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*Searching for Harmonia. «Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus»
and Hungarian Anabaptists*

ABSTRACT. In *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* (1668) Grimmelshausen depicts the Hungarian Hutterites as an ideal society, focusing predominantly on the ethics and social structure of this communal branch of Anabaptism. In this critical reading, I explore how Grimmelshausen fictionalized the religious minority, its commitment to particular social structures and ethical aspects, and its separation from society. As part of this analysis, the study investigates which social and religious principles drawn from polemical accounts and contemporary sources influence and counter the minority's image as an ideal society and how this image of the religious group supports the novel's notion of utopia.

1. Fictionalization of Anabaptism in Early Modern Europe

Grimmelshausen's baroque novel *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* (1668) is one of the first European literary works that integrates a critical consideration of Anabaptist communal life into the storyline based on an encounter with the religious group. Prior to this German novel and apart from the Anabaptists' own literary activities documenting the persecution and martyrdom of believers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, references to the religious group can only be found in a small number of dramas and fictional accounts written at the turn of the century. The Dutch drama *Het Moortje* (1616) by Gerbrandt A. Bredero, for instance, paints a picture of the Dutch Anabaptists in unpleasant colors. Similarly, Coornhert fashions a negative image of the religious group in *Aertzeney der sielen* (1570)¹. The de-

¹ According to Jeltens, the *Doopsgezinde* in Dirck Vzn. Coornhert's farcical dialogue *Aertzeney der Sielen* is subjected to bitter mockery (150-151). In his satire, Coornhert fictionalizes the Dutch Anabaptist leader Menno Simons as well as the pope, Luther, and Calvin.

picture of the separatist group in the comedy *Phasma* (1592) by the German humanist Nicodemus Frischlin also reflects common preconceptions about Anabaptism that were conveyed by polemicists' writings of the late sixteenth century². In the English literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the term «Anabaptist» appeared in numerous works, often referring to all separatist movements that threatened the customary social order³. In the seventeenth century especially, the lines between fictional literature and polemic pamphlets almost disappeared, so that Anabaptist references in literature generally served as rhetorical means to fight separatism and nonconformity. Most of the European literature produced during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a time in which the Anabaptist movement emerged, dispersed, and was harshly persecuted, echoes the anti-Anabaptist rhetoric of state and church authorities in satirical and disputatious styles.

Besides the polemical statements and allusions to their seditious practices, members of the Anabaptist movement were scarcely represented in European non-Anabaptist literature of the seventeenth century. The more

² The Anabaptists in Frischlin's comedy are characterized by polygamy, communism, and iconoclasm. They are associated with Thomas Müntzer and the peasant uprising. Richard Schade found similarities between the negative depiction of Anabaptists in *Phasma* and tracts concerning Anabaptism Johann Brenz, Martin Luther, and Jacob Andrae authored. He concluded that the condemnation of the Anabaptists (and other «Ketzer») to purgatory exemplifies the religious crisis during the sixteenth-century reformation period (302-318).

³ The term was used to designate heretics and contemporary separatist groups such as Baptists, Independents, Quakers, and even Puritans. Irvin Horst grouped Anabaptist references in English literary accounts under following three headings: «(1) allusions to seditious Anabaptism, particularly the Münster episode, (2) comments on topical Anabaptism, usually satirical in nature, (3) discussion of Anabaptist belief and practice in theological tracts and treaties» (232). Authors of fiction and church polemics joined public officials in the effort to instrumentalize the Münster affair for the purpose of suppressing a radical counterculture. John Bale, for instance, links the Anabaptists with the Münster rebellion and consequently alludes to the English suppression of Anabaptist émigrés in his play *King John* (1538). In the picaresque novel *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), Thomas Nashe describes a group of German Anabaptists in the Münster tradition. References to Puritan leaders in the novel indicate the author's motivation behind the choice of Anabaptist characterization, namely, to promote an anti-separatist stance.

significant depiction becomes Grimmelshausen's treatment of the Anabaptists, specifically the Hutterite Brethren, in Hungary. The author gives a seemingly favourable account of the group's social structure and division of work. In the critical reading of his literary depiction of the Anabaptist group, I explore how he fictionalized the religious minority, its commitment to particular social concepts and ethical aspects, and its separation from society. The discrepancy between the authorial discourse on the Anabaptist matter and the historical reality of Anabaptist persecution becomes apparent when examining the illustration of the encounter with the Hutterite Brethren in the novel and juxtaposing it with rhetoric employed by the state church. As part of this analysis, the study investigates which social and religious principles influence and counter the minority's image as an ideal society and how this image of the religious group supports the novel's notion of utopia.

2. *The Notion of Utopia in Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus*

Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus gives a seemingly autobiographical account of a young man's life during the Thirty Years' War⁴. Regarded as the first adventure novel in the German language and one of the most significant novels of personal development, the narrative follows the hero, Simplicius (Melchior Sternfels von Fuchshaim), who experiences the events and brutality of the war. He first is separated from his foster parents during a raid by marauding soldiers, and then witnesses the wealth and intrigues at the Hanau court. He is also present at the hard-fought battle of Wittstock, and then suffers hunger at the Phillipsburg Garrison. In the tradition of the picaresque novel, Simplicius perceives the seventeenth-century European society from a viewpoint of the lower social class and satirically comments on the corruptness of this turbulent war time. According to Breuer, his adventures in the Thirty Years' War period do not solely express personal obser-

⁴ The autobiographical implications of the novel have been under discussion by several scholars, most prominently by Gustav Könnecke in *Quellen und Forschungen zur Lebensgeschichte Grimmelshausen*.

vation and individual struggle; rather, the mostly violent encounters can be considered as exemplary depictions of collective experience during that time (80). Grimmelshausen visits central locations of the war. Ergang has argued that these descriptions of war scenes were unlikely to have been obtained during Grimmelshausen's time in military service. Instead, they must have been either collected by hearsay, created by a vivid imagination, or taken from historical accounts (7). Regardless of the origins of his war stories, the narrator reveals a peace-seeking stance when he portrays the violence and war crimes «als Erscheinung der Verkehrtheit der Welt ... und in die satirische Perspektive rückt» (Breuer 80). The narration does not produce heroic elevation or glorification of the war events. Rather, the story emphasizes how Simplicius suffered from his experiences in the Thirty Years' War and regressed morally. An alternative to the destructive confrontations of the war is given in Simplicius' Mummel Lake adventure to the center of the earth and his accompanying description of the peaceful Anabaptists.

The narrator's opposition to war and violence indicates the deeper issue of peace of mind and the quest for salvation. The *Zeitgeist* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is one of religious striving for salvation and the constant question, «Was soll ich tun, daß ich selig werde?» (Ermatinger 15). During the time of confessional conflicts between the established Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, and various radical reformed groups, the matter of salvation was a significant issue that Grimmelshausen portrayed as being threatened by worldly temptations. Throughout the novel, he seeks an ethical life, thereby considering different social concepts including religion as a means of guidance toward correct moral conduct.

Book V of *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus*, in particular, pursues the matter of orthopraxy, a practical religion as part of Simplicius' developmental process. In his search for a Christianity that is manifested in ethics and personal commitment rather than dogma, Simplicius explores new frontiers. Although the hero frequently changes locations throughout the novel, book V has the quality of an «ausgesprochenes Wander- und Reisebuch» (Battafarano 38). After various fortunes and adventures in the Thirty Years'

War, Simplicius joins Heartbrother on a pilgrimage to Einsiedeln. Not being seriously committed to this endeavor, he converts to Catholicism when the devil confronts him with his sinful past. Yet, he quickly falls back into his old immoral life, indicating that an inner and purely voluntary conversion had not taken place.

In the twelfth chapter of the fifth book, Simplicius ventures to the center of the earth and visits the King of Sylphs. The social system he encounters in the Mummel Lake stands in complete contrast to the contemporary society. In this utopian community, the Sylphs are unable to sin and live in absolute freedom, with the king being their guide rather than their master and judge. Ermatinger has argued that the Mummel Lake episode is the author's attempt to narrate Simplicius' philosophical study without breaking from the tradition of rich and vivid description throughout the book (56). In that regard, the Mummel Lake episode appears to anticipate the Hungarian Brethren scene. The dialogue with the King of Sylphs communicates the structure of an exemplary community that exists beyond the borders of the dominant society. Such a communal organization which the narrator first encounters in this fabulous society of Sylphs reappears later in the story when he describes his experience with the Hungarian Brethren who are depicted as a minority group at the periphery of the seventeenth-century European society.

In the novel, the concept of an ideal social order is transposed from the fictive world of supernatural beings to a geographically fixed territory – Hungary – that indeed had served as refuge for the historical brotherhood since the 1530s. The multi-confessionalism that developed in the Hungarian Empire during the time of the Ottoman rule significantly influenced Germans' image of Hungary during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although the Empire struggled with geopolitical and denominational problems, Grimmelshausen used Hungary as the setting for his scene on ideal community life and religious tolerance. His decision could have been motivated by accounts of uprisings organized in seventeenth-century Upper Hungary that demanded equal rights among Christian groups. Grimmelshausen depicts the Anabaptists against the backdrop of these appeals for

religious tolerance. According to Battafarano, the author selected the *Ungarische Täufer* to explicate the essence of «Theologia», that is: «mehr englisch [engelshaft] als menschlich zusammenzuleben» (35). The Anabaptist group embodies the ideas of the utopian Sylph society in practical aspects. Thus, the Mummel Lake episode sets the scene for political, religious, and philosophical developments that find their application in the Anabaptist everyday life as it is depicted in the novel. Important elements of the Sylph commonwealth such as freedom, purity, and the absence of authority are reflected in the group's harmonious communal life, as the following analysis will demonstrate.

In his thoughts about an optimum society, he recalls having seen Anabaptists in Hungary who led «ein solches Leben» (542). His reference to the Hutterite Brethren in Eastern Europe started a debate and sparked research on Grimmelshausen's sources for the description of the Hutterites. During the 1940s, Schowalter ruled out the possibility of a personal encounter with the Hungarian Brethren, as Grimmelshausen's biography did not indicate extended trips to the East. The historian therefore concluded that the author must have acquired his extensive knowledge about the Hutterian Brethren by reading travel accounts and first-hand reports about the religious group⁵. Further speculations have circulated that Grimmelshausen's depiction of the Anabaptists was inspired by Thomas More's *Utopia* and Johann Valentin Andreae's *Christianopolis* (Ermatinger 67). Andreas Zieglschmid was the first to establish a connection between Grimmelshausen's *Täufer* and Hutterian missionaries from Sabatisch who, after the approval of Carl Ludwig, Elector and Count Palantine, founded colonies in the area of Mannheim in 1654 (386). Zieglschmid has pointed out that Grimmelshausen's direct contact with these Hungarian Hutterites in Mannheim enabled him «ein solch lebendiges, bis in kleinere Einzelheiten genaues Bild von den ungarischen Vorfahren der ... Hutterischen Brüder zu vermitteln» (387).

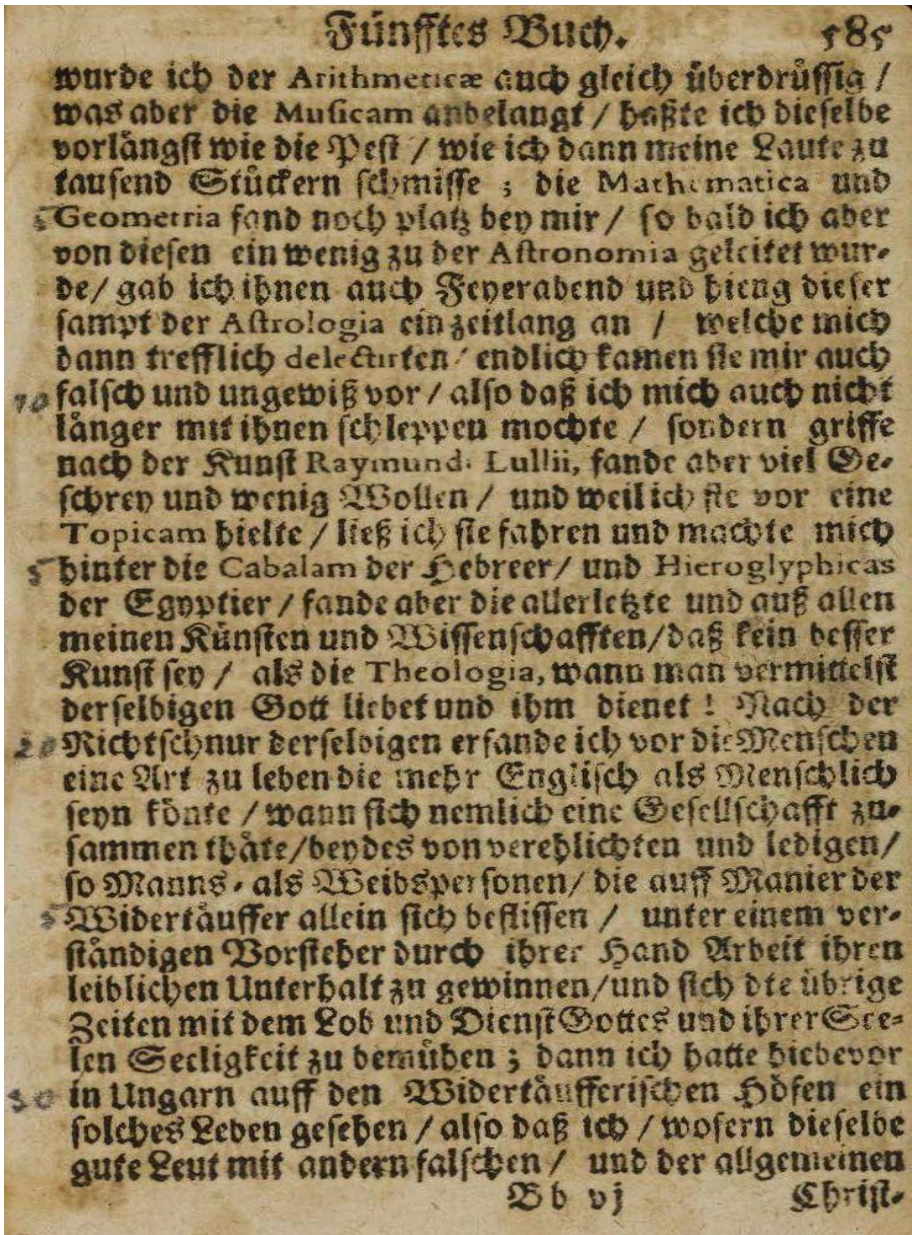
⁵ Furthermore, he has stated that chapter 19 of the fifth book appears as «ein in sich geschlossenes und dazu rein beschreibendes Stück, daß die Annahme einer, vielleicht erinnerungsgemäßiger, Abschrift, begründet» (662).

The question of direct contact or first-hand account has not been fully answered to this day. Yet, «die Betonung der Nicht-Fiktionalität des Erzählten im Roman» supports the assumption that the so-called *Täufer* chapter has in fact authentic qualities and is based on personal contact with the faith community or the report thereof (Battafarano 35). Grimmelshausen's vivid and detailed description of the Hungarian *Bruderhof* thus becomes highly significant for an image study of Anabaptists in German literature. Drawing his narrative from (accounts of) actual acquaintance, the Anabaptist depiction in *Simplicissimus* reflects an emphasis on certain aspects of the group's life that were especially noticeable to the observer. In the light of religious hatred and persecution prevailing in the seventeenth century, the author's enthusiastic account of the Hutterites needs to be analyzed in terms of representative aspects chosen to be included in the text. An examination of these practical and religious features will reveal Grimmelshausen's creation of a unique otherness contrasting the conditions of the war-scarred century.

3. Simplicissimus' Contact with Anabaptism and the Matter of Heresy

The chapter «Etwas wenigens von den Ungarischen Wiedertäufern / und ihrer Art zu leben» is structured as a complete and complex unit within the narrative's discourse on utopian societies. The author emphasizes his interest in the practical aspects of the sectarian community by defining the group exclusively by «ihrer Art zu leben», as indicated in the heading. His focus on the ethical rather than theological elements of the religious community becomes noticeable throughout the chapter which displays the separation of conduct and religion into two distinct divisions.

The narrator starts his account of the Anabaptists by recalling having seen a group of Anabaptists in Hungary: «dann ich hatte hiebevorn in Ungarn auff den Wiedertäuferischen Höfen ein solches Leben gesehen» (524). The narrating «I» alternates between the acting view and the reflecting view throughout the story and within the Anabaptist episode. Karl Otto has pointed out that this continual shift from an actively participating first person to a thoughtful observer is one of the essential characteristics of Grimmelshausen's narrative (48). Simplicius recollects an encounter with the



Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Der Abentheurliche Simplicissimus Teutsch*,
 Monpeltgart [vielm. Nürnberg], 1669 (Digitale Sammlung der Badischen Landesbiblio-
 thek Karlsruhe), 5. Buch, 19. Kapitel, S. 585, Z. 29-31: «dann ich hatte hiebevör in
 Ungarn auff den Widertäuferischen Höfen ein solches Leben gesehen».

Hungarian Brethren from a temporal distance as a matured first person narrator. Simultaneously, he reawakens his memory of his active approach to the community and attentive observation of their daily habits, thereby initiating a conversion experience and inspiring his campaign to establish a community with a similar social fabric.

Taking the position of the viewer, the narrator identifies himself as a non-member of the religious minority. His observation from an outside perspective distances him personally from the group and lets him witness the phenomenon of practical theology. At the same time, the action of seeing allows him to reflect on the differences between the dominant culture and society to which he is accustomed and the principles and practices of this Hutterite colony. His ability to perceive these dissimilarities and his appreciation for the peculiar elements of Anabaptist social life result from Simplicius' distance from mainstream society. The narrator is enthralled by the Hutterite's social interaction and ethical standards that stand in opposition to those of the dominant society which he as a *pícaro* figure satirizes. As the «agent of perception», he focuses his attention on specific points of the group's life that strike him as exceptional (Bal 18). His account of the particular aspects of Anabaptist social life, which derives from a comparison with the dominant culture, thus shapes his image of the Hungarian group as a harmonious society.

Manfred Beller has pointed out that the journey to foreign countries and contact with other cultures was a truly valuable experience for the traveller in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (105). In the case of Simplicius, the act of seeing and encountering the otherness embodied by the Hungarian Anabaptists turns out to be beneficial for his personal development and his return to religion. The contact with the Anabaptist group initiates an honest and inner conversion:

... wofern dieselbe gute Leut mit andern falschen / und der allge-
meinen Christlichen Kirchen widerwärtigen ketzerischen Meinung
nicht weren verwickelt und vertiefft gewesen / ich mich von freyen
stücken zu ihnen geschlagen / oder wenigst ihr Leben vor das seeligste
in der gantzen Welt geschetzt hätte / dann sie kamen mir in ihrem

Thun und Leben allerdings für wie Josephus und andere mehr / die Jüdische Esseer beschreiben. (524)

The narrator is so positively impressed by the Hutterian Brethren that he considers joining their colony. He even mentions that he wanted to establish a society «auff Manier der Wiedertäufer» (524). This ideal community would resemble the Anabaptist group in terms of living arrangements, work ethic, and devoted service to God.

It is necessary to note, however, that he abandons the intent because of the movement's heretical affiliation, «ketzerischen Meinung ... verwickelt». The term *Ketzer* refers to the Anabaptists' place in society as determined by their role of outsiders. The label «heretic» excludes them from the institutional church as well as the secular state and pushes them into a position beyond the periphery of the dominant society. Grimmelshausen not only sets the boundary between the mainstream public and the sectarian fellowship by depicting the group's exemplary social practice as unattainable and contrastive to the state of ethical deterioration prevailing in the seventeenth century; he also separates the group from the dominant society by the external identification marker, *Ketzer*, a common term in early modern times, referring to any deviation from the orthodox belief and practice.

Grimmelshausen's employment of the term *Ketzer* has been understood by scholars as conformity with the ecumenical publicity of that time. Zieglschmid has claimed that the author wrote «*Ketzer ... wohl nur pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*» and that this ostensible condemnation did not affect his enthusiasm toward the group's manner of living (386)⁶. Bender has further argued that Grimmelshausen did not regard the Hutterite Anabaptists as heretics because he avoided associating them with the Münster events although the (mis)perception of the movement's origin in violent revolution in the Westphalian city was rather common during his time (149)⁷. While

⁶ Similarly, Trappen understood Grimeshausen's application of the prejudicial term as an expression of differentiating between Anabaptists' admirable conduct of life and their faulty doctrine (294).

⁷ If Grimmelshausen's knowledge of the Hutterites was indeed based on direct contact with the group or the report thereof, it is only understandable that he does not include

the line of argument voiced by confessionalist scholars like Bender appear historically plausible, I venture to argue that the term «heretic» might be functional and that Grimmelshausen labelled the Hutterites as heretical in order to use them more effectively to mirror the deplorable state of present orthodoxy.

Critical remarks concerning the Anabaptists' theological dogma already appear prior to the *Täufer* chapter. Identifying the religious group by their deviation from established belief and church practice becomes apparent in the story when the devil confronts Simplicius with his sins and misdemeanors and calls him of «Ketzerischer Art / ... seine Eltern seyn mehr Wiedertäuferisch als Calvinisch gewesen» (452). These accusations, which equate Anabaptism with heresy, deeply shock Simplicius and stir a desire in him to repent. His association with the sectarian group, which would invariably result in the loss of social status and a drift toward societal marginality, is quickly halted by his conversion to Catholicism. The devil's mention of the two reformed groups reflects the theologically informed context of his Anabaptist reference. His comparative construction «mehr Wiedertäuferisch als Calvinisch» stresses the common perception of Anabaptism as a heretical manifestation of the sixteenth-century reformation.

In the *Ungarische Wiedertäufer* chapter, the narrator assumes a different perspective when describing everyday life in the Hutterite community. Although the remark about the «widerwärtigen ketzerischen Meinung» reiterates the novel's rejection of the sect's theological doctrine, the favorable account of the *Bruderhof's* communalism suggests an appreciation of their economic and ethical practices. In that regard, the narrator shifts from a portrayal of the Anabaptist identity as constituted by external institutions such as state officials and the Catholic Church to a depiction of the Anabaptists informed by the observation of everyday life which provides a greater insight into their social and ethical principles essential to the formation of their group-internal identity. Simplicius' change of viewpoint

Münster in his description of the *Bruderhof* as the Hutterian Brethren did not link their origins to the violent movement in northern Germany.

from the position of the dominant society that condemns the theological aspect of Anabaptist piety to the inner-sect perspective that is concerned with the social and moral principles also takes place on a spatial parameter. The narrator is confronted with anti-Anabaptist sentiments in the Catholic environment of Einsiedeln. His attitude toward the religious group is influenced by the harsh critique of polemicists from the established church who express theological opposition to the Anabaptists. Only when Simplicius leaves the dominant society and enters the marginalized community in Hungary, does the impact of external identification diminish, eventually to be replaced by an Anabaptist-sensitive perception of the communal group.

4. Representations of Hutterian Life as an Ideal Social Structure

Observing the structure and conduct of this group of social outsiders, the narrator emphasizes their unique manner of living. His account of the Hutterite's communal life exceeds any seventeenth-century literary reference of Anabaptists in respect to detail and tolerance toward the group's social practices. Daniel Speer, for instance, retells Simplicius' anecdotes in Hungary in his novel *Ungarischer oder Dacianischer Simplicissimus* (1683), reducing the *Täufer* chapter to a brief remark in which he merely acknowledges the existence of the religious group. Embedded in a paragraph that provides regional information about Transylvania, the narrator lists following facts: «Sie reden Deutsch oder Hamler-Saechsich / Ungarisch und Wallachisch; es gibt auch hin und wieder Wieder-Taeuffer im Lande / wie auch sehr viel Zigeuner ...» (139). Here, Speer's Simplicius associates Anabaptists with Gypsies and groups these two minorities into the category of social outsiders.

In comparison to Speer's less informed or perhaps uninterested attitude toward Anabaptism, Grimmelshausen gives a positive portrayal of the group's social and economic manners and shows awareness of their communal customs:

... dann sie kamen mir in ihren Thun und Leben allerdings für wie Josophus und andere mehr / die Jüdische Esseer beschreiben; Sie hatten erstlich grosse Schätze und überflüssige Nahrung / die sie aber

keines Wegs verschwendeten / kein Fluch, Murmelung noch Unge-
dult würde bey ihnen gespürt / ja man hörete kein unnützes Wort.
(525)

Simplicius captures the essence of the Anabaptist concept of *Gelassenheit*⁸, when noting that no verbalization of impatience could be heard in the colony. The practice of *Gelassenheit*, peace, patience, and social harmony is integral to the image he creates of Hutterite life and conduct, and corresponds to the morally superior nature of the Sylphs described in the Mummel Lake episode. The Sylphs' characteristics of «gerecht/verständlich/frey/keusch/ hell/schön/klar/ ... in ewiger Freude Gott loben» are personified by the Hutterite group and its ethical standards (496). In the company of the *Bruderhof* residents, Simplicius discovers a harmonious society that reminds him of the Essenes, a Jewish sect that lived in communes and practiced a voluntary poverty and a rejection of worldly pleasures.

Simplicius continues his account of the Hungarian Anabaptists as he reflects upon all stages of human development, starting with birth and the rearing of offspring:

... ihr Schulmeister *instruirte* die Jugend / als wenn sie alle seine leibliche Kinder gewest wären / nirgends sahe ich Manns- und Weibsbilder untereinander gemischt / sondern an jedem bestimbten Ort auch jedes Geschlecht absonderlich seine obliegende Arbeit verrichten; Jch fand Zimmer / in welchen nur Kindbetterinnen waren / ...; andere sonderbahre Säl hatten nichts anders in sich / als viel Wiegen mit Säuglingen / die von hierzu bestimmten Weibern mit Wischen und Speisen beobachtet wurden / ... dieses Geschäfte den Kindbetterin und Kindern abzuwarten, war allein den Wittiben anbefohlen.
(525)

The communal aspect of Hutterite life is particularly articulated in the group's elimination of basic societal concepts such as private property and

⁸ *Gelassenheit* expresses the Anabaptist commitment to Christ. Karlstadt first promoted the term in his teaching of «letting-go of temporal things in the awareness that God will provide for His own» (Hillerbrand 165). This notion of true discipleship to Christ is reflected in the group's disregard of worldly matters.

family unions. According to Simplicius' observations, women in childbed receive their separate space within the community and all infants are gathered in a nursery. The schoolmaster instructs all children and teaches them correct manners as well as spiritual well-being just as if they were his own progeny. The narrator's description of early childhood care and education on the communal site is reminiscent of his own upbringing in the foster family that differed strikingly from the Hutterite community, with regard to education, order, and religious grounding. Simplicius narrates at the beginning of the novel that he grew up not knowing «Gott noch Menschen / weder Himmel noch Höll / ... weder Gutes noch Böses zu unterscheiden» (20). The depiction of Hutterite communal life and organized efforts of child rearing thus stand in stark contrast to the anti-social and non-Christian orientation in Simplicius' foster family.

Grimmelshausen's positive opinion of the group's communal way of child rearing are contrary to contemporary polemical writings that criticized the Hutterites' childcare practices. Opponents of the religious group, particularly the Jesuit priest Christoph Andreas Fischer, severely attacked the Anabaptists. His polemical writings *Von der Wiedertauffer verfluchten Ursprung* (1603) and *Vier und funfftzig erhebliche Ursachen: warumb die Widertauffer nicht sein im Land zu leyden* (1607) target in particular the beliefs and practices of the Hutterite Brethren, and therefore lend themselves to a comparison with Grimmelshausen's depiction of the communal branch of Anabaptism. Juxtaposing the Anabaptist images presented in Fischer's polemical works with Grimmelshausen's fictional account underlines the novelist's exceptional stance on Anabaptist social practices. Regarding the Hutterian early child care, Fischer noted in his 1603 pamphlet:

Es ist alles zu weit kommen, denn es müssen jetzt fast alle Frawen in Mähren zu iren Hebammen, Seugammen und Kinderwärterinnen lauter wiedertaufferische Weiber haben, als wenn sie allein in solche Sachen die allererfahrnesten wären. (101)

The denunciation of the work of Hutterite nurses and midwives, professions that made the group well-known throughout the country, expresses Fischer's attempt to draw the boundary between the dominant society and

the social outcasts. He depicts the religious community as intruders who spread heretical beliefs and seek economic advantage over the surrounding population. In his anti-Anabaptist tract, he aims to exclude the radical reformers from the dominant society by suggesting an invasion of the sect and a consequent danger to the established church and society⁹. Grimmelshausen, on the other hand, presents the Hutterian early childhood care and education as a group-internal process that contributes to the preservation of the movement's distinctive social system. He draws a boundary between the group and the dominant society for the purpose of making the Hutterites appear exceptional and oppositional to the social conditions of the seventeenth-century reality.

Simplicius further comments on Hutterite division of labor:

Anderswo sahe ich das Weibliche Geschlecht sonst nichts thun als spinnen / ... da war ein Wäscherin / die ander eine Bettmacherin / die dritte Vieh-Magd / ... wuste ein jedwedere was sie thun solte; und gleichwie die Aempter unter dem Weiblichen Geschlecht ordentlich ausgetheilet waren / also wuste auch unter den Männern und Jünglinge jeder sein Geschäfte. (525)

The strict separation of sexes and distinct assignment of areas of responsibility are reminiscent of utopian ideas articulated by early modern philosophers and theologians. Simplicius is fascinated by the division of labor as it is practiced at the *Bruderhof*. According to the system of occupational expertise, each member of the Hutterian colony has a well-defined work field depending on sex, age, personal skills, and the needs of the community. The

⁹ In the 1607 polemic, Fischer criticizes the Hutterite child care system by asserting, «Wiedertäufer handeln wieder die Natur ... Denn sobald als die Mutter das Kind entwehnet hat / so wird es von den rechten natürlichen Müttern genommen und gegeben den bestelten Schwestern. Hernach den unbekanntten Schulmeistern und frembden jachzornigen Kindsziherin / die dann ohne Lieb / sittsamkeit und erbarmnuß / bisweilen hefftig und unbarmherzig gnug dreinschlagen» (53). Fischer assumes a lack of love and affection resulting from the community's absence of family structures. His negative description of the group's communal child rearing aims to discourage readers from joining the reform movement.

author's depiction of the Hutterian colony is primarily centered on practical aspects of their community life. Focusing on the industry and order of the *Ungarische Wiedertäufer*, he creates an image of the Hutterites that reflects the group-internal social practices and structures.

He also expresses his enthusiasm for the health and long life of community members:

... wiewol sie wegen löbl. Diät und guter Ordnung selten erkranken
/ wie ich dann manchen feinen Mann in hohem gesundem und
geruhigem Alter bey ihnen sahe / dergleichen anderswo wenig an-
zutreffen / sie hatten ihre gewisse Stunden zum Essen / ihr gewisse
Stunden zum Schlaffen / aber kein einzige Minut zum spielen ... da
war kein Zorn / kein Eifer / kein Rachgier / kein Neid / kein Feind-
schafft / kein Sorg umb Zeitlichs / kein Hoffart / kein Reul! (525-26)

In sharp contrast to the protagonist's life during the war, his hunger and malnutrition in the army, his poor condition in Paris where he was afflicted by illness, and his gambling habits in the imperial camps, the Anabaptists are depicted as healthy, hearty, and disciplined members of their religious community. Here the author addresses another well-known aspect of Hutterian life, namely their good health and medical competence that was enviously criticized by Fischer who warned his readers about the group's presence in the dominant society and counteracted rapprochement tendencies when disparaging: «nicht allein der gemeine Mann sondern auch die Herren wenn sie irgents ein Artzney bedürfften lauffen zu ihnen [den Wiedertäufern], als wann sie diejenigen wären so die kunst allein gantz und gar hätten gefressen» (85).

Throughout the work, and particularly in Book V, Simplicius searches for the perfect society that is physically, mentally, and morally sound. His encounter with the Sylphs in the center of the earth delineates the concept of such an ideal community. Neither humans nor angels, the creatures in the Mummel Lake form a distinct group that exists on the periphery of humankind and divinity. The Sylphs are characterized by «gesunden Vernunft / ... mit gesunden Leibern / mit langem Leben / mit der edlen Freyheit / ... keiner Sünd und dannenhero auch keiner Straff / noch dem Zorn Gottes / ja nicht einmal der geringsten Kranckheit unterworffen / ...

keine Wollust empfinden» (498), qualities and traits that are later embodied by the marginalized group of Hungarian Hutterites whose rigid division of labor, health, long life, and moral conduct result from regular habits inherent in the fundamental principles and social structures that constitute their community life.

Grimmelshausen designs a concept of an exemplary community that differs significantly from the historical reality of seventeenth-century society. Attributes such as rage, revenge, jealousy, hostility, and pride, which clearly define the baroque court life satirically criticized in the novel, are banned from the Sylph league as well as the Anabaptist colony. The vision of a community that lives in harmony and peace is conceptualized in the Mummel Lake episode and later takes shape in the manner of living of the Hutterite *Bruderhof*. The author specifically portrays those Anabaptist ethical standards and social structures that resemble the society of the lake creatures to create a parallel between the communal order and the fictitious society. Depicting the Hutterite colony as the epitome of social harmony, Grimmelshausen's illustration of Anabaptism concentrates on social and economic qualities essential to the common good and welfare of any community, such as moral values, a healthy lifestyle, industry, and ethical conduct.

Grimmelshausen's portrayal of the Hutterites, although perhaps inspired by the historical group in Mannheim, actually exceeds the believers' reported reality. Loewen argues that the author was more concerned about «ein Ideal als um ein historisch-getreues Portrait der Hutterischen Brüder» (11). He suggests that Grimmelshausen was familiar with accusations against the religious community as stated in the records of the Mannheim's city council¹⁰. Yet, he decided to disregard anti-Anabaptist allegations. Instead, he depicted the group as a community of exemplary social practices. Fashioning the picture of a utopian society, he leaves out «diejenigen Züge

¹⁰ In council records dating back July 1683, the Hutterite Brethren in Mannheim are accused of moral laxity: «in ihrem Gebäudehof soll es ... unsittlich zugegangen sein» (quoted in Loewen 17).

von seinen Täufern, die seinem Ideal nicht entsprachen, und er hat die Züge idealisiert, die ihm an ihrem Leben und ihrer Lehre gefielen» (Loewen 18).

In his summary of the group's everyday life, the protagonist reiterates his fascination with the social structure and ethical standards of the minority. The group's exemplary social practices stir a desire in him to establish a better society, one that is apt to overcome the moral and economic deterioration prevalent in his war-ravaged environment:

In Summa / es war durchauß eine solche liebliche *Harmonia*, die auff nichts anders angestimmt zu seyn schiene / als das Menschlich Geschlecht und das Reich Gottes in aller Erbarkeit zu vermehren / ... Ein solch seeliges Leben / wie diese Wiedertäuferische Ketzer führen / hätte ich gerne auch auffgebracht / dann so viel mich dünckte / so übertraff es auch das Clösterliche; ... Ach sagte ich oft / könntest du doch die Wiedertäufer bekehren / dass sie unsere Glaubensgenossen ihre Manier zu leben lerneten / wie wärest du doch ein seeliger Mensch! Oder wenn du nur deine Mit-Christen bereden könntest / daß sie wie diese Wiedertäufer ein solches (dem Schein nach) Christliches und ehrbares Leben führten. (526)

Simplicius is preoccupied with the group's moral conduct and seeks to apply their ethical standards and social practices to the mainstream Christian society. He considers recruiting the Hutterites to teach his «Glaubensgenossen ihre Manier zu leben». Battafarano has called Simplicius' efforts to apply the Hutterite lifestyle a «Plädoyer für praktiziertes Christentum jenseits aller theoretischen Divergenzen unter den Konfessionen in gegenreformatorischen Zeiten» (37).

Adopting the Hutterite manner of living and convincing fellow Christians to take up «solches ehrbares Christliches Thun» is not an easy endeavor. The influence of the dominant church becomes apparent when the narrator's description of the Hutterite commune touches upon the religious matter of «seeliges» and «Christliches Leben». In these cases, the term «Wiedertäuferische Ketzer» appears to be in concession to secular and church powers. In addition to a possible conflict with the authorities when implementing the minority's social and ethical living, the remark «dem Schein nach», emphasized by a round bracket inserted in the sentence, in-

dicates the actual difficulties to be encountered when attempting to establish a society based on the Hutterite model of communal living. The reference to the «Schein» (appearance) underscores Grimmelshausen's idealization of the colony's social and ethical conduct, with which he fashions the image of a utopian society that is antithetical to that of the morally deteriorated Thirty Years' War.

5. Conclusion

In *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus*, Grimmelshausen depicts the Anabaptists as an exemplary social unit. Unlike polemical literature of his time, which aimed to instruct readers on how to avoid succumbing to Anabaptist teaching and life, his fictional text expresses an appreciation for the group's manner of life. In his novel, he focuses predominantly on the social structure and work ethics of the communal group, thereby creating a stark contrast to the bleak reality of the seventeenth-century society. Grimmelshausen is concerned with matters of Hutterite orthopraxy as it relates to the protagonist's search for ethical conduct in times of moral decay.

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, the author avoids mentioning the events in Münster, despite the fact that the Anabaptist kingdom in Westphalia was generally perceived to be the origin of the radical reform movement until the nineteenth century. It appears that he does not even consider the link between the Hutterites and the violent Anabaptist uprising in Northern Germany. While there is a possibility that the author was not aware of the events in sixteenth-century Münster, it is likely that he disregards the connection between the violent and the peaceful members of the movement because he wants to maintain a positive image of the Hungarian Hutterites. To be sure, he utilizes the term *Ketzer* and acknowledges the group's deviant theological precepts; however, he refrains from depicting the group as radicals who threaten the social order of the established church and state. Instead, he utilizes the marginalized group to mirror the corrupted state of present Christianity. His focus on their exceptional life style and social form allows him to portray them as the «other» – comparable to the concept of the heretic, the outsider, or the noble savage utilized in narrations about the

discovery of America – as a means of intensifying his criticism of Christian Europe of his time. The Hutterites represent humanity's innate goodness or perhaps a continuation of the apostolic order that has not been corrupted by seventeenth-century civilization.

Consequently, Grimmelshausen's interest in the Hutterite Brethren focuses on social and economic aspects of their communal life. The image he creates of the Anabaptist colony gives an idealized picture of the minority; especially the emphasis on their economic and ethical practices serves as an extension to the Mummel Lake episode in which he explores theoretical notions of an ideal society. The concept of utopia, addressed in the encounter with the Sylph king, finds a practical application in the conduct, industry, and order that he observes at the Hutterite colony. The author departs from the negative perception of Hutterite social and economic practices as voiced by contemporary polemicists. Rather, his description of the religious minority is marked by a sense of admiration – an admiration that neither invites to imitation nor intends moral instruction. Although the narrator contemplates about establishing a society based on the Anabaptist social order, he dismisses this idea for the Hutterites' system of social structure seems unapt to be realized. Their manner of collective life remains a utopian ideal – a *pícaro's* tool to expose moral decline, violence, and injustice prevalent in the dominant society during the Thirty Years' War.

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