



GEORG HEYM: FIVE SHORT STORIES IN TRANSLATION

GEORG HEYM'S

DER DIEB: EIN NOVELLENBUCH

FIVE SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contains a translation of five stories from Georg Heym's collection of short stories entitled Der Dieb: Ein Novellenbuch. The major emphasis of the thesis is on the translation. Each of the translated stories is followed by a commentary in the form of footnotes. These footnotes point out the specific problems encountered in translating this work and they explain and comment on particular words and images.

The discussion serves as a general introduction to the five short stories. The main themes and literary style of each story are briefly analyzed.

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DER DIEB: EIN NOVELLENBUCH
A DISCUSSION OF THE FIVE SHORT STORIES

i) Introduction

A small collection of short stories written by the early German Expressionist Georg Heym (1887-1912) during the last year of his life before his death in January, 1912, was published posthumously in 1913 under the title Der Dieb: Ein Novellenbuch. Seven short stories comprise the collection, the last of which has given the collection its title. Five of these seven short stories have been translated as part of this thesis and will be discussed here with particular reference to the problems posed by their translation as well as their literary style and content. These five include "Der Irre", "Jonathan", "Die Sektion", "Das Schiff", and "Der 5. Oktober".

"Unermüdlich variieren Heyms Dichtungen die gleichen Themen: kreatürliches Leiden, Krankheit und Tod."¹ Each of the five stories centres around tragic human figures, who in their confrontation with a cruel and threatening reality attempt to deal with their fate, only to fall victim in the end to overwhelming powers which are beyond their control: "Der Mensch ist auf die Katastrophe hin angelegt; er geht auf sie zu".² Despair, suffering, madness and death overcome helpless individuals: "Bis an den Rand ist die Schale mit Qual und Pein gefüllt: Hungersnot, eine Leiche in den Händen der

Anatomen, ein Wahnsinniger im Bluttausch, die Paroxysmen eines Fiebernden, ein Schiff voll Pestkranker".³

Through the unusual and extreme situations which Heym depicts in each of these stories, he reveals a notable fascination with the exceptional and the horrifying in human life, which is characteristic of Expressionist writers. In Heym's case, these situations can also be seen as a reflection of his own unhappy life, in which parental strife and disapproval with his failure to establish himself in a suitable profession, the lack of success in his endeavour to find lasting love, and his sense of loneliness, uncertainty and isolation, found expression in the gloom and despair of his writings. Jens hypothesizes that Heym attempted to overcome his unhappiness and depression by writing about it: "Die detaillirte Abbildung des Furchtbaren soll dieses nicht so sehr bannen und unschädlich machen; vielmehr ist in Heyms Dichtung die Hoffnung mit im Spiel, dass gerade das Muserste an Leid wieder in Glück umschlagen könne, das Unheil schliesslich seine eigene Erlösung zitiere."⁴ Each story ends in visions, dreamlike experiences which contrast with the rest of the story and convey an impression of a higher reality: "Die drastische Beschreibung menschlichen Elends mündet stets in die bildliche Anschauung der Ver-
sehrtheit des Kosmos selber; die Verrücktheit des einzelnen er-
scheint für Heym in einer universalen Sinnlosigkeit und Schrecknis

begründet!'.⁵ The individual, however, finds no real escape or release from his sufferings in the end, which reflects Heym's ultimate pessimistic view of human fate and of the individual's inability to change the circumstances of his own life.⁶

In "Jonathan", a young man who has both legs amputated in a hospital, loses all will to live, is deprived of an ideal opportunity for love and happiness, and dies a lonely cripple. The reader experiences the despair, loneliness and helplessness of this patient, whose every thought is dominated by pain and death. The doctors and nurses assigned to care for him only aggravate his miserable lot by their callous and insensitive treatment of him. In "Der Irre", the callous and inhuman treatment received in an insane asylum exacerbates the condition of an already violent and disturbed individual. He thus poses a real threat to himself and to society when he is released. He goes out into the world with the intention of avenging the injustices and brutality he feels he has suffered. In the end, society is forced to deal harshly with this menace by destroying him like an animal. In "Die Sektion", a corpse, the anonymous subject of certain scientific experiments, is inhumanely manipulated and desecrated at the hands of ruthless and callous medical practitioners. In "Das Schiff", during a brief stay on some unknown island in the South Seas, the entire crew of a coral ship meet a gruesome death, the victims of a mysterious plague. The fear and uncertainty with which the threat of a fatal disease burdens

the crewmen of the ship, cause the worst aspects of human character to come to the fore. Rather than uniting forces to deal with the problem and to find a suitable and rational solution to combat it, the crew are overcome by confusion and panic. Disorganized and disunited, they turn their frustrations upon themselves. Each man struggles in vain to save his own life, but one by one they all inevitably fall victim to the plague, which is the final victor. In "Der 5. Oktober", Heym gives his own version of certain historical events at the time of the French Revolution. The Parisian masses, apathetic and powerless, starved and exploited by the ruling classes of France, throw off their shackles and are able to at least temporarily revel in the illusion of their own power and freedom. They are, however, doomed now and always to be under the sway of forces unknown to them and more powerful than themselves, which they can neither understand nor determine.⁷

i) Introduction: Footnotes

1 I. Jens, Studien zur Entwicklung der expressionistischen Novelle (Tübingen, 1954), p. 160.

2 Fritz Martini, "Die Sektion", in his book Das Wagnis der Sprache: Interpretationen deutscher Prosa von Nietzsche bis Benn (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1954), p. 260.

3 Monty Jacobs, "Georg Heyms Prosa", in K.L. Schneider and G. Burckhardt, eds., Georg Heym: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Werk (Hamburg: Heinrich Ellermann, 1968), p. 272.

4 Jens, op. cit., p. 160.

5 Jens, op. cit., p. 160.

6 Jens, op. cit., p. 161.

7 Jens, op. cit., p. 188.

ii) "Der Irre"

The story entitled "Der Irre" is a case study of madness as viewed from the perspective of the madman himself. Heym does not simply wish to give a description of the behaviour and motives of this man nor to act as an impartial judge in the situation, but rather to relate the immediate impressions made upon the madman by the reality which he encounters and his reactions to it. He is thus not interested in studying the madman as a pathological case nor in analyzing the individual motivations for the crimes which the madman commits, but in relating the madman's experience as the madman himself sees it and in revealing how the madman views himself and the world outside.¹ The story is correspondingly based on two narrative styles: inner monologue for the expression of the madman's thoughts and feelings, and impartial third-person narration which conveys events and actions.

Allan Blunden points out that this story was written in the same year that the term "schizophrenia" was coined.² The madman's inner world is divided, and we experience the two halves of this inner world. There are two distinct forces which control his behaviour: the animal-like, and the human. The former is violent, aggressive, irrational, and destructive, causing the madman to

commit murder on impulse and without concern or understanding of the consequences. The latter is conscious, reflective, sympathetic and compassionate to other human beings, and capable of rational comprehension. The madman cannot determine which of these sides will dominate his character at any given time. Without warning, the irrational, animal side of his nature takes hold of him, causing him to commit numerous violent crimes against humanity. This uncontrollable and irresistible force seems to gain greater hold of him and to determine his actions to the extent that he even loses his identity as a human being and physically embodies this demonic force. The madman is thus seen as being the victim of an unjust and inescapable fate, but as such society must deal with him for he poses a grave threat to its security. He exists primarily in a dream world of irrational visions, which is interspersed with periods when he is able to think and function rationally and normally. Logic and clarity of thought interchange with grotesque, unreal, violent and often incoherent visions, and the transfer from one state to the other can occur without the least provocation or reason. In the madman's mind, the flow of his thoughts and feelings is uninterrupted, and he acquiesces to the change from one to the next as a natural part of his being and character. It is the reader who must take note of the sudden switches from the logical and hu-

man to the irrational and animal. Heym too ascribed this dichotomy to himself when in his diary he referred to himself as "heut Tier und morgen Gott".³

The story begins with the madman's release from the mental asylum into the world outside. The calm and objective third-person narration of the first paragraph of the story changes suddenly in the second to the tone of a vague, menacing and ominous threat, expressed in the inner monologue of the madman's thought. This threat is addressed to the outside world and it gives us the first indications of what we might expect from this character and the further development of the story. The madman apparently has certain ideas and intentions in his mind concerning what he wishes to do now that he is free, though what these are, is not revealed here explicitly. The ominous tone of his thoughts forces us to conclude that the opposite is true of that which we initially supposed in reading the first paragraph: that the madman has been completely cured by his stay in the asylum, and that he no longer poses a real threat to himself nor to the rest of society. Instead, we see that his violence and hatred of the world have become magnified by his stay there, and that he now desires to avenge the injustices he feels have been inflicted upon him. Society, having failed to cure this individual, must now pay the price for its mistake. In the

text of the story, objective narration goes over into inner monologue, just as impartial description gives way to the expression of impassioned hostility, thus revealing the contradiction between the outside, rational and organized world, and the inner struggles and conflicts, the chaos of an embittered and potentially destructive individual. In the story, Heym immediately juxtaposes these two spheres of reality and reveals their contradiction.

The wrath of the madman is stirred at the thought of his experiences in the asylum. The madman recalls how the patients were savagely abused by the personnel in the asylum. His brutal and violent threats against the personnel now seem to be justified in response to this gross injustice and to such a brutal and corrupt environment. It is, however, impossible for the reader to determine the degree of truth or of exaggeration and falseness in these accusations. Although his memories may to some extent be subjective and the product of a highly excitable imagination, particular details impart to them a semblance of reality and fact. The doctors are pictured as grotesque torturers who put helpless individuals into scalding baths, raped the female patients, and on one occasion even intended to feed parts of a corpse to the patients. In the madman's mind, these visions take on monstrous proportions. Yet, although the tone of his thoughts is bitter and aggressive,

they are rational and coherent, and thus cannot be considered merely the product of a deranged mind bent on revenge. The asylum's mistake in letting a person not yet cured go free and its alleged brutal treatment of the sick thus make society at least partially responsible for the tragedy of the madman's life and death.

The language in this lengthy passage is colloquial, and some of the sentences are incomplete. This style is appropriate for conveying the thoughts and feelings of this person and at the same time for revealing something about his background. Although the madman is never once identified by name, former occupation or social standing, we may infer that he apparently is not highly educated and probably of a lower class. The violence of his imagery and the fact that he is unable to articulate his thoughts well, lends further support to this inference.

His thoughts return to his wife. He reveals that he was committed to the asylum for violent behaviour, namely for having assaulted his wife. Now his intention is to get even with her, as well as with the rest of the world: "So, und mit der würde er jetzt abrechnen".⁵ This sentence echoes the threat he made in the second paragraph of the story.

The author traces the madman's steps on his way back to his former apartment. Objective third-person narration ends abruptly

once more, giving way to the visions of the madman. Crossing a grainfield where the grainstalks burst open underfoot, he imagines that he is walking on the skulls of praying Moslems, and is enthralled by the sound that they make. It is a grotesque vision of tyranny and absolute power, of helpless and passive individuals who are at the mercy of one man and who meet death without the slightest protest. A similar image of human helplessness occurs in "Jonathan", where the heads of the hospital patients are compared to rapeseeds in an autumn field and the patients are at the mercy of doctors and nurses who have come to quell the revolt of their cries with injections of morphine. For the first time, the reader is given 'proof' of this person's madness. The grotesque image of cracking heads forbodes more future evil and death. He dreams of trampling the head of an old man, perhaps that of the asylum director. According to Kurt Mautz, the moon in Heym's work is a symbol identical with that of the old man's head. He states that the head of the old man, the cruel and hated asylum director, the tyrannical crushing of human skulls, and the madman's face "wie ein weisser aufgehender Mond",⁶ are all reflections of the same symbol of the moon, which expresses tyranny and violence.⁷

Like a child, the madman falls asleep after playing war games with the grainstalks. Awakened by the voices of children,

he sees them running away and becomes enraged. He catches up to them and attacks them, crushing their skulls. His vision of the praying Moslems is thus translated into reality: "Das berauschte ihn, machte ihn zu einem Gott".⁸ The horrible scene is made even more grotesque when the madman begins to sing the Luther hymn "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott", while beating time with both of the skulls. Though excluded from normal society by his insanity, the madman is shown to still be part of that same society, steeped in its culture and traditions. He sings the hymn like a child would a nursery rhyme, unaware of its real meaning. As Blunden points out, this hymn praising God is perverted into one which extols the forces of evil, of "der alt-böse Feind", whose power and cunning have no equal on this earth.⁹ The madman revels in his own destructive power and deludes himself in the belief that he is all-powerful. But like a child, he is unaware of the real consequences of his actions and that he has committed murder. The madman dances about the corpses, the blood splashing off his arms. Blunden states that his figure is likened to the beautiful firebird of Russian folklore, which further emphasizes the grotesqueness of this figure.¹⁰

Once more the rational side of the madman gains control of him: "Mit einem Male schlug seine Stimmung um."¹¹ He is moved to pity and remorse at the sight of the two small corpses, but his attempts to revive them are in vain. Blunden points out that Heym

intends the madman to be a caricature of the Prometheus figure, for he who only moments ago felt like a god, is now unable to even drive the flies away, let alone undo the grievous crime he has committed.¹² According to the ideals of humanism, man's superiority is due to his capacity for autonomous thought and action. Heym's madman is not the ideal creature of classical tradition, but a juxtaposition of good and evil, of the god-like and the animal. He is the victim of forces which govern his thought and behaviour. Just as suddenly as he is moved to pity, the thought of taking revenge on his wife turns his face livid with rage.

Further along the way, he encounters a woman whom he thinks he recognizes. Feelings of fear and insecurity prevent him from stopping her. Now for the first time his violent anger and destructive urges take on the form of a wild beast. Initially, he is detached from this beast and even addresses it:

Und das Aas wollte raus. Ja, ja, du musst raus.¹³

Blunden comments on this: "The madman is an animal provided with the human faculty of self-consciousness: outwardly, he is described as though he were a beast, and Heym writes of 'das Tier' and 'es'; inwardly the man is fully aware of his animal nature and acquiesces in it."¹⁴

This change from violence to calm and from irrational behaviour to rational thought occurs without warning. This is con-

veyed in the language with the use of the adverb "suddenly", which in most cases begins the sentence. For example:

"Plötzlich bekam er vor der Sonne Angst." (p. 22)
 "Mit einem Male schlug seine Stimmung um." (p. 23)
 "Mit einem Male wusste er ..." (p. 29)

I. Jens points out the frequency of Heym's use of this device:

"Malt Heym einmal nicht visionäre Zustände aus, berichtet er von einem zeitlichen fortschreitenden Geschehen, so geht er mit adverbialen Bestimmungen wie "jetzt", "plötzlich", "mit einem Male" nicht eben sparsam um."¹⁵ This overuse of certain adverbs causes them to lose their impact and creates an incoherence of facts and events, since every occurrence and action is artificially made unique and dramatic. Jens comments: "Die Beziehung, die diese Adverbien stiften, ist die zufälliger Begegnung, aber nicht pragmatisch-sinnvoller Folge."¹⁶

The madman pounces upon his terrified victim and kills her. An excellent example of the subtle interweaving of the two narrative styles in the story appears in the following paragraph describing the death scene:

Die Frau wälzt sich im Sand, das Tier schmeisst sie herum. Hier ist die Kehle, da ist das beste Blut; man trinkt immer aus der Kehle. Es haut seinen Rachen in ihre Gurgel und saugt das Blut aus ihrem Leibe. Pfui Teufel, ist das aber schön. 17

The first and third sentences are in the impartial third-person narration. The second and fourth sentences are the thoughts of

the madman as he is committing his gruesome acts, and thus in the style of inner monologue. The fourth and last sentence strikingly combines and contrasts the two sides of the madman's character: the ethical, human side which is horrified by the crime, and the beastly nature, which revels at the sight of blood and violence.

An old man chances upon the murder scene. His feelings of confusion, indecision and fright in reaction to the crime and to the bloody wasted figure which appears, are narrated through inner monologue. When the old man finally runs away, the madman thinks that he is doing the right thing, "denn hier konnten gleich wieder die Hyänen aus dem Korn kommen".¹⁸ The human side of his character is once again in control of him, and he speaks of the situation as though he had only been a detached observer of it. He looks at himself smeared with blood, and wonders where it came from. He cannot recall that just minutes ago he put an end to someone's life:

Sein Gedächtnis verlor sich. Er wusste zuletzt
nicht mehr, wo er war. ¹⁹

Wandering through the meadows, he thinks he is a flower. He comes upon a pond and goes swimming like a large white fish. It seems as though the madman desires to be absorbed back into nature, as I. Jens points out: "In den Visionen des Irren ist bereits eine völlige Identität des Menschen mit Pflanzlichem und Dinglichem hergestellt".²⁰

He weaves himself a crown of reeds and dances naked in the sun like a satyr. Heym uses this symbol to portray the grotesqueness of this figure whose nature is half-man and half-beast. As Heinz Rölleke points out, fauns, silenés and satyrs are negative symbols in Heym's work, appearing in poems such as "Die Dämonen der Städte".²¹

The madman reaches the city. His naïve impressions convey the impersonal and anonymous existence of the people there and the feeling of alienation in the seemingly undirected movement of persons and things. For the first time he feels alone and longs for the security of the asylum, whose cruelty now seems bearable in comparison with the indifference and confusion of life in an unknown city.

At his old apartment, no one answers the door. Rage and desire for revenge transform him once more into an animal. He pounces against the door, breaking it in. A crowd gathers, attracted by the commotion. The madman feels threatened and hunted down like an animal, and bounds away like an orangutan.

He goes inside a building which he thinks looks like a church, but which in fact is a department store.²² The madman looks at everything there with the naïvete of a child, as though even this most fundamental of social institutions in twentieth-century society were totally unfamiliar to him. The ornamental

character of the store, the variety and abundance of its merchandise, and its apparent position of power, prominence and wealth in twentieth-century society, make the madman's supposition seem, however, less absurd. Blunden points out that Heym's description allows us to imagine either a modern heaven or hell:

The vast space, the golden light from on high, people ascending and descending - surely this has all the dimensions of a modern Inferno? And since we do worship material possessions, is it not logical enough that we should seek our salvation in the big department store, which (after all) offers us paradise on easy terms? 23

The movement of the elevator makes him believe he is a bird soaring up into the sky. Standing on a balcony above the glassware department, he looks down at the crowds below who to him seem like flies. He envisions himself soaring high above a calm sea like a bird, and jumps off the balustrade into the midst of Tiffany crystal and glass. Blunden points out that the madman's illusion of greatness and strength causes his downfall at the very moment he imagines triumph. Blunden states that the madman is like the mythological figure Icarus, whose wings melted when he attained his greatest heights in flight.²⁴ Dream images are mixed with impressions of reality, and the collision of these two worlds results in the madman's downfall.

Then he attacks one of the shopgirls, and sitting on top of her, thinks he is riding on the back of a fish to the bottom of

the sea. At that moment, a police marksman shoots him. The madman dies immediately, without pain and without realizing what has happened. Death for him is like sinking into eternity, a fulfillment of visions of immeasurable bliss. It is a release from a cruel and incomprehensible world, not a punishment for his misdeeds or the burden of guilt or remorse. "Eine ewige Musik stieg von unten herauf und sein sterbendes Herz tat sich auf, zitternd in einer unermesslichen Seligkeit."²⁵ His killer remains just as anonymous as the madman is to the reader and to the outside world.

The author does not define which perspective the reader should take in viewing the situation, and he makes no moral condemnations or judgments. He merely presents the situation as it happened, leaving the reader to make up his own mind about it. As Blunden points out, Heym presented a more sympathetic picture of the madman than was generally the case in his time for "in Heym's day, psychiatrists were still adopting a tone of moral condemnation in their discussions of mental illness".²⁶ Heym lets us see the workings of a mind which cannot control its 'darker' side, its irrational nature. The madman is no heroic figure, but rather the victim of forces stronger than himself, which determine his behaviour and decide his fate. He does not feel himself bound by society's laws, and thus he attacks persons and transgresses the laws

of that society, which in turn is obliged to protect itself against such attacks. The tragedy of the madman lies in his inability to control his violent and destructive urges, for his 'normal' human side reveals a perceptive individual with compassion and understanding.

ii) "Der Irre": Footnotes

1 Allan Blunden, "Notes on Georg Heym's Novelle "Der Irre"", German Life and Letters, XXVIII (1974-5), p. 118.

2 Ibid., p. 118.

3 Ibid., p. 113. Franz Kafka uses the same technique in his short story "Die Verwandlung", in which Gregor Samsa is mysteriously transformed into an insect, though his reasoning powers are still those of a human being.

4 Georg Heym, "Der Irre", in K.L. Schneider, ed., Georg Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften, Vol. 2: Prosa und Dramen (Hamburg: Heinrich Ellermann, 1962), p. 19.

5 Ibid., p. 20.

6 Ibid., p. 19.

7 Kurt Mautz, Mythologie und Gesellschaft im Expressionismus: Die Dichtung Georg Heyms (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1961), p. 255.

8 Heym, op. cit., p. 23.

9 Blunden, op. cit., p. 112.

10 Blunden, op. cit., p. 112.

11 Heym, op. cit., p. 23.

12 Blunden, op. cit., p. 113.

13 Heym, op. cit., p. 25.

14 Blunden, op. cit., p. 114.

15 I. Jens, Studien zur Entwicklung der expressionistischen Novelle (Tübingen, 1954), p. 193.

16 Ibid., p. 193.

17 Heym, op. cit., p. 25.

18 Heym, op. cit., p. 26.

19 Heym, op. cit., p. 27.

20 Jens, op. cit., p. 165.

21 Heinz Rölleke, Die Stadt bei Stadler, Heym und Trakl
(Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1966), p. 176.

22 Blunden, op. cit., p. 115.

23 Blunden, op. cit., p. 116.

24 Blunden, op. cit., p. 116.

25 Heym, op. cit., p. 34.

26 Blunden, op. cit., p. 118.

iii) "Jonathan"

Of all five stories, "Jonathan" expresses the theme of hopelessness and human misery most intensely and dramatically. The feelings of defeat, isolation, and helplessness of the individual in dealing with his situation and his own fate, dominate the story from beginning to end, making this story the strongest expression of Heym's pessimistic view concerning man's position in the universe and his domination by forces incomprehensible, yet overwhelming and inescapable. Unlike the stories "Die Sektion" and "Der Irre", in the end there occurs no blissful reunification of the suffering individual with a loved one or a return to the unending bliss of the heavens.

The story tells of the last days in the life of an engineer confined to a Hamburg hospital. Illness and the threat of death dominate his every thought and consume him both physically and mentally. His condition has left him defenceless and alone, his will and courage to live have become weakened, and his fears have been magnified out of all proportion. As in "Der Irre", it is the brutality and neglect suffered by the individual in an institution which exacerbates his illness and prevents recovery, since the road to recovery is not only physical but mental and spiritual as well.

Jonathan, however, temporarily experiences respite from his depression and isolation when he befriends the female patient in the adjacent room. Her sympathy, attention and companionship benefit him immensely. But this opportunity for love and happiness is quashed by the intentional maliciousness of the hospital personnel who forbid any further contact between the two patients. The additional shock of having both legs amputated crushes Jonathan's spirit forever, and he retreats into himself, cutting off all further contact with the outside world. His death is without dignity, in the paroxysms of pain and suffering. Heym's conception of human fate is further illustrated in the story of the engineer's own life filled with hardship and disaster, which he relates to the girl. Like a small boat, the individual is tossed about by the cruel waves of fate, doomed in the end to be smashed by them against the rocks.

The story begins with a description of the circumstances surrounding Jonathan's stay in the hospital. Both of his legs are in casts, he is unable to move at all, and the only human contact he has had during the time of his stay there has been a peevish and unsympathetic nurse, who has shown nothing more than indifference for his misery and suffering. The boredom and monotony of his existence are expressed in the first paragraph through the repetition of the time element ("schon den dritten Tag", "langsam") and

with the metaphor of hours as endlessly falling waterdrops. Time does not promote healing nor does it bring with it eventual recovery, but is for the patient like illness itself: an inescapable enemy, a curse, and a cause of further suffering. Time is experienced as "die der Lebensgrenze zustürzende Flucht leerer, nur vergehender Zeitmomente".¹ Pain and time are described metaphorically with verbs ascribing to them the movement of animals, such as "kriechen" ("to creep", "to crawl"):

"und wenn die Schmerzen aus seinen gebrochenen Knien langsam an ihm heraufkrochen" (p. 38)

"Die Dunkelheit des frühen Herbstabends kroch durch die leeren Fenster in das elende Zimmer" (p. 38)

This same metaphor occurs in other stories such as "Die Sektion" where it describes the process of the corpse's decay: "und die Verwesung des Todes kroch mit ihren bunten Krallen über ihn hin".² Jonathan thinks that each bed is like a "Maul, das nach einem neuen Kranken zu schnappen schien".³ Thus time, pain, illness and death are depicted using language and imagery which clearly emphasize the passivity and helplessness of the patients, and their total subjugation and exploitation by these forces: "Und sie mussten ruhig in ihren Betten liegen, sie mussten sich den körperlichen Schmerzen hingeben, sie wurden bei lebendigem Leibe geschunden".⁴

Colours too are used to symbolize these forces. Just as in "Die Sektion" where the colour white conveys the callousness of

the hospital surroundings, and in "Der Irre" where terror flies through the house like a frenzied white bird, Jonathan sees Pain stretch out its long white fingers. Jonathan lies on large white pillows which seem to consume him: "Der kleine Jonathan lag in seinen grossen weissen Kissen".⁵

The repetition of adverbs meaning "eternally" and "again" imparts to them symbolic meaning:

"Und sein Bett schien mit ihm auf einem höllischen Strome herunterzuschwimmen, dessen ewige Kälte in die ewige Starre einer verlorenen Wüste endlos zu laufen schien." (p. 38)

"Und er war wieder allein, wieder verlassen, wieder seinen Qualen ausgeliefert ..." (p. 38)

Repetition to the point of hyperbole causes a word to lose its inherent function of description and to take on a symbolic, abstract function. Jonathan's individual experience of loneliness and abandonment is magnified into a metaphysical, universal condition, especially through religious symbolism. When Jonathan spots the female patient lying in the next room, he thinks that she is "jemand wie er, herausgeworfen aus dem Garten des Lebens".⁶ The hospital is the hell to which this Adam and Eve are condemned. The Christian image of hell is secularized into that of an earthly hell, symbolizing the horrors, senselessness, and monotony of earthly existence.⁷

Most sentences are long and drawn out, usually comprising two or more main clauses. Conjunctions are, however, often left

out, leaving the various elements juxtaposed to one another and without as clear^a connection between them. The drawn out structure of some sentences serves to emphasize the monotony of time and the overwhelming feelings of hopelessness in the patients:

"Ach, warum hier sterben, hier, wo man den Tod an jedem Bette stehen sah, hier, wo man dem Tode ausgeliefert war wie eine Nummer, mit sehenden Augen, hier, wo jeder Gedanke vom Tode infiziert war, hier, wo es keine Illusionen mehr gab, wo alles nackt, kalt und grausam war." (p. 39)

The theme of hopelessness is vividly expressed in the blasphemous image of Christ dying on the cross, which according to Jonathan serves as a constant reminder of the patients' own powerlessness rather than as a source of hope and strength. For him Christ is no longer the saintly figure who sacrificed himself for the sins and weaknesses of the world, who took upon his own shoulders the burdens of the world, and who suffered to prove his compassion for the righteous suffering on this earth. Jonathan sees him as an image which radiates weakness and who, like the patients, is a victim of the cruel and ruthless powers governing the world. Religion can no longer provide a haven or solace and redemption from their sufferings. Christ, the ultimate symbol of comfort and strength, the source of inspiration and of belief in virtue and goodness, is perverted into a grotesque and revolting figure, a symbol of the tragic and inescapable fate of the weak and suffering.

As I. Jens points out: "Die Heilsgeschichte ist bei Heym säkularisiert; das Bild des Gekreuzigten verbindet sich für Heyms Vorstellung nicht mehr mit dem messianischen Erlösungsgedanken, es ist vielmehr dessen Widerlegung, Denkmal vergeblichen Leidens und verratener Hoffnung."⁸

Jonathan's encounter with the female patient in the next room allows him for the first time to establish real human contact, which arouses new hopes in him and provides him some respite from the depression and fears which till then have assailed him constantly. Direct speech and dialogue impart immediacy to the events and an added dimension of reality to the two characters. A bond of friendship is created between them. They are "wie zwei Schiffsbrüchige, die in einem uferlosen Ozean nebeneinander dahintreiben".⁹ The image of the sea in Heym's work expresses a longing to find escape from the restrictions and oppressiveness of a regulated and unfeeling world.¹⁰ Abandoned and alone, their fates are insecure and unknown in a desolate and lonely world.

Jonathan begins telling his friend of the events of his past life which indeed has been like that of a castaway drifting from one disaster to the next in various parts of the world. He has been afflicted with illness on several occasions, but never, so he says, has he had to endure the extreme isolation and the inhuman conditions he must now. Despite the scientific, technological and

medical advances made in the physical treatment of the sick in Western society, the knowledge and practice of satisfying the basic human emotional and spiritual needs of the ill cannot even equal that of the more 'primitive' societies. The practitioners of Western medicine have not yet realized that a human being whose psychological well-being is not properly cared for will not recover physically either.

The vast significance and unrealistic expectations which Jonathan attaches to his meeting with this girl and its further outcome, is conveyed using Christian imagery. The heavens of love have now been opened up to him, he says, filling his heart with uncertain happiness. Whereas Christ for him symbolizes hopelessness and despair, the girl inspires hope, love and trust. Her profile "schien aus der Dunkelheit herauszubrennen, wie das Gesicht eines Heiligenbildes in einer dunklen Kirche".¹¹

The actions of the doctor force an end to the brief friendship between Jonathan and the girl. Both are reprimanded for disturbing the quiet, and further contact between them is prohibited. The doctor, after examining Jonathan's legs, remarks to him curtly that his chances for recovery are minimal and that he mustn't expect any improvement. The callousness of the manner with which this information is conveyed adds to the crushing blow of his words. Jonathan's hopes for recovery and escape out of his lone-

liness and isolation are at once brutally dashed, sealing his terrible fate. Here, just as in "Die Sektion" and "Der Irre", the doctors are representative of the brutality of modern civilization and of the hollowness of its ideals of order and progress.¹²

Shortly afterwards, Jonathan is overcome by a renewed attack of fever. His despair and hopelessness return once again: "Nun würde ihn niemand mehr erlösen, nun würde ihn niemand mehr retten."¹³ A change occurs in the story from the realistic third-person narration to a series of visions which reflect the life-and-death struggle which Jonathan is waging inside him and in which despair and madness threaten to annihilate him. Religious terms again convey his serious and desperate situation and the results of his shattered dreams. Christ's smile seems to him malicious and feigned. He no longer suffers for humanity's sake, but like a masochist, revels in his torment. Jonathan envisions his neighbour in the next room, who now looks like a corpse rather than a saint. When he awakes, the pains in his legs are so severe that he thinks they are being extracted with tongs.

Death stands on the hospital roof, towering above the suffering patients. The same image occurs in Heym's poem "Das Fieberspital":

Auf ihrem Dache sitzt ein Mann im Stuhl
Und droht den Kranken mit dem Eisenstab 14

This figure resembles the pseudo-mythological figures in the poems "Der Gott der Stadt" and "Der Krieg" by Heym which bring chaos and destruction into a seemingly ordered and civilized world. Like the mysterious figure in this story and the Plague in "Das Schiff", these are creatures without definite shape or form, which increases their terrifying effect on their victims. Kurt Mautz states that the personification of such forces in Heym's work expresses the superior yet incomprehensible powers which reality exercises over man and their inherent negative and threatening character.¹⁵ According to Zimmermann in his article "Jonathan", the terrible howling of the patients in response to the appearance of this figure "evoziert die makabre Vorstellung einer höllischen Messe, die zur Feier der diabolischen Macht des Todes veranstaltet wird".¹⁶ Just as hunger compels the masses to revolt in "Der 5. Oktober", the pain of the patients turns into a mad orgy of howling and protest. The grotesque visions of decay and disease climax in one sentence, in which visual imagery captures and heightens the overwhelming despair and helplessness of patients who like Jonathan, are doomed to become victims of Death, which thus broadens Jonathan's personal experience into a more universal one:

"Überall drang das entsetzliche Brüllen hin,
Überall weckte es die Schläfer aus ihrem
kraftlosen Schlaf und überall weckte es ein

schreckliches Echo, bei den Krebskranken, die kaum entschlafen waren, denen nun der weisse Eiter wieder in ihren Därmen zu rinne begann, bei den Verdamnten, denen die Knochen wegfaulten, langsam, Stück für Stück, und bei denen, denen auf dem Kopf ein furchtbares Sarkom wucherte, das von innen heraus ihre Nase, ihren Oberkiefer, ihre Augen wegfrass, ausfrass, austrank, und riesige stinkende Löcher, grosse Trichter voll gelber Jauche in ihrem weissen Gesicht aufgerissen hatte." (p. 46)

The nurses running about with needles filled with opium to relieve the patients from their pain, are like the ministrants of a strange church service. The scene resembles that in "Der 5. Oktober", where the suffering masses find temporary escape and release from their anger and frustrations in their visions and reveries, after which they are once more reduced to apathetic creatures without a will to act. Similarly in this story the patients are manipulated and lied to by the doctors and nurses and given drugs to subdue and render them powerless: " ...und der Aufstand der Schmerzen endete in Tränen, Schlaf und stumpfer Resignation".¹⁷

Jonathan too becomes victim to this:

Jonathan fiel in eine dumpfe Betäubung. Der Schmerz hatte sich ausgerast, er war zuletzt erstickt in Apathie. ¹⁸

The narration returns once more to a factual and realistic description of events. Jonathan's legs have quickly and unexpectedly swollen, and he must have them amputated. After the operation has been performed, Jonathan is not only physically crippled ("um

die Hälfte kürzer gemacht"), but emotionally as well.¹⁹ The author ironically compares his body to that of an exotic god rising out of a calyx.

When Jonathan sees his friend once more, he seems unable to recognize her. The shock caused by the operation and his overwhelming feelings of alienation and shame have totally taken control over him, and prevent him from reaching out to the only person who can now help him. In "Eine Fratze" (1911), Heym wrote:

Unsere Krankheit. Vielleicht könnte sie
etwas heilen: Liebe. Aber wir müssen am
Ende erkennen, dass wir selbst zur Liebe
zu krank sind. 20

This applies appropriately to Jonathan's situation at the end of the story. In his article, Zimmermann points out that illness has two primary symbolic functions in this story, as in Heym's prose in general: it signifies the alienation of the individual from the rest of the society (as represented by the doctors and nurses), and it means the alienation of the individual from himself, the dissolution of the "I" or self.²¹ The hallucinations and visions which Jonathan experiences as he is dying reflect this dissolution. He sees the wallpaper move. The room fills with dwarfs whose blue heads are like cornflowers. When he tries to discern their features, they become blurred in "lauter blaue Flecken". The colour blue, as Kurt Mautz points out, symbolizes death and decay, an "Erlöschen des Lebens",²² and occurs

in "Die Sektion" in the "blaue Fäulnis" of the corpse's forehead.

The final scene of the story takes place in a large field. Jonathan envisions himself lying "allein und nackt ... auf einer Art Bahre", like the corpse in "Die Sektion" who lies "allein und nackt auf einem weissen Tisch in dem grossen Saal". According to I. Jens, these scenes symbolically portray "die ungeheure Verlassenheit des Menschen in kosmischer Weite".²³ The figure of Death which stood above the hospital, has now become the figure of a man in rags shaking his bony fist. The girl is there with him too. Both beckon to Jonathan who must choose whom to follow: Life (as represented by the girl), or Death (the skeleton in rags). Jonathan, however, has neither the will nor the strength to defy Death, whom he follows into the endless darkness. The ending of the story, as I. Jens points out, resembles that of "Das Schiff": "Die Fahrt bleibt ziellos, sie vermag nicht, den Bannkreis des Schreckens zu verlassen."²⁴ Jonathan finds no escape or comfort in death from his suffering on earth. As in life, so too in death is he a castaway, doomed to forever wander aimlessly through the universe.

iii) "Jonathan": Footnotes

1 Kurt Mautz, Mythologie und Gesellschaft im Expressionismus: Die Dichtung Georg Heyms (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1961), p. 163.

2 Georg Heym, "Jonathan", in K.L. Schneider, ed., Georg Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften, Vol. 2: Prosa und Dramen (Hamburg: Heinrich Ellermann, 1962), p. 36.

3 Ibid., p. 39.

4 Ibid., p. 40.

5 Ibid., p. 38.

6 Ibid., p. 39.

7 Werner Zimmermann, "Jonathan", in his book Deutsche Prosadichtungen unseres Jahrhunderts: Interpretationen für Lehrende und Lernende (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1966), Vol. 2, p. 167.

8 I. Jens, Studien zur Entwicklung der expressionistischen Novelle (Tübingen, 1954), p. 177.

9 Heym, op. cit., p. 40.

10 Mautz, op. cit., p. 178.

11 Heym, op. cit., p. 43.

12 Fritz Martini, "Die Sektion", in his book Das Wagnis der Sprache: Interpretationen deutscher Prosa von Nietzsche bis Benn (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1954), p. 277.

13 Heym, op. cit., p. 45.

14 Heinz Rölleke, Die Stadt bei Stadler, Heym und Trakl (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1966), p. 164.

15 Mautz, op. cit., p. 126.

16 Zimmermann, op. cit., p. 173.

- 17 Heym, op. cit., p. 47.
- 18 Heym, op. cit., p. 47.
- 19 Heym, op. cit., p. 48.
- 20 Zimmermann, op. cit., p. 170.
- 21 Zimmermann, op. cit., p. 170.
- 22 Mautz, op. cit., p. 357.
- 23 Jens, op. cit., p. 188.
- 24 Jens, op. cit., p. 178.

iv) "Die Sektion"

The shortest of the five stories, "Die Sektion", portrays the theme of the dehumanization of the individual perhaps most poignantly. A dissection is being carried out on a dead man's body. The sun which shines upon the corpse seems to cause new life to stir in it which eventually reaches the brain, causing it to bring back memories of the past. As Fritz Martini points out in his excellent analysis of this story, the story is divided into two halves.¹ In the first, there is a description of the hospital room, the corpse, and the doctors. The decaying corpse especially is depicted in gruesome yet colourful and exotic detail. At the same time, the doctors are dissecting the body like cruel torturers who pull out its various parts indiscriminately and revel in their senseless desecration of it. In the second half of the story, the corpse's brain is "reactivated", and dreams and visions of a past love are recalled. Love is a spiritual force strong enough to survive despite physical death and decay. Martini remarks: "Auf den Kontrast ist der Gesamtaufbau der Erzählung in seiner schroffen Zweiteilung zwischen kreatürlicher Verfallenheit an Qual und Verwesung einerseits, der seligen Ver-zückung entkörperter Liebe andererseits hingerichtet".²

The style of the prose can also be divided into two types. Concise, factual sentences conveying events and actions are in sharp contrast to the long and more complex sentences which predominate in the story and in which description and imagery border on hyperbole.

The corpse undergoing the dissection remains anonymous throughout the story, identified by neither name nor former occupation (like the madman in "Der Irre"), and without any particulars about his life and death. As Martini points out, the definite article "der" in "der Tote" (as opposed to "ein" Toter) makes this corpse symbolically representative of all the dead, and reveals death as the cruelly inescapable force which obliterates the individual and the unique in life and brutally reduces everything to a common denominator. Change is thus the only constant force in all existence.³ Martini states:

Heym greift die Wirklichkeit da an, wo sie auch für ihn unwiderlegbar in Erscheinung treten musste: an der physischen Beschaffenheit des Menschen. Der Leib, so darf man dessen Darstellung in Heyms Dichtungen deuten, ist aber die Realität, die den Verfestigungs- und Verhärtungstendenzen des Bestehenden spottet. Er verändert sich unaufhaltsam, er zerfällt und verwandelt sich im Tod schliesslich in blosser Natur. 4

The first sentence of the story sets the mood. The corpse is lying naked and alone in a white and austere operating room.

The repetition of the adjective "white" attributes to it the symbolic meaning of lifelessness.⁵ In this sentence, the initial factual description of the surroundings is followed by the emotional and subjective impressions which these surroundings make. This is conveyed especially by the adjectives "bedrückend" and "grausam". The first sentence builds up to a climax at the end, in which reality is completely transcended in the vision of the cries of endless torments.

The sun is the catalyst which causes the dead body to change and to decay more rapidly. It brings forth new life in the corpse, which is compared to a blossoming green landscape and thus contrasts with the cold and lifeless surroundings of the hospital. In the heat, his wound bursts "wie eine rote Ackerfurche".⁶ Martini states that the corpse "erhält eine zauberhafte und vergiftete Schönheit als sakrales Opfer vor dem Gott, der Tod heisst".⁷ The corpse embodies an exotic and unreal world of demonic beauty in which life and death come together. Decay is revealed as a hidden life force: an active, mysterious and incomprehensible process. What seems to be dead is in fact alive and undergoing constant change.

The doctors enter to begin their dissection. They are described as "ein paar freundliche Männer", educated (as symbolized by their duelling-scars) and seemingly cultivated (their golden pince-

nez).⁸ Their duelling-scars allude to their cool nerve and cold-bloodedness and that they are inured to "cutting up" others in duels, and being "cut up" themselves. A full personal description is not given of them, only a few superficial characteristics which outwardly designate them as physicians are briefly mentioned. The demonic image of their instruments, of needles which "wie krumme Geierschnäbel ewig nach Fleisch zu schreien schienen"⁹, undermines the conventional but superficial image of the doctors. This is later confirmed in the statement: "Sie glichen furchtbaren Folterknechten ...".¹⁰ The doctors have suddenly and unexpectedly turned into demonic torturers who brutally manipulate and abuse the helpless corpse which initially was thought to be an object for study. They treat the body as a thing, not as a human being who once pulsed with life like themselves and who now even in death is full of life. They thereby violate the rights and integrity of this human being. Martini states: "Der Tote, der einmal ein lebender und liebender Mensch war, ist zum preisgegebenen Objekt der blühenden Verwesung wie einer in wissenschaftlicher Sachlichkeit sich verkleidenden Dämonie geworden".¹¹ The individual is pitted against a collective "sie", the anonymous group of doctors. As Kurt Mautz points out, the expressionists often intentionally make nouns plural to depersonalize them, to make them abstract, and to impart to them an ominous and threatening character.¹² The doctors

and the hospital no longer represent the orderly and the rational. The seemingly civilized milieu of the operating room is in reality violent and horrible. Beneath this veneer of bourgeois respectability and orderliness lies the demonic and the perverse.

Midway through the story, there occurs a marked change in the narrative which signals the beginning of the second half of the story: "Der Verwesung des Fleisches stellt der Erzähler jetzt die Verzückung im Todestraum entgegen".¹³ Colette Dimić as well points this change out in her thesis: "Obwohl bei Heym die Welt der dämonischen Gegenstände unheimlich tyrannisch geworden ist, bring doch der Geist, d.h. die Hoffnung, oft den Ausgleich".¹⁴ The second section begins with the sentence "Aber der Tote schlief", which corresponds to the first sentence of the story: "Der Tote lag allein...".¹⁵ The indestructible realm of the soul, of the inner being of this dead man, is now revealed to us. Although the body is in a state of decay and decomposition, the brain and the soul still remain whole and intact. The imagery is characterized by a calmness which contrasts with the violence and grotesqueness of that in the first half of the story. For example, this is conveyed through the verb "schlafen" in "Aber der Tote schlief", which is repeated in the next sentence: "... er schlief". As the dreams and memories come alive in the dead man's mind, the lyric element becomes predominant in the imagery and language.

In contrast to the callousness of the hospital rooms, nature outside is unrestricted, idyllic, full of life and light.

In the next paragraph, the brutally decaying body of the dead man contrasts with the former vision of idyllic harmony outside. Decay consumes the corpse more and more. The "prächtige rote und blaue Farben" of the first half of the story have become "das schwarze Blut des Todes" and "die blaue Fäulnis" in the second. The colours black and blue give the impression of extreme violence. Even the figure of the body is now becoming indiscernable, since the skin has begun to disintegrate. The gruesome sight is made more grotesque when the deformed mouth of the dead man seems to smile. What was thus once the subject of romantic poems and of lovers' adulation, has become part of the decay.

In his mind, the corpse carries on a conversation with a loved one, whom he addresses as "du", but who like the corpse remains unidentified. The following passage is in fact a monologue, a "Gespräch der Seele mit ihren eigenen Träumen".¹⁶ Memories of past experiences come alive once more in which the dead man envisions his lover. But these visions take on aspects of fantasy and of unreality in his imagination. Images of fire and light are mixed with tenderness and feeling. Nature encompasses the girl, and love is embodied in its beauty. Just as the decomposing body of the dead man is being absorbed back into nature, he envisions the girl

too being transformed into nature: "Wie du durch die Mohnfelder gingest, selber eine duftende Mohnflamme"; "das Licht der Kerzen ... (das) dein Haar in einen goldenen Wald verwandelt".¹⁷ The grotesque and brutal images of decay have been overcome. Whereas in the first half of the story, the syntax of the sentences followed the basic pattern of subject followed by verb, now conjunctions introduce the sentences ("Wie du", "Und dein Kleid", "Aber dein Kopf"), and these sentences have a flowing lyrical rhythm. Two worlds are being juxtaposed to each other and stand in contrast: the material, transient and fragmented world, and the spiritual, harmonious and ever-lasting world, "das Gewaltsame und Satanische einerseits, das Gefühlvoll-Schwärmerische, Mystisch-Innige andererseits".¹⁸ As Fritz Martini points out: "Heyms Erzählung scheint uns an einer sehr charakteristischen Übergangsstelle zwischen den Nachwirkungen des Jugendstils und dem Frühexpressionismus zu stehen".¹⁹ The images and metaphors, the rhythmic style of the language and the sentence structure, are characteristic of the "Jugendstil" style. Images such as the billowing skirt, the golden forest of the girl's hair, and the poppy field, are typical of that period. Nature is not portrayed as a real landscape, but as a fairytale land. The dead man's memories of past happy experiences are coloured with melancholy and transience. The setting sun and the dusk form the background of these visions, making the scene

one of parting lovers. But the dead man no longer feels alone for he has found release in the memory of union with a loved one.

The story ends in a manner typical of Heym: in a feeling of unearthly transcendence and of romantic boundlessness. According to Martini, this is "die Sehnsucht nach poetisch-romantischer Verklärung, nach Entgrenzung des Ich in den Rausch und Traum der Weite".²⁰ Death is not absolute, for the spirit lives on in its dreams and ecstasies. Physical death frees the spirit into a realm of unchanging timelessness. Thus decay and ecstasy, annihilation and transcendence, cruel loneliness and exploitation and the dream of love and unity, are the sharp contrasts which exist within this story. Ecstasy and love do not triumph over bodily decay, however, nor do they detract from its horrors completely, for in the last sentence the doctors break open the skull of the dead man where these dreams are harboured: "Und der Tote zitterte leise vor Seligkeit auf seinem weissen Totentische, währen die eisernen Meissel in den Händen der Krzte die Knochen seiner Schläfe aufbrachen".²¹ Thus the story ends suddenly on a somewhat pessimistic note which again underlines the dualistic nature of the story.

iv) "Die Sektion": Footnotes

1 Fritz Martini, "Die Sektion", in his book Das Wagnis der Sprache: Interpretationen deutscher Prosa von Nietzsche bis Benn (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1954), p. 266.

2 Ibid., p. 276.

3 Ibid., p. 268. This also applies to the title of the story, "Die Sektion" (instead of "Eine Sektion").

4 Ibid., p. 271.

5 Ibid., p. 268. The same symbolic use of the colour white occurs in the first pages of "Jonathan" as well.

6 Georg Heym, "Die Sektion", in K.L. Schneider, ed., Georg Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften, Vol. 2: Prosa und Dramen (Hamburg: Heinrich Ellermann, 1962), p. 35.

7 Martini, op. cit., p. 271.

8 Martini, op. cit., p. 277.

9 Heym, op. cit., p. 35.

10 Heym, op. cit., p. 35.

11 Martini, op. cit., p. 277.

12 Kurt Mautz, Mythologie und Gesellschaft im Expressionismus: Die Dichtung Georg Heyms (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1961), p. 167.

13 Martini, op. cit., p. 280.

14 Colette Dimić, Das Groteske in der Erzählung des Expressionismus. (Scheerbart, Mynona, Sternheim, Ehrenstein und Heym) (Freiburg, 1960), p. 177.

15 Heym, op. cit., p. 36.

16 Martini, op. cit., p. 282.

17 Heym, op. cit., p. 37.

18 Martini, op. cit., p. 284.

19 Martini, op. cit., p. 283.

20 Martini, op. cit., p. 285.

21 Heym, op. cit., p. 37.

v) "Das Schiff"

Heym's story "Das Schiff" relates the mysterious death of a ship's crew who have landed on a small unknown island. One by one they are overcome by a strange overpowering force which takes on a series of different shapes and causes them to suffer mental and physical paralysis: the plague. The unpreparedness of the men for such a drastic and unexpected turn of events, their inability to deal with it adequately, and the horrors caused by being subjected to such a fate, comprise the story's main theme. Each man realizes his inevitable fate beforehand, but is powerless to escape it and forced to suffer uncertainty, fear and terror during his last hours, while waiting for the plague to take its next victim. As the physical effects of the disease become stronger, the fear and hallucinations caused by it increasingly take control of their minds as well. At the end of the story, the ship filled with corpses sails off with the Plague at its helm.

The style of the prose throughout the story is factual and concise. The story begins with a description of the ship's voyage and its crew-members, and of the events leading up to its landing at the unknown island. Heym's fascination with the exotic, unknown and far-away is given expression in this story. A variety of nationalities comprise the crew of this coral boat. The reason for

their landing on the island is not stated explicitly, except that they intend to seek out the island's inhabitants. Thus it seems that some mysterious turn of fate has brought them here.

The deathly silence they encounter immediately forebodes evil: "Nirgends war etwas Lebendes auf der ganzen Insel".¹ The tall trees encircle them "wie riesige Tote in einer furchtbaren Starre", arousing fear and anguish in the men. Nature has taken on demonic qualities. Some new and inexplicable force seems to alienate one man from another, and prevents them from pulling together and mutually expressing their thoughts and feelings.

They come upon three corpses which clearly show signs of disease, the first tangible proof that the fear they felt upon their arrival on the island has a real cause. A mysterious threat seems to be expressed on these faces as well: "Aber eine rätselhafte Drohung schien auf den Gesichtern dieser Leichname zu stehen, etwas Böses schien unsichtbar in der stillen Luft zu lauern, etwas, wofür sie keinen Namen hatten, und das doch da war, ein unerbittlicher eisiger Schrecken"(p. 53). The men are seized with an uncontrollable panic. Instead of rationally facing up to their fears, determining their cause, and choosing an appropriate plan of action to deal with the immediate situation, they are thrown into disorganization and confusion.

The threat first takes shape in the figure of a woman in mourning, which the Englishman spots as the men are fleeing from

the corpses. This same figure appears at the end of the story as the old woman who pursues the Frenchman to his death. When the Englishman tells the others what he has seen, they make fun of him and attempt to shrug it off as unimportant. But upon returning to the ship, silence once more reigns among them: "Irgend etwas schloss ihnen den Mund" (p. 54).

The combination of two or more main clauses into one sentence allows for events to be reported at a rapid pace in the narrative. For example: "Sie waten durch den Uferwald, dann krochen sie mühsam über einen Berg, kamen durch eine Schlucht, wieder über einen bewaldeten Berg." (p. 52). In this sentence, grammatical correctness and parallelism are sacrificed to create the impression of rapid action. In the third clause of the above example, both the subject and conjunction are left out, and in the fourth, subject, verb and conjunction are missing, thus accelerating the tempo and rhythm in this sentence.

That same evening the Frenchman sees the rats abandoning ship. Nature once again gives warning that danger is at hand and it is further evidence that the same fate which struck the natives on the island threatens the crew as well.

The underlying but until now suppressed fear and tension explode in a brawl between two of the crew-members over a trivial issue. The behaviour of the men under stress contradicts the impression of unity and harmony which was given at the beginning

of the story: "Und weil sie so wenig waren, hatten sie gute Freundschaft gehalten." (p. 52).

The images of gloom and death increase in number and in intensity. In the following sentence, the atmosphere is described with numerous adjectives whose effect verges on hyperbole: "Und die bleierne Atmosphäre einer tropischen Nacht, voll von schweren Nebeln und stickigen Dünsten, senkte sich auf das Schiff und hüllte es ein, düster und trostlos." (p. 55). Death is already present in the closed-in, constrictive, coffin-like atmosphere surrounding the ship. The men's breathing sounds as if it were emanating from beneath the lid of a coffin. In his sleep, the Frenchman dreams of a large hearse travelling down a street in the dusk, and he is unable to open his eyes because "eine bleierne Hand schloss sie zu" (p. 55).

The image of the moon appears in this story as well as in "Der Irre" and "Jonathan". Kurt Mautz points out that in Heym's work, the moon is an evil, demonic figure of tyranny and horror, "Herr über eine gespenstige Nacht- und Gräberwelt", representing the "Triumph des Abgestorbenen und Sinnlosen".² The skull as an image of tyranny occurs here as well as in "Der Irre". The moon is like a blind man's eye which, having suffered either disease or wounds, can no longer function properly, and once again reflects the ultimate fate of the ship's crew:

Der Mond steckte seinen gelben Schädel zwischen zwei hohen Palmen hervor. ... Nur manchmal erschien er noch zwischen den treibenden Wolkenfetzen, trüb und klein, wie das schreckliche Auge der Blinden. (p. 55)

Nature in Heym's work does not represent order and harmony, but rather it is fragmented into elements which seem to be independent, self-willed, and threatening entities. In this story, the moon and the sun take on anthropomorphic characteristics which are primarily negative, and more abstract forces such as the plague and death are personified and given human form.

The threat is turned into reality, signalled by a piercing scream from the Irishman's hammock. The crewmen are paralyzed with fear and unable to speak. Shuffling footsteps and a shadow are the only visible signs of the plague's presence. Once more nature reflects these events as the moon appears ominously in the doorway and "spiegelte sich in ihrer schrecklichen Blässe" (p.56). The plague acts as a demonic power which dehumanizes men and reduces them to beings deprived of basic human faculties. The Englishman's tongue shrivels up and droops out of his mouth like a rag. In these grotesque visions, the frightful medical effects of the disease are also documented.

The men, as though in the inescapable and overwhelming grip of death, are drawn as if by a magnet towards the Irishman: "Und gleichsam, wie magnetisch angezogen, gingen sie langsam, in allen

Gelenken schlotternd, auf den Schläfer zu." (p. 57). Similarly in "Der 5. Oktober", the heads of the masses are drawn towards Versailles by the mysterious forces of history which determine their fate: "Wie ein riesiger Magnet riss der Westhimmel ihre Köpfe herum, wo Versailles ihrer harrete." (p. 16). The Irishman's hair has turned white; he is the first victim of the plague. An anonymous voice expresses the one thought they all share: "Das ist die Pest." (p. 58), just as in "Der 5. Oktober", it is an anonymous voice which rouses the crowds to revolt. These words provoke even greater hostility and suspicion among the men: "Und in jedem von ihnen keimte gegen seine Schicksalsgenossen eine dunkle Wut, über deren Grund er sich keine Rechenschaft geben konnte." (p. 58). For the first time they are forced to confront the inevitable truth: "Mit einem Male kam ihnen allen zugleich die Erkenntnis, dass sie verloren waren." (p. 58).

The plague seems to the men like a dragon which is groping for their hearts. Their fear is transformed into paranoia: each man thinks that he is the only one still alive. Nature once again reflects the situation in the image of the sun, which stands on the horizon like an enflamed eye ("wie ein entzündetes Auge"), expressing not only hostility but, like the blind eye of the moon, the effects of disease. The crewmen desert their stations, leaving the ship unmanned and therefore unable to sail.

The Frenchman is the last to die of the plague. At first he hasn't even the strength to close his eyes: "Er war nicht mehr Herr seines Willens." (p. 60). All night he waits in vain for death. Dimić interprets the grotesque images which follow as the hallucinations he suffers from fear, which makes him go mad. He imagines his head to be a huge blazing tower where a snail is crawling up a spiral staircase. Dimić states:

Das Bild zeigt die absolute Niederlage der menschlichen Vernunft der grauenhaften Gefahr gegenüber ... Heym schildert eine schwelgende Vision der triumphierenden Irrationalität: der Kopf wird zur Wendeltreppe (also zu einem verwirrenden Gegenstand, der sich in die Höhe unendlich wendet), und auf dieser Treppe kriecht (eine unheimliche Gangart) eine schlüpfrige weisse Schnecke mit feuchtem Schweif (an sich ein wegen seiner feuchten Schlüpfrigkeit befremdendes Tier). 3

The sea looks like a "feurige Hölle", the sun "eine riesige Masse weissglühenden Eisens" (p. 62). These images of fire represent the fever and madness which are consuming his mind as well as his body.

The plague takes shape in the figure of an old woman dressed in black. As it approaches, the Frenchman flees across the deck and climbs up into the sails. The pace of the narrative is once again quickened by using short sentences:

Da war die Pest noch ein paar Meter entfernt.
Er kletterte an der höchsten Rahe entlang. Am
Ende war ein Seil. Er kam an dem Ende der Rahe
an. Aber wo war das Seil? Da war leerer Raum. (p. 63)

The Frenchman is at last cornered, and losing his balance he falls down onto the deck below. The plague has thus taken its final victim.

In the sky a dark storm approaches, and the sun hides behind the clouds "wie ein Sterbender, der ein Tuch über sein Gesicht zieht" (p. 64). Nature once again represents the victory of the plague and death over man as that of demonic forces. On the deck of the ship stands a dark figure which grows ever larger and towers above the ship, which disappears into the brightness of the heavens. Dimić comments upon this image:

Bei Heym bedeutet dieser Wechsel der Proportionen einen Übergang von Menschlichkeit zu Göttlichkeit (oder Dämonie). Die Gestalt, die zuerst eine schwarz gekleidete Frau war, wächst plötzlich in den Himmel, und ihre Dämonie, ihre vernichtende Übermenschlichkeit kommt erst dann zur völligen Entfaltung. 4

In "Das Schiff", Heym is not successful in creating an allegory out of the events which he has depicted, since disease and suffering are seen as being mere catastrophes of nature which are released by demonic forces incomprehensible to man. Jens states concerning this point: "Gerade in dieser Erzählung wird die Tendenz Heyms sichtbar, die Spuren geschichtlicher Vorgänge im Schauplatz der Natur wiederum zu verwischen, Leid und Grauen als blosse Naturkatastrophen darzustellen, die von dämonischen Mächten spontan ausgelöst erscheinen."⁵ The events of this story have no rational ex-

planation and no justification for their occurrence, but are related as though they were a mystery story. This accounts for the weak impact which the story on the whole makes upon the reader and its lack of a more universal and symbolic significance as a work of literature.

v) "Das Schiff": Footnotes

1 Georg Heym, "Das Schiff", in K.L. Schneider, ed., Georg Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften, Vol. 2: Prosa und Dramen (Hamburg: Heinrich Ellermann, 1962), p. 52. All quotes from the text are taken from this source, and subsequently only their page number will be given within the body of this section of the commentary.

2 Kurt Mautz, Mythologie und Gesellschaft im Expressionismus: Die Dichtung Georg Heyms (Frankfurt am Main, Bonn: Athenäum Verlag, 1961), p. 251.

3 Colette Dimic, Das Groteske in der Erzählung des Expressionismus. (Scheerbart, Mynona, Sternheim, Ehrenstein und Heym) (Freiburg, 1960), p. 170.

4 Ibid., p. 170.

5 I. Jens, Studien zur Entwicklung der expressionistischen Novelle (Tübingen, 1954), p. 183.

vi) "Der 5. Oktober"

In the story "Der 5. Oktober", Heym depicts a brief episode from the early period of the French Revolution, in the time between the storming of the Bastille and the march to the King's palace in Versailles by the Parisian masses, which occurred on October 5, 1789.¹

As K.L. Schneider points out, Heym's portrayal of these events reveals "die eigenwilligste und nur seiner Phantasie gemässe Ausprägung".² Although the theme of revolution appears a number of times in Heym's work (in the poems "Robespierre" and "Le tiers état, and the dramas "Arnold von Brescia" and "Feldzug nach Sizilien", for example), in general Heym was not concerned with giving an accurate historical account of real events, as the content of these works clearly show. Historical events merely provided him with material to use in his literary writings: "Es geht ihm bei der Darstellung mehr um Ausdruck und Freisetzung der eigenen Emotionen als um die faktengetreue Gestaltung geschichtlicher Wirklichkeit".³ Neither was Heym interested in espousing any particular political ideas or ideals in his work.⁴ Revolution held special interest for Heym, since revolution causes a marked and violent impact by unleashing forces which change society, destroy life as well as create it, and thus it affects not

only that particular society, but human history as a whole. The French Revolution, whose impact and violence are almost unequalled in modern history, thus held special attractions for Heym "nicht als politisches oder historisches Ereignis, sondern als ein in seinen Ausmassen unvergleichbarer Ausbruch der Lebensgewalt".⁵ In this exalted state, man is to be transformed through renewal and rebirth. In "Der 5. Oktober", the masses are awakened out of their apathy to new life: "Ihre Leiden waren geadelt, ihre Qualen waren vergessen, der Mensch war in ihnen erwacht".⁶ Heym depicted historical eras which for him symbolized qualities contrary to those he felt characterized his own age and lifetime, a sentiment which he shared with other expressionists. In "Eine Fratze", for instance, he wrote of his own time: "Unsere Krankheit ist, in dem Ende eines Welttages zu leben, in einem Abend, der so stickig ward, dass man den Dunst seiner Fäulnis kaum noch zu ertragen kann".⁷

And in his diary he wrote the following:

Ach, es ist furchtbar. ... Es ist immer das gleiche, so langweilig, langweilig. Es geschieht nichts, nichts, nichts. Wenn doch einmal etwas geschehen wollte, was nicht diesen faden Geschmack von Alltäglichkeit hinterlässt. Wenn ich mich frage, warum ich bis jetzt gelebt habe. Ich wüsste keine Antwort. Nichts wie Quälerei, Leid, Misere aller Art. ... Würden einmal wieder Barrikaden gebaut. Ich wäre der erste, der sich darauf stellte, ich wollte noch mit der Kugel im Herzen den Rausch der Begeisterung spüren. 8

According to Heym, war and revolution would rejuvenate a time of

stagnation and rigidity. "Der 5. Oktober" ends with a hymn to the Revolution as the liberating force of great emotions: "Ihre Herzen, die in der trüben Flut der Jahre, in der Asche der Mühsal erstickt waren, fingen wieder an zu brennen, sie entzündeten sich an diesem Abendrot".⁹

The masses of people are the protagonist in this story: "selbst das Volk im 'Fünften Oktober' ... wird als Masse wieder ein einziges grosses Ich, das hungert und dürstet nach der Gerechtigkeit, das geplagt und gegeisselt wird und sich dennoch freimacht".¹⁰ The people are waiting expectantly for the arrival of the breadcarts to Paris at the beginning of the story. The intensity of their longing and need for food transform the awaited cargo of flour into the gift of salvation and redemption, and turns their physical sufferings and deprivations into those of the spirit. The breadcarts are a new and great revelation which will provide them with "Paradiesen der Sättigung" and bring hope and alleviation for their sufferings and misery. As I. Jens points out, in Heym's short stories time is often experienced as a period of waiting for a liberating event which will relieve man of his suffering.¹¹ Most of this story is taken up with dreams and visions of the masses in which they find temporary respite from their sufferings while waiting for the breadcarts to arrive.

The crowds vent their anger and despair on the baker "mehr aus Langerweile, um sich die Zeit zu vertreiben, als aus der Hoff-

nung, in den Kästen noch Brot zu finden".¹² Their will and determination is apparent in the threats made to the bakers: "Man wird die Bäcker an die Laternen hängen, man wird selber braten, man wird seinen Arm bis über die Ellenbogen in Mehl tauchen".¹³ They wish to rid themselves of their oppressors represented by the bakers, who hold the reins of economic power controlling their lives and determining whether they live or die. The baker is a member of the bourgeois class. His white wig is thrown to the ground, he is forced to repeat a "prayer". He is called a "Mehlwurm", a beetle which feeds on flour and thus deprives the people of their rightful nourishment. The interaction between the crowds and the baker is made more forceful and immediate through direct speech. Their actions are erratic, unplanned and spontaneous, but vicious and ruthless as well, foreboding serious events of greater consequence and broader scope in the future. The crowds, however, quickly become bored with the spectacle. Only the baker's white wig, symbol of his superior social standing, is left lying on the street to dissolve in the rain.

The reality of their hunger once more turns their thoughts to their own plight. The cry of the arrival of the breadcarts rallies them out to the countryside and to the fields stripped bare of their yield. "Wie ein Volk Astronome", they scan the horizon for the promised fulfillment of the revelation. But their hopes are once again disappointed, and they escape into reveries of their

lives in the past and the supposed abundance of food they enjoyed then. They are obsessed with the idea of bread: "Und das Wort "Pain" zwang sich mit seiner ganzen Weisse, seiner Fette, in das Gehirn der Masse ...".¹⁴ They dream of "die heilige Wolke" of the bakers' ovens. Their hands tremble, their teeth chatter, and "wie Maschinen" they chew the sackcloths hanging from their mouths. Weariness and hunger have taken their toll on them:

Ach, sie hatten keinen Willen mehr. Der
Hunger begann ihn langsam zu ersticken und
sie in einem schrecklichen Schlaf und der
Marter seiner Träume zu entmannen. ¹⁵

The grain mills encircle the horizon like "riesige Gottheiten des Kornes", dispersing clouds of flour-like incense. They imagine themselves being beckoned to tables filled with food, but they are mute and paralyzed and unable to respond. Their grotesque and horrible situation is conveyed through the repetition of the word "schrecklich":

Aber die konnten ihre Lippen nicht aufmachen,
schrecklich, sie waren stumm. Schrecklich, sie
konnten kein Glied rühren, sie waren gelähmt. ¹⁶

The masses are like an army condemned to death, doomed to disappear into the belly of Paris to be consumed like food themselves. The overwhelming and inescapable cruelty of their fate, their constant exploitation from birth till death by those in power, is forcefully expressed in one sentence:

Und die schwarzen Träume flatterten über die Haufen, die zu Klumpen geballt beieinander standen und lagen wie ein Heer, verurteilt zum ewigen Tode, geschlagen mit ewiger Stummheit, verflucht, wieder in den Bauch von Paris unterzutauchen, zu leiden, zu hungern, geboren zu werden und zu sterben in einem Meer der schwarzen Finsternis, der Fronen, des Hungers und der Sklaverei, erdrückt von blutgierigen Steuerpächtern, ausgeplündert von der ewigen Auszehrung, entnervt von dem ewigen Rauch der Gassen und wie ein altes Pergament verwelkt von der beizenden Luft ihrer niedrigen Höhlen, verdammt, einst zu erstarren im Schmutze ihrer Betten und in einem letzten Seufzer den Priester zu verfluchen, der gekommen war im Namen seines Gottes, im Namen des Staates und der Autorität, ihnen zum Dank für die Geduld ihres elenden Lebens die letzten Groschen zu Kirchenvermächtnissen abzupressen. (p. 10)

These masses of anonymous individuals were born to suffer, to hunger, and to die "in einem Meer der schwarzen Finsternis". As Heinz Rölleke points out, "Heym gebraucht im Bildvergleich die Vorstellung 'Meer' fast ausschliesslich mit Beziehung auf die Stadt".¹⁷ The city is like a sea for it has no contours and is enveloped in darkness and obscurity.¹⁸ The masses of people who live in this sea of stone have taken on a similar character and are repeatedly referred to as being a "flood" or "river":

"Die Menschenströme gossen sich in die Felder" (p. 8)

"Die Massen begannen zu schwanken, wie ein ungeheurer Malstrom" (p. 15)

"Der Damm war gebrochen" (p. 16)

They remember how "wie grässliche Spinnen" they once stood outside the gates of the Luxembourg Gardens, gaping at the aris-

tocracy enjoying a lavish banquet. To them the Gardens seem like "ein geheimnisvoller Tempel", and they crave access to it to enjoy its excesses and to forget their own suffering and misery. The constant burden of their lives makes them desperate in their desire to find even temporary respite from it. But even the marble cherubs in the park aim their arrows at them as the people are being taken away by the bailiffs.

The masses are contrasted to the aristocracy in the Gardens. Instead of the fragrance of ambergris, a horrible stench is diffused by their clothing. The dirty ostrich plumes on their hats are a grotesque contrast to the silk and pearls of the Queen. The comparison is made even more grotesque when the masses are turned into the motionless pillars of Gomorrah which Death has frozen in their suffering, corresponding to "die Tänze der Hofdamen" in the Luxembourg Gardens:

Die zerstreuten schwarzen Figuren der Massen
 glichen den erstarrten Pas eines düsteren Men-
 uetts, einem Tanze des Todes, den er mit einem
 Male hinter sich hatte erstarren lassen, ver-
 wandelt in einen riesigen, schwarzen Steinhau-
 fen, gebannt und erfroren von den Qualen, Säulen
 des Schweigens. 19

These dreadful conditions have been purposely inflicted upon the masses so that they would rise up in revolt against their oppressors and that "eines Tages sie wie Götter der Zukunft unter den Himmel treten könnten". One day their arms would grow light "wie leichte Tauben beim Schnitterdienste der Guillotinenmesser".²⁰

As Jens points out in her thesis, many of Heym's metaphors and comparisons such as these do not lend themselves to rational analysis or logical comprehension.^{20a}

The masses spot a black dot on the horizon: "War dieser schwarze Punkt das Mekka ihrer Hoffnung, war das ihre Erlösung?" But instead of the breadcarts, it is Maillard who rides up to them. He utters only one word which for the first time expresses the one thought in the minds of all since the beginning of the story: "treason". The crowd wait expectantly for Maillard to address them. The gravity and momentous importance of the present situation and the overwhelming burdens of past injustices are conveyed in one lengthy and complex sentence in which it is stated that the scale of justice which formerly had tilted in favour of the ruling classes, "begann langsam zu sinken".²¹

Maillard addresses the crowds, preaching the need for change, into the bare and gloomy surroundings of the countryside, "in alle Burgen des Elends weit hinaus".²² He depicts their desperate situation and the need for immediate action to rid themselves of their oppressors. Again it is direct speech which conveys immediacy to these events and imparts greater forcefulness and impact to the narrative: "Jedes Wort fiel wie ein schwerer Stein in das Volk".²³ Like the God of the Old Testament, the words of Maillard cause the heavens to quake. He informs them that the Queen has sent her

troops to Versailles to intimidate the National Assembly. The people have been deceived by them:

Wofür habt ihr euer Blut bei der Bastille
gelassen? Es war alles umsonst, hört ihr,
umsonst. 24

The scene is transformed into the demonic: the tree from which Maillard addresses the crowd is like a flame which a demon shoots up from an abyss, and Maillard becomes a "Dämon der Verzweiflung".

The anonymous cry of "Nach Versailles!" suddenly unites the people, giving them new direction and purpose, and uniting them in a common goal. The masses are set spontaneously in march:

Da war ein Ziel. Das war kein Chaos mehr,
die Menschenmassen waren mit einem Schlage
ein furchtbares Heer. 25

When Maillard tries to stop the torrent of the masses and to convince them that they must rationally plan out their moves and choose a leader, they sweep him aside. He is powerless and incapable of influencing or dominating the masses any longer. Heym deviates here from actual historical fact for in real life, La Fayette led the Parisian masses in their march on Versailles. In Heym's story, Maillard merely acts as a catalyst to stir the masses to action. Emotion overrides the actions of the crowds. Despair has changed to rage and determination. The masses embody the force of history which follows its own course and acts according to its own rules.

Helmut Greulich points out that this story differs from the others in that ecstatic optimism is genuinely felt by human beings and that the story ends on a seemingly positive note.²⁶ Yet this optimism is deceptive as well. Though not clearly stated, failure and disappointment are implied in the visions of ecstasy at the end of the story. The masses are compared to Prometheus, the Greek mythological figure who brought fire to earth from the heavens and was afterwards chained to a rock where an eagle devoured his liver. Perhaps Heym intended to reveal the unfounded idealism of the masses as deceptive and unreal, and the dream of an ideal future world as myth. This scepticism is also conveyed by the use of rhetorical questions, which point to the weaknesses and lack of judgement by the masses in their spontaneous decision to go to Versailles:

Sie waren waffenlos, was schadete das, sie
waren ohne Kommandanten, was tat das? Wo
war nun der Hunger, wo waren die Qualen? 27

The new life and vigour of the masses is symbolized with images of fire. The evening sun sets everything ablaze in its light: "Die ganze meilenweite Strasse brannten tausend Köpfe in seinem Lichte wie ein Meer, ein urewiges Meer".²⁸ Glowing poplars line the road of their fame. The desire to create an image of totality at the end, according to Jens, results in only a "Scheintotalität" which is reflected in the pompous and melodramatic image of nature at the end, the "kitsch historischer Kolossalgemälde" of the last sentence.²⁹

vi) "Der 5. Oktober": Footnotes

1 In his article "Sources and Subject Matters in Two Short Stories of Georg Heym", Journal of the Australian Universities Language and Literature Association, XII (1959), 52-57, p. 55, Egbert Krispyn quotes the following paragraph from "The Cambridge Modern History", which briefly outlines the events of that particular day:

On the morning of October 5 a crowd, in the first instance chiefly of women, although afterwards supported by men, assembled in the Place de Greve and began an assault on the Hotel de Ville. Feebly resisted by the National Guards on duty, they forced their way in, seized a quantity of arms and were about to hang an Abbe whom they chanced to find there, when a certain Stanislas Maillard, who had taken part in the attack of the Bastille, raised the cry "To Versailles". The women followed him, and on the march were joined by crowds of male rioters.

Heym's perception of the events of the French Revolution was influenced by a work written in 1905 by the Russian anarchist and revolutionary theoretician Count Peter Kropotkin, the German translation of which appeared in 1909 under the title "Die Französische Revolution 1789-1793". Inspired by the hunger riots of 1905 in Russia, Kropotkin especially stressed the lack of food which the Parisian masses suffered and which led to the march on Versailles. This accounts for the importance of the flour theme in Heym's story. (K.L. Schneider, "Georg Heym", in Benno von Wiese, ed., Deutsche Dichter der Moderne. Ihr Leben und Werk (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1965), p. 373.)

2 K.L. Schneider, "Barrikaden, welch ein Wort. Zum Revolutionsmotiv bei Georg Heym", in his book Zerbrochene Formen. Wort und Bild im Expressionismus (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1967), p. 80.

3 Ibid., p. 80. Hellmuth Himmel states as well that "in Heyms 'Fünften Oktober', die Steigerung der Massenregung zum revolutionären Gefühlshöhepunkt (erscheint) durch die Schönheit des starken Gefühls gerechtfertigt". (Hellmuth Himmel, "Die Novelle zur Zeit des Expressionismus", in his book Geschichte der deutschen Novelle (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1963), p. 413.)

4 "Heym widmet den konkreten politischen Motiven der revolutionären Unternehmungen keine besondere Aufmerksamkeit, so wie seine Dichtungen frei sind von ideologischen Konzeptionen zu Umgestaltung des staatlichen und gesellschaftlichen Lebens." (K.L. Schneider, "Barrikaden, welch ein Wort. Zum Revolutionsmotiv bei Georg Heym", in his book Zerbrochene Formen. Wort und Bild im Expressionismus (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1967), p. 81.)

5 Schneider, op. cit., p. 82.

6 Georg Heym, "Der 5. Oktober", in K.L. Schneider, ed., Georg Heym: Dichtungen und Schriften, Vol. 2: Prosa und Dramen (Hamburg: Heinrich Ellermann, 1962), p. 17.

7 Ibid., p. 173.

8 Helmut Greulich, Georg Heym: Leben und Werk. Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des deutschen Expressionismus. (Wiesbaden: Lessingsdruckerei, 1967), p. 356.

9 Heym, op. cit., p. 18.

10 Kurt Kersten, in K.L. Schneider and G. Burckhardt, eds., Georg Heym: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Werk (Hamburg: Heinrich Ellermann, 1968), p. 270.

11 I. Jens, Studien zur Entwicklung der expressionistischen Novelle (Tübingen, 1954), p. 191.

12 Heym, op. cit., p. 6.

13 Heym, op. cit., p. 6.

14 Heym, op. cit., p. 8.

15 Heym, op. cit., p. 9.

16 Heym, op. cit., p. 9.

17 Heinz Rülleke, Die Stadt bei Stadler, Heym und Trakl (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1966), p. 105.

18 "Gestalt und Wesen des Meeres und der Stadt sind für Heym übertragbar und einander untrennbar zugeordnet. Grösse und Weite der Städte sind die Ausdehnung, die Unermesslichkeit eines Meeres; das Grossstadtleben ist ein ununterscheidbares Gewoge."

(Heinz Rölleke, Die Stadt bei Stadler, Heym und Trakl (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1966), p. 108.) As Rölleke points out in his study of the theme of the city in Heym's work, man in the city is born and dies, and lives a life which in essence is monotonous, senseless and without purpose or direction. Life revolves about in a circle which has no beginning nor end, and thus lacks all perspectives:

Geburt und Tod, Anfang und Ende, Vergangenheit und Zukunft sind in der Grossstadt "gewirktes Einerlei". Das ist die entscheidende Aussage Heyms über das Wesen der Stadt. (Ibid., p. 108.)

19 Heym, op. cit., p. 12. The image of the pillars refers to the Old Testament where Lot's wife is turned to salt for disobeying God's commands.

20 Heym, op. cit., p. 12.

20a I. Jens, op. cit., p. 186.

21 Heym, op. cit., p. 13.

22 Heym, op. cit., p. 14.

23 Heym, op. cit., p. 14. I. Jens points out that certain metaphors and images used here such as "Bluthunde des Bluthundes, Spinnen der Spinne", are intended to have a strictly emotional appeal. (I. Jens, op. cit., p. 168.)

24 Heym, op. cit., p. 15.

25 Heym, op. cit., p. 16.

26 Greulich, op. cit., p. 133.

27 Heym, op. cit., p. 17.

28 Heym, op. cit., p. 18. In this image, the images of sea and flame are united in a metaphor. This occurs as well in the poems "Verfluchung der Städte" ("ein Meer von Flammen") and in "Die Stadt in den Wolken" ("es schien ... ein Flammenmeer um ihren Fuss zu gleiten"). (Rölleke, op. cit., p. 106.)

29 Jens, op. cit., p. 188.

TRANSLATIONS WITH COMMENTARY

THE MADMAN

The male nurse gave him his clothes, the cashier handed him his money, the porter unlocked the large iron door before him. He was in the front yard, unlatched the garden gate, and then he was outside.

All right, now the world was going to get it.

He walked along the streetcar tracks, between the low houses of the outskirts. He went by a field and at its edge threw himself into the growth of large-flowered¹ poppies and hemlock. Crawling in, he hid himself² totally as if in a thick green carpet. Only his face, a pale rising moon, was visible. All right, first of all he was going to sit for a while.

So he was free. But it had been high time they released him, otherwise he would have killed them all, the whole lot of them. That fat director, he would have grabbed him by his red goatee and shoved him into the meat grinder. Boy, he certainly was a loathsome character. How he always used to laugh when he came through the butcher's shop.

Damn it, that was a dirty rotten bastard.

And one of these days he would have kicked in the brains of that hunch-backed swine of an intern. And those male nurses in their white-striped coats, who looked like a band of convicts, those scoun-

drels who used to steal from the men and rape the women in the toilets. That was enough to drive you mad.

And he really didn't know how he had endured all that time he had spent there. How long in fact had he been locked up there - three or four years? Over there in that white hole, that big barracks, among those lunatics. Every morning when he used to cross the large courtyard on his way to the butcher's shop, they'd be lying about, baring their teeth, some of them half-naked. Then the male nurses used to come along and drag away the ones who misbehaved the most and shove them into hot baths. That way more than one had been scalded, on purpose, he knew that. One time those nurses wanted to take a corpse into the butcher's shop to have it ground into sausage. The patients³ were then supposed to eat it. He had told the doctor about it, but the doctor had assured him that it wasn't so. All right, so he too had been part of the plot. That damned bastard. If he only had him here now. He would throw him into the grainstalks and tear out his throat, that damned swine, that son of a bitch, damn him.

Why in fact had they brought him to the asylum in the first place? Surely only to play a trick on him. After all, what had he done? He had only beaten his wife once or twice, but he certainly had a right to do this, he was married. At the police station they should have thrown out his wife, that would have been much better. But instead they had summoned and questioned him,

playing nothing more than little games with him. And then one morning he was no longer allowed to leave. They had bundled him onto a police wagon, out here they had dumped him off. What an injustice, what an insult.

And who had he to thank for all this? Only his wife surely. All right, and now the time had come to settle things with her. She was still first on his list.

In his anger he tore off a bunch of ears of grain⁴ from the edge of the field and brandished it in his hand like a cudgel. Then he stood up, and now heaven help her.

He threw his bundle of clothes⁵ over his shoulder and then set off once again. But he didn't exactly know which direction to take. Beyond the fields, far off in the distance, a chimney was smoking. He recognized it, it wasn't far from his apartment.

He left the street and turned into the fields, plunging right into the midst of the grain stalks. Directly towards his goal. What a pleasure it was to wade among the thickly grown stalks which crackled and burst open underfoot.

He closed his eyes, and a blissful smile flitted across his face.

He felt as though he were crossing an immense square. Many, many people were stretched out there, all with their foreheads to the ground. The scene was just like that in a painting in the director's house depicting many thousands of people in white cloaks

and cowls, prostrate in worship in front of a large stone. And the name of this painting was "Kaaba". "Kaaba, Kaaba", he repeated with every step. He uttered it like a powerful incantation, and each time he would step to the right and to the left as though on the many white heads. And then the skulls would crack; it sounded as if someone had split a nut in two with a hammer.

Some made a very weak sound; those were the frail ones, those were the children's skulls. A sound would be heard then: silvery, light and airy, like a small cloud. Still others would rattle like satyrs when stepped on. And then their red tongues would flicker out of their mouths like rubber balls. Oh, it was really beautiful.

Some skulls were so soft that he would almost sink down into them. They would remain clinging to his feet. And so he would walk with one skull dangling from each foot, as if he had just crawled out of two eggshells which he hadn't yet shaken off entirely.

It gave him the greatest pleasure however when he spotted the head of an old man somewhere, bald and shiny like a marble ball. Then he would first cautiously set his foot on top of it and balance himself a few times, yes, this way, like this. And then he would stomp down on it, and crack: the brain would squirt forth steadily like a small golden fountain. But eventually he grew tired. All of a sudden he remembered the lunatic who thought he

had legs made of glass and couldn't walk. He had sat the whole day at his cutting table, but only after the nurses had first carried him there. He hadn't moved an inch by himself. Whenever they stood him up on his feet, he simply wouldn't budge. Yet his legs were completely healthy, surely everyone could see that. He had not even gone to the toilet on his own, no, how could anybody really be that crazy. What a laugh!

Not long ago the pastor had paid a visit, and at that time he had spoken with him about this madman: "Reverend, just take a look at that one there, the tailor, he's just raving mad. What a stupid bastard he is!" And at that point, the pastor had roared with laughter, so that the walls shook.

He emerged from the stalks, straw was clinging all over his suit and his hair. Somewhere along the way he had lost his bundle of clothes. In his hand he was still carrying the ears of grain, and he waved them before him like a golden banner. He marched with a brisk step. "Right leg, left leg, bacon and eggs", he hummed to himself. And the burrs clinging to his pants flew off in every direction.

"Company, halt", he ordered. He planted his banner into the sand of the road and threw himself into a ditch.

All of a sudden, he became afraid of the sun which was blazing on his temples. Thinking that it would attack him, he buried his face deep into the grass. Then he fell asleep.

Children's voices awoke him. A small boy and a small girl were standing beside him. When they saw that the man was awake, they scurried away.

He became frightfully angry at these two children, his face became flushed like a lobster.

With one bound he jumped up and started after them. On hearing his footsteps, the children began to cry and to run more quickly, the small boy dragging his little sister along. She stumbled, fell, and burst into tears.

And tears were something he could not at all tolerate.

He caught up to the children and snatched the small girl up from the sand. At the sight of the contorted face hovering over her, she screamed loudly. The boy too cried out and tried to flee. But then he seized him with the other hand and began knocking the heads of the two children together. One, two, three, one, two, three, he counted, and each time at the count of three, both tiny skulls would crack together like a clap of thunder. Now the blood was already beginning to flow. This intoxicated him, transforming him into a god. He had to sing. A certain hymn came to his mind. And he sang:

"A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He'll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient prince of hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour;
On earth is not his fellow!" 6

As he accentuated each beat out loud, he banged the two small heads together like a musician striking his cymbals.

After the hymn had ended, he let both shattered skulls fall from his hands. As if in a state of ecstasy, he began to dance around the two corpses. At the same time, he flapped his arms like a large bird, and the blood on them sprayed about him like a fiery rain.

Suddenly his mood changed again. An overwhelming feeling of compassion for the two pitiful children nearly choked him. He lifted up their bodies from the dust of the road and dragged them over into the grainfield. With a handfull of weeds, he wiped away the blood, brains, and dirt from their faces, and sat down between the two small corpses. Then he took their tiny hands in his fists and began stroking them with his blood-covered fingers.

He felt he had to cry; large tears slowly ran down his cheeks.

He thought that perhaps he might bring the children back to life again. He kneeled near their faces and began blowing air into the holes of their skulls. But the children didn't stir. Then he thought that maybe this still hadn't been enough, so he tried again. But this time as well, nothing happened. "All right then, I guess it just won't work", he said, "dead is dead".

After a while countless swarms of flies, mosquitoes, and other insects came out from the fields, drawn by the smell of blood.

Like a thick cloud, they hovered over the wounds. Several times he tried to drive them away. But when he too was stung, the situation became unbearable for him. He stood up and went on his way, while in a dense black swarm the insects dived down on the bloody holes in the skulls.

Well, now where?

Then he remembered what he had to do; he had to settle accounts with his wife. And in the anticipation of his vengeance his face beamed like a crimson sun.

He turned off onto a highway which led to the outskirts.

He looked about.

The road was deserted, disappearing into the distance. High on a hill behind him sat a man in front of a barrel-organ. Then over the hill came a woman pulling a small hand cart.

He waited until she was near, let her go by, and started to follow her.

He thought he recognized her. Wasn't that the greengrocer⁷ who lived at the corner? He wanted to talk to her, but he felt ashamed. Oh, she probably thinks in fact that I'm the nut from number 17. If she recognizes me, she'll make fun of me for sure. And nobody's going to laugh at me, damn it. I'd sooner smash her skull in first.

Once more he felt that the rage was about to surge up within him. He feared this dark frenzy. How terrible, now it will soon

get the better of me again, he thought. His head was spinning, he supported himself on a tree and closed his eyes.

All of a sudden he saw the beast again which dwelled within him. It was below on his stomach and resembled a large hyena. Did it ever have a set of jaws! And the bastard wanted out. Yeah, yeah, you've got to come out.

Now he himself was the beast, and on all fours he was crawling along the street. Quickly, quickly, otherwise she'll get away. How swiftly she can run, but this sort of hyena is faster still.

He barked loudly like a jackal. The woman looked around. Seeing a man on all fours running up behind her, his dishevelled hair falling over his fat face white with dust, she abandoned her wagon right away and began running down the road screaming loudly.

Then the beast pounced. Like a savage it came up behind her. Its long mane was streaming, its claws thrashed in the air, and its tongue drooped from its jaws.

Now it could already hear the woman breathing. Screaming and panting, she scurried away as quickly as she could. Now, just one or two more leaps. Then the beast pounced⁸ right onto the nape of her neck.

The woman struggled in the sand, while the beast hurled her about. Here is the neck, the best blood is there; one should always suck the blood from the throat. It dug its jaws into her throat and began drawing the blood from her body. Oh hell, but is that

ever beautiful.

The beast left the woman lying there and lept away. There above someone else was approaching. Is he ever stupid. He doesn't even notice that hyenas are sitting around here. Oh well, what an idiot.

The old man approached. When he was close, through his large glasses he could see the woman lying in the sand with her skirts in disarray and her knees which in her death-throes she had drawn up to her body. Around her head as well was a large pool of blood.

He remained standing beside the woman, frozen with shock. At that moment, the tall cornflowers parted and a man stepped out, wasted and in tatters. His mouth was full of blood.

"That's got to be the murderer", thought the old man.

In his fright he didn't quite know what he should do. Should he run away or remain where he was?

He finally decided first to try to be friendly with this person. For that guy there surely wasn't quite normal, that you could see.

"Good day", said the madman.

"Good day", replied the old man, "this is really a terrible accident".

"Yeah right, this is a terrible accident, you're completely correct", said the madman. His voice quavered.

"But I must be on my way. Please excuse me."

And the old man first slowly took a few steps. When he found himself a bit farther away and noticed that the murderer hadn't followed him, he quickened his pace. And at length he began running like a little boy.

"But doesn't he look funny, the way he's running. Isn't he off his nut." And the madman's entire face broke out in a laugh; the blood collected in its furrows, making him look like a dreadful demon.

But after all, let him run. That man was really quite right. He would do the same thing too. Since here the hyenas could at any moment come out of the field again.

"Oh hell, am I ever filthy." He looked himself over. "Where did all this blood come from anyway?"

And he tore the apron off the woman and wiped off the blood from himself as best he could.

His memory became clouded. Finally he no longer knew where he was. He started walking again across the countryside, over dirt roads, and through fields, under the scorching midday sun. He saw himself as a large flower wandering through the meadows. Perhaps a rock-rose. He could not quite identify it.

He felt hungry.

Later he found a turnip field, pulled up a few turnips, and ate them.

In a field he came upon a pond.

It lay there like a large piece of black cloth surrounded by the gold of the grain.

He felt like swimming, undressed, and waded into the water.

How good that felt, how it calmed him down. He inhaled the fragrance of the water above which wafted the smell of broad summer fields. "Ah, water, water", he said softly as if he were about to call to someone. And now he was swimming like a large white fish in the rippling pond.

On the bank he wove himself a crown out of the reeds and gazed at his own reflection in the water. Then he began jumping about on the bank and dancing naked in the white sun, tall, strong and handsome like a satyr.

Suddenly he was struck by the thought that he was doing something indecent. He quickly dressed himself and crouching down low, crawled into the stalks.

"If the male nurse were to come now and find me here, he'd really give me hell, he'd complain to the director about it", he thought. But when no one appeared, he summoned up his courage once more and continued on his way.

Suddenly he found himself standing in front of a garden fence. Beyond it were fruit trees. Laundry was hanging to dry on them, and children were sleeping among them. He walked along the fence and came to a street.

A great many people were there who passed by him without paying any attention to him. A streetcar went by.

A feeling of boundless loneliness came over him, and he was gripped with a powerful feeling of home-sickness. He would have liked most to return to the asylum right then and there. But he didn't know where he was. And whom should he ask? He certainly couldn't say to someone: "Say, could you tell me where the insane asylum is?" Then he would surely be taken for a lunatic, and that just wouldn't do.

And he actually did know what he had in mind. In fact he still had many things to settle.

A policeman was standing on the street corner. The madman decided to ask him for directions to his street, but he wasn't quite sure of himself. But after all he couldn't stand there forever. So he started off towards the policeman. Suddenly he noticed that a large bloodstain was still on his vest. Well, he wasn't going to let the policeman catch sight of that. So he buttoned up his coat. He thought out what he was going to say, word for word, and repeated it a few times to himself.

Everything came off well. Raising his hat, he inquired about his street, and the policeman gave him directions to it.

It's not at all far from here, he thought. And now he even recognized the streets. But had they ever changed; now even the streetcar came this far.

He set off on his way, slinking alongside the houses. Whenever someone came towards him, he would turn his face towards the wall. He felt ashamed.

That's how he reached the front of his building. On the doorstep, children were playing who looked at him inquisitively. He climbed the flight of stairs. Everywhere it smelled of cooking. He crept further along on tiptoe. When he heard a door open below, he took off his shoes as well.

Now he was standing in front of his door. He sat down for a moment on the steps and pondered. For now the great moment had arrived. And what had to happen, had to happen, there were no two ways about it.

He got up and rang the bell. Everything remained still. He paced several times back and forth on the landing. He read the name-plate on the opposite door. Other people were living there now too. And then he came back and rang once more. But again no one answered. He stooped down to look through the key hole, but everything was dark in there. He pressed his ear to the door to discern any sound, perhaps a footstep, or a whisper, but everything remained silent.

And now a thought came to him. He suddenly knew why no one opened their door to him. His wife was afraid of him, yes his wife, she had no spunk. That bitch, she already knew what was happening. I'll show her, watch this.

He took a few steps back. His eyes grew smaller and smaller, like small red dots. His low forehead became even more wrinkled. He crouched down low. And then with one great leap, he hurled himself against the door. It cracked loudly, but withstood the impact. Then he screamed with all his might and lunged a second time. And this time the door gave way. Its boards cracked, the lock snapped, it opened, and he crashed in.

There he saw an empty apartment. On the left was the kitchen, on the right, the living room. The wallpaper was tattered. Everywhere the hallway was covered with dust and spilled paint.

So, his wife had gone into hiding. He ran around the four walls of the empty living room, into the narrow corridor, the wash-room, and the bedroom. There wasn't a thing anywhere, everything was empty.

The kitchen too was bare. Then with one leap, he sprung on-to the kitchen stove.

But there she was in fact, there she was scurrying about. She looked like a large grey rat. So that's what she looks like. She kept running along the kitchen wall, round and round, and he seized an iron hot-plate from the stove and flung it at the rat. But she was far too nimble. But now, now he'll hit her. And he threw again. But now. And the bombardment of the iron stove-rings banged against the walls, showering the dust down all over.

He started screaming. He roared as though possessed: "You two-bit whore,⁹ you bitch, you ...". He bellowed so that the entire house shook.

Everywhere the doors rattled, everywhere an uproar erupted. Now it was already coming up the staircase.

Two men were already standing there in the doorway and behind them a group of women, who came pulling an entire battalion of small children clutching their aprons.

They saw the frenzied creature on top of his stove. The two men tried to keep up each other's courage. At that moment, a poker hit one of them on the skull, the other man was thrown to the floor, and with several long leaps, the madman bounded away over the top of the crowd like a gigantic orangutan. He raced up the stairs, reached the ladder leading to the attic, swung himself onto the roof, crawled over a few walls, around chimneys, disappeared in a skylight, tumbled down a flight of stairs, and suddenly found himself on a grassy spot.¹⁰ An empty bench was in front of him. He let himself collapse on it, and burying his face in his hands, began quietly sobbing.

He felt the need to sleep. As he was about to stretch out on the bench, he saw a large crowd of people coming around a street corner, led by several policemen acting like generals.

"They are probably looking for me, I'll have to be taken back to the asylum. They probably think that on my own I don't know what I have to do", he thought.

He hastily left the park. His cap was left lying on the bench. And from far away he could still see how one of the men waved it about in the air like a trophy.

He walked through several crowded streets, across a square, and once again through streets. He felt uncomfortable in the crowd. He felt hemmed in, he tried to find a secluded corner where he could lie down. One house had a large front doorway. In front of it stood a man wearing a brown uniform with gilded buttons. Otherwise it seemed that no one else was about. He walked by the servant, who let him pass without any trouble. This really astonished him. Doesn't he recognize me then, he asked himself. And he actually felt insulted.

He came up to a door which kept revolving. All of a sudden, he was caught by one of its leafs which struck him, and he suddenly found himself in an immense hall.

Innumerable tables were there, filled with lace and clothing. Everything was bathed in a golden light, which was diffused through high windows in the dimness of the spacious room. From the ceiling hung a huge chandelier, and countless diamonds were glittering.

On one side of the hall, a broad, open staircase led upstairs, upon which several persons were going up and coming down.

"Wow, is this ever a fine church", he thought. There were men in black suits standing in the aisles, and girls wearing black dresses. Behind a table sat a woman; in front of her, someone was

counting out money. A coin fell down and rattled on the floor.

He climbed the stairs, walked through many large rooms filled with all kinds of furniture, tools, paintings. In one of them, many clocks were displayed which suddenly chimed in unison. Behind a large curtain a harmonium was playing, a mournful tune which seemed to slowly fade away in the distance. He stealthily drew back the curtain, and then he saw many people listening to a lady playing the harmonium. Everyone looked absorbed and serious, and he was overcome by a feeling of solemnity. But he did not dare go in.

He approached a door covered with an iron grating. Beyond it was a deep shaft where several cables appeared to be moving up and down. A large box rose up from below, the grating was drawn back. Someone said: "Going up, please"; he found himself in the box, soaring upwards like a bird.

Upstairs he encountered many persons standing around large tables filled with plates, vases, glasses, dishes, or milling about in the aisles among a row of raised platforms upon which delicate crystal, candlesticks, or colourful lamps of painted porcelain glittered like a field of glass flowers. On the wall, alongside these costly objects, ran a narrow balcony, one short flight of stairs higher.

He made his way through the crowds, he came up the steps to the balcony. He leaned on the balustrade; below he saw the swarms

of people, who like innumerable black flies seemed to produce a continuous humming with their heads, legs and arms in unceasing movement. And lulled to sleep by the monotony of these noises, drowsy from the afternoon sultriness, sickened by the over-excitement of this day, he shut his eyes.

He was a large white bird soaring over a broad desolate sea, swaying in endless brightness, high above in the blue. His head touched the white clouds, he flanked the sun which filled the sky over his head, a large golden vessel which began to quake vehemently.

His wings, whiter than a sea of snow, strong, with bones like tree trunks, stretched out above the horizon; far below in the high waves, purple islands appeared to be floating, looking like large pink mussels. An endless tranquillity, an eternal stillness quivered under this eternal sky.

He didn't know whether he was flying so quickly or if the sea was being pulled out from beneath him. So that was the sea.

If he could tell this to the others in the asylum, this evening in the dormitories, they would be green with envy. This really pleased him the most. But he'd prefer not to tell the doctor anything, in case he would again say: "Sure, sure." Even though he had not believed a single word. He was such a crumb. Even when he always said he believed everything.

On the sea below, a white sailboat was drifting under slow canvas. "Like one of those from the Humboldt Docks", he thought, "only larger".

Damn it, it sure was nice to be a bird. Why hadn't he turned into a bird long ago? And he rotated his arms in the air.

Below him, several women noticed him. They laughed. Others arrived, they began jostling one another, shop girls ran for the manager.

He climbed onto the balustrade, straightened up, and appeared to hover above over the crowd.

Below him in the ocean was a gigantic light. Now he had to plunge down, now it was time to descend to the sea.

But there was something dark, something hostile there which disturbed him, which wouldn't let him descend. But he will soon take care of that, he is certainly strong enough.

And he reached out¹¹ and leaped from the balustrade into the midst of the Japanese glasses, into the Chinese enamel paintings, and the Tiffany crystal. There's the dark one, there is that, - and he pulled one of the shopgirls up to him, placed his hands around her neck, and began to squeeze.

And the crowd was fleeing through the aisles, people were scrambling over one another down the stairs, piercing screams filled the entire building. Someone was crying "fire, fire". In an instant, the entire floor was empty. Only several small children were lying

in front of the staircase door, trampled or crushed to death.

He knelt on top of his victim and slowly crushed the life out of her.

Encircling him was the vast golden sea with its towering waves on either side like mighty gleaming domes. He was riding on a black fish, he clung to its head with both arms. Is it ever fat, he thought. Far below him, he saw in the green depths, lost but for a few flickering sunbeams, green castles and green gardens in an eternal abyss. How far away would they be? If only once he could go there below, down there.

The castles were moving away ever deeper, the gardens seemed to be sinking deeper and deeper.

He was crying, he will surely never get there. He is only a poor bastard. And the fish beneath him was becoming unruly as well, it was still struggling, he'll take care of this beast yet, and he clenched its throat.

From behind the door appeared a man, he placed a rifle against his cheek, then took aim. The bullet hit the madman in the back of the head. He staggered back and forth several times, then fell heavily across his last victim, among the clattering glasses.

And while the blood gushed from the wound, he felt as though he were now sinking into the depths, ever deeper, gently like a downy feather. An endless melody rose up from below, and his dying heart unfolded, trembling in an immeasurable bliss.

1 "dick": "large-flowered". It is not clear from the German text whether "dick" describes the size of the poppy flowers or the dense growth of these flowers in the field.

2 "verkroch sich": "crawling in, he hid himself". Two meanings of "to crawl" and "to hide oneself" are conveyed by the German verb. It is, however, not possible to convey both of these meanings in English without the use of two separate verbs.

3 The German personal pronoun "sie" cannot be translated here into the English "they", since it would then incorrectly refer back to "those nurses" in the preceding sentence. Therefore the noun "the patients" is used here instead.

4 "Kornähren": "ears of grain", or "spikes". Allan Blunden, in his article "Notes on Georg Heym's 'Der Irre'", mistakenly calls the grainfield a cornfield, and the grainstalks cornstalks. This mistake is the result of the German and English cognates "Korn" and "corn".

5 "Sachen": "clothes". It is not clear at this point what the bundle contains. Only three pages later in the text, when this same bundle is referred to as "sein Kleiderbündel", is it definite that "Sachen" means "clothes" rather than "things".

6 The translation of these verses of Luther's hymn "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" is taken from Congregational Praise (London: Independent Press, 1962), p. 522. This translation is by Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881).

7 "Grünkramfritzen": "greengrocer". "Grünkramhandel" means "greengrocery business" and "Fritze" is a colloquial term meaning "chap, fellow". Therefore "Grünkramfritzen" is a colloquial or slang term, translated here as "greengrocer".

8 The tense of the verbs in the German text changes suddenly from the past imperfect to the present. I feel that this change is not effectively renderable in English. Therefore I have maintained the use of the past tense of the verbs rather than changing them to the present.

9 "Schlafburschenhure": "two-bit whore". This vulgar term could not be found in the dictionary. Literally it means "a night-lodger's whore".

10 Heym's tendency to compress a series of events into one sentence to create an impression of rapid action, is especially apparent in this sentence.

11 Once again there occurs a sudden change in the verb tenses from past to present in the German text, which I have again chosen to ignore in the translation.

JONATHAN

Little Jonathan was already lying for the third day in the dreadful loneliness of his hospital room. The third day already, and the hours were going by ever more slowly. Whenever he closed his eyes, he could hear them slowly trickle down the walls like the unending fall of slow drops in a dark underground cavern.

Since both of his legs were set in rigid splints, he could hardly move, and whenever the pains would slowly creep up his body from his broken knees, he had no one to whom he could hold on, no hand, no comfort, no loving word. Whenever he rang for the nurse, she would come in, sullen, slow, peevish. On hearing him complain about his pains, she would forbid him this idle grumbling. For he'd have her running back and forth every other minute, she used to say, slamming the door shut behind her.

And he would be alone again, abandoned once more, delivered anew to his torments, in a forgotten place, over which from all sides, from below, from above, and from the walls, the pains stretched out their long, white, trembling fingers.

The gloom of the early autumn evening crept through the empty windows into the miserable room, it was growing darker and darker. Little Jonathan lay on his large white pillows; he stirred no longer. And his bed seemed to be floating down with him on an infernal stream

whose eternal cold seemed to run unceasingly into the eternal lifelessness of a lost desert.

The door opened, and the nurse entered with the lamp from the adjacent room. While the door was open, he cast a glance across into the neighbouring room. Up till noon of that day it had been empty. He had seen the bed still empty, just as iron and enormous as his own, standing wide open, like a set of jaws¹ seemingly ready to snap up a new patient. He saw that the bed was no longer empty. He had spotted a pallid face lying in the shadow of the large pillow. As well as he could discern in the dim light of the weak lamp, it was probably a girl. A patient like himself, a companion in suffering, a friend, someone who could give him support, someone like himself, expelled from the garden of life. Would she reply to him? What could be her suffering?

She had seen him too, he saw that. And the gaze of the patients met in the doorway, a brief momentary greeting, a brief sign of happiness. And like a small bird's frail wing, so did his heart flutter during these moments with a new and mysterious hope.

Suddenly a loud bell rang three times in the corridor, at short intervals, shrilly like a command. At the signal of the bell, the nurse left, and she closed the door to the next room behind her.

That was the signal that there was danger somewhere, perhaps that someone was close to death. Jonathan had learned this signal by now, and he trembled with fear at the thought that now

someone could be breathing his last amidst these miserable stuffy surroundings. Oh why to die here, here, where death could be seen stalking each bed, here, where while fully conscious one was delivered into the hands of death like a number, here, where every thought was infected by death, here, where there were no more illusions, where everything was naked, cold and cruel. Indeed, a man condemned to die was more fortunate, for his torment lasted but one day during which they would hide from him his fate; from the day of their arrival in these rooms, however, they were sacrificed to loneliness, gloom, the dreadful sorrow of the autumn evenings, to winter, death, and a never-ending hell.

And one was made to lie still in one's sick-bed; one was forced to surrender to the bodily pains; one was being flayed alive. Oh, and to scoff at their sufferings, to constantly remind them of their helplessness, the dying Christ hung at the foot of each bed on a large white cross against a darkening sky. Poor Christ, who had only shrugged his shoulders painfully when the Jews entreated him to perform the miracle: if you are the Christ, then come down from the cross. And from his lifeless ^eeyes, which had already gazed upon countless patients in these beds, from his painfully contorted ^{mouth}, which had already inhaled the scent² of countless gruesome wounds, from this thief on the cross emanated a frightful helplessness which clouded the patients' spirits and stifled everything as yet untouched by death and despair.

Suddenly the door to the next room opened softly. Perhaps it hadn't been completely shut.

And Jonathan looked across once more at the pale face of his new neighbour whom he had almost forgotten while musing about death.

The door was left open. The sick girl too looked over at him once more, he could feel it in the dusk. And in this fleeting moment they silently greeted each other through the doorway; they were feeling each other out, an understanding was reached between them, and they became united, like two castaways drifting on side by side in a boundless ocean.

"I heard you moaning a lot this afternoon, - have you severe pains? Why are you lying in here?" he heard her gentle voice say, which seemed to have softened and become thin from her illness. "Yes, it is terrible", replied Jonathan.

"What's the matter with you then? Why did they bring you here?" she asked again.

And while his voice quavered with pain, he told her his life's story.

He had left Hamburg as an engineer five years ago on a voyage to East Asia. He had roamed about in the eastern seas, always working below in the boiler room, in the extreme heat of the tropics. He had gone to the South Seas aboard a coral ship, then for

over two years he had voyaged on a boat which smuggled opium hidden in corn sacks into Canton. He had made a lot of money working on this ship. He had wanted to return home but he was robbed. So he was left sitting high and dry in Shanghai. With the help of the consul, he was taken on as a crew member on board a freighter bound for Hamburg with a cargo of rice. The freighter went around the Cape to avoid the expensive trip through the Suez Canal.

At Monrovia, Liberia, in this terrible blistering hot Liberia, they had loaded coal for three days. At noon on the third day, he collapsed below in the boiler room. When he regained consciousness, he was lying in a Monrovia hospital, surrounded by a hundred filthy negroes. There he lay for four weeks with black-water fever, more dead than alive. Ah, what he had had to endure there in the terrible July heat which scorched the patients' veins, where the fire throbbed like an iron hammer right up to their brains.

But in spite of the filth, the stench of the negroes, the heat, and the fever, it had still been better than it was here. For, he said, there they had never been alone, there they had always had conversation.

"In the midst of their fever, the negroes would sing their songs, in the midst of their fever they used to dance over the beds. And whenever one of them was about to die, then he would spring up high one more time, as though the volcano of his fever were about

to spew him into the sky once more before swallowing him up forever.

"You see, I'm lying here in quarantine because the doctors think I could infect the others in the room with my malaria; the gentlemen in Europe are so cautious - they ought to go and see how little they care about the sick down there. But in the process, they recover much sooner since they are not confined like criminals to this awful loneliness.

"My legs would heal much sooner if I weren't always so alone. But that in itself is worse than death. Last night I woke up at three o'clock. And then I lay here like a dog, in one spot, just staring into the darkness, straight ahead."

"What did they do to your legs then, if I may ask?" he heard her inquire. "Do go on with your story."

And he obeyed her.

Well, after he had fully recovered, he went into the Liberian jungle with a French doctor who had set his heart on finding an orchid like those which are said to be growing upstream on the Niger River. Then they had walked through the jungle for two months, across rivers crawling with alligators, over enormous swamps, above which the swarms of mosquitoes were so thick in the evenings that you could catch just hundreds of them in one handfull.

And the thought of these huge morasses sinking into the evening jungle, the never-ending rustle of tree tops in these

boundless jungles, the exotic names of strange peoples, surrounded by secrets of far away lands, the mystery and the adventures of the forgotten jungles - all these strange images filled the heart of his listener with admiration and transported the patient over there - the small engineer in the miserable bed of an austere Hamburg hospital - into a strange atmosphere.

Since he had become silent, she implored him to continue.

And he told her the rest of his story, and how fate³ had thrown him here, to her side, and now was opening up to the patient the broad heavens of love above the puritanical misery of these two rooms, filling his heart with an uncertain bliss.

Near Lagos, he went on, they had come back out of the jungle. He had signed up on a boat bound for home, and everything had gone well until they reached Cuxhaven. He had been about to descend the iron ladder to the boiler room when the ship, caught in a sudden gust, had lurched forward powerfully. He had lost his balance and fell down the ladder into the engine. The piston-rod had broken both his legs.

"That's really terrible, that's really cruel", said his listener, who had raised herself up in the pillows. Now he could see her distinctly. The lamp highlighted her profile. With its rather pronounced pallor, it seemed to glow out of the darkness like the image of a saint in a dimly lit church.

"When I'm able to stand up, I will come and visit you.

Would you like that? Could I visit you occasionally?"

"Yes come, do come", he said. "You are the first one who has spoken a kind word to me here. You know, when you come that will help me more than all the doctors. But will you be able to get up so soon - why are you here?"

She explained to him that she had had an appendectomy, and that now she was supposed to rest here another fourteen days.

"Then we'll perhaps be able to have a talk", replied little Jonathan. "Let's have more chats sometime?" "Oh, certainly. I'll tell the doctor, I'll ask the nurse to leave the door open again for a little while tomorrow."

He listened to her, he could hardly believe it. And suddenly the room was free from its fears.

"I thank you", and they both lay silent for a while. His eyes sought her out on the pillows, and they fixed for a while on her face. In the silence of these minutes his love deepened, it penetrated triumphantly through his blood, it began to envelop his thoughts in joyful fantasies, it showed him a wide meadow in a golden forest, it showed him a summer's day, an idle summer's day, a joyous midday, when hand in hand they both were walking through the grain, which surrounded their words of love with its gentle rustling.

The door opened, and two doctors and two nurses entered.

"Someone's been talking here", said one of the two doctors.

"That won't do, that's not allowed. You must comply with the house rules. You must have quiet, you understand. And you, nurse, don't leave the door open again! The patients must have quiet and keep quiet." And he walked over and closed the door between the two rooms himself.

Then he examined Jonathan's legs, changed the dressing, and said: "In three months, you might be able to walk again, if it ever heals at all. That is still very doubtful. You must get used to the idea soon enough of remaining a cripple. I will leave you a nurse here, she can look after you."

He pulled the cover back over the patient, wished him good night, and left with those who had accompanied him.

Jonathan lay in his pillows as though someone had torn his heart from his breast with a single wrench. The door was closed. He would never speak to her again, he would never be allowed to see her again. So it had thus been only a few minutes which would never return. She would be released before him. Within two weeks someone else would be lying next door, some fishmonger or an old grandmother. She would perhaps want to come back sometime, but they wouldn't let her in. After all, what would she want with him, the poor cripple, the man without legs. Indeed, hadn't the doctor himself just told

him that he would remain a cripple. And he sank back into his despair. He lay still.

His pains returned. He ground his teeth lest he cry out. And the tears came to his eyes, with the force of fire.

A spasm shook him, he froze. His hands became ice-cold. He felt the fever returning. He wanted to call out the girl's name. At that moment he realized that he didn't know it. And this sudden realization plunged him even deeper into his abyss. Not even her name. He wanted to say "young lady" or something similar, but as he sat up he stared into the sallow face of his nurse, which from countless night shifts had become aged, dull and mean.

He wasn't really alone. He had totally forgotten that. They had brought in an attendant for him, this devil of a nurse, this withered old Beelzebub, on whom he had to rely and who could order him about. And once more he fell back.

Now no one would ever redeem him, now no one would ever save him. And there Christ, that pitiful weakling, was hanging, and he was still smiling. He seemed not at all able to suffer enough, he seemed to be enjoying his torments, and to Jonathan the smile of the God appeared strange, malicious and feigned like that of store-bought pleasure. He shut his eyes, he was vanquished.

The fever gripped him with its entire force. As the spasms began, the image of his unknown neighbour appeared once more, like

the evening star in an empty sky: white, distant, like the face of a corpse.

Towards midnight he fell asleep. He slept the terrible slumber in which illness and despair paralyze a person after they have exhausted the arsenal of their torments. He barely slept two hours. When he awoke, the pains in his thighs gripped him with such force that he almost fainted. He clung to the iron bed posts with all his might. He thought his legs were being pulled out by red-hot tongs, and he let out a terrible, prolonged scream, one of those screams which so often suddenly break the stillness of the night in the hospitals and startle those sleeping in their beds and constrict each heart with dread.

He had partially raised himself up in bed. He supported himself with his hands. He held his breath because of the pain, he began sucking it in. And then, then he bellowed a terrifying, full-throated "eeee" and "aaaa".

It seemed as though Death⁴ were raving over the building. Now it stood high above on the roof, and beneath its huge bony feet the patients everywhere sat up in their white gowns, in their beds, in their large wards, in their rooms, like ghosts in the light of the faint lamps, and Terror⁵, like a gigantic white bird, flew up the stairs and through the wards. The horrible bellowing penetrated everywhere, everywhere it roused the sleeping from their feeble rest,

and it caused a terrible echo everywhere: among the cancer patients, who had only just fallen asleep and in whose intestines white pus now began to flow again; among the terminal cases, whose bones were rotting away, slowly, piece by piece, and among others, on whose heads a terrible sarcoma was rapidly growing, which ate away from inside, rotted, and drained the fluids from their noses, their upper jaws, their eyes, and had torn open huge stinking holes, large craters filled with yellow liquid manure in their pale faces.

In frightful scales the howling rose and fell, as if directed by an invisible conductor. Periodically a short interval would occur, a small pause, skillfully inserted, until suddenly in a dark corner it would begin again, slowly rising and again reaching the highest pitch in a horrible, prolonged and frail "yeee", which would hover over this sabbath of death like the voice of a priest celebrating mass over the hymn of a church choir.

All the doctors were on their feet, all were pacing back and forth among the beds, in which the red swollen heads of the patients bobbed like large beets in an autumn field. All the nurses with their fluttering white aprons ran about in the wards, brandishing large needles filled with morphine, and phials of opium, like the sacristants at a weird divine service.

Everywhere they calmed, consoled, lulled the patients to sleep, everywhere injections of morphine and cocaine were administered to appease the chaos, everywhere denials were given, at every

bed reassuring reports were given. The wards were all lit up, and with the renewed light the pains of the patients seemed to gradually abate. The roaring slowly died away, it became a feeble whimpering, and the revolt of the pains ended in tears, sleep and dull resignation.

Jonathan fell into a heavy stupor. The pain had burned itself out, it was at last smothered in indifference.

But after the torment had left him, his legs began to swell, like two large corpses decaying in the sun. His knees had swollen within thirty minutes to the size of a child's head, his feet had turned black and hard like stone.

When during his morning rounds the doctor on duty came into Jonathan's room and lifted the blanket, he saw the huge swellings beneath the bandages. He had the dressing unwound, he took just one glance at the putrifying legs, then he rang three times, and after a few minutes, a mobile operating table was pushed in. Several men lifted the patient onto the table. They wheeled him out, and the room remained empty for the next half hour.

Afterwards, the operating table was wheeled back in. On it lay little Jonathan, pale, his eyes wide open, reduced to one half his former size. Where his legs had formerly been, was now a thick bloody mass of white bandages, from which his torso towered up like the body of an exotic god out of a calyx. The men threw him into the bed and left him.

For a while he was completely alone, and fate saw to it that during these few minutes he would once again see his acquaintance from the next room.

Again the door opened, again he saw a pale face. But it appeared alien to him, he could hardly even recognize it. How long ago it was since he had spoken with her.

She asked him how he was.

He gave her no reply, he didn't hear what she was asking, but he tried frantically to pull the blanket up as far as possible over his bandaged stumps. She shouldn't see that below his knees there was nothing, that everything there had come to an end. He felt ashamed. Shame was the only feeling left to him.

The young girl asked him once more. When she again received no answer, she turned her head away.

A nurse came in, she silently closed the door, she sat down at his bed with her needle-work. And Jonathan fell into a restless doze, numbed by the after-effects of the anaesthetic.

Suddenly, it seemed to him as though the wallpaper in the room were moving in certain places. It appeared to tremble slightly here and there and to bulge out as though someone were standing behind who was pressing against it to try to tear it. And lo and behold, all of a sudden the wallpaper down at floor level tore apart. Like a horde of rats, entire swarms of small, tiny little men were streaming out from beneath it and soon filled the entire room. Jon-

athan wondered how so many of the dwarfs had been able to hide behind the wallpaper. He cursed the lack of orderliness in the hospital. He wanted to complain to his nurse, but as he was about to beckon her to his bed, he saw that she was not there. The wallpaper too was suddenly all gone, there were no longer any walls there either.

He was lying in a huge broad room whose walls seemed to be moving farther and farther apart until they disappeared beyond in a leaden sky. And this whole horrible desolate room was filled with the small dwarfs who were rocking large blue heads on their narrow shoulders, like a sea of gigantic cornflowers on fragile stems. Even though many were standing very close to him, Jonathan could not make out their faces. When he tried to see them clearly, their features became completely blurred into blue spots which danced about before his eyes. He wanted very much to know how old they might be, but he could no longer hear his own voice. And suddenly the thought came to him: you are really deaf, you really can't hear anymore.

Before his eyes the dwarfs began slowly turning about in circles; they raised and lowered their hands in rhythm, slowly their large horde was set in motion. From right to left, from right to left, there was a humming noise inside his skull. The horde was circling faster and faster around him. He thought that he was sitting inside a large steel turn-table, which with increasing speed

began rotating around him, ever faster, ever more furiously. His head began to swim, he tried to hang on, but it was all in vain, he was being carried along with it. He had to vomit.

Suddenly everything was still, everything empty, everything gone. He lay alone and naked in a large field on a type of stretcher.

It was very cold, a storm was brewing, and in the sky a dark cloud was drawing near, like an enormous ship with black billowing sails.

On the distant horizon of the sky stood a man who was covered in grey rags, and although he was very far away, Jonathan knew exactly who he was. He was bald, his eyes were very deep-set. Or did he have any eyes at all?

On the other side of the sky, he saw someone standing who was either a woman or a young girl. She seemed familiar to him, he had seen her once before, but that was a long time ago. All of a sudden, both figures began to beckon to him, they shook their long pleated sleeves, but he didn't know whom he should obey. When the girl saw that he made no attempt to come down from his stretcher, she turned around, and she went on her way. And he could still see her for a long while, walking off into a white-streaked sky.

Finally, very far away, far in the distance, she stopped once more. She turned around once more, she waved to him again. But he couldn't stand up, he knew it, the man over there in the dis-

tance with his frightful death's head wouldn't allow it. And the girl vanished in the desolate sky. But the man in the distance beckoned to him more and more urgently, he threatened him with his bony fist. Then he crawled down from his stretcher and he dragged himself across the fields, across deserts, while the spectre flew ahead of him, ever farther through darkness, through terrifying darkness.

1 "Maul": "set of jaws". Although "Maul" refers only to animals and means "snout" or "muzzle", used in the same context with "schnappen", it is better translated as "jaws".

2 "Duft": "scent" (of wounds). See footnote #3, "Die Sektion".

3 The German word "Schicksal" had to be translated two different ways in the English (as "story" and as "fate") to convey the double meaning it has in the German text.

4 "Tod": "Death". Death is capitalized here because it is personified.

5 "Entsetzen": "Terror". See footnote #4.

THE POST-MORTEM

The dead man lay alone and naked upon a white table in the large room, amidst the oppressive whiteness,¹ the cruel austerity of the operating room in which the cries of endless tortments seemed still to be reverberating.

The midday sun blanketed him and made livid spots surface on his forehead; as if by magic, it brought forth a light green² from his naked stomach which it inflated like a large water bag.

His body resembled a huge iridescent calyx, a mysterious plant from the jungles of India, which someone had timidly placed before the altar of death.

Splendid red and blue colours grew along his loins, and in the heat, the large wound below his navel slowly burst open like a red furrow in a field, emitting a terrible scent.³

The doctors entered. Several amicable men in white gowns⁴ with duelling-scars⁵ and gold-rimmed pince-nez.

They approached the dead man and looked at him, with interest, while engaged in scientific conversation.

They took out their dissecting instruments from the white cabinets: white boxes filled with hammers, strong-toothed bone saws, files, hideous batteries full of forceps, small instrument

cases filled with gigantic needles, which like hooked vultures' beaks seemed to screech incessantly for flesh.

They began their ghastly handiwork. They resembled frightful torturers, the blood poured over their hands, and they plunged them ever deeper into the cold corpse and pulled out its contents, like chefs dressed in white disembowelling a goose.

Around their arms coiled the intestines, greenish-yellow snakes, and the faeces trickled over their gowns, a warm, putrid fluid. They lanced the bladder, the cold urine shimmered there like a yellow wine. They poured it into large saucers; it reeked pungently and caustically like ammonium chloride.

But the dead man was sleeping. Patiently, he let them tug at him every which way, and pull at his hair; he was sleeping.

And while the blows of the hammers thundered on his head, a dream, a vestige of love, rekindled in him like a torch which shed light into his night.

Outside the large window, an immense broad sky opened up, filled with small white little clouds bathing in the light and in the stillness of the afternoon, like miniature white gods. And the swallows circled high above in the blue, fluttering in the warm July sun.

The black blood of death trickled over the blue corruption of his forehead. It evaporated in the heat into a frightful cloud,

and the decay of death crawled over him with its variegated claws. His skin began to flow apart, his belly turned white like that of an eel under the grasping fingers of the doctors, who bathed their arms up to the elbow in the moist flesh.

The decomposition pulled the dead man's mouth apart, he seemed to be smiling, he was dreaming of a blissful constellation, and of a fragrant summer evening. His decaying lips trembled as if in a fleeting kiss.

"How I love you. I have loved you so. Shall I tell you how I love you? When you walked across the poppy fields like a fragrant flaming poppy,⁶ you absorbed the entire evening into yourself. And your gown billowing about your ankles, was like a surge of fire in the setting sun. But your head was bowed in the light, and your hair was still burning and aflame from all my kisses.

"So you walked away, turning around towards me all the while. And the lantern in your hand like a glowing rose in the dusk swayed for a long time afterwards.

"I will see you again tomorrow. Here beneath the window of the chapel, here, where the light of the candles escapes and transforms your hair into a golden forest, here, where the narcissi nestle against your ankles, tenderly, like tender kisses.

"I will see you again every evening at the hour of dusk. We shall never part. How I love you! Shall I tell you how I love

you?"

And the dead man trembled faintly with bliss on his white table of death, while the iron chisels in the doctors' hands broke open the bones of his temple.

1 Heym often changes adjectives, especially those designating colours (such as "weiss"), into nouns.

2 (See footnote #1).

3 "furchtbarer Duft": "terrible scent". The literary device of the oxymoron must be rendered in the translation as well.

4 "Kittel": "smock". When referring to surgeons, "Kittel" is translated in English as "gown", but when it refers to doctors or lab workers, it then means a "coat". Chefs and cooks, on the other hand, wear "smocks".

5 "Schmiss": "duelling-scar". Traditionally, many male university students belonged to fraternities known as "Studentenverbindungen". The members of a fraternity would usually drink together and engage in duelling. The scars resulting from the wounds received were considered a sign of bravery and boldness.

6 "Mohnflamme": "flaming poppy". Since this word could not be found in the dictionary, Heym evidently composed it to express a new image.

THE SHIP

It was a small craft, a coral boat, which was cruising off Cape York in the Arafura Sea. Sometimes they would catch sight of the mountains of New Guinea in the blue north, sometimes the barren Australian coastline to the south resembling a tarnished silver belt placed on the quivering horizon.

There were seven men on board: the captain, an Englishman, two other Englishmen, one Irishman, two Portuguese, and the Chinese cook. And since they were so few in number, they had maintained a good relationship.

Now the ship was bound down under for Brisbane. There the cargo would be unloaded, and then the crewmen would part company, some going one way, and the others another.

On their way they passed through a small archipelago; to the right and left were several islands, remnants of the large bridge which ages ago had once united the two continents of Australia and New Guinea. Now the ocean roared above it, and the sounding lead took forever to touch the floor.

They steered the craft into a small shaded bay of the island and cast anchor. Three crewmen went ashore to search for the island's inhabitants.

They waded through the jungle along the shore, then with some difficulty they crawled over a mountain, crossed a gorge, and

again climbed over a mountain covered with jungle. And after a few hours they came to the sea once again.

There was no living creature anywhere on the entire island. They heard no bird cry, and no animals crossed their path. Everywhere reigned a frightful silence. Even the sea before them was silent and grey. "But surely there must be someone here, damn it!", said the Irishman.

They shouted, cried out, and discharged their revolvers. Not a thing stirred, no one came. They wandered along the shore, through water, and over rocks and bushes on the shore; they met no one. Like large ghost-like creatures, the tall trees looked down on them without rustling, like huge corpses in a frightful rigor mortis. A sort of anguish, dark and mysterious, gripped them. They wanted to talk each other out of their fear. But when they looked into each other's pale faces, then they remained silent.

At length they came upon a tongue of land, which stretched out into the sea like an ultimate projection, a final haven. At the outermost tip where their pathway once more made a turn, they saw something which for a moment made them stop dead in their tracks.

There lay three corpses, one on top of the other, two men, one woman, still wearing their simple print dress. But on their torsos, their arms, their faces, everywhere there were red and blue spots like countless insect bites. And in some spots a few large swellings had risen from beneath their cracked skin like large hills.

They left the corpses as quickly as they could. It was not death which drove them away. Rather, a mysterious threat seemed to be expressed on the faces of these corpses, something evil seemed to be lurking unseen in the still air, something for which they had no name and which nevertheless was there, an inexorable icy fear.

All of a sudden they started running, they were tearing themselves on the thorns. Farther and farther. They were almost clipping each other's heels.

At one point the last one, an Englishman, became entangled in a bush; as he was trying to tear himself free, he unwillingly looked about. And then he thought he saw something behind a large tree trunk: a small black figure resembling a woman in weeds.

He called his companions over and pointed out the tree. But there was no longer anything there. They derided him, but their laughter had a hollow ring.

At last they reached the ship once again. The boat was launched and brought them on board.

As if by secret agreement, they didn't say a single word about what they had seen. Something kept their lips sealed.

That evening as the Frenchman was leaning over the ship's railing, everywhere below he saw the armies of ship rats moving out in troops from the hold, and from every hatchway and crevice. Their fat brown bodies were swimming in the water of the bay; the water glittered all over with them.

Without a doubt, the rats were abandoning ship.¹

He went up to the Irishman and explained to him what he had seen. But the Irishman was sitting on a stay, staring straight ahead, and didn't care to hear anything about it. And the Englishman too looked at him crossly when he came up to him in front of the cabin. So the Frenchman walked away from him.²

Night fell, and the crew went below deck to the hammocks. All five men slept in the same area. Only the captain slept alone in a cabin astern³ below deck. And the hammock of the Chinese hung in the galley.

When the Frenchman came down from the deck, he saw that the Irishman and the Englishman had started brawling with each other. They rolled about among the ship's crates, their faces blue with rage. And the others stood about and looked on. He asked one of the Portuguese the reason for this fight and was told that both of them had started fighting over some wool thread for mending socks, which the Englishman was supposed to have taken from the Irishman.

At last they let go of each other; each one crept into a corner of the cabin and remained sitting there, heedless of the others' jibes.

Finally they were all lying in their hammocks; only the Irishman rolled up his mat and went with it up on deck.

Above through the cabin entrance, his hammock was to be seen, like a dark shadow between ^{the} bowsprit and a stay, swinging to

and fro with the gentle swaying of the ship.

And the leaden atmosphere of a tropical night, filled with thick fog and sultry fumes, set down upon the ship and enshrouded it, gloomy and desolate.

Everyone was already asleep in a frightful stillness, and from a distance the noise of their breathing sounded muffled as though it were emanating from beneath the heavy lid of a huge black coffin.

The Frenchman tried to fight off his sleepiness, but in a futile struggle he gradually felt himself dozing off, and before his closed eyes appeared the first visions, the swaying harbingers of sleep. A small horse, then there were several men with gigantic old-fashioned hats, then a fat Dutchman with a long white twisted moustache, followed by several small children, and behind them through empty narrow streets in a sombre semi-darkness came something which looked like a large hearse.

He fell asleep. And at the last moment he felt as though someone were standing behind him in the corner, staring at him fixedly. He wanted to open wide his eyes again, but an iron hand kept them shut.

And the long swell rocked beneath the black vessel; the jungle wall cast its shadow far out into the faintly lit night; and the ship was enveloped deep into the midnight darkness.

The moon thrust out its yellow skull between two high palm trees. For a short time there was light, then it disappeared into the thick, drifting fog. Only periodically would it still appear between drifting tattered clouds, small and sombre, like the frightful eyes of the blind.

Suddenly a prolonged cry pierced the night, sharply as with an axe.

It came from the captain's cabin astern, just as loud as though it had been called directly beside the sleeping men. They started in their hammocks, and in the semi-darkness they looked at one another's pale faces.

For a few seconds there was silence; all of a sudden it resounded once more, very loudly, three times. And the cries caused a terrible echo far off in the night, somewhere among the cliffs, now one more time, very far away, like fading laughter.

The men groped for light; nowhere was there one to be found.

So they crawled back into their hammocks and sat there completely upright as though paralyzed, without uttering a single word.

And after a few minutes, they heard shuffling footsteps crossing the deck. Now it was above their heads; then a shadow passed by the cabin door. Then it was moving towards the bow. And while they stared at one another with wide open eyes, from the Irishman's hammock fore came again the loud prolonged cry of death. Then a rattling, short, short, the vibrating echo and deathly silence.

And suddenly the moon thrust itself into their doorway, like the plump face of a Malay; it came down the steps, large and pale, and its light was reflected in their frightful pallor.

Their lips were torn wide apart, and their jaws trembled with fear.

One of the Englishman once made an attempt to say something, but his tongue had curled back in his mouth and shrivelled up; suddenly it slowly drooped over his lower lip like a red rag. It was numb, and he could no longer retrieve it.

Their foreheads were as white as chalk. And the cold sweat of extreme fear collected in large beads upon them.

And thus the night passed in a fanciful semi-darkness, which the large sinking moon spread out below on the cabin floor. But upon the sailors' hands there at times appeared strange figures resembling ancient hieroglyphics, triangles, pentacles, and drawings of skeletons or skulls from whose ears sprouted large bat wings.

The moon was slowly sinking. And at the moment when its huge head disappeared above behind the staircase, they heard a hoarse groaning coming from the galley fore and then very distinctly a low cackling, like the sound of old people when they laugh.

And the first morning dawn flew with formidable wing across the sky.

They looked into one another's ashen faces, climbed out of their hammocks, and with trembling limbs all crept up on deck.

The paralyzed man with his drooping tongue was the last to come up. He wanted to say something, but all he could do was to stutter horribly. He pointed to his tongue and made the motion of shoving it back into his mouth. And one of the Portuguese grabbed the man's tongue with fingers blue from fear, and forced it back into his throat.

They remained standing close together in front of the hatchway, anxiously looking out across the deck which was slowly becoming more illuminated. But no one was there. Only the Irishman was still swinging in his hammock fore in the fresh morning wind, to and fro, to and fro, like a gigantic black sausage.

And almost as if being drawn by a magnet, with every joint trembling they slowly walked towards the sleeping man. No one called out to him. Each one knew that he would receive no reply. Each wanted to postpone the ghastly truth for as long as possible. And now they were there, and with craned necks they stared at the dark bundle there in the hammock. His wollen blanket was pulled high up to his forehead. And his hair streamed over his temples. But it was no longer black; it had turned snow-white during the night. One of the men drew back the blanket from his head, and they were looking at the livid face of a corpse, which was staring into the sky with wide open and glassy eyes. And its forehead and temples were dotted with red spots, and at the base of the nose a large bluish boil was rising up like a horn.

"This is the plague." Which one of them said that?

They all eyed one another belligerently and hastily retreated out of the poisonous sphere of death.

Suddenly everyone at the same time realized that they were lost. They were in the ruthless hands of a dreadful invisible enemy, who perhaps had left them only for a short time. At this very moment he could be climbing down from the sails or crawling out from behind a mast; at that very second he could already be coming out of the cabin or raising his horrible face on board to chase them like mad across the deck.

And in each of them fomented a dark rage against his companions in fate, the cause for which no one could determine.

Each went his own way. One stood beside the ship's boat, and his pale face was reflected below in the water. The others sat down on some spot on the bench on deck; no one spoke with his neighbour, but they all nevertheless remained so close to one another that the moment danger became apparent, they could join forces once more. But nothing happened. And yet they all knew it was there and lying in wait for them.

It was lurking somewhere. Perhaps right in their midst on deck, like an invisible white dragon groping with its quivering fingers⁵ for their hearts and spreading the poison of illness over the deck with its warm breath.

Were they not already ill, did they not somehow feel a heavy numbness and the first onset of a deadly fever? So it seemed to the

men on deck: as if beneath them the ship was beginning to sway and totter, now quickly, then slowly. He looked about for the others and all he could see were green faces; now they were submerged in shadows and already were showing a frightful ashen colour in certain spots on their sunken cheeks.

"Perhaps they are all already dead, and you are the only one still alive", he thought to himself. And with this thought fear ran ice-cold over his body. It was as if suddenly out of thin air an icy hand had reached for him.

The day was slowly dawning.

Over the grey stretches of the sea, over the islands, everywhere lay a grey fog, humid, warm and stifling. A small red dot stood on the rim of the ocean, like an enflamed eye. The sun was rising.

And the torment of waiting for the unknown drove the men from their stations.

What should he do now? They had to go below at least once, they had to eat something.

But the thought of maybe having to climb over corpses in the process ...

Then they heard a low barking on the steps. And now the ship dog's snout first came into view. Then its body, then the head;⁶ but what was dangling from its snout? And a hoarse cry of horror was emitted simultaneously from four throats.

From its snout hung the corpse of the old captain; first appeared his hair, then his face, and his entire fat body clad in a dirty nightshirt, slowly being dragged by the dog up onto the deck. And now he was lying above in front of the companion ladder, but on his face burned the same frightful red spots.

And the dog released its hold on him and crept away into hiding.

Suddenly they heard it growl loudly in a corner far away; in several leaps it returned from the stern to the bow, but as it was passing the main mast, it suddenly stopped dead, threw itself about, and stretched out its legs into the air as if in self-defence. But an invisible pursuer seemed to hold it ruthlessly in its claws.⁷

The dog's eyes popped out as though they were attached to stalks; its tongue drooped from its snout. It rattled a few times as if its throat were being throttled. A final spasm shook it; it stretched out its legs; it was dead.

And immediately afterwards the Frenchman very distinctly heard shuffling footsteps near him, while fear pounded upon his skull like an iron hammer.

He wanted to close his eyes, but he was unable. He was no longer master of his own will.

The footsteps headed straight across the deck, towards the Portuguese who was leaning with his back against the ship's wall, while his hands were clawing madly into the ship's side.

The man was apparently seeing something. He wanted to run away, he seemed to be about to forcefully tear his legs off the deck, but he had no strength. The invisible creature seemed to have taken hold of him. Then as if with the utmost exertion, he tore his mouth open, and in a tinny voice which seemed to be emanating from a far distance, he stammered the words: "mother, mother".

His eyes grew dim, his face turned ashen grey. The spasm in his limbs subsided. And he fell forward, striking his forehead violently on the ship's deck.

The invisible creature continued on its way; once again he heard the shuffling footsteps. It seemed to be headed towards the two Englishmen. And the horrible spectacle repeated itself once more. And now too it was again the same repeated cry which the ultimate fear of death forced from their throats, the cry "mother, mother", in which their lives were snuffed out.

"And now it will come for me", thought the Frenchman. But nothing appeared, everything remained still. And he was alone with the dead.

The morning passed. He didn't stir from his spot. He had only one thought: when will it come. And without stop his lips kept mechanically repeating this short phrase: "When will it come, when will it come?"

The fog had slowly lifted. And the sun which now already stood close to the midday hour, had transformed the sea into a huge

gleaming surface, into an enormous silver platter which radiated its own light into space like a second sun.

It was quiet once more. The heat of the tropics was steaming everywhere in the air. The air seemed to be boiling. And the sweat ran down the deep furrows over his ashen face. His head, on whose crown the sun was beating, seemed to him like a gigantic red tower filled with fire. He could very distinctly see his head growing from inside out into the sky. Ever higher, and becoming ever hotter inside. But there over a winding staircase whose last spirals were lost in the white fire of the sun, a slippery white snail was crawling very slowly. Its feelers were groping up into the tower, while its moist foot still coiled about inside his throat.

He had the gloomy feeling that it was really just too hot; surely no one would actually be able to withstand it.

Then - bang - someone struck him on the head with a fiery rod; he was falling full length. This is death, he thought. And now he lay for a while on the ship's glowing planks.

Suddenly he came to again. A weak and subdued laughter seemed to be fading behind him. He looked up, and there he saw: the ship was sailing, the ship was sailing, under full canvas. The sails were swollen white and puffy, but there was no wind, not the slightest breeze. The sea lay like a mirror, white, a fiery hell. And in the sky overhead, at its zenith, the sun was melting like a gigantic mass of white-hot iron. It was streaming all over the sky,

its fire was spreading everywhere, and the air seemed to be burning. Far in the distance like several blue dots were situated the islands where they had cast anchor.

And suddenly the terror had risen again, as gigantic as a millepede creeping through his veins and making them congeal behind it wherever it passed through with its countless icy little legs.

In front of him lay the corpses. But their heads lay supine. Who had turned them around? Their skin was bluish-green. Their white eyes fixed him. The initial decomposition had drawn their lips apart and wrinkled their cheeks into a lunatic smile. Only the corpse of the Irishman was sleeping peacefully in its hammock. Without thinking, he tried to slowly pull himself up on the ship's wall.

But the indescribable fear made him weak and powerless. He sank to his knees. And now he knew: now it will come. Something was standing behind the mast. A dark shadow. Now it was coming across the deck with its shuffling footsteps. Now it was standing behind the roof of the cabin, then it emerged: an old woman in a black old-fashioned dress, with long white curls falling on both sides of her pale aged face. On it were a pair of eyes of indistinct colour like a pair of buttons, gazing at him unflinchingly. And everywhere her face was dotted with the blue and red pustules,

and on her forehead like a diadem were two red boils over which her small white grandmother's cap was pulled. Her black crinoline rustled as she headed towards him. In a final act of desperation, he straightened up using both hands and feet. His heart was beating no longer. Once more he collapsed.

And now she was already so near that he could see her breath billowing from her mouth like a flag.

Once again he straightened himself up. His left arm was already numb. Something forced him to remain standing; something gigantic held him fast. But he wouldn't give up the fight yet. He pressed it down with his right hand, tearing himself loose.

And not fully conscious, with faltering steps he hurled himself along the ship's wall, past the corpse in the hammock, towards the bow where the large rope ladder ran up from the end of the bowsprit to the foremast.

He climbed up on it; he looked about him.

But the plague was right behind him. Now it was already on the lowest rungs. So he had to go higher and higher. But the plague would not let him free; it was swifter than he; it had to overtake him. He grabbed the rope ladder with both hands and feet, stepping here and there, one foot falling through the mesh; he pulled it out again and reached the top. There the plague was just a few yards away. He climbed along the fore royal yard. At the end were the lifts. He reached the end of the fore royal yard. But where were

the lifts? There was only empty space.

Far below was the sea and the deck. And right below him lay the two corpses.

He wanted to go back; the plague was already there at the other end of the top square sail.

And now it was coming along the wooden yard, swinging nonchalantly like an old sailor with a staggering gait.

Now there were only six steps left, now just five. He counted along in a low voice, while the fear of death tore apart his jaw-bones in a powerful spasm as though he were yawning. Three steps, two steps.

He reeled back, grabbing with his hands into the air, trying to latch on somewhere; he reeled over and fell crashing head first onto the deck on top of an iron plank. And there he remained lying with a shattered skull.

A dark storm was rapidly approaching in the east above the still ocean. The sun hid in the thick clouds like a dying man who pulls a shroud over his face. Several large Chinese junks which loomed out of the semi-darkness were under full canvas and sailed roaring and hissing ahead of the storm with burning lanterns⁸ and whistling sounds. But the ship sailing by them was as gigantic as the flying shadow of a demon. On the deck stood a black figure. And in the glare of the fire it seemed to be growing, its head slowly rising above the masts, while it swung its powerful arms about in

circles like a crane taking off into the wind. A pale hole opened up in the clouds. And the ship sailed straight into the frightful brightness.

1 "auswandern": "to abandon ship". In this context, it was necessary to use the naval expression rather than the literal translation "to emigrate".

2 Here it was necessary to translate the German personal pronoun "er" as "the Frenchman". Confusion would otherwise have been caused by the use of a pronoun, since three different persons are mentioned in this paragraph.

3 It seemed necessary to use more specific English terms to translate the German words "hinten" and "vorn", referring to areas of the ship: "astern" and "fore".

4 "jetzt": "followed by". To break the monotony of repeating "then", I chose to translate "jetzt" this way, since here a series of visions is being depicted.

5 "Finger": "fingers". A dragon normally has claws (Krallen), not fingers. There is no rational explanation for Heym's use of this image other than that the plague is personified and this personification is carried over into this image.

6 In the German text, there is an element of confusion here in the sequence of events. Since the dog's snout is already visible, it is only logical that the head would come into view next, followed by the rest of its body. In the original, however, the snout is seen first, then the body, and lastly the head. A possible explanation of this may be that they looked at the body first and then the head.

7 (See footnote #5.) There is no apparent reason why "Krallen" is used here and not in the above image as well.

8 "Götterlampen": "lanterns". This word could not be found in the dictionary. It perhaps designates a type of paper lantern with the image of a god or gods depicted on it.

THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER

On the fifth of October the bread-carts were to arrive in Paris from Provence. The town council had had it posted on all street-corners in their large red letters. And the people milled about all day long in front of them as before the gates of a new and immense revelation. Emaciated to the bone from hunger, they dreamed there of Edens of abundance, of huge flat-cakes¹, of pies sprinkled with white flour², which would sizzle in all pot-houses.

All chimneys will be smoking. They will hang the bakers on the street-lamps, they will do the baking themselves, they will plunge their arms right over their elbows into the flour. The white stuff will coat the streets like a life-giving snow, the wind will drive it before the sun like a great cloud.

In all the streets, large tables will be set up; Paris will celebrate a grand public banquet, a mighty sabbath.

The people crowded in front of the locked cellars of the bakeries and peered down at the empty kneading troughs that stood behind the barred windows; with satisfaction they looked at the black jaws of the huge bakers' ovens, which were not aglow and, like themselves, hungered for bread.

On a street in a quarter of Mont Parnasse, a bakery was broken into, more out of boredom, to kill time, than from the hope

of still finding bread in the storage bins.

Three men, coal carriers³ from St. Antoine, brought the baker out. They cast his white wig down and stood him under the bent lamp of his door. One tore off his waist-band, tied a noose and threw it around the baker's neck. Then he held his black fist up to the man's face and shouted at him: "You damned meal beetle⁴, now we're going to string you up".

The baker began to wail, and looked around to the bystanders for help. But he saw nothing but sneering faces.

Jacobus the cobbler stepped forward and spoke to the people from the city outskirts⁵: "Men, we are going to set this pig free, but first he has to repeat a prayer after me."

"Yes, repeat a prayer", whimpered the baker. "Do permit me to repeat a prayer."

Jacobus began: "I am the accursed swine of a baker."

The baker repeated: "I am the accursed swine of a baker."

Jacobus: "I am the black flour-Jew, you can smell me a mile away."

The baker: "I am the black flour-Jew, you can smell me a mile away."

Jacobus: "I pray each day to the saints above⁶ that no one will notice all the things I put in the bread."

The baker repeated that too.

The audience guffawed. An old woman sat down on the steps and cackled with laughter like an old hen laying eggs.

Jacobus himself could not continue for laughter.

For a while this comical diatribe was still kept up; finally the wretched figure grew too boring for the people. He was left standing with the rope around his neck.

It began to rain heavily; the people stepped under the eaves. The baker was gone. Only his white wig still lay in the middle of the square and began to dissolve in the rain. A dog took it in its jaws and dragged it away.

Little by little the rain subsided, and the people once again stepped out into the street. Hunger began to pinch them anew. A child had a fit of cramps, the bystanders looked on and gave good advice.

Suddenly, there was a cry: "The bread-carts are here! The bread-carts are here!" The cry ran along the whole street. And the whole street full of people began to throng out through the city gates. They came to the countryside, into the bare fields, they saw a desolate sky and the row of poplars along the roadway, which disappeared into the pitiful horizon of the plains beyond. Overhead, a small flock of ravens was flying downwind, toward the cities.

The streams of people poured into the fields. Some had empty sacks on their shoulders, others meat-mixing troughs and pots, to carry off the bread.

And they waited for the carts, scanning the edge of the sky, like so many astronomers seeking a new constellation.

They waited and waited, but they saw nothing more than the clouded sky and the storm, which bent the tall trees to and fro.

From a church, the bell slowly tolled the midday into the silent masses. Then they began to recollect how at this hour they had usually sat around tables amply spread, in the middle of which like a portly king a white loaf of bread had been resplendently throned.. And the word "pain" in its absolute whiteness, and its richness, impressed itself upon the brain of ^{the} multitude, and lay there like a boulder in the sun, gigantic, great, crunchy, ready to slice. They closed their eyelids and they felt the flow of the wheat trickle over their hands. They felt the warmth, the blessed aroma of the bakers' ovens, a rose-coloured flame, which toasted and darkened the white loaves of bread.

And their hands trembled with longing for the flour. They trembled from hunger, and their tongues began to smack in their mouths, they began to gulp down air, and their teeth ground involuntarily, as if they were crushing the white morsels.

Some had their sackcloths hanging from their mouths, and their large teeth chewed on them, slowly, like machines. They had shut their sunken eyes and swayed their heads over their comforters to the rhythm of a mysterious, harrowing music.

Others sat on the curbstones by the street and cried from hunger, while about their knees large scrawny dogs roved about, their bones almost bursting through their coats.

A terrible weariness came over the motionless masses; an enormous apathy beset them, paralyzing them like a thick blanket upon their pale faces.

Alas, they had no will left. Hunger slowly began to smother it and to enervate them in a terrifying sleep and in the torment of its visions.

Far into the distance around them, the plains of France sloped downwards, fenced in⁷ by ghostlike mills, which edged the horizon like towers or colossal grain gods, dispersing clouds of flour with the arms of their large vanes, like vaporous incense around their great heads.

On the border of France stood gigantic tables, which began to sway under the weight of the large dishes. They were being beckoned to come over. But they were shackled to large torture-racks, and the terrible opiate of hunger had numbed their blood and congealed it into black sediment. They wanted to cry out: "Bread, bread, only a morsel, have mercy, pity, only a morsel, dear God!" But they were unable to open their mouths, how horrible, they were mute. How horrible, they could not move a limb, they were paralyzed.

And the dark visions fluttered over the multitude, where some were standing and others lying down together in clusters like

an army, condemned to eternal death, stricken with everlasting muteness, doomed to disappear once more into the belly of Paris, to suffer, to starve, to be born and to die in a sea of utter darkness, of forced labour, of hunger and of slavery, oppressed by bloodthirsty tax-collectors, wasted by unending consumption, dissipated by the endless fumes of the narrow streets, and withered like an old parchment by the corrosive air of their squalid lairs, doomed to stiffen some day in the filth of their beds, and with their last breath to curse the priest, who had come in the name of his God, in the name of the State and of Authority, to wrest from them their last pennies as a legacy to the Church in gratitude for the long-suffering of their wretched lives.

Never once did a ray of light shine into their graves. What would they know of it in their appalling holes? They saw it sometimes at midday floating over the city, overcome by its fumes, blanketed in thick clouds, for an hour or two. And then it would disappear. Shadows would reappear from underneath the houses and crawl up the walls, black tentacles from the alleys with their icy embrace.

How often had they stood outside the Luxembourg Gardens, and gazed through the rows of grenadiers at the broad sunny lawns. And they had gawked at the ladies of the court dancing, the shepherds' staffs of the gold-braided cavaliers,⁸ the bowing and scra-

ping of the Moors, the trays laden with oranges, biscuits, and sweetmeats, the gilded state coach, in which the Queen slowly rode through the park like a Syrian goddess, a preposterous Astarte, stiff with white silk and sparkling like a saint with a thousand pearls.⁹

Oh, how often had they drunk of the fragrance, of the spicy scent of musk, how often had they almost been suffocated by the perfume of the ambergris which wafted from the Luxembourg Gardens as from a mysterious temple. Oh, just once they might have been allowed in, just once to sit on a velvet chair like that, just once to ride in such a coach. They would have slaughtered the entire National Assembly with delight; they would have kissed the King's feet, if just once had he for an hour made them forget their hunger and the barren fields of despairing harvests.¹⁰

And they flattened their noses against the iron bars of the park paling, and they put their hands through them, hordes of beggars, droves of outcasts and keeners. And their ghastly stench drifted into the park like a cloud in the sinister glow of sunset, which portends a terrifying dawn. They had clung to the paling like hideous spiders, and their eyes had roamed far into the park, into its evening lit lawns, its hedges, its laurel walks, its marble statues, which turned their cloyed smiles down on them from their pedestals. Small Cupids, cherubs, plump like fattened geese, with arms resembling white stuffed sausages, aimed their arrows of love

at their wide open mouths and beckoned to them with their stone quivers, while the arms of the bailiffs, who had come to throw them into the dungeons, fell like a block of wood onto the shoulders of the multitude.

The sleeping groaned, and those who were awake envied them their sleep.

They looked ahead of them, into the distance, down the road for the bread-carts, the desolate road which the terrors of the Revolution had laid waste and which, like a lifeless gut, no longer emptied any supplies into the belly of France. The road was white and ran without end into an unheeding sky^{ll} which, puffy like a priest's face, fleshy like a bishop's cheek and unwrinkled like a fattened mendicant friar, showed its pale forehead on the horizon. The sky was as peaceful as a country mass; it was delicately framed by small, grey afternoon clouds like an old abbé, who after the noonday meal slumbers in his vestry, gently interred in the armchair, while the locks of his wig fall over his forehead.

The rags of the human herds exuded an unbearable stench. Their dirty neckerchiefs fluttered about their ashen faces. Choked tears vanished into the terrible silence. As far as the eye could see, their tattered three-cornered hats stood out in the air, on which here and there dirty ostrich feathers were dancing. The scattered black figures of the masses resembled the frozen steps of a doleful minuet, a dance of Death which had brought it to a sudden

halt behind him, transformed into a huge black heap of stones, arrested and frozen to death by the torments, pillars of silence. Countless Lots, cast into perpetual rigidity by the flames of an infernal Gomorrah.¹²

High above them in the cold October sky, the iron plough of time was moving, tilling its fields with grief and sowing them with want, so that one day the flame of revenge would flare up from them, so that one day the arms of these thousands would grow light, boyant and joyous like doves on the wing, using the harvest blade¹³ of the guillotine, so that one day like gods of the future they could walk under the sky, bare-headed, in the ever-lasting Pente-cost of an unending dawn.

From the whitish sky at the far end of the highway, a black dot detached itself.

Those in the front saw it, they pointed it out to one another.

Those who were sleeping awoke and jumped up. They all looked down the road. Was this black dot the Mecca of their hope, was this their deliverance?

For a few moments they all believed it; they forced themselves to believe it.

But the dot grew too quickly. Now they all saw it; that was not the slowly moving train of many carts; that was not a caravan bearing flour. And hope left their countenance and was gone with

the wind.

But what was that? Who was riding so madly? Who in these lifeless days had reason to ride this way?

A few men climbed up the thick willows and peered out over the heads of the crowd.

Now they saw him and shouted out his name. It was Maillard. Maillard from the Bastille. Maillard of the fourteenth of July.

And then he rode up, right into the midst of the rabble. He stopped, and then he uttered only one word. "Treason!", he cried.

Then the tempest broke loose. "Treason, treason!" Some ten men seized him and raised him up on their shoulders. He stood above, supporting himself with one hand against a tree, faint from exertion, almost blinded by the sweat pouring down from his black hair around his eyes.

Maillard is about to speak, the word went around. There ensued an awesome stillness. They all waited, waited with the awesome expectancy of the mob before the riot, during the awesome seconds when the future of France was in the balance, until the scale laden with chains, prisons, crosses, Bibles, rosaries, crowns, sceptres, orbs, embedded in the false tranquility of fleurs-de-lis, full of empty phrases, promises, whole lists of royal perjuries, unjust sentences, innocuous privileges - this monstrous heap of everything that the thousands of years had used to deceive Europe, slowly be-

gan to sink.

Maillard swung himself up into the tree.

Down from his leafless pulpit, he hurled his terrible words out over the people, across the bare fields, the dingy fortifications, the black drawbridges, overcrowded with people, into the tunnels of the gates, over the roofs of Paris, into the courtyards and lanes of the dismal faubourgs, far out into all the citadels of misery, wherever beneath the earth in the sewers where the rats made their home there was still one accursed ear to hear his words.

"To the nation! You wretched ones, you accursed, you outcasts! You are being betrayed. You are being exploited. Soon you'll be running about naked, you'll die on the steps, and the tax-collectors, the hangmen of the Capet, bloodhounds of the bloodhound, spiders of the spider, will wrest from your stiff hands your last pennies.

"We've been forsaken, we've been rejected, and it'll soon be all over with us. They'll soon tear the last piece of clothing off our bodies. They'll spin the rope for us out of our shirts. We'll pave the muddy streets with our bodies so that the hangmen's wagons can drive over them without getting wet. And why shouldn't we die? For we defile the air with our bodies, we stink, we are untouchables, right? Why shouldn't we die? What else can we do? We can't defend ourselves, can we? Our spirits have been dashed, they've made us mute.

"They've brought about artificial scarcities, we've been starved, hunger has killed us."

Each word fell like a weighty stone upon the people. With each syllable, he threw his arms forward as though he wanted to make the horizon itself to shake with the bombardment of his words.

"Do you know what happened last night?"

"The Queen --"

"Ah, the Queen", and the crowds became even quieter when they heard that despised name.

"The Queen, do you know what the old whore did? She had three regiments of dragoons sent to Versailles. They are billeted in all the houses, and the members of the Assembly hardly dare open their mouths anymore. Mirabeau has been cut down to a dwarf's size, and all the others can hardly even bring themselves to clear their throats. It's disgraceful to see. Why did they take an oath in the Ballroom,¹⁴ these phoney freedom-lovers? What have you shed your blood at the Bastille for? It was all for nothing, do you hear, for nothing.

"You have to crawl back into your holes, the lamp of liberty has turned into a small night-light, a miserable train-oil lamp. Good enough to light your way back into your holes.

"In three days Broglie will be here with his troops. The Assembly will be sent home, the rack will be set up again. The Bastille will be rebuilt. Levies will be paid again. Even now the

jails are all opening up their jaws.

"Your hunger will not be satisfied, despair as much as you like. The King stopped the bread-wagons before they reached Orleans and sent them back home."

His words were drowned out in the cry of outrage. A violent storm of clenched fists shook the air. The crowds began to surge, like a powerful maelstrom around his tree.

And the tree towered up out of the sea of cries, out of the whirling curses of the contorted faces, out of the echo of rage, which reverberated from the sky like a monstrous black whirlwind and began to shake the tree in circles so that it boomed like the clapper of a bronze bell.

The tree towered up as if kindled by a sombre blaze, a cold flame, which a demon had shot up from an abyss.

High above in its bleak branches, Maillard perched like a gigantic black bird and threw his arms about in circles as if he were about to set off in flight over the multitudes into the evening - a demon of despair, a black Belial, the god of the masses who hurled ominous flames from his hands.

But from his forehead, which the dark light bathed as though with heavenly whiteness, reflected a golden ray which pierced the clouds high above the chaos from the zenith of the sky.

Only a small ribbon of the western horizon had lit up; there the sky stretched over the fields like a blue silk tapestry, which

still conjured up memories of a secluded pastoral play.

Suddenly, from the frenzied masses a loud voice resounded twice, shouting in a shrill soprano pitch the call: "To Versailles, to Versailles!" It was as if the enormous crowd itself had called it out, as if one will had articulated that which pulsed in the minds of thousands. There was a goal. No longer was there chaos, the multitudes were with one stroke a formidable army. Like an enormous magnet, the western sky drew their heads around to where Versailles awaited them. Now they would walk this road, they would wait no longer. The forces, which the storm of despair had unleashed within them, had one will, one path. The dam had broken.

Spontaneously the front ranks set off in march. In rows of four and of five, as far as the width of the road would allow.

Maillard saw this. He climbed down his tree as fast as he could, called over three men whom he knew, and ran with them over the fields alongside the multitudes until he reached the leading ranks. There he took up his stand with his followers against the throng and tried to persuade them¹⁵ that they should choose a leader and secure weapons. But they didn't listen to him. Now his voice was just like that of any other who would have wanted to stop these iron battalions. The crowds pushed him aside; they swept over the small wall formed by the four men and carried Maillard and his followers with them down the road.

An invisible leader led them, an invisible flag fluttered before them, an enormous banner waved in the wind, which a huge standard-bearer carried in front of them. A blood-red banner was unfurled. An enormous oriflame of freedom, swaying ahead of them with a purple banner in the evening sky like an approaching dawn.

They had all become countless brothers; the hour of enthusiasm had welded them together.

Men and women intermingled, labourers, students, barristers. White wigs, knee-stockings and sansculottes, women from the marketplace, fishwives, women carrying children in their arms, municipal sentries brandishing pikes over the crowds like generals, cobblers with leather aprons and wooden clogs, tailors, innkeepers, beggars, vagabonds, people from the outskirts, ragged and torn, an unending procession.

Bareheaded they proceeded down the road, with marching songs resounding. And on walking-sticks they carried red handkerchiefs like pennons.

Their sufferings were ennobled, their torments were forgotten, Man had awoken within them.

That was the evening when the slave, the serf of the centuries, threw off his fetters and raised his head in the evening sun, a Prometheus who carried a new flame in his hands.

They were unarmed - did it matter? They were without commanders - did it make a difference? Where was hunger now, where

were the torments?

And the glow of sunset passed overhead, across their faces, and branded on their foreheads an eternal dream of greatness. Along the entire mile-long street a thousand heads burned in its glow like a sea, an ageless sea.

Their hearts, which had been smothered in the gloomy deluge of years and in the ashes of toil, were rekindled by this sunset glow and started to blaze once more.

They joined hands on the march; they embraced one another. They had not suffered in vain. They all knew that the years of suffering were over, and their hearts trembled faintly.

An unending melody filled the sky and its purple-blue; an eternal torch burned. And the sun moved ahead of them, down into the evening; it enflamed the forests and burned the sky. And like godly galleons, manned by the spirits of freedom, large clouds sailed before them in the swift wind.

But¹⁶ the mighty poplars along the road shone like large chandeliers, each tree a golden flame, lighting the broad course¹⁷ of their fame.

1 "Weizenfladen": "flat-cakes". This word could not be found in the dictionary. They are large flat patties made of wheat.

2 "Mehlpasteten": "pies sprinkled with white flour". This compound noun could not be found in the dictionary. "Pastete" means "pie", "pasty" or "tart".

3 "Kohlenträger": "coal carriers". These persons carried coal in a basket on their backs and went from house to house to sell it.

4 "Mehlwurm": "meal beetle". A type of beetle which feeds on grain. Egbert Krispyn uses the word "weevil" for "Mehlwurm", which is a more scientific term.

5 "Vorstädter": "people from the outskirts". This word designates persons living outside the centre of a city. Its meaning in the context of this story could not be found in the dictionary. The modern meaning of this word designates an inhabitant of a suburb, a "suburban" or "suburbanite". The modern connotations of these meanings make them inappropriate in this story, since these events occur at the time of the French Revolution. Heinz Rölleke briefly discusses Heym's use of this word. He disagrees with Eberhard Schulz's attempt to differentiate between "Vorstadt" as "die bewohnte Stadt" and the city per se, "die Stadt als Macht und Wesen" in Heym's works. Rölleke contends that it was not Heym's intention to distinguish various areas of the city, but rather to depict and comment upon man's condition and his life in the "Grossstadt" or metropolis in general. (Heinz Rölleke, Die Stadt bei Stadler, Heym und Trakl (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1966), p. 121.) Rölleke provides another possible explanation and symbolic interpretation of Heym's use of "Vorstadt". The suffering, impoverished masses of the world which he depicts live at the "periphery" of society. They are "tröstlose Existenzen aus der 'Peripherie' des Lebens, die im ewig kreisenden Städtemeer gleichsam durch die Zentrifugalkraft an den Rand des Daseins geschleudert sind". (Rölleke, op. cit., p. 160.)

6 "die vierzehn Nothelfer": Fourteen saints in the Catholic Church who were prayed to when in difficulty.

7 "verzäumt": "fenced in". This verb could not be found in the dictionary and its meaning thus had to be deduced. "Zaum" designates the bridle on a horse. Thus the verb means "to restrain", "to arrest", "to confine".

8 "Hirtenstöcke": "shepherds' staffs". The aristocracy are dressed up as shepherds and shepherdesses for a costume ball. In the Rococo era it was fashionable for the aristocracy to imitate the

the dress of the lower classes at such parties.

9 "Astarte": The Phoenician goddess of fecundity. As I. Jens points out, Heym's selection of images especially in comparisons show "keine logische Präzision", but have rather an emotional basis. As an example, he cites this comparison between Marie Antoinette and Astarte. (I. Jens, Studien zur Entwicklung der expressionistischen Novelle (Tübingen, 1954), p. 178.)

10 "verzweifelt": "despairing". In this context, two meanings are conveyed by this word: the failure of the harvests, and the desperation of the populace who now will have to go hungry.

11 "taub": "unheeding". This image of the heavens which do not heed the sufferings of the people is sacrilegious and emphasizes the absolute helplessness of the people. It is a reflection of Heym's anti-Christian attitude which is given further expression in the grotesque images which follow.

12 This image is technically incorrect, for in the Old Testament it was Lot's wife, not Lot, who was turned to stone for disobeying God's commandment.

13 "Schnitterdienst": "harvest blade". In the German word, the two meanings of "harvest" and "death" are conveyed by "Schnitter-". It implies that the masses will behead the members of the nobility in the future.

14 "Ballhaus": "ballroom". As Bernd Seiler points out, Heym mistakenly calls the tennis-court a "Festsaal", whereas in fact it was a building used for ball games and sports. (Bernd Seiler, Die Historischen Dichtungen Georg Heyms (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1972), p. 16.)

15 Heinz Rölleke points out that in the German text, the pronoun "sie" is grammatically incorrect, since it refers back to "Strom" and thus should be "ihn". It seems, however, that Heym meant this pronoun to refer back to "die Massen" in the preceding sentence. Thus Heym either consciously or unconsciously brings these two images together in one metaphor. (Heinz Rölleke, Die Stadt bei Stadler, Heym und Trakl (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1966), p. 106.)

16 I. Jens points out that the use of the conjunction "aber" in this context is illogical, since there is no contradiction or contrast being stated here. (I. Jens, Studien zur Entwicklung der expressionistischen Novelle (Tübingen, 1954), p. 193.)

17 "Strasse": "course". The second use of this word in this sentence is figurative.

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