as Allan Sekula notes in his discussion of
photography and the archive:

In claiming to provide a means for distinguishing the stigmata of vice from the shining marks of
virtue, physiognomy and phrenology offered an essential hermetic service to a world of fleeting
and often anonymous market transactions. Here was a method for quickly assessing the character
of strangers in the dangerous and congested spaces of the nineteenth-century city.\textsuperscript{78}

As the Fowlers put it in describing their manual: “‘Short, yet clear,’ is its motto.”\textsuperscript{79}

I have argued for an interplay between individuality and typology in the image of Annie
Maud in “Carrots,” and such a tension governs the corpus of Münter’s individual American
sketches to a pronounced extent. Primarily showcasing her relatives, they serve as a portable
gallery of miniatures, if executed at very different levels of finish and sometimes with diverse
subjects on a single page to rather cacophonous effect. This quality is enhanced by Münter’s
framing of some of the sketches in paper, which serves to commodify her relatives as souvenirs.
Including both idealizing portrait heads and quirky character sketches, the group suggests a
systematizing element of collectibility, a quality enhanced by Münter’s intimation of an
encyclopedic aim in this regard.\textsuperscript{80} Revealing a combination between what Sekula frames as
Galtonian essentialism and Bertillon-esque nominalism, Münter variously foregrounds likeness
and constructs individuals as types; overall, she creates a composite America portrait.

A drawing labeled “Dallas Graham. Guion Te…” (the page is cut off) and dated
21.II.1900,\textsuperscript{81} for example, reveals a young boy with a pudgy face and a rather unhappy
expression. Depicting his arm on the armrest of the chair and his fingers in a flaccid state,
Münter seems to emphasize features in the Fowlers’ book: “the flesh of strong persons is dense

\textsuperscript{77} O.S. and L.N. Fowler, \textit{The Illustrated Self-Regulator in Phrenology and Physiology with one Hundred
Engravings and a Phrenological Chart of Character} (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1853), 12, 16, and 42.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{The Illustrated Self-Regulator in Phrenology and Physiology}, vii.
\textsuperscript{80} See statement in “Introduction,” n. 99 of this discussion.
\textsuperscript{81} Kon. 26/37; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
and most elastic, while those of weakly ones are flabby and yield to pressure." 82 The emphasis in phrenology and physiognomy on legibility of character through surface structure is also present in a drawing Münter captions “the philosopher. Mr. Ware." 83 Showcasing the figure as interiorized, Münter portrays his knit brows, gently wrinkled forehead, and slightly bulging head at the back. Unlike the gramophone girl’s glazed countenance, R.C. looks down but is immersed in thought. In Roslyn Poignant’s discussion of physiognomy, she notes that “the correspondences’ between appearances and inner constitution” were lodged in “a close scrutiny of significant parts of the body such as the nose, forehead, and chin, and a synthesizing gaze (Lavater’s ‘optic power’) that eliminated extraneous messages.” 84 Rendered with a very light touch in pencil, the drawing includes focal points such as the attenuated nose, somewhat oppressively tight collar under the chin, and in particular the head shape (Münter’s inclusion of both a crisp and a sketchier line here attests to particular concern in its rendition) and R.C.’s ear. Marooning the ear in the empty field of unindicated, assumed hair, Münter’s treatment recalls Alphonse Bertillon and Giovanni Morelli. A later photograph (c. 1920) of R.C. Ware (fig. 23) would seem to bear out Münter’s philosopher image and her registration of likeness. 85

A sketch of John Schreiber reveals an attentiveness to “accuracy” of the face in a precisely cut profile, if rendered somewhat awkwardly straight. 86 Seated in a chair with his arms folded across his chest, John’s hands seem to grip his flesh in Münter’s more energetic handling in this area of the sketch. Reading as an image of toughness and determination, John faces ahead into the distance, his profile like the prow of a ship, while his body with his hunched back is freighted in the present moment. Rendering a tension between planted weight and the hereness of now as against restless energy and forward striving, Münter perceives John from a vantage of

82 The Illustrated Self-Regulator in Phrenology and Physiology, 11-12.
83 Kon. 26/24; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
85 LEM P-76-03-17; Llano Estacado Museum.
86 “John,” Kon. 26/6; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
imperial physiology. While she attempts to register likeness here, the thrust of the image is as a physiognomic record of John as an “American.”

Münster’s fascination with gesture, gait, pose, clothing, and props thus relates to varied discourses of legibility and classification surrounding the body; the Fowlers specifically mention many of these. The resonance of phrenology and physiognomy for Münster may be contextualized in the emergence of criminology in the 1880s and 1890s. An 1896 discussion in Die Gartenlaube describes the success of Bertillon’s methods, which it illustrates. Registering anxiety about the loopholes in criminal identification and the misapprehension of an innocent person in particular, the article reassures that Bertillon’s system offers a new security (Sicherheit) of identification. At the same time, as Sekula suggests, “[O]ne way of ‘taming’ photography is by means of [the]…transformation of the circumstantial and idiosyncratic into the typical and emblematic.” Such a mode of domestication is at work in the Dewey Arch photographs, as well as in the sketches we have considered. In both genres, time and space are arrested through the transcendence of dailiness as symbol.

In addition, physiognomic typicality in systems such as the Fowlers’ enabled a bridging function of global reach through differentiation for Münster’s elaboration of community: “...nothing in nature stands alone, but each is reciprocally related to all, and all, collectively, form one magnificent whole...all stars and worlds mutually act and react upon each other...every genus, species, and individual throughout nature is second or sixteenth cousin to every other”; and: “Your head is the type of your mentality. Self-knowledge is the essence of all knowledge.”

Through her individual sketches and overall daily recording of America, Münster builds a collection of signs of otherness to forge her American Heimat. Her project is steeped in a touristic impulse: “[T]he tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself... All over the world

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90 The Illustrated Self-Regulator in Phrenology and Physiology, 10.
the unsung armies of semioticians, the tourists, are fanning out in search of the signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behaviour, exemplary Oriental scenes.  

I have mentioned the emphasis in *Die Gartenlaube* of comparativity of daily German practices to those in other countries, and Münter's taxonomy of Americans should be located in this quest to figure boundaries of the German self. Figuring both otherness and consolidating coherence, her cataloguing project relates to the duality Kirsten Belgum highlights for *Die Gartenlaube* surrounding its description of new regional landscapes:

It had to emphasize the novel, unfamiliar aspects of those regions that made them worth describing, yet, at the same time, it needed to ensure that those places were recognizable as parts of a single larger, cohesive national space.... The result was a textual process of generalization that discussed the specificity of a regional identity in order to emphasize its broader German relevance.

Belgum goes on to note, “Giving the disparate German lands political coherence, as Arndt and Hoffmann von Fallersleben did in their poems, was a major political issue for the entire century,” and she explains that emigrants were understood in the framework of *Die Gartenlaube* as part of the “national community.” Münter’s daily record is thus a representation of her German-American identity.

Despite and because of the importance of scientistic fixity and the quest for truth attending Münter’s imperial *flânerie*, her practice is undergirded by a touristic playfulness that connects her visual consumption of America to von Zobeltitz’s pleasure in Wertheim’s, if in a very different key. As we saw in the example of Münter’s drawing of Leila from St. Louis, the theatricality in her training suggests alternatives to typology but also buttresses it in a vein of

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93 As I have sought to show here, it is therefore important not to argue only for the progressive “freshness” of Münter’s approach, as in such statements: “In the States Ella Münther had found a liberal approach to tradition. She developed a defiance against anything regulated and an appetite for freshness and new undertakings and beginnings” (Ella Münther hatte in den Staaten zu einem freizügigen Umgang mit der Tradition gefunden. Sie entwickelte eine Abwehr gegen alles Regelhafte und ein Verlangen nach Aufbruch, Frische, Neubeginn: Kleine, *Biographie eines Paares*, 83).
innocuousness. Schor suggests that the "collector’s time" is "a time out of time," and Münther’s collecting project fosters the dream of another space-time, one that frequently manifests theatrical overtones. A sketch labeled “An other of John’s Positions. La Grippe oder ein Häufchen Unglück” (The flu or a little pile of misery) highlights her playful engagement with body position. Reclining with two chair legs off the ground, John lifts both feet awkwardly on the first rung with his hat perched on his knee. She clearly relishes sketching him in a variety of somewhat absurdly décontracté positions in the chair, which becomes a prop in a minimal vaudeville. Münther in fact frequently depicts her American relatives leaning back in chairs or lounging on unadorned furniture, a position indexing a relaxed, sometimes exaggerated body in contrast to her earlier sketches of supine figures and other representations of embodiment in Germany. I shall develop this issue later in an examination focused around one of her drawings of Uncle Joe Donohoo (fig. 24). I shall argue that Münther variously harnesses a body’s use of furniture and/or environment to elaborate an understanding of her subject and to represent him or her as an “American.”

For now, to illustrate the role of pose and furniture for Münther’s articulation of the dynamic between individuality and typology and its resonance for her goal of truth telling, it is instructive to examine a pencil drawing of Alice (Allie) Louise Ware called Girl with a doll and

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95 For a discussion of this issue for Münther’s paintings from 1910-1914 in the framework of utopia, see Francesca Stafford, ‘My Pictures are all moments of my life: Representations of time and space in the work of Gabriele Münther and Else Lasker-Schüler,’ unpublished Ph.D. Diss., Institute for Women’s Studies, Lancaster University, October 2001, chap. 3.
96 Kon. 26/44; Gabriele Münther- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
97 See for example the two depictions of John in Kon. 26/44a: Gabriele Münther- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
98 Some of the many examples include photographs featuring Bud Hamilton (fig. 113) and Willie Graham (fig. 111), as well as a sketch relating to the latter (fig. 19 in Hoberg essay); all three are in Gabriele Münther: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 (Munich: Gabriele Münther- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006). Additional examples include drawings of Annie Maud (see chap. 1, n. 49 of this study).
99 Kon. 38/4, pp. 50-5; Gabriele Münther- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
dated January 11, 1900 (fig. 25).\textsuperscript{100} A comparison to a preparatory sketch from the same day in Münter’s largest sketchbook reveals a series of interesting changes.\textsuperscript{101} A sketchy, bust-length rendition of Allie, the first drawing includes only the upper part of the doll and does not bring in the chair. Though serious in the contemplation of her plaything, the young girl has a hint of a smile, and Münter’s $\frac{3}{4}$-view of her countenance registers some of both eyes to convey a contrast between their intensity and the doll’s vacuous stare. While the doll in the first drawing has an upturned gaze, in the second, she looks out to the side, and Münter has now expanded her body to match her extension of Allie’s. Although the connection is furthered between girl and doll on the plane of bodily proportion, the plaything has been developed through the change in regard, fullness of body position, detail and facture, and even distended arm held by Allie into a more lifelike being, almost a small person capable of walking. Allie, conversely, has become almost hieratic,\textsuperscript{102} even as she retains elements of likeness, as suggested by a period photograph (fig. 26). Portraying less of her facial features in their specificity, Münter now portrays Allie in profile. Her eye has all but turned into a lid; the smile-trace has disappeared as she regards the doll with gravitas. Münter’s mode of rendering Allie and the chair now almost seems chiseled. The young girl has become both more contextualized and more generalizing. The girl’s energy appears transferred upon the doll; indeed, she is now spoken by her context. In an interview, Maurine Killough Phillips recalled that in the early 1900s in the Panhandle, “everybody wore hightop

\textsuperscript{100} Although it has been suggested that the drawing is of Annie Maud (Annegret Hoberg, “Gabriele Münter in Amerika,” \textit{Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900} [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 22), the identification is clear from the preparatory sketch of the same day in Kon. 38/4, p. 57 labeled (perhaps retrospectively), “Allie Ware. 11.1.1900,” as well as from a profile view captioned “Allie Ware 1900 Jan.” (Kon. 26/35; both Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung). In addition, there is an overlap in registration between Münter’s rendition and three photographs of Allie in the Llano Estacado Museum (P-76-03-30, dated 1909 but probably c. 1901, with a connection between the circularity of Allie’s hand placement on Helen and on her doll; P-76-03-25 from c. 1902, though dated 1910; and P-76-03-16 of c. 1900; she wears a matching dress to Annie Maud portrayed in P-76-03-15). Born in 1892, Allie was the eldest daughter of R.C. and Lena Donohoo Ware.

\textsuperscript{101} Kon. 38/4, p. 57; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.

\textsuperscript{102} In a discussion of the differences in handling between Allie and the doll in this second drawing, Behr notes that the image “function[s] in an anagogic manner to invest the forms with symbolic associations beyond the literal, from the girl’s presence as a ‘child of nature’ to the doll’s animated sophistication” (“Beyond the Muse,” in \textit{Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression}, 52).
shoes that laced all the way up your leg." While Münter represents Allie’s leg curving behind the chair leg resting on the rung, she has taken a casually observed everyday pose and, like her shoes, abstracted it. Her process thus displays what she will later describe in Bekenntnisse: “But isn’t drawing itself already clearly a transformation of reality. It removes the essential from the mass of impressions and presents it with sharper contours – in short, it is more abstract as a statement.”

Münter’s distillation here is multivalent. One of the meanings suggested by her changes relates to the doll’s compositional centrality, detailed rendering, and animation; in comparison Allie reads as a flattened field. As such, there is a connection to the birth of her one sibling, Helen Cameron Ware, roughly six months earlier, and Allie’s role as a small mother in the context of being a new sibling caretaker. Such a reading is borne out by Münter’s drawing of the four Wares, which I shall consider in chapter four, and is suggestive for the daily context and opportunism of familial recording for Münter’s resonant symbolism. Behr emphasizes the regard for childhood innocence updated from Romantic conceptions at work in the second drawing. I think it makes sense, though, to juxtapose the apparent freshness of capture of Allie’s “natural,” childlike position in the chair to its symbolism of her as an American. This is in keeping with Münter’s use of furniture, pose, and comportment in elaborating a typology of America; as such, her depiction relates to the representation of Annie Maud in “Carrots.” From this position, in addition to depicting the fraught intensity of connection between girl and plaything surrounding magical belief and awareness, Münter elliptically registers her own touristic curiosity and

103 Conducted by Nikki M. Deputy, April 17, 1977; Panhandle Plains Historic Museum.
105 “Beyond the Muse,” in Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression, 51.
multitemporal America. The activation of the doll in the finished drawing repositions Allie as symbol and insinuates Münter’s stilled mastery. In her discussion of toys, Susan Stewart suggests that

once the toy becomes animated, it initiates another world, the world of the daydream. The beginning of narrative time here is not an extension of the time of everyday life; it is the beginning of an entirely new temporal world, a fantasy world parallel to (and hence never intersecting) the world of everyday reality.... The toy world presents a projection of the world of everyday life; this real world is miniaturized or giganticized in such a way as to test the relation between materiality and meaning.106

The doll enables Münter’s own temporality:

The miniature does not attach itself to lived historical time...the metaphoric world of the miniature makes everyday life absolutely anterior and exterior to itself. The reduction in scale which the miniature presents skews the time and space relations of the everyday lifeworld, and as an object consumed, the miniature finds its ‘use value’ transformed into the infinite time of reverie,

and this is “an ‘other’ time, a type of transcendent time which negates change and the flux of lived reality.”107 Through her abstracting rendition of Allie and her vivification of the doll, Münter creates what McClintock refers to as an “anachronistic space”: “imperial progress across the space of empire is figured as a journey backward in time to an anachronistic moment of prehistory.”108 In this whiff of the image’s imperial backdrop, we are apparently closer to Sander Gilman’s view of America for Germans than Karl Markus Kreis’s. And yet this is too narrow a reading for the expansiveness of Münter’s temporality, which if it emphasizes essence here, also references the historical moment and evokes the future. Paradoxically, Münter’s changes to Allie’s countenance imply the girl’s diminished belief in the doll’s animation; Allie seems to age across the drawings. As images of interrogation of the relation between materiality and meaning, the subject is Allie’s testing of her ability for sustaining her connection in the new distance toward her plaything Münter suggests in the second drawing. Imbedded in an observation of the

108 Imperial Leather, 40.
daily (and captioned only with a date), the later drawing reaches into an archaic past but also serves as an allegory for a future of civilization and loss of innocence.

As images in this section have sought to demonstrate, Münter’s “truthful” and “objective” record devolves from a tension between the individual and the archetypal, as Kirk Varnedoe formulates it, and enabled by the choices and exigencies of the moment. The archetype of Münter’s American figures is, however, often confected through performance – as in her depictions of groups with rocking chairs – and thus potentially unfurled.\footnote{\text{109}} In her photograph captioned “Benlah, Jane Lee, Emmy, Willie, taken 9.14.1900” (fig. 27), the rocking chair is the primary subject: seated in it in front of the others with her back to the camera, Emmy puts her hands on the top of the chair to orchestrate her reclining comfort. In this picturing of relaxed abandon, Emmy’s dress is spread on the ground, echoing her upraised elbows in an X-configuration that highlights the situational staginess at work. As recurring advertisements from \textit{Jugend} in 1898 attest, there was a fascination in Germany with “American” furniture in the period.\footnote{\text{110}} If Schivelbusch’s assertion that “[f]or the twentieth-century tourist, the world has become one large department store of countrysides and cities” reasonably may be applied to Münter’s America travels,\footnote{\text{111}} her goal of accurate documentation would be lodged within consumption. In the rocking chair photograph, the unidealizing and disjunctive poses of the variously smiling and engaged Guion relatives good-naturedly disrupts the \textit{tableau vivant} under construction.

\footnote{\text{109} For an interesting presentation of the trope of the rocking chair in Münter’s output, see Kon. 37/3: 1898/99, p. 46 (“17.XI”), in which she evokes a decorous figure’s small tilting movements; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. Sexualizing undercurrents are almost non-existent in Münter’s America practice, though it is interesting that another image on page 51 of the same sketchbook features an attractive young woman, also leaning back in a rocking chair with a raised right arm resting on the back. Münter’s presentation of the combination of tight and flowing qualities in her cinched waist, billowy sleeves, and the drapery over her bodice conveys a tension between concealing and revealing her trim elegance as against the hefty solidity of the rocking chair.\text{111} See for example the ad for “American desks” (Amerikanische Schreibtische) in \textit{Jugend} III. Jahrgang, Nr. 25, June 18, 1898: 430.\text{111} \textit{The Railway Journey}, 197; cited also in Urry, \textit{The Tourist Gaze}, frontispiece.}
Dioramic nature

To develop the tension I have elicited above concerning play and the search for truth and accuracy in Münter’s American output, I would like to turn to the issue of her technologized vision by looking more specifically at Münter’s photographs along with brief consideration of a couple of drawings. In her photograph “Home sweet home at aunt Annie’s” (fig. 28) from Plainview, the spareness of the two chairs in the empty landscape renders this domestication of nature as playful landscape, a quality emphasized by her caption. As such, despite its pared-down ruggedness, her photographic enactment recalls the more overtly technologized rendition of nature in Baum’s shop window presentations. Processes of modernization fashion nature as spectacle, even as Münter’s image manifests a nostalgia for authentic nature. The image thus overlaps with Benjamin’s statement, “The town-dweller...made an attempt to bring the country into the town. In the dioramas, the town was transformed into landscape, just as it was later in a subtler way for the flâneurs.” \(^\text{112}\) Friedrich Ratzel emphasizes the narrowing of the distance between city and country in the United States due to developments in transportation and agricultural machinery, which he saw as linking farming to industry. Moreover, “[t]he dwellings of the rural inhabitants are becoming as urbanized as their life styles.”\(^\text{113}\) As Anne Friedberg explains, “The diorama was designed to construct and restructure – through light and movement – the relation of the viewer to the spatial and temporal present. A scene was transformed through the manipulation of daylight, which shifted the temporal mood.”\(^\text{114}\) “Home sweet home” (ironically) indexes the dislocations of photographic virtual travel and overseas tourism, and in Münter’s framing, the dwelling seems plunked down, unreal and disorienting in the barren setting, a quality the amateur off-kilter capture enhances.

\(^\text{112}\) Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, 162.
\(^\text{114}\) Window Shopping, 26.
An important manifestation for John Urry of the tourist gaze is the dissociation of landscape/townscape from everyday experience. While portraiture is the primary focus of Münter’s individual sketches, the group also includes a few landscapes. Münter renders Marshall as townscape in an 1899 pencil drawing (fig. 29). She opts for a distanced perspective and devotes the majority of the composition to nearly empty space in the foreground to suggest fields, some fenced. Her approach recalls 17th-century Dutch landscape painting in its resolute horizontality and miniaturizing treatment of buildings in their natural setting with a large expanse of sky; indeed, there are a number of windmills. Her interest in providing a visual inventory of the towns she visited is reinforced by a larger townscape dated 5.IX.99 and 6.IX.99 of Plainview, which reads as a windmillscape (the necessarily numerous windmills for the weather are rendered with more detail than the schematically rendered houses). Münter’s interest in fully mapping out the site is demonstrated by her addition of a strip of paper to register one more building. She also includes a list of five colors at the right, which suggests a desire to recall the town and perhaps an intention to work it up later.

In his description of the new landscape wrought by the railway, Schivelbusch lists its perception as an overview, without details (though he emphasizes the opportunity of taking in the “discrete,” if “indiscriminately”), as one of its primary qualities. This is resonant for Münter’s strategy of wedging the Marshall townscape for example into a thin ribbon of space ministering to the viewer’s rapid optical consumption. Yet in Schivelbusch’s new panoramic travel, as we have discussed, the foreground enabled the traveler to relate to the landscape through which he was moving. He saw himself as part of the foreground, and that perception joined him to the landscape, included him in it, regardless of all further distant views that the landscape permitted. Now velocity dissolved the foreground, and the traveler lost that aspect.

115 The Tourist Gaze, 3.
116 Kon. 26/41; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
117 Kon. 26/40; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
118 The Railway Journey, 59-63.
In keeping with the discourses of acquisitive legibility and self-knowledge we have been tracking, Münther’s retention of the foreground here seems to be an device of self-orientation (Schivelbusch drawing on Pitrim Sorokin) in the extraordinary space-time of her imperial tourism; as I shall show, her locatedness in different guises is a leitmotif of the America production. Münther complicates Urry’s assessment, then, of the landscape as separated from the everyday. Friedberg offers a useful summary here:

The panorama did not physically mobilize the body, but provided virtual spatial and temporal mobility, bringing the country to the town dweller, transporting the past to the present. The panoramic spectator lost, as Helmut Gernsheim described, ‘all judgment of distance and space’ and ‘in the absence of any means of comparison with real objects, a perfect illusion was given.’ The panorama offered a spectacle in which all sense of time and space was lost, produced by the combination of the observer in a darkened room (where there were no markers of place or time) and presentation of ‘realistic’ views of other places and times.

Münther’s travel, conversely, often contains an embodied component that, I shall suggest, mediates but thereby authenticates her reportage outside of this space of perfect illusion at the same time that it commodifies America as view.

She launches her photograph album with an image of the cowboy reunion she attended in Plainview in mid-August of 1899 (fig. 30). In many respects, the photograph seems to illustrate predominant tropes of panoramic vision, in that the photographer is looking down upon the scene in a magisterial position. The image relates to Roland Barthes’s understanding of the Eiffel Tower, which “turns the city into a kind of nature, transforms swarming humanity into a landscape. It adds to an often somber urban myth, a romantic dimension, harmony, relief” and

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119 Isabelle Jansen suggests that Münther consciously incorporates her shadow in some photographs, while Ulrich Pohlmann understands it as a creative technical mistake (Jansen, “Die Bilderwelt der Amerika-Photos von Gabriele Münther,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 181; and, in same volume, Pohlmann, “Die Fragilität des Augenblicks: Gabriele Münters Photographien der USA-Reise im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen (Moment)Photographie,” 207).

120 Window Shopping, 22.

121 While the Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung has a print of this image, it lacks a negative, Isabelle Jansen reported to me in a conversation of November 23, 2006; its authorship therefore should be problematized. I include the image in my discussion, however, because of its primacy of place in Münther’s photograph album.
“offers a world that is readable.”

The photograph also evokes Michel de Certeau’s “theoretical” (that is, visual) simulacrum” with an “oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices.”

The S-shape of its horses and buggies reads as a band of discrete, but indiscriminate, movement across a horizontal expanse. But in addition to what Urry calls the “social patterning” constituting the touristic gaze and Schivelbusch’s industrialization of vision, Münter insinuates a slowed-down space-time at the left of the image reminiscent of the flâneur’s resistant stroll and Lefebvre’s everyday as residue.

While waiting, a man rides his bicycle about; people shift their positions or walk toward the horse parade; kids play in a small group. This is not to imply that Münter overcomes the tendency to see the American other as landscape; but the juxtaposition of the group of waiting on-lookers and the S-shaped pattern registers the process of abstraction and mobilization of her gaze. The juxtaposition here problematizes the illusionism of panoramic vision within the photograph itself.

There is an interplay in this image between impressive breadth and a symbolic dailiness. Many of Münter’s American photographic landscapes variously navigate this dynamic. One example is her Landscape near Guion of March 9, 1900 (fig. 31) showing the American landscape as a space of daily encounter, an issue we shall explore more in depth in chapter three. The image showcases a fenced expanse of cultivated land: the sharpness of Münter’s registration enables a reading of different terrains – mud, weathered grasscover, clumped soil. After the dirt come the low hills speckled with trees and bushes, and then the sky filling half the image. Like Münter’s individual sketches, this is a portrait of a landscape of dailiness in both its particularity and symbolic generality. Another photograph Münter took on the same day, House on the

124 The Tourist Gaze, 3.
Prairie near Guion (fig. 32), tips further toward symbol, due to its pared down structural order.\textsuperscript{127} Again, the horizon line bisects the image, and its resolute horizontality, as established in multiple elements of the landscape, is offset by the visual rhyming of the tall grassline, vertical fence post, and mysteriously large background pole. While the resonant emptiness of the image is borne of a touristic snapshot encounter, the simple pairing of the gnarled, desiccated fence post and the clean rod in the background raises questions about the armature of nature-in-civilization. “Guion church” (fig. 33) from March 7, 1900 has yet another valence, in that the solitary dwelling reads like otherworldly staffage from Münter’s buggy-as-viewing-platform in a conflation of virtual and embodied travel.

“Steamboat mountain, east,” near Guion (fig. 34), taken a few days later, foregrounds the recessive expanse of nature across the clearly articulated carpet of rocky grass toward the mountain top and vista beyond. A very different impression is conveyed, though, by Münter’s placement of the photograph in her album (fig. 35). I shall discuss her album in detail in chapter three, but suffice it to note for the moment that while the image is cut down here, in this reframing Münter edits out the large foreground rocks to further emphasize the sweep of nature. While the attribution of this photograph is almost certain, it is interesting that the evidence for more magisterial images such as Landscape near Guion (fig. 36), “Buffalo Gap Mountains” (fig. 37), and “Buffalo Gap in Distance” (fig. 38) is less secure.\textsuperscript{128} Even as she seeks to construct an open field of nature, Münter’s photographs such as “Steamboat mountain, east” tend to resist qualities of stirring grandeur or sublimity such as those figured (if with complications of

\textsuperscript{127} Kleine writes perceptively: “She was always on a quest for the typical and did not get mired in subsidiary elements. At the same time, she made a discovery of the detail, lifting it out of the sum of impressions to lend it the status of the extraordinary. A wagon wheel in front of an empty landscape: on the road; in such photos she elevated what she saw to a symbolic level” (Immer war sie dem Typischen auf der Spur, sah von kleinteiligem Beiwerk ab. Doch sie entdeckte auch das Detail, hob es aus der Summe der Eindrucke heraus und verlieh ihm den Rang des Außерordentlichen. Ein Wagenrad von einer leeren Landschaft: On the road; in solchen Aufnahmen steigerte sie das Gesehen zum Sinnbild; \textit{Biographie eines Paares}, 70-71).

\textsuperscript{128} In a conversation of November 23, 2006, Jansen told me that the Gabriele Münter-und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung has a negative for Steamboat mountain, east, though and the other images exist in print form. The handwriting on the back of the Buffalo Gap images is not Münter’s.
civilization) in the Hudson River School, or in the discourse of Charles Sealsfield’s Colonel Morse, describing his arrival in Galveston Bay:

In our whole lives we had never seen such a coast. In fact, it would have been impossible for us to distinguish the boundary of the earth and water, only that the foam of the waves which was deposited on the grass, served as a line of demarcation. Just imagine an infinite plain, extending for more than a hundred miles before you, overgrown with the finest and most delicate grass, without even the slightest elevation or declivity, fanned by every breeze of the sea, rolling in uninterrupted waves, neither tree nor hill, neither house nor farm, and you will have a faint idea of the wonderful appearance of this country. It is true that about ten or twelve miles towards the north and northwest, a few dark masses were to be seen, which, as we found out afterwards, were clusters of trees, but which we took for islands, as in truth they are called, and characteristically enough, for they resemble them exactly. 129

Yet Münter’s photograph, like the three others I have been discussing, all variously evoke a land to be surveyed, paradisiacal and originary like Friedrich Ernst from Oldenburg’s letter, quasi-aquatic even (“Buffalo Gap Mountains”), and illustrate photography’s particular possibilities surrounding the confusion of time and space. From an albeit different historical moment, Hiroshi Sugimoto resonantly frames the problematic in his series of otherworldly dioramas (fig. 39). What, for example, is the weather in the four photographs considered here? For all the traces of located dailiness I have implied here, Münter’s landscapes overlap with Friedberg’s memorable description of the mall’s “temperature-controlled” and “imagineered” set-up. 130

However, in other photographs from America Münter specifically reveals the process of the Guion area’s spectacular consumption, as in her “Moromountain. Emmy, Willie, Mrs. E. Crow, Benlah, Miss Crow, Jane Lee, Mr. Crow” (fig. 40). The party has scaled the heights of nature to survey it in a resonant juxtaposition of fore-, mid-, and background; Münter figures the adventure as comprising the work of climbing, the reward of seeing as release, and also the playfulness of posing. Jane Lee and Willie humorously dominate the scene like menhirs, and Münter registers a whiff of the absurdity of her photographic transaction in the combination of

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130 Window Shopping, 113.
the smiling faces, posing bodies, and figures looking in all directions. There is a degree of individualizingly staged presence that, in comparison to a page from an 1899 photograph album of a mountain adventure that Pohlmann reproduces (fig. 41), suggests possibilities of circumventing the heroic summits Simmel describes in the passage from his “Alpine Journey” included in the epigraph for this chapter.

The photograph, *Trained bear drinking from a bottle* (fig. 42), taken at Sue Belle Lake, is an unusually direct representation for Münter of nature subjugated as spectacle. In keeping with the St. Louis as stage setting we have discussed as well as German circuses and *Völkerschauen*, this self-styled “bathing resort” had a fairground-like quality, as captured in a period advertisement: “Large, New Bath House. Splendid New Spring Boards. Bathing Chute. Swinging Rings. Bathing Suits for Boys and Girls Men and Women. Pair of Coyotes. Trained Bear. Fish that come to a bell. Pair Lovely White Swans. Refreshments.” Users of the lake might purchase a season pass, pay by the individual visit or as a family, and, for an additional fee, obtain a towel.\(^ \text{131} \) It is not clear from the image that the bear indexes a lost paradise for Münter, but it serves as a useful reference point for her space of activity and elaboration of a visuality.

As Münter travels, she not only collects touristic experiences, among them those located in sites of outdoor recreation, but of course the very infrastructure of tourism enables her representation of America. One panorama Münter had occasion to see was that afforded by Hynson Springs, a health resort six miles west of Marshall and 1000 feet above sea level that she visited during its heyday of commercial tourism. Hynson Springs had been called the “Hills of Health” by the Caddo and had been owned by different individuals promoting the restorative quality of the highly-mineralized (iron, sulfur, aluminum, lithium) waters before being purchased by the Interstate Investment Company of Shreveport, Louisiana in 1890. (Münter would also

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\(^ \text{131} \) *Marshall Evening Messenger*, July 7, 1900. Sue Belle proprietor R.J. Jennings had also offered to donate its profits from a day in the summer of 1900 toward Marshall’s purchase of a chemical fire engine. An article in the same issue of the *Messenger* mentions the day’s special events, including trap shooting of live and clay pigeons, a display by the Rudd Rifles, watermelon weight guessing, and music and dancing.
visit the muriatic Montesano Springs on her return visit to St. Louis.) The two-storied Hotel Randall was built on the property in 1891 and was operative until 1905, during which time it served over 100,000 guests (fig. 43). Featuring a wrap-around porch and corridors said to measure over a mile, the hotel had an "observation tower," whose Romanticizing vista was limned in a period brochure:

In scenic effect, Hynson Springs is one of the most beautiful resorts in the entire South. It is on the summit of a mountain overlooking a vast valley embracing thousands and thousands of acres of towering pine trees. The view of the surrounding country is indeed a rare spectacle with the sun flashing on the noble heights, a great tangled mass of grays, yellows, pink, red and blues, with great avenues of royal oaks setting its sylvan byways, and in the distance the purple outlines of the magnificent receding hills. Two hundred and sixty acres of grounds have been cut into gravel walks and drive-ways. From every curve and pebbly reach a new and beautiful vista bursts upon the view. The grounds are arranged with well graveled walks, embellished with rose and arborvitae. There is lover's lane with the limbs of fragrant cedar trees interlocked above a grassy promenade scented with the perfume of wild flowers.\(^{132}\)

Kleine mentions that Münter possessed a Baedeker's for the United States from 1893.\(^{133}\) The guidebook had recommended the Sisters' excursion to Niagara Falls: "No one who has an opportunity to see them should miss the Falls in the glory of their winter dress."\(^{134}\) In the guidebook's hyperbolic description, nature is the ultimate spectacle: "The Falls of Niagara ('Thunder of Waters'), perhaps the greatest and most impressive of the natural wonders of America"; "The volume of water which pours over the Falls is 15 million cubic ft. per minute (about 1 cubic mile per week).... Below the Falls the river contracts to 1000-1250 ft., and rushes down foaming and boiling between lofty rocky walls." By the time of Münter's visit, the primary source of income of the area was tourism, the guidebook had noted, with some 400,000 visitors yearly, as well as a "bazaar nuisance" resulting in the fact that it "is impossible to walk through the streets or look into the shop-windows without being annoyed by the most impudent and persistent solicitations." Helping its users to navigate this touristic morass, Münter's Baedeker's

\(^{133}\) Biographie eines Paares, 677 n. 1
had mentioned that there were places for the observation of “Views,” and recommended that the
“Museum and Cyclorama need not detain the visitor,” but one could hire a guide to descend to the
Cave of the Winds, which “only those of strong nerves should attempt”: “It is said to be safe and
is often made by ladies. For those who can stand it the experience is of the most exciting and
pleasurable description.” In one of her retrospective accounts, however, Münter mentions that
she and Emmy had gone to Niagara Falls “and admired the drama of nature. I have no memory
of it whatsoever. I have never had a penchant for grand photographic views.”

Be that as it may. However, in a different context, a comparison of her photographs of
“Jane Lee’s ‘shanty’ in snow while the peaches were blooming” (figs. 44-45) to an undated
photograph printed by the Blessing Photo Supply Company in Fort Worth, captioned, “Mrs. J. L.
Graham, West Texas Farm House, Taylor County” (fig. 46), highlights both the importance of
a clean “view” to her visuality and the establishment of her own relationship to it in the
foreground, and thus her distanced familiarity. Münter also records the tonalities of the setting
sun on the ocean on her return trip on the S.S. Pennsylvania, which she includes in an almost

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135 Ibid. 200-203 and 206.
136 “… und bewunderten das Naturschauspiel. Davon habe ich gar nichts in Erinnerung behalten. Ich habe
nie Vorliebe für großartige Photographier-Ansichten” (“Eichner Entwurf zu Mü Autobiogr.” from
“Erinnerungen an Amerika,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900
[Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006],
220). Interestingly, Nikolaus Lenau had written a friend eight days after arriving in Baltimore: “Brother,
these Americans have the souls of small shopkeepers that reek to the heavens. They are dead, stonedead as
far as intellectual life is concerned…. A Niagara-voice would be needed to teach these rascals that there
are higher goods than those struck off at the mint” (cited in Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, “Weary of Germany –
Weary of America: Perceptions of the United States in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” in Transatlantic
Images and Perceptions: Germany and America Since 1776, eds. David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-
Schmidt [Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute; and Cambridge, England: Cambridge University
Press, 1997], 71-72). For Caspar Butz, however, who had fled Germany in the context of 1848, Niagara
Falls was a symbol of the potency of New World freedom (Andrew Yox, “The Fate of Love: Nineteenth-
Century German American Poetry,” in Traveling between Worlds: German-American Encounters, eds.

Hoberg points out that during Münter’s subsequent travels with Kandinsky, she tends to avoid
photographing major tourist sites. At the same time, she notes that in a letter of November 12, 1904,
Kandinsky had requested that Münter obtain a Baedeker Guide to North Africa, and that their travels relate
closely to touristic circulation (“Gabriele Münter: Biographie und Photographie 1901 bis 1914,” in
Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2007], 18-19, 21, and 43 n. 23).
137 P.E. Roddy Collection, Southwest Collections, Texas Tech University.
cinematic series of photographs, as Isabelle Jansen notes (figs. 47-50). In addition, while Münther's photograph, *Woman with a parasol on the bank of the Mississippi* (fig. 51), departs from the magisterial panoramic arrangements of Thomas Cole or, to draw a more contemporaneous comparison, of Harry Miller, whose work we shall consider in the next chapter, the emphasis is on the panorama as backdrop to an excursion. If in fact Münther knew the Monet painting that Jansen reproduces as a possibility, the photograph establishes a contrast between the manicured fashionability of the figure and the spare backdrop, whose sublimity is undercut by the fact that subject and photographer act in and on it. In *Two women crossing a creek near the Rollermills* (fig. 52) from Moorefield, Münther aestheticizes the women's experience of traversing the rock-bridge, giving primacy to visual over embodied experience. On the cover of a notebook from Guion from 1900 Münther jots down an interesting array of English vocabulary words dovetailing with such an emphasis: scenerie, scenery, Edgar Allen Poe, bright, age, agents, concern, possibilities, useful, sensible, converse, pleasant, pathetic; doodles also appear in different handwritings for “Miß Ella,” various “M’s” and “G’s” with curlicues, and “GM.” Stewart suggests that the picturesque “is formed by the transformation of nature into art and thus the manipulation of flux into form, infinity into frame.” Representing her cultivation in this taming photograph, Münther draws connections to German art currents as she landscapes the figures; two examples are the panoramic descriptiveness of Ernst Kaiser and, still closer, the staged realism of Johann Georg von Dillis (figs. 53 and 54). In each of Münther’s photographs considered in this paragraph, she produces a dioramic figuration of nature, often with foregrounded touristic overtones.

The Moorefield photograph is a particularly clear illustration of a German-American landscape for Münther, and many of the images considered in this section also variously seek to

140 Kon. 36/3: 1900; Gabriele Münther- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
141 *On Longing*, 75.
assert a stabilizing function in the wake of effects of modern fragmentation, the concomitant interrogation of *Bildung*, and the elusiveness of *Heimat*. As Caren Kaplan writes,

> When the past is displaced, often to another location, the modern subject must travel to it, as it were. History becomes something to be established and managed through tours, exhibitions, and representational practices in cinema, literature, and other forms of cultural production. Displacement, then, mediates the paradoxical relationship between time and space in modernity. 142

The dislocations attending *Heimat*’s figuration are registered in Münter’s reproductions of photographs held by her relatives of her parents from their time in the United States, such as figure 55. Modernization enables extraordinary daily travel in time and space, but, as Münter herself shows, only at the price of simulacrum and mediation, an eliding condensation of history, and the imposition of a diasporic self.

Yet in my discussions here of theatres, *flânerie*, and dioramic representation I have offered insinuations of criticality within spectacularity – through excess, location, subversive laughter. To wish to recuperate Münter as actively interrogating or seeking to combat spectacularity, however, not only would elide the conservative impulse of her output; but it also would obfuscate the unique modes she developed of speaking through the challenges and opportunities surrounding daily representation. If we turn to a photograph of Mary Jane Allen in her living room (fig. 56), the registration of Münter’s difficulty of mastering the craft of indoor portrait photography, with the bed (?) peeking out from the lower left corner of the curtain, pokes a hole in dioramic illusionism. Here is a tattered writing related to that described by Luce Giard that, out of the unique playfulness enabled by snapshot photography, offers a humanizing connection between Münter and Mrs. Allen. This is not to negate the effects of scene; Mrs. Allen’s relationship to the trees outside in terms of value contrast against the dark curtain furthers the sense that she is lit from within. And one more example: in *Bessie Allen with Jennie Lee*,

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*Mrs. Allen, Jerusha Allen* (fig. 57), the figures are staged, pose themselves; there is an unreadable dialogue with the photographer.
Chapter three: coming to photography: three cartographies

While the circumstances surrounding Münter’s introduction to photography are unclear, in many respects, the medium was well suited to her articulation of the German project of Heimat. This focus is borne out in terms of her subject matter, which centers on her relatives and their pastimes, daily work, and immersion in the American landscape. Isabelle Jansen, who offers a useful breakdown of Münter’s photographic subjects, notes that approximately 200 of the

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1 While Gisela Kleine maintains that Münter received her Kodak on the occasion of her 22nd birthday (Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares [Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1990], 69), Annegret Hoberg interrogates this claim based on Münter’s assertion Emmy gave it to her in Guion (see this thesis, “Travels in America: Introduction,” n. 65), a statement which Hoberg rightly goes on to problematize. She concludes that, while it is unclear where Münter acquired her camera, it was certainly before her arrival to Plainview in 1899 due to extant photographs. Noting the existence of photographs she captioned “Marshall 1899,” she suggests that perhaps she obtained it there; if so, the Moorefield photographs would all have been shot in 1900 on her return visit (“Gabriele Münter in Amerika,” Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 24-26).

I would argue for either Moorefield or Marshall in 1899. In the Moorefield/Batesville area, there were a number of active photographers, including the Schreibers’ neighbor, Franklin Nill or Will (“Twelfth Census of the United States,” 1900, Microcopy T623, Roll 62, p. 113A; White River Regional Library, Batesville; I am grateful to Mary Miller for this information). In her discussion of period photographers, Helen Lindley discusses a W.H. Wade (a relative of Jim?), whose photograph studio in Oxford opened “sometime before 1900” (“Pioneer Photographers with Samples of Their Work,” The Izard County Historian 5.3 [July 1974]: 23). Regarding Moorefield, in one of Münter’s sketchbooks there is a representation of what looks like a camera on the “dutch pull out” (Kon. 37/2, p. 57); a nearby sketch is dated Moorefield 9.II.99, which suggests being in the ballpark with timing for Münter’s birthday on the 19th. Such information may not however be taken as conclusive. The photograph of the burning building (fig. 108, Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika) can be identified as the Third Harrison County Courthouse, whose blaze had started in the late afternoon of June 8, the very day of Münter’s arrival in Marshall. Unfortunately this should be discounted as evidence for Moorefield, though, due to the existence of the same image in a newspaper article, which reveals it to be from the local community; there is no negative for the image in the Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. If any photographs can be identified of Uncle Mike Schreiber, whom Münter saw on her first visit but who died before her return, or of the Schreiber Mill prior to its explosion, this would resolve the case for Moorefield.

In Marshall, the father of Mrs. J. Gaddis Allen (Mary Jane Bruce Scheuber, 1841-1902), Col. William McDonald Bruce (1813-1888), started a photography shop after the Civil War and operated it until his death (for this information, I am grateful to William F. Scheuber III for sharing a genealogy compiled by his father and others with me; Tom Rioux’s genealogical record also was useful for my study. An 1893 Marshall city directory includes a listing for Bruce & Corti, photographers, apparently run by a T.J. Bruce (General Directory of the City of Marshall for 1893 [The Standard Directory Company], 34-35). Mrs. Allen was the mother of Münter’s cousin, William Frederick Scheuber, Sr., and thus Münter’s aunt by marriage; upon her husband’s death in 1874, she had remarried in 1876. Given the number of photographs of Mrs. Allen, including the particularly humanizing, playful image discussed above (fig. 56, Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika), it is possible that she encouraged Münter’s photographic practice.
photographs are of her relatives, with a large percentage in figural groups. Münter also photographs unpopulated landscapes (according to Jansen in some 70 images), and attendant flora and fauna. Jansen points to the greater extensiveness of subject matter in Münter’s photographs than in her sketches, and her Bull’s Eye was transportable if somewhat cumbersome, with a weight of approximately 1½ pounds and dimensions of 4.7 x 4.7 x 5.9 inches. It held twelve-exposure rolls and made photographs measuring $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

A distensible temporal discourse with unique prerogatives to referentiality, even as it is paradoxically also a resource of order, the photographic medium was conducive to Münter’s lifewriting project. John Taylor refers to the desire for the possibility of stopping time, or appearing to do so, in photography. The medium caters for armchair time-travel, in which the viewer has the illusion of entering some other place and period through a magical window. At the same time, the viewer stays safely in place, and the act of time- and space-travel is purely speculative, encouraging day-dreams and reverie.

As an instrument for a primitivizing vision, photography also “perpetuates the past in an insidious fashion, denying time, presenting a timeless vision, an ‘ethnographic present’ and as such becomes another manifestation of anthropology’s atemporal discourse.” While the camera enables a time-travel for Münter to the past, photographs retain a unique pretense to (indexical) authenticity (William Henry Fox Talbot’s pencil of nature; Susan Sontag’s trace of reality).

Imbricated in the discourses of positivistic criminology I have mentioned (Alphonse Bertillon, Francis Galton), photography asserts particular truth claims resonant for Münter: “Because it was mechanical, photography was believed by many...to be a direct reflection of nature and reality,

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3 Ibid, 180.
evidence in support of facts.”8 Taylor describes a “shared assumption” among those describing or looking at landscape of

the authority of what they ‘took’ in photographs to be hard evidence or truth. They assumed this authority to be derived from the way photographs had a closer one-to-one relationship to reality than any other system of representation.... They combined the belief in truth and control with other systems of knowledge, such as taxonomies of natural science, which were also the languages of domination and distance.9

As such, the medium is particularly well qualified for the management of modern fragmentation and flux, an extension of the physiologies. Thus for example, in a discussion of the dislocating qualities of the World’s Columbian Exposition, Julie Brown describes photography as a tool for its management: “The world through the viewfinder was a precise, bounded, often controlled instant in time before the world dissolved again into the confusion of everyday life.”10 And snapshot photography was a unique tool for coping with the messiness of everyday life, in that the “easy availability of snapshots allowed people for the first time in history to arrange their lives in such a way that painful or unpleasant aspects were systematically erased.”11

Yet as is variously caught in each of these statements, photography, for all its insistent referentiality, repeatedly avers its elusiveness, is a “certain but fugitive testimony.”12 Or in another formulation: “The camera puts an end to time, but photographs are perpetual reminders of its passing.”13 Such a point is highlighted in Münter’s re-photographed image of her parents, a portrait that attests to photography’s enablement of an authentic fiction:

13 A dream of England, 89.
Though photography was intimately linked to the passage of time, to mutability and alienation, it also promised escape into permanence, with moments able to last for ever. Photography and tourism were the two means of time-travel which allowed tourists either to see the past or to journey to places which they believed to hold traces of earlier, unspoiled times. 14

Elizabeth Edwards refers to the “anthropological perception of photography – the quest for photographic realism and certainty, the authentication of the anthropological object, and indeed the ultimate failure, in positivist terms, of these endeavors.” 15 We shall discuss Münter’s ethnography in chapter four, but as my treatment of her spectacular travels has illustrated, for all her focus on fixing qualities of her Amerikaner, there is a fundamental instability at work in her overall project, as in the drawing of Allie Ware. This manifests in her photographic output in the registration of the subjects’ vantage, as through their interaction with Münter and in self-staging. In enabling a fluidity of selfhood, her photographic practice problematizes representation and capture of the moment. Sontag conveys photography’s slipperiness of reality and opportunity for manipulation: "photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire." 16

Catching the intertwining of openness and degradation, Sontag’s assertion communicates a deep-seated insecurity attending photographic representation and its access. Christopher Pinney observes that while photography is “often acclaimed as the apotheosis (either good or evil) of a Western civilization grounded in ocularism,” it “has always suffered ‘moments of unease,’” which include “a recurrent tension between photography’s ‘iconic’ and ‘indexical’ status” as well as “between ‘art’ and ‘verisimilitude.’” 17 Amateur photography (in distinction to snapshooting) was pitched by period writers such as Catharine Weed Barnes as an optimal site of engagement and work for women, 18 though as Jane Gover points out, their appropriateness for the medium

14 Ibid, 68.
16 On Photography. 4.
was often related to its construction as minor, and they might be resited through photography within domestic practice.\textsuperscript{19} In keeping with tropes of mechanical creativity in \textit{Godey’s} and discourses emphasizing women’s suitability for reproduction over production to which I have alluded,\textsuperscript{20} Gover points out for example that F. Holland Day was concerned that women’s use of the camera would denigrate photography’s status.\textsuperscript{21} If photography were well-suited to the gendered space of family chronicling I have mentioned, and Kodaking in particular due to its “connotations of spontaneity, naiveté, and intimacy,”\textsuperscript{22} its very capaciousness enables a play with documentation.

Elizabeth Flint Wade’s 1894 reference to the medium as “the handmaiden of science, the artist’s assistant, the tourist’s notetaker, the mainstay of the lecturer and historian, the chronicler of current events…the discoverer of unknown worlds” connects her engagement with it to illustration and tourism rather than high art.\textsuperscript{23} Her discourse echoes Charles Baudelaire’s, if with a more positive inflection:

Photography must, therefore, return to its true duty which is that of handmaid of the arts and sciences, but their very humble handmaid, like printing and shorthand, which have neither created nor supplemented literature. Let photography quickly enrich the traveller’s album and restore to his eyes the precision his memory may lack; let it adorn the library of the naturalist, magnify microscopic insects, even strengthen, with a few facts, the hypotheses of the astronomer; let it, in


\textsuperscript{20} Liz Wells and Derrick Price note that in “its early years,” photographs are seen as “mechanically produced and thus free of the selective discriminations of the human eye and hand. On precisely the same grounds, the medium was often regarded as falling outside the realm of art, as its assumed power of accurate, dispassionate recording appeared to displace the artist’s compositional creativity” (“Thinking about photography: debates, historically and now,” in \textit{Photography: A Critical Introduction}, ed. Liz Wells, 3rd Ed [London and New York: Routledge, 1996], 13). This de-emphasis on creative interpretation is also caught by the usage of the word “Kodak” in newspaper mastheads to construct the honesty of their reportage (West, \textit{Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia}, 22).

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The Positive Image}, 22.

\textsuperscript{22} West, \textit{Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia}, 35.

\textsuperscript{23} Cited in Gover, \textit{The Positive Image}, 28.
short, be the secretary and record-keeper of whomsoever needs absolute material accuracy for professional reasons.  

Such apparently subsidiary spaces serve however as a cover for spectatorial pleasure, as Wade suggests, or, for Münter, visual experience. Fostering the development of her visuality, in the medium of photography she manifests her interest in picturing and portraiture. Refuting the naiveté of snapshot photography, even as she highlights its posturing as such, Val Williams writes, “Removed from its traditional base of innocent revelation and placed instead within a concept of documentary order, precise in intention if sometimes eccentric in execution, its preoccupation with the family and with the passage of time would allow its role as a marker and a recorder to be registered.” Münter is clearly fascinated by the rich visual capture of photography; however, as we have begun to see, she also instances her location and probes the medium’s transparency. In its destabilization of truth claims, her engagement with photography helps her to problematize her access to representation and the autobiographical project.

To develop this issue, a first section in this chapter considers the relationship between Münter’s photographs and Kodak advertising and the ways in which her images negotiate discourses of the mobilized gaze. The issues here are extended into a sub-section concerning Münter’s engagement with a 19th-century tradition of America as adventure. Specifically, her points of connection from a daily writing of adventure to the masculinist narratives of Charles Siringo, Karl May, and Charles Sealsfield, as well as to Friedrich Gerstäcker’s discussions of women on the frontier, are explored with a focus on the issue of visual experience and the possibilities of virtual travel. Münter’s photograph album is the subject of the second section of this chapter, which probes its textualization of dailiness and authorship. A third group of readings addresses Münter’s relationship to the imperialist claims for photography via the lens of her documentation of Moorefield. Edwards suggests that photography “represented technological superiority harnessed to the delineation and control of the physical world, whether it be boundary

surveys, engineering schemes to exploit natural resources, or the description and classification of the population,” and in an oft-cited characterization, Sontag refers to photography’s “predatory” feature. As noted, Münter foregrounds the Treffsicherheit of her sketches; for her photographs, she is using a “Bull’s Eye.” A comparison in this section of Münter’s Arkansas photographs to three American portrayals of Arkansas from around the time of her travels seeks to illuminate aspects of her understanding of Heimat and thereby to problematize the documentary quality of her project. Through these three cartographies, I aim to elaborate aspects of the discursive fabric surrounding her photographic authorship. In the process, I shall demonstrate Münter’s engagement with photography to circumvent what for Roland Barthes is the medium’s banality and “infra-knowledge.” Against photography as the “absolute Particular, the sovereign Contingency, matte and somehow stupid, the This (this photograph, and not Photography), in short, what Lacan calls the Tuche, the Occasion, the Encounter, the Real, in its indefatigable expression,” Münter channels photography in service of authentic fiction and self-figuration.

**The Kodak Girl and the mobilized gaze**

Five years before Münter would set foot on American soil, Kodak launched the Kodak Girl to advertise its products. In many respects, the ideal she represented would overlap with Münter’s practice, if without the declarative glamour. As Nancy Martha West explains, Kodak constructed the icon around youth, fashionability, an athletic body, independence, and sense of adventure: “Sunburned, with hair flying in the wind, she travels in a canoe, on a steamship, in a

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28 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 4, 20, and 30. For a case study of the stabilizing function of snapshots for Vanessa Bell, see Williams, *Women Photographers: The Other Observers*. 

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motorcar; she walks, rides a bicycle, plays tennis, journeys to Japan.  

We have seen the importance of cycling for Münter, and in the United States the pastime is often paired with snapshot photography, as in Outing and Wilson’s Photographic Magazine features; in 1895 Kodak developed the Kartridge Kodak camera to fit a bike bar. The Kodak Girl’s explorations off the paradigmatic beaten path are communicated in her first appearance in the context of the Chicago World’s Fair (fig. 58). Positioned away from the main buildings in a natural setting, she and her companion have ventured out after a discovery. Engaging the viewer with seriousness (the photographer) and some timidity (her companion), the figures suggest a conspiratorial new mobility within a site of visibility, a quality especially caught in the companion’s body position. West argues that up until about 1900, Kodak advertisements emphasize the play and adventure of taking photographs and of travel, and that this then gives way to a nostalgic impulse to record memories.

A noteworthy feature of Münter’s photographic practice in America is the figuration of her mobilized gaze, which, as I shall show in this section, is imbricated within discourses of both adventure and nostalgia as Münter thematizes the issue of viewing itself. In “Guion church” (fig. 33) and “Hill with cedars” (fig. 59), both taken in Guion on March 7, 1900, Münter showcases her own perspective through the carriage wheel and buggy onto the openness of nature, dotted with trees and the toy-like church building. The sheer number of times she includes the carriage motif suggests it to be a metonym for the self. To be sure, it is possible that the inclusion of the carriage wheel was antiperformative, a kind of amateur glitch registering the need to shoot from the buggy, such a glitch indeed seems to be present at the upper-right corner of “Hill with Cedars.” Yet for all the difficulties Münter may have had with framing, there is no question that

29 Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia, 53-56.
30 Ibid, 41.
31 Ibid, 57.
32 Ibid, 13, 38, and passim.
33 I am grateful to Michelle Lamunière at Harvard’s Mongan Center for discussing this issue with me in a conversation of April 24, 2006.
she was supremely interested in the opportunity afforded by vehicles of viewing, as shown in such images as *View over a ship's outrigger onto the Mississippi, near St. Louis; View from the stern of the ocean steamer 'Pennsylvania' departing from New York;* and *View from the departing ocean steamer 'Pennsylvania' onto two sailboats* (figs. 60-62), in which she figures her vantage from the ship, her place of framing the view. The companion image to the first of this group, *Paddle-steamer on the Mississippi, near St. Louis* (fig. 63), goes a step further in representing this issue of enabled framing and aestheticization. Technology—of the camera, of the ship—is shown here as both a means to and mode of seeing, as a passport to visual adventure. Rather than understanding the formal qualities here as a “graphic effect, tantamount to a structuring stroke” offered by technology, with the rigging as a compositional element, though, in keeping with my prior discussion, I wish to argue for a more fundamental technologization of Münter’s vision. In other words, I would like to integrate the artistic components of her images with their motion and mediation. Oggenfuss recalls the allusion of the Bull’s Eye name to the eponymous window to suggest “the formal correspondence of looking through the view-finder and looking through a round window.” In other words, transparency is predicated upon technology, which problematizes it but opens new vistas in an overlap to Frank L. Baum’s mechanical moonlit nights and views of Venice.

In an instructive contextualization of the mobilized gaze, Anne Friedberg explains:

A variety of architectural forms also emerged in the nineteenth century which facilitated and encouraged a pedestrian mobilized gaze—exhibition halls, winter-gardens, arcades, department stores, museums. The pedestrian in a glass enclosed winter-garden or exhibition hall enjoyed an endless summer; arcades protected against weather; museums brought artifacts of the past into a tourable present. As the technical advances of iron and glass architecture changed the temporal concept of the seasonal, institutional museology changed the relation to the past. And just as machines of transport (from the railway to the *trottoir rolant*) produced a new experience of distance and time, these architectural spaces were, in a sense, machines of timelessness,

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34 “…zeichnerische Wirkung, gleichwertig dem strukturierenden Strich” (Isabelle Jansen, “Die Bilderwelt der Amerika-Photos von Gabriele Münter,” in *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 183).
35 “…die formale Übereinstimmung des Blicks durch den Kamerasucher mit dem Blick durch ein rundes Fenster hin” (see this chapter, n. 27).
producing a derealized sense of the present and a detemporalized sense of the real. Coincident with the new mobilities produced by changes in transportation, architecture and urban planning, photography brought with it a virtual gaze, one that brought the past to the present, the distant to the near, the miniscule to its enlargement. And machines of virtual transport (the panorama, the diorama, and later, the cinema) extended the virtual gaze of photography to provide virtual mobility. 36

Conquering space with a modernizing device of portable, instantaneous execution, Münter’s “Guion church” and “Hill with cedars” convey the dislocations to which Friedberg alludes in service of an imperial vision and the figuration of originary nature; as such, Münter constructs her images as sites of virgin documentation. Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes argue that “[i]n the eyes of Europeans, the Kodak was typically American in a number of ways. It combined production techniques using replaceable parts with a design intended to be user friendly, and, most importantly, it aimed at democratizing the tool of photography.” 37 While the Kodak was cast as portable, efficient, and delightfully modern, the Kodak Girl was often portrayed in idealized nature to allow for a nostalgic reading as well. 38 This twinning of course sought to undercut the rational process of Kodaking and to position it through naivety, even infantility, as a woman’s hobby. 39

Münter seems to wish to temporalize nature with an insertion of this expansive, if evacuated, dailiness. While train travel afforded access to new domains, as Wolfgang Schivelbusch points out, the cost of such reach was the loss of space “savored” on the course in between through slower forms of transport. 40 It is precisely this that Münter appears to want to recuperate through her locatedness of the carriage wheel. Writing of the old transport technology, Schivelbusch suggests:

Organically embedded in nature as it was, that technology, in its mimetic relationship to the space traversed, permitted the traveler to perceive that space as a living entity. What Bergson called the

38 West, Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia 70.
39 Ibid., 7, 41, 53, 75, and passim.
durée (duration, the time spent getting from one place to another on a road) is not an objective mathematical unit, but a subjective perception of space-time.\textsuperscript{41}

Though in “Hill with cedars” Münter’s carriage wheel effects a barrier from the scenes she observes, its earth is figured at such crisp proximity that details are legible to almost synaesthetic effect. In contradistinction to Schivelbusch’s “projectile” train travel,\textsuperscript{42} the earth invites caressing contemplation.

Devices such as the carriage wheel figure Münter’s traveling about on the open road and her process of capture as a situated knowledge. Ulrich Pohlmann relates Münter’s photographs to an image taken from an automobile by Jacques Henri Lartigue from 1907,\textsuperscript{43} a date West cites as the beginning of automobile images in Kodak advertising.\textsuperscript{44} A text for a 1907 Kodak advertisement describing “The Kodak Story” notes, “Of summer days grows in charm as the months go by – it’s always interesting – it’s personal – it tells of the places, the people and the incidents from your point of view – just as you saw them” (fig. 64). A Kodak, then, ostensibly enables new forms of lifewriting; as West suggests, for all the emphasis on simplicity, the 1889 slogan, “You Press the Button, We Do the Rest,” foregrounds the “You” as new practitioner.\textsuperscript{45} Figuring the excitement of the story, here the Kodak Girl photographs her man fixing the car. In a similar vein, Emmy shoots Münter and Willie checking out the buggy that had tipped over when Münter was riding in it alone (fig. 65). For both the Kodak Girl and the Münter sisters, the camera is trotted out to document the adventures surrounding travel on the open road, and, in the Münters’ case, to represent female independence and the exoticism of America. Münter’s photograph, “Boys playing between Abilene and Lake Abilene, on the day of our departure,” on May 17, 1900 (fig. 66) showcases the possibility of encounter, spontaneity, and chance of the

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid. 36.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, 55.
\textsuperscript{43} “Die Fragilität des Augenblicks: Gabriele Münters Photographien der USA-Reise im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen (Moment)Photographie,” in Gabriele Münter. \textit{Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900} (Munich: Gabriele Münter- and Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006), 211.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia}, 66.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 8.
open road. A 1917 Kodak advertisement will run: “Wherever the purr of your motor lures you, wherever the call of the road leads you, there you will find pictures, untaken pictures that invite your Kodak.”46 Here in Münter’s piggy-backed kids, the everyday as daily record overlaps with quotidian chance adventures of the street.

Münter’s locatedness diverges from what Taylor perceives as the “main features” of landscape writing and surveying, namely “to conceal the author, to place the viewer at the author’s vantage point, and to represent the view as the result and sign of order.”47 Location does not, however, necessarily imply criticality, as Caren Kaplan points out, in that it functions as both a marker of Western ‘interest’ in other cultures and signals the formation of diasporic identities. Whether it encourages resistance to hegemonic formations, whether it becomes its own academic reification – turning into an instrument of hegemony itself – or whether it marks important shifts in discourses of location and displacement depends, not surprisingly, upon who utilizes the concept in what particular context.48

A 1905 advertisement for “The Kodak Girl in Fair Japan” (fig. 67) communicates the expanded field and problematic of visual capture and (armchair) travel Kodak allows. A period advertisement runs: “No trouble in getting KODAK films in any part of the world.”49 Like a caption, the motif of the carriage wheel anchors Münter’s connection to and possession of the land, in keeping with a touristic mode of engagement: “The typical tourist experience is...to see named scenes through a frame, such as the hotel window, the car windscreen or the window of the coach.”50 And this is specifically in keeping with Kodak’s targeted audience, in that in hoped to instill a “new breed of amateurs” outside the category of the scholarly “gentleman amateur” with impeccable taste. This group would instead be a (perhaps female) middle-class amateur interested in amusement and ownership.51 As we shall discuss further in a treatment of her

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46 Cited in West, Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia, 67.
47 A dream of England, 34.
51 West, Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia, 40-41.
ethnography in chapter four, Münter does not appear to interrogate her privilege or her assumptions surrounding and domestication of her American subjects. Thus, while location serves to foreground issues of her authority, she fails to instance what Graham Huggan calls “counter-travel.”52 Her retrospective statement, “But the freedom in endless nature was beautiful. And the good people were fun,” suggests some problematic issues when positioned against her over-the-top mushroom of children.

Consider for example the idyllic View over a fence into the landscape (fig. 68), in which the graceful sweep of nature is framed as landscape by the rough-hewn fence and overhanging tree-canopy. Münter elaborates her own approach to the established visual strategy of using the tree as a compositional anchor in a pair of framed thumbnail pencil drawings that she made just before her departure for the United States.53 Here the eye is invited to roam back into deep space over lush fields, trees, and rolling hills: the scene looks edenic, utopian in the context of Lebensraum. Yet contrary to such a reading of prelapsarian nature, the land has been claimed by fencing in an emblematic gesture of settlement of the United States. Münter sent a copy of this photograph to the Grahams and captioned it on the back: “Scene in Arkansas. Going to the caves.”54 Speaking its commodification, this discourse also foregrounds its quest for wholeness; as Dean MacCannell notes, “Sightseeing is a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience. Of course, it is doomed to eventual failure.”55

For all the construction of authenticity in Münter’s assertion, it is evocative for qualities of circulation, breathing room, and adventure informing her photographic practice which, as I have suggested, offers new possibilities within visuality. As Liz Wells and Derrick Price put it in

53 Kon. 37/2: 1898/99, p. 21; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. Jansen similarly notes that Münter often uses organizing elements such as a fence or tree to build a formal frame as here (“Die Bilderwelt der Amerika-Photos von Gabriele Münter,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 181).
54 Roddy Collection, Southwest Collections, Texas Tech University.
their discussion of photography, “Our vision will be changed because we can see the world from unfamiliar viewpoints, for instance through a microscope, from the top of high buildings, from under the sea.”56 I have mentioned overlaps between Münter’s photographs and early cinema, and here I would like to connect her four photographs of the sunset from the S.S. Pennsylvania (figs. 47-50) to three images made by amateur photographer (and lawyer friend of George Eastman) Walter Hubble with a Kodak No. 2 showing his excursion on an electric launch along the North Canal at the Chicago World’s Fair (figs. 69-71). The seriality of Hubble’s photographs evokes a “type of cinematic reproduction of the viewer’s experience” of going under the bridge;57 the surrogate viewer would re-appear in Thomas Edison’s 1901 eleven-minute film, “A Trip around the Pan-American Exposition,” in which the camera is positioned behind the man steering the boat. Despite the convergence between Münter’s and Hubble’s series, a significant difference has to do with Münter’s greater emphasis on aesthetics and composition than on the experience of movement, as in the Hubble grouping. And this is not simply attributable to the Romanticizing subject matter of the sunset, as her aestheticizing views of Dewey’s Arch suggest. In keeping with Rydell and Kroes’s point about this Exposition’s ignition of culture industries, Kodak had produced a special exposition spool holding 200 exposures, twice the regular number, and advertised, “To get value received the amateur must take a large number of pictures in a day.”58 Even as she admits movement across her series, in comparison to Hubble Münter seems to hold out for the particular moment and for the presence of the individual image. As such, she appears to try to transform a tourist’s glance into the traveler’s gaze, as in Taylor’s formulation: “Gazing seeks to confine what is elusive, and counter the fleeting moment with a prolonged look which in

57 Brown, Contesting Images, 100.
58 Cited in ibid, 96.
itself is a sign of permanence. It stands in strict opposition to the glance, which is a subversive and furtive look.” 59

West argues that in seeking to showcase “every imaginable spectacle and site of interest, fairs conditioned visitors to see the act of viewing as a form of consumption, and thus to identify leisure with an abundance of visual sensations, distractions, and mobility in an era characterized by a never-ending stream of mass-produced goods and amusements.” 60 As noted, Münter’s subject matter is expanded in her photographs in comparison to her sketches, a point that relates to Sontag’s assertion, “From its start, photography implied the capture of the largest number of subjects. Painting never had so imperial a scope.” 61 To develop Münter’s relationship to this discourse of consumption, it is helpful to turn to what appears to be a thematization in her American photographs of viewing subjects.

These include for example “Texas Ft. House” (fig. 72), in which a dog’s “gaze,” in keeping with the body position, seems to direct us into the image toward the horses, so that the animal becomes a surrogate viewer. Young farmer with a herd of cattle (fig. 73) operates similarly, although here the subject harnesses the camera’s unique opportunities for performance and thus clearly connects to Münter in his balletic display of Texas accoutrement. In Holiday parade with female spectators in the foreground, Marshall (fig. 74), we look at the figures’ details of dress and then intuit their gaze toward the float so that they, too, instruct us in viewing what is undoubtedly a 4th-of-July celebration. Far removed from the Romantic empathy of the figure shown from behind viewing nature, Münter depicts them as part of the spectacle itself. Yet the back view has other connotations too. In a discussion of instances of required payment of individuals in the living-people exhibits at the 1893 World’s Fair and of some subjects’ displeasure at having their likeness captured, Brown mentions photographs of subjects from

60 Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia, 61.
61 On Photography, 7.
behind or receding from the lens (fig. 75). Such a power relation recalls Sontag’s understanding of photographs as pieces of reality available for purchase. Thus in this photograph Münter appears to assert the authority of her gaze, to connect herself to the viewers (who become an index of presence for her) and also to distinguish herself from them. Her gaze integrates viewer and attraction though the strategies of linking the female viewers and the float through patternization and of bracketing the image by the arriving carriages and the planted male onlooker. In the first two images, however, Münter seems to open up and poke fun at the idea of the surrogate viewer. As these three photographs begin to suggest, the camera not only enables new subjects for Münter and new subjects’ access to visibility, but also new viewing perspectives in this mobilization of the gaze.

In enabling Charly’s vicarious travel, Münter instructs him in viewing, a role that fosters her authorship of imagined community. Yet beyond this specific position, the issue of the viewing public had crucial cultural relevance in Germany in the fin-de-siècle. In a treatment of Völkerschauen resonant for Münter’s photographs and for the discussion in chapter four of the ethnography of Münter’s America practice, Sierra Bruckner suggests that “the ways that the public ‘looked’ (schauen) was consistently at the center of the discourse of ethnography.”

Bruckner explains that Völkerschauen in their early incarnation “taught the public how to ‘see.’” As one author of an exhibition brochure explained, the public could learn to practice a positivistic gaze similar to that of contemporary scholars by observing scientists at work at the Völkerschau.” Indeed:

scientists were as much a part of the show as the exotic people on display; the presence of specialists observing, measuring, and quantifying the bodies and behavior of the ‘natives,’ frequently in front of onlookers, helped legitimize the Völkerschauen in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, scholars contributed to the spectacle by taking notes on language, recording songs and proverbs, and measuring skulls and limbs.

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62 Contested Images, 110 and 112-113.
64 Ibid, 138-139.
Yet scientific interest in these events peaked in the mid-1890s. As part of what she describes as a movement from contemplation to consumption, Bruckner notes that after 1900 the *Völkerschauen* “moved away from an effort at teaching spectators how to see, describing instead what the observer should see, smell, and hear. Spectators were no longer encouraged to participate as critical observers but rather were animated to lose themselves in the event.”

Thus at the beginning of the century:

Popular ethnography came to be associated not with a cultivated milieu, but rather one in which bourgeois behavior had ceased to exist.... the crowds of spectators – much like the scientists – came to be perceived as an element of the show. Indeed, by the turn of the century, middle-class critics increasingly focused on the crowds and characterized them as an uneducated, *schaulustige* proletariat.

Despite Münter’s apparent interest in the “individual” photograph, as opposed to it as a cog in/of motion, her depictions relate to this later moment, for, as Bruckner notes, the *Völkerschau* “asserted the theatricality of its performers as well as the role of the spectators – both at the exhibition and through the press – as part of the representation itself.”

Viewing is a leitmotif of Münter’s America practice, even as there is not a tenor of critique of her viewers or *Schaulust*; instead there is an awareness that looking itself is part of the spectacle, both by her subjects and as objects of the gaze. This again recalls the fact that the *physiologies* included the *flâneur*. Display is foregrounded, albeit with potential for subversion in the dog-as-viewer and idiosyncratic farmer.

As these photographs illustrate, within Münter’s American photographic practice there is a tension between being the subject and object of the gaze. Here it is useful to return to the Kodak Girl as cultural authority. In her figuration on the cover for the New York-issued *Truth* magazine that had come out less than two weeks before Münter’s arrival there (fig. 76), the camera’s enablement of female mobility becomes conflated with that of fashionable display and

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commodification. Her iconic femininity thus needs to be brought into West’s assessment: “The image clearly conveys her autonomy: she dresses practically, walks purposefully, and apparently requires no man (only her female servant) to help her with her luggage.”

Elizabeth Wilson is more thoughtful in her discussion of the related figure of the Gibson Girl, introduced in 1890, who “epitomized the ‘New Woman’ with free and easy ways, whose almost masculine attire only enhanced her femininity.” West rightly notes that “independence was manifested in the Gibson Girl’s participation in athletic activities and choice of costume rather than a commitment to societal reform,” though she would be harnessed to causes of reform by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and others.

Even Edward Wheeler’s Kodak Kate, the San Francisco “ally” of his Deadwood Dick who appears in several stories in his series, is caught in this tension of looking and being looked at. Deadwood Dick notes that he “[n]ever took up a helper who pleased me half so well. Hang me if she isn’t as good as a second self.” Harnessing her Kodak as evidence, this “’Nelly Bly’ of San Francisco,” a reporter-cum-detective hired by the Secret Service, can “bag” a likeness. Yet she is also “the petite lady” and “the little female detective,” and, at one story’s end, she “was prettily attired, and looked anything but a fearless detective and expert reporter,” so that “Deadwood Dick was charmed at this new revelation of her true self,” and asked for a photograph of her.

In keeping with this conflation of subject and object status and foregrounded theatricality, Münter harnesses the technology of the camera to performative ends in a vein reminiscent of Alice Austen’s self-styled “high jinks” involving staged intoxication on lemonade or tea, as well as cross-dressing scenarios (figs. 77-79). Thus in Münter’s photograph of Bruce Allen (left) and

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68 Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia, 58.
70 Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia, 117.
a companion in an interior in Marshall (fig. 80), the figures have suppressed smiles: looking away deliberately from the camera which is capturing them at proximity, they register its presence.

And in a mini-series Münter illustrates photography’s unique possibilities for fluid theatrical adventures and performative selfhood (figs. 81-83). Less overtly aestheticizing in terms of tonalities, framing, and pose than the sunset and Dewey images, or the photographs of the dog, gesticulating farmer, and even the 4th-of-July viewers, for example, these depictions highlight Münter’s engagement with the theatricality of the moment. In the different genre of art photography, Mary Warner Marien evokes its role of theatrical uplift in a tension between aesthetics, moralization, and scripted underpinnings by noting that it

blended theater, printmaking, and painting with photography. Actors or other players were posed singly or in a tableau vivant…. For the most part, these images rendered original conceptions, illustrating religious moral precepts often in the manner of maudlin genre painting and popular Victorian prints. By partaking in the established didactic function of fine arts, High Art photographers attempted to skirt objections to the medium’s inartistic verisimilitude. 72

Yet while Münter’s Woman reading in profile (fig. 84) indeed overlaps with 17th-century Dutch painting, 73 the image has a very different resonance in the context of the quilted backdrop and emergence in photography as a period parlor game. 74 Developing this argument, Münter’s (purely speculative) relationship to Johannes Vermeer takes an interesting turn in Two men with a glass and bottles on a veranda (fig. 85), which reworks the invitational Brunswick Girl with a Wineglass, for example, to at least partly collaborative mock propositionality with typological overtones. As such, Münter’s photographs relate to the enacted caricature of Frances Benjamin Johnston as a new woman (fig. 86), if in a less directly critical mode. If some of Münter’s images

74 Gover observes that women’s magazines in the 1880s and 1890s often advocated photography’s primacy of place among other acceptable parlor activities for young women (The Positive Image, 20). And Marilyn Ferris Motz explains, “Late nineteenth-century amateur photographs often show people clowning for the camera: mocking traditional poses, dressing in humorous costumes, experimenting with peculiar settings…. Faster shutter speeds….freed the subjects of photographs from the solemn, stiff poses required in the early days of studio photography…. The process of taking a photograph apparently was often a form of group entertainment” (“Visual Autobiography: Photograph Albums of Turn-of-the-Century Midwestern Women,” in American Quarterly 41.1 [March 1989]: 80.
poke fun at patriarchal convention, it bears recalling that this fluidity of perspective nevertheless is inscribed within her overall taxonomy of America.

As the above examples begin to suggest, Münter’s photographs reveal tensions surrounding high and low, original and copy, and contemplation and consumption. Channeling these rich impurities of her daily practice, Münter fashions variously idiosyncratic solutions. In this context, the representation of the carriage wheel is an apt summation of her location in the “derealized,” “detemporalized” writing of adventure and nostalgia. More specifically, as I shall argue in the following section, in its accentuation of Münter’s visual experience it belongs to a strategy for her inscription of adventure within a Wild West Heimat.

**Adventuring and visual experience**

As we have seen, Münter’s Bull’s Eye allows her to create adventures surrounding traveling, tourism, and spectacularity; and it may be recalled that she refers to her sketches in the Roditi interview as “private notations of visual experiences.” Applying Sontag to Münter prompts the question of how the virtual enables travel experiences precluded by determinations of identity in that she writes of the “promise inherent in photography from its very beginning: to democratize all experiences by translating them into images.”75 This section takes up the question of the possibilities and challenges surrounding Münter’s engagement with photography and other modes of visual experience in her project of self-representation within a tradition of America as adventure.

Münter’s decision to initiate her photograph album with an image from the cowboy roundup foregrounds her adventurism with an implicit inscription of action scenes between Indians and whites promoted for example in Buffalo Bill’s 1890-91 tournée in various places in Germany and subsequently by German circuses such as the Althoff, Hagenbeck, and Sarrasani, as

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75 *On Photography*, 7.
well as by groups at fairground shows. 76 We know from Münter’s 1897 pocket calendar for example that she attended the Circus E. Schumann and the Circus Mehl. Beginning her album with the roundup connects her travels to widespread German perceptions of the United States: by the time of her departure, the Wild West was seared in the popular imagination as an image of America, a synecdoche even, due to attendance figures and, still more importantly, the extensiveness of press coverage of Wild West shows, as well as Buffalo Bill’s overt positioning of his show as America, as Karl Markus Kreis suggests. 77 Yet as we also know, Münter’s Llano Estacado is a detached, problematizing panoramic view.

To begin to understand the resonance of the twinning of virtual and embodied forms of travel for Münter’s experience, it is instructive to turn briefly to popular literary variants of adventuring in the American landscape. Siringo’s Texas Cowboy is an exhausting tale of restless rough and tumble featuring hard drinking, carousing, spending, and lost jobs; hard work and fighting; scheming, swindling, and getting conned; horse racing, steer roping, and thief chasing; encounters with Billy the Kid and Native Americans; hunting and dehydration; and incredible physical stamina. As J. Frank Dobie puts it in his introduction,

Siringo had five themes: his experience on the range; Billy the Kid, whom he chased as a cowboy; Pinkerton’s National Detective Agency, for which he worked for twenty-two years; tough men and tough experiences that he met as a detective; and then more tough men. He had an inclination to write about women but suppressed it. 78

Important parts of Siringo’s chronicle unfold on the Llano Estacado, which May, conversely, had (fittingly) mythologized without ever visiting. 79

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78 In A Texas Cowboy or, Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony Taken from Real Life by Chas. A. Siringo, an Old Stove up “Cow Puncher, Who Has Spent Nearly Twenty Years on the Great Western Cattle Ranges (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950), x.
79 Discussing this point, Dan Flores goes so far as to assert that May achieved a construction of it as “one of the most widely recognized toponyms of the American West” (anerkanntesten Toponyme des amerikanischen Westens: “Der ’wirkliche’ Llano Estacado,” in Karl May im Llano Estacado, eds. Meredith McClain and Reinhold Wolff [Husum: Hansa Verlag, 2004], 61).
But adventure is of course what defines Old Shatterhand, as in Sam Hawkins’s bulletin:

Never saw a buffalo before, and kills two of the biggest; never saw mustangs before, and culls my Nancy out of a herd of ’em; never saw a grizzly, but kills one with only his knife, and with the same knife kills the biggest, baddest Indian knife-fighter I ever saw, without losin’ a drop of his own blood! Dick, Will, come look at this young surveyor-lad from another country.80

Sam’s speech induces Will to call for divesting Old Shatterhand of his “greenhorn” designation, and his fighting vigor earns him the name “Old Shatterhand”: “his fist has so much power that he strikes his enemy to the ground with only one blow.” And Old Shatterhand tells Winnetou that he left his native country “from a desire for adventure…to seek my fortune here on this side of the Big Water,” including the “riches” of “wisdom, experience, health, honor, glory, and the respect of my fellow human beings.” There is even less meaningful space for women in May’s universe of “ideal homosexuality” and “hard-fighting, masculine life;” as Old Shatterhand explains, “I wasn’t ready for home and family, here or elsewhere. There were too many adventures still to be experienced, and having a wife would put a dead stop to further adventuring.”

Such sources would seem to have little to say to Münter due to their disregard (May) and somewhat off-color figuration (Siringo). This also appears to be the case for Sealsfield, whose Colonel Morse regales his audience with his adventurist tale of the chase of a mustang, which results in his five-day loss in Texas in “The Jacinto Prairie.” Against the intoxicatingly virginal Texan landscape, Sealsfield figures Morse’s patriarchal transfiguration. In a discussion of nineteenth-century German-American immigrant literature, Dorothea Stuecher notes that women are for the most part “simply absent, invisibly tending immigrant hearths,” and that the literature operates

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almost universally from a male perspective, highlighting man’s wrestling with the elements of destiny and man’s victories and defeats. Many women writers followed this model, depending on male protagonists or authorial voices to tell their stories. This suggests that from the very beginning, the immigrant experience was conceived as a male journey and challenge.\(^{85}\)

While the prognosis from this cursory sketch appears dim indeed regarding useful models for Münter’s travel adventures and self figuration, Gerstäcker was one of the few popular German writers on America to treat women on the frontier, a lack he acknowledges in his 1845 “Women of the Backwoods,” which was first published in Das Ausland: Ein Tagblatt für Kunde des geistigen und sittlichen Lebens der Völker and subsequently in his 1847 collection, Mississippi-Bilder: Licht- und Schattenseiten transatlantischen Lebens. An ethnography of women’s everyday tasks, the story appeals to readers’ curiosity in its writing of the adventure of dailiness.

“Early in the morning,” he begins, his female figure prepares breakfast for her family. In a wooden bowl she mixes coarse cornmeal with water and salt to a thick batter. She beats it flat on an iron lid and then places it angled toward the glowing coals. She has no coffee mill, but knows how to do without. The roasted beans she places in a tin hunting beaker of her husband’s and grinds them fine with the handle of his tomahawk.\(^{86}\)

The story goes on to recount the female protagonist’s travails after her husband is killed in the wilderness by a rattlesnake when the pair is journeying with their two young children. Though Gerstäcker’s women are inherently delicate, on the frontier they rise to the occasion when their men are absent. Exhausted and starving, the protagonist displays her independence and competence, braving wolves and shooting turkeys to survive until she and her children are rescued by a kind stranger.

In various ways and to different extents, Münter’s portrait of America overlaps with the discussions of these writers. If the differences between Münter and Old Shatterhand appear laughable, there is an important convergence in the explorer discourse of their figurations, as in

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\(^{85}\) Twice Removed: The Experience of German-American Woman Writers in The Nineteenth Century (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 50-51.

the nationalist geography of their presentation of everyday “customs.” May’s Charly (aka Old Shatterhand-in-training) is to “explore and survey” nature in preparation for a railway line, which “involved time-consuming rides, strenuous climbing, and the taking of many trial measurements for comparison.” America is a space of measurement for Münter too, as I have emphasized; and her discourse also builds tales worth recounting regarding its tough going. As noted, she is forced to undergo the frightening experience of having her buggy tip over. In a more light-hearted vein, she mentions trying to heave the sack of flour back up that had tumbled off her horse while on a riding excursion alone; and she also photographs a carriage whose passage is blocked by a flooded road. The challenges of buggy travel appear of course in other accounts too: Gerstäcker’s “The Young Schoolmaster” includes an incident about the wagon getting stuck in the mud in which a 17-year-old carpenter’s daughter good-naturedly jumps out into swamp water. And in Helen Violet von Zehmen’s retrospective account of her 1882-1890 America travels, a farmer picks her up in the prairie to give her a lift to town, but she has to perch on the side rail of his wagon since there are no seats. In Münter’s “Wagonwreck” (fig. 65), however, what is portrayed is the survey of the damage the next day; it is telling that Willie touches the buggy while Münter is positioned in a vein of careful observation behind the tree. For Münter’s American output not only tends to avoid figuring the “strenuous” body; but presentations of her own body are few as well.

While Old Shatterhand engages a course of “strenuous activity” of “hunting, trapping, fighting, tracking, and lore of the forest and plain” as well as “stalking” and tests of intense

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87 As Richard Cracoft points out, Old Shatterhand’s receipt of his name is a custom of the West, and May’s works frequently include such ostensible traditions (“Siegfried mit Bärenfellmütze,” in Karl May im Llano Estacado, eds. Meredith McClain and Reinhold Wolff [Husum: Hansa Verlag, 2004], 128-143: 131).
physical stamina, Münter endures the test of being rowed in a boat on Sue Belle Lake on a summer day sporting a monumental hat (left in fig. 87). The photograph of her with the Scheubers on the idyllic outing screens out the sweating bodies; in period Marshall, aesthetics enable transcendence of the body, which, nevertheless, is acknowledged. An article from the Marshall Evening Messenger notes:

August is the month of months when a woman finds it a trying task to look cool and dainty; when the reds, pinks, vivid green and other colors suggestive of heat must be laid aside for the creams, pale blues and pale yellows. Here is a becoming bodice and toque designed for afternoon use.

A comparison of a photograph of Münter on horseback (fig. 35 upper right) to Siringo’s self-figuration on the cover of the 1888 text (fig. 88) in her estate—a cover upon which she wrote her name—points to her uneasy fit within the masculinist framing of the Wild West I have outlined. With reins in his left hand and his right behind his back, Siringo is astride Whisky-peat facing the viewer with his rifle; bulls are in the background. Also holding the reins in her left hand, Münter is perched atop Brown Jug in a sidesaddle position and encounters the onlooker from a ¾ view. Behind her is the room in which she stayed on her visit with the Grahams, their four trees, and what appears to be hanging laundry. The photograph is then inserted into the ethnographic dailiness of her album, a reading facilitated by its caption, the decorative framing, and the juxtaposition to the other images.

As such comparisons illustrate, Münter’s adventuring spans a dailiness of embodied, domestic repetition and of encounter as it engages with the discursive framework of Siringo, May, and others. In its way, Siringo’s meanderingly repetitive, episodic concatenation of actions and figuration of restlessness catches both meanings of dailiness too; yet the numerous editions of A Texas Cowboy attest to a hunger for his thrilling dailiness. Thus his irreverent plainspoken tone often affirms his machismo, as for example in his discussion of building his Z-shaped dugout:

My idea in making it so crooked was, to keep the Indians, should any happen along at night, from seeing my fire. After getting established in my new quarters I put out quite a number of wolf

92 "For women and home: items of interest for maids and matrons," July 5, 1899.
baits and next morning in going to look at them found several dead wolves besides scores of
skunks, etc. But they were frozen too stiff to skin, therefore I left them until a warmer day.

However, his animal adventures are not over, as a steer happens to fall on the roof of the dugout:
“Talk about your ticklish places! That was truly one of them; a steer jammed in between me and
daylight, and a hot fire roasting me by inches.”\textsuperscript{93} If in relationship to such accounts Münter’s
adventuring appears somewhat unsatisfying, a retrospective account of a young girl’s life in the
Panhandle in the 1890s suggests that it is precisely because of her gendered assignment of
dailiness on the frontier that she is so courageous:

Most all the girls were the proud possessors of side-saddles. Even though it was necessary for
some girls to ride a man’s saddle, they always sat sideways on it. For a girl to ride astride was
unthinkable…. [W]hile we respect the convictions behind the custom we have since learned that
there was more hazard to life and limb, more difficulty in maintaining a modest appearance, and
greater discomfort to the horse in the side-saddle regime. Some of the girls became expert at
horseback riding even with the conventional handicap, and in the everyday exploits of our wild
free life they could ride a horse bareback, sitting on one side, as they would run, turn, and
suddenly halt in the maneuvers of driving unwilling cows. However, I did not become so
proficient, although I preferred horseback riding to eating.\textsuperscript{94}

As this example demonstrates, Münter’s adventures are less readable or obviously impressive
than Siringo’s and others; as I shall argue presently, she appears in some respects to have
cultivated their illegibility. Here, though, different aspects of Münter’s adventuring are
illuminated because of the writer’s vantage on dailiness. In her discussion of Texas “pioneer”
experience, the same source maintains, “The lives of these people were not chains of thrilling
escapades…. Underneath, it was the little incidents, the everyday endeavors, that were so
important in molding characters and preparing each for his bout with the inevitable hardships and
obstacles.”\textsuperscript{95} Thus written traces concerning Münter’s American adventuring are few and slight.
For example, her departure from Marshall was picked up in by the \textit{Messenger}: “The Misses

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\textsuperscript{93} A \textit{Texas Cowboy}, 86-87.
\textsuperscript{94} Memoir written by Mrs. Elizabeth Montgomery Neelley of life in the early-to-mid 1890s, “Pioneers-Life
of Early Settlers. Told by Native Daughter of State,” written for the \textit{Semi-Weekly Farm News}, 38;
Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Ibid}, 1.
Munter of Germany, and Miss Minnie Donahue of Plainview, went to Plainview yesterday to spend a few months.\textsuperscript{96}

If we return to the roundup, while these events were dedicated to locating and branding cattle, period commentators underscore their social function for wranglers, whose work was necessarily isolated for lengthy periods. Lassoing contests and other displays of skill were intended to establish roundups as community events. Münter attended the roundup because of Uncle Joe Donohoo’s decision to hold his son Carl’s wedding to Octavia Winn (“Tavie”) there in August, a wedding still recorded in the regional literature of Texas; uniting two of the early families of Plainview, it was a big event. The reunion, of which Joe was the president, was advertised as a “grand celebration of confederates and cowboys.” A five-day event held on the Plainview fair grounds, it sought to unite a widely dispersed group, as suggested by its advertisement that it was “free to all: free grounds, free grass and free water.”\textsuperscript{97} In an overlap to the St. Louis Exposition, it was particularly keen to attract veterans of the Confederacy (who would be on hand performing exercises) and of course the cowboys, who would offer displays such as “[r]oping contests, tournament riding and broncho busting.” In addition, there would be a “Kowboy Karnival,” a “fat stock show,” baseball, preachings from different churches in town, and music from a brass band. In a memoir, T. C. Thompson writes that in the 1890s, about once a year there would be a Plains Reunion lasting usually three days and being held at Plainview, Tulia or Canyon. People came from all over the area in wagon, buggies, carts, or on horseback. Rodeo roping, races, greased pig catching and other contests, dancing and all forms of entertainment were kept going. Barbecue cooking furnished meat, women brought some [sic] baked cakes and pies and other home cooked foods. Visiting! Such visiting one never sees today.\textsuperscript{98}

In her album below the photograph from the cowboy reunion, Münter placed a photograph of the Plainview Courthouse with two figures on horseback in front of it. One of them seems to be riding sidesaddle, although the image is overexposed, which of course augments the mystery of

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{The Weekly Amarillo Way: The Panhandle People’s Newspaper}, July 7, 1899, no. 51; Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.
\textsuperscript{98} “Memoirs of Life on the Plains Since Mid-1890”; Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.
its pairing with the reunion. The figures may well be Carl and Tavie registering their marriage, but it is not certain how the two photographs function to inscribe Münter’s travel adventures within a Wild West tradition.

To probe aspects of the relationship between image and adventure for Münter in the context of the focus on gender I am developing, it is helpful to consider her drawing, “Dogwood. 14.IV.99” (fig. 90). Undertaking the sketch in pencil, Münter also renders a branch in the foreground in green with touches of brown and orange pencil. The partial use of color demonstrates an interest in making vivid through synecdoche. Without needing to complete the coloring, Münter conveys a sense of fresh seasonality, a quality underscored by her unusual rendering of the title and date in green. Requiring her completion and visual contemplation, the drawing foregrounds the use of her sketchbook as a trigger to memory. Instead of attesting to artistic mastery, the sketch is a vehicle of process; she is therefore able to articulate her own story. Lodged in dailiness as routine writing and opportunism, her adventuring here takes the form of visual experience in the creation of a symbol of seasonality. In Gerstäcker’s “John Wells” story of 1855, published in Hausblätter and republished in his 1859 Hell und Dunkel, the motif of the dogwood is a sign of the passage of time. Besty Wells awaits her husband John’s return, as first Christmas comes, and then the budding trees, mating wild turkeys, the greening of the trees, and the blooming of the dogwood; and: “Once again the trees flowered, the turkeys mated in the forest – and still not a trace of her husband.”

Nature would have important ramifications for the adventure of Münter’s Moorefield stay, as a diary entry by Floy Louise Hillhouse Baker makes clear; coincidentally, this same writer would purchase the “sixty-acre farm known as the Schreiber place” in 1919. Describing

99 Kon. 36/2, 1899, pp. 8-9; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
her experience in Smithville in nearby Lawrence County during the particularly frigid winter of
Münter’s visit, she writes:

During the cold spell the thermometer registered from 17 degrees to 28 degrees below zero.... We all sit around the fire on Sunday and had a big fire and honestly ones feet would get cold as ice and my heels were frostbitten. Black River froze over so one could walk across. Machine creek was frozen over 2 weeks square out. When we would go to wash the dishes of a morning the coffee would be frozen in the cups. Chill tonic froze hard as a bone. The ice was 14 inches thick on Cooper’s Creek. I think that’s how thick it was. February 12 – that night I slept under 5 good quilts, 2 sheets, 1 rug, 1 cloak, 1 petticoat, 1 apron, 1 coverlet, 2 spreads, 1 cape, 1 dress, 1 shawl, and had two hot irons. We did not have enough good quilts.¹⁰²

Münter is in Moorefield at just that time, having arrived on February 6. On February 25, she reports to Charly: “We are frozen solid. It has been the most severe and lasting cold here for 10 years...water, milk, pie, eggs – everything frozen here, it’s horrid. You’ll pity us” (Wir sind eingefroren. Es ist die größte und anhaltendste Kälte hier seit 10 Jahren... Wasser, Milch, Pie, Eggs – alles gefriert hier, it’s horrid. You’ll pity us.)¹⁰³ To be sure, she completes her drawing weeks later, and I do not mean to imply a one-to-one connection here. But what is interesting is that instead of adopting a version of Baker’s adventuring, as she does in her correspondence, in “Dogwood,” as in her drawing of Annie Maud, photographs such as “Guion church” and “Texas Ft. House,” and other works, Münter fashions her narrative of dailiness into a multivalence lodged in visual experience and de-emphasized in many other options of adventure.

It is instructive in conclusion to this section to compare Münter’s visual experience to Georg Simmel’s understanding of adventure. While at a basic level the bracketed component of her America travels overlaps with his articulation, the latter’s heroic focus, inner-driven quality and intensity, and frequent erotic manifestation suggest fundamental difficulties for a collection of experience sited in dailiness with an important “feminine” component, which would seem to be a difficult position from which to tell an adventure for Simmel. His formulation, like the majority of the writers considered in this section, accords primacy to the everyday as the chance encounter of the street. Nevertheless, his discussion dialectically admits an everyday of domestic

¹⁰² Baker in ibid, 30.
¹⁰³ Cited in Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 67-68.
repetition in that experience becomes adventure by "the radicalness through which it becomes perceptible as a life tension":

the most general form of adventure is its dropping out of the continuity of life. 'Wholeness of life', after all, refers to the fact that a consistent process runs through the individual components of life, however crassly and irreconcilably distinct they may be. What we call an adventure stands in contrast to the interlocking of life-links.... Nevertheless, it is distinct from all that is accidental and alien, merely touching life's outer shell.... [I]t is a foreign body in our existence which is yet somehow connected with the centre.104

In keeping with what Friedberg, like Schivelbusch, describes as a new relationship between seeing and embodied movement wrought by machines of transport,105 Münter frames quotidian chance with her Bull's Eye to rescue it from dailiness flattened as routine and thus to offer alternatives. Concluding her album with a poignantly humorous question mark through a photograph of Emmy holding baby Helen Cameron Ware, the first such image throughout, Münter indeed seems to cast her America travels as a visual adventure outside of the strictures of everyday life – within the quintessential daily genre of the family photograph album.

While a poem entitled "Das Alltägliche" in an 1898 issue of Jugend undercuts the everyday as constitutive of knowledge, it recognizes it as the thread of life and uplifts it as art:

To call the daily the world,
Is to misrecognize the world,
But to disregard it
Means to pass the world by.106

Though aestheticizing, Münter's visual experience is less uplifting than transporting in keeping with the dioramic tourism of her visuality. One of the divisions between ordinary and extraordinary that John Urry sees as undergirding the tourist gaze is lodged in what he calls the "carrying out of familiar tasks or activities within an unusual visual environment. Swimming and other sports, shopping, eating and drinking all have particular significance if they take place

105 Window Shopping, 3.
106 “Das Alltägliche ‘Welt’ zu nennen, / Heißt die Welt verkennen, / Es aber beiseite liegen lassen / Heißt die Welt verpassen” (“Kleine Sachen,” Jugend III. Jahrgang, Nr. 25, June 18: 427).
against a distinctive visual backcloth.” This is certainly the case for Münter’s photograph of Emmy and two other women swimming in an Arkansas river (fig. 91); the environment defines the pastime. In Cäsar Flaischlen’s period “Sun, Wind and Wave,” as the poet lies naked in the sand and the wind is upon his limbs, “I listen to the song of the waves nearby and my eyes begin to feel heavy and gold- and purple-colored clouds drift upon me... I am no longer human... don’t want to be human anymore... I am only sun, wind, and wave...a fleeting harmony of tones.”

While Münter’s swimming photograph departs significantly from this discourse of Romanticizing nakedness, through such visual experience she is able to negotiate her position of daily embodiment. Outside of the discourse of the strenuous body, her photograph attests to her aesthetic and familial adventures in the American landscape.

An album of paratactical creativity

The album book that Münter compiled from her America travels includes approximately ninety photographs executed by various people; roughly speaking, Münter appears to have made the majority of the first half, whereas the second portion is probably devoted to gifts from different sources. Some images are crisp, others largely out of focus, and still others...
somewhere in between, even in just the first half; some were cut down for the album, which comprises photographs of different formats; and the compilation features a number of almost identical images. While the second section of images scrambles Münter’s itinerary, as we know, the album begins with two photographs from Plainview, and its development then tracks with her coordinates as given in the pocket calendars across Guion, Abilene, and Marshall. Yet even here it is difficult to establish her itinerary from the album, in that Münter sometimes retains, but may reject, chronology: versions of images from the same day, or of the same subject, are repeated, but not necessarily right together; sometimes her dates, though penciled in, move backward and then jump ahead. A comparison between the album and the map-list of photograph captions from the 1900 pocket calendar suggests the former to be characterized by a rhythm of disjunctive choppiness as far as subject matter and time. In keeping with her refugured generic space in the pocket calendars, Münter undermines temporality as progression to suggest more fluid possibilities. It is tempting to suggest that Münter depicts what Ben Highmore calls the “continual drift of the daily” in the modified form of her visual experience, such as of her roadside encounters with nature. As such, the apparent formlessness of the album is a way of speaking her dailiness, with its contingency and fortuity as well as its combination of repetition, recollected pastness, and flow into the future.

In her work on family albums, Patricia Holland suggests that the genre inherently holds a profusion – a confusion – of pleasure and pains.... Family collections are never just memories. Their disconnected points offer glimpses of many possible pasts, and yet, in our longing for narratives, for a way of telling the past that will make sense in the present we know, we strive to organize these traces, to fill in these gaps. Each viewer makes their own tracks through the album. 

Yet if there is a tendency to try to locate the story of Münter’s album, as contemporary viewers, however, it is easy to just feel shut out. The compilation’s private quality is enhanced by disjunctions of captions and images [“(killed hog.”); fig. 92], peculiarities of staged groupings, inside jokes. As I looked through the album, I wondered where the editing is in Münter’s inclusion of two very similar images of April 29, 1900 on the same double spread, with one poorly exposed. And why does she include two nearly identical photographs of Jane Lee’s “shanty” sprinkled into different locations?

Münter displays little interest in thematic or narrative coherence in the compilation; the images at the start and end appear as rather exceptional in this regard. We seem, as viewers, to require some of what Elizabeth Hampsten calls “inventive patience” with regard to reading the familial groupings, domestic scenes, and landscapes without much in them: “We must interpret what is not written as well as what is, and, rather than dismiss repetitions, value them especially. “Nothing happened” asks that we wonder what, in the context of a particular woman’s stream of days, she means by something happening.” Moreover, although Münter often captions and dates her images (fig. 35), she does not demonstrate an archival fastidiousness. As we have seen, she has a system to document her photographic output in her 1900 pocket calendars; yet it breaks off suddenly at 64, some entries are blank, and there are repeat numbers and a jump in sequence. As the album progresses, and well before the second half of it, Münter’s dating and captioning wanes, as if she lost interest in the documentation process. While she carefully cuts the paper into a network of interlocking octagonal frames at the beginning, a practice that relates to the frames she made for the individual drawings of her relatives, this practice tapers off as

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113 Pp. 8 and 24. On page 17, there is another image of the dwelling without the snow.
115 Oggenfuss also points out that Münter numbers her negatives from 1 to 321 (“Kamera und Verfahrenstechnik der Amerika-Photographien Gabriele Münters,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, 194).
well, as if she ran out of steam in the compilation and cataloguing effort. In my reading of the album, Münter appears across it to articulate a sensation of dailiness with its hallmark quality of boredom. Drawing on a discourse of documentation, she inscribes her embodiment in terms of what Michael Taussig calls the “sense” of the everyday, which “includes much that is not sense so much as sensuousness.”

Approaching the artifact in terms of its more meticulous components, however, suggests a different interpretation, as we might expect. If we return to Münter’s framing strategy, the album appears almost quilt-like in its foregrounded decorative component and patternization. On a page in one of her sketchbooks, she made octagonal quilt designs, and Münter also experimented with triangular, square, and star motifs, shapes that are all referenced in this album. Münter undoubtedly could have purchased an album from a German department store, such as those advertised by Wertheim’s (fig. 93); instead, she deliberately sought out this simple notebook-like format. This choice and her elaborate framing device are not only more in line with the homespun (and, as I shall discuss later, self-made) authenticity she seems to have sought in the United States than with other options, but they also assert the picturesque quality of the photographs. In comparison to the preformatted album Pohlmann reproduces, for example (fig. 41), Münter’s framing highlights her images to such an extent that they invite immersion, becoming portals into another dimension. Within a discourse of American decoration, then, Münter showcases her visuality as she quilts together her imagined community in the stretch of dailiness. As Sidonie Smith explains, family photographs “bind families together across generations, across geography, across differences in destines, by providing records, however fragmented, of a mutual past for those who come in the future and occasions for the communal

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116 This reading was suggested to me by Highmore’s challenge: “...if tiredness, boredom, distraction, daydreaming and so on are considered important aspects of daily life, then how would a ‘study’ (if that is the right word) present these elements as part of a felt experience of daily life? How would tiredness and boredom register in an account of daily life? Can one point to socio-cultural texts where a sense of the feeling of tiredness is recoverable?” (“Introduction,” The Everyday Life Reader, 20).

117 Cited in ibid, 19.

118 Kon. 37/2: 1898/99, p. 74; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
sharing of different but overlapping family narratives.” Our painstaking line of interpretation throws the public quality of Münter’s project into relief; as Smith goes on to note, “In the process individual memory becomes social memory as private memories find narrative affiliation with the social memory accumulated in the family album.”

In its anti-narrative choppiness, with certain foci, the album is paratactical. Sontag argues for such a quality as inherent to photography generically in an understanding of it as “a series of unrelated, freestanding particles,” and Peter Jelavich specifically connects the variety show to parataxis. In its fragmentary, absorptive rhythm, the album does have a distracted quality that overlaps with vaudeville, shopping, and other metropolitan practices with which Münter engages. In addition, for our purposes, Rachel Blau DuPlessis’s reading of Monique Wittig’s *Les Guérillères*, and Rebecca Hogan’s development of this interpretation for diaries, are useful. DuPlessis perceives Wittig’s text as “a form of verbal quilt. We hear her lists, her unstressed series, no punctuation even, no pauses, no setting apart, and so everything joined with no subordination, no ranking”; DuPlessis calls this form “radical parataxis.” Hogan’s connection of paratactical equalizing accumulation to diaristic practice is resonant for Münter’s album:

Diaries are not so much inclusive because they contain everything from a given day, as they are inclusive in the sense that they do not privilege ‘amazing’ over ‘ordinary’ events, in terms of scope, space, or selection. So as well as being paratactic on the level of grammar and syntax, diaries are paratactic on the level of full entries and of content too.

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120 *On Photography*, 22-23.
This is apparent for example in fig. 92, which showcases figures on a wooded embankment, a

group listening to an organ peddler, a gathering beside a “bee tree,” and a girl on a hill looking at

blooming redbuds. In Münter’s composite America portrait, there appears to be a principle of

ethnographic equivalence in keeping with German anthropological discourses foregounding

collecting over narrating and theorizing. As is clear, the album in many respects overlaps with

diaristic output. Suzanne Bunkers notes that for many scholars, the diary is a form that “readily

lends itself to experimentation with traditional ideas about narrative.” For instance, Hogan
discerns in the diary a “serial narrative form” that resists “unity...and formal closure,” and

Bunkers and Cynthia Huff suggest that the genre is “simultaneously elastic and tight.” Münter’s
daily lifewriting is foregrounded by her emphasis on dating as a caption, with some

inclusion of textual identification. At the right margin of “redbuds. 10.IV,” for example, she
writes in “(killed hog).” In its disjunction with the image, the caption illustrates the album’s tight

elasticity.

DuPlessis foregrounds the seams of paratactical creativity:

The fact that there is an imbedded, fictional artwork with a process of creation visible...along

with the interruptions, hiatuses, emotional weight and tender risk, the difficulty of voicing, and

the achieved statement – this tends to demystify the activity of an artist. Not a godlike creator,

conjuring the work ex nihilo from an inexplicable crucible, instead portraits of the female artist
show the artist as producer, a maker of social product.

Münter’s repetitions and resistance to (or mutability of) narrative in the photograph album, like

the multiplicity of hands, formats, and genres, foreground experimentation, stylistic pluralism,

and the building of a visuality. In a resonant discussion of the aesthetic heterogeneity of

Brechtian theater, Highmore suggests that it “offers everyday life studies...a vehicle more able to

124 Andrew Zimmerman, Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany (Chicago and London: The
University of Chicago Press, 2001), 116-117. Taylor makes a related point about the “qualitative
125 “Diaries and Dysfunctional Families: The Case of Emily Hawley Gillespie and Sarah Gillespie
Huftalen,” in Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women’s Diaries, eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers and
126 As she notes, she is drawing here on the work of Felicity Nussbaum (Hogan, “Engendered
Autobiographies,” 96).
contain the multiple strands and complex interweavings of the everyday, while framing them in a way that acknowledges their constructedness and revivifies material that is continually slipping out of view." 129 By including strikingly similar images and some that are blurry, Münter prevents herself as a producer from slipping away into transparency. In compiling her album, she makes decisions that foreground the act and process of representation, as against simple reportage, to image her struggles in developing her craft. 130 Against the assertion by Wells and Price that "the photograph itself – that is, the chemically treated and processed paper – is invisible. It is not it that we see. Rather, through it we see that which is represented," 131 she showcases the mediation of photography and her appropriation of it for lifewriting purposes.

The repeat photographs and those with a fuzzy focus attest to Münter’s investment in each image, a fact that might substantiate her involvement with aspects of developing her work. 132 In an overlap with what Tom Gunning perceives as the thrill of visibility surrounding what he calls the cinema of attractions, the characteristics of her compilation I have been describing, along with some of the mundane subject matter, demonstrate a joyfulness in the possibility of the camera to record. This connection to early actualities relates to Münter’s emphasis on technology (to be sure, where Méliès showcases effects, Münter proclaims her amateurism) and display (in the album), the registration of traces of an impresarial role (captioning and framing), and in terms of subject matter (touristic consumption and exoticism). If we look to early cinema for what it suggests about Münter’s authorship in such a compilation, though, there appears to be an interesting difference. While authorship in early film-related entertainments devolves to the exhibitor presenting a combination of custom and stock images,
Münter's reduction in captioning and framing for the second half of the album conveys a relative lack of ownership of these, although as we have seen her compilation effort begins to flag even earlier in the album. While the compilation admits a plurality of authorship, Münter appears to have been particularly invested in the visual experiences she herself crafted.

Unsurprisingly, the emphasis on artistic process may be discerned in much of Münter's American output; as we shall see, in her sketchbooks, she includes notes about what needs adjustment, crosses sketches out, and works on multiple versions of a motif on a page. Twinned with her foregrounded process is the aide-mémoire function of her output, which enables visual experience and the reconstitution of Heimat: as I have noted, Münter renders select portions of her drawings in color, and she also occasionally relies on color legends. In the album, she includes two copies of the redbuds image (lower right, fig. 92) in different locations and hand colors one with a few dabs of red on the bonnet, bouquet, and background shrubs. This feature not only foregrounds her engagement with issues of process and capture, but suggests a hyperreal quality with elements bursting into another dimension. Such a characteristic relates to a period testimonial: "Down in the deep woods on the west of our place were the clumps of dogwood with its creamy-white clusters of blossoms in spring, and for contrast, right by them was a redbud tree, one of the sweetest things that grow." In keeping with the overall quality of the album, Münter's hand coloring communicates the image's mediation, limitations, and possibilities even as it heightens immediacy. Münter's traces of representation in the album not only point to a lack of concern about mastery or finish, then, but to a desire to proclaim her amateurism and thus a quotidian creativity. Harnessing her technical glitches as resources and speaking her dampened enthusiasm for her archival project, Münter's album interrogates issues of mechanical creativity and self-representation and thereby renegotiates invisibilities and the "naturalness" of daily assignments.

133 Memoir of Mrs. Elizabeth Montgomery Neelley, 11; Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. Neelley's encounter with the redbud and dogwood took place in Parker County, Texas, prior to her family's move to Swisher County in the Panhandle.
**Documentary regionalisms**

In keeping with the problematization of documentation and unmediated experience in this study, this section takes up the question of Münter’s record of regionalist dailiness by turning to examples of her photographs from Moorefield. Perceiving Münter’s photographs of farmers and workers as a high point of her output, Pohlmann underscores their “unmediated realism and... documentary rigor” and locates a “comparable objectivity” to that of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Ben Shahn, with the caveat that she did not seek to generate social consciousness.134

One period Batesville photographer about whom the same qualified claim has been made is Harry Miller.135 From Minnesota and then North Dakota and with a German background,136 Miller opened a photography studio in Batesville sometime before June of 1900, when he is recorded in the Independence County census.137 We do not yet know if Münter encountered his work during her stay in nearby Moorefield, or that of other photographers active in Batesville at the time;138 and Miller’s use of a late-nineteenth-century view camera differs markedly from Münter’s Bull’s Eye in terms of its set up and weight, registration, processing, and expectations surrounding its users and the circulation of its images.139 However, Münter represents many of the same local subjects as Miller, and a comparison of their work is instructive for understanding the record of her Arkansas surroundings. In her catalogue essay on Miller, Jo Blatti suggests that he seems

134 “…unmittelbaren Realismus und...dokumentarische Strenge” and “vergleichbare Sachlichkeit”; Die Fragilität des in Gabriele Münter. Die Reise nach Amerika, 208.
137 Jo Blatti, “Miller, Photographer, Batesville, Arkansas,” in Harry Miller’s Vision of Arkansas,1900-1910, ed. Jo Blatti [Batesville, Arizona: Old Independence Regional Museum, 2003], 11; and ibid, 38 n. 4. I am grateful to Blatti for discussing the imbrication of Miller’s work in a regionalist fabric of sources including the Arkansas Sketch Book and An Adventure in Photography with me in concert with their treatment in her essay; my own study in this section owes much to the framework she has elaborated.
139 Henry offers this information, but notes that unfortunately specific details surrounding his technology are lacking (“Harry Miller: An Authentic View of Arkansas,” in Harry Miller’s Vision, 23-24).
“concerned with conveying the physical reality of northern Arkansas as a specific place and also with the distinctive human arrangements within that space.”

It is this focus that for Blatti constitutes Miller’s “documentary” strain, one of the primary modes she sees him adopting:

...many of the pictures do not appear to be merely documentary in the sense of recording a scene of daily life. Rather, they appear to be created as regional scenes. They depict what is distinctive about north central Arkansas: exquisitely sited cabins in the wilderness such as the Lafferty cabin..., the presence of African Americans and cypress swamps..., the bucolic image of children and chickens at the dooryard gate.... These are iconic images, holding highly specific meanings for local people – and possibly meant to be shared with others who will ‘read’ their resonance with other regions and perhaps even travel to the locales pictured.

Positioning Münther’s Arkansas photographs against Miller’s, his appear more overtly aestheticizing: figures and nature are tonalized and rendered as reflection (Black man and two girls with pirogue in cypress swamp, fig. 94); the density of surrounding trees engulfs a dwelling in shade in his composition, though Miller’s camera exquisitely articulates qualities of lambent light on the stone roof and showcases a small dazzling field of sunlight (White children with chickens in front of picket fence and house, fig. 95). For all the obvious overlaps between the latter image, which for Blatti exemplifies Miller’s “documenting [of] a style of living and the landscape in which it occurs,” and Münther’s “Jim Wade feeding the hogs, Schreiber hill bei [near] Moorefield” (fig. 6), the differences are noteworthy. Where Miller’s composition miniaturizes the gaggle of fowl with attached children, Münther’s Wade strides forward from the gate with his easy smile bearing a heavy bucket of slops with his pigs in tow, his frame elongated in its visual rhyming with the two erect trees in the background. Against Miller’s articulation of photographic sensibility surrounding the imbrication of civilization in and near-dissolution by nature as a rather downtrodden picturesque, Münther features Wade’s cultivation of nature – the orderly fence, the house as prize, the broad-brimmed hat to deflect the sun. The vernacular moment is fashioned as symbol. In contradistinction to Alexander von Humboldt’s fashioning of

140 “Miller, Photographer, Batesville, Arkansas,” in Harry Miller’s Vision, 17.
141 Ibid, 16.
142 Ibid, 14.
America, Münter’s American has subdued nature; in rural Arkansas, he is the incipient *Kulturvolk*. 143

Miller and Münter clearly have different approaches to and understandings of their Arkansas surroundings. There is a personal connection for Münter vis-à-vis her subjects that allows for an intimacy and informality not present in Miller, qualities of course related to her technology and the use of her images. Such relationships of familiarity are harnessed in service of nation-building, for, as Geoff Eley points out, “the *Heimat* idea’s specificity was its spatial hybridity, joining a grand story of national origins to the forms of lived identity in local and everyday environments.”144 Through Wade, Münter articulates a culture-in-the-rough version of what Hartmut Lutz describes concerning May’s “Indianthusiasm” crafted “at a time when German nationalism searched for ‘authentic’ national traditions and aimed to define itself against others.”145 Münter’s familial knowledge claim and concomitant removed vantage are expressed in her caption, a point that is clearer by drawing a brief comparison to the writings of the Massachusetts-born Octave Thanet (née Alice French), who had spent time every year since 1883 at Clover Bend in Lawrence County.

In her 1893 *Adventure in Photography*, an autobiographical how-to manual for amateurs celebrating her experiences with a Rochester Optical Camera and Waterbury lens, Thanet includes images attesting to the development of her photographic process as she portrays tropes of region. The captions are suggestive here, as for example, “The Black River” (Taken with a $10 Waterbury lens”); “A Southern Kitchen. (We reduced the window and the tablecloth.)” (fig. 96); and “An Arkansas renter’s cabin” (fig. 97). Blatti points to the convergence of Thanet’s and

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143 In an interesting parallel, Zimmerman discusses Robert Hartmann’s drawing of life in a prehistoric Swiss lake community: “Although the inhabitants ostensibly lack culture, history, and writing, they clearly display conversation, family, and economy. They may be natural peoples, but the artist foreshadows their destiny as a modern *Kulturvolk*” (*Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 50; fig. 89).


Miller's subject matter – "rural cabin scenes, corseted black laundresses at work, the plantation managers out birding, the steamboat Hope at dock, portraits of white and black children, the plantation parlors, the cook at rest in a well-ordered kitchen." By 1893 Thanet had published widely, with writings in Scribner's, Century, The Atlantic Monthly, and other important periodicals, as well as a couple of collections of stories and a feature in the Berlin-issued Amerikanische Kriminal Erzahlungen. Nevertheless, in An Adventure in Photography, she elaborates a discourse of homespun modesty, charm, and orality to underscore her legitimacy in claiming authorship surrounding her photographic experimentation of the region. Thus for example: "...I hate to witness the ravages of photography on that gentle spirit, but the little book, as we say in Arkansas, 'had done its do'"; and: "...our favorite among the older developers is a 'mixtery,' as the old negro cooks would say, of eiko and hydro..." This mode of discourse would continue in her short stories, as in her "Why Abbyonia Surrendered" (1897?):

But the eye of Abbyonia Eddings was no ordinary eye. She had more ambition than health, and in spite of eking out the latter with that which the New Englanders name 'faculty,' and we in

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146 "Miller, Photographer, Batesville, Arkansas," in Harry Miller's Vision, 17.
147 This is part of a broader discourse of declarative modesty Thanet unfolds, and her text is couched in terms of apologias that serve to create connections to the reader. The book begins by addressing the question of authorship/-ity: "When my kind friends, the publishers, first proposed this book to me, I at once laid the proposition before my partner." Lack of knowledge is then put forward: "But we don't know enough to write a book," Jane notes. She puts forth her problem: "And they want us to illustrate it with our own photographs," I continued, under the impetus of my first burst of information, although I felt a distinct shock, similar to the feeling produced by unexpected cold water. 'But we don't make good enough photographs to illustrate a book,' said Jane." Thanet then denigrates the quality of her work: "Jane has a great deal on her side of the argument, as the ash-barrel and I know better than any one." Thanet's justification of coming to writing follows: "We have failed in so many different and unexpected ways,' I urged, 'I think it would be interesting and - and profitable to amateur photographers to read about them.'" Thanet constructs a thrill of visibility in the context of botched amateur practice: "The early stage in the photographic career is a wonder and delight at the ability to make any semblance of a picture at all. A camera seems such a witch's toy that to be able to get any obedience whatever from it amazes the beginner." And she appears to assume that an amateur will include process: "If it were not for a tender conscience and some knowledge of the cost of reproducing photographs, I could fill pages with illustrations of values out of gear, as it were; fences larger than houses, and lop-sided scenery. But what amateur's photograph album has missed such presences?" In summary: "Therefore this little book makes no pretension to authority, neither can it claim any original discoveries; it is simply the record of the failures and good fortunes of two amateurs, forced by circumstances to depend considerably upon their own ingenuity; and shows what may be done by any amateur student, without a very large expenditure of money or of time" (An Adventure in Photography. Illustrated from Photographs by the Adventurers [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893], 1-2, 19, and 22).
148 Ibid, 37, 84.
Arkansas call by no special name, but admire as sincerely, she at times strained her nerves to the breaking point.\textsuperscript{149}

Miinter’s caption for “A merry crowd eating dinner on the ground (The cave picnic) Emmy, Ida, Ernst, Minnie” (fig. 98) differently communicates a goal of harnessing her Arkansas surroundings to register a hybridized, if touristic, identity. Moreover, the motif of grounding relates specifically to German nationalist discourses, whose resonance for Münter I shall describe in the next chapter.

If we return to Miller, his greater distance than Münter vis-à-vis figural subjects is sustained in comparisons using images in which he apparently photographed his social equals, as in his \textit{Party of young white people playing music and picnicking in cave} (fig. 99) to Münter’s cave picnic; a related photograph is Miller’s \textit{From inside of cave, three figures standing at entrance (couple in sunlight possibly Birdie and Harry Miller)} (fig. 100). The contrast highlights the rugged envelopment of impressive, almost menacing nature in Miller’s figurations as against the Münter party’s posed immersion in it for grounded enjoyment. Miller’s nature is palpable in its immanent majesty, synaesthetic. While humans are props for its dramatic portrayal, nature is rendered as backdrop in Münter’s cave picnic, landscaped in the \textit{tableau vivant} offered to her Kodak. If nature appears to overwhelm in the Miller depictions considered so far, it also is submitted to contemplative mastery (\textit{Stout white man and dog sitting on bluff overlooking White River}, fig. 101). Yet it is not onto the vista that the male figure directs his gaze, but rather to the dead tree draped in Spanish moss with which he is paired. Far from an image of conquest, the photograph reads as an incongruous collection of three components – bluff grouping, White River, tree. A juxtaposition of Münter’s panorama of the Plainview cowboy reunion (fig. 30) to his \textit{Cotter, Arkansas on the White River} (fig. 102) suggests that Miller’s nature is more informed by a discourse of heroic mastery than Münter’s. Whereas the C-shape of his panorama places the viewer at the center as a magisterial disembodied eye, Münter’s S-shape evokes paraded

\textsuperscript{149} In \textit{By the Cypress Swamp: The Arkansas Stories of Octave Thanet}, ed. and collected by Michael B. and Carol W. Dougan (Little Rock: Rose Publishing Company, 1980), 186.
movement and location, as we have discussed. Yet here too, Miller’s image is more complex than it appears, in that his rendition of this trope of masterful possession was produced at a time of significant transition and uncertainty concerning the region’s self-definition in terms of its transportation future.\textsuperscript{150} The construction in the period of a railroad at Cotter would complete the trans-Ozark line and hasten the demise of water transport.\textsuperscript{151} Miller’s stout white male may have scaled the bluff, but in View over a fence into the landscape (fig. 68) Müinter constructs a souvenir of an exquisitely bountiful America.

The uncertainties communicated in Miller’s tonalized ode to regional transition overlap with discourses surrounding the Arkansas Sketch Book, a quarterly published from 1906 to 1910 to foster the art and literature of Arkansas that also published some of Miller’s photographs.\textsuperscript{152} A special 1908 volume issued by Bernie Babcock and O.C. Ludwig conveys a nostalgia for a past way of life, as in O.C. Ludwig’s “When You and I Were Young.” Describing his observations of snowfall, Christmas past, and hunting, he writes for example:

We knew that on the fruity limb
Of some wild ‘simmon tree
His coonship, like a spectre dim,
Was happy as could be.

We shook him out, and on the ground
They wallowed to and fro,
First here, next there, and then we found
A dead coon in the snow.

But now:

It seems to me that in these days
We don’t have half the joys,
And people too, have changed their ways,
Since you and I were boys.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{150} See Blatti, “Miller, Photographer, Batesville, Arkansas,” in Harry Miller’s Vision, 14.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, 14.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, 18.
This gnawing regret romanticizes pre-Civil War society, as registered in Josie Frazee
Cappleman’s “The Old Time Darky,” published beside images such as “Mammy” (fig. 103):

They are going fast, they’re going,
From the old-time cabin door,
And the places now that know them,
Will know them, soon, no more;
Aye, the ‘Uncle,’ and the ‘Aunty’
With the bygones soon will be,
And no more of ‘Mars’ and “Missus’
Will there come to you and me’;

and:

With the passing of the darky,
Of that good, old golden time,
So passeth out for ever
That fair epoch of our clime. 154

For all the positive economic developments just after 1900 that Carl Moneyhon discusses for
Arkansas in what were “golden years” as he puts it for many, the extension of postal, telephone,
and railway services served to integrate rural cultures into the rest of the state and nation. As he
describes, increasing commodity prices and a surplus farming population capped prosperity and
resulted in increased racial tension after 1900.155 In this context, the Sketch Book’s display of a
discourse of uplift of regional everydayness is significant. Here for example is the third stanza of
A.C. Millar’s “My Own Loved Arkansas:”

Land of the nut and honey,
Land of the ‘possum pie,
Land of the watermelon,
Land of the hot fish-fry;
Land of the deer and turkey,
Land of the yellow yam,
Land of the huckleberry,
Land of the pone and jam –
The fattest land you ever saw,
My own, my own, my Arkansas. 156

154 Pictures and Poems of Arkansas, 27-29.
155 Arkansas and the New South 1874-1929 (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 104-
109.
156 Pictures and Poems of Arkansas, 17.
And Babcock’s “The Sun-Caressed Prairies of Arkansas” foregrounds the majesty of nature, as in the following two stanzas:

From a line of the east
To a line on the west,
Where the green of the field
Meets the blue of the sky,
Stretching boundless and free
As the breast of the sea
The sun-caressed prairies
Of Arkansas lie.

Here acre bounds acre
In rich store of treasure;
Here the grain and the grass
in luxuriance vie; Here the billowing rice,
For man’s toil pays the price
Where the sun-caressed prairies
Of Arkansas lie.\(^{157}\)

The accompanying uncredited image, “Arkansas Rice Field,” humorously suggests the referenced abundance (fig. 104).

There are suggestive points of connection in Babcock’s (later) poem to Münter’s retrospective statement included in the epigraph to my section “Travels in America,” as well as between “Arkansas Rice Field” and the overloading bounty surrounding “Carrots for dinner.” While Münter’s statement that Americans were fun(ny) and good people registers a folklorizing curiosity, the discursive convergence foregrounds questions of transculturation in the contact zone, which Mary Louise Pratt formulates as follows:

How are metropolitan modes of representation received and appropriated on the periphery? That question engenders another perhaps more heretical one: with respect to representation, how does one speak of transculturation from the colonies to the metropolis? The fruits of empire, we know, were pervasive in shaping European domestic society, culture, and history. How have Europe’s constructions of subordinated others been shaped by those others, by the constructions of themselves and their habitats that they presented to the Europeans? Borders and all, the entity called Europe was constructed from the outside in as much as from the inside out. Can this be said of modes of representation?\(^{158}\)

If we look at Münter’s Arkansas visit, it is difficult to answer these questions at a specific causal level. One might wonder, for example, to what extent Münter’s documentation of Moorefield

\(^{157}\) Pictures and Poems of Arkansas, 115.
might be said to foster her later championing of Murnau *Volk* culture; or whether by any chance she learned of Thanet’s *Adventure in Photography*, with its figuration of photographic glitches as a mode of and means to authorship. While these remain open questions, the remainder of my study – chapter four on Münter’s lifewriting, the postscript on “Mildred’s cake walk,” and the conclusion – is animated by Pratt’s challenge.

Freezing in the bitterly cold winter, with the explosion of the Rollermill, Uncle Mike deathly ill, and the quarrel with and near split from Emmy over her flirting with John Schreiber, Münter’s first Moorefield visit cannot have been easy. If she did not acquire her camera in Moorefield, her Moorefield photographs would all have been taken shortly before her departure from America on her second visit. In either case, though, as figurations of her own personal and cultural nostalgia, Münter’s Arkansas photographs assert a stabilizing function as authentic fictions lodged in compositional artfulness, theatricality, and optimism.

Despite all the loose overlaps of these Arkansas discourses of nostalgia and the convergence of Miller and Münter in the Batesville area at the same moment, their documentary regionalisms are of course fundamentally different. In Münter’s *Young woman near Moorefield* (fig. 105), as in Miller’s *Black man and two girls* (fig. 94) and *White children with chickens* (fig. 95), all of the figures are related to and defined in terms of their environments; yet whereas Moorefield constructs, but serves as a foil for, Münter’s young woman, Miller’s figures are dematerialized in theirs. Positioned against the backdrop of the town church, neat fencing and row of trees, pigs in the road, and grasscover, Münter’s figure emanates from, and is produced by, this context through the unpaved road. As such, her photograph relates to an Else Mehrle print published in an 1898 issue of *Jugend* (fig. 106). The Mehrle profile head is defined by her

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159 See n. 1 of this chapter.  
160 This characteristic is notably present in Münter’s photographs from Moorefield; see for example *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika*, cat. 79-81, 83, 86, 88-91, and 93-94.  
161 No. 22: 375. This mode of working is one she will develop; as Shulamith Behr notes in a discussion of her process of working exemplified in her 1907 linocut, *Bridge in Chartres*, and her preparatory watercolor: “Clearly, her prints conveyed the charm of the daily routine of native inhabitants in quaint

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juxtaposition to the landscaped background of village church, lake, rolling hills, and tree, a connection elaborated by the image’s insertion in the textual “character study.” Against the typological parody of America surrounding its Wild-Westness, the print reads as a portrayal of true Germanness. Unlike the idealized Mehrle profile, however, the intensity of Münter’s subject’s regard suggests a psychological interiority. This quality is cross-cut by a toughness communicated by the erect posture, put-together attire, and dominant presence in the carefully framed composition, suggesting a discourse of cultivated mastery of the landscape and Münter’s ambitious visuality. A locus of typology yet more than it, the young woman suggests the interweaving of consumption and contemplation in Münter’s “worldly provincialism.”

architectural settings in a manner consistent with the familiar category of Scènes et Types much promoted by popular photography and travel literature of the period” (“Beyond the Muse: Gabriele Münter as Expressionistin,” in Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression 1906-1917 [London: Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery in Association with Paul Holberton Publishing, 2005], 43).

My approach here follows H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, in an edited volume of the eponymous name; see for example the section “A Cosmopolitan Discipline” in their “Introduction: Rethinking Germany Anthropology, Colonialism, and Race” (Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire, eds. H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl [Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003], 11-17).

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Chapter four: lifewriting through Kultur

As Münter made her way to New York on the S.S. Statendam, she recorded her impressions in three different sketchbooks, all of which were begun in Germany. In one of these and the smallest of her seven American sketchbooks (roughly 3¾ x 5¼ inches), she renders schematically and rapidly, often with diverse subjects on a page, and sometimes crosses out her images. Experimenting in different styles with a range of motifs, she works in pencil and pastel. She makes a notation of the steamship with three small boats in the background and figures on deck, a subject she would take up with her Kodak on the return passage. Two pages of pastel doodles of a sunset demonstrate a playful exploration of color and line, while a summary treatment of a man and boy rowing a woman in a small boat reveals Münter’s bemusement at the female figure’s overwrought clothing as the craft is propelled forward, a movement distilled in a few quick marks. She offers her impression of feet under a dress and does leg studies, and she sketches a young girl or girls dancing in different poses. She also catches male passengers in variously unidealizing positions – leaning against the deck with a jacket bunching in back and protruding rear end, scratching a head, asleep in the chair, a hand on a belly. The Wanamaker’s 1900 Paris Guide would suggest taking “a blank book for jotting down one’s impressions and experiences” to pass the time on the Atlantic crossing as a “Mental Occupation”; other recommendations included conversation, games, and music as antidotes to “the hardships of a rough voyage.”

Münter’s sketchbook also features four pages of maps of New York in a different hand. One double spread is an overview of Manhattan focused around transportation lines and the borough’s situation on the water, with a few landmarks such as (an unlabeled) Central Park (fig. 107). The map across the next two pages is still more topographic, with a focus on landforms in the water – New York boroughs, New York State and “Jersey State,” Liberty, Governors’ Island,

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1 Kon. 46/1: 1898; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
Hoffman Island, as well as Hoboken and West Hoboken, for example; "OCEAN" is scrawled on most of one page. The maps are in keeping with the physiologic cast of much of Münter’s project as devices of orientation to the metropolis and the country. Given that Münter had a Baedeker’s, which included more detailed maps, it is somewhat curious that her sketchbooks should include these. The overlap speaks to the untidy opportunism of a daily practice. Perhaps a fellow passenger was simply trying to be helpful; this is the same sketchbook that includes the coordinates for Keith’s and the Museum of Natural History. Whatever the circumstances, against her Baedeker’s pre-packaged visuality, Münter’s overall record of America reads as an attempt at inscription of her own organized mobility, sometimes as here with a plurality of authorship. Yet as we have seen, her visual experience of America also relates to her image of it from discourses of tourism, popular fiction, and family accounts. Noting that in itself, an instance of sightseeing is “weightless,” Dean MacCannell underscores the ordering of society generated by these instances; in Münter’s figuration of her travels, she elaborates a “backyard ethnography.”

Here I appropriate and, as I shall explain presently, rechannel, an expression in autobiography studies evocative for Münter’s lifewriting practice: as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson explain, the phrase designates a “focus...on the everyday practices of autobiographical narrating in America rather than the ‘high culture’ of published, ‘artful’ autobiography.” As mechanisms of preservation and of the cultivation of visuality, Münter’s American sketchbook-diaries are an unpolished, capacious everyday practice. Their lack of boundedness is emphasized by her work in multiple sketchbooks simultaneously, as well as her decision to tear out pages, as to give to her American relatives. In addition, myriad motifs are often included disjunctively on a page, though this depends on the sketchbook; as a group, these artifacts tend to lack the finish of

the individual sketches and to emphasize process, though the sketchbook Münter devotes primarily to more finished portraits is an exception. The pages include anatomical awkwardness and notes of self-correction; and they suggest a rapid fluidity in the capture of visual impressions, with favored themes and genres, such as portraiture, botanical motifs, and scenes of making music. Münter works in different styles of capture and materials, though primarily in pencil. Though not all pages are dated, what holds these disjunctive documents together is a loose flow of dailiness. As with her photograph album, Münter is less interested in providing an itinerary or chronicling activities day by day than in registering select visual experience, though her whereabouts may be tracked for example from Saint Louis to Moorefield in multiple sketchbooks. Yet these artifacts reveal a contingent opportunism communicated in evolving subjects as her circumstances change. In a description of diaries resonant for the sketchbooks, Rebecca Hogan references their “accumulation of discrete entries..., capturing a series of ‘present moments’ in the diarist’s life,...[and] unfinishedness.” The inside cover of one sketchbook includes a gridded hourly schedule for morning and afternoon from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday through Saturday.

Smith and Watson’s lens is not only resonant for the dailiness of Münter’s American sketchbooks, but in this chapter I shall harness the term backyard ethnography to spotlight particular Wilhelminian permeabilities surrounding culture as well as self and other that fostered her self-inscription. In his discussion of this cultural porosity, David Blackbourn explains that with its increasingly nationalistic charge leading up to World War One, Kultur not only encompassed German artistic activity, but began to take on the meaning of culture as a “way of life” elaborated from “manners, customs and material artefacts developed from the new

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6 Kon. 38/4: 1897/8/9; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. However, this sketchbook also includes pages with varied motifs and schematic renderings.


8 Kon. 37/2: 1898: 99; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
disciplines of ethnology and ethnography." H. Glenn Penny notes that German ethnographic museums contributed to the broadening redefinition of categories of Bildung and Kultur by their study of the "material culture of everyday life" instead of the "focus of historical inquiry [on]...high art and culture." As we have seen, in America Münter is creating a composite portrait of its people, landscape, and customs as she forges an imagined community demarcating the boundaries of her inclusion and selfhood. As I have illustrated, she often adopts a typological approach and represents her figures through their environments. In significant respects, Münter’s daily artistic practice is an ethnography; as Ben Highmore maintains, “Traditionally anthropology (or its older cognate ethnology) has been the academic arena most attentive to everyday life. In its modern form anthropology has privileged the practice of ethnography (the empirical registering of ways of life) as the form most suited to the understanding of culture as an everyday experience.” America for Münter is an other Heimat through which she seeks edification and self-inscription in the context of a spectacular Bildungsreise. Margaret Stieg Dalton provides a succinct summary of the difficulty in differentiating the terms “culture,” “Bildung,” and “civilization”:

Wilhelm von Humboldt had offered a formulation that became a classic: ‘Civilisation is the humanizing of peoples in their external institutions and the related inner attitudes. To this refinement of the social, culture adds scholarship and art. When, however, in our language we say Bildung, we mean at the same time something more elevated and more spiritual, namely the disposition which harmoniously affects perception and character out of understanding and feeling for overall intellectual and moral striving.’ Johann Herder had written extensively on the topic – his description of Bildung is quite different from Humboldt’s – and Giambattista Vico, Marquis de Condorcet, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, and Matthew Arnold were among the many who made important contributions. No one, however, succeeded either in conceptually distinguishing the various terms in a way that achieved general acceptance or in establishing the dominance of one interpretation of culture and its content. There is meaning, but logical precision is not present.

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12 Catholicism, Popular Culture, and the Arts in Germany, 1880-1933 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 47.
America as *Bildungsreise* for Münter paradoxically is enabled by the capaciousness of *Kultur*, as I shall argue in this chapter, which centers on the ethnography of Münter’s practice and her relationship to the nineteenth-century German paradigm of America.

In his “On the Ideal and Practical Mission of Ethnographic Museums” (“Über die Idealen und Praktischen Aufgaben der Ethnographischen Museen”), Oswald Richter had asserted, “The ultimate goal of all ethnographic activities and with them the general purpose of ethnographic museums can only be: To contribute to the knowledge and understanding of ourselves.” Penny explains that leading ethnologists such as Adolf Bastian sought to undergird the discipline in the commonalities of the human mind (“Elementargedanken”) and their differences based on environment or geography and historical forces (“Völkergedanken”) in an attempt to understand the German self. Their goals, Penny suggests, were scientific in a Humboldtian (cosmopolitan, empirical) vein and they believed “that only a comparative analysis of ‘mankind’s many variations’ would allow them to locate the most fundamental elements of ‘the human being’ and use this knowledge to help them explore their own essential nature.” Andrew Zimmerman describes the critique of humanist historicism surrounding German anthropology levied by Bastian and others, and the discipline’s inverting emphasis on *Naturvölker* over *Kulturvölker*:

“Anthropology was thus conceived as a natural science of natural peoples, which eschewed what practitioners held to be ‘subjective’ historical narratives in favor of ‘objective’ observations of people uncomplicated by culture and historical development.” “The lowest organisms of human society” would illuminate the inner mechanisms of the “cultural creations of higher levels.”

Penny points out, however, that for Bastian there were “essentially next to no peoples left on earth who were without historical influences,” and that “the historical and cultural trajectories

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17 Cited in *ibid.*, 47-48.
among the world’s Naturvölker were in fact at the heart of Bastian’s ethnological project.”

Thus, even as he maintained that examining the Naturvölker would help him discern a “set of seminal ideas from which every civilization had grown” to foster European self-understanding, unlike evolutionists in Britain and the United States, Bastian and his counterparts in other German cities did not ‘take [their] own culture as the absolute standard of comparison’…. As Ivan Kalmar reminds us, Franz Boas may have been the first to use the word ‘culture’ in the plural, in English. But not in German. In Germany, the term Kultur was used in the plural (Kulturen) as early as the 1880s and not just by cultural pluralists.

This instrumental disciplinary capaciousness was related to an inclusive (for the period) array of scholars, including “middle-class amateurs” and the call for “wide public participation.” We do not know the level of Münter’s engagement with ethnographic museums; however, as Penny suggests, by 1900 their discourses had become quite broad-based. By that time, he asserts, “Germans were awash in images and messages about non-Europeans,” as offered in the displays at Louis Castan’s Panoptikum, on postcards and products such as coffee, in magazines like Die Gartenlaube, and in the Völkerschauen (there had been more than 100). Penny and Matti Bunzl thus refer to the pervasive tendency to seek out new information about human cultures and to use it to refashion oneself, [which] helps to account for the worldliness that could be found even in the most provincial of German places…. The German interest in non-Europeans – in their cultures, their religions, their physiognomy, their physiology, and their history – were tightly bound up in a range of intellectual traditions that were much richer and more multifarious than a simple colonialist drive. These included humanism, liberalism, pluralism, monogenism, and a persistent

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18 Cited in Objects of Culture, 23.
19 Ibid, 23 and 34-35.
20 Zimmerman, Anthropology and Antihumanism, 47. See also Penny, Objects of Culture, 161.
21 “From 1868 to 1914 museums’ audiences grew increasingly broad with the rise of mass culture, mass politics, and commercial consumer culture. This shift did not take place everywhere at once nor did it follow a precise pattern. But in general, by the first decade of the twentieth century visitors to German ethnographic museums had grown substantially in number and social diversity, and the directors of these museums – like most of their European and American counterparts – were eagerly seeking to include ‘less-educated’ or even ‘uneducated’ people in their audiences. Individuals such as clerks, seamstresses, teachers, and even workers became increasingly common in museums’ galleries and halls...” (Objects of Culture, 144). Penny also cites O.M. Dalton, curator from the British Museum, who in 1898 lamented that “Germans of all classes find ethnography of great interest” as against the British and noted that the Berlin museum’s collections were “six or seven times as extensive” as those in London (Objects of Culture, 1).
22 Objects of Culture, 210-211.
desire to know more about the world that went hand in hand with the German commitment to Bildung. 23

Only one of Münter’s American sketchbooks has a dedicated focus: 24 a soft cover notebook she appears to have found conducive to bringing with her to capture her Moorefield surroundings. Using pencil, colored pencil, and charcoal, Münter renders the buildings of the “Schreibermill”; botanical motifs and trees, some labeled and partially colored, such as the dogwood drawing; female bodies in nature; a couple of portraits of her relatives; and a catalogue of “working hands.” Her sketchy, often energetic modes of handling suggest that this notebook functions as a collection of visual impressions as Münter forges a typology of place. This is a leitmotif of Münter’s American output, and partially explains her retention of photographs she did not make herself, such as that of the third Harrison County Courthouse in Marshall burning (fig. 108). Though the fire had begun on the evening of her arrival because a maintenance man had sought to burn out a pigeon’s clawhold within the cupola, 25 Münter’s preservation of the photograph is only partly accounted for by such a dramatic coincidence. She held onto and in some cases photographed a number of Texas courthouses due to their index of local prosperity and regional identity, which sometimes included an outlandish dimension. As Bill Morgan puts it in his discussion of Texas courthouses: “If you like long shots, throw in a bet that the courthouse before this one either burned under mysterious circumstances or ended up in town under a cloud of shady maneuvering.” A courthouse in the period was often a showcase of freewheeling local creativity; as Morgan points out, livestock were sometimes registered as residents to boost the area count in a play for a county seat. 26

24 Kon. 36/2: 1899; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. To be sure, Kon. 36/3: 1900, which is inscribed on the inside cover, “Guin, Texas 1900,” is similarly focused (Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung). Yet it is difficult to consider the composite of this notebook, given that the Old English Crown Linen Tablet in which Münter works here reveals many missing pages.
26 Ibid., 5 and 7.
Münter’s sketchbook-diaries thus attest to a fascination with American ways of life. One sketchbook for example includes “11.II.99,” which is an unidealizing view of a man’s ice cream consumption. Depicting him at a moment of casual open-mouthed readiness and an absentminded twist of the wrist to hold up the spoon, Münter demonstrates the pronounced interest in body position we have seen, an attentiveness accentuated by a second sketch on the same page of his legs below the table. She also displays an engagement with situational details such as the pillow on his lap to rest his other hand and the small ice cream dish. Pursuing the idea of situationality, in the same sketchbook Münter captures a scene of three women at table playing cards. Captioned “Casino. 24.XI.98,” their hair is rendered with squiggly energy, and details such as their puffed sleeves are conjured with minimal means. On the outside of the scene observing, Münter records quotidian details such as the lamp and drink on the table. The sketchbook is a repository for American idiomatic expressions and objects, such as “dutch pull out,” upon which Annie Schreiber Wade plays the guitar, perhaps with a camera beside her; song titles such as “Yankee Doodle” and “I’ll never get drunk anymore;” designs for patchwork quilts, some with color indicated; renditions of decorative dress bodices; and a catalogue of American farm animals in thumbnail form.

As is clear here, Münter’s figuration of typology of place and way of life devolve from her selection from daily opportunity. In concert with the ethnographic cast of her output picturing “America,” she proves a keen collector of American flora, as we have begun to see, as well as such fauna as wild turkeys, cows, and pigs, many as encountered on the road. If there is a utopic cast here in relation to the rhetoric of Friedrich Ernst from Oldenburg’s letter, it is cross-cut by touristic discovery. In other genres, examples include views of a tortoise in a loose sketch with

27 Kon. 37/2: 1898, 99: p. 79; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
28 P. 37.
29 P. 75. See also chapter 3, n. 1 of this study.
30 Pp. 70 and 74.
31 P. 82.
an impish, almost alien head and misshapen paws in “1.V. my pet. found 29.IV,” as well as a photograph of a swan with an enormous bill who towers against the background trees. Münter’s documentation of America is a testament to her encounters and curiosity; indeed, writing to Charly of her tortoise, she asks, “Shall I bring it back dead or alive?” Thus for example in her botanization of everyday culture, “Organ peddler” (fig. 109) is framed as a scene of distanced social relations in which she grants primacy to the foreground and therefore, if we follow Schivelbusch, to her own position within the landscape. And the photograph “Willie, Bruce Allen, etc.” (Emmy, Virgie, Jennie Lee), “a smiling water melon” (fig. 110) is a resonant example of Münter’s figuration of custom: while Emmy appears to be laughing (if rather to the camera), the caption demonstrates that she is aping the shape of the watermelon. As she holds it at arm’s length, the Scheuber girls and the men simply eat.

If we return to the sketchbook with the ice cream eater, it is noteworthy that it includes other hands, as in a rendition of Emmy lying in a chair by Konrad Happel, whom Münter would recall fondly over half a century later. Captioned “Great artist Konrad, Jan. 27, 1899,” the drawing playfully deflates (Münter’s) authorial voice, and at the same time foregrounds the ethnographic cast of her project by labeling various components of the drawing in English: chair, sleeve, jacket, button hole, hair, eye. While Münter was clearly beyond this level of vocabulary,

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32 Kon. 26/9; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
33 “Soll ich sie lebendig oder tot mitbringen?” Cited in Gisela Kleine, who differently emphasizes the “scientifically accurate observation” (naturwissenschaftlich genaue Beobachtung) of the tortoise sketches and maintains, “It was generally her goal to capture everything as faithfully to reality as possible” (Überhaupt ging es ihr darum, alles möglichst wirklichkeitsgetreu festzuhalten; Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares [Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1990], 69).
Konrad pokes fun at the recording project overall, as in his other caption written vertically in mock bad German: “That’s Aunt Emme the last letter is an ‘e.’” In keeping with such authorial fluidity, the sketchbook reveals clear experimentation with artistic effects and processes, as in its isolation of shade on a face and of shadow lines to dramatize a background. Münter sometimes works in summary capture, at others in more painstaking modes, employing modeling and cross-hatching; and a page may include multiple renderings of a profile, hand studies, or varied motifs. Across the sketchbook she employs a diversity of materials, including pencil, charcoal, pen and ink, and watercolor. Overlapping with the photograph album she would later compile, the artifact asserts the importance of process and the honing of visual memory; a scene from Moorefield of a woman playing the mandolin and a man on violin bears the note, “instrument too big.”

Showcasing Münter’s focus on visual and to some extent verbal record, this sketchbook, like others in her America practice, serves as a storehouse for backyard ethnography with varied levels of familiarity. Representations at the beginning that predate her journey are suggestive here; beginning in January 1898, and thus two months after her mother’s death, these include depictions of Charly and Emmy, as well as botanical motifs and figures playing musical instruments and reading. All of the latter three subjects figure importantly in her America practice. The differences are instructive in terms of Münter’s understanding of figures as defined through their environments. Thus for instance before her departure, she designs a bookplate which she captions “28.VII.98” of a cross-legged female figure seated with good posture in a small elegant chair with a foot on a little cushion. The chair is crowned “Ex Libris Gabriele Muentener,” and though Münter does not depict herself reading, the unusual inclusion of her full name attests to her self-identification within the site of literature and her ability to recite the self within a discourse of design. In a discussion concerning the importance of literature as a space furthering the idea of America in German consciousness, Sander Gilman writes of the “demands

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36 “Instrument zu groß” (p. 73).
37 P. 19.
of a German process of German self-identification in the world of literature – for culture came to be the space for the German trying to understand the world." Thus it is significant that in America, against her bookplate, Münter differently emphasizes the rustic groundedness of her reading subjects, as in her photographs of Willie Graham (figs. 111-112) and Bud Hamilton (fig. 113). In keeping with the German ethnographic project and the opportunities of an expanded field of vision in America, Münter’s output, then, represents her thoughtful fashionings of the linkages of self to and limits by other selves.

To develop this issue, it is helpful to turn to three portraits Münter made of Uncle Joe Donohoo (fig. 114). A self-made man and early settler of Plainview, where he had come in 1890 seeking a healthy climate to recover from tuberculosis, Joseph N. Donohoo was involved in a number of business ventures significant for the area’s development. These included running a hardware company with R.C. Ware, with whom he would launch various initiatives; Ware would also marry his eldest daughter Lena. By his own account, Donohoo purchased the first bale of cotton sold in the Panhandle, and went on to establish a business in cotton and hay. He also was one of the founders of the Citizens State Bank in Plainview, housed initially in a frame building and subsequently in the Ware Hotel, an impressive structure for the period in the Panhandle built with reinforced concrete. In addition, Donohoo became a trustee of nearby Clarendon College, established in 1898 by the Methodists. His most important contribution to the Plainview community, though, was his help in securing a link to the Santa Fe Railroad.

39 In her discussion of Uncle Bud (William Zewinkle Hamilton), who ran a blacksmith shop and a hotel, Vera Dean Wofford suggests that Münter’s grandfather (and the father of Annie Scheuber, Bud’s wife) had “migrated from Germany to be close to a source of fine woods for cabinets.” His son, H.H. Hamilton, “inherited the manual skill of his forefathers and was a ‘genius with his hands.’ As a hobby he made fine violins” (Hale County Facts and Folklore, ed. Vera Dean Wofford [Lubbock: Pica Publishing Co., 1978], 237).
Representing him in a moment of quiet concentration in “Uncle Joe. Sunday. 23.VII.99” (fig. 24), Münter demonstrates that while this leading citizen of Plainview has to work on the sabbath, he does so in a relaxed manner. Münter not only depicts his feet propped up on the table, but registers such details as his bunching suspenders against the pear-shaped clasps, indentations of his collar, and the wrinkles in his overalls around the knees. Immersed like Willie reading on the floor, Joe’s facial expression is studiously absent-minded, apparently not paying attention to Münter’s portrayal. He was undoubtedly aware of the drawing in progress, though, given both Münter’s proximity of registration and her decision to utilize her largest sketchbook, a hardback notebook she employed for her most ambitious portraits such as the representation we considered of Leila. Shown with furrowed brow, wrinkled neck and cheek, glasses sliding down his nose, and rather ragged hair, work is primary to relaxation.

Is there a latent criticism in Münter’s image, or an embrace of Joe’s gumption? To what extent is this a self-portrait for Münter through another? The twinning of Joe’s qualities of concentration and relaxed pose implicitly figures Münter’s own artistic engagement, especially with the Sunday caption and its relationship to the “Sunday painter”; Münter’s retrospective statements repeatedly figure her own application against Emmy’s love of amusement. In this respect, the image of Joe retains some connection to Charles Sealsfield’s early view of the American republic which, “prosaic and sober, at least possessed virtue and moral integrity which was lacking in Europe.” And Hans Gatzke describes the widespread “stereotyped descriptions” of America in Germany as “either...a heaven-on-earth land of boundless opportunities...or...an uncultured, artificial, heartless, and mechanistic society, bent on chasing the dollar. Both stereotypes have survived into our own day and have not contributed to better American-German

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understanding." The combination of Ernst Wilkomm's *Die Europamüden* ("The Europe-Weary"; 1838) and Ferdinand Künberger's *Der Amerika-Müde* ("An America-Weary"; 1855) catch aspects of this polarity. In a discussion of the Weimar Period pertinent here as well, Theresa Mayer Hammond asserts that while "the positive aspect of America was in the lack of a burdensome tradition, a negative one can be seen in what was regarded as the lack of all culture and a concern only for material goods." If Americans were often rubes, the country's encouragement of industriousness and ambition enabled a social fluidity and the creation of new worlds; both were the case for Münter's father and Donohoo, which might suggest a positive estimation of her uncle. As such, one of the current images in Germany of America was as "a free land with free people, which offered great hope for Germany," as a society that did not rely upon class or privilege to the same extent.

In this respect, the drawing seems Goethean, if with a wink:

Of freedom and life only he is deserving  
Who every day must conquer them anew.  

Yet at the same time, the sketch seems to engage with the discourse of Nikolaus Lenau, whose writings from the 1830s contributed significantly to negative German perceptions of America. He had insisted that the American character was "suffused with a sobriety rooted in practical, mundane reality in contrast to the German love of the imagination" and aesthetic vision of life, a point taken up by Künberger as well. As Dan Diner explains, Lenau specifically condemned America's commercial character: "'Here the practical human being is developed in all its terrible rationality.' Even achievements in this area in America do not represent an 'organic culture that

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45 *American Paradise: German Travel Literature from Duden to Kisch* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980), 35.
48 Schuchalter, "*Geld and Geist,*" 55 and 57.
has grown from within,' but an external, violently and rapidly developed ‘rootless’ one. It has nothing of its own; everything is merely put on.” 50 And to take a more contemporaneous example, here is Karl May’s stance of anti-capitalism, as for example in Apache Chief Inshuchuna’s outburst:

Didn’t this entire land once belong to the red men? It has been taken from us, piece by piece. And what have we received in return? Misery, poverty, hunger! You drive us ever further back, and press us ever closer together, so that in a short time we will suffocate and die.

And: “Why do you do this? Out of need, because you have no room? No, out of greed, for in your lands there is still room for many millions. But each of you wants a whole mountain for himself, a whole forest, a whole prairie.” 51

Joe’s freedom of body and dress would have particular meaning within German paradigms of America. Dr. Ferdinand von Roemer, sent to Texas to do a geological survey, had written in 1849:

I have noticed irregularity and romanticism in regard to the clothing of the young German colonist recently come to Texas. It seems as if they wanted to compensate themselves for the restraint which the manners and customs of the homeland had imposed upon them. The almost total absence of cultured women also helped to encourage this recklessness in dress. 52

And Edward Everett had noted in 1819: “In some parts of Europe there is more wealth… in most there is more artificial refinement, and more learning, than in America; but in none is there much freedom either of soul or body.” 53 And there are still other contexts in which to read the image.

Frederick Jackson Turner had asserted in 1893:

To the frontier, the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic, but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy, that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and with that buoyancy and exuberance which comes from freedom – these

50 Cited in ibid, 34.
are the traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier. 54

For all the criticism to this Thesis, as Blackbourn points out, it drew on the work of Friedrich Ratzel and had a resonance in Germany as part of a broader mythology of the American frontier. 55

A drawing of a few months later in the same sketchbook explores the tension between the idealization of the profile portrait and Joe’s earthy energy. 56 Representing her uncle without his glasses in a crisply articulated silhouette, Münter depicts his slightly bulbous nose, somewhat tousled hair, and pinched lips. She adopts a sketchier mode of handling for his vest and the background lines, which imbue the image with dynamism. Joe thus seems grounded in a position of determination and striving, but not of transcendence. Indeed, Münter’s portrait bust of Joe is particularly large in her output, so that he reads as an impressive presence. Her ambition imposes itself in the process and registers in particular in terms of scale and handling. Complicating her claims of nonchalant modesty in America, Münter clearly asked Joe (and others in this sketchbook) to sit for her.

One subtle, perhaps subconscious, move of reflecting her Kultur as against that in America may be seen in the following comparison between a different image of Uncle Joe (fig. 115) to Morten Müller (dated 15.VI), 57 the Norwegian painter with whom Münter stayed in Düsseldorf. Both drawings are individual sketches and are remarkably similar. The hat in each covers the men’s foreheads and touches their glasses; the two men sport moustaches and are shown with a large-sized left ear in a three-quarter view; both manifest an engrossed countenance. The two images reveal the trades of the figures: Müller looks at a card of some kind, a sketch or written document perhaps; and while Joe is not depicted with an accoutrement

54 Cited in Hammond, American Paradise, 60.
56 “Uncle Joe. 29.XII.99,” p. 55; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
57 Uncle Joe: “30.XII.1899,” Kon. 26/10; and Morten Müller: Kon. 26/27; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
of his trade, his stationary does that for him. The two biggest differences lie in the greater amount of shading for Müller as against the more minimal line for Joe, especially in the faces; but more significantly, the fact that Münter chooses to frame the image of her former teacher a bit lower than for Joe to allow us to see more of him. She thereby conveys a separation of his arm above the elbow from his body, implying that as he contemplates the card, he has his hand on his hip. In concert with his erect posture, this small gesture suggests a reaction to something, a criticality or bemused engagement perhaps – as against the total immersion for Joe, who almost disappears into his act of looking at his ledger. Münter thus intimates a variation on the distinction between Prosa versus Poesie, as well as Zivilisation against Kultur.58 Such a position is in keeping with her characterization of her uncle’s “open and unsophistical temperament” and illustrates terms of her transatlantic community.59

The issue of Kultur seems to have been resonant for Münter in terms of intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity as well as the unraveling of these categories. For example, if we return to her photograph album, one of the editorial quirks I have discussed involves Münter’s inclusion of two very similar images, one out of focus, of a group of eight picnicking under a canopy of branches at Red Lake near Guion. A striking feature here is a woman wearing white who is sprawling on the ground. To be sure, sketches that Münter made in Germany prior to her departure attest to a strong interest in lounging bodies, and we have seen that she depicts male passengers on the Statendam in unheroic poses. But within a prevalent German discourse of critique of American manners,60 a condemnation that was particularly vehement concerning

58 James T. Kloppenberg for example refers to the “American version of the flattened, utilitarian Zivilisation that German critics were fond of contrasting to their own more refined Kultur” (“The Reciprocal Visions of German and American Intellectuals: Beneath the Shifting Perceptions,” in Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany and America Since 1776, eds. David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt [Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute; and Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 156).
59 Cited in Kleine, Biographie eines Paares, 78.
American women, Münter's two photographs seem to showcase American woman as an unrefined other. Dorothea Stuecher describes a revealing complex of (self-serving) tropes in discourses in the German American press constructing American women as "domineering, uncultured, falsely pious, and dangerously outspoken," and thus inferior to their German counterparts, whose role as "female agents of culture" was repeatedly emphasized.\(^{61}\) Discussing the mid-nineteenth-century writing of Therese Robinson, Stuecher maintains that "in the face of a multitude of threats to her own womanliness, the German woman finds safety and protection in the cultural superiority of her German heritage," in that Robinson constructs the virtue of her German heroines over that of women of other nationalities.\(^{62}\) Yet if a boundary between old and new worlds is erected in Münter's pair of photographs, these nevertheless also communicate her fascination with freedoms surrounding the American female body.

Filtered through tropes of the America paradigm, Münter's American photographs relate to gendered discourses of Primitivism. Gill Perry alludes to the "implicit and explicit association often made in Western art and culture between the female nude and the 'primitive', between woman and nature, by contrast with a more masculine 'culture' or...Zivilisation."\(^{63}\) If as in such a formulation the Primitivist vantage could be said to be predicated upon a masculinist understanding of Kultur, the insistence of Münter's photographs in their quasi-repetitiveness worries that equivalence. Lolling on the ground, the female figure indexes nature and a lack of inhibition and accords pre-eminence to a German play for culture. The duality of registers of Primitivism and the America paradigm problematizes Münter's status as a viewer, and her photographs seem to express a pleasure in that confusion. In period German representations such

\(^{62}\) Ibid, 57-58.
as Franz Christophe’s *Siesta*, included in an 1898 issue of *Jugend* (fig. 116), woman is cast as organic nature in a patternized union of body and land. Swept back into classical time, the grounded body is denied in its inscription into *Kultur*. In her photographs, however, Münter depicts the unruly dailiness of the American female body. Her engagement with the freedom of American female bodies also is conveyed by her portrayal of Tante Lou reclining in her hammock (fig. 117). Yet though her subject kicks up her leg with her arms thrown back in a gesture of relaxation and her dress is wound about, the lack of inhibition of such a pose is mitigated by her aunt’s serious countenance.

Münter’s engagement with the uniqueness of the American female body may also be explored in a remarkable five-page mini-series in one of her sketchbooks of women and a boy climbing in trees from the Moorefield area. In one drawing, a woman inelegantly straddles a branch as her dress bunches; another portrays a young supine figure coiled on the trunk resting in a near fetal position as she holds onto a higher branch. And in a different sketch, Münter represents a woman balanced in the fork of a tree, with her right leg bent forward and up higher on the tree. She appears to be marching resolutely upward, holding the branches on either side with a determined expression. Pushing a tree branch down as she ascends with an erect, forward-facing body, she needs only to clear a path in her climb. She reads as a new woman in and of nature – toughly statuesque, a rugged pioneer, within and dominating nature. Münter’s rendition could be seen to challenge the Simmelian model discussed in the introduction to this study; for as Rita Felski suggests, his “equation of woman with nature and tradition” receives “a new impetus from the popularity of Darwinian models of evolutionary development, resulting in an explicit contrast between a striving, restless masculinity and an organic, nondifferentiated femininity.”

Complicating but overlapping with Simmel’s assertion that “the woman represents being and man

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64 *Jugend* III. Jahrgang, Nr. 3, January 15: 46.
65 Kon. 36/2: 1899, pp. 17-21; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
represents becoming,” American woman’s being is woman-as-becoming. Friedrich Gerstäcker had referred to the people of Arkansas as “rustic backwoodsmen,” and as James William Miller explains, at the time of Gerstäcker’s visit, in the backwoods, humans depended for their livelihood on a combination of hunting, gathering, and as little agriculture as they could get by on. Backwoodsmen were, as a result, free of almost all the constraints of bourgeois society. To Gerstäcker’s mind they were to be envied for their freedom, not disdained for their lack of culture.

Pursuing the issue of Münter’s approach to the American female body, it is interesting to consider her sketch of the Ware Family, which features her cousin Lena, five years her senior, with her husband R.C. and their daughters Allie (whom we have seen) and Helen. Reclining in a (rocking?) chair and wearing a dress with puffed sleeves and a collar, Lena throws back her hand to hold on to the top of the chair. Depicted in a state of weary introspection, Lena holds pert little baby Helen, who is at the center of the composition taking in her older sister Allie. Both Allie and her father are rendered from the rear; as he hugs her, we see her fluidly observed braids and, though R.C. is featured in profil perdu, Münter includes enough detail to make out his moustache, straight nose, and the intimation of an eye to suggest scrutiny of the infant. Münter represents a revealing circularity of arms: Mr. Ware’s big arms are hugging as he leans in to take up almost half of the compositional center; Lena’s are separate in withdrawal, and Münter positions her in the other half of the drawing. Lena’s sense of being elsewhere is communicated also in a sepia photograph (fig. 118). Her great-granddaughter recounts a story her great-aunt Helen told her about the lack of emotional involvement of her mother with the children. ‘Mama Lena’ painted for hours on end and also fired her own porcelain in the basement kiln. Once Helen fell off her pet pony and came in injured and crying. It was recounted many a time in the family how ‘Mama Lena did not miss a stroke’ and kept on painting.

69 7.1.00, Kon. 26/38: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
70 From an e-mail of November 9, 2006.
Münter’s drawing of the Wares gives rise to speculation surrounding possibilities of irrecoverable sites of dailiness in which she encountered and obliquely figured artistic practice in America. A hand-painted Haviland porcelain dish signed L. Ware and dated September 15, 1909 (figs. 119 and 120) is suggestive of her cousin’s keen artistic ability and formative contribution to the project of fashioning Plainview culture. She would paint a full dinner set during World War One.71

During her travels, Münter appears to highlight an American fluidity between cleanliness and dirt by repeatedly portraying her subjects on the ground. Her depictions of picnics and of Willie Graham reading are examples, and her American sketchbooks also display a fascination with plunked bodies on the floor. To be sure, many of the places Münter visited required being on the ground due to a lack of development, as suggested by Uncle Joe’s advertisement for the Plainview cowboy reunion; and she also traveled to Jim Ned Creek, which Juanita Daniel Zachry describes as an area for camping.72 Yet Münter captioned one of her photographs of our sprawling woman “Red lake dinner on the ground.” The word “ground” is tucked under the date, which foregrounds her investment in that information, which she specifically took the trouble to add.

71 I am grateful to Lena’s great-granddaughter for sharing these images and so much of her family’s rich history with me. She suggests that Lena’s “paintings,...painted China..., [and]...albums...bespeak of a remarkable discipline and a quantum leap from frontier type life in a generation towards a gentrified life among the ‘solid citizens’ of the town,” and understands her art as “an expression of ‘A culture of learning’ – remarkable in its content, achievement, and discipline in such a seemingly incongruous setting. Lena Ware painted beautifully whether on canvas or on porcelain and Richard Cameron Ware (her husband) saw to it that she has none other than Haviland porcelain from France on which to paint” (e-mail of March 10, 2007). And Wofford notes of Lena: “An artist, she filled the family home with her creations of hand painted china and fine needlework” (Hale County Facts and Folklore, 496). To decorate a church – “unpainted..., bare walls, rough lumber, home-made pews” – for the first church wedding in Hale County (1894), Mary V. Dye explained that people were “putting heads together,” using cheese cloth for curtains: “Mrs. R.C. Ware had been to Saint Louis and had learned how to make paper flowers and she showed us how. We made a bell of white morning glories, which we suspended from a large coal-oil lamp which hung from the ceiling in front of the pulpit” (“Mrs. R.C. Ware Last Rites Set Wednesday,” Plainview Daily Herald, August 17, 1962).
An interview of Mrs. W.B. Martine (née Mary Bryan) foregrounds challenges for outsiders surrounding period hygiene conditions in Plainview:

For these old timers there was much amusement from the attitudes of new comers [sic]. Once there was a lady visiting in the home of Will Knight, a dealer in surface fuel. One day she overheard a telephone conversation between Knight and a customer. She was puzzled at what he was saying, but said nothing about it until she could ask her husband. What she heard was, ‘Do you want little hard, brown ones or large, round, flat ones?’ and after a pause, ‘Well, the little brown ones are a bit higher, but they last longer.’ This same woman in a few years moved to the plains, and in a short time she had discarded the shovel and was handling her fuel (little hard, brown ones) with her hands as nonchalantly as any other courageous pioneer woman.73

The “courageous” approach to hygiene of course had particular resonance for Münter. For as Nancy Reagin notes, in Imperial Germany American women’s cleanliness and general homemaking skills were perceived as lacking in comparison to their German counterparts, whose work in this regard she relates to the broader project of Kultur.74 Hammond describes a widespread German notion that “Americans were determined by their terrain” in the context that “the need to subdue ‘savages’ made them savages themselves.”75 Christiane Harzig points out that German emigrants were pressed into service as a mechanism of economic and cultural compensation for Germany’s late appearance upon the colonial stage,76 and the cultivated nature of Münter’s Jim Wade suggests that the complex of Münter’s representations serves a buttressing function of Germany’s status as a Kulturnation.

Yet at the same time, her emphasis on her relatives’ “groundedness” relates to the extension of Volkish ideology onto American soil. As part of the stabilizing function of her images, the land is pressed into service to elaborate a connection to a German-American past and

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73 “Early Days in West Texas,” interview by Hattye Smoot, undated manuscript; Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.
74 Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 60-61.
75 American Paradise, 56.
thereby to figure a German-American spirit. In a discussion of Volkish ideology, W. Bradley explains:

Most often this bond between the Volk and the land was expressed by writers discussing the phenomenon in terms of ‘roots,’ for example, the ‘rootedness’ of the Volk to its native soil. This image implies not only an exchange which proceeds from the inhabitant to the soil, but also an extraction of certain ‘qualities’ from the soil. Repeatedly, one finds examples of the belief that certain creative characteristics and powers of the individual are in some invisible, intangible, but nevertheless undeniable fashion the direct result of contact with the soil which the individual and his forefathers have inhabited.

Johann Gottfried von Herder had noted:

Some sensitive people feel so intimately close to their native country, are so much attached to its soil, that they can scarcely live if separated from it. The constitution of their body, their way of life, the nature of work and play to which they have been accustomed from their infancy, indeed their whole mentality, are climatic. Deprive them of their country, and you deprive them of everything.

As Kirsten Belgum explains, “For Herder, geography and regional climate combined to shape a people’s culture; every nation and every people acquired a personality from these forces.”

Thus in the theatrical “Marshall 1899, Ella” (fig. 121), probably taken by Emmy, Münter stands on a ladder, the outgrowth of a large plant. Connected to the soil and removed from it in this quirky self-presentation, there is a fractured link between the plant’s branches and accoutrements of dress such as the foliate decoration of Münter’s traveling blouse and the decoration on her hat. Overall, the relationship is one of dislocation, a quality enhanced by the discrepancy between the rough-hewn dwelling, whose wood grain and stilts are readable, and details of female fashion as well as the two suitcases in the window. In a resonant study of the underexplored subject of nineteenth-century German-American poetry, Andrew Yox argues for

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77 My understanding of Volkish ideology is indebted to Perry here (“Primitivism and the ‘Modern,’” in Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction, 38).
78 Cited in ibid, 40.
a greater “disquiet with nature” and “divided” self-image than amongst German poets of the period. It is worth quoting Yox at length here:

Exposed as they were to the bountiful conditions in the United States, German Americans obviously had reasons for optimism and means of expressing it. Still, few scholars have highlighted the essential darkness and sense of isolation in the German American worldview, for material abundance was not, in the end, a substitute for a deficit of love. This was an emigrating people who felt in various degrees that they had been unwanted in or, in some ways, even pushed out of their homeland. Yet, they did not feel at home in the United States, either, or resoundingly comfortable with nature. A ‘love deficit’ thus colors the German American consciousness, and this fact also helps to explain much of what was distinctive about the German Americans.

Münter herself is of course not directly “pushed out” of Germany, for all her uncertainty about the future and significant familial losses. Yet her photograph communicates an attempt at a Volkish stabilization of diaspora. Yox argues for a charged German nationalism as a compensatory mechanism for the love deficit. “Marshall 1899, Ella” effects what Thomas Nolden describes as an imperialist “reterritorialization” of space: “The imperialist reterritorialization of the nation attempts to expand the nation’s space by subjecting other cultures to a concept of space often foreign to the colonized people and land.” And Reagin argues that “[i]n ‘inventing’ Imperial Germany, nationalists could...count on the fact that almost all Germans defined themselves as a people with a shared culture (a Kulturvolk).” Münter’s self-figuration speaks however to the challenges of Kultur to span contexts of assimilation and empire. And her tourism does not fundamentally seem to serve as a stimulus to recognition; as Dean MacCannell notes drawing on Van den Abbeele, “Whether or not tourism, on a practical level..., can ever be a

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82 “The Fate of Love: Nineteenth-Century German American Poetry,” in Traveling between Worlds: German-American Encounters, eds. Thomas Adam and Ruth Gross (Arlington, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 129-135. While an article from the New Yorker Staatszeitung und Herold from October 22, 1898 points to a embarrassing lack of understanding between Americans and Germans, which it frames in terms of a painful chasm between two peoples who depend upon each other (p. 11), a subsequent article in the same periodical differently broaches the issue of identity crisis. Discussing the unveiling of the Schiller Monument in St. Louis, it insists on German-American unity through cultural uplift (November 12, 1898: 6).
83 “The Fate of Love,” in Traveling between Worlds, 135.
84 Ibid, 135.
86 Sweeping the German Nation, 3.
'utopia of difference,' ultimately depends on its capacity to recognize and accept otherness as radically other.”

Münter’s repeated enactment in her photographic practice of herself and others emanating from tree stumps (fig. 122, in which the male figure rhymes visually with the background trees) attests to the significance of her quest in America for rootedness, or for an anchor to the past to build hope for the future; but traces of conversation with her American subjects in this process are difficult to find.

Despite Münter’s figuration through the motif of grounding of the fraught relationship of her American subjects to Kultur, such a focus suggests an explicit challenge to Lenau’s perception of a lack of organic American culture. Against widespread perceptions of American culture as “‘not tied to the land (Natur), to history, to the spirit, to any elevating idea,’” of being “‘bodenlos,’ without roots, without tradition, without substance,” Münter seeks to fashion a version of American culture premised on a German model yet distinct from it. Thus for example she draws on literature as a tool for the architecture of community. If we return to the photograph of Willie Graham reading, whom Münter in her concise manner would characterize in a letter from 1958 as “Farmer, intelligent,” she emphasizes his absorbed investment in learning in unadorned circumstances. Again the frayed edges of culture in America complicate and mobilize Münter’s gaze: registering Willie at an unusually low, intimate vantage as he pores over his book, the photograph instances a voyeurism rare in Münter’s oeuvre in an alternative to predominant Wilhelminian perceptions surrounding female desire. Discussing an earlier moment of German settlement, the following statement by Hubert Heinlein nevertheless is resonant for the subject of Münter’s photograph and for the role of uplift of literature for German Americans:

As Carol Diethe puts it, “Very little consideration was given to the possibility that the respectable lady might harbour a high libido”; instead female sexuality was predominantly cast in predatory or mystifying terms (“Lou Andreas-Salomé and Female Sexuality at the Turn of the Century,” in *German Women Writers, 1900-1933: Twelve Essays*, ed. Brian Keith-Smith [Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993], 26-27). As I discuss in the conclusion to this study, there is a surprising degree of overlap between this image and Münter’s 1909 *Interieur* in terms of the theme of male readers and beds, tilting floorboards and rug in the foreground, view into the far room, and voyeuristic component.

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88 Schuchalter, “Geld and Geist,” 55-56.
90 As Carol Diethe puts it, “Very little consideration was given to the possibility that the respectable lady might harbour a high libido”; instead female sexuality was predominantly cast in predatory or mystifying terms (“Lou Andreas-Salomé and Female Sexuality at the Turn of the Century,” in *German Women Writers, 1900-1933: Twelve Essays*, ed. Brian Keith-Smith [Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993], 26-27). As I discuss in the conclusion to this study, there is a surprising degree of overlap between this image and Münter’s 1909 *Interieur* in terms of the theme of male readers and beds, tilting floorboards and rug in the foreground, view into the far room, and voyeuristic component.
An interest in literature in primitive circumstances was not practical—it did not put meat on the table and even tended to interfere with one’s earning a livelihood. However, as a rare treat, key phrases from the German classics could lend dignity to such events as a wedding, a dedication, or a funeral. The classics could provide moral sentiments and appeal, in brief quotations, to the emotions.91

And of course, as I have suggested, reading is a reflection of Münter’s own social space and education. In a recollection from 1956, for example, she mentions that while she did not draw much in Marshall, “The Scheubers had a piano and books—that kept me busy. I read Walter Scott, ‘Lancelot and Elaine’ & in it I found the lyrics for a song, ‘Love art thou bitter, sweet is death to me—O love, if death be sweeter, let me die.’”92 Representing her position within a fashioned community, she also cuts a photograph of herself reading in Marshall into a star shape for her album (fig. 123).

I think it makes sense to position Münter’s Uncle Joes in this context. If Joe’s type of reading does not necessarily foster the “inner man,”93 but instead recalls Technik in “repose,” Robin Lenman, John Osborne, and Eda Sagarra point out that in Imperial Germany some people “were inclined to dematerialize technological achievements by wishfully interpreting them as secondary manifestations of German Geist: ‘Everything technical and organizational is also born of the spirit and is a representation of spirit.’”94 Here Uncle Joe’s civilizing groundedness questions the distinction between the organicism of Kultur and the artifice of Zivilisation, or perhaps between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. In Shearer West’s gloss on Ferdinand Tönnies Community and Society (1887), whereas Gemeinschaft is “rural, natural, based on kinship and

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93 Cited in Heinlen, “The Function of the German Literary Heritage,” in German Culture in Texas, 171.
family feeling,” Gesellschaft is “urban, individualist and mechanistic.” Indeed, Wolfgang Helbich argues that views of America in Germany become “more subdued, more sophisticated” in the period, away from the extremes of Willkomm and Kürnberger, even as they retain connections to such tropes; however, the new development after 1870 and especially 1898 if “not very prominently” was “the role of the United States as a world power, a military rival, an imperialistic state.”

It is difficult to gauge to what extent Münter was aware of the rapidity of change surrounding Plainview development. However, in keeping with her self-distancing from mass-cultural practices, she retrospectively elaborates a primitivizing discourse surrounding her travels, as we have seen in her statement, “We spent most of the time in the country in Arkansas and Texas, in primitive circumstances [Urzuständen], in houses without any plumbing, far from any conveniences. You rode across the prairie for hours to get a sack of flour.” Chartered in 1888, “By 1892 Plainview had four churches, two hotels, a seminary, a newspaper, stagecoach service, numerous businesses, and a population of 250”; and when Münter arrived there in 1899, it had a number of dry goods stores and a grocery store in the town center, as well as other services.

95 The Visual Arts in Germany 1890-1937: Utopia and Despair (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 42.
96 “Different, But Not Out of This World: German Images of the United States Between Two Wars, 1871-1914,” in Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany and America Since 1776, eds. David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute; and Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 112 and 120. In a useful summary, Helbich writes: “For Herman Grimm, the United States served as a medium for his criticism of German conditions in the sense of his liberaldemokratischer Amerikakult,’ with antitheses like ‘dreamer’ versus ‘man of action,’ or ‘bound’ versus ‘free.’ Fontane held no firm ideological position pro or con, but for all his admiration for the vitality of the New World, he clearly preferred German culture to American lack of same, sensitivity and warm feeling to American coldness and aloofness. Gustav Freytag set his Heimath myth against American modernism. Lilienron appreciated American liberty, but deplored the dominant materialism and greed. Gerhart Hauptmann’s antithesis seems to be materialism versus culture, Müllhausen’s, on the other hand, the destruction of the Indians versus railroads and factories, and Spielhagen’s liberty versus repression” (113). Helbich concludes, “Whether one tries to distill a collective image...or establish five or six different ones – it is quite clear that all of the characteristics attributed to America had originated earlier in the century, or putting it more bluntly: Nothing new was diagnosed or invented after 1870” (113-114).
98 Charles G. Davis, “Plainview.” in The Handbook of Texas Online (http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online)
Moreover, her stay coincides with early stages of the establishment of women's networks to build the town's culture. For example, Tante Lou (fig. 124) and Lena Ware were charter members of the Eastern Star, organized in 1896, and Lena was its first secretary (fig. 125); Münter mentions attending a meeting there in her pocket calendar.⁹⁹

From the lens of her primitivism, Münter's Uncle Joe appears as an albeit thoughtfully observed personage of her America as Heimat. As Celia Applegate explains, “The Heimat movement was above all concerned with the disappearance of distinctive regional cultures within Germany, and all its efforts and energies went toward the preservation of that Eigenart.” As she notes, however, the Heimat movement was not necessarily at odds with forces of modernity, such as technology, and sought an integration of local tradition within the nation.¹⁰⁰ In a related vein instructive for Münter's figurations of Uncle Joe, Shearer West explains that the Bund Heimatschutz sought to “protect historical ‘monuments,’ endangered landscapes, animals, plants, as well as ‘practices, customs, celebrations and costume festivals’ (Sitten, Gebräuche, Feste und Trachten).”¹⁰¹

This returns us to the quality of contemplative consumption informing much of Münter's America output, a tension at the center of period debates on German anthropology as well. Sierra Bruckner maintains that it “is ultimately th[e]...tension between edification and recreation, scientific practice and commercialism that makes German popular anthropology a subject rich

⁹⁹ Though she does not provide dates, Wofford notes that Louise Scheuber taught a Sunday School class to boys. She would later be active in the Cemetery Association of Plainview and “gained a reputation as a brilliant student of history” (Hale County Facts and Folklore, 496). The Mystic Club, in which some of Münter’s other relatives would participate, was organized in Plainview in November of 1905; its object was billed as “Intellectual Improvement, Public Library work and Erection of Public Library building,” and it focused on the study of literature and history.


¹⁰¹ The Visual Arts in Germany 1890-1937, 42.
with class and national identity in the context of cultural modernity.\textsuperscript{102} Penny frames the conflict for ethnographic museums in terms of an empiricist comparative ordering of culture – Bastian’s call for a “a bird’s-eye-view” of culture – as against the disorder of spectacle and display.\textsuperscript{103} Bastian had maintained that ethnology seemed to offer a ray of hope...that we might finally find a solution to the contemporary situation in which our world view is both unsure and fragmented. Ethnology seemed to offer the best chance to put the science of man on that same solid base of actual proof as we find now in the natural sciences.\textsuperscript{104}

Yet spectacle would carry the day due to a feverish pace of acquisitions and insistent paradigms of salvage that thwarted museums’ goals of tidily comprehensive geographic classification.\textsuperscript{105}

One site in which this shift was expressed was the \textit{Völkerschau}. As Bruckner explains:

While most scientists were not convinced that impresarios had the skills of ethnographers, the show promoters’ reputations as travelers and men of the world did impart a kind of scientific legitimacy to the early \textit{Völkerschauen}. Indeed, travel experience served as an alternative to formal education and a kind of symbolic capital that some anthropologists did not have.

Up through the 1890s scientists endorsed \textit{Völkerschauen} as enabling views of new peoples in Europe, and they were a site of cultivation.\textsuperscript{106} As I have noted, however, as their entertainment value (and imperialist rhetoric) gained ascendancy around 1900, the legitimacy of \textit{Völkerschauen} became increasingly questionable.\textsuperscript{107}


\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Objects of Culture}, 2, 13-14, 28-29, and passim.

\textsuperscript{104} Cited in \textit{ibid}, 28.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid}, 185, 187, and passim. The urgency of salvage registers in an 1896 statement by Karl Northoff, the chairman of Leipzig’s ethnographic association: "The progressive and powerful colonization everywhere, which quickly levels out everything in its wake, will have suppressed the unique culture of the Naturvölker within the next one or two decades. It is thus necessary to quickly save what can still be saved from the ethnographic artifacts of the Naturvölker, in order to collect and secure the material out of which science can proudly erect the knowledge of the totality of mankind" (cited in \textit{ibid}, 32). Penny describes the "scientists’ recognition of the paradox that the very technological advances that facilitated the location of an array of previously ‘unknown’ peoples – and thus the ‘empirical evidence’ ethnologists needed to complete their project – were also contributing to the rapid destruction of these peoples and their material culture. This moment of realization, which one could call the modernist moment in ethnology, caused many ethnologists to believe that matters were urgent, that opportunity was fleeting, that knowledge – about the world and oneself – would be glimpse, but not obtained, if they did not act fast" (\textit{ibid}, 29-30).


\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Ibid}, 129.
Münter’s approach to her American subjects overlaps with discourses surrounding the Völkerschau. If we turn to her portrayal of African Americans in “Susie and Sullivan, Marshall” (fig. 126), it relates to what Bruckner calls the “museological” and “showroom” presentations of the 1896 German Colonial Exhibition as well as of Carl Marquandt in 1904 (figs. 127-128), as against the sensationalism and epic proportion of Carl Hagenbeck’s shows. To be sure, Münter displays a greater degree of aestheticization and ostensibly an interconnected vestige of warmth; personal connection is referenced by her caption, which in a display of reassuring familiarity serves both to ground and to difference her Heimat. Zimmerman explains that in the Völkerschauen, “the performers did not simply appear naively before audiences but rather played roles that they and the impresarios had fabricated.” In “Susie and Sullivan” that project is at least partially shared, which purports to take the edge off of Münter’s exoticism. As such, the image is part of the discourse of authentic fiction I have been describing in a convergence with Eric Ames’s instructive discussion of vivification. Portraying the context of salvage surrounding German ethnography and its strategic trumpeting by the impresarios of Wild West shows, he notes resonantly that vivification is a “different but contemporaneous metaphor, one that gestures more toward life than death.” In this context, “Susie and Sullivan” thus retains a different inflection than the snapshots Aby Warburg took with his Bull’s Eye in 1896 of various Native American peoples in Arizona and Mexico (figs. 129-132). Whereas Münter’s curiosity and distancing strategies in representing her subjects are partly subsumed in enacting their participatory compliance, in Warburg’s ethnography, interaction is either entirely lacking or problematized. The difference in results highlights the conservatism of Münter’s humanism. While Warburg showcases a spectacular salvage, Münter maroons her figures in a performative,

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109 Anthropology and Antihumanism, 23.
vivified present. As Ames writes: “In Germany, the unintended effect of the Wild West, for all its claims to history and reality, was the vivification of a fictional universe. It was this fictional aspect of the American spectacle, its powerful grip on the German imagination – and not its obsession with the real and the authentic.” This shared project of fictionalization facilitates the elaboration of nation and selfhood through differentiation; for as Nigel Rothfels reminds us, “storytelling, or the narrative of enfreakment” enjoys a foundational role “in creating the wondrous, monstrous, or historical out of the simply unusual.”

Münter reassuringly casts her figures in terms of accoutrements of their service in a landscape of clutter and debris; the disorder is apparent in comparison to other Marshall porch scenes featuring white subjects (figs. 110 and 133). Her historical mummification recalls the series of American street types executed by Alice Austen and, in a more racist vein, those of Sigmund Krausz (both 1896); there is also a connection to Harry Miller’s Black boy smiling (fig. 134). The boy is smiling, to be sure; but there is a trace of not smiling, and his open trousers constitute the center of the composition. While “Susie and Sullivan” lacks the nastiness of Krausz’s street types and the quiescent order of Austen’s albeit more humanizing presentations, Münter’s Three women after church in Marshall (fig. 135) zeroes in on the women’s clothing and seems to speak her fascination: “Look how well dressed they are.” This reading is accentuated by the juxtaposition between the women’s dress and the dirt of their surroundings and the boy’s bare feet. The issue of dress not only has value as local color, but more difficult readings are suggested by discourses of German popular literature on America. Gerstäcker for example mocks

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111 Ibid, 222.
112 “Aztecs, Aborigines, and Ape-People,” in Freakery, 169.
113 Adopting Frantz Fanon’s term, Eleanor Hight and Gary Sampson discuss the “mummified” representation of colonized peoples and their reassuring reduction as staffage: “As objects of fascination, colonized people were often assigned positions formerly occupied by a colorful cast of conventional characters – shepherds, pagans, banditti, gypsies, loose-living women, and other roughcast types – who, when not appearing as subjects themselves, became little more than stock figures in a colonized landscape. Their placement in these preconceived roles helped Westerners negotiate the personally threatening experience of the unknown by selectively transforming uneasy or awkward, even hostile, cultural confrontations into a more palatable form” (“Introduction: Photography, ‘Race,’ and Post-Colonial Theory,” in Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing race and place, eds. Hight and Sampson [London and New York: Routledge, 2002], 4 and 7).
African Americans for dressing up, and Sealsfield constructs their laziness and wide-eyed amazement and positions them into a hierarchy of servitude and broken English;\(^{114}\) May emphasizes qualities of untrained simplicity and good-heartedness.\(^{115}\) And Ratzel underscores their indolence, clattering presence, and function of local color.\(^{116}\) That African Americans constituted an exoticizing spectacle for Münter is elliptically captured by her caption on the back of the apparently idyllic scene in the photograph, *Three girls in a meadow in Marshall* (fig. 136) sent to the Grahams: “colored Methodist church. Bessie Virgie Jennie Lee.” Aspects of the difficulties of the photographic transaction—not the least of which involve segregation—are captured in Münter’s catalogue of looks of the three women in fig. 135 and in traces of her own spectaculaity from on-lookers.

To understand Münter’s problematic articulation of Kultur in the two images of African Americans considered here, it is helpful to turn to a few other representations to examine how she resolves the dyad of entertainment and instruction I have mentioned in *Die Gartenlaube*. In photographs such as *Cockfight* (fig. 137) and *Young girl in her Sunday best on a street* (fig. 138), she appears to foreground momentary amusing encounters, which clearly lack the typology of the more posed treatments of African Americans. But if we compare “Susie and Sullivan” to staged photographs of white Americans such as that of Mary Jane Allen (fig. 56) and of the young Moorefield woman (fig. 105), there is clearly a greater degree of interaction between photographer and subjects, humanizing presence, and foregrounded artistry, either as process or composition in the latter two examples. An apparently more uplifted, “edified” approach to culture also seems to govern *Excursion on the Mississippi River* (fig. 139). The photograph showcases the inexorable pull of modernization as the women and children head for the river boat.

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to make an excursion to Montesano and the City of Providence, a draw heightened by Münter’s vantage from the back. Yet salvage appears secondary to aesthetics, in that her lens captures the rhyming of the smoke and gateway, which accents the formal structure of the image, as against the parade of the women’s billowing skirts. Münter’s camera rescues the moment in a gesture of its beautification and order. As such, her photograph overlaps with Kodak’s argument that vision should not be squandered but preserved through its cameras. While there are vestiges of salvage in Münter’s practice, the elements of humor and encounter undercut the direness of such a discourse; as Roslyn Poignant puts it, during this period “one of the major givens of anthropology” is “the insistence on the urgency of recording the vanishing, dying, disappearing peoples and/or their cultures before it was too late.”

In Münter’s “Store” (fig. 140), for example, the inclusion of the carriage wheel asserts the primacy of her optical consumption of the scene over a critique of advertising’s imprint on to American land, even as Münter was undoubtedly aware of such discourses. Within the discursive framework of tourism, industrialization, and ethnography, then, she figures her Kultur as both cultivation and popular entertainment.

Asking in 1897, “What is nationalism?” Friedrich Naumann had explained, “It is the motive power of the German people to spread its influence all over the globe.... You must conquer something, anything in the world to be something.” Robert C. Holub observes that

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119 We have seen Münter’s preoccupation with New York advertising; and in an 1893 issue of Die Gartenlaube Rudolf Cronau had published an illustration entitled In a Small Town in the Far West (fig. 141), whose overwhelming lawlessness and buildup differ from Münter’s image.
"the colonial mentality hardly exhausts itself in the official story of colonization," and there is clearly an overlap between Münter's documentation of America and German colonialist discourses. This manifests at the level of subject matter: Belgum points out that after Germany officially became a colonial power, Die Gartenlaube featured "essays on each of the territories" with information about "their climate, topography, inhabitants, crops." And the cultural and racial superiority in Münter's representations of African Americans, the uninhibitedly lounging picnicking woman, and the figurations of Uncle Joe and Jim Wade, for example, relate in varied modes and extents to the German colonialist project. In a similar vein, despite his status as a "self-avowed pacifist and anticolonialist," May's writings retain significant colonialist overtones. For example, Old Shatterhand's ability even surpasses that of the "Westerner" Sam Hawkens in its make-up of courage, force, instinct, and - a point May repeatedly emphasizes - knowledge gleaned from reading in Germany. Through Kultur, Münter's American output foregrounds colonialism's attending discourses of discovery, possession, borders, and settlement, all of which Nolden understands as spatial practices of colonialism inflecting colonial narratives.

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122 Poplarizing the Nation, 144.
124 In her discussion of May's Orientzyklys, Nina Berman suggests that the narrator's interest in ethnography and adventurism leads him to "develop...into a prototypical colonizer," which trains the reader "how to think and act like a colonist" (The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy, eds. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop [Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998], 56); and Susanne Zantop refers to Old Shatterhand as a "Teutonic superhero" ("Close Encounters: Deutsche and Indianer," in Germans and Indians, 3).
125 Lutz perceives issues surrounding Germans' late advent upon the colonial stage in May's writings, as "ideological props for German imperialism and for the self-representation of Germans as both superior tribespeople and superior colonizers... Karl May showed his readers that, given the opportunity, even a book-educated German lower middle-class adventurer and would-be pioneer could become a powerful colonialist" ("German Indianthusiasm," in Germans and Indians, 175).
126 "On Colonial Spaces and Bodies," in The Imperialist Imagination 129.
As noted in the discussion of “Carrots,” it is difficult, however, to ascertain to what extent Münter’s output registers the heightened tensions in German-American relations that Jörg Nagler describes. With few exceptions, her subjects do not seem to convey any suspicion surrounding her Kultur. Nagler asserts that in the period, while some Americans continued to have a favorable view of German culture, “For many Americans, Germany became synonymous with ‘the kaiser’ and with the personality of Wilhelm II in particular. The association of Kaiser and Kultur presented a troublesome equation.”

It is unclear whether Münter’s subjects saw her as an enabler of culture fostering pride in connections to the tradition of culture of the Old World, or whether, like “Great artist Konrad,” they failed to relate her output to that project, and instead overlooked it as familial documentation.

Within the anxiety-producing capaciousness in Germany of Kultur as artful and as way of life, Münter’s fashioning of authentic fiction in such drawings as those of Annie Maud and Uncle Joe, as well as in photographs of Jim Wade and (more titillatingly) Susie and Sullivan, for example, enables her elaboration of a backyard ethnography lodged in a quest for fusion and differentiation. Like Die Gartenlaube, that ethnography is a “compensatory visual space” that inscribes her as a national subject within a distended community.

As Belgum explains, “The Gartenlaube systematically unified the nation by appealing to the commonalities and interrelationships among the…various locales…. Even after 1871 the magazine continued to present the nation in terms of a sum of lands, a collection of ‘fatherlands,’” encompassing Germans overseas. Related to new methods of learning among scholars outside the academy who helped to forge the discipline of German anthropology, Münter’s project of documenting her American surroundings is a partial compensation for a lack of formal training. For within a site

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128 See “Introduction,” n. 206, in the present discussion.
129 Popularizing the Nation, 34.
of familial recording and cultural documentation, and thus an expansive, laden field for visual experience, Münter hones her skills of observation and craft of capture. In the process, she channels the breadth of dailiness in service of self-figuration, often in resonantly ordinary ways. Her output attests to a delight in new possibilities of exploration devolving from her mobilized gaze and the latter’s limitations as it indexes the embroiled daily struggles of elaborating a visuality and probing the contours of selfhood as a Wilhelminian in America.

Münter’s strategies of captioning and textualization are illuminating here in that she gives primacy to playfulness as a mechanism for contending with such challenges, a point in keeping with the complexities surrounding documentation and authenticity I have highlighted in this study.30 For example, she captions the Sue Belle photograph (fig. 87) sent to Jane Lee “taken at Sue Belle lake 20.V.1900” vertically, and on the diagonal: “Bessie, Virgie, Jennie, Willie, mee.” And if we return to the drawing of Uncle Joe deliberating his next move (fig. 115), Münter’s deployment of his stationary as caption literally defines him through his trade, with her schematic framing of his likeness a humorously apposite rendition of the man as corporate image. Yet while the textual information includes her uncle’s name, profession, location, and the date of the drawing, all ostensibly fixing him in time and space, the image gently mocks the archive’s certitude. Richard Sieburth draws attention to the “witty interaction of image and text, drawing and caption, seeing and reading” in the physiologies,31 and Münter’s typologization of America ultimately foregrounds her own play with documentation and curiosity. Thus for instance she irreverently captions a sketch of the solemn Minne Donohoo: “Minnie Miller D’a’no’who! Do no hoowo! 18.VII.1899.”32 In addition, the reverse of a loose sketch instances her delight in

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32 Kon. 26/25; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
playing with the English language, here ostensibly upon her return to Germany. Akin to a version of pig latin, she includes words such as “arlychae” (charly); “arymae” (mary); “iredtae” (tired); “icksae” (sick); and “utecae” (cute).

Textualization sometimes allows Münter to assert an ethnography present in more muted form in her images. For example, the caption for her pencil drawing, “18.VII.1899: Cap’n Buster. Co’n bread!” George Slaughter geb. 98,” catches the playful ethnography of her project as she represents the son of her cousin Allie Donohoo (sister of Lena, Minnie, Carl, and Will), who had married into a ranching family that would garner national attention for its breeding of Herefords. Yet while the cornbread is suggestive for the ethnographic inflection of the sketch, that quality is diffused by Münter’s decision to focus on the particular childhood disconnect between thought and action. Holding his cornbread up close to his mouth and staring ahead into space in Münter’s profile portrayal, George Jr. has forgotten what he is doing and has moved onto the next thing. In keeping with her emphasis on representing George the little child, Münter registers his pudgy face, necklessness, and the texture of his curly hair. Münter thus presses her caption into service of a backyard ethnography. Her textualization proclaims her role as an architect of a German-American language in keeping with her quest for a rooted culture. As Thomas Lekan suggests, “Germany’s status as a ‘nation of provincials,’ in which most citizens envisioned their country as a decentralized mosaic of regional landscapes, also shaped the experience of Germans abroad and enabled them to imagine themselves as part of a Kulturnation that spanned the seas.”

In her discussion of quotations, Susan Stewart suggests that they include “the two primary functions of language – to make present what can only be experienced abstractly, and to


134 Kon. 26/20; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.

textualize our experience and thereby make it available for interpretation and closure.”

Captioning declares both Münter’s lifewriting and social connection; as Smith and Watson write, “In telling their stories, narrators take up models of identity that are culturally available. And by adopting ready-made narrative templates to structure experiential history, they take up culturally designated subjectivities. Their recitations of personal narrative thereby attest to and verify their participation in corporate culture.” Münter’s “18.VII.1899: Cap’n Buster. Co’n bread! George Slaughter geb. 98” becomes (if problematically) what Michel de Certeau likens to a “rented apartment,” an act that transforms another person’s property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient. Renters make comparable changes in an apartment they furnish with their acts and memories; as do speakers, in the language into which they insert both the messages of their native tongue and, through their accent, through their own ‘turns of phrase,’ etc., their own history; as do pedestrians, in the streets they fill with the forests of their desires and goals.

We have seen instances of Münter’s rendition of listening as opticality, and in her captioning she often appropriates the authenticity of a snippet of conversation for the elaboration of her visuality. This quality overlaps with touristic discourse and its preeminence of vision; as John Urry puts it: “Treatises on travel...shifted from a scholastic emphasis on touring as an opportunity for discourse via the ear, to travel as eyewit ness observation.” If as Sabine Vanacker suggests, orality is a strategy for performing presence thematized by female modernists such as Dorothy Richardson, Gertrude Stein, and H.D. as against the “definitive, significant male life-history,” Münter’s engagement is not motivated by an agenda of “mak[ing]...autobiography into the never finishing performance of the female self.” Instead, one function of proclaiming her dailiness as orality is to legitimize her process of coming to representation. As we have seen,

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139 The Tourist Gaze, 147.

Münter’s images are often identified simply in terms of their date, which foregrounds their diaristic qualities to position them as a daily visual allotment. In “Plantin’ taters!,” “brand your sacks,” and “tore down engine room,” she develops her playful recitation of American regional culture as a strategy of authority/ship by citation. Parroting that culture, her captions simultaneously evoke it as origin authenticating her reportage in a related vein to a postcard.

As such, another function of Münter’s orality is to inscribe her bemused ethnography and to communicate her status as worldly provincial. Language is of course an important site of immigrant solidarity, as Stuecher illustrates in her discussion of German immigrant writing. Writing specifically of the post-1848 context, she notes that “‘Kauderwelsch’ [pidgin]...provide[ed]...a badge of membership within the immigrant community”; as Helga Wacker points out, new immigrants sometimes embraced a hybridized language [Mischsprache] as a strategy for avoiding ridicule. In captions such as “Dallas on hog and Johnnie having a good old time,” Münter seems rather to claim her play with creolization through a discourse of familiarity and idiomatic ordinariness. She thus registers both her alienation from and connection to her Muttersprache(s) in a vein of diasporic vivification. Yet the boundedness of her hybridity, and the limits of its critical possibilities, register in captions mixing English and German, such as “Jim Wade feeding the hogs, Schreiber hill bei Moorefield” or “Wagonwreck: Willie und I the morning after falling over and out”; these ultimately convey a certain univocality. Von Zehmen’s retrospective telling intersperses English terms in the German to figure her adventuring rather like Münter’s “Wagonwreck.” Thus she cooks “muffins,” “bisquits,” and “pickles”; caught out hunting in the bitter cold, von Zehmen’s husband is forced to knock upon the door of a stranger: “The farmer bid him welcome and gave him food and lodging for the night, even though he did not know him. In the west one said: ‘You’r wellcome, stranger!’” (Der Farmer hieb ihn willommen, gab ihm zu essen und Nachtquartier, trotzdem er ihn nicht kannte. Im Westen hieß

141 Discussed in Stuecher, Twice Removed, 6.
es: ‘You’re wellcome, stranger!’”). 143 At the same time, as Hampsten reminds us in her study of Midwestern women’s writings from the period, letters frequently were a stand-in for conversation, 144 and the foregrounded orality of Münter’s project asserts her connection to Charly and German relatives with whom she would share this output.

In her study of Heimat, Applegate explains:

The liveliest of the branches of folklore was Mundart, or dialect, which in its forms of poetry, tale, dialogue, aphorism, essay, and even joke became the leading medium for a popular creation and celebration of folk identity... Dialect helped to ‘distinguish the Pfälzer Eigenart...from the rest of the German population,’ wrote one proponent, railroad engineer and amateur dialect poet Emil Haas. To use dialect in any context was to signal one’s self-consciousness as a Pfälzer, particularly among those who could just as well speak educated high German. In contrast to standard German, dialect was the ‘most genuine...expression of a people’s character.’ Its use, its proponents insisted, did not indicate an excess of regional feeling and a lack of national German feeling, but rather a general renewal of pride in the German language, in all its many forms. 145

The role of English within Münter’s upbringing should be recalled here; thus for example she captions a loose sketch of a poodle dated 11.III. 98 “sweet darling boy!” 146 Her concisely resonant use of English after her America travels figures her hybridity in terms of bloodlines (interspersing words such as “cousins” in the German in her late interview with Edouard Roditi), 147 the mythology of success (her reference to her father as “einer der 3 American dentists”), 148 and bounded cultivation [in Moorefield: “A little stove was put into the small living room for the German girls, which I immortalized in a drawing” (Es wurde ins kleine Wohnzimmer ein Ofchen für die german girls gesetzt den ich in Zeichnung verewigt habe)]. 149

Through such speech acts Münter declares her role as a family historian, communicates the contours of her American Heimat, and illustrates her self-enactment in the expansive dailiness of the contact zone.

144 Read This Only to Yourself: The Private Writings of Midwestern Women, 1880-1910 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), vii and 95.
145 A nation of provincials, 80.
146 In Kon. 38/4; Gabriele Münther- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
147 “Gabriele Münter,” in Dialogues on Art (Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1980), 138.
Postscript: “Mildred’s cake walk”

As noted, Gisela Kleine reports that Münter sent Charly a postcard daily from America, a usage in keeping with Tom Phillips’s reference to the genre as “the vernacular aesthetic of a period.”¹ The “skeleton of almost all cards to this day,” he notes, involves variations on “[t]he greeting, the weather, health of writer, enquiry as to health of correspondent, signing off.”² Phillips also foregrounds the mundane practicality of postcards: “The postcard was the phone call of the early part of the century, the mode of making arrangements, placing orders or just keeping in touch.”³ Catering to telegraphic capture, postcards would appear to be a genre par excellence of the moment. Heinrich von Stephan, who would become Germany’s postmaster general, and to whom the invention of the postcard is often accredited,⁴ articulates the restrictive universe of the genre:

The present form of the letter does not however yet allow of sufficient simplicity and brevity for a large class of communication. It is not simple enough, because note-paper has to be selected and folded, envelopes obtained and closed, and stamps affixed. It is not brief enough, because, if a letter be written, convention necessitates something more than the bare communication. This is irksome both to the sender and the receiver. Nowadays the telegram may be said to be a kind of short letter. People sometimes telegraph in order to save the trouble of writing and sending a letter.

Thus: “These considerations suggest the need for a contrivance somewhat of the following kind, as suitable for the present time.”⁵ Moreover, in a statement attesting to today’s assignment of value, Naomi Schor points out that “conventional classification” of postcards follows topography, such as by street or district, rather than by editor.⁶ In alignment with the mundane quality of the genre, Phillips includes a section in his text entitled “Boring Postcards” describing a Martin Parr book of the eponymous name, and includes his “own contender... for the Challenge Cup of

¹ Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1990), 10.
⁵ Cited in ibid, 210.
⁶ Ibid, 207.
Dullness [which] has as its most lively point of interest the lettering of its caption. Over ninety percent of the rest of the image is taken up by either an almost undifferentiated grey sky or land unvisited by incident."

On April 1, 1899 Münter and Emmy wrote out an Easter postcard to Charly from Moorefield (fig. 142). Münter’s text here is indeed hum-drum, even as it instances the playful hybridity we have seen in terms of a peppering of mundane English phrases: “all the same.” Emmy devotes almost half of her message allotment to chiding Charly and his wife for their silence over the past two weeks, and then notes that she fell off a horse the day before. However, instead of using a postcard with pre-printed views, Münter drew upon a group of four of her pencil sketches to design the postcard, which she entitles “Mildred’s cake walk,” and which features St. Louis cousin Kate Buchheimer’s daughter. Kleine notes that Charly himself had designed postcards. Writing her distinction from Emmy, who “was out and about entertaining herself,” Münter explains retrospectively that she was busy with her drawing and composing music in St. Louis and Moorefield; and summarizing her American output in a statement from the same time, she notes that in the United States, “I drew the cousins in sketchbooks and experimented with postcards. I also arranged for a piano and composed a text from the newspaper, ‘The river and I.’” Photography interestingly has been dropped, an omission suggestive of a greater openness to mass-cultural forms in the United States than later. Similarly to the spatial expansion we tracked in her pocket calendars, in her postcard she renegotiates her

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7 The Postcard Century, 12.
8 Kon. 46/1, pp. 48-49, 54-55, 56-57, and 58-59; Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung. In each case, the drawing spans the two-page spread of the sketchbook, which conveys an element of Münter’s ambition surrounding the postcard. That Münter’s primary interest was in bodily movement is suggested by her omission of details of hair and facial features captured in the sketches.
9 "...unterwegs war mit ihrem Amüsement” (“Erinnerungen an Amerika,” in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900 [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 220).
obligation of dailiness in terms of a pre-ordained touristic consumption, as discussed above, and
the speed of von Stephan’s generic understanding.

She does so, however, within expectations surrounding an upper-middle-class German
woman abroad: Schor charts a connection of postcards to femininity in terms of triviality,
ephemerality, the picturesque, and collectibility;¹² and Münter’s relational authorship is in line
with familial obligation. An 1898 spoof in Jugend conveys the period requirement of sending
postcards in Germany: “Niels Thomsen: ‘Such an expedition to the North Pole must cost a pretty
penny!’ Fridthjof Nansen: ‘Well, you know, the cost of the expedition is actually minimal; what
makes it expensive are the postcards one has to send.’”¹³ As Schor notes, in 1900 Germany
enjoyed a pre-eminent role “both in terms of quality and quantity.”¹⁴ A British male sending a
card from 1900 from the Schmittenhöhe in Austria bears this out: “I am well and enjoying myself
and follow the fashion, you see, in sending Ansichtskarte.”¹⁵ The American picture postcard
industry had been launched in the context of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair,¹⁶ and a 1903
postcard sent to Mrs. L. Lee Dye in Plainview suggests the use of this daily writing in Münter’s
circle: “Dear Mama – How are you? I had a fine time will write a letter tonight. but it will not
get off until two or three days. Write soon, to you. B.”¹⁷

Thus while the genre of postcards would seem to foreground recording with a relational
emphasis confined to a small space, Münter harnesses familial obligation to develop and
showcase her artistic skill. In a description of the myriad functions letters served German
emigrants to America in this period, Linda Schelbitzki Pickle includes the “consolidation of

¹² “Cartes Postales,” 211-212.
¹³ “Niels Thomsen: ‘So eine Expedition nach dem Nordpol muß doch ein hübsches Stück Geld kosten!’
Fridthjof Nansen: ‘Ach, wissen Sie, die Kosten der Expedition sind eigentlich minimal; theuer wird die
Sache erst durch die Ansichtspostkarten, die man versenden muß’” (“1899,” Jugend III. Jahrgang, Nr. 32,
August 6: 546a).
¹⁴ “Cartes Postales,” 206.
¹⁶ Schor, “Cartes Postales,” 213.
¹⁷ Vincent Tudor Collection, Southwest Collections, Texas Tech University.
contact with family members and Germany and their use as a forum for self-representation."18 In this context, she tracks an interesting tension in nineteenth-century letters that, while not universal but occurring amongst male and female writers, is particularly pronounced for women between discussion of bountiful America and a diffusion of that position to avoid envy or perceptions of bragging.19 **Mildred’s cake walk** appears at a moment in the postcard industry in which the address claims the recto side for itself and message and image share the verso;20 however, after the turn of the century, “Little by little, it is no longer what one writes which is primary but the illustration.”21 Again demonstrating her reliance upon touristic discourses for the elaboration of her visuality, through the postcard’s allotted space to the visual, Münter reframes her dailiness as a quotidian creativity. Ben Highmore observes resonantly:

Significantly Phillips’s collection of postcards which sweep chronologically across the twentieth century *show* a life ‘less ordinary’, so to speak, while the backs evidence a pressing need to articulate daily life. Where, then, we locate the everyday even at the most microscopic cultural level (which side of the postcard, for instance) is going to affect whose lives we talk about and how we can talk about them.22

The inclusion of multiple views in Münter’s design relates to what Phillips calls “vignetted views,”23 as well as to the widespread “Gruss aus” formula. Often translated into English, this mode includes bounded miniature “scenes” to create spaces for text (fig. 143). The theatricality of **Mildred’s cake walk**, with screen and platform components, suggests a convergence with the popular entertainments with which Münter engages. In this vein, it

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19 Ibid, 100.
23 *The Postcard Century*, 52.
overlaps with a 1902 image of the Royal Academy, which, with dioramic effect, admits light through the windows and moon when held up to light (fig. 144). In addition, there are connections between Münter’s image and fine art postcards. One example is a card sent in 1900 of Manet-esque/Nouveau figures entering various spaces, with a short area for text below the image (fig. 145). In addition, the division of the page into multi-partite decorative fields recalls designs by Bernhard Pankok in Jugend of putti playing on cartouche borders and leaning in toward the text (fig. 146). The periodical advertised numerous postcard series by Jugendstil artists along with albums for collecting them. Within this fluidity of popular and fine art, it is not surprising that in the period Paula Modersohn-Becker maintains that her “public debut” occurred with the submission of a series of six postcards to a competition at the Old Reichstag.

Mildred’s cake walk references both the rapidity of developing culture industries devolving from the 1893 Exposition and its (and their) white supremacist assumptions. Mildred may well be listening to recorded music. Münter’s “listen to the graphophon!” clearly indexes the burgeoning development of the recording industry for classical music in the 1890s and, by the end of the decade, dance music as well. Thomas Morgan and William Barlow suggest that there was a “small consumer market” in the 1890s for phonograph machines upon which cylinder recordings such as “opera titles, sentimental ballads, marches, ragtime numbers, and coon songs” were played. Yet Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes argue that in the 1890s, after Charles Harris’s hit “After the Ball” had gone through “plugging,” rival publishers redoubled their efforts to produce songs that vaudeville entertainers would then popularize and thereby create a popular market for the publisher’s sheet music. To feed the now huge market for songs, publishers began manufacturing them assembly-belt-style. By the turn of the century, a song “was the product of a calculated effort to meet a specific need. To help increase their list, publishers hired a staff that included arrangers to put melodies on paper and harmonize them for

24 Jugend III. Jahrgang, Nr. 3, January 15, 1898: 40.
26 Rydell and Kroes, Buffalo Bill in Bologna, 93.
illiterate composers, piano demonstrators to exhibit songs to potential clients, staff writers to manufacture songs on order.”

In addition, Tin Pan Alley music publishers catered to the public with “songs and lyrics that put into music the powerful sentiments about race that permeated other aspects of American mass culture.” Yet whereas Berlin Photogram Archive founder Carl Strumpf would bring a gramophone on his visits of Berlin ethnographic exhibitions in 1900 to make cylinder records, Münter records the opportunities of recorded music in her sketchbook before designing the postcard. In addition, the cakewalk was a favored subject for picture postcards and greeting cards from the period, and its imagery was used to market sheet music and toys.

I have referred to Münter’s possible exposure in St. Louis and New York to John Philip Sousa, vaudeville, and early film. We also know that she attended a performance of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, which before 1900 was played in blackface, and Primrose & Dockstader’s Great American Minstrels, advertised by The St. Louis Republic as “The Greatest Negro Masqueraders.” Informed by the genre of the minstrel show, the cakewalk was a popular dance amongst blacks and whites during the period until about 1904. With its ancestry in African music, its characteristics include satire (“signifying”), syncopation, polymrhythm, improvisation, and connection to its audience; in addition, some early rags are cakewalks. Ragtime had begun to emerge in 1897, and, though it would take time to catch on, Scott Joplin’s Maple Leaf Rag came out in 1899. Blacks also were called upon to teach the cakewalk to upper-class whites,

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28 Buffalo Bill in Bologna, 90-91; for cited sources, see Buffalo, 196-197 n. 23.
29 Ibid, 91.
32 Morgan and Barlow, From Cakewalks to Concert Halls, 20.
34 Baldwin, “The Cakewalk,” 211.
35 Much later, Münter mentioned the newness of ragtime at the time and noted that she had collected songs in America (note on a loose sheet of paper in the folder G Mü über sich selbst, Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung).
among them Mr. and Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt and white society women. In 1892 the first national Cakewalk Jubilee appeared in New York and the dance was popularized in New York theatres in the mid-1890s. Kleine suggests that Münter practiced syncopated music on the Happels’ piano during her stay in St. Louis.

Münter showcases Mildred performing the standard repertoire of the dance, strutting about with pointed toe, foot behind, and demonstrative arm gesture, bending the body back and bowing. She removes the dance here from its antebellum carnivalesque traditions of slaves parodying their masters’ ballroom dance forms in competitions those masters condoned and rewarded with cake as a prize; the dance had been modeled on an African-American couples’ stylish walking competition. As Morgan and Barlow explain,

The slaves...were developing their dancing into a parody of the mannerisms and fashions of the white southern social elite. Couples dressed in their finest clothes would lean back and perform a high-stepping promenade. These slave dance routines were then expropriated by blackface minstrels and used at the end of their stage shows.

Münter’s rendition of the cakewalk as postcard “vignetted view” is of course only the beginning of a trend of epic proportion. As Rydell and Kroes observe for example: “in songs like Irving Berlin’s ‘Alexander Ragtime Band’ (1911), the syncopation that African American composers like Scott Joplin had helped pioneer and write down had largely been commercialized and homogenized for consumption by white middle-class audiences.”

We saw the disconnect between the Münter sisters and their American surroundings in “a smiling water melon” (fig. 110). Within the opticality of the postcard and the writing of Kultur,

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37 Morgan and Barlow, From Cakewalks to Concert Halls, 26; Baldwin, “The Cakewalk,” 214.
38 Biographie eines Paares, 65.
39 “Cakewalk Dance Clips” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sDnV1eSn_k); “Cake Walk” (http://www.streetswing.com/histmain/z3cake1.htm); “Hetzler’s Fakebook” (http://hetzler.homestead.com/NBCakeWalk.html); and Baldwin, “The Cakewalk,” 206-208.
40 Morgan and Barlow, From Cakewalks to Concert Halls, 26; and “cake-walk” in Oxford English Dictionary (http://www.oed.com)
41 From Cakewalks to Concert Halls, 26.
42 Buffalo Bill in Bologna, 92.
both the double-voiced humor of cakewalk lyrics and their faddish co-option are lost in translation. Here for example is the chorus of Rastus Thompson’s Rag-Time Cake Walk of 1898:

First you pick de yal-ler gal dat you love the most, --
Bom-bay-shay right down de hall, den you bow to your host; -- You
wheel right around, den you do de rag, Down de hall with de’Meri-can-flag! You’re
‘lowed to breathe, but don’t you dare to talk! – Gaze in-to your
ba-by’s face make goo-gie eyes! – Then you get three
kiss-es if you win de prize! – shoot de chutes; then you
all prom-i-nade, Pos-sum-me-la for some beer or lem-on-ade! when you’re
down at ‘Ras-tus Thompson’s Rag-Time Cake – walk!”

Indexing the trajectory of a dance from African Americans as “almost the same, but not white” to a form for the expression of white nostalgic superiority and neutralization and then to its repackaging as spectacular Kultur,

Mildred’s cake walk traces a journey of popular culture in the transatlantic space of industrial modernity. Sousa would export a brass version of the cakewalk to the 1900 Paris World’s Fair, and Claude Debussy’s “Golligwog’s Cakewalk” would emerge in 1908.

Drawing on the work of Michael Rogin, Alison Kibler suggests that blackface “often conveyed a longing for a connection to the worlds of immigrant community and family that were tossed aside for a place in American modernity.” As we have seen, Münter’s nostalgia is situated in a different quest for organic connection. Though her postcard, like the creolization of the African-American cakewalk with its connections to European culture, represents an acculturated form, black culture has all but disappeared in this cultural transfer of community and cultivation. In its “negation of blackness,” the postcard exemplifies the erasure of social relations underpinning American commodity culture.

43 Music by Harry Von Tilzer, words Andrew Sterling (Rag-Time).
46 Rank Ladies, 115.
47 For a useful discussion of this topic, see Susan Willis, A Primer for Daily Life (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 108-132. Baldwin notes that “by 1898 white popular culture had so denigrated the image of the black cakewalker, and so infiltrated itself into the production of ragtime music, that white society was convinced that the dance was now its rightful province. White America, confident of its racial superiority and attracted by the rhythm and spectacle of the cakewalk, concluded in its self-appointed role
hulking inelegance in the top left corner and, in comparison, an odd diminution at the upper right, Mildred retains an Alice-in-Wonderland quality, unreal in the manipulability of her spectacular body. In her delight in capturing Mildred’s expressive, unselfconscious movements, Münter showcases the primitive as child, situated at the onslaught of forces of modernization. In the souvenir, Susan Stewart suggests, “nature is removed from the domain of struggle into the domestic sphere of the individual,” and in the process it is frequently harnessed to “evokes a voluntary memory of childhood…of the individual life history or [used] in the larger antiquarian theme of the childhood of the nation/race.”

Stilled in its movement and sound, Mildred’s cake walk playfully deconstructs motion in a similar vein to devices of popular entertainment, even as the image seems to wish to halt the persistence of vision and the leveling of Americanization. For all its telegraphic messages, the postcard showcases the expansive, dislocating temporality and spatiality of Münter’s dailiness and of a self positioned in an opportunistic play between art and documentation across races and nations.

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Conclusion

In the above pages, we have undertaken a sprawling journey as I have sought to convey some of the messy possibility of Münter’s dailiness. In my writing of it in America, we have traveled from emigrant letters to burning courthouses, encountered Lena Ware’s painted dinner set and the early music recording industry; we have sampled an array of writings – Karl May, Walter Benjamin, L. Frank Baum, Münter herself among them. We have paid particular attention to Münter’s postcards, pocket calendars, and amateur photographs, some of them out of focus, in an attempt to read the mundane and idiosyncratic heterogeneity of her practice. This is of course to name but a few stopping points in the exploration of a visuality elaborated around popular entertainments, cultivation, the search for community, and otherness. Now in conclusion to this study, I would like to expand the relevance of the lens of dailiness for Münter by turning to her work after 1900. What follows is not a conclusion in the sense of summation of previous arguments, but rather an extension of my writing of Münter’s art of dailiness focused here around its relationship to Munich avant-garde art practices. I propose to fastforward to 1913, to return to Man in an Armchair (fig. 1), and then to turn to an examination of three of Münter’s other paintings, with an interwoven treatment of examples of her writings, photographs, sketchbooks, and ephemera.

Münter, it may be recalled, notes of Paul Klee: “I suddenly saw him in the room and the room with him quite pictorially.” This statement and the painting relate to the Jugendstil ideal of the total aesthetic environment. As I shall argue, there are also overlaps between the painting and Wassily Kandinsky’s elaboration of the synthesis of the arts in The Blaue Reiter Almanac. The spotlight on Klee’s white pants, however, and their uneasy relationship to the surroundings (“it is a picture, a fully formed visual experience of a totality in which the white pants gleam almost

1 For the critical role of Jugendstil models in Kandinsky’s elaboration of synthesis of the arts, see Peg Weiss, Kandinsky in Munich: The Formative Jugendstil Years (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), as well as the contributions in Kandinsky in Munich 1896-1914 (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1982).
ironically against the darkness and mysterious variety”), foregrounds questions surrounding the integration on offer. In his discussion of another painting by Münter, her *Still Life with St. George* (fig. 147), which was included in the *Almanac*, Kandinsky describes her mode of construction:

The still-life by Münter demonstrates that the different interpretation of objects to a different degree within one and the same picture is not only not harmful, but rather can, if correctly used, attain a powerful, complex inner sound. That concordance of sounds which produces an externally disharmonious impression is in this instance the source of the inner harmonious effect.²

Amidst the harmony proffered here, Münter’s still life retains a satirical inflection, as Reinhold Heller suggests in noting that her works “do not thunder” but instead serve as a “gentle criticism of Kandinsky’s overblown metaphysical ambitions” and of their circle’s tendency toward historical aggrandizement.³ In *Man in an Armchair*, Münter underscores the formal unity of the image – “the forms resounded wondrously together down to the last detail” – but queries the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and even begins to burlesque its reach. As such, Münter’s figuration of Klee’s trousers brings to mind the offending bedroom slippers in Adolf Loos’s “The Poor Little Rich Man” and the relationship of daily life to this totalizing system,⁴ for all the huge difference in motivation of these works. Of particular interest to me in introducing this connection, however, is the profound, and, I shall argue, revealing difference in the tenor of their humor.⁵

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⁴ Finding the rich man in his bedroom slippers upon a visit to his house, the architect grew white: “‘What kind of slippers are you wearing?’ he blurted out with effort. The master of the house looked at his embroidered shoes. But he breathed a sigh of relief. This time he felt totally innocent. For the shoes had been made to the architect’s original design. So he answered with a superior air, ‘But Herr Architect! Have you already forgotten? You yourself designed the shoes!’ ‘Of course,’ thundered the architect, ‘but for the bedroom. Here they disrupt the whole mood with their two impossible spots of color. Don’t you see that?’” (“The Poor Little Rich Man,” in *Spoken into the Void: Collected Essays 1897-1900* [Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 1982], 126-127).

⁵ In addition to his pronounced sarcasm, which differs from Münter’s humor, Loos seems to hold out for a masculinizing aristocratic transcendence at odds with a daily self. This position is in evidence even as Loos critiques art’s straitjacketing of the daily. On the rich man for example: “After his plate was artistically decorated, he cut into his boeuf à l’oignon with twice as much vigor” (“The Poor Little Rich Man,” 125). In addition, as Mary McLeod argues, Loos “sought a purely functional, seemingly maskless modernity – a modernity that would transcend the frivolous swings of fashion and women’s taste. It was a male modernity. Loos’s liberated woman wore man’s clothes” (“Undressing Architecture: Fashion,
Heller describes the environments Münter fashions in the Munich and Murnau interiors as spaces for her symbolic self-expression and spiritualizing transmutation.\(^6\) Hers is an implicit, yet controlling presence, he explains, in that her self-narration is enabled by the objects on view, as in the table-stage for the madonnas.\(^7\) I would like to elaborate on his observation in this context surrounding Münter’s status as witness and portraitist rather than as direct participant. In the case of \textit{Man in an Armchair}, Münter indirectly narrates herself via the specific position of disjunctive unity she proposes with regard to the \textit{Gesamtkunstwerk}. Paul Poiret, whose designs had been introduced to German audiences a few years earlier,\(^8\) would comment upon his visit to perhaps the most total domestic environment of them all, the Palais Stoclet: “Hoffmann designed everything, including Madame’s dresses and Monsieur’s sticks and cravats. This substitution of the taste of the architect for the personality of the proprietors has always seemed to me a sort of slavery – a subjection that made me smile.”\(^9\) In \textit{Man in an Armchair}, Münter’s vision is what makes the painting adhere;\(^10\) from Poiret’s point of view at least, she has an entirely different relationship to representation as a participant within the integrated aesthetic environment (fig. 148). The disjunction of the trousers and the environment serves to foreground Münter’s visual experience – a concept she herself mentions in her description – so that like the \textit{Dogwood} sketch
from Moorefield (fig. 90), *Man in an Armchair* requires her reflection and completion. For all the rapidity with which she sees the totality, the painting is emphasized as a process of authorial choice.

In evoking tensions surrounding the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as totality and partiality, and as product and process, *Man in an Armchair* communicates some of what is submerged in what Peg Weiss refers to as the *Jugendstil* project of “returning aesthetic values to everyday life.”\(^1\) This includes the daily work surrounding that project’s elaboration as well as the terms of its access, both of which threaten to unravel the ideal’s utopian and universalist premises. To begin to illustrate, it is helpful to turn to a passage from Kandinsky’s “Reminiscences,” a text written in the same year as *Man in an Armchair*. Describing his wondrous encounter with the peasant houses in the Vologda, he attempts to evoke the atmosphere of the living room:

The ‘red’ corner (red is the same as beautiful in old Russian) thickly, completely covered with painted and printed pictures of the saints, burning in front of it the red flame of a small pendant lamp, glowing and blowing like a knowing, discreetly murmuring, modest, and triumphant star, existing in and for itself. When I finally entered the room, I felt surrounded on all sides by painting, into which I had thus penetrated. The same feeling had previously lain dormant within me, quite unconsciously, when I had been in the Moscow churches.\(^12\)

It was these houses, Kandinsky argues, that “taught me to move within the picture, to live in the picture.”\(^13\) In a related vein, Münter is animated by and through the picture as well, as suggested. Yet she is also on the outside, in relation: “I let the men have their talk” and “quickly made notes without being observed.” For Münter this interloper status manifests as a creolizing problematization of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* lodged in couplings of self and other, art and commerce, and masculine and feminine.

As her America travels have revealed, an important source for Münter’s total aesthetic environment lies in her typologically-informed figuration of an organic culture. Examples we

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\(^1\) “Kandinsky in Munich: Encounters and Transformations,” in *Kandinsky in Munich: 1896-1914*, 33.


\(^13\) In *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, 368.
have discussed include photographs such as Young woman near Moorefield (fig. 105) and of Jim Wade and Willie Graham reading (figs. 6 and 111), as well as the “Carrots for dinner” (fig. 10) and Uncle Joe sketches (fig. 24).\textsuperscript{14} Such a mode of seeing is not limited to her touristic consumption of America, as a 1904 photograph of Dutch children (fig. 149) illustrates: a version of the young woman from Moorefield and the Else Mehrle print (fig. 106), the figures emerge in \textit{Tracht} from the environment of hanging clean laundry, narrow houses, the sea.\textsuperscript{15} As Münter collects these visual experiences within a lifewriting project of imperial connotation, she develops the European component of the transatlantic community she has elaborated. She goes on to produce drawings for her niece Friedel such as “Aunt Ella, go and paint me a Catholic man!” and “And his wife too” (figs. 152-153);\textsuperscript{16} she photographs Kandinsky barefoot with elements of Bavarian dress holding a book and cigarette (fig. 154). Unlike Willie reading on the ground in Guion, he is a towering presence in the landscape, his head cresting above the mountain range in the sky, even as he is apparently organically rooted to the earth. Münter builds upon the network of comparativity undergirding discussions in \textit{Die Gartenlaube} and contemporary German ethnography, by O.S. and L.N. Fowler, and in relationships between Germany and America, for example, to inscribe herself vis-à-vis these and other bodies.

\textsuperscript{14} Annegret Hoberg rightly points out that unlike other amateur photographers in America, in Münter’s camera the human figure is portrayed though his or her environment, with an emphasis on bearing and position (“Gabriele Münter in Amerika,” \textit{Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika, Photographien 1899-1900} [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus: and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 27).

\textsuperscript{15} Shulamith Behr’s discussion of Münter’s 1909 \textit{Murnau Woman} (fig. 150) has helped me to understand the importance of this mode of working for Münter. Noting the overlap between the painting and a photograph Münter made of the sitter (fig. 151), Behr points out that \textit{Murnau Woman} drew upon the discourse of “Scènes et Types...promoted in contemporary travelogues and commercial photography in the colonial era” (“Beyond the Muse: Gabriele Münter as Expressionistin,” in \textit{Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression 1906-1917} [London: Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery in Association with Paul Holberton Publishing, 2005], 60). As will become clear, her conclusion to this discussion is also resonant for my own treatment here of \textit{Man in an Armchair}: “Here we see how the woman artist’s misinformed quest for Natur (rural piety and authenticity) was implicated by modernity and how the portrait simultaneously bears levels of association with the ‘modern’, the ‘foreign’ and the ‘regional’” (60). Heller also usefully highlights the emphasis on typification in Münter’s early training. Thus for example, he explains that her class in portrait drawing with Maximilian Dasio in Munich focused on “character heads”: “The effort was fostered not only to produce portraits that displayed a recognizable likeness but to search for the ‘type’ represented by the individual, to seek communality beyond the accidentals of personal appearance” (\textit{Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism}, 51). In the same source, see also 114, 119, and 122.

\textsuperscript{16} “Tante Ella, mal mir mal ‘n katholischen Mann!’; “Und seine Frau dazu.”
Such discourses of measure are troubling for the authentic aspirations of the Gesamtkunstwerk ideal, and Münter speaks her difficult relationship to it within Man in an Armchair. Adapted to the season and “duly admired,” Klee’s dazzlingly bright pants elliptically reference discourses of (female) fashion and the challenging narration of a daily self in the Munich avant-garde.\textsuperscript{17} In contrast to the latter’s teleological underpinnings, fashion, Georg Simmel suggests amongst his extensive reflections on the topic,\textsuperscript{18} follows a cyclical course punctuated by periodic return.\textsuperscript{19} In its condition of flux,

[f]ashion’s question is not that of being, but rather it is simultaneously being and non-being; it always stands on the watershed of the past and the future and, as a result, conveys to us, at least while it is at its height, a stronger sense of the present than do most other phenomena.\textsuperscript{20}

Yet as Simmel goes on to note, fashion’s representation of the present also carries with it its incipient demise.\textsuperscript{21} This is a suggestive formulation for Münter’s dailiness as I have been describing it here, in that she ostensibly foregrounds an everyday writing of the moment, but as we have seen, her lifewriting gestures both into the past and future. Like fashion for Simmel, her

\textsuperscript{17} McLeod’s distinction between fashion and clothing is useful in this context. For while Klee’s pants are not determined by their location within the sphere of fashion to the extent of Münter’s figuration of Weretkin’s hat, for example (fig. 155), the motif may not simply be lodged under the rubric of “clothes”: “Of old English origin, and etymologically linked to the German word Kleid, ‘clothes’ refers to the covering of the human body with cloth, and usually implies something more enduring and functionally based than fashion.” Conversely, fashion “connotes ephemerality and taste, implying a cycle of rapid stylistic change.” A crucial difference has to do with the relationship of the two terms to temporality, and McLeod refers to structuring dyads such as “artifice/nature, internationalism/regionalism, commercial/noncommercial, superfluity/necessity, licentiousness/purity, and femininity/masculinity” (“Undressing Architecture,” in Architecture: In Fashion, 40-41).

\textsuperscript{18} Writings by Simmel specifically devoted to fashion include “Zur Psychologie der Mode,” in Die Zeit, October 12, 1895; “Fashion,” in International Quarterly, October 1904; and his brochure Philosophie der Mode (Berlin: Pan Verlag, 1905), p. 41. For further mention of Simmel’s treatment of fashion in other discussions and of fashion-related themes, see David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, “Introduction to the Texts,” in Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 13-15.


\textsuperscript{21} Simmel, “The Philosophy of Fashion,” in Simmel on Culture, 192; discussed in Frisby, Fragments of Modernity, 99.
project contains the “seeds of its own death,” 22 for all its ostensible presentness, and, as I shall argue, an awareness of her own unrepresentability.

Fashion for Simmel is a leading metaphor for the modern through its expression of qualities of neurasthenia, transitoriness, and arbitrary relations. 23 Writing in 1915, newly appointed Zeit-Echo editor Hans Siemsen would triangulate the relationship of fashion, modern life, and art. The journal would strive to be “more topical and lively and bound as closely as possible with daily life,” and: “We go so far in this, that we will include fashion images in the graphics section. Because today fashion seems to be that area in which art and life are most intimately linked.” 24 Yet for all the permeabilities between Expressionism and fashion, which mushroomed after the onset of the First World War in the context of the developing taste for Expressionism, as Sherwin Simmons argues, many of those in Münter’s circle, such as Franz Marc and Herwarth Walden, 25 continued to equate fashion with commerce, prostitution, surface, imitation, and a loss of (male) Geist. 26 While Kandinsky’s position that “Everything is permitted” is an apparent grounding for his understanding of inner necessity, 27 there are of course no fashion plates in the Almanac and it is difficult to see how fashion might be accommodated within Blaue Reiter guiding principles of “mystical inner construction.” 28 To be sure, paintings outside the Almanac by August Macke such as his 1913 Hat Shop (fig. 156) appear to present an exception to this disavowal with its thematics of female fashion, display, and intoxication. Yet as Simmons argues, this and other paintings by Macke of display windows

23 Frishy, Fragments of Modernity, 97-99.
25 Walden in fact had mounted Münter’s largest solo exhibition to date in early 1913.
27 “On the Question of Form”, in Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art, 241.
ultimately re-assert the autonomy of art described amongst others by Simmel and Arthur Schopenhauer, so that the paintings distance themselves from mass culture.²⁹

In Man in an Armchair, Münter accentuates interactions of form, color, and facture to the extent that, according to her telling, Klee as a model disappeared from the armchair and the painting “emerged freely and according to laws of its own.” Yet the theatrical display of the white pants, underscored by Klee’s body position – the rigid compression of the torso as against the span in the crossed and rotated legs, the monumentality of his feet – refuses to be subsumed under the rubric of autonomy or the call to soulful transformation surrounding Blaue Reiter discourse. As we have seen, a crucial issue for Münter in America is the collapse of distinctions between contemplation and consumption. The wearing of the pants asserts the motif as distraction and gesture in almost vaudevillian terms.

In his discussion of the cabaret movement in early twentieth-century Munich, Peter Jelavich describes its “physical and visual theatricality” as against the focus – itself shifting toward what Jelavich calls a “retheatricalization” – in more highbrow German theater on the spoken word.³⁰ Münter’s discussion of the painting, it will be recalled, is framed in related terms: “I let the men have their talk.” To be sure, Jelavich points out that Kandinsky draws upon the gesture of “popular theatrics” in his writing of the Gesamtkunstwerk, as for the stage.³¹ If we return to the Blaue Reiter Almanac, his composition “The Yellow Sound” includes figures who “resemble marionettes” and are characterized by their physical, quasi-circuslike acrobatics: a group “makes occasional merry leaps” or “comes on with solemn, theatrical steps”; yet another

²⁹ “August Macke’s Shoppers,” 49, 86, and passim. For a related discussion of this issue in broader German intellectual currents and art practices of the period, see Anger, especially 131 and 143-144. And as Jutta Hülsewig-Johnen argues in a look at another 1913 shop window painting by Macke, the two large female figures are subsumed under the works’ “harmonious” coloration and faceted form (256-257).
³¹ Ibid, 224-225.
“walks on tiptoe, palm upraised.”32 In the composition, Kandinsky’s mode of figuration tends toward the disembodied in the call for “indistinct beings” and “people in flowing garb,” though this changes in the penultimate scene with the inclusion of “people in tights.” Jelavich reads the utter confusion of the dance at the end of that scene as instancing a porosity of individual and collective, and even as the images are not intended as illustrations for the _Almanac_ texts, he notes that the figure placed after the scene is “a symbolic tableau that shows a harmonious reconciliation of the body and the spirit” (fig. 157).33 For all the possibility of dissonance between art forms, Kandinsky presses opposition into service of inner synthesis and harmony. Thus in “On Stage Composition,” also in the _Almanac_, Kandinsky notes: “There arises of its own accord one’s feeling for the necessity of the inner unity, which is supported and even constituted by the external lack of unity.”34 For in the end: “A certain complex of vibrations – the goal of a work of art. The progressive refinement of the soul by means of the accumulation of different complexes – the aim of art.”35 One can only speculate on how this might have manifested in Kandinsky’s proposed (and unrealized) second volume of the _Almanac_, which he explained might “go to the border of kitsch” with the inclusion of advertisements for the pictorial material.36

In the face of Kandinsky’s utopic monumental art, Münter proffers a total aesthetic environment figuring a male artist whose presented legs almost suggest those of the revue dancer.

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33 _Munich and Theatrical Modernism_, 229.
34 _In Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art_, eds. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 263.
35 _Ibid_, 257. As Jelavich notes, “Kandinsky believed that the ultimate goal of art was to evoke a _Klang_ (sound or resonance) deep in the viewer’s soul. The most fundamental _Klang_ that true faith and great art could awaken was the mystic sensation of the essential unity of all worldly opposites” (_Munich and Theatrical Modernism_, 230).
36 Letter of Kandinsky from June 5, 1913 in _The Blaue Reiter Almanac_, ed. and with an introduction by Klaus Lankheit (New York: The Viking Press, 1965; trans. ed. London: Thames and Hudson, 1974): 31. Lankheit suggests that “Kandinsky’s idea of discussing kitsch…shows an unmistakable perception of a problem of the future” (32), a position that overlaps with Münter’s as I have suggested in my discussion of the America material. At the same time, as I argue here, _Man in an Armchair_ suggests a more ambivalent engagement with mass culture.
As such, the painting overlaps with the one Ernst Ludwig Kirchner work in the Almanac (fig. 158), as well as with the satirical quality of the Elf Scharfrichter Cabaret – she had attended its performances of course and had studied sculpture with Wilhelm Hüsgen – which frequently took modern artistic culture (and self-mockery) as its subject. There is also a link to Max Reinhardt’s harnessing of spectacular forms for the fare of “highbrow” theater – the classics, Shakespeare, and period writers – with a focus on theater as amusement. At the same time, the heightened painterliness of Klee’s trousers, with their variegated handling, foregrounds their status as artistic representation to resite them from the sartorial into the realm of visual experience. Back in an 1899 essay, Hermann Obrist had described art as “augumented, concentrated life” in an argument calling for standards to avoid the banal and ordinary in art. And writing in 1904, Alfred Mohrbutter would refer to female clothing as a “decorative idea,” possessing the “logical” and “integrated” qualities of furniture: “And with a single stroke this discovery elevated dress to the status of the work of art.” Indeed, in his discussion of the motivation of artistic clothing design for women of integrating wearer, clothing, and interior, Mohrbutter’s discourse overlaps strikingly with Münter’s in his attribution of “a mood of integration, a wonderful resonance together of space and character” surrounding elderly women.

Thus in Man in an Armchair, visual experience uplifts daily life, but dailiness also begins to unravel art. Münter therefore communicates an ambivalence about the place of Mode in Kultur, and Prosa in the realm of inner necessity. Fashion is rendered the stuff of visual experience, everyday life is aestheticized; yet Münter also registers a skepticism about the Gesamtkunstwerk’s ability to elevate the modern everyday, its call for organic unity, and its

37 Jelavich, Munich and Theatrical Modernism, 177 and 179.
38 Ibid. 176-177 and 209.
messianic pretenses.  As she transforms clothing into art, Münter delicately parodies that inscription by imputing it onto the male figure. In the face of Walden’s pronouncement in the introduction to the “First German Autumn Salon,” in which the painting was displayed—“One stays himself even if fashion changes the uniform”—Münter’s is a wry sartorial incursion. Walden will persist: “Even changing back to Biedermeier skirts, Roman togas, or Greek pleated dresses does not change anything about the body. Only the spirit, which the body serves, can change it. Of course, spirit cannot be painted, but painting the body without spirit is really no art at all.” Münter’s humor is an apt critique of such gravitas, if unfortunately easily appropriated or, unlike Loos’s position, ignored.

Consider for example Kandinsky’s laudable attempt in 1913 to champion her work and the challenges attending such an endeavor, especially in the context of reactionary discourses by Karl Scheffler and others surrounding women artists and their incapacity for authentic production. Written before Man in an Armchair, Kandinsky’s remarks on Münter, which were excerpted from the published version (only first issued in 1916), ultimately inscribe (if unsuccessfully) her art within his rubric of Geist. Thus her mode of drawing combines qualities of “gaiety, melancholy, and dreaminess, which can be traced to the work of the old German

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44 “Introduction,” First German Autumn Salon, in German Expressionism: Documents, 57.
45 My discussion here draws upon Heller’s reading in Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism; see “Introduction,” n. 41 of this study. In a analysis of an exchange of letters between Münter and Kandinsky, Heller also notes that Münter stands up for herself “surreptitiously, more by nuance than forceful argumentative response” (Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 156).
46 Heller parses this essay and the difficulties of Kandinsky’s project in the context of broader German artistic currents (unpublished 2005 lecture text; see in this dissertation, “Introduction,” n. 56). My own reading of Kandinsky’s containing writing of Münter’s practice as Geist is indebted to the attention Heller draws to Kandinsky’s positioning in the tribute of Münter as an important German artist.
47 See “Introduction,” n. 56 of this discussion.
masters, and as they are heard in German folk music and poetry."48 Boldly describing the "naïve introspective – let us call it truly German Expressionist talent of Gabriele Münter" as "purely feminine" rather than as "masculine or 'partly masculine,'" Kandinsky ends up writing his cramped project of valorization as he yokes her production to his theory:

Gabriele Münter does not paint "female" subjects, she does not work with feminine materials and is completely free from female coquetry. Here is neither false romanticism, nor superficial elegance, nor even an attractive helplessness. On the other hand, there is also no forced masculinity, no 'strong brush strokes,' no 'heavily heaped' colors. All the paintings are done with finely and sensitively balanced power, they are without any trace of feminine or masculine strain or affectation. One might say that the pictures are painted with modesty, that is to say, not for their outer appearance but out of an inner necessity.49

Pivoting on the discourse of fashion in Man in an Armchair serves as a creative strategy for Münter to speak the gap between Expressionist discourses and dailiness as well as the difficulties of her self-inscription as a gendered subject. To be sure, Simmel's conceptualization of fashion as a compensatory outlet of social identity for women due to their lack of professional place highlights the dangers for Münter of adopting motifs of fashion within her painting,50 as do linkages of female artistic practice to imitation. Defined in his framework and much of Expressionist rhetoric against a deep and autonomous selfhood, Münter's inclusion of fashion risked the flattening announcement of her dailiness as dilettantism, commercial practice, and femininity;51 this nexus of tensions is explored in a forthright manner in an earlier self-portrait (fig. 159).52 The primacy of the sartorial in Man in an Armchair in the context of its re- and de-gendering permits her to renegotiate terms of the Gesamtkunstwerk as evoked in figure 148. The work offers an alternative to the painful dissimilitude of playful daily collaboration, indeed of divergent conceptualizations of daily selves, instanced in such earlier photographic couplings as

figs. 160-161 and 162-163. Its strategy retains a connection to moments of campier sartorial collaboration, as instanced in America (figs. 81-83) and in a photograph of Münter donning Kandinsky’s topcoat and hat (fig. 164). In a tension between marginalization and opportunism, then, within the aesthetic environment of the Munich apartment, the pa(i)nterly disjunction in *Man in an Armchair* allows Münter to configure an alloportrait: a portrait of the self constructed through the other and other to itself in its unspeakability and displacement.\(^{53}\) As we know, though, the painting is accorded a triumphant placement at the *First German Autumn Salon*. And Münter’s narrations about it – Kandinsky “loved the painting” and “gave it a place of honor”; Walden put on the show with “great fanfare” – suggest that, for all the distance she communicates from these figures, she harnesses the discourse into a modest telling of her accomplishment.

The Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung retains a group of mass-produced picture postcards, largely in color, from the first decade of the twentieth century that Münter sent to her brother and his family. In these she communicates her safe arrival, sometimes along with the hour, provides her basic coordinates, and records the weather. She often references corresponding itself – that she will write to Emmy, to express thanks to Charly and Mary for their card, to chide them for their silence. For a postcard from Liège, Münter pens near the image, “Greetings from Belgium. Ella,” and adds below it: “Monday best wishes once more” because she forgot to mail it.\(^{54}\)

\(^{53}\) The term “alloportait” is Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe’s, which he uses to explore Urs Lüthi’s “self”-portrait (*Portrait de l’artiste en general* [Paris: Christian Bourgeois Éditeur, 1979], 41-43). In using it here, I am indebted to Marianne Hirsch’s discussion: “[T]he self-portrait always includes the other, not only because the self, never coincident, is necessarily other to itself, but also because it is constituted by multiple and heteronymous relations. The self-portrait’s double-edged otherness – combining multiplicity with alterity – is well-characterized by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe’s term *allo-portrait* (from the Greek *allos* meaning *other, different*).” She also notes that in the Lacoue-Labarthe text, Urs Lüthy’s “auto-portrait is also an allo-portrait in the sense that it includes in his self-representation the familial others and the ways in which the subject is constructed familiarly. Mother and father are literally in the face he constructs and photographs” (*Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* [Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997], 83 and 89-90).

\(^{54}\) “Herzl. Grup aus Belgien. Ella”; “Montag nochmals beste Grüße” (card postmarked November 11, 1905).
This is a clearly a day-by-day mode of trying to stay in touch, and the postcards illustrate the disappearance of selfhood in the dailiness of banalized routine. Yet as we might expect, this dailiness is phenomenally expansive in its writing of imperial modernity. A card reads: “Greetings from the trip. Today Basle. Tomorrow Paris. Ella.” 55 From Tunis, she sends her brother a topless “Jeune Bédouine” to bring in the new year. Similarly to America, if in a more overtly exoticizing fashion, an ethnography is articulated across many of the Tunisian cards, as in “Arabian notary in his study” and “Tunisia – Waterbearer;” in addition, some of the postcards, such as “Tunis. – Souk-el-Trouk, Bazar Barbouchi,” directly relate to the motifs of her own photographs. 56 The holdings also comprise a postcard referencing a visit to Dresden’s “Zoological Garden with savage peoples” captioned “Marquandt’s West Sudanese exhibit ‘the Futa.’” 57 Interestingly, six of Münter’s photographs of an earlier (1901) Völkerschau in Munich are preserved elsewhere in the same archives; 58 in one of these, a dwarf performs to the camera, standing on one foot beside a tall and statuesque bare-chested black male. At the same time, a white woman walks by, taking in the photographic transaction. Another card is of the Padiglione Stampa Building for the Milan Exposition, and upon it Münter mentions seeing Buffalo Bill. 59 She may not have liked Niagara Falls, but she sends Carl the Duomo, the Arc de Triomphe, and a dazzling view of the ostrich house at the Berlin Zoological Garden. Her brother also would get fold-out panoramas of Verona and the Staffelsee; an image of three men erecting electrical lines in Berlin (“Berlin Types: High in the Sky”); 60 and selections from “Series X Peasant Girls.” 61

57 Postcard to Annemarie Münter postmarked June 2, 1905.
59 Postmarked June 5, 1906.
60 Postmarked October 23 (?), 1907.
61 “Berliner Typen: Hoch in den Lüften”; “Serie X Bauermädchen.”
As I have suggested, Münter’s life up to 1900 is marked by transatlanticism, dislocation, and the search for rootedness. Upon her return to Germany in 1900, she is back in Coblenz and in 1901 moves with her sister to Bonn, where she studies briefly with sculptor Hermann Küppers. In the spring she goes to Munich to attend the Ladies’ Academy at the Association of Women Artists, where she enrolls in portrait drawing and landscape courses with Maximilian Dasio and portrait drawing with Angelo Jank. In the winter she takes sculpture at the Phalanx School with Hüsgen, as noted, and subsequently participates in Kandinsky’s drawing class after the nude model. As this encounter plays out, it engenders an intensification of displacement and broadened opportunity. From 1904 to 1908 for example, Münter and Kandinsky travel extensively, with stays for example in various towns in Holland and in Bonn, Tunis, Dresden, Brussels, Rapallo, Sèvres, and in the Swiss Alps on a walking and biking tour.62 Annegret Hoberg characterizes the period as constituted by “‘vagabond’ years of improvised togetherness, far removed from the normal context of everyday life,” a status she associates with the ultimate demise of the relationship with Kandinsky.63 As I have sought to demonstrate, though, Münter’s everyday retains an exotic quality writ daily, suggesting the porosity of the exotic and daily and Münter’s practice as a continuum between them.64

To pursue this issue, I would like to turn to Münter’s thematization of “home” to query its relationship to dailiness. Heller rightly foregrounds the importance in Münter’s writings of her purchase of her Murnau house, and, as we have seen, understands environments within as a locus for self-figuration. Dorothea Stuecher explains that German-American writing repeatedly

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63 Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences 1902-1914 (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2001), 11. The German version of this text includes the term “personal life” rather than “everyday life,” but nevertheless positions this period of travel as an extraction from the rest of life.

64 I am indebted to Michael Leja for his insightful comments on this point.
organizes the world in terms of those “at home” and those “without home,” and I think it indeed makes sense to explore Münter’s home as an extended self-portrait and space of coming to representation.

To launch the discussion, let us consider a brief passage in her retrospective chronicle of May 17, 1911, written when Kandinsky was away in Sindelsdorf visiting the Marcès. It is often included in the Münter literature and describes the acquisition of the Murnau house in June of 1909:

...we moved to stay with Xaver Streidl – in the newly built villa that Kandinsky had fallen in love with at first sight. To this love he has remained faithful. There was a lot of debate – he put a certain amount of pressure on me – by late summer the villa had been bought by Miss G. Münter.

Münter’s succinct textualization here communicates an insistent disjunctiveness between we, he, and me; instead of I, she inscribes herself in the fraught “Miss” form and with her whole name. As in America, she communicates the distance of a recitation to register her otherness. The house as object is a surrogate, even a usurper of self, a position that destabilizes the home as security and sanctuary and raises questions surrounding whose dailiness is being assured by it.

The issue of the uncanny, in particular Sigmund Freud’s 1919 theorization and Anthony Vidler’s subsequent discussion, offers a useful way of pursuing Münter’s inscription of dailiness within the home and its modern dislocations. Grounding the idea of the uncanny in domesticity and exploring its nineteenth-century etymological development, Freud suggests that the *heimlich* (homely) takes on a “direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite,

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67 See Doreen Massey, Space, Place, and Gender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 167 and 169. In raising questions of whose dailiness is served by the elaboration of “home,” I do not mean of course simply to imply a financial windfall for Kandinsky in his association with Münter: as Hoberg points out, the Münter passage has fueled (unfounded) rumors on this matter (Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences, 16).
unheimlich” (unhomely); it thus encompasses a multivalence surrounding familiarity and concealment. Freud understands it as “in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.” Referring to “the peculiarly unstable notion of ‘house and home,’” Vidler considers the uncanny in its spatial and architectural manifestations as a metaphor among others for modern nostalgia, estrangement, and nomadicism.  

In an unsent diary-letter to Kandinsky of October 10, 1902, Münster communicates the importance of domesticity to her sense of self even as she steels herself for the possibility of it failing to materialize:

My idea of happiness is a domesticity [Häuslichkeit] as cozy and harmonious as I could make it & someone who wholly & always belongs to me – but – it does not have to be that way at all – if it does not come about & if I do not find the right man – I am still very content & happy I intend now to find pleasure in work again.

What she most dreads is the threat of ambivalence:

At any rate I have always so despised & hated any kind of lying & secrecy [Heimlichkeiten] that I just could not lend myself to it. If we cannot be friends in the eyes of the world I must do without entirely – I want no more than I can be open about & I want to be responsible for what I do – otherwise I am unhappy.

In the letter, Münster’s fundamental sense of well-being would seem to hinge on staving off the slippage of the heimlich to the unheimlich. But beyond the idea of the “ambivalence” of her relationship to Kandinsky, turning on the idea that “the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar,” Freud’s discussion helps to bring out Münster’s investment in Heimat and her fear of it as an eradicated possibility. I shall illustrate this by turning to her 1909 Interior (Still Life, Bedroom) (fig. 165).  

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70 Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münster: Letters and Reminiscences, 37-38 (German edition also 37-38).  
Depicting the second floor of the newly-acquired Murnau house, the painting asserts an inventory of quotidian domesticity reminiscent of lists in Münter’s sketchbooks of objects purchased or needed for her home (I shall discuss an example of this later). We survey Kandinsky’s sandals, Münter’s own pair of small heels, two rugs, two pitchers, a water bucket, a backpack, and a wash basin, for example, in an enumeration of the “lowly” elements reclaimed here as subjects of art. In an evocative treatment of the multiple space-times operating in this image of Münter through what she calls an “absent presence,” Francesca Stafford describes the everyday movement, shoes taken off and left, everyday cleaning and watering tasks, a sense of the domestic, homely, familiar.... [Kandinsky] also provides an image of the everyday, of lying in bed, with a reclining head and arms stretched behind the neck in an attempt at comfort, relaxing from the daily tiredness in the evening.72

Complicating the idea of the “naturalness” or “truth” of daily life, though, such everyday elements are carefully laid out for Münter’s visual accounting of the space. The shoes for example bookend the focal rug, and are in turn bracketed by Münter’s monogram and Kandinsky reading, all on a diagonal axis. In keeping with the authentic aims of the Gesamtkunstwerk discussed above, the painting stages the meeting of the quotidian and the artful. Thus one of the dressers is embellished with Kandinsky’s horse-and-rider scene, a motif of flowering plants and dogs, and a castle on a hilltop. Another cabinet is graced with a small display of folk art, and the walls are adorned with art collected or made by the couple (Stafford’s idea of Münter’s “studio time”).73 The attempt at spiritualization of the everyday is developed in the visual equivalence of the cross motif on two works of art and on the window. Above the small chest of drawers a mirror reflects the glow of an oil lamp, which serves to create an altar-like illuminated niche; its loftiness is enhanced by the diagonal thrust of the rug. Münter thus develops the resonance of an

72 ‘My Pictures are all moments of my life’: Representations of time and space in the work of Gabriele Münter and Else Lasker-Schüler, unpublished Ph.D. Diss., Institute for Women’s Studies, Lancaster University, October 2001. In a related approach to Stafford’s understanding of the “absent presence,” Behr’s framework draws on Derrida’s idea of différence to suggest “the movement of signification that welds together the difference and deferral, ‘presence-absence’, that typified women practitioners’ relationship to early modernism” (“Beyond the Muse,” in Gabriele Münter: The Search for Expression, 68).

73 ‘My Pictures are all moments of my life,’ 73.
authentic culture here in the context of discourses of Bavarian regionalism overlaid with avant-garde transmutation.  

The primary motif, however, is the tilting floorboards, or the very space of the interior itself. As such, there is an interesting connection to Münter’s photograph from America of Willie Graham reading (fig. 112). The motif of reading men in bed or beside it with a voyeuristic inflection is unusual in Münter’s work and contributes to the unease and instability of the space here. The floor appears to careen downward toward the viewer, perhaps as Kandinsky slides in another direction. The green walls seem immaterial in their yellowish glow, and the ceiling, though referenced, does not appear to contain the room. At the apparent center, the rug hovers over the concealed floorspace but simultaneously cuts to the cabinet as terminus, almost headstone-esque in its shape and flattened frontality. Where is inside and outside, and with it the subject of the painting? Where is the daily after all?

As Vidler explains, haunted houses are prime sites of the uncanny, and he describes the Romantic telling of ghost stories in a “secure setting” so that stories of terror might be tasted with delight; many writers insisted on the need for a storm outside, to reinforce by contrast the snugness within. Thus the setting of Hoffmann’s ‘Uncanny Guest’..., where ‘the four ingredients, autumn, a stormy wind, a good fire, and a jorum of punch’ engendered a strange sense of the awesome.  

Painted at night by oil lamp or shown in such a state, Münter’s interior is apparently more cheerful than its outside. But for all the quotidian anchors and spiritualization of daily life in this retreat, the basic solidity of the room threatens to give way to the incursion of outside and the modernizing future. Torquing the diagonal of the rug, the monogram and depiction of Kandinsky

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74 For a useful elaboration of the making of Murnau authenticity, see Heller, *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism*, 70-71, 74, and 108. He notes for example: “The villagers and farmers from nearby continued to dress in Lederhosen and folk costumes, but the ‘unspoiled’ Bavarian village in which they now lived was a stage shaped according to a sanitizing modernist ideological celebration of rural authenticity” (71).

75 *The Architectural Uncanny*, 17 and 36. Some of Münter’s works seem to play with this theme of haunting, even as they variously subvert it. Two examples are Little Bellevue House (fig. 166) and Little Green House (fig. 167). In keeping with the broader theme of the anthropomorphic inflection of her practice, Münter asserts that “all houses had faces” (“Alle Häuser hatten Gesichter”; cited in Peter Lahnstein, *Münter* [Oberammergau: Buch-Kunstverlag Ettal, 1985], 37).
are limited in their tethering capacity. Squared in his body position like Klee to rhyme with the geometry of the paintings, furniture, and the architecture, Kandinsky is not only miniscule in the span created by the diagonal, but a doll-like inanimate object. As such he exemplifies the amorphous boundary surrounding the real and unreal, and the alive and the inanimate informing Freud’s uncanny. 76 As we saw with Man in an Armchair, though, a caricatural inflection seems to offer Münter some maneuverability, 77 so that the estranged familiar is refamiliarized. Kandinsky’s status as one of the objects of her “secret seraglio” offers a reassurance, like the array of other items – the folk art objects, symbols of immersion in “nature,” objects made by the self. As Jean Baudrillard observes, however, the mastery of such a collection is predicated upon artifice, alienation, and regression. 78 Only canny illusion ultimately will ensure the sense of belonging, rootedness, and familiarity in Münter’s “veillée,” or stay-up-late “‘cottage’ vision of house and home” as she writes her dailiness in quotation marks. 79

In a brief author’s note for her Primer for Daily Life, Susan Willis maintains: “The bottom line in daily life is the commodity form. Herein are subsumed all the contradictions of commodity capitalism and our aspirations for their utopian transformation.” 80 Depicting a headless female figure supporting objects purchased and collected, Münter’s 1908/09 Return from Shopping (In the Streetcar) (fig. 168) graphically appears to thematize the female commodity. Likened to a mannequin and defined through consumption, the fragmented figure overlaps with an image from the period published in Lustige Blätter showcasing the pervasive sexualization of

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76 “The Uncanny,” 244.
77 Vidler suggests that the uncanny “was the direct opposite, finally, of the caricatural and the distorted, which, by their exaggeration, refused to provoke fear. Sharing qualities with all these allied genres of fear, the uncanny reveled in its nonspecificity, one reinforced by the multiplicity of untranslatable words that served to indicate its presence in different languages” (The Architectural Uncanny, 22).
79 Describing this “nostalgic evocation of the veillée,” Vidler notes that it was “especially relished in the age of rural displacement and urban emigration” (The Architectural Uncanny, 36; see also 41 for further discussion of the term).
the link between consumer and commodity (fig. 169). Communicating the ambiguous position of women in public space, Münter’s painting would seem to query the legitimacy of place Anne Friedberg claims for women therein as shoppers. As I have mentioned, Anke Gleber is skeptical about this possibility of female flânerie. In her reading, consumption is a ghettoizing “domesticized flânerie” lacking the male flâneur’s breadth of perception independent of function or purpose; for Gleber women in public are ultimately “passively receptive objects and images to a publicly active and male gaze.” As I shall show here, however, such an interpretation seems overly pessimistic for Münter in Return from Shopping.

Despite the striking focus on defining the figure as body in the painting, Münter instances a pronounced tendency toward the erasure of her corporeality. Coincident with most of the frame of the picture, the figure’s body is rectangularized and abstracted. A tension between vestiges of bodily form and two-dimensional geometric form remains, as illustrated by the contrast between the gentle curvature of the silhouette at the right and the straighter left side. With the exception of the right hip and a hint of shapely form in the knees through the variegated application of blue in energetic brushwork, the curvatures of the woman’s body are nearly indiscernible; furthermore, not an inch of skin is visible. Indeed, in contrast to discourses of prostitution, this de-emphasis on corporeality recalls that in Romanesque sculptures of the Virgin and Child; Münter is known to have collected a number of later Bavarian versions of these, many of which are included in her paintings. Specifically, the figure’s hieratic, frontal pose and headlessness – or construction as

81 Published and discussed in Simmons, “August Macke’s Shoppers,” 56 and 59. As Marsha Meskimmon notes for the different context of Weimar Germany, “The seductive nature of the prostitute likened her to the commodity fetish, where the subject’s desire occludes the material conditions of exchange, while the fetishized femininity of the mannequin, often in fragments, provided a seductive display to sell commodities, both in shop windows and in the mass media. The very display of goods in arcades and shop windows links the sites of prostitution with those of mannequin forms” (We Weren’t Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999], 57).
82 See chap. 2, n. 50 of this discussion.
83 “Female Flânerie and the Symphony of the City,” chap. 3 in Women and the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 71-72. Gleber offers a description of the film Berlin, Symphony of the City that is resonant for this painting in referring to “scenes with women as models, instruments, and coat hangers of capitalism, images on display as well as commodities for sale” (77-78).
lap – in *Return from Shopping* suggest intersections with the discourse of the Virgin as *sedes sapientiae*, or Seat/Throne of Wisdom. In images of the *sedes sapientiae* (fig. 170), the Virgin is literally a throne and vessel. Blue is of course traditionally the Virgin’s color, and Münter’s decision to represent the figure in a cloak-like dress in that color reinforces this connection.

In place of the Child, however, Münter proposes an arrangement of objects that helps to offer an alternative to the Virgin-whore, or lap-commodity, duality. Along with the figure’s modesty of dress, the tower of possessions appears to serve as a barricade against a male gaze. Upon closer inspection, however, the elaborate still life seems to be on the verge of toppling or disintegrating. The ziggurat of pink and brown parcels is untethered; the blue package is barely held in place by the strap to Münter’s purse, which itself is hanging from gloved hands that appear to have little relation to the wearer’s body; the geranium is abstracted in three hovering color zones. Thus the materiality of the figure gradually seems to evaporate, transmuted into the realm of art, as in the figure’s unreal body position neither standing nor sitting, her sculptural physicality, and the sheer painterliness of her dress. The “purse” is decorated with dots and ribbons of color; two of the packages are revealed as brushwork on exposed canvas; the geranium is comprised of floating circular and ovoid forms: there is thus a dream-like quality of color, form, and commodity. In describing Münter’s strategy of “visual disjuncture” here, Heller suggests that she foregrounds “the ideational quality of the image and its function as the record of a memory or an idea, not the external world.”

Within the conditions of commodity capitalism, then, visual experience is possible. In a conflation of the physical and spiritual eye, it is as if the objects and the structure of consumption enable vicarious travel, even as Münter situates herself with regard to commodification.

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85 *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism*, 84.
Inflecting much of Münter’s output, the issue of virtual travel bridges the everyday of domestic repetition and of the street (masculine and feminine perspectives). For example, in a letter to Kandinsky of October 20, 1910 when he is in Russia, Münter writes: “Had a look at the street, lunched, chatted, had a look round the house, your pictures.” And ten days later:

There would be so much to see here – (your pictures – mine – the things on the walls) to think – to do – to read (first of all newspapers). I have to put away my studies so as not to be distracted by them – first I’m going to work on a couple of sketches (paint pencil jottings) & then there are still lifes asking to be done wherever you look – It’s so beautiful here with the flowers! And the table with the 17 madonnas!

From this vantage, it is helpful to turn to Titmice on Snow Covered Branches of 1934 (fig. 171), which Hoberg reads as an image of immobility, claustrophobia, isolation, and potentially even of political disengagement. While there is indeed a static component here, the red curtains add a theatricality suggestive of a dioramic presentation of nature as still life placed before Münter’s receptive body. As such, her self-figuration intersects with Friedberg’s notion of a “mobilized ‘virtual’ gaze”:

The virtual gaze is not a direct perception but a received perception mediated through representation. I introduce this compound term in order to describe a gaze that travels in an imaginary flânerie through an imaginary elsewhere and an imaginary elsewhen. The mobilized gaze has a history, which begins well before the cinema and is rooted in other cultural activities that involve walking and travel. The virtual gaze has a history rooted in all forms of visual representation (back to cave painting), but produced most dramatically by photography. The cinema developed as an apparatus that combined the ‘mobile’ with the ‘virtual.’ Hence, cinematic spectatorship changed, in unprecedented ways, concepts of the present and the real.

Friedberg concludes that for women “[s]uch imaginary flânerie produced a new form of subjectivity – not only decorporealized and derealized, but detemporalized as well.”

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86 Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences 70.
88 Gabriele Münter, with a contribution by Helmut Friedel (Munich: Prestel, 2003), 39.
89 Anne Mochon writes, “Here a section of the window pane and picture plane becomes identical as Münter transferred landscape into still life, this time with actual rather than artificial birds. This kind of transformation had always pleased her…” (Gabriele Münter: Between Munich and Murnau [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Published for the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, 1980], 57-58). See also Friedberg on the passivity and stasis of the spectator in the context of the “mobilized ‘virtual’ gaze” (Window Shopping, 28).
90 Window Shopping, 2-3.
91 Ibid, 38.
Sitting in the streetcar enables a new flânerie. The transportation apparatus forges a mode of looking, as strangers crowd together, on display with new risks of objectification but simultaneously remote. In a resonant discussion of this issue, Ana Parejo Vadillo suggests that "omnibuses and trains became the female school of the visual in modernity: the place where women learned how to look." Expanding upon my argument following Wolfgang Schivelbusch for the incorporation of compressed time and space in Münster's American output, Return from Shopping is suggestive of the industrialization and mediation of her (visual) adventure and "spiritualizing" revision of reality. Münster's dress insists upon spiritualization in its rendition as Kleid rather than Mode. As such, in a Loosian vein, it becomes a mask for individual personality. At the same time, despite the "neutrality" of the clothing, Münster also foregrounds its painterliness, as noted. Such traces of the hand, or of the self as maker, run counter to the alienation of the fashion system as argued for example by Henry Van de Velde. The inclusion of the purse, which, as Heller points out, is "similar in design to those Münster and Kandinsky made together," also asserts a resistance to a society predicated upon exchange value, even as shopping and commodification are the preconditions for Münster's expanded visibility. For indeed, in contrast to the monochromatic background clothing – for all its variegation in handling – the figure is signified by her commodities. The linkage of the rose in the design for the purse to the organically blooming geranium positioned against the figure's body highlights the figure's femininity both as socially produced and within discourses of essentialism. In distinction to reigning ideals of the eternal feminine such as Simmel's, Return from Shopping portrays a

94 Die Künstlerische Hebung der Frauentracht (Krefeld: Kramer & Baum, 1900), 33-34.
95 Gabriele Münster: The Years of Expressionism, 83.
96 As Simmons points out, "applied arts, particularly embroidery and other textile arts,...were linked, like fashion, to cultural constructions of the feminine" ("Expressionism in the Discourse of Fashion," 76).
remarkable twinning of process and product, and of reflection and alienation, to instance the conditions and possibilities for Geist in modern female culture.

The daily is the backdrop to a life and what happens in between. As we have seen, Münter struggles from this position to be heard over the din of modernism and its telling. Henri Lefebvre suggestively captures the contrast and interactions between the quotidian and the modern:

The quotidian is what is humble and solid, what is taken for granted and that of which all the parts follow each other in such a regular, unvarying succession that those concerned have no call to question their sequence; thus it is undated and (apparently) insignificant; though it occupies and preoccupies it is practically untellable, and it is the ethics underlying routine and the aesthetics of familiar settings. At this point it encounters the modern. This word stands for what is novel, brilliant, paradoxical and bears the imprint of technicality and worldliness; it is (apparently) daring and transitory, proclaims its initiative and is acclaimed for it; it is art and aestheticism – not readily discernible in so-called modern spectacles or in the spectacle the modern world makes of itself to itself. The quotidian and the modern mark and mask, legitimate and counterbalance each other. 97

We cannot write the daily, however, or we occasion its loss in valorizing reclamation or tedious enumeration. 98 And yet, while Lefebvre’s assertion that “[w]riting can only show an everyday life inscribed and prescribed; words are elusive and only that which is stipulated remains” is instructive for thinking about her practice, 99 in important respects Münter also resists this conceptualization in her telling of the everyday’s untellability. Throughout much of her life and in various genres, she seems to have sought to write the impossibility of in-between. Indeed, as Lefebvre recognized, the everyday harbors a radical potential, in that its examination might yield

98 As Lefebvre resonantly observes, “It is not possible to construct a theoretical and practical system such that the details of everyday life will become meaningful in and by this system” (Everyday Life in the Modern World, 98).
99 Ibid, 8 and 24.
important insight into the structure of society and thereby enable alternatives outside of everyday life.100

Among other items, a box of ephemera preserved in the Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung includes Münter’s pages from an old calendar, bank statements, and bills. Indeed, Münter’s and the archival act of preservation rescue, or alternatively spirit away, these items from the realm of inattention.101 To be sure, Münter held on to these documents at least partially for their function as writing surface, readapting and confining them to the status of scrap paper. Thus on the back of pages of a 1927 picture calendar of Bavaria, in a move reminiscent of her pocket calendars in America, she writes a brief chronology of art classes taken and some of her exhibitions. On the reverse of a 1944 Bayrische Vereinsbank account statement, she jots down information about Kandinsky’s coldness and incomprehensible behavior; and on the back of a 1946 bill for the costs of treatment following a breast operation, she records information about Kandinsky’s first wife Anja and tie-ups with his divorce.

Yet writing off the “mundane” sides of the documents by noting that Münter was frugal in her use of paper or perhaps a packrat misses the ongoing two-directional slippage of ordinary into extraordinary and the stretch of the daily we have been discussing. Among the contents of Münter’s box of ephemera for example is a dinner menu from January 27, 1905 issued by the Hotel Saint-Georges in Tunis and written out in exquisite penmanship. In unfolding it, pressed leaves and flowers, advertisements, and schematized renditions of paintings are visible. This capacious rag-picking bricolage also is evocative for Münter’s sketchbooks, as described briefly in the introduction. Thus for example on the back cover of a 1903 sketchbook, she includes lyrics and a list of items she apparently acquired or was planning to purchase – “2 boxes,” “1 book,”

100 Ibid, 64-65.  
Like a collection of picture postcards, the same sketchbook includes pencil "views" of places visited as distanced landscapes in her burgeoning art-tourism. In a sketchbook from the following year, she is working on recalling the lyrics to "Polly Wolly Doodle," developing her monogram, and sketching the Dutch landscape, water bearers, and figures in clogs and knickerbockers. Against more polished modes of autobiography, Suzanne Bunkers observes that women's unpublished diaristic writings may emphasize "life as process, not product," and we have traced this characteristic in much of Münter's American output. As Man in an Armchair illustrates, this quality extends to some of her paintings and, as I shall demonstrate presently, colors much of her post-America lifewriting in what indeed might be understood as a scrappy writing of self. It is the disjunctive heterogeneity and fragmentation, the lists, ellipses, and traces of process over teleological unfolding, the very dailiness expressed in so much of Münter's self-narration, that seems beyond description but also offers transformative possibility.

To develop this issue, let us return to the unsent "diary-letter" to Kandinsky of October 10, 1902 which, as Hoberg explains, "evidences Münter's confusion, and regret, about what had taken place between them - the first exchange of kisses." Itself an untellable subject, it reveals an interesting attempt for a footing in dailiness and the limitations of that position.

Dear K! (That is how you sign yourself & what else am I then to call you) To pass the time, and because I am thinking of you, I will give you a preliminary report and tell you what I have been doing since yesterday evening and some of the things I have been thinking...
As is clear, Münter foregrounds her uncertainty about the status of the relationship and its incompatibility with bourgeois norms up front in the difficulty of the greeting. She harnesses the daily to come to writing – she is passing the time, giving a “report” – to move to other spaces: a hard look at her relationship with Kandinsky. Throughout this study we have seen the importance of relationality for Münter’s self-construction, and here she writes herself through another as an imagined dialogue to sort out her emotions and thoughts.

Showing the process of her self-understanding, the next paragraph begins:

Now let me try to tell you something of my thoughts. I believe that with me it is as I already told you at Kochel & Seeshaupt – namely, that – [oh my!] – (how hard it is for me to say it!) since I came to know you as a teacher I have found you ever more capital and commendable. Then you interested me personally too & I loved you the way – & still do – & always will do – the way most people surely do who have come to know you as I have…

Here Münter features her unspeakability at multiple levels – *something* of my thoughts, how hard it is for me to say it, “oh my,” the dashes and ampersands, the deletion of lines later in this paragraph. The numerous dashes and run-on sentences built of telegraphic components create a quality of disjunctive compression suggestive of a stream-of-consciousness writing and her postcard-messages. Yet in fact her text is even closer to orality, as highlighted by the “oh my,” which seems to burst the confine of the page. Her strategy of self-narration here relates to Leigh Gilmore’s autobiographics, a term which is intended to convey those elements of self-representation which are not bound by a philosophical definition of the self derived from Augustine, those elements that instead mark a location in a text where self-invention, self-discovery, and self-representation emerge within the techniques of autobiography. Autobiographics, as a description of self-representation and as a reading practice, is concerned with interruptions and eruptions, with resistance and contradiction as strategies of self-representation.

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107 Ibid., 37.
108 Tom Phillips’s discussion of postcards is evocative here: “What always seems remarkable in older messages is that they often carry on without any help from commas or full stops” (*The Postcard Century: 2000 Cards and Their Messages* [London: Thames & Hudson, 2000], 14).
As we have seen, the art of conversation was perceived as a desirable female accomplishment in Godey's. Margaretmary Daley points to a deep-seated connection between orality and women's writing, as for example in women's encouragement to follow "natural" conversation when writing and in the frequent transitions in salon conversation which may also appear in epistolary forms.\textsuperscript{110} As Daley cautions, however, this does not mean that there is a lack of artistic display in women's writing, or that it is spontaneous and unmediated.\textsuperscript{111} In its choppy familiarity, Münter's orality fashions an attempt at transparency of selfhood. Yet at the same time, there is an important emergent, subconscious quality informing Münter's everyday writing. As Laurie Langbauer puts it, "Part of the complexity of the everyday is that is represents...conflicting registers and assumptions; it charts a fault-line between the conscious and the unconscious, between determining powers people can see and those they can't, between theories that seek change and those that enmesh their subjects in determinism."\textsuperscript{112}

Münter wants to tell herself, and to tell herself to Kandinsky; after the passage discussed above describing her idea of happiness as domesticity and a need for a lack of secrecy, she asks:

What will you say – when you read this? Will you agree with everything – will that be it? I cannot tell you this in writing – perhaps I will let you read it one day – I will write to you as in a diary when there is something on my mind – to help myself – you old egotist! (me).... Monday, 5 o'clock. Good heavens!\textsuperscript{113}

While she constitutes herself relationally, she calls for a boundedness of discourse which, if "private," is nevertheless written with Kandinsky as hovering audience. The diary is a space for self-knowledge, if an indulgent one; the recurrence of dailiness enables the (questionable) allowance, the bearings in the dislocation. A few lines below, she continues: "I hope I am not so demented as to imagine that to be love...If only I knew what to do! – if I could only find some

\textsuperscript{110} Women of Letters: A Study of Self and Genre in the Personal Writing of Caroline Schlegel-Schelling, Rahel Levin Varnhagen, and Bettina von Arnim (Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House, 1998), 5-6.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{112} Novels of Everyday Life, 22.
\textsuperscript{113} Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences, 38.
relief! Damn. The devil take it. I so long for a letter – but the fellow does not write – ...” And again below:

(An hour later)… You cannot blame me if I at first had my doubts about the depth and duration of your feelings. And such doubts I only had at the very beginning. – What a chump I am – how I hunger for a letter from him – damn. The devil take it once again!!

She writes her impossible longing in familiarity, repetition, the stretch of time. Of particular interest in this diary-letter is its visual display of the boundary of daily selfhood, in that Münter scrawls down the edge of the first page: “I really am a goose – I went walking with him in Kochel arm in am & had no idea what was to come – but who could have imagined?!” For as I shall demonstrate via two examples, in this textualization the daily is also a frontier for Münter which she will expand into an autobiographics of marking and masking modern selfhood.

The first example is her “retrospective diary,” which as noted was written on May 17, 1911 when Kandinsky was away in Sindelsdorf visiting the Marc.

As Heller revealingly puts it, Münter had recognized the Murnau group’s importance and taken on the position of “unofficial scribe.”

Girding up for her project of chronicling, Münter begins:

Well then, Rapallo 05-06
Paris 06-07
Berlin 07-08 spring Lana
Summer Munich – fall Murnau. Summer 1908 I stayed Pension Stella 48 Adalbertstr. – also winter 08-09 – and in winter had studio nearby 19 Adalb. IVth floor. With the good Miss Mathild as housekeeper. From fall onward K lived at Lechleiters’ – 36 Ainmillerstr. rear building.

We had seen Murnau on an excursion and recommended it to Jawlensky and Werefkin – and they asked us to come there in the fall. We stayed at the Griesbräu & liked it very much.

After a short period of agony I took a great leap forward, from copying nature – in a more or less Impressionist style – to feeling the content of things – abstracting – conveying an extract.

It was a wonderful, interesting, enjoyable time, with lots of conversations about art with the ‘Giselists,’ who were full of enthusiasm. I particularly enjoyed showing my work to Jawlensky – who praised it lavishly and also explained a number of things to me – passed on what he had experienced and learned – talked about ‘synthesis.’ He’s a good colleague. All 4 of us were keenly ambitious and each of us made progress. I did a whole heap of studies. There were days when I painted 5 studies (on 33 x 41 [cm] sheets of cardboard) and many when I managed 3 and a few when I didn’t paint at all.

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114 Ibid, 38.
115 Ibid, 38 and 40.
117 Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 70.
We all worked very hard.
Since then, Kandinsky's work has progressed miraculously.\textsuperscript{118}

While the post-“rear building” paragraphs are cited so often as to be legend, the
beginning section is not. Recalling the pocket calendars, the information is sparse, with some (to
my eyes) odd inclusions, such as the floor levels, which she frequently includes throughout the
chronicle; Münter is clearly invested in trying to pin down her coordinates in the wake of years of
travel. She then describes her development, if with a “mitigating” dash of humor (“a short period
of agony”), reflects upon and summarizes her mode of working, and asserts her connection to
other artists and pride in her industriousness. She concludes with a vote of confidence for
Kandinsky. Avoiding the initial section, however, shortchanges Münter in that it sets up her
distance from representation and her mode of self-narration between the lines.\textsuperscript{119} Such a location
is clear as the chronicle proceeds, as in the following section (skipping ahead):

In the winter (or late fall) he [Kandinsky] dictated to me – one day when he was feeling
very off-color and so we didn’t go to one of the first meetings of the Association – the first –
composition for the stage (Black-White-Colored).

In Feb. we went to Kochel to see the Hartmanns. We traveled Garmisch first – from
there sleigh Mittenwald – and in the hotel there we also worked on his compositions (Mittenwald
was lovely in the snow!) Then by sleigh to Kochel!\textsuperscript{120}

In her historicization, Münter devotes more attention for example to sleigh riding than to the Neue
Künstlervereinigung München, and the repetition of the sleigh reference, compounded with the
parenthetical inclusion of the “lovely” [fein] Mittenwald weather, adds a subversive undertone.
Münter’s edge here enables a mode of self-narration contrasting with that surrounding her role of
taking dictation. In an evocative numbered list contrasting the work of art to the document,
Walter Benjamin notes: “The virility of works lies in assault. The document’s innocence gives it

\textsuperscript{118} Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences, 45-46.
\textsuperscript{119} In a discussion of memoir Mary Jean Corbett describes this as a mode for Victorian women writers to
tell their own stories “without demanding that they commit full disclosure” (“Literary Domesticity and
Women Writers’ Subjectivities,” in Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader, eds. Sidonie Smith and
\textsuperscript{120} Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences, 47.
Positioning her text as a calendrical record, Münter registers her resentment at such an assignment but in the process challenges the boundaries of documentation and art. For example:

I've had enough of this. So to cut things short. Fall 1909 October our first club exhibition at Thannhauser. Since Oct. 1909 we have been living here together. 1910 spring nice couple of weeks in Murnau – looking after trees and garden. Then again late summer or fall. Summer Munich. 1910 – stage II – at Thannhauser initially, in the upper rooms this time. It is the “intertextuality” of art and everyday life that bespeaks of her struggles to create a narrative of modernism, accents the heterogeneity of her practice inside and outside of Art, and offers more expansive readings for the art she produced.

Following an excursion on the Staffelsee with Kandinsky, Marianne Werefkin, Alexei Jawlensky, and the latter’s son Andreas in the summer of 1910, Münter painted Boating (fig. 172), which I would like to consider now as our second example of her autobiographics of dailiness. Looming behind the other passengers in the boat with his head positioned against the middle of the blue mountains, Kandinsky figures a position of heroic transcendence. His pose closely recalls that in fig. 154, an overlap that foregrounds the staged and symbolic quality of the work; interestingly, Kandinsky is not featured in some of the oil studies for the painting, such as fig. 173, or in the first of a series of preparatory pencil sketches. As we have seen elsewhere in Münter’s output, there is a typifying cast to the portraiture here. Elisabeth Erdmann-Macke would observe of Kandinsky: “there was something mystical and awesome about him, coupled with a singular pathos and a penchant for the dogmatic. His art was an initiation, a philosophy of life.”

For the contrast in the positions of Münter and Kandinsky, one is reminded of the Fowlers: “In general,...tall persons have high heads, and are more aspiring, aim high, and seek

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124 „...er hatte etwas Mystisches, Phantastisches an sich, gepaart mit seltsamen Pathos und einem Hang zu Dogmatik. Seine Kunst war eine Lehre, eine Weltanschauung” (Erinnerung an August Macke [Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998], 235).
conspicuous, while short ones have flat heads, and seek worldly pleasures.”

Merging with Kandinsky axially and coloristically, Münter differences herself as an anti-heroic body. Powering the craft from behind, she is a literal support for his transcendence. Such an amalgamated contrast, succinctly captured in the cross of the predominant verticality of his body against her distended horizontality, begins to suggest a union of Prosa and Geist.

The painting is an apt metaphor for Münter’s self-inscription in German modernism. A resonantly symbolic landscape, it is difficult to imagine Münter actually rowing all three passengers in the boat, all the while sporting a monumental hat; Kandinsky too is on the verge of falling into deep water. All the more interesting, then, is Münter’s staging of herself in the effacement of laborious repetition. In my reading Münter probes the contours of the view from below and fashions it as a site ripe for appropriation. Her figuration of her fusion with Kandinsky as a precondition for and frustration of her presence suggests both a reliance on their assigned positions and a strategy of making her invisibility visible without, however, flattening it into tellability.

Münter’s multivalent treatment of the issue of looking, as with the inner and outer eye and in terms of a dynamic of contemplating and consuming, complicates an emphasis on resignation here. On one level, her own position recalls that of the onlookers in her photograph of the Marshall 4th-of-July parade (fig. 74), a connection underscored by the thematics of fashionability in both images. She is a part of the spectacle but, in her representation from the back in prominent foreground placement, also a surrogate as well as an impresario for the viewer.

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125 The Illustrated Self-Regulator in Phrenology and Physiology with one Hundred Engravings and a Phrenological Chart of Character (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1853), 16-17.
126 Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 126.
128 In a related vein, Stafford concludes, “It has become clear through the readings I have offered of Münter’s self-portraits, that the concept of the absent presence may be seen as her central structuring principle of the artistic chronotope….Despite its ostensible impression of defeat and alienation, the absent presence carries a radical and empowering potential through the rupture of expectation and the breakdown of generic rules” (‘My Pictures are all moments of my life,’ 85).
129 Behr points out that the painting showcases the party “attired in urban and fashionable clothing” (“Kandinsky, Münter and Creative Partnership,” in Kandinsky: The Path to Abstraction, eds. Hartwig Fischer and Sean Rainbird (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), 86).
The motif of boating is a mainstay of Romantic imagery and in its more turbulent manifestations connotes the challenges attending the navigation of “physical or spiritual unrest,” as Robert Rosenblum notes. Drawing on the Romanticizing resonance of the theme, Münter references discourses of communion with the landscape in its brooding luminosity; yet in a similar valence to her 1899 “Texas Frt. House” (fig. 72), the dog as onlooker gently undermines such elevated thematics. As a vehicle to artistic experience, Münter is both all body and disembodied in this improbable performance of clustered stability and uncertain weather. Kandinsky conversely asserts his presence as an incarnation of transcendence and as object of reverence. As such, in this outing both the everyday and modernism are defamiliarized.

In the output I have considered in this conclusion, as in much of Münter’s practice, her textualization of self is challenging to locate through its implicitness – as in archival relation, surrogacy, and interrelationship – and in its banality and effacement, anomalous heterogeneity, and tension between resistance and accommodation. This is a governing quality of dailiness, which cannot be fixed. Ghostwriting the self in Johannes Eichner’s Kandinsky und Gabriele Münter. Von Ursprüngen moderner Kunst and serving as a witness to the development of German modernism, Münter poignantly conveys the difficulties of her self-articulation on scraps of paper, with specific instructions, such as “Insert as quotation.” Despite and because of the difficulty of telling her dailiness, for all its promise and deferral of stability, she repeatedly seems to wish to account for the self within segments of time. Thus for example Münter had severely reprimanded Kandinsky for failing to correspond during his Russia visit in the fall of 1910 only to get his letters belatedly. “And without those 2 letters there was such a big gap in the sequence! And I would have felt so totally different. I was not at all cheerful & didn’t feel like doing

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131 Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences, 34.
anything.'" She would write him the next day: "It probably won't happen again but still let us systematically number them so that we know where we are.""

In the face of the decorporealized, detemporalized subjectivity Friedberg evokes, Münter would seem to find herself in an intractable project of orientation. Temporalizing the space of art history, Münter offers photographic documentation of the genesis of Kandinsky’s *Composition VII*, sometimes with references to the hour (fig. 174). As such she measures the creation of heroic abstraction in black-and-white time to create a record of the process of its emergence along with the impossibility of filling the gaps in the sequence. As Suzanne Juhasz reminds us, “[D]ailiness is by definition never a conclusion, always a process,” so that “[t]he diary is finished when the pages run out, not when some denouement and conclusion is reached.” Münter returns to a textualization of this process again and again.

Thus a book of recipes reads as lifewriting: inscribed “Gabriele Münter. Coblenz. 1897,” it includes recipes written in her own and other hands and recipes culled from the newspaper. As we have seen in so much of Münter’s output, dating is an organizing principle; for example, a double-page spread for recipes of different jams includes a record of “My quince jam” dated 1934, as well as an entry reading “July 18, 1940 Black currant jam.” There are “old recipes” from Eichner from 1938 in his hand, an entry for “Russian Passover” from 1940, and

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133 Letter of October 30, 1910 (Ibid, 76-77). In addition, in a letter to Kandinsky of November 29, 1912, Münter writes: “I do wish you could be more cheerful, I do wish you would try harder to come to terms with life – with the moment!” (145).
134 Discussing this series of photographs, Helmut Friedel evokes the process-oriented quality of Münter’s output in concluding: “The simultaneity of all the colors and forms in the complete work becomes a suspenseful succession in the photographs” (Die Gleichzeitigkeit aller Farben und Formen des vollendeten Werkes wird durch die Photographien zu einem spannenden Nacheinander; “Kandinsky und die Photographie: Die Wunder der Photographie,” in *Gabriele Münter: Die Jahre mit Kandinsky. Photographien 1902-1914* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2007], 52-54). For another approach to Münter’s endeavor, see Kenneth Lindsay, “Gabriele Münter and Wassily Kandinsky: What They Meant to Each Other,” in *Arts Magazine* 56.4 (December 1981): 60.
135 "Towards a Theory of Form in Feminist Autobiography: Kate Millet’s Fear of Flying and Sita; Maxine Hong Kingston’s The Woman Warrior,” in *International Journal of Women’s Studies* 2.1 (January/February 1979): 64.
136 *Koch-Recepte;* Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung.
items from a 1950 magazine, for example, which suggests that she added to her compilation throughout much of her life. Showcasing her collection of community, heritage, and traces of selfhood, there are recipes in English, as for “corn mush,” “muffins,” and “oatmeal drop cookies,” all in quotes. American units of measure from Fahrenheit to tablespoons are provided for these; writing the new power of the brand name, Münter underlines the need for Quaker Oats and “Hershey’s Cacao.” And one more example: toward the end of her life, Münter would record the following entry in her diary concerning her gift to the Lenbachhaus of the cache of canonical works she had preserved for almost three decades in her Murnau basement: “Yesterday... a big furniture truck with five men and Dr. Röthel and police collected all the Kandinsky pictures and some 30 Münter pictures. Röthel ate with us. Celery slices, vanilla pudding, Vermouth.”


Figure 1  Gabriele Münter, *Man in an Armchair*, 1913
(After Gabriele Münter 1877-1962 Retrospektive [Munich: Prestel, 1992], cat. 133.)

Figure 2  August Macke, *Caricature of a meeting with Gabriele Münter at her brother’s in Bonn*, 1911 (After Hoberg, *Gabriele Münter* [Munich: Prestel, 2003], 24.)
Figure 3  Marianne von Werefkin, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1910
(After *Der Blaue Reiter und das Neue Bild*, eds. Hoberg and Friedel [Munich: Prestel, 1999], cat.134.)
Figure 4  Gabriele Münter, page from a school drawing book, 1892
(After Hoberg, *Gabriele Münter* [Munich: Prestel, 2003], 6.)

Figure 5  (After Müller, *Anleitung zur Momentphotographie*
[Halle: Wilhelm Knapp, 1904])
Figure 6  Gabriele Münter, “Jim Wade feeding the hogs. Schreiber hill bei [near] Moorefield,” July 1900 (After Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 91.)
Figure 7  “The Trojan Bike” (After Jugend, 1898 Nr. 31: 529.)

Figure 8  Julius Diez, “Woman and the Devil” (After Jugend, 1898 Nr. 2: 33.)
Figure 9  Page from a “Regulator Diary: Simmons Liver Regulator”
P.E. Roddy Collection, Southwest Collections, Texas Tech

Gabriele Münter, “Carrots for dinner Annie Maud 15.IX.1899”
(After Kleine, Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares [Frankfurt: Insel, 1990], 78.)
Figure 11  Photograph of Leila Hamilton-Davidson and Annie Maud Davidson, taken at Murillo Studio, St. Louis, c. 1900
Llano Estacado Museum P-76-03-15

Figures 12  Gabriele Münter, *House with fence and tree, Moorefield*, 1899
(Both after Hoberg in *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 19.)

Figure 13  Gabriele Münter, *Rollermills in Moorefield*, 1899
Figure 14  
Anon., A German farm with a log cabin, published in *Die Gartenlaube*, 1853  
(After Penny in *I Like America* [Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; and Munich, Prestel, 2006], 144.)
Figure 16 Otto Philipp Runge, *The Artist’s Parents*, 1806 (After R. Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition* [New York, Icon, 1975], 51.)
Figure 17  Gabriele Münter, *Steam engine on a bridge, Arkansas or Texas, 1899/1900*  (After Gabriele Münter: *Die Reise nach Amerika* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 55.)
Figure 18  Gabriele Münter, Sue Belle Lake with slide and boat, Marshall, 1900  
(After Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 43.)

Figure 19  Gabriele Münter, Woman Playing a Guitar, 1898  
(After Heller, Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism [Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997], 34.)
Figure 20  Gabriele Münter, *Admiral Dewey Arch and colonnade*, New York, October 1900 (After *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 119.)
Figure 21  Gabriele Münter, *Admiral Dewey Arch and colonnade with a pedestrian*, New York, October 1900 (After Gabriele Münter: *Die Reise nach Amerika* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 120.)

Figure 22  Gabriele Münter, “listen to the graphophon! 14.VIII”  
(After Kleine, *Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares* [Frankfurt: Insel, 1990], 79.)
Figure 23  Photograph of R.C. Ware, c. 1920
Llano Estacado Museum P-76-03-17

Figure 24  Gabriele Münter, J.N. Donohoo, Plainview, July 23, 1899
(After Kleine, Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie
eines Paares [Frankfurt: Insel, 1990], 76.)
Figure 25  Gabriele Münter, *Girl with a doll, Alice (Allie) Louise Ware*, Plainview, January 11, 1900 (After Kleine, *Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky: Biographie eines Paares* [Frankfurt: Insel, 1990], 80.)
Figure 26  Photograph of Allie Louise Ware and Helen Cameron Ware, taken at Eckler’s Art Studio, Hot Springs, Arkansas, early 1900s
Llano Estacado Museum P-76-03-25
Figure 27  Gabriele Münter. “Benlah, Jane Lee, Emmy, Willie, taken 9.IV.1900.”
Guion (After Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 31.)
Figure 28  Gabriele Münter, “Home sweet home at aunt Annie’s,” Plainview, 1899
(After Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika [Munich: Gabriele Münter-
und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 1.)

Figure 29  Gabriele Münter, View of Marshall, 1899
(After Hoberg in Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika [Munich: Gabriele Münter-
und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], 26.)
Figure 30  
Gabriele Münter (?), *Plainview Cowboy Reunion*, August 17, 1899 (After Heller, *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism* [Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997], 32.)

Figure 31  
Gabriele Münter, *Landscape near Guion*, March 9, 1900  
(After *Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 22.)
Figure 32  Gabriele Münter, *House on the prairie near Guion*, March 9, 1900  
(After Gabriele Münter: *Die Reise nach Amerika* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- and Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 23.)
Figure 33  Gabriele Münter, “Guion church,” March 7, 1900
(After Gabriele Münter: Die Reise nach Amerika [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 17.)
Figure 34  Gabriele Münter, “Steamboat mountain, east,” near Guion, March 13, 1900
(After Gabriele Münter: *Die Reise nach Amerika* [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2006], cat. 27.)
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Wassily Kandinsky, Münter at Schnorrstraße 44, Dresden, with a purse embroidered after Kandinsky's design. Summer 1905 (After Gabriele Münter: Die Jahre mit Kandinsky [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2007], cat. 83.)
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Figure 162 Gabriele Münter, Kandinsky on a couch at Schnorrstraße 44, Dresden, Summer 1905 (After Gabriele Münter: Die Jahre mit Kandinsky [Munich: Gabriele Münter- and Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2007], cat. 85.)
Figure 163  Wassily Kandinsky, Münter on a couch at Schnorrstraße 44, Dresden, in a self-designed dress, Summer 1905 (After Gabriele Münter: Die Jahre mit Kandinsky [Munich: Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2007], cat. 86.)
Figure 164  Photographer unknown, Miinter in a Fasching costume with Kandinsky's topcoat and hat in the stairway of the Phalanx-Schule, 1903 (After Hoberg in Gabriele Miinter: Die Jahre mit Kandinsky [Munich: Gabriele Miinter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Lenbachhaus; and Schirmer/Mosel, 2007], 13.)
Figure 165  Gabriele Münter, *Interior (Still Life, Bedroom)*, 1909
(After Heller, *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism*
[Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997], 90.)
Figure 166  Gabriele Münter, *Little Bellevue House*, 1907
(After Gabriele Münter: *Das Druckgraphische Werk*, ed. Helmut Friedel (Munich: Prestel, 2000), 91.)
Figure 167    Gabriele Münter, *Little Green House*, 1910
Figure 168  Gabriele Münter, *Return from Shopping (In the Streetcar)*, 1908/09
(After Heller, Gabriele Mütter: The Years of Expressionism [Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997], 86.)

Figure 169  "Das Self-Made Mädel," published in Lustige Blätter (After Simmons, "August Macke’s Shoppers," in Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 63.1 [2000], 56.)
Figure 170  Sedes Sapientiae (After Weiss, “Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of the Sainte-Chapelle,” in *The Art Bulletin* LXXVII.2 [June 1995]: 314.)

Figure 171  Gabriele Münter, *Titmice on Snow Covered Branches*, 1934 (After Hoberg, *Gabriele Münter* [Munich: Prestel, 2003], cat. 70.).
Figure 172  Gabriele Münter, Boating, 1910  
(After Hoberg, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter: Letters and Reminiscences.  
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Figure 173  Gabriele Münter, *Preliminary sketch for Boating*, 1910
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