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# Breaking down generational barriers: Gottfried Keller's novella 'Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten' and its contemporary reception

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BREAKING DOWN GENERATIONAL BARRIERS: GOTTFRIED  
KELLER'S NOVELLA 'DAS FÄHNLEIN DER SIEBEN  
AUFRECHTEN' AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RECEPTION

by  
Amber Rose Wozniak

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Masters of Arts degree  
in German  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Waltraud Maierhofer

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Amber Rose Wozniak

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the  
Master of Arts degree in German at the May 2010 graduation.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Borders define the physical limits of a country. However, within those borders, there are infinite possibilities for culture, tradition, and unity to flourish. Each member of a community or nation shares a common set of symbols which are present in society. These images contribute to the creation of a national identity. Comradeship emerges from shared images, shared narratives, and a shared past, creating an emotionally connected unity. This identity becomes a cultural artifact itself and is essential to understanding the historical background of a national character and its process of change through history. As Benedict Anderson states in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, the role of the “imagined community” is important to understanding nationalism. According to Anderson, communities are “*imagined* because even the members of the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson: 1999: 6). Alongside the standard images of a country are many fabricated icons and stereotypes. These icons identify a country on a surface level, but do not reveal the substance behind the icon.

Switzerland has such icons and myths which have developed into an essential part of its cultural framework. Behind these iconic constructs exists a set of common Swiss ideals and a shared history creating a unique diversity and national bond. Authors like Gottfried Keller also participate in creating part of this iconic national framework. Literary tradition is linked to cultural history. It is important to situate Keller in the

process of forming a cultural identity in order to gain insight into Switzerland's cultural and literary tradition.

Keller, who lived from 1819 to 1890, maintained a successful career as a politically active cantonal clerk. Like other Realists, he looked away from the aristocracy as subject matter, shedding light instead on the middle class and common people. Known as one of Switzerland's most important authors, Keller remains a prominent figure in the German literary canon. He was interested in the genuine circumstances of society and his works draw attention to the elements portraying social networks within Swiss communities. His rich description of society contributes to the presentation and preservation of Swiss national narratives. His descriptions include an attention to detail that creates a resemblance to the world as Keller experienced it. He uses these types of images in his fictional narratives as a way to associate fiction to his idea of Swiss life. He is therefore responsible for painting a portrait of Swiss society which serves as an artifact to his readership. As a result, Keller takes part in leaving his mark on Switzerland's literary tradition.

Keller's works are literary pieces which situate political and social issues as well as characters into a distinctively Swiss context, mixing history and ideals to create new narratives. His integration of historical facts with realistic portrayal solidifies his position as a Swiss national author. Keller expresses concern for Swiss political and social issues and where other authors have overlooked Switzerland, he embraces his Swiss origins to describe the world in which he lived. He examines individuals, political and social change, and how these different aspects of society interact. His narrations construct a

fictional portrayal and depict contemporary nineteenth-century Switzerland on a national, regional, and local level.

Keller's *Züricher Novellen* focuses on situating Switzerland in a localized context within the city of Zurich. He not only focuses his narrative on one city, which grew into an emerging commercial center in nineteenth-century Switzerland, but also reveals important traditional elements from Swiss history, which he experienced as a citizen of Zurich. With his concentration on Zurich, Keller explores the various political, economic, and societal dimensions within the city. He creates a fictional depiction of social reality and combines this with imagined characters, which represent a different piece of Keller's reality. With these characters, he introduces general conflicts existing between the belief and value systems of old and new generations.<sup>1</sup>

A particular novella within this compilation of works, which illustrates these different elements, is Keller's 1860 novella "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten". Keller revisits the long-standing Swiss motif of the conflict between generations and the persistent struggle between old and young within the work. Throughout this novella, Keller enumerates on the political, social, economic, and ideological changes that develop within Zurich and how these changes reflect the gap between generations.

In investigating "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten", I will focus on the generational conflict present in the novella, while also exploring the outcome of the collapse of generational barriers resulting in the transition and establishment of new leadership. In addition to the focus on the original novella, I will also compare it to Swiss

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<sup>1</sup> *Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten* appeared in 1861 in Auerbach's *Volkskalender* and was later incorporated into the collections of novellas titled *Die Züricher Novellen*.



director Simon Aeby's 2001 film sharing the same title in German, while the subtitled English version is also known as *The Rebel*. The film adaptation reexamines the barriers resulting from generational gaps. A comparison between Keller's novella and the contemporary film adaptation will explore how the mainstream film version adapts Keller's novella, its portrayal of Switzerland, and its traditional ideals for a twenty-first-century audience. Aeby, born 1954 in Bern, presents a different representation of this generational conflict and in his film adaptation it is possible to see how a new interpretation of Keller's Swiss society is presented. Although based on Keller's work, the content of the film takes liberties in its interpretation to appeal to a contemporary audience; therefore resulting in a connection between the two works solely through the adaptation. However, I find it telling that Keller's piece was adapted for the screen giving the film version a modernized interpretation and shift in focus of the novella's themes, outlining how the film and novella differ in their portrayals and connections a Swiss audience.

Gottfried Keller's novella "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten" is a portrayal of a community and the varying personalities within it. The relationships and conditions within the community are challenged by a generational split. Keller uses notions of Swiss identity and tradition as a backdrop to portray social transformations as well as a platform to critique the differences between the generations. The notion of depicting generational conflict has a long literary tradition stemming back to the sixteenth-century. This type of conflict represents the recurring issue of generational change.<sup>2</sup> Set against such change,

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<sup>2</sup> The origins of this motif is demonstrated in the new found wealth of young Swiss mercenaries in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries who sold their military services to the highest bidder. See "Das Spiel von den alten und jungen Eidgenossen" (1514) by Balthasar Spross.

the development of Keller's characters highlights stark oppositions within nineteenth-century Swiss society. Keller exposes the divergence of Swiss identity through a critical juxtaposition of differing beliefs between the representatives of an older and traditional generation and an emerging younger progressive one. The concept of Swiss historical tradition, as portrayed by Keller, emphasizes the opposition between the generations, but also drives the plot. These two societal groups collide, which for Keller is necessary for the progression of society. The confrontation between the two groups initiates the transition of attitudes and the emergence of a new leadership. As newer societal beliefs eclipse former ones, Keller demonstrates hope for an ideal social and political model of Switzerland. He does not mourn the negative aspects of change as hopeless. Instead, Keller has an optimistic view of political and social change. His hopeful attitude is ever present in the work and his vision of progression is depicted in a positive manner.

Switzerland has long been known for its struggle for, and emphasis on, independence. The country gained de facto independence from the Holy Roman Empire at the Battle of Dornach in 1499. With the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, Switzerland had official autonomy and was in control of its liberties but was yet to be recognized as a full sovereign state (Croxtton: 1999: 576). The country continued to fight for independence under Napoleonic rule; gaining partial sovereignty in 1803 and re-establishing itself as an independent nation in 1815. Triumph over tyranny is a foundational myth that plays a significant role in shaping attitudes and, as a result, evokes a common awareness and need for unity amongst its people. The cornerstone of this foundational myth is the legend of Wilhelm Tell, who takes a stand against tyranny and fights for the freedoms of Switzerland. The existence of this myth is a significant point which successfully assists in

stressing the acceptance of freedom, diversity, and individuality within a cohesive society. Keller feeds into these images and ideological tenets with his presentation of two generations in the novella.

The older generation maintains traditional beliefs. Their attitudes take shape in the form of an organized social and political group. In this work, seven aging pillars of the community form a group in continuation of the battles for independence they experienced in their youth. These men were exposed to the struggle for independence under French occupational rule but more importantly took part in the fight against the “Ancien Régime”, or as stated in “Das Fähnlein” the “Aristocrats and Jesuits”, inside Switzerland’s borders for a unified nation. These internal battles for Swiss religious and political freedoms span from 1815 until the establishment of the Federal State in 1848. These seven men, also known as “the Upright Seven” (“die sieben Aufrechten”), are concerned with Switzerland’s future and believe they are guardians of its freedoms.

In the minds of the younger generation rests another set of ideas. Keller uses the son of one of the Upright Seven, Karl Hediger, to represent the advancement of Swiss thought. Karl is a product of his community and represents the new generation for Keller. Karl differs from his traditional elders in that he expands his belief system to include a new Switzerland. Didactically, Keller demonstrates the necessity of the breakdown of generational barriers and the collaboration between these differing groups for the advancement of Swiss society.

The Upright Seven are a stern group of patriarchal men, in the guild tradition. Although masters in their individual professions, which range in craftsmen abilities (tailor, metalworker, carpenter etc.), they share a common connection through their

beliefs and activities. Throughout the novella they are preparing to attend a marksmanship or shooting festival (*Schützenfest*) in Aarau.

Karl is determined to prove himself to the older generation. A driving force behind this desire for acceptance is to be allowed to pursue his love; Hermine Frymann, daughter of the most distinguished member of the group, Master Frymann. Hediger, Karl's father, and Frymann object to the relationship and potential marriage of their children. They believe that politics begin with the family and prefer to strictly maintain a relationship rooted in friendship. Both generations converge at the shooting festival in Aarau, which sets the stage for the high point of the work. It is here that Karl, by means of his rhetorical education and marksmanship achievements, proves himself worthy to Hediger and Frymann. Upon doing so, he gains a new leading position in society and his elders' consent to be with Hermine.

The analysis will also examine the legacy of Switzerland in Keller's narrative. He positions the work in a contemporary context, relevant to the time, and shows how Switzerland adapted to political change. His Swiss society is resilient and comes to terms with the emergence of new leadership and economic changes. Keller is able to simultaneously maintain classic Swiss notions of freedom and unity, while still supporting (a positive critique toward) a new Swiss identity. In addition, the analysis will focus on describing the two generations throughout the novella, paying close attention to the ideals and varying opinions among them. This will allow me to situate these beliefs in nineteenth-century Zurich, where it will be possible to see how these barriers function as a background for Keller's idealized portrayal of Swiss society.

Switzerland and its authors are part of the German literary canon, but Swiss originality is seldom highlighted. Too often German literary studies do not give Switzerland the emphasis it needs. Investigating the Swiss-ness of Swiss literature encompasses a large part of Keller's work, but does not necessarily stand out as explicitly in other works from Swiss authors. This investigation is relevant because it examines a Swiss author's perspective of Switzerland. Keller's narrative not only provides a thorough portrayal of daily Swiss life between family and community, through close attention to details and precise description, but is also written from the inside perspective of a member of Swiss society. "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten" tells a story which lays bare the foundations still supporting Switzerland's national identity. With a generational gap as its focal point, Keller deconstructs the concept to illustrate societal progress. This process plays a vital role in "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten" and remains a significant aspect of the work.

## CHAPTER II

### SIGNIFICANCE OF *SCHÜTZENFESTE* IN “DAS FÄHNLEIN” AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Shooting is one of the “Fatherland abilities” according to Karl Grob. Marksmanship skills are revered nationally in Switzerland. Being able to shoot well is connected with the protection of Swiss freedoms. The tradition of *Schützengilden* (shooting guilds) or *Schützenvereine* (shooting associations) and *Schützenfeste* (shooting festivals) traces its origins to the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. The formation of these associations began near the end of the thirteenth-century. Originally these groups served as guards or protectors of the city and its freedoms as part of a *Schützendienst* (marksman service) and when necessary participated in military conflicts, as militia. As a result, the tradition of Swiss *Schützengilden* developed. During this time the concept integrated itself into Swiss culture and became a significant contributor to political and social life. By the beginning of the fifteenth-century *Schützen* had spread widely throughout Central Europe (Reintges: 1963: 72). This mostly impacted male citizens during this time. They were required to complete compulsory military service (*Wehrpflicht*). However, participation in the *Schützengilden* was voluntary and these groups developed as part of the social and political groundwork of the Late Middle Ages. They were also seen as educational organizations in which they not only provided a method of defense but also encouraged patriotism and disciplined control.

During peacetime the *Schützengilden* focused on the art of marksmanship. Peacetime was the perfect opportunity to practice and hone their craft. They would practice very regularly. All of this practice culminated and was displayed at the

*Schützenfest*. The shooting festival was an annual event and provided a means of social interaction for neighboring cities. Near the end of the fourteenth-century medieval cities were growing in their economic and political presence. The *Schützenfest* became a way for the shooting associations from various regions to engage in a different capacity. During the fifteenth and through the seventeenth-centuries the *Schützenfest* was highlight for the *Schützengilden*. It was the platform to demonstrate marksman skills in various shooting competitions and games (*Vogelschießen* and *Freischießen*). *Schützenfeste* brought individuals from all regions together creating a unique national dynamic among “the people” (*das Volk*). Through the large participation of the *Volk*, these festivals eventually developed into a political stage for the marksmen. In almost all larger cities organizations for young shooters existed. These groups operated similarly to the guilds and functioned as way for the youth to gain exposure and practice (Reintges: 1963: 293). The festivals became an institution to the culture and participating in them transformed into a rite of passage. Marksmen could present themselves to a broader community and prove their position in the shooting organization as well as society.

Over time *Schützenfeste* became a national, political and social stage. During the festival *Festreden* (festival speeches) gained importance. They reflected the political ideals of the shooting associations and for Keller represent a simpler way of political expression. The shooting festival and speech stand in combination for Keller’s emphasis on rhetoric as an important characteristic for the new Swiss citizen in the novella. The rifle, in Keller’s time, makes it possible to legitimize your position and acceptance in society through shooting; this is also why Keller places emphasis on the shooting festival. Therefore, the rifle is the most prized possession for the Upright Seven. Rifles are a

benchmark of their self-made society. At times they devote more care to their weapons than to their relationships. This particular festival in Aarau is important for the Upright Seven because, as a group, they place a large emphasis on shooting abilities. The festival is a public space in which each can demonstrate his rifle expertise and therefore prove himself to society.



## CHAPTER III

## KELLER'S PHILOSOPHY BEHIND "DAS FÄHNLEIN"

Keller was aware of the important role that his own life and surroundings played in his work. His close descriptions of the world of his characters, in addition to the idiosyncratic relationships between them, help him construct a fictional world which mirrors his own. Thus, he integrates the daily and common nuances of nineteenth-century Switzerland into his works. His novels and novellas represent literary ideals of the nineteenth-century; in so much that literature influences life and life imitates art. Keller's novella "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten" represents this intricate interaction. His personal perception of everyday life creates a unique backdrop when put onto the page. This originality presents a new Switzerland in an imagined political community. Keller is an author with a social mission to open the eyes and minds of his readership. In return, he carefully creates the undefined boundaries between life and literature. He presents a world which takes shape within the imaginations of readers; thus, creating a national conception. He pushes the borders between reality and fiction by fusing this communal ideology with an actual sociological backdrop. Gail Hart suggests that Keller wanted to spark this recognition for readers, hopeful they would feel inspired to imitate fiction. "Keller *hopes* that they will be inspired by this recognition to narrow the gap between their real circumstances and the idealized fictional models presented to them" (Hart: 1989: 12). With "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten" Keller presents a politically charged novella which sets out to reform and guide Swiss citizens.

The historical and political background of this novella, in addition to Switzerland's new beginnings and political ambition plays a significant role in establishing the main generational conflict in Keller's work. Like other countries in Europe, Switzerland experienced struggles for independence resulting in revolution, civil war and change. In 1848, these factors culminated in the establishment of the Republic and ratification of the constitution. The entire novella dedicates itself to the liberal principles of Swiss ideology. Although published in 1861, Keller sets the timeframe of his work within this post-revolutionary period. His story marks the end of one era and the hopeful beginnings of a new one. The narrative conveys how a Swiss author idealizes this transition. By setting his story in the past, Keller reveals the potential of the present to continue toward a more optimistic future. As a result, the story conveys commitment and love for one's homeland as well as representing an exemplary future of Swiss democracy.

"Das Fähnlein" contributes to the time-capsule of Swiss history and as a literary representation of the past. The story details the Aarau Shooting Festival which highlights the commemoration of 1849. The narrative centers around preparation for the festival and concludes with the participation of the protagonists at the event.

The festival in the novella is significant as it commemorates one year of freedom under the newly formed Swiss constitution as well as marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1824 *Eidgenossenschaft* shooting festival in Aarau. It attracts people from the different regions of the country and inspires a patriotic atmosphere in which the various Swiss communities feel naturally connected. "Landleute und Städter, Männer und Weiber, Alte und Junge, Gelehrte und Ungelehrte, alle saßen fröhlich durcheinander" (*Fähnlein*, 67). The festival becomes the platform where the diverse talents and social

landscapes converge. Everyone proudly displays their banners to represent their cities and regions and comes to demonstrate their marksmen abilities.

Da drei glückliche Schützen, welche Becher gewonnen hatten, mit Trompeten und Anhang ihren Weg kreuzten; doch das alles, verbunden mit dem heftigen Schießen, erhöhte nur ihre feierliche Berausung, und endlich entblößten sie ihre Häupter angesichts des Gabentempels, der mit seinen Schätzen schimmerte und auf dessen Zinnen eine dichte Menge Fahnen flatterte in den Farben der Kantone, der Städte, Landschaften und Gemeinden” (*Fähnlein*, 59).

The shooting festival serves as a form of self-expression for the people. Karl Grob refers to this type of *Volksfest* simply as a democratic manifestation of art (Grob: 1978: 176). The festival itself is artistic in its ability to harmoniously balance tradition and diversity. It unites common ideas and a shared past in one space. The festival then builds on the notion of tradition to stimulate the growth of a national identity and progress. Many different communities are present at the festival but its unique qualities also represent them as one. “Die Fahnen wallten geschwätzig und lebendig durcheinander, [...] Doch oben im Sternenschein schlug die eidgenössische Fahne” (*Fähnlein*, 78). Individuality disappears during the festival and the transformation of various communities into one national unit occurs poetically, demonstrating the utopian qualities of the festival.

Keller captures Swiss-ness not only through the shooting festival, but also through his decisive realistic qualities and his insider position. His works have an educational quality. His intention toward educating and reforming the minds of citizens reflects his persistent aspiration for progress. Although a fairly straightforward story, “Das Fähnlein” presents its ideas to the middle-classes of Swiss society. It portrays the lives of middle-class Swiss citizens who eventually recognize the importance of working together for the

greater good of the country. This progression emerges from the conflict and reconciliation of the generations. Through their eventual collaboration, the transition of leadership takes place. This shows that the potential Switzerland has to move closer to the ideals of democracy and freedom. In a sense, Keller is guiding the imaginations of a community toward comradeship and a unified mentality showing the capacity Switzerland has to adapt to change, develop, and progress.

Herbert Reichert explains that for Keller the *Volk* is important in its contribution to society. “The life-span of a people depend[s] on the time needed to carry out its mission, to bring its inner germ to fruition” (Reichert: 1966: 116). What Reichert refers to as cycles of the *Volk* can be conceived as generations; each having their own destiny or specific mission. According to this concept, each generation must fulfill its purpose in order to complete its cycle. The *Volk*, according to Keller, requires enlightenment in order to better fulfill its specific task.

Keller was able to accomplish educating the *Volk* through his writing. He used his text as a means to educate the people with his characters. He expressed his commitment to their education through his writing and concepts in “Das Fähnlein”. He is able to educate them by presenting two generations with similar Swiss roots, but situated in differing positions in the *Volk* cycle. In order to achieve this, Keller takes advantage of his knowledge of human behavior and uses it to build his characters. He presents in his characters the idiosyncrasies and nuances of human personalities. He then uses this detailed portrayal of people as a way to create a message, a mirror between his world and his work. As stated by Henry H.H. Remak, the best novellas are the ones which blend together fictional characters with the traits of individuals (Remak: 1996: 148). This

approach not only corresponds to Keller's ideas of literary portrayal, but also directly establishes a relationship between literature and society. Literature functions as a mirror for the people allowing them to observe their own imagined and slightly subjective self-portrayal. "Dichtung gibt dem Volk ein "gereinigtes" oder "verklärtes" Bild seiner selbst, um es zu seinen Möglichkeiten, ja zu seiner nationalen Vollendung zu führen; doch muß die Geschichte immer schon der Dichtung vorangegangen und das politische Fundament der nationalen Entwicklung gelegt sein" (Hahl: 1977: 327). It is clear that Keller's approach and his convention of mirroring literature and people is how he incorporates the *Volk* as part of his didacticism.

Keller captures all aspects of the Swiss-ness with *Volk* by portraying it in various ages, positions in the community, and with mixed political views. With this he paints a vivid portrait of Zurich and those who comprise its community. "Der Schweizer ist schwer aus dem Zusammenhang mit seinem Lande zu lösen. Zu ihm gehört eine große Liebe zur Heimat, ein Hang, das anvertraute Gut mit Sorgfalt zu pflegen, und diese Liebe setzt sich [...] aus der dreifachen lebendigen Beziehung zur schönen Natur, zur Geschichte und zur Freiheit des Landes zusammen" (Bettex: 1954: 77). Keller's insider position allows him freedom to present the *Volk* from various perspectives. The *Volk* appears in "Das Fähnlein" and manifests itself in two different generations. The novella acknowledges the older generation's contribution to the fight for a new and liberal Switzerland, but also demonstrates, through the younger generation, how the new idealized Switzerland will be led to its full potential by its youth.

## CHAPTER IV

THE NOVELLA “DAS FÄHNLEIN DER SIEBEN  
AUFRECHTEN”

## Die Sieben Aufrechten

The *Sieben Aufrechten* embody the more traditional, conservative, and antiquated beliefs of mid-nineteenth-century Switzerland. Keller describes them as follows:

[E]ine Versammlung [...], nämlich der Gesellschaft der sieben Männer, oder der Festen, oder der Aufrechten, oder der Freiheitsliebenden, wie sie sich abwechselnd nannten. Dies war einfach ein Kreis von sieben alten bewährten Freunden, alle Handwerksmeister, Vaterlandsfreunde, Erzpolitiker und strenge Haustyrannen (*Fähnlein*, 13).

The personalities and beliefs of the men bind them together. Over time they have formed close friendships with one another, which they aim to uphold just as the freedoms of Switzerland. They have faith in their love for their homeland as well as their group slogan “Freundschaft in der Freiheit.” Heinrich Gaese comments that the group is held together by their common backgrounds and experiences, “Sie haben gemeinsame geschichtliche Erinnerungen. Sie, die Freiheitsliebenden, haben die Herrschaft der Standesherrn brechen und die neue Zeit heraufführen helfen. Es verbindet sie eine gemeinsame politische Überzeugung, und sie dienen derselben Partei” (Gaese: 1964: 126). The novella leverages the positions of the seven men in society and utilizes their notions of Swiss identity and tradition as a backdrop for critique of necessary progression.

Keller employs the ideas surrounding Switzerland’s foundational myth, achieving independence by overcoming tyranny, as groundwork to emphasize the opposition between generations. The group, *die sieben Aufrechten*, represents a Switzerland that is unified, in theory, but operates with each member’s interests in mind. “Each man’s

weakness and strengths---stinginess, greed, kindness, reason---come to the fore, and it becomes clear that the ‘seven upright men’ serve as symbols of individual republics within the confederation” (Bendix: 1992: 773). Although they are unified they also represent a disparity, alluding to disconnectedness in the Swiss confederation as well as importance of the individual over the greater good of the whole. The *Sieben Aufrechten* dedicate a majority of their time to discussing past political issues and endeavors of Switzerland since the triumph and establishment of the *Bundesverfassung* in 1848. They reminisce in the victory over the “Aristokraten und Jesuiten” but do not concern themselves with the current situation of their community or Switzerland (Keller: 2006: 3). Instead, the group revels in the past with outdated notions of a Swiss identity solely based on ideas of tradition and accomplishments of their last revolution. Although their principles and ideas have helped shape their present Switzerland, they have yet to realize they are continuing to fight battles that are over. Their battles show as much age as their hairless heads and full beards do.

[A]lle waren von einem unauslöschlichen Haß gegen alle Aristokratie erfüllt, welcher sich seit deren Untergang nur in einen bitteren Hohn verwandelt hatte. Als dieselbe aber später nochmals auftauchte in demokratischem Gewande und, mit den alten Machtvermietern, den Priestern, verbunden, einen mehrjährigen Kampf aufwühlte, da kam zu dem Aristokratenhaß noch derjenige gegen die »Pfaffen« hinzu (*Fähnlein*, 13).

These men are no longer as politically active as they were in the days of their past. Instead, they have grown complacent with their past victories and are unable to overcome new obstacles. Their idea of progress is one-sided and stagnant. Their notions are still confined to a limited and linear way of thinking. “Successful revolutionaries, such as the Upright, are doomed to repeat the tales of their success. Everybody, winners as well as

losers, repeats the last revolution. The danger for the winners is complacency, or not seeing the consequence for the next generation, of their own victory” (Platt: 1993: 101).

The Upright seven fall victim to such contentment.

Keller’s characters represent both individual and collective mentalities. In fact, this group is modeled after a circle of friends belonging to Keller’s father. This is another example of Keller linking his fictional imagination to reality. This group of men is a closed group which has been established for many years. They operate as a solid and reliable center for the community. Over time, they have become comfortable in their situation and, consequently, have sunk into isolation. Their seclusion from the current state of Switzerland happened on account of their own behavior. They belong to a time of revolution and political upheaval and have isolated themselves based on their reluctance to move beyond this point. Each member owns a rifle and at a moment’s notice is prepared to fight against ecclesiastical and aristocratic opponents regardless of the fact that they no longer menace society.

The novella begins with a description of a back room in a house which belongs to Hediger, a member of the *Sieben Aufrechten*. The room itself is comparable to that of a historical artifact collection. The walls are decorated with photos of past revolutionary figures, and scattered throughout the room is political literature from Hediger’s revolutionary political past.

[Er] neigte sich über die Zeitung “Der schweizerische Republikaner” und las mit kritischem Ausdrücke den Hauptartikel. Von diesem “Republikaner” standen wenigstens fünfundzwanzig Foliobände, wohlgebunden, in einem kleinen Glasschrank von Nußbaum, und sie enthielten fast nichts, das Hediger seit fünfundzwanzig Jahren nicht mit erlebt und durchgekämpft hatte. Außerdem stand ein “Rotteck” in dem Schranke, eine Schweizergeschichte von Johannes Müller und eine Handvoll



politischer Flugschriften und dergleichen; ein geographischer Atlas und ein Mäppchen voll Karikaturen und Pamphlete, die Denkmäler bitter leidenschaftlicher Tage, lagen auf dem untersten Brette. Die Wand des Zimmerchens war geschmückt mit den Bildnissen von Kolumbus, von Zwingli, von Hutten, Washington und Robespierre; denn er verstand keinen Spaß und billigte nachträglich die Schreckenszeit (*Fähnlein*, 3-4).

Keller's meticulous account of the items in this passage gives insight to the political affiliations of Hediger. His collection of Swiss historiography and relics exemplifies his dedication to the struggle of Swiss freedoms. His picture collection of prominent historical figures demonstrates his political beliefs in liberties and freedom as well as the extremes to which he is willing to go in order to protect them. Of particular interest is the inclusion of Robespierre in the collection and the link Keller creates between Hediger's political stance through his artifacts and the French Revolution. Keller's commentary on Hediger's approval of the political struggles behind of Robespierre's Reign of Terror. Hediger's collection represents the similarities between the French Revolution and Swiss fight for freedoms against the aristocracy and tyranny. "[I]nfluential voices outside the country [Switzerland], ranging from Goethe to Madame de Staël and Rousseau, considered the Swiss struggle for independence from Hapsburg rule a parallel to the French Revolution" (Bendix: 1992: 775). On the other hand, Hediger's accumulation and preservation of these materials prove as an example of his, as well as the group's, antiquated position in the current political atmosphere.

The *Sieben Aufrechten* were once very politically involved, but their endeavors have receded to the political background and in Hediger's case to the back room of his home. It is clear that the group's political ideology belongs to an earlier time. This time represents the first half of the nineteenth-century and corresponds to Switzerland's

political scene from the Helvetic Republic (1798–1802) to creation of the *Bundesverfassung* in 1848. Karl Grob discusses the life span and the effectiveness of the group stating that they do have an understanding of their once radical position and own society, but also that this is connected to a finiteness which applies to all worldly and manly effects. “Die Position der Gruppe ist verknüpft mit der – murrend akzeptierten – Einsicht in die radikale Endlichkeit aller menschlichen Dinge. Sie gibt dem Menschen die Verantwortung für sein eigenes Verhalten zurück, auch wenn er einsehen muß, daß seine Unternehmungen dem natürlichen Zerfall unterliegen” (Grob: 2007: 106). Without realizing, the world has changed for these men. Additionally, the social structure of their society developed into a republic. Everything and everyone is susceptible to the laws of nature and the *Sieben Aufrechten* are no different; their existence is limited. The link to nature is organic and connected to biology. Therefore, it makes sense that nature is responsible for the generational change. In the end, nature is larger than any one man or people because it endures and outlasts all.

The older generation focuses heavily on freedoms, but maintains a traditional outlook on life. This becomes evident when they define their conception of a model Swiss citizen and even more so when they express thoughts on matters of their private lives. Each man is an experienced craftsman, whose expertise designates him as a master in his field. Hard work and determination are tenets of their work ethic. However, these men are more accustomed to working with their hands than with their minds. Their craftsmen abilities range from tailor to blacksmith and carpenter to inn keeper. For them, their training and education developed according to the old rules of

the guilds. They are not accustomed to a school education which involves rhetoric and speech.

Keller pays special attention to two members of this group. Master Frymann is the most prominent, outspoken, and wealthy of the seven and subsequently their unofficial leader. Frymann stands in contrast to another member, the tailor, Master Hediger. All of the seven men epitomize *der Bürger* (bourgeois) and share similar political beliefs. Master Hediger comes from more financially modest circumstances in comparison to Frymann. He is aware of his own limited education and allows his sons educational opportunities which he did not have:

Ich ließ sie lernen, alles, was ich wünsche, selber gelernt zu haben. Jeder kannte etwas Sprachen, machte seinen guten Aufsatz, rechnete vortrefflich und besaß in übrigen Kenntnissen hinreichende Anfangsgründe, um bei einigem Streben nie mehr in völlige Unwissenheit zurückzusinken. Gott sei Dank, dachte ich, daß wir imstande sind, endlich unsere Buben zu Bürgern zu erziehen, denen man kein X mehr für ein U vormachen kann (*Fähnlein*, 24).

With this education Hediger's sons have mastered rhetoric and speech, which allows them to find clerical professions. Hediger is aware that through education his sons' futures are vast. He is even proud of his children for their pursuit of education; although he would never tell them. However, he does not understand or respect their careers in clerical positions as much he does his own style of work.

Und ich ließ darauf jeden das Handwerk lernen, das er sich wünschte. Aber was geschieht? Kaum hatten sie den Lehrbrief in der Tasche und sich ein wenig umgesehen, so wurde ihnen der Hammer zu schwer, sie dünkten sich zu gescheit für das Handwerk und fingen an den Schreiberstellen nachzulaufen. Weiß der Teufel, wie sie es nur machten, die Schlingel gingen ab wie frische Wecken. [...] Kann mir am Ende gleich sein! Wer nicht Meister sein will, muß eben Gesell bleiben und Vorgesetzte haben sein Leben lang! (*Fähnlein*, 24-25).

Frymann agrees with Hediger and concludes that the actions of the younger generation are “Papperlapp!” (*Fähnlein*, 25), revealing his, equally as outdated, misunderstanding of the importance of education for the modern citizen. Although Hediger’s attitude toward education is not completely negative, he maintains a belief in the educational foundation provided through physical hard work. Keller, on the other hand, finds it important to be able to express oneself in words. His focus turns to Master Hediger’s son Karl in order to convey the significance of this skill.

A familial scene, at the start of the novella, establishes the barriers between the generations. Hediger is reluctant and refuses to let his son, Karl, borrow his hunting rifle. Karl is a talented marksman and wants to borrow the weapon during his military drill. He is not allowed since his father feels he should have his own rifle, but more importantly Hediger believes Karl is not mature enough. “Ich gebe meine Waffe niemand, der nicht damit umgehen kann; wenn du regelrecht das Schloß der Flinte abnehmen und auseinanderlegen kannst, so magst du sie nehmen; sonst aber bleibt sie hier!” (*Fähnlein*, 5-6). Hediger’s attitude toward his son is not surprising. In regards to his other three sons, he has treated the rifle in an identical matter. In this opening scene Keller introduces the underlying opposition between young and old. Hediger’s attitude toward his sons demonstrates the manners and attitudes of the Seven’s tyrannical rule in the home. They are the supreme authority and Hediger feels he is entitled to the last word. In the case of Karl and Hediger, the borrowing of the rifle is similar to the passing of the torch between generations. Hediger is certainly hesitant to relinquish his patriarchal position, which faces its own challenges of dissolution if he allows his son to borrow his weapon.

Unbeknownst to Hediger, Karl is an excellent marksman. Karl needs to borrow this rifle as part of his military drill. Hediger is unfamiliar with such usage of a rifle. For him the rifle solidifies societal hierarchies and its purpose is to hunt political opponents. He does not agree with Karl's intention to use it as military equipment. In Karl, Keller embodies his ideal of the new model Swiss citizen. He gives him the ability of eloquent speech and accurate shooting. Karl is unable to realize his full potential in Keller's new Switzerland if Hediger denies him a chance to prove himself. The older generation is attempting to hold the youth back. The parents may not have confidence in the younger generation, but Keller clearly portrays their multifacetedness and aptitude for leadership. Karl has succeeded in his educational endeavors and is confident in his skills as a marksman. His display of confidence shows the poise and certainty of the up-and-coming younger generation. It is a kind of self-assurance that the Upright Seven have lost over time and especially due to their self-imposed isolation.

#### Karl and the Younger Generation

Keller portrays his hopes for a prosperous Swiss future through his description of the younger generation. Karl embodies the road to progress, as he is the epitome of Swiss manhood. He lives off a meager income as a clerk, but he possesses the aptitude and qualities necessary for Keller's political utopia. The barrier between the generations is based on their differing political agendas. The *Sieben Aufrechten* need to be brought not only into the present, but also into the future by the generation of their children. It is difficult for them to realize that the time has come for them to pass the torch and that their children are capable of carrying it. The younger generation has its own political agenda and it is one which Keller presents as unified in its rich diversity. Whereas the

seven men belong to an exclusive group, they are willing to cooperate with everyone in the group out of love and service to their homeland. Keller uses Karl to bridge the gap between these differing opinions and places in society. Through him, the older generation recognizes the significant change in their children.

Karl is a member of the public like everyone else. His position as a member of the younger generation trying to establish itself is tangible and relatable to the actual Swiss public. At this point in the novella Karl already has completed his education, has a decent clerical position, and has fulfilled his military service leaving the social aspect of his life unfinished. In public, Karl gets the chance to prove himself during the Aarau Shooting Festival. Here, Keller further portrays the widening gap between an ideal Swiss unity and the one present in the society of the novella. He does this by using a shooting festival as the backdrop for the culmination of the novella. Keller invokes the Swiss traditional pastime of shooting festivals to simultaneously demonstrate the consistency and discontinuity of ideologies between the generations. Shooting is a rite of passage in Switzerland and Keller integrates this concept into the novella by portraying attendance to the shooting festival as a patriotic pilgrimage. “The popular movement to practice and compete in nationwide shooting events had built this community to a considerable degree; the events had helped forge a lasting political constitution and contribution to the growth of the new Swiss state” (Bendix: 1992: 776). The festival in Aarau is the location where organized groups, like the *Sieben Aufrechten*, enthusiastically convene. The emotional force behind the festival adds a new dimension at the power of the festivity. It is here where national pride transitions into localized and

regionalized pride. At this point, Keller critiques the Swiss state as the generations collide during the festival.

In preparation for the festival, the Upright Seven have fashioned a *Fähnlein* and a cup as an offering to the winning marksman. They have democratically come to the decision to bring these gifts as they uphold their personal motto “Freundschaft in der Freiheit.” Their motto perfectly represents their own interest in remaining friends and upholding the freedoms they believe in. However, at the same time this motto requires that they distance themselves from one another. Even though they meet often, share aspects of their lives, and hold similar world views, they are sure to always meet in a public space. They are selective regarding their personal lives. This does not suggest that their concept of friendship is limited, but rather demonstrates their drive to maintain an alliance to guarantee the safety of the nation. Since their individual preferences dictate how intimate they are, they choose to work together at their discretion. During the festival Karl proves to them that continuous collaboration is important, in addition to being able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of others. This is important in order to be able to help in any moment of need.

As a result, a situation such as this becomes the breaking point between young and old. During the national marksmen’s festival in Aarau, Karl comes to the aid of Frymann and the Upright Seven. The group is not in agreement about which member will do the honor of speaking at the ceremonial induction of their flag and Frymann refuses to speak. Karl, who has arrived separately from the group, appears and begins to deliver the speech for the group. “Ihr Herren, gebt mir die Fahne! Ich trage sie und spreche für Euch, ich mache mir nichts daraus!”(*Fähnlein*, 58). With an impressive and inspiring speech,

Karl captures the traditional ideas of older Swiss generations while emphasizing the necessity for progression. In his speech Karl remains authentic to the motto of the *Sieben Aufrechten*, “Freundschaft in der Freiheit” as well as explaining how collaboration between citizens and society functions.

Wo die politische Zusammengehörigkeit zur persönlichen Freundschaft eines ganzen Volkes wird, da ist das Höchste gewonnen; denn was der Bürgersinn nicht ausrichten sollte, das wird die Freundesliebe vermögen, und beide werden zu einer Tugend werden! [...] Es lebe die Freundschaft im Vaterlande! Es lebe die Freundschaft in der Freiheit! (*Fähnlein*, 62).

As the speech concludes Karl receives the admiration of the audience as well as the members of the group. Through his rhetorical talent, he emerges as the glue which binds the older and newer generations together and finally closes the gap between them.

Karl is Keller’s spokesman for his political hopes. The significance of Swiss identity is redefined in his speech as Karl emphasizes freedoms, cooperation, and friendship.

Wie kurzweilig ist es, daß es nicht einen eintönigen Schlag Schweizer, sondern daß es Züricher und Berner, Unterwalder und Neuenburger, Graubündner und Basler gibt [...] Diese Mannigfaltigkeit in der Einheit, welche Gott uns erhalten möge, ist die rechte Schule der Freundschaft (*Fähnlein*, 62).

Karl represents Switzerland as a whole and moves beyond the regional or local identities, which the *Sieben Aufrechten* represent. Karl’s speech embraces the differences within society and updates the outdated traditional concept of national identity by celebrating a new national individuality rich in unity and diversity. Karl’s speech has a didactic purpose. With his words he is able to eclipse the older generation and guide them back to a genuine concept of Swiss politics, identity, and patriotism. Even though the group



intended the festival to be their crowning achievement, Karl is victorious and his success transitions him into a leadership role. His new position in society is created through his speech and establishes a new democratic order with him at the forefront. He is able to create an improved view of society by integrating tradition with progression and finding a balance between unity and individuality. As a result, everyone is brought together in a harmonious fashion. The speech demonstrates the power of rhetoric and its effectiveness in achieving goals. Speech is just as important as shooting and is what saves the *Sieben Aufrechten* and in turn Switzerland. Karl offers a new ideological standpoint in his speech. He is more concerned with what is natural than political as well as emphasizes unity and *Volk* as the cornerstone to the future. Karl brings together talents of both generations; speech and shooting. As a model of the exemplary citizen, he eliminates generational difference and replaces it with diverse abilities and confidence.

The older generation now recognizes the importance of rhetoric and the meaning of change in their children, as Karl stands before them. After Karl's speech Frymann finally realizes this and gives Karl advice:

Gleichmäßig bilde deine Kenntnisse aus und bereichere deine Grundlagen, daß du nicht in leere Worte verfallest! [...] Wenn du einen glücklichen Gedanken hast, so sprich nicht, nur um diesen anzubringen, sondern lege ihn zurück; die Gelegenheit kommt immer wieder, wo du ihn reifer und besser verwenden kannst. Nimmt dir aber ein anderer diesen Gedanken vorweg, so freue dich darüber, statt dich zu ärgern; denn es ist ein Beweis, daß du das Allgemeine gefühlt und gedacht hast. Bilde deinen Geist und überwache deine Gemütsart und studiere an andern Rednern den Unterschied zwischen einem bloßen Maulhelden und zwischen einem wahrhaftigen und gemütreichen Mann! Reise nicht im Lande herum und laufe nicht auf allen Gassen, sondern gewöhne dich, von der Feste deines Hauses aus und inmitten bewährter Freunde den Weltlauf zu verstehen; dann wirst du mit mehr Weisheit zur Zeit des Handels auftreten als die Jagdhunde und Landläufer. Wenn du sprichst, so sprich weder wie ein witziger

Hausknecht noch wie ein tragischer Schauspieler, sondern halte dein gutes natürliches Wesen rein und dann sprich immer aus diesem heraus (*Fähnlein*, 65).

Frymann acknowledges his generation's position in society and is willing to contribute to the future by giving Karl sound guidance. Though these two different speeches the two generations collaborate and exchange ideas of societal progress. The Upright Seven accept the changing times.

“Es ist so!” sagte Hediger, der Vater, nach einigem Nachdenken und fuhr begeistert fort: “Darum preisen wir ewig und ewig die neue Zeit, die den Menschen wieder zu erziehen beginnt, daß er auch ein Mensch wird, und die nicht nur dem Junker und dem Berghirt, nein, auch dem Schneiderskind befiehlt, seine Glieder zu üben und den Leib zu veredeln, daß es sich rühren kann!”

“Es ist so!” sagte Frymann, der ebenfalls aus einem Nachdenken erwacht war, “und auch wir haben alle mitgerungen, diese neue Zeit herbeizuführen. Und heute feiern wir, was unsre alten Köpfe betrifft, mit unsrem Fähnlein den Abschluß das ‘Ende Feuer!’ und überlassen den Rest den Jungen” (*Fähnlein*, 76-77).

With this exchange Hediger and Frymann celebrate their contributions to Swiss society and openly express that they are passing on the torch to the younger generation. In the future exists collaboration in place of an oppressor and this aspect reflects Keller's bright hope for new democratic beginnings. As Karl breaks down barriers and teaches the older generation, Keller's intention for this work as a teaching tool for democracy shines.

## CHAPTER V

AEBY'S FILM: A CONTEMPORARY  
INTERPRETATION OF "DAS FÄHNLEIN"

Film director, Simon Aeby, released his interpretation of Keller's portrayal of Swiss-ness and nation in 2001 in his film representation of "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten". This film version of the novella adapts Keller's concerns for twenty-first-century Switzerland. "Keller's works, which recorded and interpreted the changes he witnessed, still intrigue us today because we live in an advanced stage of the society of Keller's day, and because we understand (or are still seeking to understand) the manifestations of the social, economic, and political ferment that inspired his fiction" (Ruppel: 1998: 183). Aeby characters in the film take Keller's fusion between social realities and fiction to world around them. The film's characters reflect the struggle between the generations but also demonstrate a shift toward the characters personal growth and the pursuit of love.

Consequently, Keller's work guides its reader through the obstacles facing an ever developing and evolving society. His fusion between his own observation of societal concerns and fiction allows the reader to associate with the fears, concerns and behaviors of his characters. These characters mirror society and are useful in a reader's comprehension of the world around them. In a sense, Keller's constructed version of humanity is guiding us through the present day.

This Swiss film incorporates aspects of literary tradition, pop culture, and music. The film itself is "frei nach Keller" meaning that its creators took liberties in creating this updated version. In order for Aeby to reach a contemporary audience he has to

incorporate a certain level of entertainment. He takes an old story from a Swiss literary figure and transforms it into an entertainment interpretation. Both Keller's and Aeby's characters face a set of problems, but different problems take varying precedence in the two pieces. Whereas Keller concerns focus on societal and political progression, Aeby concentrates on personal relationships and development of the characters.

Aeby's interpretation speaks to a younger audience, which may not be as familiar with or take an adverse stance against Keller's explicitly Swiss novella. The lead roles of Karl and his love interest, Hermine Frymann, are played by young attractive Swiss celebrities. Karl comes to life through successful snowboarder Fabien Rohrer and Brigitte Kobel, or Kisha, a pop-music artist who plays Karl's counterpart Hermine. The two popular icons turned actors contribute a youthful dimension to the tale of the *Sieben Aufrechten*, but in addition attract a young enthusiastic audience. Since Rohrer and Kisha's star power shines so brightly, Karl and Hermine become the focal point of the film's narrative. This representation focuses heavily on the love story between Karl and Hermine, whereas the novella puts generational, societal, and political conflicts at the forefront. This transition away from the political and toward the personal demonstrates the adaptation for the audience. The film documents their relationship from their reunion as young adults, through Karl's unrequited love for Hermine, past other obstacles (parents and differing opinions), finally ending in their union. In the film, their triumph of love over outside forces outweighs Keller's focus on Swiss unity and destiny. The film goes as far as incorporating a *Dorfdiot* or village fool who runs through the town searching for love. His character supports the importance of love in the film and how

everyone searches for it. This reveals that the film focuses more on love rather than on upholding Swiss liberties.

It is important to acknowledge the love story in the film because the generation gap between Karl and the Upright Seven gets lost within this romantic portrayal. The Upright Seven are still presented as having outdated political beliefs and as being out of touch with reality. However, their collision with Karl is primarily presented as a result of his love for Hermine and not as political opposition or the movement progression he represents. Therefore, Karl spends a majority of the film trying to improve his rhetoric and develop shooting skills. His motivation stems from wanting to impress his elders to achieve love and not out of a dedication to his country. He has some knowledge of both skills, but, as in the novella, needs to unveil his abilities. The main difference in Karl's talents in the film is that he needs to learn to shoot. In the novella he is already an established marksman and has participated in military training, whereas Aeby's Karl is apprehensive about having to learn how to fire a rifle.

In the film, Karl's development, as a character as well as in his speech and shooting, is portrayed more as a process. The film focuses heavily on him finding his way into a societal position. The viewers encounter Karl moving through the different stages of development. He constantly has to prove himself to find acceptance in society. The film documents Karl's development into a capable respected position in society. Aeby's film is able to portray Karl's progression as a character because the film introduces him as a character that needs to realize his potential. This differs from the novella, where characters are generally introduced as fully formed. For Keller, Karl already possesses abilities to help lead Switzerland into a new era. He is a skilled marksman, has a strong

command of rhetoric, and is loved by Hermine. In contrast, the film allows for Karl's character to expand his horizons. He needs to improve his speech and most of all needs to overcome his reservations about shooting and master the skill which is revered by his community. Once Karl accomplishes this he is able to experience a new position in the eyes of the *Sieben Aufrechten* through his achievement in marksmanship as well as romance.

The generational gap remains whereas the old and young must learn to work together for the improvement of society and future preservation of Swiss political ideals. However, in addition, the film emphasizes Karl's quest to gain parental acceptance and love. The manner in which Karl achieves his place in society and recognition from the *Sieben Aufrechten* is similarly attributed to his inspiring speech and shooting. The film makes mention of the shooting festival, but eliminates its narration. The patriotism and Swiss diversity displayed during the Aarau festival is removed from the film. However, the Swiss-ness and representation of the shooting festival still has a presence in the film. The importance of unity and diversity displayed at the shooting festival are present as the underlying principles of Karl's speech. Nevertheless, without the representation of the Aarau festival there is no national platform to express change and political ideas. The national political stage is reduced to a localized setting. This is a setting is smaller in scale and therefore more personal. This points to the different emphasis the film assigns to the conflicts in "Das Fähnlein". Keller chose the Aarau shooting festival of 1849 as the backdrop of his novella to express the importance of this period in Swiss history and thought, a contributing factor to the message of his novella. Aebly incorporates the

meaning of the Aarau festival in the film but through its elimination concentrates on character development and the interpersonal relationships between them.

In the film, the Upright Seven attend and return from the Aarau fest defeated, as they were unable to demonstrate their shooting capabilities and capacity for rhetoric. Only upon returning from Aarau do they discover Karl has won the festival shooting prize while remaining undetected. Within the confines of the town center, Karl delivers his speech to a local audience rather than on a national stage. The main points of his speech are in accordance with Keller's in regards to acceptance, diversity, and unity. The reward for Karl's accomplishments does reveal his leadership potential, but also awards him his true love, Hermine. Not only has he proven himself to be an integral and crucial member of society, but he has gained acceptance from his father, Frymann and most importantly Hermine.

The landscape of the film varies vastly from novella. This creates a different perspective of the mentalities of the characters. Aeby's version is set in rural Switzerland whereas Keller places his work in the urban capitalist epicenter of Swiss change in 1849. Ruppel describes Keller as understanding both rural and urban mentalities. Keller had this ability because he came from a *Kleinbürger* background but climbed the social ladder throughout his life. This landscape expresses another side of Keller and represents his humble beginnings as a similar starting point for Karl. The time is identical, but a rural setting portrays the traditional views of the Seven as rural mentality instead of common beliefs amongst the older generation regardless of their location.

This setting does play to Aeby's advantage when conveying the political situation the younger generation overcomes. Aeby's setting in the countryside is the opposite from

Keller's intended location of Zurich. In this new environment Aeby's characters interact less in a political context and are more motivated by romance and personal connections. Aeby employs Pop and American Western music with Swiss-German text which transforms this rural setting into an *Alpenwestern*. The town represents Switzerland's discontinuity under the guidance of the older generation, the *Sieben Aufrechten*. Karl needs to eliminate the "lawless-ness" of the town and put his local area of the Swiss countryside ("Hinterwälder") back on track with modernization. He can only do this through the qualities that are still coveted in Switzerland; shooting and speaking. Both of which he learns, masters, and demonstrates in his rural town. These characteristics have continued to remain a fundamental component of Swiss citizenship.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

A close relationship to one's homeland is a genuine Swiss concept. Service and love of the country also manifests in the minds of Keller's characters. "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten" is a novella which demonstrates the basic fundamentals of a societal change by placing two generations in opposition to one another. Each society, whether now or then, faces continual adaptations. Keller captures this in his work and closes the gap between the generations by demonstrating a successful collaboration between the different levels and peoples of society. He is able to highlight the traditional Swiss values and reinvent them to represent a new and changing Swiss state. His contrasts in the novella present his political euphoria for further Swiss progress in the mid-nineteenth-century. Keller ushers in a new era and defines the new Swiss model of the *Volk*. He expresses progress in the rhetorical skills of Karl, who becomes the leading voice of the future. These issues remain relevant in Aeby's film version for a modern day audience. Since Keller converted the world he knew into a fictional work, he was able to break down the borders existing between different Swiss mentalities and age groups. Together, the film and novella accomplish what Keller's classic story emphasizes. It breaks down generational barriers to unite a nation and an audience.

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