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CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN LITERATURE

In seventeenth-century Germany art and reality stood in a contradictory relationship to one another, and this contradiction was a fruitful one: it contained, in an undeveloped and indistinct form, the paths that art was to take in the centuries that followed. From the point of view of the history of culture, it is important to feel the basic contradiction of this period, the pledge of the developments of the future, even though the period itself perhaps suffered from this contradiction. We ourselves will be helped in this direction—that is, towards the elucidation of the central contradiction of seventeenth-century art—by a few isolated comments and observations on the literary texts of the time.

After some customary prefaces and preliminaries, Grimmelshausen begins his novel about Joseph (1666) as follows:

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"Gleich wie der Apffel nicht weit vom Stamm fällt / also schlägt kein Zweig aus seiner Art! Niemalen hat eine Taube einen Raben geboren / noch ein Nachteul eine Nachtigall gehägt / ob zwar beyde von der Nacht ihren Namen herführen; Der Sara seltene Schönheit war so berühmt und vortrefflich / dass sich auch Könige Nemlich der mächtige Pharao in Egypten und Abimelech der zu Gerara in Palestina darinn vernarreten! Wo hätte dann ein hässliches Ur-Encklein von ihr herkommen können? Vornehmlich aus einer solchen Mutter wie Rahel gewesen / um welcher himmlischen Schönheit wegen / Jacob gantze vierzehen Jährige: ob zwar freywillige / jedoch sehr beschwerliche Dienstbarkeit gedultet; Warum aber das Geschlecht Thare (welcher Abrahams Vatter gewesen / und von den Arabern Assar genennt wird /) allein vor allen andern Menschen so damalen gelebt / mit so verwunderlicher Schönheit begabt gewesen / davon sagen die Araber / Perser / und der Chaldeer Naturkündiger neben ihren Geschicht-Büchern dieses; dass obgemeldter Thare oder Asar ein überaus künstlicher Bildhauer: Und deswegen bey dem grossen Nimbrod in Diensten sehr beliebt / und zugleich seiner Götzen Tempelwarter oder Pfleger gewest seye; Der hatte so vollkommene. schöne Bilder verfertigt und unter Handen gehabt / dass sich viel die sie nur angesehen / im ersten Anblick darein verliebt: und weilen dessen Hausfrau / Abrahams Mutter (aus welchen Geschlecht auch Sara / Rebecca und Rahel entsprossen /) diese Bilder stetig vor Augen gesehen / seyen durch ihre hefftige Einbildungen alle ihre Kinder denselben an der Gestalt ähnlich worden; Welche geraubte Schönheit ihrem Geschlecht bis ins vierdte Gleid (ob es zwar auff der Liae Seiten zeitlicher verhimpelt worden) angeklebt; Unter allen aber seye Joseph der Sohn Jacobs der Kern und Ausbund darvon: Und zwar so unaussprechlich schön gewesen / dass seine Schönheit auch die höchste Schönheit eines jeden Engels übertroffen; Solches nun ist der Araber / Perser und Mesopotamier Meinung von Josephs Schönheit; Es wird auch davor gehalten / dass die Götzen Labans so durch die Rahel wegen ihrer Raritet und sonderbahren Schönheit ihrem Vatter gestohlen: Und nachmals durch den Jacob bey Sichem unter eine Aich begraben worden / ein sonderbares Kunst- und Meisterstück des Asars: Und die gröste Ursach beydes der Rahel und des Josephs Schönheit gewesen seyen / weil Josephs und der

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Rahel Mutter dieselbe geliebt: und im Anbeten solche stetigs vor Augen gehabt haben.

Aber über diese hohe Gabe der Schönheit / hat Gott den Joseph noch weit reichlicher gesegnet; So / dass man ihn wegen seiner Vortrefflichkeit wol den Edelsten König: und wegen seinen Schönheit dass er in dem herrlichsten Pallast wohnete / vergleichen mögen; Er hatte vollkommene Schönheit von der Mutter / und eben so viel Verstand von seinem Vatter auff sich geerbet; Welcher in seinen blühenden Frühlings-Jahren anzeigte was er vor Früchte bringen würde; Ja sein Verstand war damalen bereits so hoch / scharf und fähig; Sein Gedächtniss so gut und starck: und sein Kopff etwas geschwind zu begreiffen / so fertig? Dass schwerlich ein Urtheil zufällen / ob diese seine innerliche Gaben? oder die äuserliche Gestalt seines Leibs am verwunderlichsten zu schätzen?..."[1]

Grimmelshausen is here clearly relying to a certain extent on the techniques of contemporary Catholic sermons; the points to pick out here are the following:

Firstly, all the biblical characters, names and places are assumed to be perfectly familiar to the reader. Of course, in a sense this was quite true, and Grimmelshausen's readers did know them all. But not only were they clearly familiar—they were supposed to be all *equally familiar*: Terah and Abraham, Jacob and Abimelech, all are treated alike. The reality of certain characters, which is taken to be obvious, serves as a guarantee that other characters are just as real. This device is used very consistently, and as we shall see, is taken a long way. This could be called the principle of the circular guarantee, a guarantee that binds all the historical characters and biblical personages who are mentioned in the extract quoted and who therefore already arise before us as heroes (albeit episodic heroes) of the novel.

Secondly, this characteristic feature is linked with another one, namely that this world of biblical history is presented to us as a very intimate world. The author is well aware of the historical distance of the events he describes, and yet he uses all his powers to bring this remote world closer to the reader. But of

[1] Grimmelshausen, *Des Vortrefflich Keuschen Josephs in Egypten Lebensbeschreibung samt des Musai Lebens-Lauff*, published by Wolfgang Bender, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968, pp. 8-9.

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course this is not done by any techniques of deliberate modernisation. On the contrary: this world remains as it was in the books of the bible and in legend, but the reader is transported into the confines of this reality that he knows. It is an intimate world—one might even say a narrow one, a family circle. And the characters who inhabit this world can be treated in a familiar, a familial way. But here Grimmelshausen follows the dictates of a taste that in the context of other periods and other cultural domains would have been called austere: in fact he does not allow any familiarity, and where the Catholic sermon trod boldly forward, he allows himself only the odd hint. He is not familiar, then; but almost imperceptibly he infects the reader emotionally. Emotion reigns alone in his work, and it transforms its reality into a world that is close, intimate and familiar to the reader. Terab, the able sculptor, was beloved of the great king Nimrod; the figures that he formed with his hands had the property that all who even glanced at them were filled with love for them; no wonder, then, that Rachel the mother of Joseph, and Rachel's mother, loved them so much, since they had them daily before their eyes; finally, Sarah the wife of Abraham was so beautiful that even kings fell in love with her:—Grimmelshausen expresses it all far more powerfully and vividly.

And now for the third and last feature of this text that we are interested in here. The characters in the fragment quoted answer for one another, they are bound by the circular guarantee. It follows that Joseph's beauty is guaranteed by none other than the Pharaoh of Egypt and Abimelech, king of the Philistines, ruling at Gegara, who was in love with Sarah. And this being so, we can dramatically exclaim: how could the great-grandson of this same Sarah not be beautiful? This is not only a piece of rhetoric, not only a sermon-like train of thought, but the very essence of what is literary, the brilliant manifestation of a writer's imagination—free and untrammelled by the chronographic nature of his material. Indeed, from a purely literary point of view, the reference to Abimelech, for example, acting as a sort of middle term allowing us to make a "causal" connection between the beauty of Sarah and that of Joseph, is no different from the device that the narrator in Gogol's tale allows himself when he tells us that the hero of the tale—of whom we know nothing at the time—had had his cap made at a time when Agafya

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Fedoseyevna—of whom the reader will hear no more—"had not started visiting Kiev." The difference lies in the fact that Grimmelshausen does not put unknown personages or negative quantities into his text; the action of Gogol's tale takes place in a narrow world, in an almost randomly chosen corner of the earth, where everyone knows everyone else and it is even difficult for us to rid ourselves of the notion that they all know each other personally and by name; Grimmelshausen's world is a broad one in time and space, but he uses his literary technique to turn it, within the space of a few lines, into a world that is close to the reader, easy to oversee in time and space, a world that is narrow in its own way, though this does not make it lose any of its importance; most importantly, this is a completely new world, without the tone of the biblical story, a world in which the author's fantasy reigns (of course it is not a question of the quantity of material that has been "imagined into" the story, added to the source material!); and the central personage immediately ceases to be a biblical hero and becomes the hero of a novel, because of the way in which he is brought into the story. A connection that "historically," "chronographically" never existed, is thus created, between him and Abimelech, and Abimelech is even obliged to bear a measure of responsibility for this Joseph whom he never knew!

We must of course forget that Abimelech is a little-known figure for the reader of today; we should not see Grimmelshausen's exposition as merely a device, a technical moment, even less as some sort of individual discovery or invention; and it would be banal to say that the author is showing us familiar things as though they were unfamiliar, showing them from a new angle, in an unexpected way, and so forth. It would be right to say that familiar things here become truly familiar, transparent, and intimately close (it is interesting that the kinship between the characters is insistently emphasized every time it comes up); everything familiar is here astonishingly *skillfully retold*, and herein lies the rhetorical art of this novel. At the same time, of course, everything suffers a change, without losing its already *known* character and without acquiring an unknown or mysterious character in the process. The art of the novel, the art of story-telling, is here the art of re-telling. But we anticipate.

When the narrator exclaims "how could Sarah have a great-

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grandson who was not beautiful?" there is still no principal hero in the novel. Of course, the reader knows that it will be about Joseph, but at this point he has still not been named; it has only been stated that the great-grandson of Sarah could not be other than beautiful. Grimmelshausen's contemporaries would have no difficulty in realising who Sarah's great-grandson was, so that obviously this must refer to Joseph. But it is precisely as the great-grandson of Sarah that Joseph enters the novel, and this also gives a certain intimacy to the beginning of the novel. But it is easy for us to see too that the author does not need this intimacy for its own sake; it is not only that he needs to narrow down the broad geographical, spatial, political world to a size that is easy for the reader to oversee, where family relationships are simple and everyday (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, four generations of one family, appear simultaneously before the reader); he also needs to present this close, cordial family relationship, which everyone can understand, as a historical fact that is unique of its kind. In point of fact the bible story itself requires this, in so far as it tells of human destinies of a particular kind; but Grimmelshausen does far more than this—in his novel, here, at the outset, he brings out the polarities in the events that take place: the poles of the particular and the general, the intimately familial and that which is of general, historical significance. This, then, is the polarity of the familial and that which relates to the general laws of history: and the polarity is brought to a unity—the life of a family line, a life in which a historical law, a historical pattern, a historic fate, such as a seventeenth-century author would understand it, are expressed. At the same time—and for us this is the most important feature—all this is not simply given as such, it is illuminated in its internal polarity and tension. Sarah is not just a beautiful woman, her beauty has not just been given her like that, it did not fall from the heavens—or if it did indeed fall from the heavens, then it fell by virtue of some meaning and plan of much wider import. God purposely endowed her with beauty in order that, later, a few generations later, such and such a thing should happen; so that (as we know) Joseph should suffer such and such a fate, so that his brothers should resolve to kill him, should throw him into a pit and sell him into slavery, so that Joseph should find himself in Egypt, should rise in power

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there, and so forth. The whole point of the extract we chose was precisely to show, with complete clarity but without superfluous arguments or tedious theories, how the general political and historical reality penetrated into the intimate sphere of the family, and how this intimate familial and privately personal element is raised to the level of historical destiny. In other words, it is an analysis of the biblical subject using the means that were at the disposal of a south-west German writer of the 1660's.

In this passage Grimmelshausen gives us a consistent and progressive accumulation of essential signs and features, which we shall shortly analyse in greater detail. Everything becomes clear at the end; but we shall point out all the features that might seem inessential on a first reading as well. Take Sarah: even kings fall in love with her, the Pharaoh of Egypt and the notorious Abimelech; and the somewhat crude verb that Grimmelshausen uses here does not vulgarize the essence of the matter or make it comic or base, but merely reinforces the meaning of the events that are taking place, as something altogether inevitable. Pharaoh and Abimelech simply could not fail to fall in love with Sarah: she was a person of royal beauty, although she came of no royal line; her beauty was no ordinary human beauty, and it was not fortuitous: and if she herself was no queen, Abraham being merely the chief of a nomad tribe, then her royal beauty gave a certain promise for the future—for it is clear that Sarah holds within her more than meets the eye, a meaning that transcends what is simply given. And Rachel's beauty is later described as "celestial"; and while there may be absolutely nothing special about this epithet, in its context it has a more literal sense than it does in ordinary usage. And indeed, we pass on immediately to Terah, and discover that he was a sculptor, a maker of heathen idols of rare perfection and beauty. The point of this piece of information is not to let us know that Terah indeed made figures, idols, little gods, but—in the spirit of the baroque literature of the time—exclusively to show that the whole tribe of Terah and Abraham had something royal about it. This quality might not come to the surface for much of the time, but yet it showed itself clearly and insistently, both in royal beauty, and, no less, in a sort of "privileged" activity, such as Terah was engaged in (and by all appearances he alone—

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another exclusive gift). So one might say that while Terah is not directly connected with the heavens in the sense of having something divine and unequivocally sacred about his work (after all, he is a maker and sculptor of idols), still there is something royal about it: it is no accident that he serves the king, and in his special and inimitable activity he has a special bond with the king, he exists with him, and in a sense by his side. But if there is something royal in Terah's existence, then this itself creates the sacred quality that marks his work: the making of idols is a sacred activity because it is a royal one. Obviously this is a typically baroque train of thought and of fantasy.

We can already see that Grimmelshausen's whole exposition is producing a typically baroque picture of a social and aesthetic hierarchy. More precisely, it is implicit in the way the author unites the royal and the divine, and the way he further endows this unity with the quality of extraordinary, celestial beauty. Let us say straight away that it is no aristocratic world view that makes the author create such a picture, in its entirety and in its details; on the contrary, it is the world-view of his time that makes him take as his basis, and create variations upon, just such a hierarchical picture of historical and social reality. He is bound by what one might call a compulsory hierarchy of values. Strictly speaking, such a background can be embroidered with all kinds of patterns, and in his novel about Joseph, Grimmelshausen combines the most diverse currents, tendencies and influences, from the obvious influence of theological literature to the intermingling currents of the Catholic sermon, with its imagery and its rhetorical devices, and to the literature of the masses. Needless to say, Grimmelshausen was also acquainted with *précieux* literature.

What is the point of the accumulation of signs of the divine and royal beauty of the tribe of Terah and Abraham, which Grimmelshausen systematically presents at the beginning of his novel? He is introducing his main hero, but he does not do this directly—he presents him through his tribe and his family, and through the historical idea that is embodied in this tribe. The royalty and the beauty of Joseph are felt before they are described: they are prepared for us, and their explicit description is actually weaker than the gradual preparation for it. If Grimmelshausen were simply to tell us that his heroes are the most

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beautiful people on earth, obviously such a statement would belong to the world of a fairy-tale that was concerned only with a narrow and closed circle of characters. Grimmelshausen achieves the equivalent of such a statement, but his image is taken from the favourite images of contemporary Catholic sermons: Joseph's beauty, he says, exceeded the beauty of the angels. And later he represents Joseph as uniting all the virtues in himself, in such a way that all his physical and spiritual perfections merge into one another and are essentially indistinguishable: "from his mother he had perfect beauty, from his father no less understanding; it was hard to decide which was the more remarkable, these spiritual gifts or his bodily appearance..." And, later on, he says that Joseph was a good mathematician and astronomer, and was well versed not only in husbandry, but also in *magia* and *philosophia naturalis*; in his youth he mastered all those things that his forebears only mastered in the fullness of years, and so forth. Such a description gives the reader a lot of information about the hero, but it is information of a very general nature: the more perfections the author piles on his hero, the more the hero must fade into abstraction, so it would seem. Joseph is the incarnation of royalty, and hence the incarnation of a divine destiny (divine in the sense of being ordained by God)—and therefore in turn the personification of an ideal historical purpose, the central hero of a particular period of history.

But in the last analysis, what sort of a hero of a novel is this Joseph, what sort of figure and what sort of character? Let us return to the beginning of the passage.

Sarah was beautiful, and a scion of her race could therefore not be other than beautiful, any more than the young shoots of a tree can grow otherwise than the older branches. So Joseph's beauty is natural, and he is a reflection—in the fourth generation—of the beauty of Sarah. But even Sarah's beauty is shown us in reflected form, through the eyes of Pharaoh and of the king who could not help falling in love with her. And Rachel too: not only was her beauty reflected in that of Joseph, but (so that we should know how beautiful she was) is reflected in the eyes of Jacob. And so, just as Joseph appears in the novel for the first time, as it were, not on his own account but as "the great-grandson," so also his beauty appears not to be his own beauty but the result of repeated mirror-reflections. Joseph is the mirror

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of his tribe, and he unites, as if at a focal point, all the royal beauty of Abraham's line, accumulated over many generations. But as we have said, the history of this line contains an ideological plan that is realised here: the hidden royalty is finally to be manifested, and outward beauty is here a sign of a hidden meaning. And if all the beauty of the race has accumulated and found super-human expression in Joseph—so that he is far more beautiful than Sarah or Rachel, more beautiful than the angels themselves—then it is immediately clear that Joseph is a figure of world-wide historical importance. This is clear even before the story of his life has been told, or re-told; it is clear as soon as the author, with some humour, shows us this hero of his from a distance, as it were in historical perspective, at four generations' remove.

This is why Grimmelshausen cannot be content with showing us the naturalness and the natural origin of the beauty of his hero. He needs to find a way of emphasizing and pointing out that Joseph's beauty carries a hidden meaning. Then we will see that this beauty, reflected over and over again in the mirror of successive generations, is a reflection—the reflection of a divine idea, if we are to use platonic terminology. And we will see that Terah, Abraham's father, made images of gods and idols of extraordinary beauty, and that this is the ultimate explanation of the beauty of Abraham's race. Terah created objects unlike any others, original and unique; and we might say that in contrast to Plato's artist, he was creating the idea itself and not its imitation. This is all the more important since it confirms the sacred significance of the idols—they are sacred not because they reflect something divine (in which case they would be no more than false idols), but because they are divine in their own right, as the incarnation of an original, unreflected beauty, and because they have a clear and direct function in fulfilling the divine plan, in showing the royal character of Abraham's line. But compared with the originality of the beauty that Terah created as the sculptor, maker and inventor of his figures—false gods, but truly sacred prototypes of beauty—Joseph's beauty was reflected: in origin it was both natural and supernatural at the same time—it was divinely natural, like the incarnation of the divine in the natural. His beauty was naturally inherited, and at the same time, as the author says, it was "stolen." And so one can say that

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Joseph is a mirror, receiving light from two series of mirrors—light that is gathered together, and multiplied, and is here reflected in infinite quantity; he is a mirror that shines with such extraordinary beauty that the author is right to liken it to the beauty of the angels.

If, then, we set about dismantling, piece by piece, the structure that Grimmelshausen created all at once, in one breath, we see that Joseph the Beautiful of his novel is by no means "simply" beautiful; his beauty is internally mediated by the meaning that is bound up to it, a meaning that one has to call general and historic, if we remain within the world of biblical stories and their baroque reinterpretations. This beauty is internally reflected, and the fact of its reflection, the fact that it is *not* presented simply and directly to our thought, is itself as it were the reflection of a light in a multiplicity of mirrors. The author never uses the word "mirror," but it is obviously most natural to liken Joseph to a mirror that gathers all the light from all other mirrors. If we want to understand what exactly the "non-simplicity" of Joseph's beauty consists in (and after all the author himself appears superficially only to repeat that he was beautiful, beautiful and beautiful; he uses images that are bold, but that do not add anything concrete), then we can try to imagine what would change if Grimmelshausen simply told the reader at the outset that the hero of his novel was very beautiful. We should lose, first of all, the loaded significance of this beauty—about which, literally speaking, nothing whatsoever is yet said in the first paragraph of the story, and yet in fact everything is said. The whole of this paragraph is both a light-hearted game, in which the author takes great pleasure in associating with biblical figures; and a splendid rhetorical construction, all really done in one breath; and at the same time a whole historical conception, expressed in images—as it were, a rhetorical construction of mirrors.

At the same time, this construction is also a historical one, in which the history of the generations is collected together into this one hall of mirrors. But here the essential fact is that Joseph is not the last of the line of mirrors; he, too, points forward and casts his light ahead. As an image, Joseph achieves the fullness of his meaning when his ultimate essence is named: a little later on in the text of the novel, it is said that Joseph "may

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fairly be called the archetype of Solomon the wise." The hidden, secret, and yet already clear and burgeoning royalty of Abraham's line was expressed so plainly in Joseph that he himself can serve as a model and prototype of the ideal, wise king; and this is well in keeping with the tradition of commentary upon biblical characters. And whereas Joseph, when he serves as a model for the ideal and wise ruler, is infinitely sublime, still he is not himself this king, he merely points towards him, like an allegorical personage. This is precisely why, with all his virtues and all his beauty, this wonderful mark and sign of his historic predestination, as a symbol he is not perfect in himself. But still he is the highest incarnation of beauty that there could be, and of a beauty that also points towards the same higher meaning. And therefore, although this beauty is unique and unrepeatable, it cannot contain within itself any individual features, or indeed any features about which anything concrete or visual could be said. The image is higher than anything visual.

Nonetheless, it is an image; and one that does not escape from its visual quality, its visual representation; however strange it might seem at first sight, it tends towards the visual, towards its own concrete and visual realisation.

In *The Suppliants* of Aeschylus (pages 282-283, ed. Weil), Pelasgos, king of Argus, addresses the daughters of Danaos as follows: Κύπριος χαρακτήρ τ'ἐν γυναικείος τύποις εἰκὼς πέπληκται τεκτόνων πρὸς ἀρσένων. We find here two words that have found a permanent place in our everyday language and in science, the words "character" and "type." Of course, these two lines taken in context do not constitute any philosophical problem; all that is being said is that "their womanly—or maidenly—faces seem to be imprinted with features common to the Cypriots, features that come from their father's side." So "character" here means just the facial features, and "type" means the face. But in general "character" does not merely mean this, the facial features alone; it includes all signs, letters and features that are engraved on a tree or hammered out in stone or metal. Plato uses "character" together with coins and seals - νομίσματος ἰδέα καὶ σφραγίδων καὶ παντὸς χαρακτῆρος (Polit. 289 b). And " τύπος " is not only the "face," as here; it is anything stamped, printed, anything beaten out (τύπτω means "I strike"); for instance, struck on a medal. And, further

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on, these Cypriot features are not merely "imprinted" on the faces (" ἐν τύποις "), they are stamped on them, and stamped by him who founded the Danaides when he begot their father: the word " τέκτων " has the same root as " τέχνη ," "art" or "trade," and is homonymous with " τέκτων " in the sense of "carpenter" or "builder" in general. Altogether, then, Aeschylus expresses a materially very clear, and (one might even say) a productively constructive idea about the birth of a human image that is visible, that can be seen and contemplated, of a face. A face is the stamp of a mould in high relief, it is a sort of representation on a medal, and here, naturally, we have in mind the closed and curved surface on which the imprinted features are represented. In Aeschylus, something that was achieved in a far less material and visible way (for we are dealing with the transmission of racial and hereditary facial features) is expressed constructively and figuratively.

We shall return to "characters" and "types." Let us note meanwhile that, here too, the beauty of a face depends as it were, on an activity that is performed on the surface of the medal; facial features are the reflection of the features of another begettor and builder of the image, on the curvature of the medal. After a space of two thousand and more years, the beauty of a face is explained in Grimmelshausen as the reflection of light in the limits of a mirror; the beauty of Joseph is the reflection of the beauty of Sarah and Rachel, and at the same time it is the reflection of the pictures that Rachel drew in her imagination as she contemplated the beautiful figures of the idols.

Here, however, we have just said somewhat more than is to be found in the text. The text does not mention light or mirrors. But "light" and "mirror" are images suggested by the text, and we are just about to adduce another example which, in acting as a parallel to the Grimmelshausen extract, will take us a little further. This is an extract from Philipp von Zesen's novel *Die Adriatische Rosemund*, which was written some twenty years earlier.

Markhold, the hero of the novel, is telling of one of his meetings with his beloved Rosemund:

> "Es war nun fast eine vierteilstunde vorüber, dass ich also zwischen hoffnung und furcht geschwebet hatt, als die türe plötzlich ward aufgetan. Ich sahe mich um, da fand ich sie

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eröffnet, gleichwohl konnt ich keinen einigen menschen erblicken, es kam mich ein entsetzen an, gleichsam als wann ein geist vorhanden wäre: ich zitterte vor angst und erblasste, als wann mir ein grosses unglück zustünde. Indem ich also beängstiget war, da brach dieses wunderlicht an, gleichsam wie das licht der Sonnen, das sich hinter dem gewölke eine zeitlang verborgen hält, und nachmals urplötzlich herfür bricht; wie der blitz, der die sterblichen erschrecket, und die augen verletzet. Sie kam in einem solchen glanz und solcher hoheit herein getreten, dass sich unter uns allen ein grosses stillschweigen erhub. Es kam mir nicht anders für, als wann itzund ein schweres ungewitter vorhanden ware, da auch gemeiniglich eine solche stille vorhergehet: es dauchte mich, als wann sich itzund das wetter kühlete, als wann lauter blitzende strahlen um mich herum schwebeten. Ich stand im zweifel, und wusste vor angst nicht, ob ich warten oder fliehen sollte: ich entfing sie, aber mit einem solchen herzklopfen, dass ich für der äussersten hitze, die mir in das gesichte stieg, kaum eines und das andere wortglied machen konnte. Ja ich glaube, dass ich endlich gar zur erden gesunken wäre, wo wir uns nicht stracks niedergelassen, und ich im sitzen meine kräfte wiedererholet hätte.

Dieses schöne Wunder kam abermal gleich gegen mich über zu sitzen, und hatte itzund viel ein freudigers gesichte, als da ich sie zum ersten mal sahe. Ihre Jungfer schwester selbsten, wie ich unschwer vermerken konnte, hielt sie sehr hoch, und erhub gleichsam mit einer stillen verwunderung ihr überirdisches, durchdringendes wesen. Dann es ist gewiss, dass der Neid selbsten an ihr nichts zu tadeln fand."[2]

Almost a quarter of an hour had passed, as I hovered thus between hope and fear, when the door was suddenly opend. I looked round and found it open, but I could not see anyone! I was overcome with terror, as if a ghost had been there: I trembled with fear and grew pale, as if some great misfortune had overcome me. As I was thus in fear, this wondrous light broke in on me, like the light of the sun that has hidden a while behind the clouds, and now suddenly breaks forth; like the lightning that frightens mortals and pains their eyes. She entered with such radiance and majesty, that a great silence fell on us all. I felt as if a heavy storm was at hand, for at such times too such a silence passes; it seemed to me as if the air had become cooler, and shining rays were playing about me. I stood in

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> doubt, and in my fear I did not know if I should wait or fly. I saw her, but with such a pounding of the heart that the heat that came into my face prevented me from putting two words together. Indeed I believe that I should have sunk to the ground, had we not all at once sat down, and as I sat my strength returned.
>
> This marvel of beauty came and seated herself just opposite me, and now she had a much more joyful face than when I saw her for the first time. Her lady sister herself, as I could easily see, held her in high regard, and she too contemplated in silent wonder her celestial and penetrating being. It is certain that envy itself could find no fault in her."[2]

Here beauty is a radiance that seems to blind him who sees it; but in Zesen, unlike Grimmelshausen, all reality is surrounded by psychological subjectivity, and it is all permeated with sentimentality (if one can be allowed an anachronism). As we can even see from the extract quoted, the whole text is aimed at bringing out a variety of subtle nuances of emotion; it does not tend directly towards any one-sided ideal, but—in depicting the feelings of the lover—allows full scope to emotional lassitude and a peculiar kind of mundane scepticism. In Zesen, beauty is not some fabulous beauty that exists on its own, but beauty that is inwardly mediated by the lover's feelings, or rather by the impression it produces. A beautiful face as a real object, a visual, visible thing, hides behind its radiance and brilliance, and its features cannot immediately be distinguished; indeed, the writer, coming to the concrete description of Rosemund's face, cannot help blurring it in our eyes by the use of rather stereotyped expressions and images (flowers, precious stones and the like). But her portrait as a whole is presented through its reflection, which reaches us in the form of undifferentiated radiance. An apparently completely subjective impression becomes the real substance of the image.

> "Meine Fürbildung entwarf sie mir mit solchen ihren liebeskünstlerischen und blitzlenden augen so lebhaft, und so vollkommen, dass ich endlich nicht wusste, ob mir dieses

[2] Philipp von Zesen, *Die Adriatische Rosemund*, published by Klaus Kaczerovsky, Bremen, 1970, pp. 67-68. (Collection Dieterich, vol. 327).

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> anbetenswürdige Sinnenbild durch eine Zauberische beschwörung fürgestellet würde."[3]

> ("My imagination drew her for me so vividly and so perfectly, with her shining eyes all filled with love, that in the end I did not know whether this adorable image had not been presented to me by some magic spell.")[3]

But this sort of analysis of one's own feelings does not prevent Rosemund from remaining "a celestial figure of a woman." An image is a fruit of the imagination ("Fürbildungen," as Zesen says; "hefftige Einbildungen," as in the Joseph novel); but this does not annul the objective essence of this image as ideal beauty, or as a blinding reflection in a mirror. It is "a celestial radiance that bereaves me of sight" (Zesen, p. 56). Rosemund is a "masterpiece of grace, the finest ever created by the progenitress of things"—that is, nature (65).

Beauty, then, is something unearthly, supraterrestrial, superhuman—in the sense of "non-human."

> "Dieser ... Schäffer hatte eine Tochter / Amoena geheissen / welche wegen jhrer vbermenschlichen und vnvergleichlichen Schönheit / so der günstige Himmel und die mildreiche Natur Häuffig vber sie aussgegossen / von allen Schäfern des gantzen Landes für eine Göttin gehalten vnd geehret wurde ... sie war mit allen nur ersinnlichen Schönheiten ... gekrönet / dass man sie mit nichts andrem / als mit jhr selbsten vergleichen können."[4]

> ("This shepherd had a daughter called Amoena, who because of her superhuman and incomparable beauty which a gracious Heaven and gentle Nature had abundantly poured out on her, was held by all the shepherds in the land to be a goddess.... She was crowned with every imaginable beauty, so that there was nothing that she could be compared to, except herself."[4]

This appears in the "Pastoral of the Amorous Nymph Amoena," 1632.

Both Zesen, and the unknown author of the pastoral, and

[3] Zesen, p. 65.

[4] "Pastorale," in *Der Verliebten Nimfen Amoena. Schäferroman des Barocks*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, Klaus Kaczerovsky, 1970, p. 13. (Rowohlts Klassiker, 530-531).

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Grimmelshausen in his Joseph novel, create a "wonderful image" (Wunderbild) of beauty, as they themselves put it. But in the first two cases the ideal nature of the image turns out to be in contradiction with the originality, lifelike realism and subtle psychology with which the theme is developed: the image is ideal, but the action constantly casts off its conventional pastoral garb, and we see before us private lives, immersed in the sphere of emotions, lives whose fortuitous course shows them to be far from ideal and remote from any sort of harmony, lives filled with such unadorned chance happenings as fell to the lot of the author himself. At the same time, this subtle vibration of the emotions, this sensibility or sentimentality, the lifelike unresolvedness of dissonances, the very real might of social circumstances, which the heroes of the novels take very real account of (so that there are no miracles in their destiny, and all the poetry of their relationships lies only in the prose of life)—all this realism can yet not be expressed as such, it can only fall into and out of a predetermined style, can only break away from a previously established level of stylization. Real life, in its prosaic course, its fortuitousness, life that is by no means always raised to the level of some guiding idea—has already reached the awareness of these writers; it is already visible through its conventionally pastoral, conventionally rhetorical, conventionally idealistic romantic clothing—and this clothing itself is already felt to be just clothing, something so external, through which an element of everyday life can unexpectedly permeate and become apparent, all unadorned. Nonetheless, for all that, the clothing is the first and most important thing in the literature of the time. It is the mirror of style, in which alone the reality of the age can see itself. And the writer is obliged to take two mutually contradictory courses: he must produce the reflection of reality as an ideal reality, seen in the mirror as a radiance—and he must see reality through the clothing of style and rhetoric, and see a human face through the blinding radiance of the mirror. But this is no mere contradiction in an author's work, no mere contradiction in literary activity—it is the disintegration of reality itself, into an idea, something ideal, on the one hand, and naked reality on the other, remote from ideas and meanings, the naturalness of all that is given and all that takes place. Of course, it is impossible to develop and illustrate this situation as a whole here. But one thing

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is clear to us: when a writer reduces the whole concrete physiognomy of a human being to some shining light in which no features are distinguishable, this is not pure ideality, positive in its essence, but (strange as it may seem) it is the writer's striving to bestow visual clarity to ideality itself, to express it not merely in abstract words, nor merely in terms of fable and myth. Inasmuch as the ideal is ideal, of course, it must transcend all that is visible and seeable, but nonetheless this ideality, as we saw in Zesen and Grimmelshausen, is mediated. It is both constructed as a meaning, instead of being merely given as such, and also constructed as an *impression* and an object of *imagination*—so that this beauty is itself already given in the reflection of the eyes that see it, even if the eyes were blinded when they saw it.

Of course, these faces considered as a "type," a "typos," are far from having the clear relief of a stamp or a medal; this "type" is the closed surface of a reflection; the image is always given only in a reflection, while that upon which the image-forming principle is reflected is most conveniently called a mirror. Here there is not and cannot be anything ponderable, materially palpable, perceptible for the chisel or the block, and the image is not stamped on metal or stone; instead, a far more subtle and spiritual process takes place. Its result is obviously much less clear and sometimes it is indeed almost impossible to grasp; but the image that arises here has as it were an inner vibration, it is surrounded by a cloud of radiance and light, it shines and sparkles, and when we have seen it we still have to decide how much of it comes "from itself," and how much comes from our own eyes; how much is material and how much is the spiritual halo, and how much is the presentiment of the psychological depths of a character such as would correspond with the psychological complexity of the action itself.

At the same time, the image is never equal to itself; in this radiation of accumulated light, we cannot grasp the visual concreteness of *that which is*. The image is a reflection, in the stylistic and rhetorical forms of the age, and it is also an object of imagination, when it is seen from the side, through someone else's eyes; and it is the reflection of original beauty, however it is understood; and, lastly, it is the archetype, when its ideality is reflected in the image of another: Joseph in the wise king Solomon.

The semantic element—whether it comes from the rhetorical

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habits of the age or from its theological concepts—is of primary importance here, and therefore reality, in order to appear in its natural form, with natural dimensions, man-high, must first escape from the sphere of meaning, slip through the net of ideal hierarchical constructions, and break away from the bounds of the hierarchy of values; but then it will be a raw, unworked reality, without any meaning or value of its own; coarse, wild, sometimes visual and expressive but without a clear, sharp and steady image, because it cannot attain a steady image. It is a reality that is above all coarse and fleshly, that never leaves the confines of the most simple, sensuous, corporeal and material data: it is blood and sweat.

A world without any meaning laid down in advance is a "madhouse," and the heroes of the novels of Johann Beer, which are imbued down to the last thought with the pointless absurdity of all existence, live like conscious practising nihilists, among rubbish and slops; they neither wash nor brush their hair, they get covered in dirt and lice, give themselves up to wild drunkenness and gluttony, and falling into ecstasy they dance wildly, cutting and tearing the objects around them; they become little gods of the low and mean world, the animal existence, the hopeless laziness of things. But even in these depths of existence, the inexorable process continues in which the human "I" comes to consciousness; from the start, here, it gives itself up to the sensation of the hopelessness of life, and of course, even the youth living amidst all this squalor only knows one way out: either he sees himself in the faces of the lunatics in the "madhouse,"—or else he surrounds himself with mirrors:

"The lord Lorenz brought some mirrors into the room and arranged them about the table. Thus we used to amuse ourselves like madmen, and he who could adopt the most adventurous position was esteemed more highly than the rest, as one who had performed an exceptionally skilful trick."[5]

Naked reality is the soil of realistic literature, but it is a soil that needs cultivation. Meanwhile, between ideal and naked reality, between the ideality of the superhuman "I" and the nihilistic super-reality of the "I" entangled in viscuous materiality, there is a considerable gulf.

[5] Johann Beer, *Das Narrenspital...*, Hamburg, Richard Alewyn, 1957, p. 31: (Rowohlts Klassiker, 9).

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The romantic crisis of the "I" at the turn of the 18th-19th century seems to mark the moment when the "image" of the human being with his problematic character ceases to fit into the closed surface of the previous "type," and also does not fit into the earlier relationship of the "image" with its "reflection." The Schoppe of Jean Paul, going mad before his mirror, unable to solve and give meaning to the identity and non-identity of the "I" and the "not-I" that looked at him out of the mirror—was an attempt to take the old, traditional contradiction between the ideal and the corporeal and material, that cannot achieve meaning for itself, and to lead this contradiction to a logical conclusion and thus overcome it.

The contradiction lies not between the image and its reflection, but between the "I" and reality, and they must now be reconciled, in the sense that "I" and "reality" must be understood within one another. Sky and earth meet at the horizon. But these processes are connected with the dialectical conversions of "type" and "character," with conversions whose roots date back to the literature of the baroque period. "Type" and "character," as they are understood in the everyday and scientific sense, bear little resemblance to the original Greek "typos" and "charakter." Movement and action penetrate into the human physiognomy, and therefore the human being, in his dynamism, cannot be closed into any stable and immobile surface be it a seal or a mirror.

Reality "as such" can no longer be represented as a series of frames, or mirrors reflecting it; to be "in itself" does not imply being a Kantian "thing-in-itself:" it means realising one's essence in movement, in time, in history—in the material passage of time. And the baroque image as a reflection, a variant of the earlier "typos," frozen in the closed frame of the mirror, in its shining radiance, is on the most general level already excluded from historical movement: it is above all an immovable essence, whatever unheard-of meaning is attributed to it, as to Grimmelshausen's Joseph.

The baroque image and face tend towards a state of being visible and perceptible in their perfection and immobility, but they tend away from such a state of visibility insofar as they possess either an excessive, one-sided, and far from material spirituality of meaning, or else an excessive, one-sided materiality, bogged down in materialistic subtleties and reaching nihilistic heights of

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senselessness. The baroque face blurs its "character"-istic features, we lose sight of them because of its celestial radiance—or else its thick and heavy materiality—and now the task consists in creating characteristic features and a character in the new sense of the word, in place of these old "character"-istic features. In losing the firm outline of its relief, in hiding behind the spirituality of its reflectedness, the baroque face loses the earlier "typicality" of the medal, the coin and the seal, and now it must become a "type" in the new sense of the word. And so, in an age that saw the brightest blossoming of the emblem as a typically baroque way of thinking and of representation, the emblem as the stamp of meaning, there also grew up those inner forces that were to overcome the discord between the meaning and the "matter."

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